



Never There Yet Always There

By Ayeley M.

“Antaa, my mummy is a very bad person. She’s always insulting you and saying bad things about you.”

“I know, she’s always telling her friends that I’m trying to take you away from her.”

“Don’t pay any attention to her, tomorrow, when the school bus stops here, I’ll come to your place again, ok?”

That was my aunty and me and this was just about what used to happen when I was a little child of not more than four years old where I would go to my aunty’s place and gossip about my mother with her. Besides, the houses were just a stone throw away from each other.

I never lived long with my mother, but from the little memories I have of her, I remember quite well that she restricted my movements.

“If I see you with this lady’s child, you won’t sleep in the house today,” she would say. I never really mingled with the other kids in my neighbourhood. This was something that stayed with me for the better part of my eighteen years on this earth, until I entered the senior high school where I’ve learnt how to really live with other people. Honestly from the way my friends made me feel on my 18th birthday, I don’t think I want to go back to that state anymore.

As a young child, I remember vividly an incident when I was beaten by my mother because I went to ask for money for snacks from the driver as my cousin who had my money was in an examination hall still writing his paper. I’ve never done that again since that day.

I guess I must really be someone who loved her freedom right from childhood, so I would run away from home and go to my auntie’s place whenever I felt I would be beaten. I enjoyed the company of my aunty so much that whenever

the school bus brought me back from school, I wouldn't go straight home but would rather alight at her place and then talk to her about some funny things my mother did.

When my mother was about to leave, she was contemplating sending me to her elder sister but I ran away to my auntie's place and she had no other option than to let me be with her. I would go and stay with her on weekends and then for months such that eventually, when my mother left, I never felt her absence in my life.

My father stayed long enough to witness my naming ceremony before leaving and four years later when my mommy left I was stuck with my aunty, with whom I never lack anything. She treats me like her own child such that I've never felt any distinction that exists between me and her children. An outsider observing us would think that I am her daughter. It gets to a point where I feel that I do not need the presence of my parents in my life because with her, I have everything.

Since childhood, she has always taught me to do the right thing, taking over from where my mum left off, but in a completely different manner. By just saying that she'll take me to my father's relatives, I'd stop whatever mischief I was up to, because I know with them I wouldn't get life as easy and comfortable as I do with her.

I've never lived with my mom and dad so I cannot imagine what life would be like with them. Currently my mom buys clothes for me without asking my size and it fits perfectly, so I guess she would be the same size as I am now.

I've never seen my dad but I talk to him often on phone. From our conversations, I would picture my dad as quite an old man, in his early 50's, with a moustache. Since I am short, he obviously won't be any taller than I am. Even though he has fat brothers I do not want to picture him that way because I'm not fat either. He is a great cook, I've been told and I guess that's where I got my skills from. When I get to live with him one day, he's going to stuff me, I know.

THE END