

Tuesday, May 1, 8 PM; Silver Spring, Maryland

Lena was relaxing for a change, when the phone rang. She answered it, and found a tearful Naomi on the other end. "What's de matter, honey?"

"Oh, Nyanya, something terrible has happened. One of the assistants at our church got an anonymous email, supposedly from some woman, accusing me of making improper advances to her daughter. They are saying that I should leave the church until this has been cleared up."

"Who is 'dey'?"

"The minister and some of the lay elders came here about an hour ago. Mom got really angry and told them that if they wanted to believe a message from some anonymous person over a family that had been going to that church since before I was born, then maybe we shouldn't go to that church at all, ever again."

Lena smiled at her. "Dat sounds like your motter, child." She became serious again. "I have an idea as to why dis happened. I'm sorry it happened to you. I'll see what I can do to correct de situation."

"You really think you can help? That would be wonderful!"

"Where is your motter?"

"She was so angry that she went out for a run after they left."

"Okay. You tell her dat you talked to me and I'll call her later."

"Will do, Nyanya. Thanks for hearing me out. You didn't even ask me if it was true!"

"I know you better dan dat, Naomi. You aren't dat type of person. Now, go wash your face and dry your tears. Tings will work out for de best."

"I will. Talk to you later. Bye."

Lena sat thinking for a few minutes. Then she went into her office; there were two things she wanted to do. First she looked up the minister's phone number. Then she turned on her computer and started a search. While the computer was doing its thing, she dialed the number.

There was an answer on the third ring. It was the minister, himself. "Mrs. Matumbo, if you're going to verbally assault me for what happened earlier today, I assure you that your daughter has already done so, and I'm not really prepared for another."

"Reverend, that isn't de reason for my call. I tink I can shed some light on dis situation. I tink dat

my granddaughter has become de victim of someone who is trying to get to me."

There was a pause. Then, "Go on."

Dere is a business out dere dat is not entirely etical. Dey have tried to hack into de computers of de company I work for, as well as de personal computers of de family dat owns de company. Recently dey tried to recruit me to leave my job and join dem. When I refused, dey made veiled treats, saying dat my family -- and otters - might suffer unless I reconsidered. I told dem I'd hold dem personally responsible for anyting bad happening to dem. It sounds to me like dey didn't take my statement seriously."

"Are you sure they sent this message?"

"An anonymous email? How many people in your congregation know how to do dat?"

There was another, longer pause. "You are probably right. I-we should have realized that this wasn't on the up-and-up. I've known your family for many years, and to even consider it to be valid shows a serious lapse of judgment on my part. My only defense is that the shock of seeing an email like that caused me to falter; this church has never had that happen before. I'm sorry we didn't think this through more. We could have saved your daughter's family and ourselves a lot of grief. I'm very sorry this happened. I will need to apologize to your daughter, and in person."

"Reverend, a bit of advice. Wait until tomorrow at least. Give her time to calm down; she might not even give you de chance to speak until den."

There was a slight chuckle. "Yes, I've seen her temper before. I'll take your advice; I should talk to the others first, anyway. Thank you for calling, Mrs. Matumbo."

"Tank you for answering, Reverend. Goodbye."

She then turned to her computer and noticed it hadn't found anything. After trying a few different search keywords, she got what she was looking for. "De website of de Hightower's 'business'. Good. Now for my retaliation, as I promised."

She took out a CD and put it into her computer. On it was a program she had used only once, a long, long time ago. She'd kept it in case she ever needed to use it again, and she felt that now was a good time. She looked over the program, made a modification here and there, then satisfied, accessed the website. She transmitted the program to the website, and once it was downloaded, closed out the window and removed the CD.

"Dere, dat should keep dem busy for a substantial amount of time."

From Hobbeth 8/13/2005

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