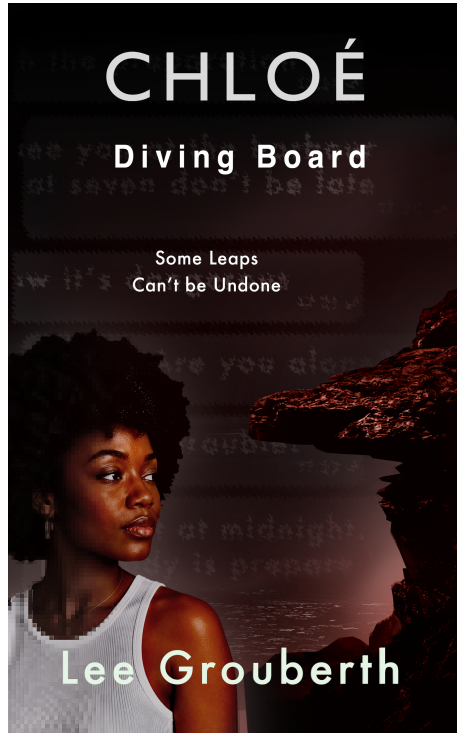


welcome to my newsletter



‘CHLOÉ - DIVING BOARD’.

A brief introduction:

1 cam girl + 1 customer = shady business...

Chloé is a beautiful black young woman in Cape Town, South Africa. Not even her best friends know about her secret profession: In the safety of her four walls, she performs raunchy sex games in front of a webcam, attracting horny customers worldwide who are watching her and paying for her service.

One day, she receives an offer from a regular customer for whom she is to work exclusively for a better and safer salary. Which sets off an avalanche of events:

Her jealous and drug-addicted boyfriend abuses her; he trashes her flat, leaving her virtually homeless. Then, he gets killed when he tries to hurt her again.

After she finds shelter with an acquaintance - who will soon become her lover - the mysterious customer contacts her again. This time for a real visit. In the hope that it will bring relief to their precarious situation, she meets him at the airport in Cape Town. In the following series of turbulent occurrences, Chloé discovers that this client is a woman and is soon entangled in a business, which turns out to be more and more shady and criminal.

Chloé is faced with the decision to return to her secret life as a cam girl, to poverty and the constant danger to which a woman in a large South African city is exposed. Or follow the path of money, which is paved with crime and exploitation of women.

The style of the novel could be described as follows:

Third-person limited POV with informal, fast-paced, action-packed sentences, vivid descriptions, and recurring themes of power, money, and corruption set in contemporary South Africa with cultural and political references.

Tone and Mood: The tone is heavy and sombre, with a sense of urgency and desperation. The mood is tense and uncertain, with a hint of danger and secrecy.

Vocabulary and Word Choice: The vocabulary is informal and colloquial, with occasional use of slang and profanity. Figurative language and metaphors are employed to convey emotions and descriptions.

Sentence Structure: The sentences are generally concise and straightforward, with occasional use of fragments and repetition for emphasis. The pacing is fast and action-packed, with short, snappy sentences.

Pacing and Rhythm: The narrative is fast-paced and action-packed, with a sense of urgency and tension. The rhythm is quick and choppy, with short sentences and frequent shifts in perspective.

Dialogue: The dialogue is informal and colloquial, with a mix of sarcasm and humour. Unique dialogue tags and formatting techniques are used to convey character voices and speech patterns.

Descriptive Style: The approach to descriptions is vivid and sensory, with a focus on detail and imagery. The descriptions are often used to convey emotions and set the scene.

Themes and Motifs: The recurring themes include power, money, and corruption. The motifs include secrecy, danger, and betrayal.

Cultural and Historical Context: The story is set in contemporary South Africa, with references to cultural and political issues such as corruption and prostitution.

Read some samples:

December 15th, overcast, 23°

A group of intimidating, black vehicles with tinted windows began to move, followed by a Minibus. The sky had turned a dull grey as if to camouflage the things to come. The convoy left the main road and turned off into the lowlands of the city. They pushed through the narrow lanes between shacks and unpainted bungalows, past a neglected stadium, and then took some even smaller drives up to a place which the locals called *Campus* for no recognisable reason.

Chloé was sitting next to Zahra, who was driving the leading car. She stopped just outside the settlement on the curb of a dusty lane under some scraggy trees. The engine grumbled at idle and emitted slight vibrations. In the background, a high wire mesh fence could be seen, topped with a spiral of barbed wire, fencing a row of low barracks.

The rest of the fleet lined up behind. Chloé had no idea about the details of the plan. Nor did she have any urge to ask about it. She felt like a stowaway on an unplanned journey. Zahra seemed rather unimpressed by it all, staring into the distance for a few seconds, her hands loosely on the steering wheel. Then she reached behind her and took a pile of papers from the briefcase in the back seat. She grinned at Chloé with a nod that could be interpreted as encouragement. But she said nothing and immersed herself in her reading.

Chloé let her window slide down. In the wing mirror, she saw a thin grey plume of vapour slowly dissipating in the evening breeze. A few of the residents of the settlement below approached leisurely. The skinny blokes stood indecisively on the other side of the road until one of the khaki muscles got out of his ride, looked at them, and slowly rounded the black monster. He opened the tailgate, took something out and engaged in small talk with the group. Chloé saw cigarettes, beer bottles, small pastry packets, and even banknotes changing hands. The recipients settled down under a low tree at the side of the road, which was decorated with slimy rubbish. They began consuming the gifts and conversing in hushed voices, occasionally turning their heads and glancing at the gleaming, threatening vehicles.....

Darkness began to seep in. Finally, Zahra lowered her side window, leaned out and gesticulated something. She shifted into gear, and with a roar of the mighty engine, she started the race down the hill with wild abandon. Chloé was amazed by how quickly this polished businesswoman had transformed into a fierce amazon. How many more different identities does *this Halle Berry substitute* hide from me?

In the rear-view mirror, she could see the other vehicles following close behind like the loosely assembled body of a giant black metal worm as they tore through the neighbourhood at dangerous speeds. Soon, they passed

some familiar places until Zahra slammed on the brakes at the studio's gate, causing a cloud of dust to envelop them as they screeched to a halt. Within seconds, the fleet had blocked both sides of the road.....

...."Hey, hey, Chlo   speaking." She answered groggily.

"Chlo  , get your butt over here A. S. A. P. We've got a client asking specifically for you. I don't know what kinda voodoo you worked on him last time, and honestly, I don't wanna know. Just get yourself together and haul your ass down here in 20 minutes!" It was Gigi, buzzing into the earpiece, busy as always. In a hurry as always.

"Twenty minutes? Are you kidding me? I'm not even dressed."

"Then come in your birthday suit if you have to! Just hurry up!" The call ended.

She could not refuse this request, however rudely it had been made. It was a godsend, came at just the right moment, and a relief from her ongoing financial calamities for a while. She scrambled around her room, racing through her wardrobe, skipping socks altogether, wiping down with a wet washcloth before slipping into her underwear and a dress, whilst calling an Uber at the same time. Rush didn't work for her. Meeting a customer without having a shower was a no-go. But usually, at the client's place, she had another opportunity.

Thirteen minutes later, she was out on the street, racing against time. Thankfully, her cab arrived two minutes later, and after a sporty journey through the city centre, she flew past the wiry, tired-looking security guard at the ground floor desk and sprinted up the stairs to the office of '*Seductress Dot Com*'.

Gigi's smoky voice purred as she looked over the rims of her glasses at her.

"Another twenty-four minutes wasted, sweetie! How am I supposed to earn money and pass it on to you if even the smallest things don't work properly? Tardiness kills in this business! I'll have to deduct that from your pay." With her butterfly glasses, bleached hair, and slipped-on make-up, she

looked like a transvestite presenting an educational program for divorced couples on late-night TV. She reclined on the table with her ample tummy jutting out, a half-smoked cigarette resting in an overflowing ashtray nearby. These were the usual signatures of her boss: a protruding belly, a lit cigarette, and a cup of coffee with smeared lipstick on the rim.

"You know, we have a forty-five-minute lead time! So, act on it!"

"Forty-five minutes? Don't bullshit me! That is for in-house work, not mobile!" Chloé shouted.

Gigi looked at her.

"Customer is king. Act on it." And after gazing at her for a beat:

"I'll never understand what blokes expect in undernourished chicks like you. You almost have the sun shining through your ribs. I understand that everyone calls you *Two-Slice*. Although *One-Slice* would actually be enough." She turned her attention back to her screen.

"You look like a hot mess. Put on something spiffy from the stash. It's for that feisty one, what's his name?" She hit some keys. "Pollock, Jeremy. Pollock! The name alone makes me a racist! Does that ring any bells?"

The bell rang. The customer was all too familiar to her, and it wasn't a super pleasant memory. He wasn't someone she feared, but he was a persistent client who always had one thing on his mind - and it wasn't conversation. He was ordinary and she felt used and dirty after every session....

....."You're late," he said

"Ten minutes," she said.

"Have a seat," he said.

"Where?" she said.

Three chairs in the room were unoccupied. Applegate looked at her with interest but said nothing and pointed to the one close to his desk. She sat down on the edge of the chair. He started hammering on his keyboard, which surprised her. A case of this scope should require the officer in charge to have the necessary paperwork ready, printed out and stapled together. Applegate didn't seem to feel that way and spent several minutes letting his eyes wander between the keyboard and the screen.

Perhaps it was just an attempt to unsettle her. Perhaps she had made a mistake by being so brash here. Perhaps she would be better off sticking to the good old female tactic of activating the tear glands and playing the desperate bereaved lover. But then she had an intuition and asked with a blank look:

"Can we begin? I've taken tranquilisers; I feel very tired, Inspector."

Gosh.

That helped. The inspector winced noticeably and looked at her. He now clearly realised that his tried and tested interrogation technique would not lead to the desired result.

"I am sorry for your loss. Unfortunately, we have not yet been able to well, examine the, err, body of Ms. Devereaux. The mountaineers did their job, but the morgue is jammed with loads of..." He stopped and seemed to realise that he was making one lapse after another. After a beat, as if to collect himself, he continued.

"This questioning is purely routine. In such cases, we always have to rule out a, excuse me, criminal offence." He paused another beat.

"For the protocol: what's your name?"

"Penelope ChloéNomvula Dakalo Mthembu." She said.

He looked at her.

"Please understand, you are only here as a witness. Please describe what happened yesterday afternoon."

She stared blankly at his desk.

"Well, we climbed up there. She wanted to celebrate something work-related, good business, she said. She had booze with her. I don't drink, but she... Well. And then we went up to the Diving Board, and the fog came all of a sudden. I am afraid of heights, she's not, I stayed sitting on the slope; she was dancing at the top, and then suddenly she was gone."

She tried successfully to make her eyes appear a little humid. But the lack of sadness on her face was clearly due to the medication, she hoped.

Nevertheless, she was once again surprised at how little Zahra's death affected her.

Applegate tried to look sympathetic. But he was a seasoned police officer, not a social worker or counsellor, so his facial expressions were inadequate. He seemed to remember his other qualities.

"That must have been terrible for you, Miss... er... *Mthembu*. Were there any other, well, witnesses, I mean, other people up there with you?"

"Nope. I didn't see anyone. Not before and not after, err, what happened. A minute ago, there was a clear view of Camps Bay. The next moment all fog. There was only Zahra and me..." she began to sob quietly. She now took something more to sit on than just the edge of the chair....

.....Her strategy of playing the desperate brainiac was beginning to bear fruit. The inspector was visibly getting tired. He asked for more details, but his attitude was no longer as sharp as it had been at the beginning. Now, it was routine, and she could tell the rest straight from the heart: the helicopter farce, the descent, Zahra's car being left behind, and the ride home in the taxi.

She avoided starting again about the medication. In the end, the zealous cop would probably investigate the source she got the tranquillisers from. She wanted to avoid a blood test that would make part of her defence break like a dry branch.

"And then you went home, or rather back to the Hotel, right?"

Yah, what could I do? I was completely exhausted! And somehow, I hoped that it had just been a bad nightmare! I sat all night and waited for her to come back. I waited for a sign of life!"

"I understand. What I would also like to know: you were Miss Devereaux's lover, is that right? Can you say that?"

Chloé looked at the floor, ashamed. She realised that she wasn't that cold at all. She raised her head and said with some defiance in her voice:

"Yah. You could say that. We were lovers."

"How long had you been, err, together?"

Now, things were getting even more uncomfortable. Information would be surfacing that would paint Chloé in not the most positive light. And there was no way to sugarcoat it. She could only hope that the Apple guy was bound by some kind of legal confidentiality and wouldn't later reveal to the media: *'Miss Mthembu is essentially a prostitute who earns her living through sex work. During her line of work, if you can call it that, she encountered the victim.'* And so on.

"We've known each other for a long time. On the Internet. But we only met in person some time ago." She hoped that she had said it neutrally enough. But the inspector wanted to poke a little deeper. Internet acquaintances were probably inherently suspicious. Or maybe he also wanted to make contact with an exotic young woman out there in the other world.

"So you met somehow on a dating site?"

"Yah, somehow."

"Can you be a bit more specific? I mean, explain it in more detail?"

"We chatted. For many months."

"How can I imagine a chat like that to be like? What did you talk about?" He didn't let up. Could he really get her to reveal her real profession?

"I mean, can you give me the name of that chat site or whatever it's called? I have to check it out; it's just routine, I promise you."

Bang. There it was.....

.....The inspector looked at her, somewhat perplexed. Had he just made up a nice romantic story, and now the shit was going a different path all of a sudden?

"Business? And you don't happen to know what kind of business these are, or rather, was, I must say."

"Yah, I do," said Chloé.

The inspector, whose beautiful romantic story had just burst like a soap bubble, was starting to get angry.

"Well, tell me then."

"She wanted to get into the industry on a big scale, here in S.A., based in Cape Town," said Chloé.

"Industry? You mean, well, what do you mean by industry?"

"Adult industry," she said.

"Adult industry?" he asked.

"Sex industry you could say," Chloé said.

"Oh. Okay." The inspector licked his lips involuntarily. Not because of the sex in the *adult industry*. She thought. But because of a nice new motive for a murder or manslaughter investigation. That was probably a common occurrence in this milieu, the inspector might think. Actually, he wasn't that far from the truth then.

"So she wanted to open a brothel here? Or produce sex films?"

"Nope. She wanted to open a studio. A luxury studio for cam girls. Like me," she said....

...Now, she had to be extremely careful. There had been no argument, at least not openly. There had been disagreements, at least that's how it could be perceived from the outside. She was sure the heavies in suits, especially Jeff, had overheard a lot of things. And certainly Marcus. And they would not help, after all, they didn't like the little black slut who pushed her way into the business.

"She had trained me as her employee. I'm an expert, so my experience was important to her. We had a few disagreements about details."

"Ah. What details?"

"Very unimportant things. I'm sure you're not interested in them."

"Ah yes, I'm interested in the unimportant things," said the inspector expectantly.

"Oh. Ok. It was mainly about the accommodation for the girls. Whether we should provide rooms for three or double rooms. I was in favour of double rooms, but Zahra wanted to save money. Then we had a discussion about whether the girls should be allowed to show their pussies with inserted vibrators already at the public show or should ... "

"It's OK, Miss Mthuba!" The Inspector interrupted her hastily. "I don't think we need to go into such detail."

“Mthembu, that is.”

“Sorry, Miss, er, Mthumbe.”

Well done, she thought. Mia would have been proud of her. She hoped. That was almost it. The inspector asked a few more trivial questions, took her address and phone number, what was the hotel's, emphasized his sympathy again, and after what was only about one and a half hours, she was back on the street. Innocent, like the first snow on the Mountain in June.

You soon can buy the book at the Kindle store and other platforms.

For details go to leegroubert.com

Kind regards

Lee Groubert