MY WAR WITH FIBROIDS

A Wombful of Scars, Silence, and Survival

Carolle Ruto

My War With Fibroids - *A Wombful of Scars, Silence, and Survival*

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Published by Carolle Ruto

Dedication

For every woman who has bled in silence.

For my father, who held ground for my children — his grandchildren — refusing to cut down the guava tree.

Preface

I did not set out to write a book.
I set out to survive.

They called them fibroids.
But they were monsters.
Hungry things that fed on my hope.
They didn't just grow inside me —
They took things.
Time. Blood. Sleep. Dreams.
They emptied me in ways no scan could see.

This is not a medical memoir.
This is a record of what it means to be unseen while screaming.
It's a map of wounds no one drew,
and silence no one dared to interrupt.
It's what happened between the waiting and the waking,
between the first blood and the last stitch.

I bled through jobs.
I bled through love.
I bled through prayers.

And still, they said, "You'll be fine."
Still, they handed me painkillers
and told me to dress it all in strength.

But strength does not mean silence.
And silence has teeth.

This book is not for pity.
It is for the woman sitting on the edge of a hospital bed,
wondering if she's being too dramatic.

It is for the girl staring at the ceiling,
counting how many more pads she has left.

It is for the one who has stopped explaining,
because explaining hurts more than bleeding.

This is for her.
This is for you.

This is a mirror.
A scream.
A soft rebellion stitched in truth.
A testimony carved beneath the skin.
A kind of survival that cannot be sterilized.

And yes — somewhere in these pages,
You will find a surgeon
testing knives near my face
as if I were not there.

And maybe you will see what I saw:
That cruelty doesn't always shout.
Sometimes, it wears scrubs and a clock.

I did not set out to be brave.
I set out to live.
And in the process, I wrote.
I bled this book.
I wrapped it in gauze and grief
and sent it out into the world
so no one else would have to walk through this war alone.

You are not cursed.
You are not broken.
You are not alone.

— *Carol*

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Chapter 1 - The Silence in the Blood

It didn't start with a diagnosis.

It started with pain.

Pain that didn't follow any rules.

Pain that kicked down the door of my body and made itself at home.

It came when it wanted—stayed as long as it liked.

Left me breathless. Bent. Begging.

Cramps that felt like something was trying to claw its way out of me.

I'd curl up on the floor, shaking, drenched in sweat,

whispering to a God I wasn't sure was listening.

Bleeding so heavy it felt like punishment.

Like my womb was trying to drain me dry.

I'd soak through pads in minutes — I mean, not hours, minutes.

In offices. On buses. In public.

And still,

I had to smile like nothing was wrong.

And when I gathered the courage to speak?

They told me it was "just your period."

"Watch your diet."

"Drink water."

"Maybe it's stress."

I was young. I believed them.

I thought maybe I was just weak.

Maybe I wasn't trying hard enough to be normal.

So I kept going.

To work. To church. To family gatherings.

Smiling through pain.

Hiding soaked clothes.

Sitting in meetings with blood trickling down my thighs, pretending to be fine.

I started planning my life around toilets and painkillers.
Around shame.

One day, I bled onto a friend's car seat. I apologized so much.
She looked at me like, "Why are you sorry?"
I didn't have the words.

But the truth is, I had learned to apologize for everything —
For bleeding.
For being in pain.
For not being able to carry things.
For missing events.
For staying home.
For needing help.
For existing in a body I couldn't control.

Silence settled inside me.
It grew, quietly — just like the fibroids.
But I didn't know that yet.
I couldn't afford to know.

Poverty is a kind of disease.
I didn't have the money to see a good doctor.
Couldn't afford a scan.
Didn't know who to ask or what to ask for.

So I waited. And I bled.
I bled for years.

By the time I was diagnosed, the fibroids had already claimed a part of me.
They had taken my peace. My confidence. My job.
I was fired —
because I missed too many days.
Too many sick days.
Too many curled-up mornings
where I couldn't move,
couldn't breathe from the pain.

Sometimes, I passed out.
Other times,
I just stared at the ceiling,
praying to bleed a little less —
just enough to survive the day.

The fibroids hurt, yes.
But what pierced deeper than any cramp or cut
was how people responded to my pain.

The silence.
The suspicion.
The sting of words said — and unsaid.

Because sometimes, it's not the body that breaks you.
It's the way people stop seeing you.
Stop holding space for your suffering.
Treat your pain like an inconvenience.

There's a kind of love that stretches —
across differences, across seasons, across silences.
But not everyone offers that kind.
Not every home knows how.

In some families, the ones who bear children are celebrated differently.
Held with more tenderness.
Spoken to with more pride.
It's a quiet kind of divide.

One that isn't always named,
but is deeply felt.
You learn to smile through it.
To sit at the table and swallow the ache.
To love people, even when you're not sure they see you the same way.

No one knew I had lost a pregnancy.
No one knew I had almost died from an ectopic pregnancy.
No one asked.

They only whispered:
"Why is she always broke?"
"She doesn't even have kids. Where does her money go?"

Let me tell you where it went.
To hospitals.
To doctors who shrugged.
To clinics with long lines and cold stares.
To painkillers.
To take taxis after surgery.
To medicine that costs more than rent.
To hope — even when hope ran out.

I've had two surgeries.
Two times my body was cut open.
Two times they tried to remove what was killing me.

As you'll read later, those surgeries came with their own trauma.
But fibroids don't just leave.
They come back.
They grow like grief — quietly, slowly, until you realize you're not the same anymore.

There are days I still bleed unexpectedly and have to pretend I'm okay.
There are days I cry for no reason — except I know the reason.
I lived in silence for too long.

That's why I'm writing this.
Not to impress anyone.
Not to beg for sympathy.
But to speak to the woman who is suffering in silence right now.

The one who feels ashamed for something she never caused.

To you — the woman who bleeds too long,
Who smiles at family gatherings while dying inside,
Whose relatives whisper behind her back,
Who has been called names, blamed, abandoned — I want to say:

You are not cursed.
You are not a witch.
You are not alone.

You don't have to keep bleeding in silence.
Your pain is real.
And you matter.

Even if the world never sees your scars —
Even if no one believes your pain —
Even if your womb has been wounded and your spirit tired —
You are still a whole woman.
You are still here.
And that means something

Chapter 2: Understanding Fibroids

After years of hiding pain behind smiles.
After bleeding through clothes and pretending it was nothing.
I finally heard the word that explained what had been happening to my body:
Fibroids!

I remember sitting there, confused.
The doctor said it like I should already know.
I didn't.
I'd never even heard the word before.

No one had ever taught me.
Not in school.
Not at home.
Not even when I started missing work and feeling like a stranger in my own body.

My mother never told me much about her womb.
But I remember how tired she looked.
How her hands trembled when she stood up.
How some days she would sit quietly, eyes far away, as if carrying something heavy inside.

She is a strong woman.
And by strong, I mean she swallowed pain like water — no complaints, no explanations.
I think I learned that from her.
We all did.

As girls, we were taught to endure.
To fold our pads into wrappers.
To hide the pain behind politeness.
To go to school even when our legs trembled with cramps.
To whisper. To endure.
To never say the word "blood" in front of a man.

I come from a line of women who bled in silence.

Maybe that's why I ignored the signs for so long.
Maybe that's why I kept going to work with a handbag full of pads.
Maybe that's why I smiled at people while wondering if I was dying on the inside.
Silence becomes a habit — a sickness of its own.
But the body always speaks.
And when it does, it does not whisper. It roars.

Mine did.
It pushed me to seek answers — even when I couldn't afford them.
Even when doctors dismissed me with a shrug.
Even when I started thinking maybe it was all in my head.

But it wasn't. It was in my womb.
Fibroids.
That word became the key that unlocked years of confusion.

And suddenly, everything made sense:
The bleeding lasted weeks.
The pressure in my lower belly.
The constant urge to pee.
The bloating that made people ask if I was pregnant.
The pain — that made walking feel like punishment.
The shame. The exhaustion. The fear.

So many of us are walking around with monsters inside us — and no one tells us their names.
I learned late.
But I want younger women to learn early.

If you're reading this and you've been told it's just stress — don't stop asking.
If your period drains your soul every month — don't accept it as normal.
If you feel something isn't right — trust yourself.

Your body is not lying to you.
You are not weak.

You are not overreacting.
You are not imagining it.

What's happening to your body is real.
Fibroids are real.

And we need to talk about them — woman to woman.
Not with fear. Not with shame.
But with truth.

Because when you finally give your pain a name…
You begin to take back your power.

Chapter 3: The Fight for Healing

When I finally gathered enough courage — and money — to walk into that hospital, I thought:

They'll fix me.

They'll make this pain go away.

I was wrong.

The truth is, fibroid treatment is a journey.

And for women like me, that journey is rarely simple.

It's often delayed by poverty. Blocked by misinformation. Slowed down by fear.

But knowing your options — even when they scare you — is how you begin to take your power back.

This is everything I've learned — the hard way.

1. Medical Treatments

Doctors often start with medication to manage symptoms before talking about surgery.

a) Pain Relievers

Basic ones like ibuprofen (Brufen) or paracetamol.

They helped with cramps, but they didn't address the underlying issue.

They don't shrink fibroids.

b) Hormone Therapy

These control hormone levels to slow fibroid growth or stop your periods altogether:

- GnRH agonists: Shrink fibroids temporarily by pushing your body into "fake menopause."
  The moment you stop, fibroids often return. And the side effects — hot flashes, bone thinning — are brutal.

- Birth control pills: Can regulate bleeding, but don't remove fibroids.

In my case, medicine only bought me time — not healing.

2. Surgical Options

When fibroids grow too large or cause too much harm, surgery becomes necessary.

a) Myomectomy (Removing fibroids only)

Ideal if you still want to have children.

Can be done through open surgery or keyhole (laparoscopy).

But fibroids can return.

b) Hysterectomy (Removing the uterus)

Permanent solution.

But it ends the possibility of pregnancy.

Emotionally hard if motherhood is still a dream.

Surgery changed my life — but not without cost.

It's something I'll never forget.

3. Herbal & Natural Remedies

Let's be honest: when you can't afford hospitals, you turn to herbs.

I did too.

Some brought small relief. Others brought disappointment.

Please be careful.

Some herbalists give dangerous mixtures.

Some ask for money without giving results.

Some convince you to stop taking real medicine — which can be risky.

I understand the need for herbs.

But don't suffer in silence.

Mix knowledge — not guesses.

4. Diet & Lifestyle

Food can't "cure" fibroids, but it can help manage symptoms and support your body.

Try to:

- Reduce red meat, sugar, and processed food
- Increase vegetables, water, fruits, and whole grains
- Get rest
- Move — *even if it's just walking from the house to the gate*

There were days I could barely walk. But I walked when I could. That was enough.

What They Don't Tell You

Treatment can fail.
Fibroids can grow back.
Surgery might *fix* your womb, but break something inside you.
You might feel angry, numb, or hopeless — *and not know why.*
You might heal physically, but carry emotional scars.

But you will rise.
You're already rising.

What I Wish Someone Told Me

Healing from fibroids is not just about removing a tumor.
It's about reclaiming your body, your dignity, your right to be well.

Whether you choose surgery, medication, herbs, or a mix — *just know this:*

You are allowed to choose yourself.
You are allowed to heal.
You are allowed to stop bleeding and start living.

No woman should have to suffer to prove she is strong.
No woman should have to bleed to be believed.

You've bled enough.
Now it's time to heal.

Chapter 4: The First Cut

I had known for years.
Eleven, to be exact.
I had known fibroids were growing inside me —
a quiet war I carried in my womb.

But knowing doesn't prepare you
for how far the battle will go —
especially when poverty keeps you from fighting back.

Because it's not just the pain that breaks you.
It's the cost of staying alive.

When I finally went for that scan, it was supposed to be routine.
Just another confirmation of what I already knew.
But the doctor — the one who would eventually cut me open — was visibly shocked.

He placed the scanner on my belly,
then looked up at me with disbelief.
"You look like you're eight months pregnant," he said.

But I wasn't carrying a baby.
I was carrying a monster.
A blood-sucking demon that had been feeding on me, silently, for over a decade.

He told me I needed surgery.
But there was a problem — my blood levels were dangerously low.
Too low to survive the operation.

He gave me three months to "build blood."
But what he didn't understand —
or maybe didn't want to admit —
was that it's nearly impossible to build blood —
with a monster still bleeding you dry every day.

And there was something else:
I didn't just lack blood.
I lacked money.

Poverty had delayed this surgery for years.
Even when I had the pain, I didn't have the power.
Even when I had the will, I didn't have the means.

I went home with a deadline and a failing body.
I tried to eat better, rest, and follow every instruction —
But the fibroids were relentless.

I kept going back to the clinic, hoping for a miracle,
But my blood levels kept dropping.
I was literally fading.

So the doctor made a decision.
"We'll do a transfusion on the day of the surgery," he said.
"Just enough blood to take you in. Before the monster takes it back."

And that's what they did.
They gave me blood from someone I'll never meet.
Whoever you are — God bless you.
You saved me.

And then they wheeled me into the theatre.
They cut me open
and removed several kilograms of fibroids.
Dead weight that had occupied my womb like a squatter.

I survived.
But just barely.

The monster didn't get the chance to take most of the blood.
I lost it through the knife.
It was the price I had to pay.

Something had to give —
And it was my blood.
A debt paid in silence,
with no receipts but the scars.

The recovery wasn't easy.
"Your womb has been peeled."
That's what they told me.

I felt it —
the rawness,
the emptiness,
the slow, aching healing that didn't come with a timeline.

It wasn't just my body that needed to recover —
It was my sense of womanhood,
My trust in hospitals,
my faith in life itself.

I bled for days.
Slept in broken stretches.
Cried when no one was watching.
I was alone anyway.

There were moments I wondered if I'd ever feel whole again.
They removed the monster.
But they left behind silence.
Scars.
And questions I didn't yet have the strength to ask.

That was my first cut.
My first war.
And somehow, I won.

But the battlefield?
It never really leaves you.

Chapter 5: Return of the Monster — Mic Testing of Knives

***Years later*,**

the monster returned.

I got to the hospital at 6 a.m.

Alone.

Not because I wanted to be — but because sometimes, this journey leaves you with no one left to call.

I sat there quietly, trying to hold myself together.

I wasn't just waiting for surgery — I was waiting for courage to arrive.

They didn't check me in until 10:00 a.m.

Four hours of sitting.

Four hours of staring at white walls and trying not to imagine what would be taken from me this time.

They eventually called my name.

I stood up, but my legs were trembling.

They didn't ask if I was ready.

I wasn't.

But I followed them anyway — like a woman heading to something she had no say in.

They led me into a small room inside the theatre complex.

Not the main theatre yet. Just a holding room.

A single door separated me from where they were still operating on someone else.

And that door — it was thin.

Useless.

It didn't block out the sounds.

I could still hear the beeping, the clatter of metal, the soft panic in the rhythm of people trying to save someone.

That room was cold, and I was alone again.

Not one word of comfort.

Not even eye contact.

I sat there — stiff, silent, pretending to be brave —
But inside, I was already grieving something.
Not just my body, not just the fibroids.
I was grieving the version of me that still believed hospitals were places of care.

I stared at that door.
The one that separated me from the table.
And I wondered — when they open it, will I come back out whole?
Or will they take another piece of me and not even notice?

My chest was tight.
Not from anesthesia — it hadn't even started.
From fear. From loneliness.
From that quiet, suffocating feeling of being forgotten while you're still awake.

The worst part wasn't the surgery.
It was this — sitting in that small room,
hearing someone else's pain while bracing for your own,
knowing you're next, and no one is really looking at you.

I sat in that little room, behind that thin door, for close to an hour.
No one came to check on me.
No one said why it was taking so long.
No one offered even a blanket or a kind word — nothing.

Just me.
In a thin gown. On a plastic chair.
Listening.
Listening to machines.
To muffled voices.
To the slow, rhythmic beeping of someone else's life being monitored.

I tried not to look at the clock, but I couldn't help it.
Five minutes.
Twenty.
Forty.
Each tick felt heavier than the last.

I started to wonder if they'd forgotten me.

Or maybe they were stalling.

Or maybe something had gone wrong inside that room — and I was about to be next.

Every sound on the other side of that door felt louder.

A tray being dropped.

A suction machine starting up.

A voice asking for more gauze.

The dull clank of metal instruments.

And still — nothing for me.

That hour wasn't just a wait.

It was a slow unraveling of everything I had tried to hold together since morning.

I had come here to be healed.

To be helped.

But in that hour, all I felt was how small I was in their system.

How forgotten I could become with just one closed door.

By the time they came for me, I wasn't scared anymore.

I was numb.

Tired.

Already cut open in places they would never see.

The door opened.

Not for me — not yet.

They were wheeling someone out.

A woman.

Fresh out of surgery.

Still under anesthesia. Unconscious. Vulnerable in the deepest way a body can be.

She wasn't fully covered — her gown had slipped, her legs were bare, her chest exposed.

There were tubes in her nose and in her mouth.

And mucus was bubbling at her lips, choking her softly.

You could hear it — the wet sound of breath fighting through fluid.

And no one flinched.

No nurse rushed to clear it.
No one wiped her face.
No one covered her properly.

They just pushed her out like luggage.
And parked her right next to me.

I sat there, frozen.
Watching her body rise and fall — just barely.
Her mouth slack. Her skin pale. Her dignity gone.

That image burned itself into me.
She wasn't just sedated — she was suffering.
And no one noticed.
Or maybe they did.
Maybe they were just used to it.

But I wasn't.
That woman wasn't just another patient to me.
She was me, in a few minutes.
I was next.

And I realized then that what scared me most wasn't the scalpel or the stitches —
It was the possibility that I would be treated the same way.
Wheeled out half-naked.
Breathing through mucus.
Uncared for.
Unseen.

That's the moment I stopped pretending I was okay.
That's the moment I wanted to leave.

Because what they had turned into routine — I saw as cruelty.

Then they called my name.
And instead of standing, instead of nodding, instead of pretending to be strong like I always do
—

I looked at them and said:
"I want to go home. I don't want it anymore."

And I meant it.
I didn't care how far I'd come.
Didn't care that I was in a gown, barefoot, prepped for surgery.
Didn't care about the time, the money, the paperwork.

I just wanted out.
Out of that hospital.
Out of that gown.
Out of this cycle — of being cut open and sewn shut, again and again, like it was normal.

The nurse blinked, confused.
She didn't know what to do with a woman who no longer wanted to be brave.
She said something like,
"You've already waited so long."
As if waiting had ever been a reason to go through with pain.

I said it again, quieter this time:
"Please… I just want to go home."

And I wasn't asking for permission.
I was begging for a small piece of control.
For my own voice to mean something in a place that had treated me like silence.

But they didn't let me go.
They talked to me like I was being emotional.
As if fear were irrational.
As if trauma had a timer.

They convinced me.
Or maybe they wore me down.
Maybe I realized there was nowhere else to go — no healing waiting outside those hospital walls either.

So I stayed.
But a part of me never forgave them for that.

And a bigger part of me never forgave myself —
For staying, when everything in me was screaming to leave.

They told me to breathe.
To relax.
But my body was stiff.
My fists clenched. My jaw locked.
It wasn't obedience — it was defeat.

So when I finally gave in —
after asking to go home, after begging with my whole soul —
They led me into the theatre.

They didn't speak much.
They didn't look at me like a person who was terrified.
I had become a task. A time slot.

They helped me onto the table.
A steel slab.
It was cold against my back — the kind of cold that makes your body brace for pain before it even begins.

And then… they just started.

No gentle words.
No kindness.
No pause to ask, "Are you okay?"

As I lay there, still fully awake, still breathing fear into the air —
They began cleaning the surgical instruments in front of me.
Metal clinking against metal.
Gloves snapping.
Water running.
Trays rattling.

Right next to my head.
As if I weren't there.
As if I couldn't see the tools they were about to use to cut into me.

As if my fear was inconvenient.
As if my body didn't deserve dignity.

And in that moment, I remember thinking:
How far can cruelty go?

It's not always loud.
Sometimes, it's in the small things.
In the way they wash the blood of someone else while you lie there, knowing yours is next.
In how they clean the knife while you're still awake.
In how they don't even bother to shield your eyes — or your heart.

I lay there watching them,
feeling more like a carcass than a woman.
I looked at the ceiling.
White. Bright. Unforgiving.
I looked at the tools.
Shiny. Cold. Unapologetic.
I looked at the people again.
Busy. Efficient. Unbothered.

And I thought,
This is not care.
This is a procedure.
And I am the object.

I wasn't just preparing for surgery.
I was watching them prepare to forget me.

I could have screamed.
I could have run.
But my body stayed still — not because I trusted them, but because I had no fight left.

Then one of them came near me.
Placed something on my chest. Checked something on my arm.
Still no eye contact.

And that's when it really hit me —
They didn't see me.
Not as Carol. Not as a woman.
Not as the daughter of a man who once pointed at a guava tree and said,
"Don't cut it — it belongs to my grandchildren."

They just saw a uterus.
A file.
An open slot on the schedule.

And right before they put me under, I remember thinking:
If I don't wake up, will anyone even remember my name?

And just when I thought it was finally about to happen —
just when I had given in, laid down, stretched my arms, let the cold metal beneath me become my fate —
They paused.

One of the doctors was called away.
Called to another patient.
Another emergency.
Another body that suddenly mattered more than mine.

They looked at me and said something like,
"We have to wait. Please step down for now."

Step down?
Like it was nothing.
Like I wasn't already emotionally naked.
Like I hadn't just gone through hell to get on that table in the first place.

I was already shaking.
Already stripped.
Already seconds from being put under — and now I was expected to get off the table and return to the holding room?

I didn't even know how I stood.
My legs were numb.
Even so, my spirit more.

But I got down — quietly — and walked back like a ghost.

No apology.
No warmth.
No acknowledgment of how deeply wrong it was
to put someone through that kind of emotional whiplash.

I sat back in the same plastic chair I had been in before.
In the same cold gown.
Heart racing.
Eyes dry — because even the tears were tired.

I waited again.
This time, not with hope.
But with a dull kind of ache.
The kind that doesn't scream.
It just sits inside you like something rotting.

They had pulled me to the edge.
Laid me bare.
And then pushed me back like a file being misfiled.

And I remember thinking:
"How do they not see this as cruelty?"
How do they not see me?

Then finally — the time came.
No one fetched me with gentleness.
There was no moment of comfort.
No soft tone. No warm hand.
Just a quiet, cold signal that it was time.

So I walked in.
On my own.

Feet bare. Heart racing.
Soul somewhere between here and not.

I climbed onto that table myself.
No one helped me up.
No one said, "You'll be okay."

I lay there — not because I was brave,
but because I had run out of places to run.

I didn't utter a word.
Not a prayer. Not a plea.
I was beyond scared.
I was emptied out.
The kind of fear that silences even the voice inside your head.

They moved around me. Checked machines. Tightened straps. Inserted lines.
I watched them without really seeing.

I had become weight.
Skin.
Flesh.

And then — nothing.

Darkness.
Anesthesia pulled me under like a tide.
I didn't fight it.
I didn't even feel it.
I just… let go.

When I woke up, it was around 5:30 p.m.
The world was blurry.
My body felt heavy, like someone else had lived in it while I was gone.
And I was freezing.

I was extremely cold.
The kind of cold that seeps into your bones and starts to shake your soul.

I looked down, and just like the patient before me —
I was barely covered.
Gown pushed aside.
Legs out.
My chest half-exposed.
My skin raised in goosebumps, teeth slightly chattering.

No dignity.
No warmth.
No care.

No one rushed to cover me.
No one noticed the shaking.
No one whispered, *"You're safe now."*

And in that moment, I realized —
This isn't just how they treat patients.
This is how they treat women.

Especially the ones who bleed quietly.
The ones who've already been told, again and again,
that their pain is *"manageable,"*
their grief *"hormonal,"*
their story *"too much."*

I came in with wounds.
I left with stitches.
But the deepest cut wasn't from the scalpel —
It was from the way they left me cold and uncovered - like the others.
Like we were all just bodies they'd finished with.

Chapter 6: The Pain They Don’t See

There's the bleeding, yes.
There's the pain,
the fatigue,
the exhaustion that sits in your bones like a second skeleton.

There are the surgeries,
the medicine,
and the side effects.

But the hardest part of living with fibroids
is the pain no one sees.

It's the quiet shame.
The questions asked in whispers.
The looks you pretend not to notice.
The gossip that smells like pity but cuts like judgment.

It's watching people try to measure your womanhood by your womb.

They Whisper: "Where Does She Take Her Money?"

I've heard it.
"She has no children, no husband… but she's always at the clinic."
"She dresses well. Where does her money go?"

They don't know that every cent I earn —
every coin I save —
goes into blood tests, scans, medications, pads, painkillers, and transport to hospitals.

They don't see the bills.
They don't see me limping home after checkups.
They don't see me soaking through sheets in the middle of the night.
They don't see the part of me that's too tired to explain anymore.

Scars They Can't See

There are the scars that doctors stitch closed.

And then there are the ones no one ever sees.
The ones you carry in silence.

Friends avoid the topic.
Family tiptoes around it.

Someone once told me, "*At least it's not cancer.*"
Another said, "*Maybe you weren't meant to be a mother.*"

My father never said much.
His pain sat beneath the surface — steady, unspoken, but present.
He never confronted me.
He didn't have to.
I could feel it in the way he watched me.
I knew he sensed I wasn't okay — even if he didn't have the words to say it.

But one day, he said something that broke me in a way he may never understand.

I was trimming a shrub in the compound.
He saw me and said gently, almost absentmindedly:
"Don't cut that guava tree. It's for my grandchildren."
My children…

He was talking about a guava tree.
But I heard so much more.

My grandchildren.
The ones I've begged God for.
The ones I've lost.
The ones who never made it earthside.

He said it so gently.
So casually.
So full of innocent hope.

And that's what hurt the most.

Because how do you tell your father that the tree has fruit — but your womb does not?
That every time someone mentions "children," it scrapes the inside of your soul?
That your silence isn't indifference — it's survival?

I didn't answer.
I just nodded.
And later, I cried where no one could hear me.

Because even love — when it speaks without knowing — can open wounds that never really closed.

Chapter 7: Ectopic Loss, IVF & Hope Deferred

I remember the day the pregnancy test turned positive.
I sat on the edge of the bed, holding it in my trembling hands.
My heart beat so fast I could hear it.
A soft, almost afraid voice inside whispered:
Could this be it?

I didn't move.
I kept checking.
As if the two lines would disappear if I blinked too long.

For a few quiet minutes, I let myself believe.
And for the first time in years, I smiled — really smiled.

It felt like winning.
Like the universe had finally said, *"You too."*

But joy is fragile.
And mine didn't stay long.

Almost as soon as hope arrived, pain followed.
A sharp stab on one side of my belly.
A strange, heavy feeling.
Something wasn't right.

The doctors confirmed what my body already knew: ectopic pregnancy.
The baby was growing in my fallopian tube — a place where life cannot thrive.
A miracle already slipping away.

I locked myself in the hospital bathroom and wept.
Clutching my stomach as if sheer will, as if love itself, could hold on to the life being pulled from me.

They didn't just take the baby.
They took my fallopian tube too.
They took a part of me.

A piece of my body.
A piece of my hope.

Gone — without ceremony.
Without the world even noticing.

That's the part no one talks about.
It wasn't just a miscarriage.
It was a loss of self.
A closed door.
A dream shattered in silence.

And still — the world says:
"Try harder."

They don't know what it means to wake up in a hospital bed bleeding — from a womb that's been opened, and a spirit that doesn't even try anymore.
They don't know what it feels like to walk out of that hospital with a scar on your belly…
And a canyon in your heart.

IVF Followed

Expensive.
Exhausting.
Emotionally brutal.

Injections. Hormones. Blood tests. Endless appointments.
Hope rising and crashing in waves.

And yes — I still want to be a mother.
That dream never left me.

Even when my body tried to shut the door.
Even when fibroids took one of my fallopian tubes.
Even after the ectopic pregnancy.
Even after the scars — on my belly, and on my soul.

So I turned to IVF.
Not just for science — but for hope.
A quiet, fierce rebellion against every voice that said:
"You're too old."
"You should give up."

But IVF is not kind.

Financially, it broke me.
I emptied my savings. Skipped meals.
Borrowed money I was too ashamed to ask for.

People assumed I was being reckless —
they didn't know I was paying for one more injection, one more scan, one more shot at the life I dreamed of.

Emotionally, it drained me.
Hopeful mornings. Heartbreaking evenings.
Waiting. Wishing. Praying.
Wondering if it was all worth it.

Some nights, I cried in silence.
Some mornings, I woke up numb.

But I kept going — because my dreams matter.

And the Stigma…

It's hard to say *"I'm doing IVF"* when people already think you waited too long.

They ask:
"Why not adopt?"
"Maybe it's God's will."
"Why waste all that money?"

But they don't understand what it feels like to long for the sound of a heartbeat inside your own body.

To imagine holding a child that shares your eyes.
To see your own smile in a tiny face — not in a mirror, but in life.

People smiled and said, *"Just relax."*
They didn't see the bruises blooming across my belly.
They didn't see the syringes, the vials, the silence.
They didn't hear the sobs muffled by pillows.
The prayers whispered through clenched teeth.

They didn't know that I cried myself to sleep —
holding baby clothes I hadn't yet dared to buy.

Maybe IVF Will Work. Maybe It Won't.

Maybe I will become a mother another way.
Maybe not.

But this I know:

Every woman deserves to want more.

You are allowed to try.
You are allowed to hope.
You are allowed to dream — even when it costs you.
Even when it breaks you.
Even when it doesn't come true the first time.

Because trying doesn't make you desperate.
It makes you brave.

What Fibroids Do to a Woman's Heart

They steal your confidence.
They kill your sex life.
They isolate you from friends and lovers.
They make you cancel plans — again and again.
They leave you doubting your own womanhood.

"Am I less of a woman?"
"Will I ever be enough?"

But perhaps the cruelest thing they do…
They make you feel invisible —
in a world that only sees and celebrates mothers.

But I Am Still Here

Yes, I've cried.
Yes, I've bled.
Yes, I've been rejected.

But I have also survived.

I've stood in hospital queues when my legs barely held me.
I've gone to work when pain wrapped around me like chains.
I've smiled at people who shattered me with their words.

And still, I'm standing.
Still healing.
Still whole — even if my womb is scarred.

For the Woman Reading this

You are not broken.
You are not barren.
You are not cursed.
You are not less of a woman.

Your body has carried pain with a strength that defies explanation.
That alone makes you worthy.

Worthy of love.
Worthy of joy.
Worthy of peace.

Living With Fibroids Is Not Just Survival — It's Resistance

You are resisting every label.

Resisting every whisper.

Resisting every lie that says motherhood defines your worth.

You are living.

And that is more powerful than they will ever understand.

Chapter 8: What I Wish People Knew About Fibroids

People see your smile and think you're fine.
They see you walking, working, laughing —
And they believe you're strong.

But they don't see what's underneath.
They don't see the emergency pads you carry everywhere,
Just in case there is a flood your way.
They don't see the bathroom breaks —
timed like survival missions.
They don't see you bleed through clothes,
cry in toilets,
whisper through pain.

That's why I'm writing this.
Because fibroids are not just *"heavy periods."*
They are life-altering.
They are body-breaking.
They are soul-crushing.

1. Fibroids Are Not a Punishment

This is not witchcraft.
This is not karma.
This is not God punishing you for being childless,
or unmarried,
or independent.

It's a medical condition —
One that affects millions of women.

And yet… in some homes,
In some churches,
In some cultures,
We whisper about it like it's a curse.

We're told it's because we waited too long.
Because we talked back.
Because we were too ambitious.
Too loud. Too free. Too something.

No!
This is not punishment.
This is pain,
and it deserves care — not condemnation.

2. Fibroids Are Not Just "Woman Problems"

People laugh when we cancel plans.
Bosses think we're unreliable.
Partners get distant.
Friends change the topic.
And strangers — they say, *"At least it's not cancer."*

But fibroids steal everything:
Your energy
Your confidence
Your joy
Your sex life
Your sleep
Your calendar
Your dreams

It's not *"just your period."*
It's weeks of bleeding.
It's blood clots,
back pain,
nausea,
swelling,
exhaustion.

It's sitting in a meeting pretending you're fine —
while your body is breaking inside.

It’s wondering if you’ll soak through your clothes before the day ends.
It’s trying to stand,
but too dizzy to move.

It’s the shame.
The mess.
The silence.

3. We Suffer in Silence Because No One Talks

We don't ask for help —
because we know how people talk.

We hear them.
"Why is she always at the hospital?"
"Where does her money go?"
"She has no kids, what's wrong with her womb?"

They don't see that our wallets bleed too —
just like our bodies.

That every coin we save is swallowed by:

- Clinics
- Scans
- Painkillers
- Pads

- Blood tests
- Surgeries
- IVF
- Taxi rides home while still bleeding

They ask why we don't have children — never imagining the nights we've cried for them.
They talk behind our backs like our womb is public property.

And so, we learn to stay quiet.

We skip weddings.

We avoid baby showers.

We fake smiles.

We cancel plans.

We disappear.

And they call us distant.

They don't know we're trying not to bleed out in the middle of dinner.

4. We Need to Be Heard — Not Judged

If you know a woman living with fibroids:

Don't ask her when she'll get pregnant.

Don't tell her to relax, or pray harder, or *"just get married."*

Don't call her dramatic.

Don't ask why she's moody.

Don't suggest herbal tea as a cure.

Instead, say:

"I'm here if you ever want to talk."

"Is there anything you need today?"

"Do you want company at your next appointment?"

"You don't have to pretend with me."

Because silence is heavy.

But empathy?

Empathy heals.

Chapter 9: To the Men Who Haven’t Forgotten Us

This goes out to the men who haven't forgotten us.
Who stayed through the storms.
Who witnessed the blood, the fear, and the surgeries.
Who didn't flinch when the monsters came.

You may not have carried the fibroids — but you carried us.
You stood in the war — not as a witness, but as a warrior.
Clothed in full armor, though none of it was yours.
You carried shields you didn't know you needed.
Took blows meant for bodies that were not your own.

And still, you stayed.
Not because you understood the battle —
But because you refused to let us fight alone.

Where others fled at the sight of blood —
You came closer.
You held us through the aftermath,
through the stitches,
through the silence.

This war was never yours.
But you fought like it was.

This is for you.

For the Husbands, Boyfriends, and Fiancés
The men who try to love a woman fighting this bloody war —
You weren't given a manual for this.
You weren't taught how to handle pain you can't stop,
Or how to hold a woman
When her body becomes the battleground.

They didn't teach you how to hold her
When the monster invades her body,
and the bleeding starts without warning.

They didn't prepare you for the nights she curls up in bed
facing the wall,
her back to you,
not because she doesn't love you —
but because the pain is louder than anything you could say.

They didn't show you what to do
When she starts cancelling plans,
when she forgets how to laugh,
when her body no longer feels like home —
to her, or to you.
You weren't taught how to stay close
to a woman who keeps pulling away,
or how to make her feel safe
when her own body has become a stranger.

But still — you tried.

And that trying -that quiet — patient — faithful trying— it matters.

Because it's not easy to love a woman
whose body keeps betraying her.
To hold her when she bleeds through her clothes,
When sex becomes painful,
when shame replaces closeness,
And silence replaces connection.

But you stayed.

And in a world that tells men to walk away from what they can't fix —

You remained.

And that, too,
Is an act of love.

For the Brother Who Didn't Look Away

To the brother who didn't flinch when he saw her doubled over in pain —
This is for you.

You didn't understand it fully.
You weren't trained to speak the language of blood and wombs.
You couldn't name the medical terms.

But you knew one thing with certainty:
She was hurting.
And that was enough to move you.

You stayed —
not because it was easy,
not because you had answers,
but because the thought of her facing that hospital room alone
was unthinkable.

You slept on the next bed.
Thin mattress. Harsh light. Cold floor. No complaints.
You watched her breathe through the pain.
You lifted her when her body gave in.
You held the vomit bag with steady hands when the medication turned cruel.
You wiped her mouth.
You whispered, "I'm here," when she couldn't speak.
You poured water into trembling hands.

You were there — not to fix her, but to hold her together.

When others made light of her suffering,
you stood between her and their ignorance.

When pity threatened to define her,
you replaced it with dignity.

You silenced the careless.
You shut down the gossip.
You became her shield when she was too tired to fight.

You didn't need to understand fibroids
to know she was in the middle of a war.

And you showed up like a quiet soldier —
not loud, not heroic,
but constant.
Present.
Unshakable.

You didn't just stay.
You carried her.
Carried her spirit.
Carried her silence.
Carried her through one of the darkest chapters of her life —
in ways she may never have the words to thank you for.

You weren't just a brother in blood.
You were her safety.
Her spine when she couldn't stand.
Her shield when the world got cruel.
Her home when pain made everything else feel unfamiliar.

This is for you.
For showing up like love dressed in brotherhood.

For the Father Who Loved in Silence

To the father who stood outside the hospital room,
pretending to be calm while holding back a storm —
This is for you.

To the fathers who gave their daughters a shoulder
When the men who were supposed to stay
bolted at the first sight of blood.

Who stood in the storm
not because they weren't afraid —
but because their daughter's health mattered more than their fear.

When helplessness wrapped itself around the chest,
when the unknown loomed like a wall too high to climb —
They stayed.
They showed up.

Sat in waiting rooms.
Asked about wombs —
things no one ever prepared them to speak of.

They spoke through silence.
Gave what they had.
And stayed.

And when the grandchildren didn't make it earthside,
they mourned too —
quietly,
softly,
in their own language.

This is for them.
For carrying what they didn't understand.

For standing where others ran.
For staying —
When staying was the hardest thing to do.

Not raised to speak the language of pain or bleeding daughters,
not taught how to ask:
"Are you scared?"
"Are you tired?"
"Are you okay?"

So they cleared their throats at doorways.
Searched eyes without asking too many questions.
Stood by windows, pretending to look at the view —
When really, they were trying not to cry.

They couldn't take the pain away.
They couldn't fix what was broken.

But they gave something else:
Steadiness.
Strength.
Unshakable love —
spoken not in words, but in showing up.

They didn't say, "I love you."
They didn't have to.

Their love was in the waiting.
The silence.
The way they paced the hallway like soldiers
guarding wounds they could not see —
but refused to leave unattended.
This is for them.
And they are not forgotten.

To the Men Who Stayed

This goes out to the men who didn't turn away.
Who didn't look away when the bleeding began.
Who stayed — not because they knew what to say,
but because leaving was never an option.

Who stood in the war without a map.
Who held trembling hands in waiting rooms.
Who read pain in our eyes before we even spoke it aloud.

You didn't run from the blood, the scans, the surgeries.
You stayed — and that saved us.

To the male doctors and nurses who treated us like people, not cases.
Who didn't dismiss our pain as "*just hormonal.*"
Who didn't rush our stories.
Who looked us in the eye,
and called us by name — not diagnosis.

To the brothers, the cousins, and the friends,
who showed up without needing a spotlight.
You waited outside theatres.
You bought pads without shame.
You carried the bags we couldn't lift
and the silence we couldn't break.

To the ones who didn't need a title to act like family —
You didn't call it heroism.
You called it being there.

You may never understand the full weight we carried.
But you lifted what you could.
And that made all the difference.

You fought beside bleeding women,
with nothing but love as your shield.
Took blows meant for wombs you didn't own.
Stood guard over wounds you couldn't heal.

This war was not yours.
But you made it yours by standing in the fire with us.
By believing us.
By believing in us.

Thank you.
For staying.
For standing.
For seeing us when the world turned away.

We remember.
We always will.

Thank you.
We see you.
We remember you.
And we are grateful for you.

You are rare.
You are needed.
And you are part of our survival too.

Chapter 10: Final Reflections

To all the women in the storm,
If you're quietly hurting... this is for you.

Maybe you're sitting on the toilet, holding your head in your hands,
wondering how much more blood your body can lose.
Maybe you're walking through town with a sweater tied around your waist,
Praying nothing shows.
Maybe you're lying in bed,
staring at the ceiling,
asking why your body feels like it's betraying you.
Maybe you're silently counting how many pads you've used today.
Wondering if the bleeding will ever stop.
Wondering if anyone would believe you —
if you told them how heavy it is, how painful, how frightening.

You don't know how to explain it.
Why your period won't end.
Why it hurts so much you can't even stand straight.
Why every month feels like a war inside you.

Your sheets are stained.
Your clothes are ruined.
Your confidence is cracked.
And still… You say nothing.

Because they told you it's normal.
Because you're tired of being dismissed.
Because you've learned to carry your pain in silence.

But hear me:
You are not lazy.
You are not dirty.
You are not cursed.
You are not alone.

You're not faking it.

They say it's "just your period."
That you're exaggerating.
That other women go through it too.

But they don't see your bathroom floor.
They don't hear your muffled cries at 3 a.m.
They don't know how many times you've passed out, or almost did.
They don't know that you plan your outfits around blood.
That you carry extra clothes.
That you've learned to move without wincing —
to smile while cramping,
to speak while breaking,
to show up even when your body begs you not to.

But I know.

I know the way pain makes you shrink.
How shame creeps in where understanding should be.
How you've convinced yourself to be smaller, quieter —
because being believed feels harder than bleeding.

I know the rage.
The kind that's so quiet it looks like calm.
The kind that builds inside when the world won't make room for your truth.

And I know the strength.
The kind that doesn't shout.
The kind that wakes up again and again —
even when every part of you wants to stay under the covers.

So, to the woman in the storm:
You are not broken.
You are not alone.
You are not imagining this.

You are surviving something most people will never understand.

And that survival —
that quiet, aching endurance —
it is a kind of courage the world doesn't celebrate enough.

But I do.
I see it.
And I honor it.

So rest if you need to.
Cry if you must.
Scream if it helps.
But don't you dare think you're weak.

You are the storm.
And you are the shelter.

With all my scars,
With all my strength,
And with a heart that still believes in your healing —
I stand with you.
Always.
— *Carol*

Afterword: Rebirth in the Aftermath

Recovery is not just physical.

It's spiritual.

It's emotional.

It's political.

I am not the same woman I was.

I am stitched up — in flesh, in memory, in identity.

I still bleed —

In memory.

In rage.

In grief.

But I also rise.

I speak now.

Loudly.

For the girl I was.

For the women still afraid to tell their truth.

For those who are still being dismissed, disbelieved, and denied.

This body?

It is scarred.

But it is mine.

Physical Recovery

They stitched my body closed — but they didn't close the wound inside me.

The blood stopped, eventually.

But my energy. My strength. My appetite. My breath.

It all had to come back slowly.

Even now, my body flinches at the memory of pain.

Healing wasn't quick. It wasn't clean.
It was slow. Messy. Fragile.
But it came.

Emotional Recovery

I didn't just lose fibroids — I lost parts of myself.
I grieved a womb that betrayed me.
I mourned the children that I lost.

I felt rage. Shame.
I felt loneliness so loud it echoed through my chest.

Some days, I wanted to scream.
Other days, I just wanted someone to sit beside me and whisper,
"You don't have to explain. I believe you."

Spiritual Recovery

I questioned everything.
God. My body. My worth.

Was I cursed?
Did I pray wrong?
Was I being punished for something I couldn't name?

But slowly,
I started to believe that survival itself was sacred.
That being here — stitched, scarred, and standing —
Was a kind of grace.

I stopped begging to be healed,
and started honoring the fact that I was still here.

Political Recovery

Because this pain was never just mine.
It was shaped by systems that ignored it.
Dismissed it.
Silenced it.

Recovery is political

When your pain has to be "proved" to be believed.
When access to care depends on your status.
When your suffering is labelled "normal."
When people ask why you're still complaining —
because they've never lived it.

Speaking out is rebellion.
Owning your pain is protest.
Telling your story is power.

And now —
I rise.

Acknowledgments

To the women who suffer in silence — this book is for you.

Your pain is real. Your story matters. Your voice is enough.

To my father,

Thank you for seeing my children in that guava tree long before I ever held them.

You watered hope even when you didn't have all the words. That memory kept me going when everything else broke.

To my mother and siblings,

Thank you for loving me through the mess — through the blood, the surgeries, the silence, the days I could barely speak.

You didn't always understand what I was going through, but you never left.

To the friends who showed up — and those who tried,

Thank you. Even when you couldn't fix it, your presence mattered.

And to those who disappeared, your absence taught me who I truly needed.

To the doctors and nurses who treated me with dignity —

especially the ones who didn't rush me, didn't shame me, and didn't question my pain —

Thank you. In a system that often forgets we are human, you reminded me I mattered.

To all the men who stayed

You are rare. Your kindness didn't erase the pain, but it softened the edges. Thank you.

To every woman who whispered her truth to me while hiding her scar —

I carried your voices as I wrote this. We are not alone. We never were.

And lastly,

To the version of me who thought she wouldn't make it —

Look at you now. You turned wounds into words. Pain into purpose. Blood into ink.

Thank you for not giving up.

About the Author

Carol is a writer and fibroid survivor.

She shares her lived experience to raise awareness, break the silence, and give voice to the millions of women suffering in the shadows of reproductive health struggles.

Through raw honesty and unflinching truth, her work speaks to every woman who has bled, been broken, or battled silently — and still found the strength to stand