

BECAUSE I LOVE HER

Transcript (ENG)



Because I Love Her (2016) is a Guestbook Project produced by Boy Pasha as part of “Exchanging Stories: Changing History”

Participants Lydie Waridi Kone & Robert Muramira

English Translation Boy Pasha

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Lydie Waridi Kone: Good Morning, good evening.

My name is Lydie Waridi Kone. I'm 28 years old. And I am Congolese and I am married to Robert Muramira who is a Rwandan. It has been almost five years now since we are married and God has blessed us with two little children, two little girls.

Robert Muramira: My name is Robert Muramira.

I am Rwandan. I live here in Gisenyi. I am married. I have two daughters. I am a teacher of history in a high school.

[Intertitle: What does Congo represent to you?]

LK: The Democratic Republic of the Congo is my country. I grew up there. I was born there. It is the country of my ancestors. It is my origin. It is my identity.

[Intertitle: What does Rwanda represent to you?]

RM: Rwanda... I love Rwanda. Apart from being my country, the country where I was born, Rwanda is a country where people are really hard workers. A Country where... people preserve their dignity.

[Intertitle: Where did you meet?]

LK: We met at University in Kinshasa. I was studying philosophy and he was doing theology. He wanted to become a priest.

RM: Yeah, I remember I was in school in Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I was studying theology at the Catholic University of Kinshasa. First of all, when I was told that I would go continue my studies in Congo I was afraid. I was wondering how I would be living there considering the difficult relationships between the people of Congo and of Rwanda. I didn't know how I would behavior when I will be there in Congo. I had to dissimulate my identity. So I was introducing myself as a Congolese from the province of North Kivu as the populations of that province share a lot of cultural similarities with the people of Rwanda. So, in order to live in Kinshasa, I had to dissimulate my identity.

And, when I arrived in Kinshasa, I went at the same university as Lydie who, a little bit later became my wife. You know, the first time I saw her, apart from the fact that I had a crush on her, I asked myself, how will I reveal my real identity to her? Because she really wanted to know me more. She kept asking but this was really challenging to me. I was wondering, if I let her know that I am a Rwandan, is she going to accept me? What would her reaction be?

Lydie: I didn't know that he was a Rwandan. I didn't know that. I though he was a Congolese.

RM: When our relationship became stronger I finally decided to clearly tell her that I was a Rwandan. Immediately she went like [gestures being taken aback] what? Are you a Rwandan? I said yes, I am a Rwandan.

LK: How would I get rid of this Rwandan? How will I tell my mother and my parents

that I have a boyfriend, a future fiancé who is a Rwandan? Okay, he is a Rwandan. After he said that, he wanted to know if I would continue with our relationship. I said yes, but actually I lied...anyway, I couldn't directly say no—ok, we are done and it's over, no! I was preparing myself to stop this relationship after two days, or let us say a week. I will certainly put an end to this relationship because I didn't want any problem with my family. Especially not because of a Rwandan. But, after a week, our relationship became stronger. I announced to my family, my parents. I told them that I found a fiancé. My mother's first question was what tribe is he from? That's when the bombs exploded.

A Rwandan? With my daughter? Never!

RM: I remember one day one of her aunts called me and told me, "Do not talk to our niece any more. It is over! We don't want you in our family."

LK: The first time I came in Rwanda was in 2010.

I remember I was very afraid! So afraid. With all that was said about Rwanda by that time, my fear was justified. I went in Rwanda to visit my future husband's family as by that time my husband and I were engaged. Before we leave Congo, our family and some friends told us — gosh, they told us all kinds of horrors. In Rwanda, don't talk too much. They're mean people. Don't talk on a bus. Don't look at Rwandans in their eyes otherwise you will be arrested. Don't do this! Don't do that!

RM: Even I was a bit afraid, especially on how I would behave.

LK: My brother and I were communicating only by small movements because we thought if we talked too much we would be arrested. But when we arrived at my husband's house, it was the opposite of what we had in mind. We found a peaceful family with girls and women. We were so warmly welcomed that my brother and I asked ourselves is this a Congolese family? It was so good and during the three days we spent with my husband's family things were rather simple to us.

RM: She assured me and everything went well.

[Intertitle: How was it possible?]

LK: Love fixes a lot of problems. It fixed ours.

We officially got engaged. We got married. But one of my grandmothers in the village said, "Never! I will never put my feet at Lydie's house. Never!" But the day of our wedding she sent us a big gift pumpkin. She prepared that big gift, she packed it and sent it all the way from the village in Congo. The gift crossed the border and welcomed it at our house in Rwanda. And the day I gave birth to my first daughter, she came to the hospital despite what she said before. She was the first one to carry my baby. And despite what she said a couple of months ago she accompanied me to my house, and when she saw my husband she simply said, "you are the one who took my daughter." It's fine.

[Intertitle: Why did you continue?]

RM: Because since the very first day I loved her. I really loved her. And I

believed that love transcends our cultural and regional considerations. I said to myself if I fail to marry her only because I am Rwandan, then I would be unhappy. So I said, being from different nationalities or cultural differences between us cannot stop me since I really love her. I knew that beyond our differences there was love. And I really loved her.

LK: I am happy. In this man, I found what I didn't find in a Congolese man. May be this is a woman in love talking to you. May be. But Rwandan or not, it's a man! And remains a man!

RM: We've understood that our union is not a fusion, meaning that we keep our identities, our differences, and we accept each other just like we are. Because our difference is our wealth.

This document has been provided by the Guestbook Project, an international project committed to transforming hostility into hospitality, enmity into empathy, and conflict into conversation.

Because I Love Her was produced as part of the Guestbook Project's 'Exchanging Stories - Changing Histories' initiative, creating opportunities for young people from communities that have been polarized by religion, race, ethnicity, or culture to come together to trade stories and make short videos. Working with peace organizations, community art groups, innovative schools and cultural workers from areas torn by conflict and injustice.

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