

PART ONE

The idea of dating your boss is never a good one. I learnt this the hard way.

My relationship with my boss made me happier than I had been for some time. He loved me and I loved him. Nothing about it felt wrong.

We had to be sneaky about our relationship because he was the manager and I was his secretary and also because of our age difference, but it made it a lot more exciting. I loved how nonchalant he pretended to be towards me when people were looking and the winks and smiles he gave when no one was.

How we'd sneak into his office or at the back of his car and kiss longingly, not caring in the moment if anyone was watching. It was exciting.

I was deeply attracted to him for some reason, maybe because of my love for men who are significantly older than me, which has always been the case probably because I lost my father at a young age. Whatever the reason, I was happy to be happy..

On a Friday while at work, he passed by my table with a file in hand and, without looking at my direction, he said, "Ginika, my office."

"Okay sir," I answered, trying to hide my smile, then stood up and followed.

We got into his office and I locked the door behind then pulled him close to me and kissed him. He kissed me back for a while, then pulled away.

"I have a meeting in about ten minutes," he said after checking his wristwatch.

"That's enough time," I said and tried to kiss him again, but he pulled away, then held my cheek.

"We have to be careful."

"You worry too much."

"Well, one of us has to," he said, and I rolled my eyes.

He held my hand, then walked over to his seat and sat down, then put me on his lap.

"Come over to my place this weekend," he said, and I shook my head.

"I can't."

“Why not?”

“My mum is not feeling too well, so I have to take care of her.”

“Hope it’s nothing serious?” he asked, his voice filled with concern.

“No, nothing serious, it’s probably just stress.”

“Maybe I should come introduce myself to her.”

“Eh!” I shouted, then burst out laughing, but then I noticed he was serious. “Wait, are you serious?”

“Of course, we’re too old to be running around, in and outside of work. I am too old. Besides, we’ve been together for about four months.”

I adjusted uncomfortably on his lap. It was a bad idea; I knew it, but a part of me wanted to risk it. There was no way my mother was going to be okay with me dating my boss, who was twenty years older than me, but like she always said, you can find love anywhere and with anyone.

“Alright then,” I said, and he looked more shocked than I did when he brought up the idea.

“Are you sure?”

“No, I’m not, but you are going to have to meet her one day, so it might as well be today.”

That day after work, we drove together to his apartment. He freshened up and changed, then we went together to my house. On the way I began to regret my decision, a lot of things went through my mind. What if it was too soon? What if she doesn’t like him because he is my boss and a bit too old for me? I loved my mother. It’s been just the two of us for a long time. Her approval mattered a lot to me. He noticed my worry, so he placed his hand on mine, his way of telling me it was going to be okay.

We got to my house and parked in the compound, then we both came down and I took a deep breath. He grabbed my hand, then turned me towards him and held my cheek to kiss me. It was funny how a man in his forties was more romantic than any young man I have ever been involved with.

As we kissed, I heard a door open, and I pulled away. It was my mum and from the shock on her face; I knew she had seen us kiss. She dropped the broom in her hand on the floor, then pointed at us. I walked up to her, but she was not looking at me, her eyes

were fixed on my boss. I didn't look at him, but I could imagine he was frightened. My mum tends to have that effect on people.

"You... your," she stammered. I looked at him, and he didn't look scared or frightened. He looked shocked. They stared at each other like they knew one another. My eyes went back and forth at them before my mother spoke again.

"Your... you've... you've met your father," she said, and I froze. My eyes widened, and I looked at him, he didn't seem shocked by the news or confused but I knew I had to be reading his expression wrong because I knew my father, he died when I was five but I still remember his face and his pictures are all over the walls in the house and the man I had spent the last few months dreaming of our lives together, could not be him.

PART TWO

I disliked him at first, his poise and how he never smiled and rarely answered greetings.

I remember the first time we spoke more than two words to each other.

It was the day I saw him in his car after work looking sad and down.

For some reason, I felt bad for him, so I walked to his car and knocked on its window. He turned to me, then rolled down his window.

"Yes?"

"Sorry sir, is everything okay?" I asked.

"Nothing to worry about," he said, then turned away.

"Are you sure?" I pestered.

"I said there's nothing to worry about!" He shouted, then I nodded, turned and walked away.

Before I got too far, I heard him call my name. He had come down from his car and was now standing not too far from me.

I rolled my eyes before turning to him and said, "yes sir."

"Sorry about that," he apologized.

"It's fine," I said, avoiding eye contact.

"No, it's not. I was rude. I am just having a really bad day."

"Sure," I said, then he put his hands in his pocket and moved closer to me.

"You're headed home, right? Let me drop you off, if that's okay."

"No need."

"Please let me," he persisted and, for the sake of my job, I followed him. I was new at the time and I didn't want him to dislike me more than I thought he did.

He smiled after I agreed. I had never seen him smile. I smiled too, but I didn't let him see.

From that moment started an unexpected friendship, which turned out to be more. We went from smiling at each other when we passed the hallway to short conversations when we met at the elevator and finally to dinners, kisses and sex.

We were still standing in the middle of the compound, quiet. I was waiting for the part where they'll both laugh and say they were just pulling my legs or explain that it was all a misunderstanding but it didn't happen, so I turned to my mother.

"Mummy, what are you talking about?" I asked. Tears began to form in her eyes, her lips were quivering. It was like she was trying to speak but couldn't, so I turned to my boss.

"Do you know my mother?"

He hesitated for a while then said, "we were... we were in love once."

"No!" I shouted. "No, no, no you were not."

I walked up to him with tears filled in my eyes. He didn't look at me, no matter how much I tried to make him, he didn't making me feel more frustrated than I already did.

I turned to my mother. "Mummy, please tell me this is all a mistake. It can't be true." I said, staring deep into her eyes in desperation.

"I'm sorry," she said, then looked at me with tears in her eyes. "There's a lot you don't know."

We entered the house and went to the living room, where my mum explained everything to us.

They had met while they were both in the University. About two years of dating, she got pregnant.

They were both young, with no idea of how to take care of a baby, so they agreed to get an abortion, which didn't work out. My mom's parents found out and disowned her. They went to his parents, who were rich politicians, and they took her in.

They agreed in front of my father to take care of my mother and me, but later went behind his back to frighten my mother into making sure she never had me. They offered her money and the phone number of a doctor that could help her with an abortion.

She took it and left, but never went to see the doctor. She dropped out from school, went to a place she was sure no one would recognize her, then had me and raised me. It was a month after she had me she met the man I grew up believing was my father. He agreed to raise me with her and to never tell anyone the truth.

I was quiet for a while before running up to my room, not minding how much my mum called for me to come back. I was angry and sad. I paced around my room in frustration until I fell on my knees and cried my eyes out.

All I could think of was how I was going to continue living with all I had just found out.

I wished I had never found out. I wished at some point we broke up and I resigned, then we went our separate ways without ever knowing. I wished my mother had just killed me in her womb.

I opened my drawer to check for painkillers cause my whole body was hurting. I brought it out and took the two prescribed tablets, stared at it for a while, then added another two. I didn't just want the pain I felt to stop at the moment I wanted it to stop forever, so I took all the tablets in the pack and swallowed it with a glass of water.

After taking it, I heard a knock on my door. It was my father.

"Hey," he called after coming in. "Are you okay?"

"You look okay for someone who just found out that he has been having sex with his daughter."

"I'm still processing the whole thing. It's difficult for me too," he said and I scoffed.

"Processing Pro..." I coughed and staggered.

"Are you okay?" he asked.

“No,” I said. I could feel my eyes turn, the cup of water in my hand fell and spilled on the floor and as I bent down to get it, I tripped on the water and fell hitting the back of my head on a table.

Few days later I woke up to the disturbing smell of drugs. I opened my eyes slowly and saw my mum sitting by my side. He was there too, sitting in a corner. He jerked up when he saw me open my eyes, then ran out to call a doctor. Soon, a doctor rushed in with him.

“How are you feeling?” the doctor asked.

I took a deep breath, looked at my mother, then at my father, who was smiling at me. The smile felt distant and sad and immediately I knew what I had to do.

“How did... mummy what am I doing here?” I asked, feigning surprise.

“Don’t you remember how you got here?” The doctor asked.

“No... no I don’t,” I lied, then turned to my father. “Who is he?”

They looked at each other, confused for a while, before turning back to me.

“Don’t you know who he is?” My mother asked, and I shook my head.

“But you recognize your mother?” The doctor asked, and I nodded.

My father moved closer to me, held my hands, and looked into my eyes. He was not trying to be a father or a boss who cared about his employee, he looked at me like one would look like a lover and I knew he would never be able to look at me any other way and neither would I and this was the only way I could put an end to what we had so when he asked with sadness filled in his voice, “Are you sure you don’t recognize me and you don’t remember how you got here?”

I stared right back at him for a while before pulling my hand away and turning away, then said, “No... no, I don’t remember.”

He nodded his head, then said to my mother, “Maybe it’s for the best,” before standing up to leave.

He knew I was lying; he knew me too well not to know, and I was glad he didn’t make it harder than it already was.

As he walked out of my room, I could feel my chest tighten and I thought; maybe death was better.

