



**Excerpt: 'Nomad Diaries'**

**By Yasmeen Maxamuud**



Nomad House Publishing

*Excerpt courtesy of NomadHouse Publishing*

## Nuptial Jumble

Warsan wondered, like other married women who find themselves in less than idealistic marriages, what has happened to her dream life. What went wrong? She and Hannad had been madly in love when they first got married. They carefully handcrafted their life—or at least she thought they did. She went into it with literal seriousness. She thought she had it all. A good American education afforded to her by her parents, back in the day when her father was a big shot government official, a well paying job as an investment banker and an amazingly fulfilling life. When she met him, she thought Hannad was the epitome of a good man. Charming, handsome and hard working, even her friends thought Hannad was a good catch. Warsan's dilemma of meeting a compatible man has become a concern. When she was finally ready for marriage, the streets were not exactly paved with accomplished bachelors she could choose from. The war and its aftermath created a dry spell of suitable bachelors. The likes of her were shunned for their education, opinion, worldliness and obvious rejection of war-produced bachelors whose soul and sanity were lost at war. Her status and education limited her chances of marriage. Somali men detested women like her. They said she was opinionated, aggressive and self-assured. As the pressure to get married mounted, the choices appeared limited. She would have to remain single or marry an American?

To marry an American was totally out of the question. She'd seen enough mixed-marriage misery with Deeqa Ladan, and her marriage to Steve Dobson was not at all what one would call ideal. Deeqa Ladan was a close friend who struggled with her marriage. Two kids and a plethora of problems later she was alienated from her family, as Steve felt at odds with an unaccepting Somali culture. Awkward and lonely Deeqa Ladan often came across as defensive,



while she attempted to explain away her marital choice. She was far gone into American culture as a soccer mom who was busy chauffeuring kids from one after-school activity to another while her family members, mostly recent comers were struggling to decipher the required curriculum to go from middle school to high school. She would almost always require someone to decode Somali culture when she was around her family, appearing pretentious. As young lovers and their ideals meet reality, the result could often be an ugly episode of uncompromising life with daunting consequences. Steve and Deeqa Ladan attempted to fit their college puppy love and social activism into the challenging reality of their mixed lives, one utterly haphazard and Somali, and the other over-planned and American. There was a plethora of refugee family to consider, two baffled kids who often felt unwelcome by both families, extended family in Somalia who were in dire need and then of course American parents in nursing homes. All and all from the look of things the life Steve and Deeqa Ladan planned in their respective dorm rooms at Georgetown University, she in business school and he in medical school, appeared difficult. Back in the day when everything appeared a possibility while hand-in-hand protesting Apartheid in front of the South African Embassy, or in front of the Supreme Court to stand in solidarity with one group or another, they thought their love would transcend their background.

On their wedding night they danced to Tupak's "Letter to the President" not anticipating the difficulty multicultural marriage would bring into their idealistic lives. They never thought the huge divide that existed between the two cultures would ever cut into their lives. But it did, and when Steve announced he was no longer in love with her, Deeqa Ladan would spend many tearful evenings with Warsan, discouraging her from ever marrying an American.



Although Warsan already knew that it was never an option for her. Imagine exposing a poor unsuspecting American man to the unrelenting trauma of her family—having an American man under the same roof as Nadifo. Whatever sanity Nadifo had, if one could actually argue she possessed any, would surely be further traumatized by such a predicament.

That is not to say Warsan had not had her share of trial encounter with Americans both black and white. In fact the idea of marriage to one Connor O’Donnell presented itself with urgency more than once when viable Somali prospects dwindled. Sometimes she wondered if she were destined for the confusing matrimonial of Steve and Deeqa Ladan until she met Hannad.

Warsan made no excuses for desiring a man with a high intellect. She did not want an ignoramus man who had no knowledge of worldly issues, politics, social issues, art, music and culture. Most dismissed her desire as irrational, alluding to the fact that she was a pompous educated woman who wanted to use her knowledge as a weapon. Indeed, she did not hide her desires for a person who could discuss Picasso, Tolstoy and the Othman Empire. Most Somali men were shocked by her quick intellect and immediately felt intimidated by her knowledge, and awareness. A very beautiful cordial encounter would end up in an argument where the man would accuse her of intellectual snobbery. One went as far as accusing her of competing too much with males, as if books, newspapers and issues of intellect were a male domain. The men she met expected her to show obedience, when she defied them she was compared to *Arraweelo*, a mythical queen who neutered all the men under her reign.

Then came along Hannad, whom she referred to as her *halyey*, in a manner of speaking her prince charming. When she first met him in her eye he defied all the misconceptions she stereotyped about Somali men. He was romantic, kind, giving and thoughtful. He was an



engineer by profession and was gainfully employed with an engineering firm, and for Warsan that was a plus. Theirs was a love at first sight. They met at a friend's picnic and were married six months later.

As they prepared for their life together, Hannad was part of every aspect of the preparations. He accompanied her to wedding halls and caterers. He even helped pick the dress, which was custom made. Warsan just couldn't stop talking about her charming fiancé. He was generous and refined. Being part of the elite that run the country and having being exposed to western beliefs at an early age, Warsan's philosophy was not typical; she possessed a western outlook on life. Hannad seemed to accept that, although it was a bit foreign to him. She loved the fact that he went along with her ways, never expecting her to assume a typical Somali wife arrangement.

Before their children were born, they took vacations to places she fanaticized as romantic location where they could rekindle their love. Brazil, Morocco and Jamaica in one year, Ireland and Istanbul in another. They reserved one night a month as their special night to rediscover and renew their love for each other. These rituals meant nothing to him, but he went along to harmonize his life with her and she adored him for that. But suddenly, here he was, clumsy, lazy, rude and unromantic. The Hannad she had married, the kind, romantic, loving husband, had suddenly become someone she was unable to recognize let alone accept.

For more information please contact us at:

Email [nomadiaries@gmail.com](mailto:nomadiaries@gmail.com)

Visit: [www.nomaddiaries.com](http://www.nomaddiaries.com)



Nomad House Publishing

*Excerpt courtesy of NomadHouse Publishing*