

Consequences

by Richard Lewis

As an only child, life on the compound could be lonely. Ami lived in a phantasy world, turning to the world of nature, her friends were the laughing doves, cape sparrows and the insects, creeping in the undergrowth. She loved the fragrant flowers, the beauty of the lilies and the wild pear. As the hot African sun poured down, she could be found climbing the fever tree or sitting in the shade of the magical banyan with its strange areal roots, propping up the trunk like scaffolding poles.

Ami was a shy girl, weary of people and had been given little encouragement by her strict, overbearing mother or distant father. Both of whom seemed caught up in their own problems and oblivious to their daughter's isolation. Ami was desperate to attract her father's attention but his mind was always off somewhere else.

If only she had known what she'd wanted, she might have found her own way in the world and not have been taken by whichever direction the wind decided to blow. On leaving school with few qualifications her options seemed limited and when a family friend suggested secretarial work, she found herself following that path. Like a proverbial sheep, she thought, conditioned to believe others knew best.

Ami hated her need to be liked. It had got her into trouble many times over the years, as was the case with Thomas. She'd had no strong feelings for him but he had chosen her because he liked her and that, at least was something. So once again she had just gone along with it. The theme continued, agreeing to sex before feeling ready, then on discovering she was pregnant, she knew she was trapped, tied to Thomas whether they lived together or not.

Though not prepared for motherhood one thing she did know was that could never get rid of the baby. Ami also knew that she had loved the baby and was determined to give Oliver the attention and encouragement that she had not received from her parents.

Oliver being diagnosed with autism had come as a terrible shock, even though the signs had been there from the age of two, Oliver being a quiet, independent and undemanding child.

Looking back across the years she thought about where her compliant nature had brought her. It would seem everyone, at some time or another, sits down to a banquet of consequences.