

MAU'LOTE PIUTAU

Hidden

Soft luscious lips, honey soft brown eyes, a beautiful lavender aroma that you can smell even from a mile away; her soft alluring curls bouncing off her shoulders as she strides to the front of the church. Am tempted to walk to the front to kiss her, claiming her as mine, but I know better than to do that. My heart beats rapidly as I watch her laugh. Her laughter is a sweet melody to my ears; a beautiful song I could never get enough of like a hymn I need in my life. I remove my gaze from her as I try to pull myself together before I do something that I will regret. How can those boys make her laugh like that when I couldn't even make her smile at me? I grip the chair in front of me, as my knuckles turn to a shade of deathly pale white. I feel someone's burning stare from the side of my head. As I look up, there is Grandma eyeing me out silently, trying to question me. I remove my hands from the chair as I try to focus on the patterns on my ugly dress, playing with the fine straws of my ta'ovala to distract myself from blowing my cover. I look up and there she sits, smiling and laughing with those fat-cracks. I mean come on, am I not pretty enough? Ok, maybe this dress is making me blend in with Grandma, that she thinks I am one of the oldies. I mean yeah, I may be psychotic for liking a girl because I am a girl too, but I cannot help it. She is so beautiful, and I cannot help the way I feel. Should I just tell her that I have loved her ever since I was 10? Should I risk blowing my cover open for her? Ugh, she is not supposed to laugh like that with anyone but me, those upupala have no right to look at her like they want her. But I question myself, who am I

to tell her to not be laughing with any boys but laugh with me? I cannot help that I am dangerously falling for her. I really want to drop this whole Sunday school lesson, and just go home and play in my father's pig farm with the pigs, because at least they give a damn. The church bells go off, indicating that Sunday school lessons are about to start. Now I must sit here and listen to the story of Adam and Eve again. The past 3 weeks, Mrs. Moala has been preaching about Adam and Eve repeatedly. Like yes, I get it. Eve made a mistake and Adam being the dumb one followed her, but I wonder if the story was twisted in a different way like a story between two females - Eve and Neve. I laugh inside my head, what an epic story it would have been if God made everyone to love anyone regardless of their sex. I mean Eve and Neve could've been an item, and Adam with someone else, then maybe there was a chance that the stupid snake wouldn't have caused our downfall to sin, because Adam and Eve will be too occupied being happy with their partners, and they would actually have listened to what God said, and didn't *have* to follow the other. But we know the story never went like that because it is a sin to be swinging the other direction. Now I just want to bang my head on one of the church bells; like come on out of all of the girls in the Tongan village, why am I like this? I need to grow a pair, and just let Seini know the way I feel about her. I will confess my feelings for her after Mrs. Moala finishes. I didn't notice that I had been thinking so much that Mrs. Moala was ending the lesson with a prayer. And 'emeni' everyone said, yes 'emeni' for me because I'm about to go and 'emeni' Seini right now! I chuckled at myself. I watch as everyone slowly leaves, and I watch her walk into one of the church storage room. I get up, prepare myself, and fix my grandma dress and ta'ovala as I slowly make my way to where she is. Trying to come up with what to say in my head, I was already turning the doorknob and there she stood, looking stunning as always. She looks at me with confusion. I walk in and close the door, locking it. She

looks at me with even more confusion, “Can I help you, Lina?”

“Yes, Seini I’m sorry for bothering you”, as I walked close to her. “I’ve needed to tell you something for a long time now. What I’m about to tell you, you must promise me you can’t ever tell anyone. Not even your friends, your family, no one.”

She nodded her head and looking me in the eye as a promise.

“Seini. I’ve always loved you, since I was 10. I can’t remember a time where I didn’t tell myself that you were the one thing I desire in my life. You are everything I ever need and want; you are so beautiful. I love you so much, and I know this is a shocker to you, but I can’t stay away from you anymore. I can’t watch from afar anymore. Would you do the honor of becoming my girl? I love you Seini Masikoka.”

She looked at me with teary eyes, “I’ve always loved you too, Lina. I know it is very wrong of me to love a girl like that, but I do love you. You do remember my father is the minister of this church, right?” I frown not wanting to remember. “I love you so much that I had to do what was right, which was ignoring you, not talking to you. But I don’t want to risk anything because you know if they find out about this, we are done for. I really want to be with you, but you know what they will do. I do love you and I promise not to tell anyone.”

I watch her babble about the consequences of us being together, but I didn’t pay attention because all I wanted right at this moment was to taste her succulent lips. I moved even closer to her closing, the distance between us. I pressed my lips to hers. That shut her up. I laughed in my head. I moved away just for her to capture my lips again making me slightly gasp as she slides into my

mouth, as our tongues dance together. I leave her mouth as I slowly press wet kisses from her jaw to her neck, sucking the soft skin. A loud knock separated us like we were not just about to emeni each other right here, right now. She looked at me with a smile as her cheeks slowly taints a rosy blush. She's so gorgeous and cute, I try to even my breathing. I fix myself and I grab a broom as I open the door, and there is my annoying cousin, "Ohh there – what are you doing in here, Lina."

"I was just getting the broom to help Seini clean the church."

She looked behind me to Seini, and shifted her gaze back at me, "Hurry up, because Uncle is getting pissed since you guys are taking forever to clean."

"Ok, we are coming now."

I looked behind me to see Seini holding a broom, I winked at her, "I will be waiting for an answer, Seini." I walk into the church, ready to sweep out my dirty thoughts and sweep the Holy Spirit into me. After cleaning the church, I walked home still replaying the sweet, hot moment that is now forever etched on my mind. I cannot believe all this time she's liked me, too. SHE LIKES ME! I cannot be any happier right now. I see the view of my house as I walk in, trying to hide my smile. My grandma stops to look at me, "Nake i fe?"

"I was helping Seini clean the church," I tried not to sing.

She nodded her head and continued her cooking. I wonder if Grandma will understand my feelings for a girl. I wonder if everybody will understand and accept me. I understand Seini's father is a minister and my father is a steward. I understand that our families have reputations in this village and in the church. I understand that our lives are on the line if we get caught, but I know deep

down in my heart, my feeling towards Seini can never go away. I've tried so hard to like a boy, but I'm so dysfunctional; my heart and my entire being is called towards a girl. I envy all these straight people loving one another in public in the open, and I'm here suffocating every second, minute and hour of my existence trying to stay hidden in the closet. Trying to be someone I'm not. If this island was as accepting as some places, then maybe there might be a chance for Seini and I to express our sexuality openly.

Looking at the clock, it's been an hour since Sunday school ended. Now my family is meeting up at Seini's house since the faifekau wants a feast to celebrate my father becoming a steward. We arrive at their home. I carry a plate of cut up taro, yam, and a bag of corn beef. I remove my shoes, walking further into the house placing the food onto the table as I greet everyone. I walk into the kitchen asking if they needed help to prepare, but to my luck, no help needed. I watch as the men do their own thing, and the women laugh and cook. I swerved my way around the house looking for the bathroom. However, I get snatched into a room, and my snatcher happens to be my beautiful princess. She looks at me and finally speaks, "the answer to your question, is yes."

I pull her in for a sweet hug as I bury my head into her neck, welcoming her lavender scent onto me. I can't believe it. She said yes. Removing myself from her, as happy tears glide down my face and I watch as my beautiful princess kisses my tears away. She peppers my face with sweet kisses as I lose myself in a moment of contentment; I had forgotten we were in her house and our families were just outside. But I try to control myself as she pushes herself onto me as I fall back onto a soft mattress. She climbs on top of me kissing me like no tomorrow, I look into her eyes and see nothing but pure happiness and an emotion I can't catch. I flip her on the bed as we wrestle one another in a way for control. She

laughs as she captures my lips again, grazing her tongue on my bottom lip as I whisper, "I love you". I realize I can't control myself anymore and I attack her lips. Making my way to her neck as I trail kisses to her chest. The door is smashes the wall, and there stands our families. I jump up feeling terrified as I look over to Seini. She has a smirk on her face. I was about to question her as she cuts me off, "you see everyone I told you she's a freak, a lesbian." "You see Lina? People like you are a curse to this Kingdom. I never loved you, I found a chance to expose who you are." I could not believe it; Seini betrayed me, she set me up. My heart is broken over the girl who I loved, and yet here she stands as she shames me and breaks my heart. Every kiss and every word was a lie? How could she do this to me? My family looks at me with disgust and pure hatred. Grandma is bawling her eyes out, as Mother utters, "you are a fakama to this family. You do realize people like you are hanged for this crime? I'm ashamed to say this, but Lina, you are no daughter of ours." I knew in this moment it was either stand here and wait for my death, or run away from the person I once trusted, and from the people who once loved me.