

Discovering the taste of lime in the midst of lemons

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It was Saturday around 16.30 when I heard my phone ringing as I was sleeping. I stretched out my hand to reach it on the dressing table near my bed. It was my friend calling to remind me that we have to take a walk to the park. I went to the bathroom to wash my face, thinking about what to wear since we were going to take photos at the park. I decided to wear my pink vest and blue jeans with my blue Tomy takkies. I did not even carry my umbrella because there was a cool wind blowing sweetly around the streets.

As I walked to my friend's house, one street away I listened to my favourite song by Jason Gray 'Remind me who I am'. I walked to the pace of the music beats, my curly hair extensions blown by the wind. I was no longer worried about getting my takkies dusty. The music was great and I was excited about getting to the park when the light was still good for us to take photos.

When I got to my friend's house all the doors were closed. I stood by the garden next to the fence, waiting, looking at the veggie garden when I heard a man's voice greeting me. He was on the other side of the fence, planting flowers, wearing blue shorts with red stripes and a white t shirt. He was tall with a muscular body. I greeted him back. Without waste of time he asked my name. I told him I am Lawrentia. He told me that he is Sanele. He asked me for my number and without hesitation I gave him my number. I heard the door opening. My friend, wearing a blue and pink floral dress, glanced at me and greeted her neighbour. I waved at Sanele and went inside. My friend asked "Chomi, how do you know Sanele?" I



looked at her, smiling and said 'Grace, I just met him and he looks amazing'. She rolled her eyes and said 'You don't even know him but you are already saying good things about him.' With a teasing smile I said 'Gracie!' and she gave me that friendly funny look. I said 'There is only one way to get to know him and I just did it'.

We walked out of her house, but when I looked on the other side of the fence Sanele was no longer there. I suppose he was inside. We walked and talked, on our way to the park, as always making noise with our voices and laughter. You can imagine, two friends.

Before we even got to the park I received a phone call. It was Sanele and he was saying all the sweet words that just kept me smiling until the end of the call. After the call Grace said 'I just pray that this Sanele guy does not steal my friend away from me'. I laughed and said 'Chomi, you are my number one'.

We got to that beautiful park decorated with white roses and green lawn, brown wooden benches and swings painted blue, yellow and red. And we started taking pictures.

Falling in love

After several weeks of talking to Sanele on the phone I realised I was falling in love with him. I confessed it to him and we became a couple. That day he was very excited and asked if he can take me out on a date. I said on Saturday, as it was on Wednesday when I confessed.

We had dated for three months when I visited him at his house one Sunday afternoon. We kissed as usual but this time it went deeper and longer than usual. I felt uncomfortable and I stopped him. He looked at me with his sleepy eyes and I looked away – at the sky blue walls of the sitting room, at the black curtains with their silver stripes. I looked back at him and asked 'Why is today's kiss different from the usual one?' He said 'Because I think it is time we take our relationship to the next level – meaning I want us to make love.' With my eyes opened wide I was like 'I am not well informed about sex and I don't want to do things I don't know much about'. I also explained my concern about things like STIs and HIV and pregnancy. He assured me that we were going to use condoms and

I felt a little relaxed. But I looked him in the eye, held his hands and said ‘We don’t have to start today’.

Fear of the Unknown

One week after my discussion with Sanele I decided to tell my friend about my concerns and what was in my mind. I expected to hear a lot since Grace was already sexually active. Grace told me that I should go to the clinic to get information on contraceptives. We were sitting on the brown bench at the park and she said she could not come with me as she did not want people to think she was encouraging me to engage in sexual activities.

The next day I woke around 10 am, put on my grey tracksuit and went to the clinic. As I walked along the road I was not thinking much. I had music in my ears and I saw cars of different colours passing by in different directions.

When I got to clinic I saw the glass doors were closed. I could see people seated inside. On the door was written ‘Pull’, but instead I was pushing it. Until a lady wearing a red dress and white hat stood up and opened for me. When I got in I did not know where to start or what to say, or who to ask. I spotted a blue plastic chair that was empty and rushed to it. I sat down and took a deep breath. Looking around I felt like people knew why I was there and I covered my face with my right hand. I couldn’t even look around me because I felt everyone was looking at me.

I asked myself what if the nurse will judge me? What if they will not give me enough information? And what if I freeze in front of the nurse and do not know what to say? While I was busy thinking, it crossed my mind that people say nurses are rude, why did I think they will help me especially with this kind of information. Then another thought crossed my mind that maybe I am not

emotionally ready for sex and that is why I am scared. I said to myself this is not only about me and why am I suffering alone?

Coming out of these thoughts I saw a nurse coming by. She was wearing a blue skirt and blue top with maroon epaulettes on her shoulders. She was dark and fat, walking slowly and I thought why don't I ask her where to go. I looked at her face and thought she is unapproachable, I should just go back and forget about the sex thing. Immediately after she passed by I got up so fast that I almost tripped myself. I opened the door and went outside.

Love – a strong force

That Friday, knowing I was going to meet up with my boyfriend the next day, I did not know what to think. I loved him and part of me was ready to make love with him, but part of me was scared because of the other things that are also part of making love. I thought a lot that night, and I fell asleep thinking –because I was about to take a big step in my life.

I woke the next morning with my hair messed up. I went to the mirror and looked very closely at myself. I said to myself if he loves me the way I love him he will understand me if I tell him the truth.

That afternoon around 12.00 I wore my blue dress and blue sandals, I combed my hair so nicely and used my best perfume. I looked and felt lovely. I was very nervous since I did not know what to say and how to say it.

When I got to the door I took two minutes before I knocked. He opened. He was wearing a white t shirt and he said 'You are looking good'. I was so nervous I could not even say 'thank you'. I just smiled a quick smile as I got inside. Before he even offered me something to drink I grabbed his hand and said 'I am not yet emotionally ready'. He looked at me in surprise and said 'what are you talking about?' I was so nervous, I looked aside and said 'you

know'. Then he held my hand and walked me to the black leather couch. He helped me sit down, held my hands and asked me to look at him. He said 'I understand'. He told me he will wait for me and that I don't have to be worried about it since there is more to love than sex. He gave me a hug and held me so close I could even feel his heartbeat. He said 'Lawrentia you don't have to do anything you are uncomfortable with just to please someone else. Relationships are about two people and someone who loves you will love you the way you are, and somehow inspire you to be a better person'. After he said that I felt free and let go of his arms. I looked him in the eye and gave him a fresh hug.

When I got home that Saturday evening I felt the need to write this:

Love needs not experience from the past
You need not learn it from somewhere
Love needs one skill and that is communication
One can learn to love and learn from love
But what I learnt is don't just talk, communicate!!

His love for me gave me the courage to go back to the clinic and to my surprise the nurses were friendly and now I know better.

