

Over Coffee

He sat across the table from me, tears streaming down his face, I could tell the pain ran deep inside him. It had been a quiet week for me, just work, home, and repeat. He had been distant since the beginning of the week, he had left all my messages on read and I kept asking myself what had gone wrong this time around. Our relationship always had its ups and downs and I just assumed this was one of the downs. The week was busy so I didn't have time to spare to confront him about his rudeness of leaving me on read and not answering my calls. On Sunday morning he called me, sounded so down and drained and asked that we meet at my favorite cake shop so we can talk over coffee. I thought he wanted to apologize for his recent tantrums. I arrived an hour early, but he was already seated at the far corner of the shop facing the wall. He wasn't the punctual type so I was like more points to him for the effort. I walked towards him, hugged him from behind and gave him a perk on the cheek as I moved to sit on the other side of the table. He was facing down and I immediately knew something was wrong. He slowly raised his face, his eyes meeting mine and tears immediately started rolling down his dark, smooth bearded cheeks. Tears rolled down his cheeks endlessly like a water pipe had been burst inside his eyes and he didn't know how to fix it. I slowly stood up and he raised his hand stopping me dead on my tracks and I sat down again. Not knowing what to do, I decided to order us some black coffee, maybe it could elevate his mood because he clearly had a lot of things to tell me. As I was waiting for our order to arrive, I took his hand and told him whatever it was we would deal with it together. Seeing him cry like that without even making a sound really got me worried, he was not an emotional person, he was the strong one in this relationship and I was the cry baby. In an argument I'd be the one crying, while watching movies I was the emotional one, my tears were always close yet his, his tears I never saw even for a second. Now here was this man, crying in silence, tears just streaming down his face, I knew he was in pain and needed to let it out. Our coffee came, he took it and held on to that coffee mug as tight as he could and took sips here and there but never put it down. I just sat there drinking my coffee while giving him a look of comfort since he didn't want to be held physically. He continued crying for over 30 minutes and I sat there waiting for him to say something, to open his mouth and tell me at least one word. I just wanted one word to at least know what was going on, but he was silent. He just drank his coffee, got lost deep in his thoughts and tears kept rolling down. I could see bulging blood vessels appearing on his forehead and I knew this thing was eating him up, he was stressed, I just couldn't prophesy what it was. I wanted him to tell me, I now needed him to say something because my worry levels were now super high. A lot had been going on in his life, he was a closed book, he never liked talking about his struggles and I understood that, but he had called me, he had wanted to meet me, so he definitely wanted to tell me something. I guess the courage he thought he had wasn't there anymore. He finished his coffee and put the mug on the table and breathed in and exhaled so loud like he was removing what he was feeling through his breath and he asked me to take him home. Confused as I was, I stood up immediately, paid for the coffee, rushed to his side, held his hand as we slowly walked out the door.

By Bongeka Mpfu