

The Bachelor Night



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Abstract

The Bachelor Night is a short film screenplay that examines contemporary masculinity among young African men. Set on the eve of a wedding, the story follows five friends whose gathering subverts conventional portrayals of bachelor parties as spaces of excess, misogyny, and emotional avoidance. Through intimate conversation, humour, and moments of vulnerability, the narrative explores how dominant expectations of manhood, such as emotional stoicism, financial authority, sexual performance, and self-reliance, shape these men's inner lives and relationships. Drawing on concepts of hegemonic and caring masculinity, the screenplay emphasizes alternative forms of masculine intimacy rooted in care, honesty, and mutual support. By portraying male friendship as a space for emotional transparency, *The Bachelor Night* challenges the assumption that vulnerability signifies weakness, presenting it instead as a foundation for authentic brotherhood within a contemporary African context.

Keywords: masculinity, vulnerability, care, queer intimacy, African men

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THE BACHELOR NIGHT

1. EXT / INT. EBUKA'S HOTEL ROOM - EVENING**1**

FEMI (29, sharp dresser, confident swagger) stands outside holding a bottle of Hennessy and a bag from an adult store. He adjusts his designer shirt and knocks.

EBUKA (31, calm and collected), wearing a T-shirt and shorts, opens the door.

FEMI

(energetic)

Ebusky! The Man of the Hour! I hope you are ready for your last night as a free man?

Femi stops mid-sentence as Ebuka moves aside to reveal a cozy hotel room, with large floor cushions arranged in a circle.

Inside, **BOMA** (28, gym rat, smooth talker), **DANIEL** (33, mature but weary) and **PLUTO** (27, artsy and peculiar) are having a conversation.

On a table, there are bottles of water, plastic cups and some snacks.

FEMI

(confused)

Ebuka, did someone die?

EBUKA

(chuckles)

No, Femi. Nobody died.

FEMI

Then what is happening? Where is the party? Where are the girls, the drinks, the strippers?

They all look up and smile warmly at Femi.

DANIEL

(grinning)

This is the party, bro. Come in.

Femi enters slowly, looking around like he is on a new planet.

FEMI

I don't understand, guys! What the hell is going on?

BOMA

You can put the Hennie down, bro.
We're not drinking tonight.

FEMI

(alarmed)

Not drinking? At a bachelor party??!
Wait... Are you joking?

PLUTO

Didn't you get my message? I sent
you a text on WhatsApp.

Femi pulls out his phone and scrolls through it.

DANIEL

Femi, just sit down and relax.
I will explain.

Femi reluctantly drops the Hennessy bottle and gift bag on the table and takes his seat. The other friends join him as Daniel addresses the group.

DANIEL

Welcome, guys. Thank you for coming. As we all know, our dear brother, Ebuka, is getting married tomorrow. And as his best man, it's my job to plan his bachelor party. Now, instead of smoking weed, getting drunk, and partying into the night, like we usually do, I want us to try something different. Something intimate.

Femi shakes his head and chuckles nervously.

DANIEL

Tonight, I want us to talk. To open up and be honest with each other.* Let's tell ourselves the truth. For real. No lies, no fronting. Just us.

FEMI

(under his breath)

Jesus Christ! This feels like group therapy.

PLUTO

(whispering to Femi)

Sorry, bro. I tried to warn you.

DANIEL

After Tunde committed suicide, I realized that we don't really talk about what we are going through. He was struggling with his mental health, and none of us knew.

The room goes quiet. Daniel takes a breath.

DANIEL

Tunde needed our help, but we weren't there for him. We failed him. And now he's gone.

BOMA

(quietly)

Rest in peace, my guy.

DANIEL

I don't want that to happen again. Not to any of us. So tonight, we go around the circle. Each person shares something true. Something you've been carrying. And we hold space for each other.* No judgment. Just... brotherhood.*

FEMI

(*anxious laugh*)

Daniel, *nawa for you o!* This is Ebuka's last night as a single man. You really want us to waste it talking about our feelings like a bunch of women?* Can't we watch football instead?*

EBUKA

Femi, just try it. If you hate it, you can leave. But I'm telling you... This is what I need tonight.

Femi looks around. All eyes are on him. He sighs.

FEMI

No *wahala*. Anything for you, bro.
Tomorrow is your big day. Oya, Mr.
"best man", let's talk.

Everyone laughs. The tension breaks slightly.

DANIEL

Alright. Since this was my idea, I'll go
first.

2. INT. EBUKA'S HOTEL ROOM – CONTINUOUS

2

Daniel sits forward and takes a breath.

DANIEL

Since Bukola passed away, I've been
raising Tobi by myself. He's three now
and looks just like her. But, I don't
get to spend time with him because I
am always at work. He stays with my
parents whenever I travel. And I keep
thinking. I'm becoming my father.*

Everyone listens closely.

DANIEL

My dad was a police officer. Always
posted somewhere else. Kaduna, Jos,
Abuja. Anywhere but home. I barely
saw him growing up. And when he was
around, he was just... distant. Like he
didn't know how to be with us. One
time, I scraped my knee playing ball,
started crying, and he told me, "Men
don't cry over small things."*

BOMA

That's rough, bro.

DANIEL

Now I'm... I'm doing the same thing. Because of work, I only see Tobi once or twice a month. And when I'm with him, I feel like a stranger in his life. What if he grows up thinking his father abandoned him?* What if he remembers me the way I remember my dad?*

PLUTO

Have you thought about changing jobs?

DANIEL

I have. But this job pays for everything, his school, my parents' house, Bukola's medical bills from before. I'm stuck between being a provider and being present.* And I don't know which one makes me a better father.*

EBUKA

Daniel... bro... you're already ahead of your dad just by saying this out loud.

BOMA

Facts. My dad never talked like this. Ever.

DANIEL

(small smile)

I hope so. I really hope so.

He looks at Ebuka.

DANIEL

Alright. That's me. Ebuka, your turn.

3. INT. EBUKA'S HOTEL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER**3**

Ebuka shifts uncomfortably.

EBUKA

Okay. So... Chioma is amazing. Like, she is everything. Smart, beautiful, supportive. I love her.

FEMI

(grinning)

We know, guy. That's why you're marrying her tomorrow.

EBUKA

There's just one problem... She makes more money than me. Like, three times more.

They look at him in shock.

EBUKA

She works in tech. Big salary. And I'm just... an accountant. I mean, I love what I do, but the pay is not much. And sometimes I wonder... what if she realizes she made a mistake? What if she meets someone richer? Someone who can actually take care of her the way a man should?*

DANIEL

Ebuka, she's marrying you. You, not your bank account.

EBUKA

I know. But in my head, I feel... small.* Like I'm not man enough* because I'm not the breadwinner. What kind of husband allows his wife to pay the bills?

PLUTO

It's not a competition, guy. Both of you are a team.

EBUKA

Yes. But it still gets to me. I am happy that Chioma is doing well, but what if she starts to boss me around? I hate that I don't measure up to her financially. Talking about it now makes me sound insecure and pathetic.*

FEMI

It's not pathetic, bro. You are just being honest.

The others nod in agreement.

DANIEL

And I guarantee Chioma would rather hear that than have you resent her for being successful.

Ebuka sits back, processing.

EBUKA

(quietly)

Yeah. You're probably right.

He looks at Boma.

EBUKA

That's enough about me. Who's next?

4. INT. EBUKA'S HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS**4**

Boma cracks his knuckles nervously.

BOMA

My babe, Amara, is in Canada. Doing her Master's. She's been gone for eight months now.

DANIEL

Omo, long distance *no be beans*, bro.

BOMA

It's not just hard. It's... it's killing me. We video call every day, but it's not the same. And lately, I've been having these thoughts... what if she's seeing someone else? What if she's lying to me? I check her Instagram every day and I ask her where she's

going, who she's with. I know I'm being crazy, but I can't help it.

PLUTO

That's trust issues, guy.

BOMA

And the worst part is... I've been tempted. Like, there are girls here who are interested. And sometimes I think, "If she's doing it, why shouldn't I?" But then I feel guilty for even thinking that. I love her. I really do. But this distance is making me paranoid and desperate.*

FEMI

Guy, you need to tell her how you feel.

BOMA

I can't. If I tell her I don't trust her, she'll think I'm accusing her. And if I tell her I'm tempted to cheat, she'll break up with me. I just feel stuck...

EBUKA

Bro, you can't keep this inside. It's going to destroy you. And the relationship.

BOMA

(sighs)

I know. I know. But what can I do?

He looks at Pluto.

BOMA

That is my dilemma. What about you, Pluto?

Pluto smiles sadly.

PLUTO

Okay, so... I'm different from you guys. Obviously.

FEMI

Different how?

PLUTO

I'm gay.

The room goes quiet. Femi looks shocked but the others already knew.

PLUTO

And before you ask, yes, my family knows. My dad barely speaks to me anymore. My mom prays for me every night. And my siblings... they love me, but they don't understand.

DANIEL

Pluto, I'm sorry, bro.

PLUTO

It's fine. I've made peace with it. But the hardest part isn't even my family. It's... it's loneliness. You guys are sitting here talking about marriage, about relationships, about building families. And I'm just... I'm here. Watching. Envyng*. Because I know I'll never have that. Not in Nigeria.

EBUKA

Pluto...

PLUTO

Every guy I meet just wants sex. Nobody wants anything real. Nobody wants to build something meaningful. And I get it, it's dangerous here. The laws, the stigma, the violence. But still... I want what you guys have. I want someone to come home to. I want someone to grow old with. But instead, I'm just hooking up with strangers and pretending I'm okay with it. The truth is I'm scared that I'm going to end up alone*.

Tears well up in his eyes.

PLUTO

I am jealous of you guys... You can get married. You can have kids. You can walk down the street holding your partner's hand without being afraid. I'll never have that. And it fucking hurts!

Boma reaches over and pulls Pluto into a hug. The others murmur support.

DANIEL

Pluto, you're not alone. You have us.

PLUTO

(wiping eyes)
I know. Thank you.

5. INT. EBUKA'S HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS**5**

Femi has been quiet this whole time. The men stare at him.

FEMI

I don't really have anything to say. You guys have said everything already.

DANIEL

C'mon, Femi. We all shared. Your turn.

FEMI

(defensive)
What do you want me to say? That I'm scared of commitment? That I use jokes to avoid real conversations? You already know that about me.

EBUKA

Femi, why did you bring a bag of sex toys and a bottle of Hennessy to my bachelor party?

FEMI

Because... that's what we do. We party. We drink. We have fun! That's how we roll.

BOMA

Yes, but why do YOU do it?

Femi's jaw tightens. He looks down.

FEMI

Because... because if I stop partying, I'll have to think. And I don't want to think.

PLUTO

Think about what, bro?

Long pause. Femi's hands are shaking.

FEMI

(voice breaking)
I'm HIV positive.

The room goes completely silent.

FEMI

I found out six months ago. I went for a random test and... it came back positive. And I haven't told anyone. Not my family. Not my girlfriends. Not you guys.*

Tears stream down his face.

BOMA

Why?

FEMI

Because I'm ashamed. Look at me now, I'm damaged goods.* I'm the guy with the disease. The guy nobody wants. And I keep thinking... I'm never going to get married. I'm never going to have kids. So why not just... party and enjoy life*? Why not just

drink and fuck and pretend everything
is fine?

Ebuka moves closer and wraps his arms around Femi. Then Daniel. Then Boma. Then Pluto. They all hold him.

EBUKA

Femi, you're not alone. We're here.

DANIEL

And you're not damaged goods.
You're our brother.

BOMA

We're going to figure this out
together.

PLUTO

You don't have to carry this by
yourself anymore.

They hold each other for a long moment and sit in the silence.*

6. INT. EBUKA'S HOTEL ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

6

The guys are still sitting in the circle, but the energy is lighter now. Femi wipes his face. He is embarrassed but smiling.

FEMI

Yo, if any of you post this on social
media, I swear—

PLUTO

(laughing)
Relax, guy. What happens in the circle
stays in the circle.

DANIEL

Facts. This is a safe space.*

EBUKA

So... how do you feel now, Femi?

FEMI

Lighter. Like... I didn't realize how much I was carrying until I put it down.

BOMA

That's the power of talking, bro. Of being honest*.

DANIEL

Real talk. We need to do this more often. Not just when someone's getting married.

PLUTO

I agree. We can meet up once a month. And call it "The Circle" or something.

EBUKA

Yeah, I'm down.

BOMA

Me too. As long as there's food sha.

FEMI

(grinning)

Yes! We can't be vulnerable on an empty stomach.

Everyone laughs.

EBUKA

Deal. So we meet next month, at Boma's place?

BOMA

Sure. I'll make jollof rice.

PLUTO

And I'll bring the fried chicken.

They all stand up, stretching, hugging each other goodbye.

EBUKA

Thank you for this party Daniel, I really needed this before walking down the aisle.

DANIEL

You are welcome, bro. And... real talk. You're going to be a great husband. Chioma is lucky to have you.

FEMI

Yeah. And remember, money doesn't make a man. Character does.

EBUKA

(smiling)

Thanks, bro.

DANIEL

And Femi... we're going to find you a good doctor. Get you on treatment. You're going to be okay.

FEMI

Thank you.

BOMA

And I'm going to talk to Amara tonight. I'll open up and tell her how I feel.

PLUTO

That's good, Boma. As for me, I will keep looking for love. Even if it's hard. Even if it's scary.

DANIEL

And I'm going to be the father my son deserves. I'm going to break the cycle*.

They all nod, a silent agreement.

FADE OUT

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