

The Hairdresser
of Harare

Tendai Huchu

PHOTOGRAPH BY BOB MCDEVITT



TENDAI HUCHU was born in 1982 in Bindura, Zimbabwe. He attended Churchill High School in Harare and then went to the University of Zimbabwe to study Mining Engineering in 2001. He dropped out in the middle of the first semester when he discovered that the maths had more letters and symbols than it had numbers. Tendai has a great love of literature, in particular the nineteenth century Russian novel. He is now a qualified podiatrist and lives in Edinburgh, Scotland.

One

I knew there was something not quite right about Dumi the very first time I ever laid eyes on him. The problem was, I just couldn't tell what it was. Thank God for that.

There was a time that I was reputed to be the best hairdresser in Harare, which meant the best in the whole country. Amai Ngoro was the fussiest customer to ever grace a salon and she would not let any ordinary *kiya-kiya* touch her hair. Having sampled all the salons in Harare – and rejected them all – she settled on ours. The fussiest customer was also the largest motor mouth and gossip-monger. Once she was our client, we never needed to advertise again, as long as we kept her happy. That was my job and why Mrs Khumalo paid me the highest wage.

Khumalo Hair and Beauty Treatment Salon was in the Avenues, a short walking distance from the city centre. We did hair but never any beauty treatments. In any case I doubt any of us knew how to. There was a rusty metal sign painted white with black lettering on the front gate that pointed to our establishment. The rust, accumulated over several rainy seasons, had eaten away so much of the sign that only Khu—l-, a drawing of a lady with a huge afro and an arrow still showed. Our customers didn't need it, the directions were simple.

‘Go up from Harare Gardens, skip two roads, take a left, skip another road and look for the blue house on your right, not the green one, and you’re there.’ You’d have to be a nincompoop to miss it.

The front section of the house, which once served as a lounge, was converted into an internet café with a dozen or so computers. You could hear the fans humming and the shriek of the dialler from the pavement across the road. Their prices weren’t too bad either, compared to those at Eastgate or Ximex Mall. The rest of the main house was used by the Khumalo family, all thirteen of them.

Our salon was at the back in what used to be the boy’s kaya, servant’s quarters. From across the yard, the fragrant aroma of relaxers, dyes, shampoos and a dozen other chemicals hit you. The smell merged with the dust from the driveway and left something in your nostrils that you couldn’t shake off until the next time you caught a cold.

The building had been crudely extended. A wall had been knocked down to the left and concrete blocks hastily laid to add another seven metres. Such architectural genius had left us with a hybrid building, the likes of which you could only find if you looked hard. The right of the building was constructed of proper burnt bricks, professionally built in every respect. You could see the dividing line where the cheap concrete blocks had been used. Aesthetics aside, we were all grateful for the accommodation though it rattled a little during heavy storms.

Each morning I was greeted by Agnes with, “Sisi Vimbai, you’re late again. Customers are waiting.” Mrs Khumalo’s eldest daughter held the keys and opened shop.

I would make a sound like ‘Nxii’ with my lips and walk in without greeting the cow. I hated her, she hated me twice as much and so long as mummy wasn’t in, there was no need to pretend otherwise. Everyone knew I was the goose that laid the golden eggs. If I left, half the customers would follow me. In any case letting them wait made them realise how lucky they were to be served at all, so I was actually doing the business a favour.

There were three other hairdressers, Memory, Patricia and Yolanda

plus Charlie Boy, our barber, who always came in smelling of Chibuku. The salon was my personal fiefdom and I was queen bee. I would throw my handbag on the floor underneath the cashier's desk and boil myself a cup of tea.

"There is a new style I want you to do for me." How often have I heard these words, usually followed by a folded picture torn from some glossy American magazine.

"Nxii, I can do that easily, it's just the style for you!" I always indulged them with a white lie.

There's only one secret to being a successful hairdresser and I've never withheld it from anyone. 'Your client should leave the salon feeling like a white woman.' Not Coloured, not Indian, not Chinese. I have told this to everyone who's ever asked me and what they all want to know is how d'you make someone feel like a white woman. Sigh, yawn, scratch.

The answer is simple, 'whiteness is a state of mind'.

Mrs Khumalo understands this and that's why she would never fire me. The other girls don't understand it and that's why Patricia was fired. The stupid girl got pregnant less than six months into the job, so, of course, Mrs K. had no choice. Hairdressers are there to sell an image and that image is not pushing a football in your belly. Suddenly we had a vacancy. Little did I know that this small twist of fate would cost me my crown.

Two

The grapevine is an amazing thing. Patricia had only been sacked for two days but the phone was already ringing off the hook. Each caller had somehow heard that we had a vacancy and they were ready to start straight away. I must have answered a dozen calls before I refused to take another one. Agnes sat in a corner reading a magazine. She only ever worked when her mother was in.

I was doing a perm for a fat customer when the phone rang again.

“You’re doing nothing, can you answer the phone?” I shouted. If she’d been my daughter, I would have slapped her.

She got up slowly and went to the desk.

“Helloow,” she said like a person on a toilet, but the caller had already hung up.

“Sit by the phone and write all their names and details into that exercise book.” This girl was so lazy, you had to spell everything out.

“Don’t you tell me what to do! You’re just a worker. One day you’re going to get fired too and I’ll be answering calls for your job.”

‘Stupid girl, if I go your mother will be out of business’ was what I wanted to say, but we had customers. My ugly one wriggled uncomfortably. I could tell she was not feeling white yet, but I was so angry I couldn’t have cared less.

Wearing a green Nigerian bou bou, which hugged the contours of

her amply fed body, Mrs Khumalo came in later that day kicking the dust off her feet. The government had given her a few hectares on a farm thirty kilometres down the Mazowe Road so she spent a good amount of her time there. It was where Mr Khumalo now lived permanently, since they'd also been given the farm manager's house.

"Agnes, get me a glass of water." Her high-pitched voice echoed round the room. Whenever she spoke, it was so loudly that I assumed she thought we were all deaf. She drank the water in one gulp and placed the glass on the desk. Behind her puffed eyelids, her tiny eyes surveyed the salon and seemed disappointed that there weren't more customers in the queue.

"*Makadini henyu*, Mrs Khumalo?" my fat customer said.

"Matilda, I'd heard you'd left us for Easy Touch Salon." Mrs K. never forgot any of her customers' names, a trait that I wished I shared.

"They're cheaper but they don't know what they're doing." Fat Matilda answered.

"Everyone who goes there comes back. I hear horror stories about people's hair snapping off." It was an exaggeration, but destroying a competitor's reputation was all part of the game. Easy Touch, in turn, spread a rumour that we were wenches who wanted to steal our customers' husbands. It must have scared some women off because we were all beautiful except for Agnes who shared her mother's toadyish shape. Neither mother nor daughter had necks. Shame.

It was left to me to tell Mrs Khumalo about the calls we'd been getting for the vacancy. This was something else I admired about her. Had it been another person, they would have looked for a relative to fill the position, but not Mrs Khumalo. She wanted the best people working for her.

I put Fatty in the dryer in the centre of the room for her perm to set before I could take the rollers out. One wall of the salon had the wash-basins, the other chairs and a third side was reserved for Charlie Boy and his male customers. The dryers were placed in the centre because we didn't have anywhere else to put them. The fourth wall had shelves carrying our stocks, and a large mirror.

“Are any of these girls who’ve phoned professionals?”

I should have used cotton wool to plug my ears.

“I know two of them personally.”

“Which ones?”

I hesitated. I didn’t want to recommend someone who turned out to be useless, but if I’d known what was to come I would have pushed for anyone of them, useless or not.

A man walked up the drive. The sound of his feet crunched on the pebbles. He hesitantly read the sign to see if he was at the right place.

“Is this Mrs Khumalo’s hair salon?”

“Couldn’t you read the sign?” Agnes called out. We all laughed like a pack of hyenas. Charlie Boy came to the front, certain he had a customer. I don’t know why he was kept on. Very few men came in for a haircut or shave so the barbershop was hardly profitable.

“Come in sonny, I will sort that hair of yours out in no time.” Charlie Boy quipped.

The man had an afro. I would have been sad to see it shaved off. Stylish and well kempt, it glistened in the sun, a sure sign that he was using oils. He was about twenty-two with a well-proportioned boyish physique, pleasing to the eye. The black trousers and short-sleeved white shirt made him look like a junior clerk in the civil service.

“I’ve come to see Mrs Khumalo.” His voice was soft yet clear.

“What do you want?” she asked.

He took a timid step and stopped at the doorway to look around the salon and its many American hairstyle posters that we’d pinned on the walls. His searching eyes studied everything from our stocks to the seats. I took fatty Matilda out from under the dryer and led her to the cash desk. The young man could not take his eyes off her. Men want their women big and round, *mutefetefe*. Her voluptuous buttocks bounced around as if to mock me.

“I said, ‘what do you want?’” Mrs Khumalo snapped him out of his trance.

“I heard that you had a vacancy.”

“So you want something for your sister or cousin maybe. Tell me

her name and her qualifications.”

“I need the job myself.”

Agnes let out a squeak, and I began to laugh.

“Young man, d’you think I am looking for a garden-boy? I want a hairdresser.” Mrs Khumalo laughed. She sounded like a pig, much like her daughter. The young man turned as if to go.

“I can do the job Mrs Khumalo, if you give me a chance.”

“Don’t be stupid. We mustn’t waste each other’s time. Go away.” If you weren’t putting money into her till, Mrs K. had no reason to be nice to you. These were difficult times and jobs were scarce but I’d never thought that men might try to get a woman’s job. A male hairdresser, who’d ever heard of such a thing? But instead of leaving, the young man stepped into the shop towards Matilda who was counting out her money. She grasped her handbag tightly between her breasts. The man flicked her hair with his hand.

“Hey what do you think you are doing?” Charlie Boy shouted. Even an unlikely male figure can be some protection against Harare’s bold thieves.

“Trust me, sister. This is your chance to help me.” The man said, his voice as soft as running water. “Your hair was set beautifully, but the style she’s given you is not for you.” He picked up a fine-toothed comb from the table and ran it through her hair. “You have a round face, so instead of these curls we need to layer it so that it flows with the smooth contours of your face.” He worked briskly with his comb, then took a pair of scissors to trim the ends.

My heart was pounding with rage. It had taken me an hour and a half to do that style and he dared to say that I’d got it wrong. The customer is always king. I’d done the style she asked for.

“Hey you...” Charlie Boy moved forward.

“No, please let him finish Mrs Khumalo.” Matilda said.

Our boss was silent as she watched him with a quiet fascination. If I hadn’t known her better, I would have said she seemed amused. The stranger worked quickly like an artist working on a living sculpture. His long slender fingers primed the hair and everyone’s eyes were focused on him. A few customers stepped out from under their dryers to watch him work.

Five minutes later he was finished. He put his hands on Matilda's shoulders and made her look in the mirror. She blinked. He picked up a mirror so that she could see the back of her head as well.

"What do you think?" he asked.

"Sweet Jesus, I look like Naomi Campbell." Matilda's body was trembling with excitement.

"You see what I meant about the layers."

"This is wonderful. Please give me your phone number."

That is when Mrs Khumalo stepped in. She'd seen enough. She gently took Matilda by the hand and ushered her to the door. "Don't worry, you'll find him here next time you come."

The young man said that his name was Dumisani. Mrs Khumalo didn't care. She took his details and told him that he was to start work the following Monday.

Three

The house that I lived in was far bigger than anything I could have dreamt of. It stood in Eastlea, a low-density suburb, home to the middle classes where people like me passed through carrying large baskets on our heads. A neighbourhood with an English name is a good neighbourhood. There are exceptions to the rule of course like Highfields or Hatcliffe, high-density areas. So to make the distinction we *Shonarized* these names: Highfields became *Highfiridzi*; Hatcliffe was *Hatikirifi*.

It was natural and instinctive that when we pronounced the names of really plush neighbourhoods, like Borrowdale, with its sprawling mansions, we spoke in a nasal tone to try and sound more English.

I had Tony Blair to thank for living in Eastlea in my elder brother's house. A four-bedroomed bungalow with a red roof set on an acre of land. The lawn was slowly turning into desert but for the weeds, which had taken over. The flower-beds, which once boasted many foreign botanical specimens, were also wilting. Only sturdy geraniums and self-seeding marigolds remained giving some colour. A Durawall surrounded the property and shielded our shameful garden from prying eyes.

The backyard was a different story. There we had eight beds of cultivated vegetables: rape and tomatoes, onions and carrots, cabbages

and pumpkins. There was a guava tree in the corner by the servant's quarters. The peach tree had long since died and been used for firewood. A stump remained as a sort of inanimate memorial. One day we would uproot it and burn it too.

When I reached home, my daughter Chiwoniso was red, the same colour as the soil in this part of town. Together with her little school friends she was wallowing in mud.

"Get out of there all of you!" I shouted.

"Mama!" they said in unison and came speeding towards me.

"Get away from me."

I was wearing a white dress. I don't know what's wrong with kids these days. They don't listen. They mobbed me anyway and soon I was looking like them in my soiled dress. If only they knew how hard it was to wash out soil stains. I took some sweets from my bag and gave them two each. My heart warmed when they clapped their hands to thank me.

"Make sure you all go to your homes by six o'clock." They were too young to tell the time but they knew to leave just as the sun began to set.

The house was empty except for Sisi Maidei, my house-girl. I'd grown up in a tiny two-bedroomed house in Tafara sharing the floor with five other girls. I was unused to space and the privacy. There was never any peace when I was growing up; I was always surrounded by the sound of laughter and insistent chatter. In a way I missed it, but I had learnt to love my own space.

"*Maswera sei?*" said Sisi Maidei.

"*Taswera maswerawo.*"

I told her to make me some Tanganda tea. My throat was dry. I sat down on the sofa and relaxed. I had been on my feet all day and my arches were very sore. I rubbed them to ease the pain. Outside the window the children were back in their mud hole, their joyful faces wrapped in the innocence of childhood. I was here to protect them. I had no desire for Chiwoniso to have the same childhood that I'd endured.

"Here's your tea."

“Thank you.” I took a sip, “You always put too much sugar. What’s wrong with you? Do you think I buy it with paper?”

The stupid girl just stood there looking at me until I dismissed her with a wave of my hand. That was the problem with these rural girls, they lacked common sense. I knew I had to replace her, but not with someone too clever. The city girls would steal from you at the first chance they had. It was getting harder and harder to find a good house-girl.

Chiwoniso entered the house, her tiny feet leaving footprints on the floor.

I told Maidei to clean up and took my daughter to the bathroom.

“But Mama, I don’t want to bath.” She squirmed but I was firm and held her tightly.

“If you keep wriggling like this there will be no more sweets for you.” She fell still, her tiny mind debating the situation, perhaps weighing if one bath was worth losing sweets over. Her face contorted in anguish.

“Don’t worry, I’ll bath with you,” I said. Her smile shone like tiny moonbeams on my face. I kissed her, we were friends once more.

One day when she grows older she will understand why I insist on bathing her myself every evening. Only six years old and in her first year in primary school, she could not possibly know that I was checking for any signs of abuse. I knew I was being paranoid but the *Herald* was always full of stories about abused children ... it seems that nowadays whether it’s AIDS or *muti* or just the way things are, children become the victims. Sylvia once told me that the Child Abuse Clinic at Harare Hospital was seeing a hundred kids a week and that was just the tip of the iceberg. The only way that was going to happen to Chiwoniso was over my dead body and even then, my *ngozi* would still have something to say about that.

Maidei was outside cooking supper on a three-plate hearth we’d recently built to save electricity. The costs had gone up again and I was two months behind with payments. The security light outside shone on her as she adjusted the logs to kindle the fire. Her strong

hands worked rhythmically as she stirred the pots. A machine of flesh designed for a lifetime of servitude. The one thing I admired about her was her ability to do work quietly and uncomplainingly. She did the yard and the garden as well because I could scarcely afford to hire a garden-boy. In that moment I felt myself thinking maybe I shouldn't get rid of her after all.

Supper was sadza with *matemba* with some pumpkin leaves mixed with tomatoes and onions, cooked in beef fat to give them more flavour. The smell was heavenly but I had to add more salt. Clearly there was still a lot to teach this girl. Chiwoniso hated *matemba*, so I indulged her and let her have lacto with her sadza.

"Tell me about your day at school," I said.

She began a convoluted tale about her teacher, other students, class and Lord knows what else. It made very little sense but I marvelled at her fluent English. It rolled from her little tongue sounding natural, not forced like mine.

She went to bed late. It was Friday, so she didn't have to get up early. Maidei went to bed once she'd done the dishes. Chiwoniso asked me to tell her a story like I'd once done so so long ago. I kissed her on the forehead and covered her with a blanket wishing that it would always be this way.

Then I made my way around the house checking all the doors and windows. We had a latch on every door and burglar bars on all the windows but I knew that even this was sometimes not enough. The thieves in Harare worked 24/7 and a house full of women made for easy pickings. I wheeled the TV into my bedroom just in case. A house just up the street had recently been burgled and they'd lost everything, even the light bulbs. What was worse was that the family remained fast asleep, waking up to find themselves naked on the floor. There were rumours that burglars were blowing some sort of sleeping powder through the air vents but no one ever said what the powder was or where they got it from.

Finally, I went to bed and stared at the ceiling trying not to think how this house had driven a wedge between me and my family.

Four

I was late again for work on Monday. This time Mrs Khumalo herself greeted me.

“This is a business, Vimbai! Customers are waiting and you’re modelling,” she called out, as I made my way up the driveway. Agnes sniggered as I quickened my pace.

“I’m sorry, but the kombis from Kamfinsa were all full.”

I wondered what she was doing in so early. She seemed to be nervous as she stared at the slow procession of cars going down the road. I accompanied Sylvia, one of our regulars, to the basin. No time for tea when the boss is here. One day I will have enough money for my own salon, I thought, as I ran my fingers through her hair. Sylvia was a nurse at Parirenyatwa and people in the medical field were always handy to know. Maybe she would help me to jump the queue one day. Though God forbid I should get sick.

Sylvia’s hair was straight except in the nape of her neck where her new curly hair was growing out in its natural state.

“You shouldn’t have left it so long before coming in for a retouch. There’s a lot of growth in here.”

“I know, but money is hard to come by these days.”

“Don’t worry, I’ll give you a discount today.” Mrs Khumalo cast a sharp glance my way and I quickly added, “This is your tenth consecutive visit so you deserve it.”

There was something wrong today and I could feel the tension in the air. It took me a while to realise what the problem was.

“Agnes, go and look up the street,” said Mrs Khumalo.

“That’s why you shouldn’t take these people in from the street,” quipped Charlie Boy. He had a customer, a man having a punky haircut, like he was still in the eighties.

I wriggled my nose as the Revlon relaxer worked its magic on Sylvia’s hair.

“Make sure you tell me when your scalp starts tingling,” I told her. She knew the risks well. I remembered the first time she’d come in, her scalp was scabbed where she’d been burnt by Glen-T, that horrible local stuff. It was weeks before she could have her hair done professionally. She’d stayed loyal ever since.

Agnes returned shaking her head.

“Did you look properly?” Mrs Khumalo asked.

“Yes, Mama, there’s no one.”

Mrs Khumalo looked downcast. She threw the cashbook on the table, picked up her cellphone. She couldn’t get a signal so she stepped outside and hovered around trying until she got one.

“Dumisani, where are you? It’s Mrs Khumalo, please call me when you get this message, we are tired of waiting for you.” She hung up the phone and sighed. “Maybe he has a problem.” We all cast each other conspiratorial looks. This was not the boss we knew. How could she be so tolerant with someone not showing up, and on his first day, when we all knew there were hundreds of hairdressers looking for work. Mrs K. rolled up her sleeves and asked the next customer to come forward. In Zimbabwe you have to learn to be a jack of all trades: Mrs Khumalo was a hairdresser, farmer, trader, IT consultant, you name it, she did it.

Only Agnes had the guts to ask her about this newfound blast of tolerance.

“What’s so special about him? We can get someone else.”

“There’s something about that boy. I saw the way he styled Matilda’s hair. He knows how to do the job better than some of you who’ve been here years.” That stung. Who was she referring to – me or the other girls?

I inserted the latest CD by Papa Wemba, my favourite Congolese artist, into the CD player. The salon was not complete without a lit-

tle Rhumba in the background. Even Mrs Khumalo jiggled her hips in rhythm to the beat and in that instant looked like a sexy young woman again.

“Do you have Kofi Olomide or Kanda Bongoman?” a customer said.

“We have everything you want, one hundred per cent satisfaction guaranteed. Hey *chinja* that CD.”

Agnes put Kanda Bongoman on and the customer laughed content. The guitars and the rhythmic beats from the Congo blared out and could be heard in the street. When we wanted to speak, we shouted above the music. ‘Hand me that comb. Do this, do that.’ The salon came to life.

A boy came in later that morning; he was not much older than my daughter. He wore shorts and a blue T-shirt that was so tight that his belly button showed.

“*MaFreezits*,” he said, lowering the large box that he carried on his unkempt head.

We all bought the frozen popsicles more out of sympathy than because of the heat. He came by every day and sometimes we bought nothing. There were many more like him roaming about the city. I shuddered when I imagined my own child having to leave school and fend for herself. I recalled a time when the city council forced truant kids into school or rounded up street kids and put them in orphanages. Nowadays nobody bothered. None of these high-handed measures had worked anyway.

He thanked us and went on his way. I could see Mrs Khumalo watching him until he was out of sight. Her face showed a mother’s concern and helplessness all rolled into one. She already had far too many mouths to feed.

A shiny black Mercedes C-class pulled in. Agnes lowered the volume on the stereo. My heart beat faster. It was our top client. The chauffeur ran round and opened the door for her. I was disappointed she’d not brought her husband with her. He was a nice man who sometimes hung about and chatted while her hair was being done. The lady, who was Minister M___ (after what happened, I could

never bring myself to mention her by name) got out and walked towards us. Mrs Khumalo was beside herself ordering Memory to sweep hair from the floor.

Yolanda got a chair ready and stood behind it as the minister made her way in.

“It’s so good to see you again.”

“How are you? Please seat down.” There was a slight tremor in Mrs K.’s voice. She clapped her hands in the traditional fashion and the lady responded in kind.

Minister M___ came in to get her hair done once a month. She had grown up in rural Chivhu, Charter as it was known then, the same area that Mrs Khumalo came from. A lot of people assumed Mrs Khumalo was Ndebele, but actually she was Shona, it was her husband who had the Ndebele roots. The Minister even called her *Vatete*, auntie, because by some conjuring trick they had managed to establish a relationship based on their totems.

Minister M___ had joined the liberation struggle when she was only fourteen. She had trained in Zambia with ZANLA and had fought bravely against the Rhodesian Army. After independence, she entered politics and continued with her schooling. In the late eighties she became a deputy minister and later a full minister. She wore spectacles and had a gap in her teeth, which made it sound like she was whistling when she spoke.

“Vimbai, are you going to do my hair?” She always asked this even though she knew I was the only one allowed to touch her. I left my customer for Yolanda to finish off. “How’s Chiwoniso, that’s her name isn’t it? I wish I’d brought something for her.”

“She’s fine – you got her name right.” It amazed me the way she remembered our names although we were nobodies.

“How’s your mother feeling these days?” she asked Memory.

“Much better, but her bones cause her problems when it’s raining.”

The minister nodded sympathetically.

“Is she getting the medicine she needs?”

“Yes, but it’s expensive. Things are very difficult these days.”

“Go to the pharmacy on Angwa Street. Tell them I sent you and they will give you whatever you need for her. Make sure you take

a prescription.”

Memory clapped her hands and thanked the minister. Tears formed in her eyes as if she was overwhelmed. The minister pretended not to notice and turned to Yolanda.

“Are you still going to night school?”

“I’m getting ready for my final exams.”

“You’re a good girl. You’ll pass. The country needs educated young people like you. You are the future.”

Yolanda bowed her head slightly embarrassed. She was doing A-levels at night school because her parents didn’t have the money to send her to a good school. She could have gone to a B-school somewhere in the townships, but she was a classy girl and refused to.

“Who are you?” the minister asked a customer who was sitting in the corner waiting.

The customer seemed surprised that she was being spoken to.

“Me?” she asked. The minister gestured yes patiently. “I am Patience Chidhakwa.”

The minister thought for a minute and spoke slowly.

“The Chidhakwas from Buhera?”

“Yes.”

“What’s your phone number?”

“It is 01135...”

“No, you’re supposed to say double nine, nine, two, ten,” said Mrs Khumalo referring to an old hit song from the eighties and laughed loudly.

“She is too young to know this.” The minister laughed as well. “So Patience, you’re my little sister because I have a cousin who is married into your people.”

Who would not be pleased to know they were in some way related to the minister? I liked the way she whistle-spoke and carried herself. There was a down-to-earth quality about her; she felt like one of the girls, even though we all knew she was loaded. She spoke with Mrs Khumalo about her farm and encouraged her. When she left, we all felt special even as we stared after her shiny car that lay far beyond our wildest dreams.