**No sugars, please**

by Tychique Ciamala

Scotland was cold, bleak and miserable but had known the sun. Nobody knew this more than Alex McGee. He lived in a small village called Iring. He moved here because it was incredibly quiet and there were no rowdy teenagers there to disrupt this like there was in Glasgow and Edinburgh. He had an incredibly thick Scottish accent ever since he was a little boy living with his foster careers for twenty years. His mum was a drunk and abusive plus his father died when he was little. He moved into care when he was ten and got his own place when he was twenty. He always dreamed of being a policeman. Failing that he wanted to be a vet.

He had been married but now he was divorced, his wife had left him of her own will knowing that there was nowhere for the relationship to go and all three of the children, two boys and one girl had flown the nest. But, after a while of feeling sorry for himself, he got used to his own company. But he did buy a dog. A female German shepherd who had once worked on the force in Birmingham. She was called Kim. She had served in the police, but she had her time and now she deserved rest.

It is worth mentioning that he lived at the top of the hill in the village. Every morning without a fail he would make himself a cup of tea with three tops of milk, two tablespoons of sugar and two slices of toast. Every now and again he would have a breakfast treat such as salmon or a fry up but that was only when he wasn’t working mainly from the café called Rees, ten minutes from his bungalow. He did work Monday to Sunday.

He was an older fellow, one of late fifty years so he had been there and done it but he did seem to have the wind knocked out of his sails which partly the reason he became a police man… to knock the winds out of other people’s sails. The motto at the police station was respect, engage, energise and support. They respected the public, engaged with each other, energised themselves and supported everybody, the public, their colleagues and themselves.

He always drove to work which took forty minutes even though he could have walked in which would have taken him around the same time or shorter. He didn’t exercise much, and he did a bit more fatty and sugary foods along with quite a few cans of fizzy pop than he should. He chose not to be social, but he would ask about your day and then a tiny bit of information about it. He wouldn’t tell you how his day was. There were two ways he would respond to you when you greeted him, a grunt or a hello. He would look up at you briefly then get back to his paper.

At home, he had tea, but at work he had coffee. Quite a few of them. But he didn’t get energized by them. One day he was told he was on standby for some urgent business. He could see a kerfuffle which distracted him from putting sugar in his coffee. He proceeded to drink it anyway, he took his first sip which was quite large and then made a disgusted screwed up face. Before he could turn around to put tea in his coffee one of the younger officers hurried rapidly to grab his attention. Alex downed his sugarless, bland coffee and ran after the policeman to the car. He drove like a man trying to catch the birth of his first child to the crime scene, he knew the streets quite well.

There had been a reported burglary at a jewellery store, but it wasn’t just any old thief, it was a thief that the whole force had been trying to catch for twelve years. Alex and the officer got out the car to see the storekeeper frantically waving his hands and pointing in the shop. They both hurried over to the storekeeper to get a description, when they heard something drop in the store. Alex went in stealthy, with his gun out in front of him and slowly moved towards the noise. He went through the back of the store and saw the back door open with the thief running away. Alex suddenly ran after him. Alex had the thief in his sights after two minutes of chasing him but he couldn’t reach him. The more he tried to gain speed, the more breaths he required to take until the thief fully got away and he could hear him sniggering.

Alex went back through the store and waited in the car for the young officer. On the drive back he was very, very quiet and sulking. His fitness had let him down once again.

Later, that night his daughter called, and he told her what happened. She had no sympathy, but she did feel for him because she knew how important his job was too him. But she stated he needed to go on a health kick. After they both hung up Alex noticed a book on his shelf called ‘Health Life Change’. It had a florescent bright blue spine; Alex had never noticed it before. He read parts of it; one part suggested making small changes. Alex thought he’d start with no sugar in his tea or coffees and more fruit in his diet. He felt better after a month of doing this. He found that his focused had sharpened and his paperwork was more prominent. He then started to eat more vegetable, then he brought a blender and started having homemade smoothies. When he was out on patrol, he realised that he could cover a lot more distance and run faster which meant he could catch more crooks. Then he decided to do 5 kilometres runs, which made him healthier and a lot more sociable. He was asking about people’s days and lives which carried on into his work.

One day when he was on patrol. He heard an alarm go off. He leapt out the car and saw the famous thief. When the thief saw him, he turned right around quicker than a roundabout flung by the world’s strongest man and flew off, Alex decided to run after him. He started a bit slow and then gained speed his lungs felt fantastic when he was running this time, the thief through bins behind him and ducked and weave but Alex was still on his tail. He made a sharp left and then a sharper right, then quicker than a hyena hopped over the fence. Alex could see him hopping over the fences. He ducked down but kept just ahead of him. The thief hopped over the last fence onto the street and chuckled blithely. How could an old man…WHAM! Alex leaped onto him, slammed his cheek to the floor, cuffed and brought him back to his car no matter how many times he struggled. It helped that Alex had been doing weights at his local gym called Energise. When he brought the thief back to the station there were cheers louder than if Scotland had beat England in the World Cup final. They got all the information they needed out of the thief.

Later that month Alex was given a bravery award by the huge police bosses. His ex-wife, daughter and two boys were their and they were beaming with pride. To celebrate later they all got fish and chips. Including Alex as it was his cheat day.