

This small in a big world

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I am a twin to a dark skinned, red eyed, handsomely chubby guy with a deep voice and an outer look that would make one feel young, just too young. His height just added more reason/ doubt for people to call us twins for he tends to say “just call me Bhuti”, and you surely will should you discover that he does conduct himself in a more adult manner.

We grew up in a good manner. Dad made sure we would get what we needed and what we wanted would be gotten at a later stage as a form of entertainment. Mother was and still is strict. With her ‘one mistake equals two weeks of silent treatment’ rule.

Our home is an eight roomed house with the kitchen outside, two spare rooms, a garden and an outside toilet. Standing at the back of the kitchen you will see a big school building. This is the primary school we attended. On completing there I went to a good high school as well as to a tertiary school.

When you see me you would never tell if I am sad or happy, simply because I am always talking, making sure people around me are in smiles. But deep down I walk with a heavy load of a sad burden. I wouldn't say it is a secret. And definitely not a brag right.

It all began when I was in primary school, grade four, where we learnt about the human body, sex organs and puberty. I would sit behind the class hidden by long grass, almost turning brown and I would think maybe I am sick.

I always played with boys and girls and funny enough I would fit well enough and not have a problem with all the games they played. I would slide with a box down the hill by the school grounds and call it car racing – the only girl in a group of boys. I played dolls in class with the girls and I would sometimes be the daughter or mother with another girl being the father. We would kiss and cuddle and hold hands as if we knew what we were doing. But then again it would be something we learned from our parents.

There was this one girl I always played wife to. She was slightly taller than me, light in complexion, with beautiful brown eyes. One day we were playing dolls and I had an argument with one of the girls which became quite serious. I cried, I felt alone because I always felt like the odd kid. I ran out of class. On my head was the plastic meant to be a head scarf for a married, well respected wife. All over my face was the chalk supposed to be the wife's makeup. I sat under the grass. I screamed. I spoke to myself, or rather to my imaginary friend. I asked questions I got answers to in my head. I felt hot as if I had been running. I started sweating and shaking. I felt like I could not breathe. My ears were burning. I took off my jersey and placed it on a rock. I lay on my side until the feeling stopped. I lay still, my eyes drying, the chalk drawing water marks down my brown cheeks. I asked my imaginary friend why she made me feel hot, why she made me feel like I was going to pass out.

Before I could get an answer my friend from class, the 'husband' playmate, found me. She was also crying. She said she was hurt, she was worried and felt useless as she had not helped me during the argument. She hugged me for some time. I told her she doesn't have to feel that way. It was my battle. She hugged me even tighter and kissed me. I wanted to kiss her some more but I was too embarrassed.

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We continued being friends until high school where she was now more firm that feminine. I understood who she was and who I was too. I had gone out on dates with guys and there was one guy who I liked.

One day in grade 11 she visited me in class and asked what I was eating for lunch. “Books” I answered sarcastically. She laughed, pushed the books away, and sat on my table. She had a brown watch with silver lettering, she wore black trousers and a yellow transparent shirt. I settled into my chair and folded my arms. Jokingly I asked what she wanted. She replied ‘You. I want you’.

I looked outside the window, not even seeing the street. My mind played her words over and over. ‘You. I want you.’ She asked if I was okay. I said yes. On that day she seemed different to the way I knew her. She was calm, more sensible, protective and on the watch out for me. It was as if I was her little sister. She pulled me by my curly brunette hair and laid my head on her lap. She slowly brushed my hair. I enjoyed what she was doing. Her hands were soft, her palms watery as if she had just washed her hands or put lotion on them. She slowly moved her hands as if drawing my ears. The voices of my class mates from the school yard kept fading into the distance. I closed my eyes and almost fell into a blissful sleep. Until she shook me saying ‘here is your teacher’.

I quickly raised my head. Completely wide awake I felt my stomach cold with butterflies, my heart beating faster than normal. She sat next me and we looked at the teacher in his blue Nike jacket, his cap slightly over his eyes. He said “school is out. We have a teachers’ workshop.” He went out.

I covered my face with both hands and yawned. When I opened my eyes they were red and teary and on the right side of my face were the lines made by her trousers when I had my head on her lap. I felt like I had been sleeping for hours, whereas it was only a minutes.

We walked out of school together and she offered to carry my bag. I finally brought myself to ask her 'why are you doing this?' 'What?' she replied. I shrugged my shoulders as though annoyed and started stomping on the ground.

We continued walking and talking about general school things. She looked at me and said 'We have known each other since primary school' I replied 'Uh-huh'. 'Wow that is quite long, yeah. And look at us all grown and bored.' I laughed and continued walking. When we got to the park at the corner of the main road, she pulled me close and kissed me. I closed my eyes. It felt warm, so sweet and for a moment the world stood still. Her lips were very soft. I slowly opened my eyes.

Reality was now taking its toll. I did indeed kiss a girl. Not just any girl but somebody I had known almost half my life. People were passing by and some of them kept looking at us, more especially at me. They knew me as a twin to a boy, and they knew my father because of his involvement in community forums. I felt nervous. I felt like going back to school, or home. While my mind played games, I heard a group of guys laughing. I looked at them in their blue overalls and black boots with their brown tips which showed they had been digging or working in the garden.

On my way home I stopped at the tuck shop near my house to buy a cold drink. At the door I met a lady who knows my mom. She was with a younger girl. She greeted me, concern on her face. She asked why I was home so early. I told her we had been released early because the teachers were attending a workshop. 'So this is why you decided to stand in the middle of the street in broad daylight and kiss another girl passionately in front of adults as if you don't see them.'

I kept silent. 'Are you a church goer?' 'Yes' I said. She made sounds as though this was very surprising. I had never felt so embarrassed in my life. I wanted to walk away and leave her standing there,

but I could not because I am after all young and must respect my elders. 'My dear do you know about demonic spirits?' I said 'No'. She clapped once in astonishment. 'But you say you go to church! Well let me tell you now you are possessed. All the stuff you were doing in the park, it is satanic. The devil is playing with your mind. The devil is confusing you and you are allowing him.'

I was now no longer embarrassed but boiling with anger and fury. Who was she to judge me? Who was she to play God and tell me I was possessed by demons? She continued 'the world has two people, only two. God created Adam and Eve, a man and a woman. Even animals are like that. You and that girl are inhuman!' I had heard enough of her insults. I walked away, heading for home.

My hands were sweating, my lips trembled, and my eyes filled with tears. 'You are a grade A student. You will kill your mother with what you are doing.' I heard her shouting from a distance as I struggled to open the gate with my sweaty, slippery hands. I dropped my keys. I could not find the right key. I could not see through my tears. I thought to myself 'How could she be so cruel?'

Finally I got the locks right and entered the gate, dragging myself and begging myself not to cry. I unlocked the door. I was the first one home. I dropped my bag on the living room floor, threw myself on the couch and cried. My legs hung from the couch, half my body was on the couch. I felt so hot and like I could not breathe. 'I am not a bad person, I didn't kill anyone', I thought to myself, 'I have developed feelings for my friend, I even went as far as kissing her.' The more I thought this the more I cried.

The door was still open, the key still in the door lock. My twin arrived, looking worried. I knew my crying affected him. He asked me to stop crying. Even though he was right there with me, I felt lost and alone. I felt like I did not know myself. I regretted living. I hated my parents for bringing me into this world where I would not know if I am a boy or girl emotionally. I kept thinking how am

I going to tell my mother let alone my father who has always been the understanding one.

I got up and went to my room to change. I looked in the mirror. I looked at my breasts, my curves. I saw a girl. I thought how will people look at me? What will they think? These thoughts became heavy. Half naked I took a razor and sat on the bed. I made a fist and cut my wrist from the inside. The first try was painful but as I carried on I couldn't feel a thing. I saw blood flowing from my wrist. My arm was getting weaker but somehow the blade made me feel better. I felt like something was being erased – hurt, anger, tears, mixed emotions. I was not even aware that this could end me up in hospital. I just kept going and going. 'What am I living for if I am going to be labelled a confused, greedy, possessed girl?' I finally felt calm and I lay on my bed. Blank. No thoughts. No regrets. Just tired and sleepy. My hand was swollen, red with blood and starting to hurt. But I did not move a muscle. I dozed off.

My twin walked in, found me lying there and thought I was unconscious or dead. 'I froze, I wanted to cry. I thought call mom. No. call the ambulance or check if you are breathing' he later told me. 'But I thought no. Sit on top of her and perform CPR.'

I opened my eyes as though in a bad dream. I discovered my twin on top of me, pressing my chest counting, one, two three. Painfully so. 'Come on Mtase (sister) don't do this to me' he shouted.

'Do what?' I shouted. Struggling to get the words out, panicked and out of breath as if drowning.

'You, sick, sick child!' he shouted.

'Get off me, I can't breathe. Are you trying to kill me or something?' I asked.

'You mean you want to kill me? I almost died of a heart attack. What are you trying to do?' he asked.

'When Bra?' I replied.

'Why is your hand bleeding? I was performing CPR before I could call your mom and tell her you are dead' he said.

'No man I was not dead only sleeping' I said. 'I may have been bleeding but not any more'. I held my chest. 'Gosh you nearly took the oxygen out of me!'

He asked, now calm 'Then what happened? Oh you worried me.'

I told him word for word what had happened.

I am not obsessed or possessed. I am not confused. I am not trying to trend or fit in. I am not experimenting. I am not half girl, half boy. I am a full seven days menstruating woman who is attracted to both sexes. I do not need to make up my mind. I do not need to be prayed for. I do not need to prove to anyone that I am not insane. Or answer unnecessary questions about my sexuality. I do not have to make a noise to be heard. I do not have to run up and down the streets to be taken seriously and not for granted. I am attracted to guys and girls. I am a bisexual.

