

Amethyst - A Tragic Love Tale

Amethyst Meets Kingston, Volume 1

Dimakatso Molapo

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AMETHYST - A TRAGIC LOVE TALE

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Written by Dimakatso Molapo.

Dedication:

For those who have loved deeply, felt the sting of heart-
break, and still dared to hope again.

Epigraph:

"In every love story, there is a shadow where joy and sorrow intertwine."— Dimakatso Molapo

Title: Amethyst - Tragic Love Tale

Author: Dimakatso Molapo

Volume 1

Prologue

I never meant to love him. But love is rarely something we mean—it's something we survive.

Chapter 1 – Just Another Ride

I had just escaped the clutches of a toxic relationship when my best friend decided she no longer wanted me in her life. She called me something—something cruel—implying I was a leech.

Yeah, I know. Ouch.

That was the final blow.

My name is Amethyst. I'm a full-bodied woman with soft curves and a face marked by the stories my skin has lived through. I have acne scars, yes—but they don't take away from my beauty. When I wear makeup, I feel powerful. Polished. Breathtaking. But even without it, in my bare skin, I know I'm still beautiful—just in a quieter, more intimate way.

My eyes give me away before my mouth does, and my smile... well, it carries both joy and ache.

I feel deeply. Love harder than I should. And I carry myself with a strength that doesn't always need to shout to be heard.

At that moment, I was stripped of everything familiar. I'd been unemployed for nearly a year after abruptly resigning from a soul-draining job. In my heartbreak, I faced the overwhelming reality of losing everyone I loved. The weight of it all bore down on me, suffocating.

But I had a coping mechanism: people. I used them to mask the pain, to fill the void, to pretend that if I didn't acknowledge the wreckage, it wasn't real.

But reality doesn't vanish just because you ignore it. And when those people—the ones holding me together—were taken away, my world crumbled.

I unraveled, piece by piece, until I was nothing but fragments of who I used to be.

I disappeared.

Even my own family had no access to me. I switched off my phone, deleted my social media, and fell into darkness. Nights blurred togeth-

er, spent sitting in the pitch-black room that became both my prison and my sanctuary.

Hardly eating. Mostly sleeping.

Existing—but barely.

Months passed before something inside me whispered that this was no way to live.

Six months into my isolation, I reached for my phone. My hands trembled as I dialed a toll-free line for people like me—people who were drowning. The voice on the other end was steady, kind.

They didn't know me, but they helped me take the first step toward resurfacing.

Slowly, I reentered the world.

When I finally went to see my family, their faces were a mixture of shock, relief, and understanding.

They knew.

They understood that I had needed that time to claw my way back.

A week later, the universe did something unexpected.

I got a job.

Just like that. No interview. No long process. Someone saw my CV and said, "You're hired." And just like that, life dragged me forward.

The job required me to commute from Pretoria to Johannesburg—a daunting trip at ungodly hours. I called my stepfather, hoping he could help arrange transport. He did.

And just like that, I had a ride.

That's when I met him.

The first morning, the driver glanced at me through the rearview mirror and smirked.

"You're a popular lady."

I frowned. "What are you on about?"

"I know your dad. And I ran into some other drivers who asked about you. They made it seem like you're a whole big deal. Everyone has something to say about you."

Panic. My stomach twisted. I knew where this was coming from.

“My ex.”

The words left my lips like venom. I already knew. My evil ex, as I liked to call him, had been running his mouth—poisoning the air around me with his lies.

My driver shrugged, but I could tell he was curious.

I exhaled sharply.

“Don’t believe everything you hear. These days, niggas act like bitches. You can’t trust these hoes.”

He laughed. “Fair enough.”

He offered me a deal—to pay him monthly instead of daily. I agreed. It made things easier. Eventually, he suggested we travel back together in the evenings, too. It was logical: he’d drop me right at my gate. No more navigating dark, sketchy passages alone.

We became travel companions. Then we became something more.

Not in the way my ex had assumed, with his toxic jealousy and paranoia.

No, we were something simpler. A friendship forged in the early morning silence and the city lights blurring past us at night.

But my ex wouldn’t let go.

He sent his goons after my driver, poisoning his ears with stories about me—tales of my past, of my sins, of the men I had been with.

He thought it would scare him away.

He thought it would ruin me.

It didn’t.

I made a decision.

I moved.

Away from Pretoria. Away from my ex. Away from the past that refused to loosen its grip around my throat.

Johannesburg became my fresh start.

A new place. A new isolation—but this time, one I chose. A healthier one.

Finally, I was free.

Or so I thought.

I loved waking up later, needing only one Uber ride to get to work. My morning routine had become smoother, and I found unexpected joy in my conversations with the transport driver. We'd built a great friendship. He made me feel human again, after isolating myself for so long.

I thanked him for unknowingly transforming me.

When we first met, I was broken—damn near shattered.

I had a lot of work to do on myself just to be able to look in the mirror and recognize the woman staring back at me.

That's what my evil ex took from me—my confidence. My self-esteem.

He broke me down, and when I was at my lowest, he physically assaulted me.

But that was in the past now.

Johannesburg was new to me, and the only people I knew were my colleagues.

Among them was a tall, dark, and handsome man who smelled like wealth and drove an expensive car.

I never imagined I'd catch his attention.

My confidence was at an all-time low. Even compliments shocked me. I was so far gone.

One weekend, I needed to check on my house in Pretoria. It had been vacant for months, and I made a habit of visiting regularly to prevent vandalism.

But I had been careless—

I left my keys at work.

My first instinct was to call the person who had trained me: a moody woman who had taught me everything I knew.

She redirected me to the claims manager.

They worked until 5 PM.

I called the manager and asked him to leave my keys with security. That's when it happened.

My phone rang.

"Amethyst, hello," I answered.

"Hi, it's Roman."

Roman. My stomach dropped. That was my ex's name.

I was still learning everyone's names at work, and this was an unfortunate coincidence. He continued, "Where are you exactly, Amethyst?"

I hesitated. "I'm at the Kempton Park taxi rank. I was going to request a ride back to get my keys. If you could leave them with security, I'd appreciate it."

"That sounds like too much admin," he replied. "Where do you live?"

"Pretoria."

"Where in Pretoria?"

"Mabopane."

"Send me your location. I'm coming to fetch you."

I gasped as the call ended.

My heart raced as I sent him the pin. Fifteen minutes later, he arrived. He stepped out of his car looking like a Viking god—tall, sharp jawline, beard trimmed just enough to make you wonder what his hands felt like. I glitched. For the first time since my toxic ex, I felt something.

I'd made a conscious decision to get my ex out of my system. Whatever it took. I didn't want a relationship—I'd made that mistake before—but I was human. I needed to feel something other than numb. I had isolated long enough. It was time to embrace joy, pleasure, and everything in between.

Roman would be my first victim.

He drove me home that night, and before I knew it, I was telling him my whole life story. Word vomit. It was a bad habit—my ex always managed to spill out, even when I swore I'd locked him away.

At my gate, Roman walked me to the door.

“Want me to come in?” he asked, testing my resolve.

I laughed. “Maybe another time.”

There was no way I was letting him into that disaster of a place. He’d think I was a slob. In my defense, I had been through enough trauma to take down a whale.

The weekend passed, and I couldn’t stop thinking about him.

Monday morning, I went straight from Pretoria to Johannesburg for work, then to my rental after my shift. I spent the evening binge-watching a series, stuffing my face like I hadn’t eaten in days. That’s when my phone rang.

“Hey there,” he said.

I swallowed my food. “Hey you... what are you up to?” I asked, playing dumb.

“I want you. And if you were serious about ‘no strings attached,’ we can make things happen. You’re so free, so sexy—I want to see what that mouth can do. So, what do you say?”

I smirked, letting silence hang just long enough.

“Hmm. You’re naughty. What if I bite it off? I’ll agree if you agree to put it in my ass and give me the greatest f*ck of my life.”

I was joking. Mostly.

He chuckled. “That can be arranged—but we’d have to talk about the, uh, anal part. Never indulged.”

“Well, there you have it,” I teased. “I’m heading back to Mabopane tomorrow after work. Do you mind giving me a ride? We can discuss further.”

The next day, we were in his car.

With Roman, conversation flowed. Hours passed like minutes. He had this energy—big d*ck energy—but it was more than that. He made me feel like myself again. And myself? I was a woman who knew what she wanted. Desired, confident, in control.

Here was a man with a name that should have triggered me, but instead, he was pulling me back to life. Making me feel seen. Making me feel worthy again. Worthy of attention. Of being worshipped.

“I need some time,” I said quietly.

“Time?” he asked, glancing at me.

I met his gaze. “If I’m not careful, I might fall in love with you.”

He smiled, amused but intrigued. “I thought you weren’t looking for a relationship?”

“Having feelings doesn’t mean I want to be with you, Roman. I have self-control. The idea of a relationship sounds like a nightmare. I’ve been through enough. You know that.”

“I do,” he said simply.

And that was the thing—he did.

We reached my house in Mabopane. He parked, then turned to look at me.

“Are you going to invite me in?”

I grinned. “Come back later. I need to gather my bearings.”

That was code for: my place is a mess—let me clean up first.

He nodded, respectful. No argument, no pressure. Just a quiet understanding as he drove off. And for the first time in a long time, I felt something stir inside me—something dangerously close to excitement.

The night wasn’t over. Roman was coming back. And this time, I was ready.

When he walked through the door, the air between us shifted—charged, magnetic, thick with tension. There were no words. We didn’t need them. His eyes locked onto mine, dark with unspoken desire, and before I could take another breath, he closed the distance between us in two long strides.

His hands were on me, his grip firm, urgent, as if he’d waited too long and couldn’t hold back any longer. His lips crashed onto mine, fierce and searching, and I melted into him without hesitation.

Clothes came off in pieces, like confessions whispered in the dark. I stood bare before him, not vulnerable—but real. Seen. Wanted. And with him, that didn't feel scary. It felt right.

His gaze raked over me, setting my skin alight before he even touched me again. Then, in one breathless sweep, he pushed me back onto the bed, his body hovering over mine. The weight of him above me didn't press—it grounded me.

I wanted him. Completely. But beneath that want lived something quieter—fear. Not of him, but of myself. Could I handle what this meant? What this could undo in me?

I didn't have time to answer. His mouth was on my neck, then lower, leaving a trail of heat and tremble as he found every place I'd forgotten could feel like this.

When he finally reached me, I gasped. My hips rose without permission, desperate for the attention he gave so generously. His mouth moved slowly at first, like he was learning me, committing me to memory. Every flick, every pause, pulled me deeper into the moment—and further away from the shadows of lovers who never tried to understand me.

But still, my mind betrayed me, if only for a second. A flash of my ex—selfish, unbothered, absent. The kind of man who never cared if I finished, only if he did.

I blinked, and Roman pulled me back. Present. Focused. Devoted. He wanted me to feel this. Made sure I did.

I reached for him, fingers curling into the sheets, body arching into his mouth, chasing what he gave so freely. It was overwhelming—the attention, the reverence.

And when he looked up at me, eyes filled with mischief and hunger, his voice was rough silk.

“Are you ready for me?”

I could barely breathe. “Yes,” I whispered. It came out broken, thick with need.

He entered me slowly, carefully, and I gasped at the fullness, the stretch, the way he felt like home and something dangerous all at once.

His rhythm started slow—each thrust deliberate, deep. Every movement said: I see you. I want all of you.

And I gave it. All of me.

His hands roamed, his lips never far from mine, and the pace built—frantic, desperate, beautiful. My body moved with his, our rhythm wild and perfect. My legs wrapped around him, grounding us both in a dance that felt both ancient and brand new.

“God, you feel so good,” he groaned into my neck, his breath hot, his grip tightening.

I was unraveling. Bit by bit. Piece by guarded piece.

And when he whispered, “I’m close,” I shattered.

“Yes,” I begged. “Come with me.”

And he did. With one final thrust, he let go, burying himself in me as his body trembled and released.

We stayed there, tangled, hearts racing. The silence was thick, but not heavy. It was peaceful. Earned.

I ran my fingers through his hair, and for the first time in years, I let myself smile like I meant it.

In that moment, I felt free, like I was finally taking my life back. It wasn’t about reclaiming power in some dramatic way, but simply about taking ownership of my own desires, of my own choices.

Roman and I had found a rhythm over the months, sneaking around the office, our secret moments of passion spilling over in stolen kisses. There was something intoxicating about the risk—the thrill of getting caught added to the fire between us. But even though it was casual, there was always that flicker of something deeper in his eyes, in the way he touched me, like he wanted more.

His birthday was coming up, and as I thought about it, something pulled at me. It was a strange mix of giving, of wanting to do something nice for him, even if it wasn’t expected. After all, we weren’t in a re-

lationship, just two people in a no-strings-attached arrangement. But even so, I couldn't help it. It was in my nature to give. I was a giver by instinct, and though people like me were sometimes taken advantage of, I couldn't shake the urge to show him I appreciated him. Maybe it was foolish, but I didn't mind.

After work one day, a colleague mentioned she was heading to the mall. I decided to join her. I'd already made up my mind about the gift for Roman—something personal, something that would speak to him in a way no ordinary gift could.

"I want to get my fuck buddy a birthday gift," I told her, leaning casually against my desk as I typed out an email.

She stopped mid-sentence, eyes wide. "Wait, what did you just say?"

I grinned. No filter, just me being me. "Girl, you heard me. I want to get the man who's been fucking me a birthday gift."

She laughed, clearly amused. "Amethyst, you're wild."

I shrugged, not bothered by her teasing. "Hey, he's no ordinary guy. He's well-established, so if the gift isn't expensive, it better send a message. It needs to leave him wanting more."

She raised an eyebrow, intrigued. "A message, huh? Well, let's see what we can do. We'll keep it within budget."

"Now you're talking my language," I replied, feeling the anticipation of what was to come.

The mall was huge. I was still fairly new to Johannesburg, so I didn't get out much—mostly ordering everything I needed online. I felt a little out of place, but it was exciting. I was buying a gift for a man who wasn't just a lover. He was something more—complicated, mysterious, and thrilling.

Roman and I had talked about trying anal sex at some point—something he hadn't experienced before. It had intrigued me, and the idea lingered in my mind. What could I give him that would be both practical and suggestive?

I walked past the aisles, each one holding something that could be the perfect gift. I settled on lubricant—something high-quality and luxurious, perfect for the intimate side of our relationship. I also picked up some foreign sweets, chocolates, and then... the condoms.

The condoms felt like an odd choice since we'd been fucking raw from day one, but I liked the idea of them. It would push him—maybe even challenge him to reconsider his usual approach with me. I thought about the risks—the dangers of unprotected sex. The thought of infection crossed my mind, but I pushed it away. I had always been careful, and my tests had come back negative.

Still, the condoms were more than just a safety precaution; they were a statement. I wanted him to know I was open to whatever came next, that I was ready to explore and go further with him.

When I got home, I set everything out. The lubricant. The sweets. The condoms. It was a mix of playful and intimate, and I couldn't wait to see his reaction.

Roman had taken the week off for his birthday, so when he returned to work, I texted him. "Got a present for you, but I left it at my place."

I could see him across the office, his desk a little farther from mine, but I could still steal glances. When his reply came, it was quick, decisive: "Let's go."

My heart skipped a beat. I looked down at my phone, confused. "What?"

He stood up, walking toward me with that confident stride, his gaze dark, unspoken words swirling between us. "Get up," he said, his voice low, almost commanding.

I stood up, trying to act casual, though my pulse was racing. I was already wet, my body reacting to his presence like it always did. I made my move, making it look like I was heading to the bathroom, but in reality, I was heading straight for him.

We left the building quietly and climbed into his car. He didn't say much during the short drive to my place, but the air was thick with tension—an electric current humming between us.

When we arrived, I led him to my apartment, a mix of nervous energy and excitement racing through me. I couldn't wait to give him the gift—to see how he'd respond.

Roman had always been in control in the bedroom, but tonight... tonight was different. Tonight, I was the one setting the stage, setting the pace. I wanted to take him by surprise, to show him that I wasn't just some woman who needed saving. I was the one who wanted to be taken.

The moment we stepped inside, he pulled me close, his lips on mine in a fierce kiss. The weight of his body pressed against mine, and I felt the familiar thrill as he backed me up against the door. His hands were everywhere, touching, exploring, claiming.

I pulled away just long enough to reach for the bag where I'd hidden the gift. I handed him the lubricant first, watching his reaction closely. His eyes flickered with curiosity, and then he smiled—a smile that said he wasn't entirely surprised.

I handed him the rest, watching as he took in the chocolates, the sweets, the condoms.

"What's all this for?" he asked, his voice hoarse with desire.

"Just a little something for your birthday," I said, stepping closer. "But there's more. I want to take you to places you've never been before, Roman. I want this birthday to be unforgettable."

His lips crashed onto mine again, and I knew—this was only the beginning.

But then, as the seconds ticked by, the reality of the office hit us like cold air. We'd snuck out for a break, and time was slipping away.

"Shit," I muttered, pulling away reluctantly. "We have to get back."

He nodded, eyes still dark with want, but sharp with awareness. "You're right."

We shared one last, lingering kiss before scrambling to fix our clothes, breathless and flushed. The drive back was quiet, tension still thick between us, unspoken but impossible to ignore.

When we pulled into the basement parking, I paused before getting out. Our eyes met—just for a second—but it said everything.

“Next time,” he murmured.

“Next time,” I echoed, then turned and walked away.

Back in the office, we were just two colleagues again. But beneath the surface, everything had changed.

The rest of the afternoon dragged. Every stolen glance across the room made my pulse quicken. I tried to refocus on work, to slip back into routine, but it was pointless. My body still ached from his touch, my mind replaying the way his hands had roamed and his lips had claimed mine. It felt electric—dangerous—and I wanted more.

We said little. Only subtle looks, brief brushes of fingers that set me alight. The hunger lingered, growing.

Roman had hinted at things he wanted to explore—things that made my skin prickle with anticipation. There was more waiting for us, and I was ready to dive into all of it.

But a part of me knew: we couldn’t keep this up forever. The secrecy, the thrill—it would eventually come at a cost. Still, I wasn’t ready to think about consequences. I just wanted him.

As the day wound down, a message from him lit up my phone:

Same time tomorrow?

My heart skipped. Tomorrow.

I typed back without hesitation.

Definitely. Can’t wait.

But as the office emptied and I packed up for the day, a strange unease settled over me. Despite everything—the passion, the connection—there was something hanging unspoken between us. Something I couldn’t quite name.

I shook it off. Tomorrow would come. And when it did, I'd be ready.

Only... he never came.

The next day, Roman was a no-show.

Then the next. And the next.

Days turned into weeks, and still—nothing. At first, I told myself it was COVID. That's what his colleagues said. "He's recovering," one of them offered, almost too casually. I wanted to believe it.

But the longer the silence stretched, the harder it became.

No calls. No texts. No update. Just... gone.

I told myself maybe he needed space. Maybe he was dealing with something personal. Maybe he'd reach out when he was ready.

But deep down, I knew.

One evening, when I couldn't take it anymore, I grabbed my phone. My hands trembled as I dialled. It rang and rang. No answer.

I tried again. Still nothing.

Frustrated, I opened his contact to send a message—only to freeze. Blocked.

The shock hit me hard.

He had blocked me.

I stared at the screen, my mind racing. Why would he block me? Was it something I said? Something I did? The sting of confusion and hurt settled in like a slow burn, but I couldn't dwell on it. I needed answers.

I dialled his number again, this time choosing a regular call.

To my surprise, he answered.

"Hello?" His voice sounded strained, like someone caught off guard.

"Roman?" I said, trying to keep my voice calm even though my heart was pounding. "What's going on? Why haven't you come back to work? Everyone's been asking."

There was a pause. A silence so thick, it made my chest tighten.

"I'm getting better," he said quietly.

"Okay... but why did you block everyone? Your manager's looking for you. People are talking—saying you've disappeared, that you blocked the entire office. What's really going on?"

I heard the uncertainty in my voice, but I couldn't hold it back. "Are you coming back? Or should I take the silence as your answer?"

Another long silence.

Then finally, softly: "Let me call you back. I can't talk about it right now."

Before I could respond, he ended the call.

I stared at the phone, stunned. What was that? Why call back only to say nothing?

None of it made sense. Blocking me. Blocking everyone. That strange, distant tone in his voice.

I sat with it for a moment longer before deciding—I wasn't going to chase him. If he wanted to explain, he would. But whatever we had, it had come to an abrupt, unexplained halt.

And then, a month passed. Still no sign of Roman.

The office buzzed with rumors. No one had heard from him. And then, just like that, the final blow landed—Roman had been officially let go.

He hadn't reported when he'd be back. Never sent in his medical documents. Cut off all communication. He vanished.

It was hard to process.

One moment, he was the confident, charming man I was tangled up with, and the next... a ghost.

And yet, somehow, I felt an odd sense of peace. Maybe because I finally had an answer, even if it wasn't the one I wanted. Or maybe it was the quiet acceptance that it was over—no messy fallout, no final goodbye. Just silence.

Roman was a chapter that closed without a sound.

One evening, while tidying up my apartment, I opened the drawer and saw it—his gift. The lubricant from that last heated encounter. I hadn't touched it since. Seeing it now was like opening a time capsule—intimate, bittersweet.

I held it in my hand for a while, my fingers brushing over the bottle, letting the memories wash over me.

Strangely, I wasn't angry. I had always known it wouldn't last. What we had was intense but fleeting. Still, for a moment, I had felt wanted. Desired. Seen. And for that—I was thankful.

As I placed it back into the drawer, a thought stirred. It had been a while since I'd thought of him—my ex.

The one who broke me.

It was strange how the pain had dulled, how that darkness no longer hovered over everything. That toxic chapter—filled with manipulation and lies—felt distant now. Like someone else's story.

It wasn't that I had completely healed. But something had shifted.

Maybe this was growth. Or peace. Or just the soft, quiet beginning of something new.

Had I healed?

I didn't know. But I was no longer angry. No longer broken. No longer waiting for answers that would never come.

And for the first time in a long while, that was enough.

I stood there, surrounded by the calm, and realized:

This was the beginning of something different.

Something mine.

And I was ready.

It was a few weeks later, and life had a strange way of throwing distractions my way. The aftermath of Roman's disappearance had left me more at ease than I expected, but something was missing—a spark, a bit of excitement.

I wasn't looking for anything serious. After everything with Roman, I realized that I wasn't ready for commitment, nor did I really want to

be tied down. I needed something casual, something that wouldn't pull me back into the heavy emotional weight I had just left behind.

It was one of those days when everything seemed to be running late. I had set out for Pretoria, as usual, but somehow, time slipped away from me as I found myself lingering longer at the mall than planned. I wasn't sure what had happened—maybe I'd gotten distracted by the bright lights or the rows of stores—but before I knew it, the time had passed, and the afternoon rush had turned into night.

By the time I made my way to the taxi rank, I was already running behind, and I knew I had to get back soon. I waited there, tapping my foot impatiently, hoping that the taxi would fill quickly, but minutes turned into an hour. The line seemed endless, and as the crowd around me began to thin, I felt the frustration bubbling inside.

Finally, I gave up. I couldn't wait any longer. It was already too late to be taking a regular taxi ride, especially with how far I needed to go. I stepped out of the queue and started looking around for a safer place to stand where I could pull up a ride and get moving.

That's when I saw him—a man in a car parked nearby, the faint hum of the engine breaking the otherwise still night. He leaned out of his window and caught my eye, a look of amusement on his face.

"If you weren't paying with your card, I would've never taken this Uber ride," he said, grinning.

I raised an eyebrow, intrigued. "Why's that?"

He shrugged, his expression still playful. "It's late, you're going pretty far, and this time of night, there are scammers all over. Too many risks."

I couldn't help but laugh. It wasn't exactly the kind of conversation I expected to have, but something about it felt refreshing. I hadn't expected anyone to be so upfront, and it was oddly comforting to know that someone else had the same cautious instincts as I did.

"Fair enough," I replied, easing into the passenger seat. "But here I am, paying with my card, so I guess we're good."

He chuckled, pulling away from the curb. As we drove off into the night, the conversation seemed to flow effortlessly between us. We talked about everything—how we both had long days, the unpredictability of life, and how strange it was that I had ended up in the situation I was in, heading to Pretoria so late.

The more we talked, the easier it felt. It wasn't forced or awkward; it was just two people having a real conversation, sharing moments of laughter, and finding a strange comfort in each other's company.

There was a spark, something in the air that made me feel more alive than I had in a while. I wasn't expecting anything from this ride, just a simple trip to my destination. But the chemistry was undeniable. He had this easy confidence about him, and the way he looked at me when we joked about the city's late-night chaos made me feel something I hadn't felt in a long time.

I didn't know where this conversation was going, but I liked it. For the first time in what felt like ages, I allowed myself to lean into the moment, letting the lighthearted exchange carry me away from the heaviness I had been carrying.

As the car pulled up to my apartment, I felt a strange sense of regret that our conversation was coming to an end. We had spoken so easily, almost like we had known each other for longer than just that ride. He parked the car and turned to me, a thoughtful look crossing his face as he glanced over at me.

"You know," he said, his tone casual but with an underlying confidence, "if you're not too familiar with Johannesburg, I could help you out. Show you around a bit, maybe even help you find a new place to stay if you're looking."

I raised an eyebrow, intrigued. "You could?"

He nodded, a small smile tugging at the corner of his lips. "Yeah, I know the city pretty well. And if you're getting tired of the place you're living now"—he paused for a moment, glancing over at me as if sensing

something—“I’ve got referrals for some nice spots. I don’t mind driving you around to have a look if you want.”

I hadn’t expected this at all, but it sounded like exactly what I needed. The constant noise from my neighbors had been driving me insane, the late-night arguments and barking dogs making sleep nearly impossible. I had been toying with the idea of finding a new place for weeks, but navigating Johannesburg on my own felt daunting.

“Yeah, that sounds like it could be really helpful,” I said, the relief evident in my voice. “I’ve been thinking about moving because of the noise, but I don’t really know the area well enough.”

He smiled again, this time with a hint of pride. “I’ve got your back. Let me know when you’re ready, and I can show you around.”

There was a moment of silence before he added, “Oh, I should probably ask for your number, right? That way we can keep in touch when you’re ready to look at places.”

I hesitated for just a second, but the practicality of the situation made me hand over my number without much thought. I had nothing to lose and everything to gain by getting some help from someone who knew the city better than I did.

“Thanks,” he said after I gave it to him. “I’ll be in touch soon.”

He gave me a nod, and as I stepped out of the car and onto the sidewalk, a small wave of anticipation rolled through me. I didn’t know much about this man—his background, his life outside of being an Uber driver—but something about his ease, his straightforward nature, made me feel like I could trust him.

At least for now.

A few days passed after I’d given Kingston my number, but I never got around to reaching out. Life, as it always does, got in the way. Work, errands, exhaustion—it all blurred into one continuous loop. Our conversation faded into the background, tucked somewhere between good intentions and forgotten to-do lists.

It wasn't until one evening, after a long and frustrating week at the office, that I found myself standing outside, waiting for a ride. All I wanted was to get home, shower, and slip into something soft. I opened the Uber app without a second thought, barely glancing at the details. I just wanted to be picked up—fast.

When the familiar black car pulled up in front of me, my heart stuttered.

I walked over, and there he was. Kingston. Behind the wheel.

He grinned like he'd been waiting for this moment. "Well, well, well," he said with a teasing lilt. "Look who finally decided to call me."

I chuckled, slightly embarrassed. "I know, I know. I totally ghosted you after we exchanged numbers. My bad."

He raised an eyebrow, amused. "Yeah? I was starting to think I got played."

I laughed, trying to shrug it off. "It's not like that. Things just got hectic. You know how life is."

He shook his head, still grinning. "Uh-huh. 'Busy.' Right."

I slid into the passenger seat as he pulled away from the curb, guiding the car smoothly into the night traffic. A comfortable silence settled between us, warm and unspoken. His presence had a way of quieting the noise in my head, and I didn't realize until then how much I'd missed that.

"So," he said, glancing over at me, "I was thinking about our conversation the other day. You still looking for a place?"

I nodded. "Yeah, I am. I just haven't had the time to follow up. I know I said I'd reach out... but I didn't."

He looked at me, the teasing fading slightly. "I'm not mad," he said, sincerity softening his tone. "I figured you were dealing with stuff. But if you're still interested, I meant what I said—I can take you to see a few places this weekend."

I smiled, guilt tugging at me. “Thanks, Kingston. I really do appreciate that. I’ll definitely take you up on it. Just... don’t ghost me again, okay?”

He laughed, flashing that easy smile of his. “I won’t. Promise.”

As if he was the one that ghosted me.

The car slowed as we approached my apartment. The headlights washed over the building’s entrance, and I felt something shift. Maybe it was the way Kingston looked at me—not like I was another passenger, but like someone worth knowing. Worth showing up for.

“You’re home,” he said gently, pulling to a stop.

I turned to him and held his gaze for a moment longer than necessary. The car idled between us, the quiet humming like a heartbeat. There was no pressure, no expectation—just something unspoken.

Something beginning.

His face was half-lit by the amber glow of the streetlight outside, shadows dancing across his jawline. He had one of those quietly handsome faces—strong but not intimidating, softened by a kindness that lingered in his eyes. His skin was a deep, rich brown, smooth and even, like polished mahogany. A faint dimple showed when he smiled, and his lips, full and relaxed, curved just slightly now, like he knew something I didn’t.

His eyes, dark and thoughtful, held mine with quiet confidence. There was depth there—a steadiness that made it easy to believe every word he said. His brows were thick but neat, giving his face a kind of seriousness that contrasted with his playful charm.

And then there was his scent, faint but clean—soap, a hint of musk, and something else I couldn’t place but already associated with him.

He wasn’t beautiful in the polished, magazine-cover way. He was better than that. Real. Undone. And undeniably magnetic in the kind of way you don’t see coming until it’s already happening.

“Thanks for the ride,” I said, getting out of the car. I turned back to him with a smirk. “And for the reminder that I totally ghosted you.”

He chuckled, his eyes locking with mine, carrying a knowing glint. “No problem. I’ll be waiting for your call when you’re ready.”

Despite the great conversations and occasional laughter we shared during our rides, I hadn’t reached out to Kingston. To me, he was just another driver—someone I didn’t really know outside of a few interactions. As much as I enjoyed his company, I wasn’t looking for anything serious, and I definitely wasn’t about to complicate my life by asking for his help finding a place. Things were already busy enough.

Then, one evening, my phone rang. Kingston’s name lit up the screen. I hadn’t expected him to reach out again—but there it was.

“Hey, what’s up?” I answered, keeping my tone casual.

“I was wondering if I could see you,” he said. His voice was warm, but there was a flicker of uncertainty there, like he wasn’t sure how I’d respond.

I hesitated, surprised by the directness of the request. Still, I went with it. “Sure. When?”

“I’ll be outside your gate in five minutes,” he said.

Five minutes. I blinked. I hadn’t expected him to be that close—or that prepared. But true to his word, he pulled up just a few minutes later. I walked over, and we stood talking at the gate. Just like before, conversation came easily. We laughed, teased each other, slipped into that effortless rhythm that had always been there between us.

Then came the unexpected.

As we wrapped up our chat, Kingston gave me a small, almost shy smile. “Can I get a hug?”

I paused but nodded, stepping into his arms. It felt harmless—familiar, even. But then, as I began to pull away, he lingered, just a breath too long. And before I could fully process what was happening, he leaned in.

His lips found mine.

I froze.

It was soft, unassuming, but entirely unexpected. I had never looked at him like that—never let myself. To me, he was a friend. Someone I could joke with, maybe trust in small ways, but never anything more.

And yet... I didn't pull away. I kissed him back.

There was something disarming in his gentleness, something that made it hard to retreat. But as the kiss ended, reality snapped back into focus. I stepped away slowly, trying to make sense of it all. The shift between us was undeniable—and it caught me completely off guard.

"I think we need to talk about this," I said, my voice softer now, uncertain. "Maybe not right now, but... when we're both thinking clearly."

He nodded, his expression unreadable. "Yeah, you're right. I just... didn't want to leave things hanging."

I offered him a small, uncertain smile. "We'll talk. Just not tonight."