

Teamo – The true meaning of love

Anitah Mathabathe

It was the first week of March 2013. It was cold, the wind blew so hard that the door made an unpleasant sound, but this did not keep me from opening the window. I was so hot like I had walked near the sun. Dusty air, with particles of soil came through the window, so I closed it.

I decided to switch on the fan instead and direct it at me. I sat on the couch, legs wide open, a pillow behind my back. One of those loose dresses made my body feel at ease.

After two minutes of feeling comfortable I realised the couch was wet. I stood up. I was frightened. What could it be? I found a reddish water. I came to my senses. I fetched a mop, wiped the floor. My pelvic area was a bit sore but that did not stop me from bathing.

When I was done bathing I put on one of my best, colourful maternity dresses and sprayed myself with body spray. The room smelt like lillies. I reached for my phone and dialled my boyfriend's number. In his deep voice, like the guy in 'boys to men', he said 'Hi baby, how you feeling?' I told him what had happened, that I had just bathed and he must come and take me to the hospital. He told me he was not busy and will come and take me to the hospital. He told me he loves me. I responded 'I love you too'.

I took the baby bag from the wardrobe. I checked if I had packed her clothes, toiletries, wipes, diapers, surgical spirits and blanket. I heard a knock on the door. It was my boyfriend.

A tall, dark, handsome well-mannered guy by the name of Bongakonke. When I saw him it was like the first time we met. He looked me straight in the eye. I could tell he wanted to say something, and that he was panicking. He asked if I was in pain. I explained that my water broke and my pelvic area is kind of painful. Otherwise I am ok.

He took the baby's bag, packed some of my clothes in a bag and asked if I needed him to help me to the car. I told him I was ok. As I locked the door I saw his white Corsa Lite parked next to the outside toilet. How cute it looked. He opened the door and put all the bags in the boot. He asked 'are we forgetting anything'. I said 'no.' We then left for the hospital.

There were ambulances parked at the entrance and people going in and out. Now it got a bit scary that I was going to give birth to the precious diamond in my womb. How amazing, I just felt a kick as he parked. I got out of the car.

The receptionist was a kind, old white woman who looked like Whoopi Goldberg, chewing gum while typing our information. I saw from how Bonga looked at her, he was impatient because he thought she was too slow. She explained we should take the lift to Ward 161 as the stairs were under renovation.

My baby was playing beautifully in my womb. A nurse directed me to the ward I would be in until the delivery. The walls were pink and blue, the curtains green. I saw scissors and other sharp equipment for the delivery. I got a bit scared. Bonga held my hand and said 'Baby we are in this together'. I smiled through my frown. I felt like I was going to be examined through a microscope.

The cabinet for my bags was not up to standard. It did not look clean. The nurse smiled and said that the doctor would be back in five minutes. I looked at the machines in the room. The pains began to strike hard. Bonga held my hand and we said a prayer. Before we had said Amen a chubby dark lady came in. She had long eyelashes and an angry face. How sad that she did not greet us. She reminded me of those horror movies where someone like her would just drag a baby out of the womb without saying a word. Bonga was observing every moment.

She said to me ‘whooh whooh with this fat body, where do you think your child will get out from?’ I kept quiet because she was fatter than me. Maybe she was trying to get her cool at my expense. She opened the file and gave me a weird look. Bonga asked if we should be worried. ‘Not you handsome’ she said. To me she said ‘Go to that chair I want to check your blood pressure’. My pressure was very high. She called me every worst name she could think of. I still kept quiet because the pain was getting really bad.

She put me on another machine and told me not to move around because I will break the machine. She examined the baby’s heartbeat. For a minute I thought being me was all wrong. I wanted to question God for being fat. Luckily I had a supportive man who told me that I should not take what the lady was saying to heart.

While the sound of the machine was annoying me, a tall white guy with a Russian accent walked in. I did not know who he was, but I felt glad enough to see him. I felt I would now hear something positive. He introduced himself and thanked Bonga for his presence, and for being supportive because it is very rare to find a boyfriend as supportive as this.

He went through my file and asked about my previous ceasarian. He explained that I would deliver by a ceasarian section. He instructed me to go to the theatre, three rooms away. I walked, Bonga carried my bags. I guess this was the sweetest doctor I met.

In the theatre I got traumatised by the largest scissors I had ever seen. Everything just looked silver. And now I did not want to give birth anymore. There were two other white men in theatre. They introduced themselves but I was in too much pain to listen. One of them told me to breathe in and out.

Now the pain got worse. Bonga was asked to sign documents to accept that I am undergoing surgery. Boom came the same mean nurse who had called me fat. Now she was my translator. The doctors told her that we understood English, but to her it was like 'this lady is dumb'. One of the doctors shouted at her to keep quiet. I could not laugh as hard as I wanted, but Bonga did my part – he laughed for both of us. Now somebody had put her in her place. The tension in the room was super bad.

The gynaecologist asked me to get on the bed. He explained about the two injections he was going to inject on my spine. Mixed emotions ran through me. This was not how I wanted to give birth to my baby girl. I imagined it would be a simple task just to hold her. I was wrong. My legs felt numb. Oh God, I could not move my legs. Next thing I woke up and the gynaecologist showed me a very cute, light baby and asked me to confirm the sex of the baby just to see if I was still with them. I responded with tears on my face. I was curious to know how she looked. While the doctors were busy Bonga came to me and said 'Anitah thank you'. We both shed tears of joy. My baby was taken to be weighed and I wanted to hold her. Then she was brought to me and one of the doctors said 'Congratulations! You have given birth to a baby girl. Here she is.' I held her for the first time. I looked at her and shouted 'thank you God!' Her tiny body was just too cute. Between her eyes she had a red mark the shape of a heart.

I looked at Bonga. We were thinking the same thing. 'Love'. We named her Teamo, meaning I love you. God had blessed me with

a cute child. Her Zulu names are Mbali meaning flower, and she is also named Ramathetse, after my grandmother.

The same nurse who had been rude to me, was now holding my baby, calling her all sorts of sweet names. I could see her walking towards me and she said ‘Anitah I am sorry I treated you so bad. If only you knew you had rights as a pregnant woman you would not have allowed me to treat you the way I treated you.’ Funny, she now even asked for a hug.

I was then returned to my room and told that I could leave after three days. Bonga was the happiest man in on earth.

After three days of difficulties bathing with no assistance, I was discharged. My mother in law came to the hospital with my mom and aunt. I nearly cried – it was so nice to receive their support and love. They held Teamo for the first time. Funny how she did not want to open her eyes. I guess she was not used to them yet.

The bond I have with Teamo, the challenges, the journey were wonderful. Thanks to God, Bonga and I added another gain to the Myeni and Mathabathe clans.



My kids Jerome and Teamo

My hormones
My craving
It all began in my womb
You moved too quick
Wished I could kiss
How precious we bond
Till the day you made a mark in this world
So wonderful you are all mine
So tiny I held you well
I would never believe there is another happiness
With a gift I know you are all I need



I will love unconditionally
I will care generously
I will teach you as I learn everyday
From my kindness I will adore your faces
So sweet though I have to discipline
Keep your memories in heart
Share my stories
My legacy will live on
My history will be shared amongst
My kids Jerome and Teamo



I'll teach you right to wrong
I'll keep your best moments in my head
Always remember the only gift I'll cherish will be you
I love you
I'll have reasons to say no
I'll have my bad day
Same as you, I'll remain human
As I see my reflection in you
Make me proud
Mathabathes are unshakeable
Always be king



Don't be perfect
I never taught you that
Don't fit in everywhere
Not everyone accepts you for you
Don't believe everything
Believe you are all your mother needs
You are what I need Jerome and Teamo
Anitah loves you