



Friends New Underground Railroad

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R's Story: "Thanks FNUR - you are the heroes" – A Friends New Underground Railroad Story

Born in a powerful Christian family, my dad has planted many churches in and around Uganda. I was raised in church. My dad at 59 is still a powerful pastor in some of the biggest churches. I don't want to expose the "fool" right now as I am still trying to forgive him and do away with hate and pain in my heart.

I went to Christian schools founded on Christian principles. However all my life I knew I am not like any other girl. This made me withdraw a lot from socialising with fellow teenage girls of my age. My mother noticed so early and she always talked to me. Till I told her that mummy, I'm sexually attracted to fellow girls, she became so mad at me. But by high school I had known my sexual orientation and I wanted it to appear known to the family. I tried all sorts of help thinking it might be a problem, but before joining university I made peace with my heart that I am a lesbian, having attempted several suicide attempts because of lack of support and care, I said it's all well, I am a lesbian and that's it.

Stubbornly during a family meeting I went with my ex-girl (RIP - Sharon who committed suicide in 2013 when we separated) and introduced her to the family as my girl. I thought my braveness will force the family to accept me, I knew dad and mummy loved me. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to pull this off. We were flogged and chased away, never to return. This was in 2011 and that's the last time I saw a blood family member. We changed towns, moving from one town to another till we decided that life isn't for us in towns. We decided to settle in the rural, even in the rural sometimes word could get around as the community saw us as strange.

As we were considering to go and settle in Northern Uganda, seek employment and try to live a normal life, Sharon took her life. We were not getting along considering the countless problems we were going through. This was so hard on me and I decided to move to another rural area targeting areas where people are most likely not to mind me.

Financial struggles reached a limit where I even considered entering prostitution but the thought of having to sleep with a man made me feel as if the world was ending. In Uganda unless you are in the city it's hard to get a lesbian willing to pay for sex.

As I was still being bothered by all those troubles, hell broke loose and shit was more tight than I can even talk here. The gay bill was signed into law and my father didn't waste time to preach about it and how God gave him the powers to chase me from the family, clan, and later alone get me banished from the community. He was happy that he hadn't heard from me. A secret closet church member updated me once in a while.

A simple mistake got me exposed in the rural place where I was staying, and the village took it upon themselves to beat me to confess that I am a lesbian. But since I had made contact with a fearless activist, I will call him SB, who introduced me to Tony some time back, I directly jumped on a bodaboda [motorcycle taxi] and went to their hiding place. I was welcomed. It disturbs me that Tony passed on,

having worked to save many gays from death together with FNUR. They viewed my case with so many questions but through their connections they researched and knew my case was real. FNUR provided the transport and an escape route and I left Uganda.

In Sept, I was given a working and stay Visa in UEA and a one Rob paid for my airticket.

Am now working in one of the world largest malls, I have housing, a job, feed well and have hope. It's so hot in Dubai compared with Uganda, I used to think it's so conservative but people here are so busy and just mind their business. When the storm settles, governments change, laws turned down, I will return to Uganda one day and tell dad that you were an asshole.

Thanks FNUR - you are the heroes, Uganda needs more of FNUR, these are servants who only need you to be out of danger. I think many foundations and charities have a lot to learn from FNUR. They help while giving you respect. I have met a few other lesbians who escaped through other organisations but gosh, it's gross, they tell their ordeal, how they were made feel inhuman, they had to show that they are lesbians, some even to an extent of showing their privacy to people who wanted to take advantage of them. Some even had to bribe to be accepted, visible help but maybe a few connections, they had to hand in their passwords of the social media and emails, bring pictures. That was so bad, others just decided to give up, some went into hiding, some took their lives. That's why I have all praises for FNUR. Thanks once again, I wish to wish you a happy 2015 if we get there but with God's love we shall made it to 2015

Cheers folks
R

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can help other people like R.**

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Thanks!