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The Big Change

Chapter One

"Get up!" my mother said. "It's morning and you know what that means!" she called from downstairs. "Hurry up and get dressed, you don't want to be late for the first day of school." I got out of bed and walked stiffly across the floor. I walked over to the dresser and pulled out my favourite pink t-shirt and green shorts. Then I trotted over to the bathroom and looked at my reflection. I stared at my blank face and my dark brown hair. Why? Why did I have to be different from all the kids in the school or maybe even the city? I pulled myself out of the bathroom finally. I walked downstairs to the tiny kitchen and sat down on a stool. My mom came out of her room and gave me a sad glance. "What's...?" That's all she got out before I burst into tears. "Why? Why mother? Why do I have to be different from all the kids here? Tell me why! You know everything mother, why?" "No, I don't know everything...but here is what I do know: you will get used to it. You will make lots of new friends and everyone will like you," she said. I kept crying, but said nothing else. A minute later I stopped crying; eight minutes later I was in the car, and we were off. I sat silently in the car with my new purple backpack and fairy lunch kit in my hands. Soon we pulled up by the school gate.

"Hop out, and let's go see what class you're in." Mother stepped slowly out of the car and gazed up at the sky. "This is a lovely place," she said as she grabbed my hand lightly. It was a lovely place. There were some tall willows by a sand pit. Farther away there was a field of daisies and buttercups. I was so happy I came here until I looked on and I saw other children playing on the playground. White children, not like me. I was black. I wasn't like them. If I could I would have hid behind mother but she started down the stairs pulling me with her. I had no choice but to go with her. She led me across the winding sidewalk into a long building. The halls were crowded with children and chatting parents. The first thing I noticed was there were only white people, no black. Mother pulled me through the big crowd of people. She pulled me to a poster board and held me tightly while she scanned through papers. "Katube, here is your name. You are in...Ms. McPhearson's class and you will be doing grade 1." "RING, RING!" The school bell rang, and within only three seconds everything went blurry.

Chapter Two

Children rushed everywhere, parents shouting "Good bye, I will see you after school," and things like that. Mother tugged at me while squeezing through the crowd. Finally she took me through a door. I stared. Only white children were in seats or standing. They all seemed to turn to us. They all stared with curiosity. But mother just took me to the teacher's desk and said. "Ms. McPhearson, this is Katube. Katube has been worried she won't fit in." "Yes, I see," Ms. McPhearson whispered in a low tone. "Do you want to bring her to her seat?" "Ok," mother said. She looked around a little before she found it. The desk was long and smooth with a little chair. On top of the desk there was a nametag saying "**Katube**" in bold red letters. "Here you are, your new school and desk." Mother had seen me look around the room without blinking once. Everyone was still watching me, and no one said a word. At that moment I felt lonely.

Chapter Three

Mother left the room saying "I love you." I didn't respond although I wanted to. "Everyone take your seats." I turned to see Ms. McPhearson at the chalkboard, and everyone knew she was talking to me. I sat down slowly and carefully. Mother had already put my bags in the cloakroom. "Now let's start off with learning your names. Let's go to the carpet and sit in a circle. We will take turns saying our names. Jack you go first." A small shy looking child said in a small voice "Jack." "Now Kyla" "Kyla!" she yelled. "Katie." "Mark." "Hannah." "Ty." "Noah." "Rachel." Everyone paused and looked at me. "Katube", I said softly. "Joe." "Ally." "Olivia." "Haley." "Arlo." "Emma." "Emily." "Cooper." "Very good class," said Ms. McPhearson. "Now let's go to our seats and do math." She walked to the board and wrote $3+10=$. Everyone's hand shot up all except mine. At that moment I started daydreaming about good friends that I wish could have come along. Awhile later I was startled by Ms. McPhearson. "Now let's do writing" She started handing out papers. "The topic will be 'you as an imaginary creature.'" I started writing quickly, it was my favourite subject. Soon I started remembering what happened in the past again. This time it was about father. Father had died and mother had to leave her job. Father had been killed which made us very sad. It also convinced us to move because – no father, no job, no money. We had to sneak away at night and we could not bring lights or anything like that. The hard part was finding a place to hide at dawn. So we used all of our money to get away from Sierra Leone and apply to get to Canada. I continued to write.

I raised my hand "What is it Katube?" "I'm done" "Can I see?" I walked over without making a sound. "Here" I said and carefully put it down on her desk. More kids started to raise their hands and walk over. "You can pick a book to read." She pulled out a bin of books from behind her desk and put it on the table, I walked over and pulled out a book about "Anne of Green Gables" and took it to my desk to read. The cover looked interesting. I turned the page carefully and began reading. I liked to read, it was fun and I don't know how to explain it. I looked up at the clock and it was almost time for recess. I tried to read quicker but it was pretty hard and soon I just read normally. Then the bell rang. I put the book in a separate bin for later. I got an apple for snack and headed to the door. I just realized what was I going to do for fifteen minutes? I finally realized. I walked timidly to the willows. Sat down under the shade and looked at the flowers thinking about my mother. I thought of mother probably having a good time at work. I wished I had said good bye this morning. I began to daydream again but this time about the book. I began to wonder if Anne had problems fitting into a new place like I did even though she was white.

At that moment I noticed someone was watching me. I began to shiver and very slowly turned around bravely. It was Rachel from my class "What are you doing here?" she asked, her face turned bright red. "I was going to ask...if you...if...we can be...," she took a deep breath, "...friends?" "friends!" I had a feeling, a feeling of hope I could be happy here, and maybe I could make more friends. I tried to come up with an answer but I just blurted out "yes...of course I would love to." "Great what do you want to do?" "what do you want to do?" I asked. "Let's play on the teeter-totter" said Rachel. "Great, let's go!" I was no longer afraid. All I wanted to do was play with my new friend. We skipped all the way holding hands. I had found a friend.

The End