

A man and a woman are shown in a close-up, romantic setting. The man, on the right, is wearing a dark fedora hat, glasses, and a black leather motorcycle jacket over a dark t-shirt. He has a beard and is looking slightly to the right with a serious expression. The woman, on the left, is wearing a white collared shirt with a small floral brooch and a red and white patterned headscarf. She is looking down and to the right with a soft, smiling expression. The background is blurred, suggesting an outdoor setting with warm, bokeh light effects.

KEFF VIDALA

UNTIL LOVE FINDS US

BASED ON A TRUE STORY

The author

Kerfala „KEFF“ Vidala was born in Kinshasa (Democratic Republic of Congo). At the age of nine he fled to Germany. After finishing primary school, despite some problems, he attended the Theodor Heuss secondary school in Herten, where he successfully completed the course.

His first book, *Bis die Liebe uns findet* (Until Love Finds Us), was published in September 2016 in Germany. The young author financed and published his book from his own resources after 36 publishing houses had rejected it. Despite that his Self-Publishing books were so successful that his guide: *5 Räume* (5 Rooms) eventually reached 21st place on the Spiegel-Bestseller List.

In 2019 he received a publishing contract with Ullstein Germany.

But his book series -Until Love Finds Us- remains Independent.

Besides that, in 2019 he set up his own podcast: ‚KeffTV‘, that will go online on Spotify, Youtube and Apple Podcast.

Further books by the author:

Bis die Liebe uns findet, (Until Love Find Us) Part 2 & 3
5 Räume (5 Rooms - by Ullstein Germany) (Guide for dealing with the pain of separation and increasing one’s self-love)

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*I dedicate this book to Aaliyah,
and to all women and men
who don't feel they are understood.*

*Not everyone who knows you
knows you*

Keff Vidala

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FOREWORD

The biggest mistake we men can make in a relationship is that we're never satisfied with the woman we've won. You have the one woman who loves you the way you are. She's there for you in good times and bad. She's in tears before going to sleep if you've had an argument. No matter how little money she has, she tries to make your birthday a special day for you. You can feel how much she loves you.

And although it looks as if you've got everything, you let yourself be seduced. Suddenly there's a voice whispering inside your head that it's OK for you to mess around, even if you're going to hurt her feelings. She'll forgive you anyway because she loves you so much. We go to clubs and eye up other girls, perhaps because they've got a better figure, perhaps because they're prettier. And then we start to have our doubts. We compare our partner with those of our colleagues, find them prettier and more attractive and wish our woman looked like that. We allow ourselves to be manipulated, go to parties, get drunk and flirt. We let ourselves be seduced by women on social networks, let them twist us round their little finger when we're chatting with them. Your girlfriend finds out. She screams at you, curses you, but instead of showing remorse, you think you're the king. You leave her because you think, *I've had so many tarts and whores, I don't give a shit for her.*

For several months, perhaps years, you have fun, but on your birthday at the latest you realise who's thinking of you and who's been using you just for their own self-interest. Where's the 'I-love-you-have-a-nice-day' phone call? You've been in hospital — where's the tearful call in a worried voice

asking you how you are? You've got problems — who are you going to talk them over with?

THE DEVIL IS NOT YOUR FRIEND. Don't let yourself be seduced by sluts or inveigled into doing bad things by 'friends'. The diamond you've found? It could be the last one.

Everything started with those words to the song I wrote that was copied and disseminated on Facebook by well-known Internet poets, writers and lyricists. They had all put their name under my song and behaved as if they'd written it themselves. For days I was furious and tried to contact those Instagram and Facebook posters. Would they kindly write underneath that the song was by me. But none of them answered and, what was worse, a lot even blocked me.

After a few days my anger died down and I slowly came to see that with my lyrics I could set off very strong emotions in other people and, after thinking things over, I started posting songs, quotations and poems about love, splitting up, lovesickness and heartache on Instagram.

Suddenly some people started asking me for advice — people who'd just separated, just fallen in love, who were in love without hope, hurt when their partner had cheated on them. I was surprised that there were so many unhappy people of every age. I was most moved by the fact that many women wrote to me — they wished they had a man like me and couldn't understand how I could remain single.

Despite all the beautiful poems I'd written and published, I kept my dark secret to myself. The longing to write a book about my mysterious life grew stronger. I just couldn't get the idea out of my head. But I thought that if I were to write a book, then it wouldn't be one of those you'll-find-the-love-of-your-life-eventually-and-I'm-telling-you-as-a-counsellor, nor one of those cliché-ridden, soppy love novels of which there are more than enough already. No, I wanted to write a

book that told the truth and opened people's eyes, one that made you ponder, a book that would keep you from sleeping for days on end. And what would be a better example of that than my own, no, our life — that of Aaliyah and me?

I was really scared stiff of writing this story. Not because I was afraid people would think badly of me after I'd finished it. What I was afraid of was that I wouldn't be up to it emotionally, that I might die with pain talking about Aaliyah, go to pieces telling how many souls I've broken. But I stuck to it because I owe it to her, because it's my duty to all good women and men, who were and are constant and honest in a relationship, who wanted nothing more than to be loved and whose hearts were broken, leaving them bitter. Like each one of you I thought love was the best thing that could happen to us and that it means everlasting happiness. I was firmly convinced that I could only be truly in love once, and that for ever.

Back then I gave up my apartment and sold or gave away all the furnishings in order finally to get away from the Ruhr area because unfortunately that town too often reminded me of sad moments. So I set off for Stuttgart with the dream of publishing a book of my own. At first I kept that secret to myself for I knew that if I gave it away to anyone people would laugh at me, think I was mad. So I kept quiet...

...until now.

The piece you're immersed in right now is something special I've been writing on my iPhone 5 for a whole year because I couldn't even afford a laptop. And now you're holding all my dreams, my pain and my sorrow in your hand.

Love betrayed me. I was forced to learn that hatred, despair, grief, heartache and even thoughts of suicide happen to belong to love. My life was defined by party nights, alcohol and women. I broke countless hearts.

It was in my darkest hour, with no faith at all and full of depression, that I met her: Aaliyah, a Muslim woman wearing a headscarf. Driven by my hatred of women, she was meant to be my greatest victim, my greatest triumph. But, contrary to what I thought, contact with her was to be more than just communication. It was to be my salvation. Aaliyah bore a terrible secret within her that made me what I am today.

My story is one hundred percent true. No lies, no made-up yarns. This story is not at all a typical love story with a happy end. It's not Bollywood nor pure romanticism. My novel tells you the naked truth, what I came to understand. It shows you the tricks I used to take women for a ride, what love really is and, above all, what it means.

If you're ready to free yourself from from your fantasy world, to get away from the manipulation of the media and society, that want to tell us what love is, then you're ready to read this book.

CHAPTER 1

What is Love

*The blood flowed along my arm and dripped
onto the cold kitchen floor.
I have done something terrible, Aaliyah...*

At last I was standing in front of the class. All eyes were on me.

I was so nervous my hands were quite clammy and I was trying to get everything under control by rubbing the palms of my hands on my jeans.

The boys were looking at me with grins on their faces. As always they were waiting for a joke from me or some funny bit of business. They were all keen to see what I would come up with. After all, I was the class clown, so all they could expect was a piece of nonsense. The girls were not very interested in the fact that I was out there. They preferred to chat amongst themselves about the latest tittle-tattle — the groups *Bro'sis* and *No Angels* were the number one talking point back then. The gossip was going to and fro, I don't think they'd even noticed that I was standing out at the front. They had little interest in who I was and what kind of thing I was doing in my life. A lot of them didn't even know what my proper name was. »Kerula? Kefa?« — »Just Keff,« I said every time, irritated. My name was actually Kerfala Vidala but I turned it into Keff to stop them butchering my real name.

Well to be honest, I didn't personally consider myself to be one of the cutest candidates for a girl to fall in love with. Like every teenager back then I had a problem with acne. Back then there weren't any YouTubers who would give us adolescents tips and tricks on how to get beautiful, glowing skin, that you all have nowadays. Back then we had to test out countless beauty products or simply rely on what our mothers told us about their own experiences, which in my case often went wrong. I can remember my mother recommending African oils that in some wondrous way would supposedly make the pimples disappear within a day. I once used one of those oils and my skin was so shiny that I even dazzled my friends. I didn't feel at all comfortable with the way I looked back then, almost ugly. I was always comparing myself with the teenage stars, who all looked quite perfect, and that made me feel even more depressed. So all the girls were preoccupied with other things than me.

»Hey, let's have a little respect, please. Keff's standing down there,« the teacher roared at the class.

The girls, irritated, turned to look forward.

»Right then, Keff, now you can start.« The teacher, a slim man with grey hair and moustache, who always reminded me very much of Albert Einstein, only a bit more modern in dress, put his square spectacles on the end of his nose and gave me a piercing look as if to say, *Don't mess this up, young man.*

All kinds of thoughts were going through my head. *What will it be like if they all think I'm gay when they hear this? What'll happen if they all laugh at me? A boy who can write things like that can only be gay.* I looked all round at them. A girl in the back row gave me a smile and nodded. That was the sign to be brave. My hands slightly trembling, I slowly opened the folded piece of paper and started to read in a nervous voice., »What is love for me? Love is...«

They all started laughing.

»Anyone who doesn't want an hour's detention, will stop laughing at once,« the teacher shouted. The room was quiet once more. Taking a deep breath, I started from the beginning again. I looked at the class again and saw how they were all eagerly awaiting an opportunity to laugh again. I started to seethe with rage, *Who do they think they are*, I thought to myself. *I have to be brave*. I looked again at the girl who had smiled at me. She gave me a thumbs-up gesture, her eyes looking straight at me. I mustn't disappoint her now.

I threw the sheet of paper on the floor, looked at the class and started. As I spoke I looked each one of them in the eye. »Who can tell me what love is? Who? You? Or you? Love is when you see a woman with your heart. The feeling for a woman is more than her looks. We're all worried that we're not good-looking enough because we live in a society that presents us with the ideal woman in an unrealistic way in magazines. We accept this and strive to emulate these models and eventually attract attention when we show ourselves off as particularly good-looking. Does beauty mean happiness in life? No! Happiness in life is to obtain and possess that which cannot be bought with money: LOVE! We have forgotten how to love with our heart. We only love with our eyes now. Naturally beauty is important in life. It is very important for us to be called beautiful by someone. That is what all too often leads to broken hearts. For one person loves your looks and another your character. We simply replace people because we because we don't want to fight any more. We replace people because we want someone younger. We replace people because we'd rather have a blonde or brunette girlfriend. I don't want to be one of you; I don't want to live in a superficial world in which only looks count. I'm afraid of that world. Appearances can always be bettered, no question, but a good woman only rarely. Just think that over.«

Silence in the classroom. It was so quiet you could hear people outside.

»You didn't write that,« said Friederike, whom Sakir always called a fat pig. I really hated her back then. I didn't actually feel hatred for people who were a bit stronger, on the contrary, and I didn't want to give them a hard time. But every day Friederike gave me countless reasons not to defend her. She was one of those students heading for top marks and she was always trying to eliminate any competition. I suspect she saw me then as a potential danger.

»Of course I did,« I snapped back

The teacher looked at me, bewildered. »Thank you, Keff. You may sit down.'

I went back to my place. As I did so all eyes, especially those of the women, were on me. I heard some of the girls whispering. »That was so beautiful, Sarah! I had no idea he could write something like that.«

And another girl: »I'd never have thought a boy could write something like that.«

»Super piece,« was what I heard from most of them. Even the boys were surprised.

»Please stay behind for five minutes, Keff.« So it looked as if I could kiss goodbye to the quick return home after the bell. All the girls gave me a smile as they left the classroom. Suddenly the girl who had given me a smile from the back row came up to me. She had beautiful light-brown eyes and was wearing a long floral dress and had her hair in a pigtail. She was the most beautiful girl in the class and was looking at me with a smile that went to the depths of my soul.

»Are there more things you've written?« she asked in a calm voice.

I suddenly felt very nervous. I had the feeling that her eyes would take my breath away, and my soul at the same time. I cleared my throat and tried to keep my voice under

control. »Yes, any amount. A whole book! Well, 30 pages to be precise.«

»Can you let me have them? I'd love to read them,« she asked with a smile.

»But it's a whole 30 pages!«

She smiled again. »That doesn't bother me, I like what you say.«

The next day I gave her everything I'd written. Six months later she moved away and all my notes and thoughts went with her.

»You really are talented, Herr Vidala.«

Me and talent? I was fairly lacking in talent, for I couldn't even match up to the clichés about black people: I couldn't dance, couldn't sing, couldn't play any kind of sport even reasonably well — apart from basketball — but the reason for that was that I started school late and was therefore ten centimetres taller than the others. It was more of an advantage than a talent.

»Even I was moved by your piece and it made me reflect on things, Herr Kerfala. If you work on your grammar and spelling you really have a chance of becoming a good writer. You know, I can sense something asleep in there and it has to be woken up. If you like I would be happy to sign you up for the literature class.«

Me and literature? That had to be a joke. Me together with all those Tims, Tobiases and Melanies who looked like cousins of Harry Potter and all came from la-di-dah families? My guys would immediately start making fun of me and that would be the end of any cool image I had.

»No, Herr Röhl, thank you for the offer, but literature and all that isn't my thing. And I have to be off now, my bus comes in six minutes.«

»Okay then, but I still think it's a pity. You really do have the talent to move people with your words.«