

TO BE

Background: Takondwa and Rachel are school friends. They are in Form 2. Today is Thursday. Takondwa goes to Rachel's house in the afternoon to study with her classmate. The two girls have a difficult Mathematics test the following week.

Takondwa: Hello! Hello! Rachel! It's Takondwa. Are you at home?

(A 10-year-old boy comes to meet Takondwa at the gate after a few minutes).

Takondwa: Thanks a lot Peter. Hi, by the way.

Peter: Hi Takondwa. How are you?

Takondwa: I'm fine. Where's Rachel? Is she at home?

Peter: Yes, she is. She's just washing the dishes. We've just had our lunch.

Takondwa: Ok, maybe I should come back a bit later.

Peter: No, no, no. Come in. Rachel said you should come in.

Takondwa: Alright, thanks. Is your dog on the leash?

Peter: Ha, ha, ha. Don't worry Takondwa, he is. Sorry, I forgot you're afraid of dogs.

Takondwa: Eh, dogs and I aren't best friends at all.

Peter: Ha, ha, ha. I know. Jack isn't a troublesome dog although he looks fierce. He doesn't bite people.

Takondwa: Eh, Peter. I come here often but I'm still afraid of the dog.

Peter: Don't worry Takondwa. Maybe one day you'll get used to him.

Takondwa: I hope so Peter.

(Takondwa follows Peter. They arrive at the back of the house. Rachel is busy doing her chores. She smiles and wipes her hands on her dress. She comes out and hugs her friend.)

Rachel: Hi Takondwa!

Takondwa: Hi Rachel! Here I am.

Rachel: I thought you wouldn't come. Did your maid let you go easily?

Takondwa: Yes, I told her I was coming to do my homework. I hope she believes me. If she tells my mother that I went out in the afternoon instead of studying, I don't know what my mother will do. Anyway, I don't care. I did my chores and I'm now going to study. I'm not doing anything wrong.

Rachel: No, it's ok, don't worry. Nothing will happen. You're here now. We can do our work and you'll be at home when she gets back. Let me finish doing the dishes and then we can start immediately. My cousin from Chilomoni is here. She's also in form Two.

Takondwa: Oh, that's nice. Where is she?

Rachel: She's in the living-room. Misozi! Misozi! Where are you? Please come here! Let me introduce you to my friend.

Misozi: Rachel, did you just call me?

Rachel: Yes, please come. Takondwa, my friend from school, would like to meet you.

Misozi: Oh, just wait a minute ok? I'm coming.

(The two girls wait for Misozi. Rachel resumes her dishwashing.)

Takondwa: Let me help you with the dishes.

Rachel: Oh, thanks Takondwa. Peter! Where is Peter? Peter! Peter! Come here!

Peter: Yes Rachel! What do you want?

Rachel: Can you bring the red and white tea towel that's on the clothes' line? Takondwa wants to help me with the dishes.

Peter: Why are you asking me? Why don't you go and fetch it yourself?

Rachel: Peter! What am I doing now? Am I just sitting on the floor doing nothing?

Peter: Of course not.

Rachel: So go and get the tea towel for me.

Peter: But I'm busy. I'm doing something else too.

Rachel: Does Peter look like he is busy? Is he busy Takondwa?

Peter: Is he busy Takondwa?

(Peter imitates his sister.)

Rachel: PETER!

(Rachel's mother comes into the kitchen.)

Mrs Banda: Rachel, why are you talking like that to your brother? Oh hello Takondwa. How are you?

Takondwa: I'm fine Auntie. How are you?

Mrs Banda: I'm fine too. My back is just giving me problems nowadays. And now these two. Look at them. They are just quarrelling instead of doing their chores. Do your work in peace and not in pieces.

(Rachel and Peter laugh.)

Takondwa: Oh don't worry Auntie. You'll feel better soon. Peter, just go and take the tea towel. Look, you made your old mother come to the kitchen just because of this.

Peter: Alright, I'll go and get it. Rachel, next time you'll do it.

(Rachel doesn't say anything. She keeps on washing the dishes. Her mother goes back to the living-room. Peter brings the tea towel. Takondwa thanks him and starts drying the plates. Peter goes away to play in the yard.)

Takondwa: Didn't your mother go to work today?

Rachel: She did but she came back before lunch. She came with my cousin Misozi.

Takondwa: Oh. The same Misozi you were talking about? Your cousin?

Rachel: Yes, exactly. Misozi's mother is one of my father's remaining sisters.

Takondwa: Ok, I didn't know.

Rachel: But she's very sick now.

Takondwa: Misozi?

Rachel: No, not Misozi. It's my Auntie. She's really sick. Misozi wants transport money so she can take her mother to the hospital. My mother came here to take the cash and they will go together to Chilomoni to fetch my Auntie. They will also buy some medicine at the pharmacy, you never know...

Takondwa: You never know indeed...Sorry Takondwa. I'm really sorry. How old is Misozi?

Rachel: She's only fifteen.

Takondwa: Fifteen? She's courageous.

Rachel: She is. She lost her father two years ago. Takondwa, in this life I tell you, we all have to be brave. Life is tough.

Takondwa: That's true. We see so many things in this life. You can't survive if you aren't brave enough.

Rachel: Misozi is brave, I tell you. She still goes to school, you know, and she's doing very well. Her dream is to go to Chanco one day.

Takondwa: She will, why not? She will go to Chancellor College and she will succeed. We'll all do well. I'll go to Poly and you'll become a top model.

Rachel and Takondwa: He, he, he!

(The two girls clap their hands and continue to laugh at themselves.)

Rachel: No, I'll not be a beggar.

Takondwa: Over my dead body, ha, ha, ha.

Rachel: Peter ! Peter! Where is this boy now? We always have to look for him. Peter! Where are you? Isn't this boy a pain in the neck?

Peter: Who's a pain the neck? Who said that?

(Peter is still in the yard.)

Rachel: Me, who else? Peter! Come here! Don't pretend as if you can't hear me.

(Peter finally comes but remains in the doorway.)

Peter: What again Rachel? Can't you see that I'm busy?

Rachel: Busy with what? Can you check if Mum is gone?

Peter: You called me just for this! No.

Rachel: Peter...

(Peter goes back to the yard. He is humming his favourite tune.)

Rachel: I tell you, this boy is rude.

Takondwa: Ha, ha, ha. He's still young.

Rachel: I'm telling you, this boy-is-rude. R-U-D-E. Rude.

Takondwa: He's just a boy Rachel.

(Rachel goes to the living-room. After a few minutes, she comes back. Misozi is with her.)

Rachel: Takondwa, this is Misozi.

(Takondwa stops drying the dishes. She wipes her wet hands on her dress.)

Takondwa: Oh, hi Misozi.

Misozi: Oh, hi. You already know my name.

(Takondwa's right hand taps into Misozi's briefly.)

Takondwa: My name's Takondwa.

Misozi: Nice to meet you Takondwa. You already my name anyway.

Takondwa: Yes, Rachel told me.

Rachel: Takondwa is my classmate.

Misozi: Alright, I didn't know.

Rachel: She's very bright, I tell you. Sometimes, I wonder where she got her brains from.

Takondwa: Stop it Rachel. YOU, the boys are always running after you because of your beauty.

Misozi: Ha, ha, ha. Don't tell me.

Takondwa: Kkkkk I'm telling you. Eh, THIS girl.

Misozi: Who's her boyfriend?

Rachel: Stop it you two.

(Takondwa opens her mouth as if she is about to reveal something. Rachel puts her hand on Takondwa's mouth. Takondwa is laughing.)

Rachel: Takondwa, **DON'T...**

Takondwa: Alright...

(Peter comes back into the kitchen.)

Peter: Who has a boyfriend?

Takondwa, Rachel and Misozi: PETER!!!

(Peter laughs and runs out of the kitchen. Rachel's mother comes into the kitchen.)

Mrs. Banda: What's happening girls? The whole neighbourhood can hear you. Are you crazy? Where's Peter?

Rachel: Ha, ha, ha, Mum...No, we aren't crazy. That's funny. Ha, ha, ha.

Takondwa: Rachel, your Mum is funny.

Mrs. Banda: Ha, ha, ha, am I? You girls are crazy.

Misozi: Ha, ha, ha, Auntie...

Mrs. Banda: Ha, ha, ha. It's true. Where is Peter by the way? Where is my little boy?

Rachel: Which Peter? That rude human being! I'm always looking for him. Peter! Peter!

(Peter doesn't come.)

Mrs. Banda: Well, leave him alone.

(Mrs. Banda looks at her watch.)

Mrs. Banda: Eh, I didn't notice that it was half past two already. Misozi, we should be going now.

Misozi: Alright Auntie.

Mrs. Banda: Rachel, don't go out until you've done your homework. I don't want you to become a beggar in the future, do you hear me? I don't want any ruffians in my house, is that clear? No hooligans.

Rachel: I already planned to do my homework Mum. Takondwa came here just for that.

Mrs. Banda: That's nice girls. Well, see you. I will call you to tell you if I'm coming back or not. I might have to spend the night at the hospital with Auntie Tadala.

(Rachel nods her head understandingly and hugs Misozi tightly.)

Rachel: Stay strong.

Misozi: Thanks Rachel.

(Takondwa hugs Misozi too.)

Takondwa: It was nice to meet you Misozi.

Misozi: It was nice to meet you too.



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