

Full Name	Rhoda Gonyora
Age/ Category	Ages 19 and Above
Word Count	1 000
Telephone number	0774024806

Over coffee

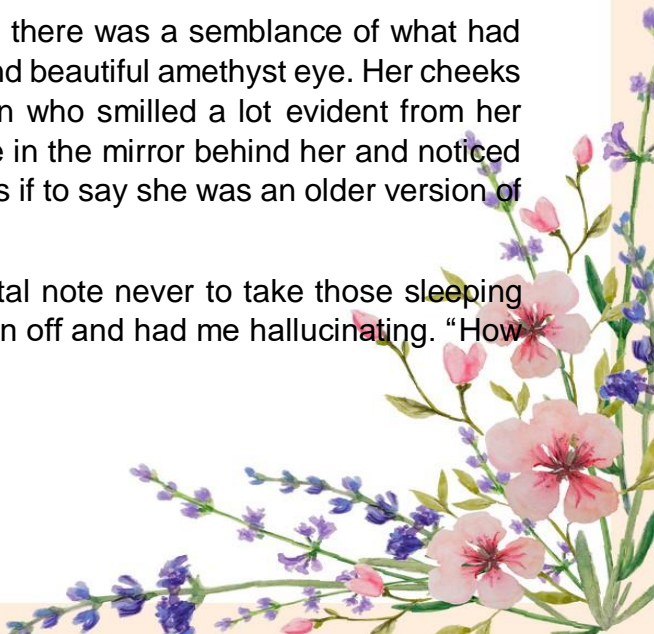
The strong scent of the coffee beans hit my nostrils as I lifted the cup up to take a sip. Such a moment needed one to close their eyes to appreciate the amazing aroma. I shut my eyes as my face was engulfed by the steam from the cup. It would definitely ruin my very expensive Estee lauder foundation I thought to myself, but I didn't mind. My senses became heightened as I allowed myself to drift off to a place where time and space did not matter.....

'Hallo there,' I heard. I was suddenly brought back to reality. I slowly opened my eyes and as they adjusted to the light and beyond the cloud of endless steam coming from my cup of coffee, I saw an old lady standing right opposite me.

"G-g-good morning," I replied, seeming to stutter as if I had forgotten how to speak. I waited, assuming she had mistaken me for someone else but out of nowhere she confidently pulled out the chair opposite me and plonked her plump bottom right down. I sighed. One of the reasons I had chosen the corner table close to the back of the café was because I really didn't want to share my table nor be disturbed. It had been a hectic morning and I had dared to dash and grab a cup of coffee. From waking up to a flat tyre on a rainy day, being shouted at by my headmaster for what I assumed to be a beautiful display I had done in the foyer at school, to having that difficult child in my class tell me he had yet again lost his books with that look of 'what can you do to me in his eyes'. I really needed the break. Also, the pile of books I had next to me were needed in my next lesson at 10.30am but her greeting was so cheerful who was I to chase her away.

As I studied her face, I noticed that behind the wrinkles there was a semblance of what had definitely been a beautiful face, smooth plump cheeks and beautiful amethyst eye. Her cheeks had those long smile lines that told a story of a woman who smiled a lot evident from her cheerful greeting. As I studied her I happened to glance in the mirror behind her and noticed the striking resemblance between herself and myself. As if to say she was an older version of me....

I quickly snapped myself back to reality making a mental note never to take those sleeping pills I had taken last night, clearly the effects hadn't worn off and had me hallucinating. "How is Ryan she enquired?"





'Huh...' I seemed to hear myself say, "how do you know about Ryan?"

The lady looked at me and smiled whispering, " Well dear, for starters you have a shopping list right in front of you written, Ryans' boarding list."

"O - o- ohh, " I muttered yet again. I really needed to collect myself I definitely wasn't sounding like an educated teacher. For an old lady she sure had good eyesight I thought to myself. "He is alright," I heard myself respond, "growing so fast...such a fine gentleman..." I trailed off with a pause and a smile.

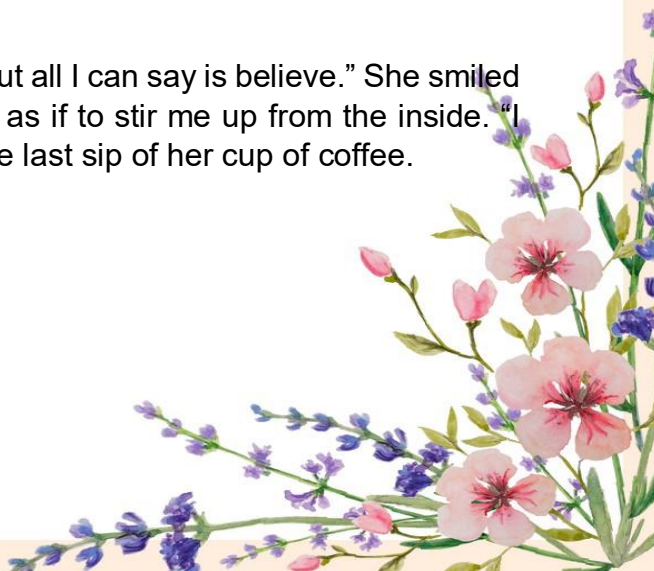
"You are doing just fine my dear, he will turn out to be a fine gentleman for sure,' she responded. I smiled. So often I had sought that reassurance as I often pondered on if I was raising my son well enough for me to stand tall one day and shout proud, 'that's my boy.' This old lady seemed to be prophetic. "How is the studying going?"she queried again. I took a second to wonder how she could have known I had gone back to school and before I could ask she explained. "I noticed the assignment on top of those books your about to mark. Are you a teacher?" For an old lady she sure asked a lot of questions in a short space of time.

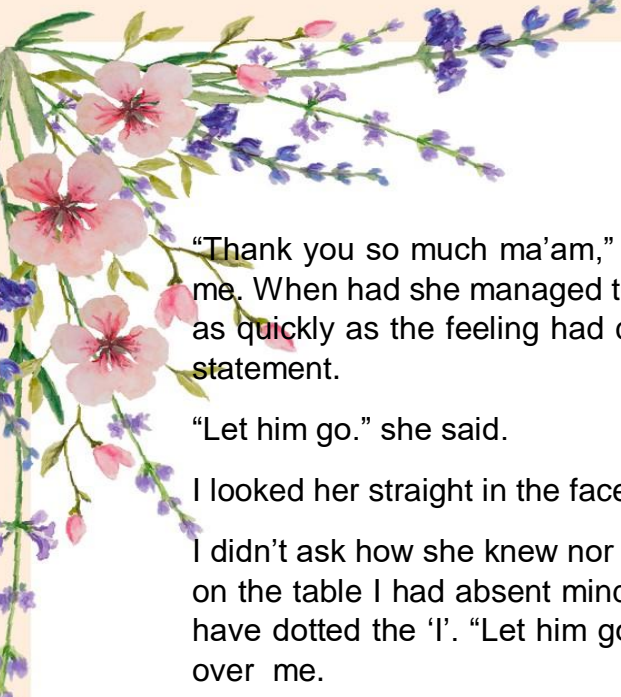
'School is alright, I've just started my degree program with the University of Zimbabwe. Was skeptical when I began if I would manage, what with the work load, being mummy and all the other hats one finds themselves wearing...I am still skeptical really," I doubtfully ended off.

Not to worry my dear, you have all the time in the world go for it. You'll be shocked to find you'll add in a masters and doctorate in there too." I giggled inside like Sarah from the Bible when she overheard the angel tell Abraham she would bare a child in her old age. Or was it my giggle actually escaped because she went to ask, "Why do you doubt yourself my child?"

"Nothing really," I responded adding on the age old cliché, "so much to do and so little time to do it in."

"You sound just like me when I was your age my child, but all I can say is believe." She smiled her warm smile as she looked me deep within my soul as if to stir me up from the inside. "I know you can do it," she confidently said as she took the last sip of her cup of coffee.





“Thank you so much ma’am,” I responded already feeling the determination rising inside of me. When had she managed to drink her coffee through all these questions? I pondered and as quickly as the feeling had come it was cut off by that old lady yet again, this time with a statement.

“Let him go.” she said.

I looked her straight in the face puzzled by her statement. “Let who go?” I asked baffled.

I didn’t ask how she knew nor did she explain. Looking down into my notebook that lay open on the table I had absent mindedly written his name on the page with a tear where I should have dotted the ‘I’. “Let him go..” I seemed to hear her whisper again as a memory flooded over me.

He was hitting me. I clutched my stomach. He punched me, my god so so hard I fell to the ground. He kicked and kicked, seeming to be no end. I kept asking for a reason, there was no reason at all. A tear slipped down my cheek. She stood up, gathered her dainty purse, came across to me and wiped my cheek. Yet again she echoed her statement, “Let him go!”

I was speechless and as I watched her walk away, I heard her say, “You’ll find another at the door...” I snapped myself together but by then it was too late. Just as quickly as she had appeared I watched her skirt slip past the door. She was gone, leaving me wondering what her name was, who she was and where she had come from.

I quickly gathered my bags and mourned over my cup of coffee that sat cold and untouched. I poured it into my mug making a mental note to heat it up as soon as I got back to school. Quickly, I made my way to the door, not paying much attention to the wet floor sign. As I opened it, I could not help but wonder what ‘other’ she had meant I would find at the door and suddenly, there I was slipping and sliding, books, bags and mug flying into the air.

I closed my eyes and anticipated the pain that would be inflicted by two things: one the cold hard floor; and secondly the embarrassment that would come from a generously plump woman as myself falling to the ground. That old lady I muttered to myself with disdain.....

From nowhere the strongest and warmest of arms suddenly engulfed me. There was no pain... I opened an eye, batted an eyelash and there he was. With the most beautiful smile I had ever laid my eyes upon.

“Hallo there.....’ he said.

