

BELOVED WOMAN

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BY

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Chapter 1:

LOVE ME



Growing up as a young, effervescent girl in England, I've always longed for what one would refer to as the quintessential perfect relationship. This included (but was not restricted to) a rich man taller than me, a roadman, and, yes, white. In all honesty, 'something different' has been a bit of a fixation for me. I reckon this would make me the happiest girl in this world: someone by my side, a ride or die. Little did I know that I was setting myself up for many heartbreaks, disappointments, and the accompanying trepidation. I ended up in so many failed relationships with *my type of guy* that I almost convinced myself that I was not cut out for accomplishing this entire relationship milestone. Then, the unexpected happened. The nice guy. *What? Who is the nice guy? How did he end up in my life? Out of all people, him?* In the nascent stages of my relationship, I was just bored, but things changed for the better. *Wow. Oops. He is so lovely, good-looking, and just everything I've ever wanted in a man. Is this for real? Yes, it is. He is perfect, I guess, and I am happy I found him amongst millions of boys.*

When I met him, he said he was from Tanzania. I was shocked beyond words! I didn't know where that was, but it is in east Africa, and I'm from the west. To this day, he is what I thought no man could ever be – an excellent, sweet, good-looking guy who is devoid of pretensions and who would do anything in the world to make me happy.

“When did you fall in love for the first time?”

“I first noticed I loved you on an NSC programme trip. You were playing football. I didn't expect you to know how to play football. I found you incredibly attractive after watching you play the game. Inexorably, I was shy and unsure about approaching you. Then they moved you into our group. It thrilled me beyond measure, almost euphoric to speak to you and to get closer to you. I remember that I once wanted to borrow your jumper, and you said, 'I don't think I could share my jumper with you.' Boy, it was so embarrassing for me in front of everyone. Thankfully, you did come over and apologise to me. The fact that you demonstrated sensitivity and realised I was taken aback was indeed comforting. We made some splendid memories during the NCS programme that will last a lifetime.”

“By the way, what did you enjoy the most during the NCS programme?”

“I enjoyed the caving activities going underground with the head torch on. Being under the rocks was petrifying, plus there was water and a narrow path to pass through. I also fondly remember the time we went climbing the mountain. I loved the feel of the wind blowing and gently caressing my face.”

“What about you?”

“I love the smell of mountains around us and the view of the hill from a long distance.”

The dove-white mountain soared into the sky, and the seashell-white cliff jutted into the atmosphere. Then, finally, the phantom-white mountain reared into the sky. The fang-white hills were brooding and hovered over us. When we heard a clapping sound, a massive wall of snow crashed down. Rumbling and roaring, a rush of white surged down the mountainside. A deep, booming noise erupted, and the mountain’s flank became a waterfall of white. The wrinkled mountains were cocoon quiet, and the Rocky Mountains were Zion quiet. The knobby face of the hill was grizzled and sacristy peaceful.

The whole team gazed up at the rugose and rough-hewn mountains with a sense of awe. They were mysterious and catacomb quiet. A ring of snow covered the sky-punching mountain like a bracelet of snow-topped the sky-spearing mountain. The snow-festooned mountain peaks were embalmed with tiaras of powdery snowflakes. The hills were bone white as a wall of snow came crashing down. The hills were crimped at the top.

One day, I asked her, “What have you done to me?”

She answered, “I did nothing to you.”

I responded, “Your love is better than anything in the world. Your love drives me so crazy. No woman can be sweet to me as you are, and your words were so like a honeycomb. Thank you! I’m delighted you appreciated it. I never get bored listening to you. I hope you enjoy listening to my jokes. Sometimes your jokes filled me with so much joy in my heart, and that is one thing I appreciated more from you.

I climbed a thousand mountains and never saw a woman I could compare to you because you are more worthy than those I have seen in this world. I chose you amongst those women I saw, and you are the one who recognised my feelings and understood me.”

Chapter 2

ON THE LOVE JOURNEY



The year was 2012, and the country was Tanzania. I was a 16-year-old when I fell in love with a gorgeous girl called Abigail. I remember first meeting her on Lake Tanganyika beach. The moon's delicate, succour-inducing incandescence had just turned the world aflame with silver when I saw her. She had a comely figure that stemmed thin, and the saffron tint to her complexion surprised me more than her curvilinear waist. *She must be a native*, I thought to myself. Her crescent-shaped eyebrows inclined lightly up as she cast her gaze at me, and I yelped at being caught. Her languid eyelashes of velvet-black blinked in a suggestive, inviting manner.

Oh, sweet love. There's just something magical about the feeling of butterflies fluttering through your mind that compels your heart to sing with gay abandon. They say that the feeling of being in love cannot be compared to anything else in this world. But, of course, you probably already know that to be true. However, the thing about love is that there are no words to describe this immense, intense, and transformative emotion. And the inability to express your love to that special someone can be the most challenging thing

to deal with. Trust me, I've been there and done that. So, what's the best way to make your beau know how you feel about them? I guess we'll find that out together!

She was an exquisite girl with long, flowing hair. She was living in a small town in Switzerland on the beach shore. We spent a very intimate time together on the beach and then went to the café shop to eat something. We ate delicious food, chicken curry with rice.

After we were done eating, she kissed me on my forehead and said, "See you here at the same time tomorrow."

The next day, I met her again at the beach shore. It was very windy, and she borrowed my jacket. I worshipped this girl so much that I did not bother to give or seek any explanation. Sometimes, she would sing a romantic song for me that was incredibly famous at a particular time, and the song's name would dwell in the recesses of my heart. She used to sing like a bird singing in the blossom of springtime. *You are the queen of my heart. I am so glad I found you in trillions of girls*, I thought incessantly. One night, I was asleep in my bed, and I dreamt of the one I love. I looked for her in the streets but could not find her. I went through the town, but the security guards saw me in town.

I asked them, "Have you seen my lover? If you see my lover, tell her I'm weak with passion."

As soon as I left them, I found my beloved woman! I could not let her go until I took her to my grandpa's house to watch movies while sitting on the sofa.

She invited me to meet her family the following week. I gladly accepted her offer and met her family; I had an exciting time getting to know her family.

After eating the meal, they asked me, “What are you planning with our daughter? She is our unique daughter, and we have raised her in a suitable environment. We want to ensure our daughter has a good man; we don’t want someone from the street. We would also like to know more about your background.”

“I’m from a Christian family, and my parents were ministers at a Methodist church.”

“It’s a noble thing to know that. It is comforting to know that our daughter is in a safe place. Can you do us a favour to meet Abigail’s grandma? According to our tradition, you must meet her grandma.”

“Okay, sure, I will meet her. But I request you to arrange a day and time.”

“Can you meet her the next day in the afternoon?”

“Yes, I will meet in the afternoon then.” So, I caught the morning train to meet Abigail’s grandma. I reached her house; I knocked on the door before she opened it.

“Welcome, grandson. Please sit down. Which drink would you like to have?”

“Can I have orange juice, please?”

She brought me a glass of chilled orange juice and then asked, “Did they tell you anything? Why are you here?”

“They didn’t tell me anything specific about why I’m here, but they said I need to meet Abigail’s grandma today. That’s all I know.”

“So, they didn’t tell you anything specific, right?”

“But, no, they didn’t.”

“Do you know why you are here?” she asked.

“I don’t know, really; maybe I should turn the question on you,” Abigail’s grandma said. “Are you here today to discuss something fundamental with me? I called you here to discuss something important. Are you circumcised?”

“Yes, I was circumcised when I was seven years old.”

“Are you a virgin?”

“Come on, grandma, what kind of question is this?”

“If you love my granddaughter, answer me.”

“Yes, I’m still a virgin.”

“Good, my granddaughter is also a virgin. We wanted our daughter to marry a virgin man who has not known girls yet. And you passed this test, be proud of yourself. And there is another thing; I need to examine your ability to give a child.” She looked at me to see if I could provide for a child. Then she said, “Young man, you have passed this test again. Well done.”

Chapter 3:

BEACH SHORE OLD MAN



At the beginning of September, when I was sitting on the beach shore near the café shop, I saw a man wearing black jeans, a white t-shirt, and black trainers. He sat next to me and asked me a question.

“What are you doing here alone?”

I answered, “I am waiting for my grandpa here, so I hope he will be here soon.”

He then said, “Would you like to help me fix the fishing nets?”

I said, “I would like to help you, but my grandpa will be here soon.”

“What is your grandpa’s name?”

“His name is Alphonse Denis.” He then added that he knew him from primary school.

“He is a good man. I have heard many things about him. For example, he is the best swimmer ever in Tanzania.”

I narrated my swimming encounter with my grandpa. “There was a challenge in Tanzania to find the fastest swimmer ever. That challenge was popular because everyone wanted to prove they were the best swimmer. Like many others, I registered my name in that competition. It was the most significant event ever to take place in Tanzania. The training for the preparation for the challenge itself was ridiculously hard. My coach was doubtful about my performance. But I told my coach, ‘Don’t doubt me; you chose me for this challenge because you believed in my ability. I will make it, so please don’t discourage me now. It would be best if you motivate me rather than frustrate me.’ He replied, ‘You are right, but think about the competition. It’s a serious challenge to take part in the challenge.’

I said, ‘I know I’m taking part to prove to myself. What can I do to show everyone that I will be the winner of this competition?’

‘You don’t know the results yet, so stop pretending; you will be the winner of the challenge.’

‘But if I don’t believe in myself, what is the point of me taking this challenge? I want to prove myself and be declared the fastest swimmer in Tanzania. I am determined to win this challenge.’

I spent hours and hours practising. Finally, I got to challenge my grandpa, and he won the challenge in the last round with a difference of just five seconds.

I, however, didn’t accept that defeat easily. I said, ‘I want to rechallenge you, Alphonse, to see if you are still the best swimmer.’ I continued, ‘Let us

swim five kilometres in five rounds to see who emerges victorious. We need to prove our strengths and abilities.’

Alphonse accepted my challenge, saying, ‘Let us prove our strengths and ability as you said. I agree with you.’ It was a powerful challenge to swim five kilometres in five rounds. Unfortunately, he won the challenge.

I then conceded, ‘Alphonse, you are the best swimmer ever in Tanzania. Today I admire your ability and strengths.’

It was an unbelievable victory, and I congratulated him on all the efforts he put in to win the challenge. After the challenge, he said, ‘Do not compete with someone who overcomes knowledge.’ There was another French proverb he used to quote very often, and the English meaning of one such proverb was: They who live shall see. Then, he said, ‘Don’t judge a book by its cover.’

The phrase implies that appearances can sometimes be misleading.”

“What is your name?” I asked the older man. “My name is Daniel Ngolo, I am 85 years old, but I look like a 50-year-old man.”

He then narrated a short story scenario. A book said if you see a lion chasing you, lie on the ground and pretend that you are dead; there, another memo said, “If the lion has read that memo, they might not respect that.” The lesson we can take away from this story is that we must learn from the past to avoid making the same mistakes in the present and the future. After chatting, we fished all night with him and then went to his house in the morning for breakfast. I learned something special about him. Do not criticise people, do not be judgemental. Many people don’t like to be corrected. Think before you speak.

He then asked, “Can you tell me something incredible you have ever done for other people?”

“Yes, sure,” I said. “I went to the field to transplant corn and rice. I heard loud voices suggesting that people were fighting near our field. I was so scared; maybe they could hurt me too. I decided to go there to find out what was happening. When I got there, I found the elevator tight. I asked them why they were arguing so much. One of them came running to me and said, “You need to listen carefully.”

First, I asked them informally. “What is your name?”

He said, “My name is Leah,” and this is my ancestor’s field that they left me as an inheritance. I have cultivated this field for years and years. Do you see this lady?”

“Yes, I see her.”

“Okay, today I found her on my field plantation with tomatoes on my farm without my permission. I asked her, ‘Why are you planting on my farm?’

She said, ‘This is my farm, so I may plant anything I want to plant on it. Why are you asking me this strange question?’

‘Stop claiming something that does not belong to you. This is my field, and everyone knows this.’

‘No, you don’t have that right on someone’s farm, and you can’t turn up on my farm and claim you may plant anything you want on my farm.’

‘No, this is not your plant; this is my plant, so get out in the field and leave me alone.’

‘This happened between us.’ I have listened to you, and I need to listen to her.

‘What is your name?’

‘My name is Bethany.’

‘Miss Bethany, can you tell me why you are claiming this field is yours?’

‘I have evidence to prove my claim.’

‘Sure, if you say so. I’m going to do something different. I was hoping you could tell me something about this field of yours. Go ahead; I’m listening.’

Unfortunately, she could answer the question. ‘Okay, let me turn the question to Leah.’

‘An enormous stone was present in the middle of my field where we used to sit with our ancestors to eat, and my ancestors' names were carved on that stone. Come and see yourself.’

‘This is not your field; it’s her field because she provided plain proof. This woman deserved her field, so don’t come again to attack her over her field or abuse her.’

She won the case and thanked me for solving her problem. I became a hero to her, and her family was there with her.”

He said, “Listen, young man, a genuine hero does not merely talk. A genuine hero is constantly thinking about how they can act and help others. You thought it would be best to consider people’s needs before your own. When you decide at work or home, take some time to think about how your actions will affect someone else. It inspires you to be a hero for a certain cause

or issue, or you may try to be a hero for someone in need of your help. A hero will act and confront injustice straight on. If you see older people struggling with something, then help them. Please always remember these lessons, grandson.”

“Can you come tomorrow to help me? I need your help tomorrow to help me cut wood in the forest this morning.”

“Sure, I will come to help you tomorrow.”

It was early in the morning. We went to the forest with my grandfather’s friend to cut wood to make lumber. When we started chopping down the trees, we heard a loud lion roar next to us. We listened to a loud lion roar in the distance. We moved to find out what had transpired. We saw a male lion and crocodile fighting on the river; we saw a lion trying to drag the crocodile out of the river, whereas the crocodile wanted to pull the lion into the river. We witnessed the fight with our own eyes. A lioness came along and took two minutes to think about the whole situation. Then the lioness went away and covered about two hundred yards. We thought she left a male lion to fight his own battle. The crocodile was biting a male lion on his left hind leg and then closed his mouth, after which the male lion was sticking his claws down. Both of them were powerful creatures. Then the lioness came back running at high speed. She lifted both of them and threw them on the ground; unfortunately, they died. If the lion had successfully dragged the crocodile out of the river, he would have won the battle and vice versa.

After ploughing through the trees, we rested for about five minutes. The forest was terrifying due to its eerie silence, much to my anxiety. After a day

of chance, we went back there to pick up the trunks before we left to make beds, chairs, and windows.

“Let us carry on cutting the trees, and we need to finish around 4 o’clock,” the elderly man said. “We spent eight hours cutting the trees down.”

“Sounds cool; we got a few hours to finish. Can we go swimming in the river after we finish?”

“Yes, sure, when we finish, we will go swimming for fun in the river.”

We realised we did not have the proper equipment, and we were using an axe to cut the trees.

My grandpa’s friend said, “I’m so thankful to you for your help. I didn’t know if I could finish this job without your help. Thank you so much for your support.”

“I’m thankful for your incredible sense of humour, even when things are hard,” I replied. “The way you jumped in and contributed right away and everything you have done for me is amazing. You are a unique person and care for other people regardless of race. I’m happy to meet you.”

I learnt excellent lessons from the time I met him.

“You are an exceptionally good and generous man; you want to help people, and it’s a good thing to help other people. Can you tell me something silly you have done?”

“Yes, I had done many stupid things; I don’t know where I should start from.”

“I think you should start from the beginning of the contest.”

“Some of my friends visited me at my house. I welcomed them, and then we had an argument about which dogs were the best, mine or their dogs.”

I said, ‘Let us stop the argument; let’s make them fight first. Then we have our answers. You guys need to go back home and bring some of your dogs for a fighting match.’

They went home to get some dogs for the game. I picked one of my best warrior dogs called Rufaro, and they brought some dogs too for a fighting match. We held the dogs up on two legs, made them stand, and then threw them at each other to fight. In the first round, my Rufaro dog won.

I said, ‘I’m so happy and feel so lucky today through this victory.’ We went for a second fight, and I won again. They were furious because they couldn’t win. In hindsight, it was a silly thing to make dogs fight each other.”

I then asked the elderly man, “What silly things have you done?”

He replied, “When I was in primary school, I used to do stupid things like peeping at the girls in the river. Me and your grandpa, we used to go to the girls’ side to see them naked because we were just kids. We didn’t know what we were doing. One day, we were caught in the act. They reported us home to our parents. It scared us to go home because we knew we would be punished for looking at girls naked on the river.”

“Wow! You were a naughty kid during your childhood, grandpa. How come you didn’t get scared looking at those naked girls?”

“It was just childish behaviour during my growing years as it was a common thing to do; there was nothing new about it.”

“Can you tell me something more interesting?”

“On Thursday afternoon, I went to the river with my friends, and it was a sunny day. One year ago, I went to the river with some of my friends to wash our clothes. There was a man who named himself Warrior. He intimidated everyone to wash up his clothes like a king. Everyone was scared of him because he was a brutal, rude person. He was disrespectful to older people as well. He made everyone line up. He made me sing a song, any song I knew in my head. Needless to say, I could not say no. Otherwise, I would be in serious trouble, or he would hurt me. He gave us his coveted rule: “If I dive into the water, no one shall dive unless I finish swimming. Then everyone can go after me. Please don’t make the cardinal mistake of diving at the same time as me.” One young man dived into the water simultaneously, and he fisted his nose, which was bleeding everywhere in the water. And he said, “Listen, young boy, it is your fault, never dive at the same time as me. Take some clothes there and wash them up; make sure you wash them perfectly.”

“It’s fabulous sharing our stories today.”