

Publisher: Independent Publisher – Richard Ojwang

Copyright: © 2026 Richard Ojwang. All rights reserved.

No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form without written permission from the author.

Edition: First Edition, 2026

ISBN:

Dedication

To my daughter Mary, whose life gives me hope even in the darkest days.

To all those who struggle to hold onto love, family, and faith in the face of trials.

May this story remind you that even in loss, strength can be found.

Acknowledgments

I am deeply grateful to those who supported me in ways seen and unseen during the writing of this book.

To **Bishop Joseph Dao**, whose prayers and guidance gave me hope when I felt lost and alone.

To **Aunt Maria**, who cared for my daughter Mary and offered wisdom and comfort when I could not reach her.

To my family, neighbors, and friends in Olare, whose encouragement, advice, and support even when misunderstood helped me navigate the darkest days.

Finally, I thank every person who has been part of my journey those who caused pain and those who offered love. Each experience, however bitter or joyful, has shaped this story and the man I have become.

Preface

This is a story of love, loss, and resilience. It is my journey through the highest hopes and the deepest heartbreaks, the joy of parenthood, and the despair of betrayal.

I share this not to seek sympathy, but to offer lessons from life's harshest trials. I write to show that even when relationships break and trust is shattered, the human spirit can endure.

This memoir captures not only what was lost but also what was learned the strength that comes from suffering, the clarity that comes from pain, and the hope that arises even when the world seems dark.

May this story inspire you to face your own challenges with courage, to forgive where possible, and to keep walking forward when life takes unexpected turns.

CONTENTS

Dedication	2
Acknowledgments	3
Preface	4
DEDICATION	Error! Bookmark not defined.
PART ONE	8
CHAPTER ONE:	8
The First Encounter	8
CHAPTER TWO:	11
Choices and Tensions	11
CHAPTER THREE:	14
Seeking Guidance and Lessons from Life	14
CHAPTER FOUR:	18
Approval and Trust	18
CHAPTER FIVE:	22
Night of Confessions.....	22
CHAPTER SIX	24
Care, Sacrifice, and School Life	24
CHAPTER SEVEN	27
Diversion and Determination.....	27
CHAPTER EIGHT:	30
Reunion and Laughter	30
CHAPTER NINE	33
Decisions and Distance	33
CHAPTER TEN	36
Life, Struggle, and Love	36
PART TWO:	39
CHAPTER ONE	39
New Ventures and Determination	39
CHAPTER TWO:	41
Kisii, Hustle, and Uncertain Shelter	41
CHAPTER THREE:	44

Nights Without Shelter.....	44
CHAPTER FOUR:.....	47
New Paths and Hard Truths	47
CHAPTER FIVE.....	51
Return, Responsibility, and a New Beginning.....	51
CHAPTER SIX	54
Love, Responsibility, and New Purpose	54
CHAPTER SEVEN:	58
Shelter, Fear, and Simple Joys	58
CHAPTER EIGHT:	61
Distance, Duty, and Doubt	61
CHAPTER NINE:.....	64
Provision, Suspicion, and Silent Battles	64
CHAPTER TEN:.....	67
When Peace Left the House	67
PART THREE.....	70
CHAPTER ONE	70
The Storm of Corona.....	70
CHAPTER TWO:.....	73
The Arrival of Mary.....	73
CHAPTER THREE:.....	75
Life After Mary's Arrival	75
CHAPTER FOUR:.....	78
Mary's Sickness and the Prophecy	78
CHAPTER FIVE:	80
THE WEIGHT OF A WHISPER	80
CHAPTER SIX:.....	84
BETWEEN FEAR AND FAITH.....	84
CHAPTER SEVEN:	94
The Silence of Deception	94
CHAPTER EIGHT:	104
When Truth Breaks Through.....	104

CHAPTER NINE:.....	113
A Stranger in A Strange Place	113
CHAPTER TEN:.....	124
Turned Away	124
PART FOUR.....	134
CHAPTER ONE:	134
A Day Without Justice	134
CHAPTER TWO:.....	137
Voices From Every Side	137
CHAPTER THREE:.....	140
The Path of Confusion	140
CHAPTER FOUR:.....	142
THE DARK DAYS	142
CONCLUSION:.....	144
End Of One Chapter, Beginning of Another	144
Epilogue.....	146
Author's Note	147
About the Author	148
Scriptures and Quotes	149
Invitation / Call to Action	150
Legal Notes	151

PART ONE
CHAPTER ONE:
The First Encounter

When I joined college, I had made a silent promise to myself that I wouldn't date anyone. Not now, not ever. My life had been carved out of pain and bitterness ever since my parents' divorce. Love, in my world, came with strings of hurt I didn't want to feel again. I didn't know how to treat a woman, how to care for someone, or how to show affection without being afraid it would be misunderstood. I had grown up broken in ways I was only beginning to understand, and I thought it was better to stay safe and alone.

I kept to myself. I buried myself in studies and quiet observation. I wasn't lonely, not exactly. I had one person I could trust, Nicholas Oluoch, my only true friend at that stage. He was dating a girl called Nancy, a bright and focused high school lady who carried herself with purpose and discipline. Nancy seemed like someone who would never compromise her goals, someone you could trust to stand by her word. Nancy had a friend named Rose, who was dating my classmate, Joseph. Rose had a spark that set her apart, a liveliness in her eyes that made it impossible to ignore her, even from a distance.

One evening, I found myself at the gate of our hostel. The campus was settling into the quiet hum of nightfall. Most students had gone to their rooms, while a few lingered in small groups, chatting softly or walking home. That's when I saw Nancy approaching the gate, accompanied by Rose. Nancy had come to see Nicholas before heading home, moving with a quiet determination, her uniform neatly pressed and spotless under the fading sunlight. Rose followed her, laughing softly at something Nancy whispered, her energy bright and unrestrained.

I stepped aside to give them space. I didn't want to intrude. Nancy entered our room to greet Nicholas, and I could hear their conversation faintly, polite and light. Then, my eyes fell on Rose, waiting at the gate. She looked different somehow. Fresh, brilliant, and effortlessly beautiful in her school uniform, her impish smile making the evening feel warmer. Her hair caught the last rays of the sun, and she carried herself with a kind of ease that made it seem like the world had slowed just for her.

She was carrying a small bag of sweets, and then, with a mischievous grin, she tossed one toward me.

"Hey, take this and do great, people," she said cheerfully.

I froze. My heart raced. I was painfully shy, unpracticed in the ways of charm or flirtation. The sweet bounced awkwardly on the ground, rolling dangerously close to the well of water beside the gate. My hands trembled as I bent down and picked it up, brushing off the dust and holding it carefully.

"Th-thank you," I stammered, my voice barely steady.

"You're welcome," she replied, still smiling. There was something kind in her eyes, something genuine that made me feel seen in a way I rarely had.

I swallowed hard, trying to summon courage I didn't know I had. "Y-you... you really look good. Can we... can we be friends?"

Rose tilted her head slightly, her smile widening just a little, the corners of her eyes crinkling as if amused by my awkwardness. "Of course," she said simply, as though it were the most natural thing in the world.

I remember walking away slowly, my heart still hammering in my chest. My mind was spinning. I couldn't understand why a simple exchange could make

me feel so alive. I had spent most of my life hiding, protecting myself from hurt, yet here was someone who made me want to take risks, to open up just a little.

I watched her walk back toward the gate, carrying her bag of sweets and her radiant smile. She didn't know it, but she had left a mark on me, one that I didn't yet understand. I realized then that life could still surprise me, and maybe, just maybe, meeting Rose was a beginning of something I had long thought impossible.

That night, as I lay in my room, staring at the ceiling, I couldn't stop thinking about her smile, the way her eyes seemed to see right through me, and the warmth of her presence even in such a brief encounter. I knew that this was only the beginning, and though I didn't know what was ahead, I felt something I hadn't felt in a long time a spark of hope, fragile but real.

Little did I know that Rose, the first girl I had truly noticed on campus, would change more than just my days. She would change the way I looked at life, at love, and at myself.

CHAPTER TWO:

Choices and Tensions

Days went by after our first meeting, and my thoughts were never far from Rose. I kept replaying the memory of her smile, the way her eyes seemed to linger on me, and that small, mischievous gesture of throwing me the sweet. I was painfully aware of my shyness, of how awkward and inexperienced I was with women, but somehow, I wanted to break my silence, to bridge the gap that my fear and past had created.

At that time, Joseph was still very much the main man in Rose's life. She and he were seen together most days, and though she sometimes seemed distant, I didn't know what to do. I didn't want to overstep, didn't want to scare her away. So, I turned to **Nancy**, her friend, for help. I trusted Nancy to understand, to convey my feelings without making things messy.

Weeks passed, and one afternoon, I received a letter from Rose. My hands trembled as I unfolded it, my eyes scanning her words over and over. It was a letter of acceptance. She was willing to step out of the relationship she had with Joseph, to explore something new with me. I was elated, but there was a shadow of confusion I couldn't shake. How had she ended things with Joseph? I remembered how she had introduced him to her grandmother; a woman whose respect and presence left an impression on me as well. Rose's grandmother was someone I could never forget a gentle, wise figure who carried warmth and authority at the same time. That she had trusted Joseph enough to introduce him to her grandmother made me wonder what had changed, how Rose had reached this decision.

It wasn't long before Rose came to visit me in the hostel. We sat on a single slab outside, the evening air crisp and quiet around us. There was a comfort in her presence that I had not known I was missing, a sense of possibility that made

my heart race. We talked, laughed softly, and for a moment, it felt like the world had narrowed down to just the two of us.

Then, out of nowhere, Joseph appeared. I didn't know where he had come from; he seemed to materialize out of the shadows. My heart sank. The tension was immediate, heavy, and undeniable. Rose's face went still, and before I could say anything, Joseph's voice cut through the air.

"So, Rose... you think Oscar will manage you better than me?" he said, his tone a mix of anger, disbelief, and hurt. I flinched at the words. They called me **Oscar** or **Rich** in school, a nickname that had nothing to do with money but somehow made me feel seen. Joseph's voice carried a weight I had not expected; it was sharp, almost like a curse on the fragile bond that was beginning to form between Rose and me.

Rose stayed quiet. Her eyes lowered, her fingers twisting the hem of her sleeve. She didn't answer. I stayed silent too, unsure if anything I could say would make a difference. I felt a strange empathy for him, for the boy who had been part of Rose's life, the one she had trusted enough to bring home to her grandmother. I understood his confusion, his hurt, even his sense of betrayal but in that moment, I also realized something I had learned quietly over the years: the antelope is not anyone's goat. Life doesn't belong to someone else to claim.

I looked at Rose, really looked at her, and I saw not the girl tied to another, but the girl who was making a choice, who was stepping into the unknown, who was willing to try something different despite the weight of past attachments. I admired her courage, even as my heart beat faster with nerves and anticipation.

Joseph's presence faded slowly as Rose and I sat there in the silence that followed. The air felt heavy, thick with words unsaid and futures uncertain. I

wanted to reach out, to say something, but I felt the need to let her decide, to let her own courage and choice speak louder than anything I could.

That evening stayed with me long after he left, long after the sunset had disappeared behind the hostel walls. It was a lesson in understanding human emotions, in patience, and in respecting the complexity of love and loyalty. It was also a quiet reassurance that some things some people come into your life not because they are meant to be owned or controlled, but because they challenge you to grow, to open your heart despite fear.

I didn't know what the future held with Rose, or how the story would unfold. But I knew this: I would not step back out of fear. I would face the unknown with her, and that, in itself, was a start.

CHAPTER THREE:

Seeking Guidance and Lessons from Life

Those days, I found myself often consulting Nicholus. He had a wisdom in him; the kind of calm intelligence that made people trust his judgment without question. I had become the deputy chairperson in the student council, a responsibility that came with long hours, meetings, and the weight of representing fellow students. Nicholus, as secretary general, worked closely with me, and together with our chair, Edwin, we often gathered in the council room to discuss school issues. The room had a quiet authority to it, filled with the smell of polished wood and faint traces of ink from old records. It was in these meetings that I learned to think clearly, make decisions, and hold my tongue when emotions threatened to take over.

During one of these meetings, my mind kept wandering. I wanted to ask Nicholus about Rose, about Joseph, and about the confusion in my heart. I wanted guidance, some hint of how to act, how to speak, how to even look at Rose without seeming awkward or desperate. But I held my tongue. This wasn't the place to discuss matters of the heart; it was a space for leadership, for responsibility, for duty. I told myself to wait.

The opportunity came during games week. We went to the hostel to change into our sports kits. The excitement in the air was palpable. Students ran past, joking, laughing, and teasing each other, their energy a welcome relief from the routines of lectures and council duties. I changed quickly, my mind divided between football drills, strategy, and the silent questions I had about Rose. Even though I had decided to be patient, I felt a quiet longing that grew every time I thought about her smile, the mischievous sparkle in her eyes, and the way she had made me feel like I mattered for the first time in a long while.

We began our journey to Nyakwere Primary School, where our vice chancellor, Mr. Steven Masawa, had instructed everyone to meet for ball games practice. The path was lined with trees, and the late afternoon sun filtered through their branches, creating patterns on the dusty ground. As we walked, I finally spoke to Nicholus, narrating the whole situation the tension with Joseph, the confusion over Rose, and my fear of overstepping. I explained how my heart seemed to pull in two directions at once, longing for her trust but respecting her past. Nicholus listened carefully, his eyes steady and thoughtful. When I finished, he leaned back slightly and said, “I would just tell you to ask that question to Rose. If she accepts you or Joseph, then there may be peace. We are classmates, and we should not fight over small issues.”

I thought about his words for a long moment. The clarity in his advice surprised me, though it was the same clarity that had always drawn me to trust him. I realized that all the answers were with Rose. I could prepare, I could be patient, but her choice was hers alone. The wisdom of his words settled something deep in me. Love, I realized, was not about forcing things or competing; it was about understanding, waiting, and respecting the other person’s heart.

When we arrived at Nyakwere, the field was alive with students warming up, shouting, and chasing the ball. I felt a thrill as I joined my team, slipping into the rhythm of football, letting the physical exertion clear my mind. I remember scoring a goal that day. David, a young and dedicated goalkeeper from Suba, tried his best to stop me, but the ball found the back of the net, and the cheers from classmates rang like music in my ears. That goal reminded me that effort and skill could create small victories, even when life was uncertain and messy in other areas.

Football was more than just a game for me. It was my escape. It was where I could let go of doubts, fears, and the weight of my past. It was where I felt strong, capable, and alive. Many lecturers trusted me for my discipline and dedication, not just my talent. I was guided and motivated by teachers like Madam Aphline Omiti and Everlyne Nyamato, two of my favorite female teachers. They noticed things in me I often did not notice in myself the potential, the strength, the need to be patient and observant. I learned from them that leadership and skill were meaningless without integrity, humility, and respect. I also remembered the guidance of Mr. Dick Ogalo and Mr. Kodunga, may his soul rest in peace, who taught me that discipline, fairness, and focus on responsibility mattered both on and off the field.

During these walks, practices, and meetings, I often thought about Rose. The feelings I had for her were no longer just admiration or curiosity. They were tender, hesitant, and yet growing fast, like a plant reaching for sunlight through cracks in concrete. Every small memory the way she threw the sweet to me, the way she smiled at nothing in particular, the way she carried herself with quiet confidence kept coming back. I realized I was starting to feel the stirrings of something I had never known before: love. A love that was new, unpracticed, but sincere.

I also began to observe the subtleties of human relationships more carefully. How friends supported each other, how trust was built or broken, how small acts could mean more than grand gestures. I started noticing how Rose interacted with people, how Joseph's presence affected her demeanor, and how patience, kindness, and courage often mattered more than anything else. Every council meeting, every football match, every casual conversation became a lesson not just in leadership or skill, but in life, human emotion, and the art of starting love without losing oneself.

That evening, as we walked back to the hostel, the sun dipping low behind the horizon, I felt a mixture of excitement and anxiety. Rose's choice, the unspoken tension with Joseph, my responsibilities in council, my love for football, and the guidance of teachers and friends all of it intertwined in a complicated web. And yet, I felt ready to face it. I realized that growing love, like life itself, required patience, courage, and the humility to learn from every experience.

For the first time, I truly understood that love was not just about desire. It was about respect, understanding, courage, and knowing when to speak and when to wait. And in that moment, walking through the fading light with my friends and teammates, I felt a quiet hope that somehow, despite all the uncertainty, I was learning how to navigate both life and love at the same time.

CHAPTER FOUR:

Approval and Trust

After weeks of waiting and wondering, Rose finally accepted me. But it was not a simple “yes.” She set a condition; one I respected immediately: her grandmother had to approve me first. Rose lived with her grandmother because she and her siblings had lost their mother at a young age. From what I had gathered, that loss was rooted in conflict arising from her parents’ marriage, leaving Rose with a sense of caution when it came to trust and family. Her father, from what I could tell, was often hostile, rarely present, and never someone who cared for guidance. Her siblings mostly lived away from home, though I occasionally spoke with James, who was friendly and easy to talk to.

The condition of meeting the grandmother felt both serious and intimidating. I knew this was not just about her family or tradition, it was about respect, responsibility, and proving that I could be trusted with her heart. I accepted without hesitation. I was ready.

The day we were to meet her grandmother came with challenges. We had to go discreetly, without her father knowing. In Kenya, school girls like Rose are often referred to as “bhang,” and discretion was key. We couldn’t involve anyone else; the plan relied entirely on careful timing, patience, and the guidance of my friend Nicholus.

Around 8:00 pm, Rose sent us the location. It was dark, and the streets were quiet, the kind of night where every sound felt louder, and every shadow seemed to watch you. Nicholus and I made our way carefully, walking fast but cautiously, keeping an eye out for anyone who might notice us. By around 10:00 pm, we had reached her grandmother’s house. Relief and tension mixed in my chest as we were welcomed inside. The house was quiet, warm, and modest,

filled only with the soft scent of herbs and the faint glow of a single lamp. Only Rose and her grandmother were present.

I introduced myself to her grandmother, trying to steady my nerves. She was a woman of dignity, gentle but firm, with eyes that seemed to see through pretenses. We engaged in conversation about the relationship, our ambitions, our respect for each other, and our intentions. I spoke honestly, from the heart, about what I hoped for with Rose, about how I wanted to be a supportive partner and a trustworthy companion. Nicholas stayed close, quietly listening, sometimes giving a whispered piece of advice to help the conversation flow. His calm presence helped me keep my own anxiety under control.

After a while, her grandmother retrieved a Bible from the shelf. She explained that before any commitment could be considered, Rose should reflect on the teachings of the Lord about love, respect, and partnership. She handed Rose a pen and asked her to write down a verse about marriage. Rose chose a verse from 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, the passage about love being patient, kind, and enduring all things. She read it aloud with a steady voice, and I could see her grandmother watching her closely, evaluating her understanding, and ensuring that our intentions were rooted not just in desire, but in respect, patience, and wisdom.

The evening continued with a deep discussion about values, faith, and the responsibilities of a relationship. Her grandmother spoke about the importance of communication, mutual respect, and the guidance of God in all matters. She reminded us that love alone was not enough; it had to be tempered with integrity, humility, and commitment. I listened intently, realizing that this was a rare chance to learn from someone who had lived, loved, and faced life's challenges. Nicholas occasionally added a word or two, mostly encouragement

or reminders of respect and patience, but the conversation was mostly between me, Rose, and her grandmother.

Hours passed, and by around 11:30 pm, a knock at the door startled us. It was her cousins, returning home to sleep. Panic and urgency filled the room. We had to leave without being seen. Nicholus whispered a plan, and we carefully moved to a small storeroom next to a window that led outside. The room was cramped, filled with the scent of stored herbs and old wood, but it offered a temporary hiding place. We waited, hearts pounding, until the cousins went inside. Then, silently, we sneaked out through the window. The cool night air hit my face as we crouched low and moved quickly, careful not to make a sound.

As we walked back to campus, adrenaline still thrumming in my veins, I reflected on the night. It wasn't just the thrill of secrecy or the fear of being caught. It was the weight of responsibility, the understanding that love required patience, respect, and humility. I realized that this was more than just beginning a relationship with Rose. It was about learning to navigate life, faith, and trust. Her grandmother's guidance had left a mark on me, teaching that true connection is built on more than attraction it is built on principles, mutual respect, and understanding.

That night, as I lay in my bed back in the hostel, my thoughts kept returning to Rose. I thought of her courage, her trust in me, and the quiet wisdom of her grandmother. I realized that love, real love, required courage not just to speak, but to listen, respect, and act rightly. I also knew that Nicholus's quiet support had been invaluable; without him, the plan would have failed.

The night had tested me, strengthened me, and taught me that every relationship has its lessons, and that patience, respect, and faith are as important as emotion. And as I closed my eyes, I knew this was only the

beginning of a story that would test us, shape us, and ultimately teach me what it truly meant to love someone.

CHAPTER FIVE:

Night of Confessions

Days passed, and our relationship grew deeper with each passing moment. The affection we shared was no longer just playful smiles and secret glances. It had transformed into something more profound a trust that bound us together in ways I was only beginning to understand. One evening, I decided to visit Rose at her grandmother's house alone. My friend Nicholas was not able to come this time, and I felt a mixture of excitement and nervousness as I made my way through the quiet streets of the campus neighborhood.

The night was calm, the sky clear and dotted with stars. I remember the way the lampposts cast long shadows on the ground, making the journey feel both eerie and magical. When I arrived at the house, Rose and her grandmother welcomed me warmly. There was a sense of comfort in the way her grandmother smiled, the quiet approval in her eyes as she nodded at me. That evening, I was invited to spend the night in Rose's room, not out of rebellion or secrecy, but because she wanted to share her world with me the space where she felt safe, where she could open her heart.

As the hours passed, we talked quietly, sitting close on the floor. We shared our dreams, our fears, and our memories of the past. Rose spoke softly about her heartbreak with Joseph. She told me, with tears in her eyes, how she had been hurt and the ways she had learned to protect herself. Her voice was trembling at times, but there was strength in her honesty. She trusted me with her story, and I listened with all the care and respect I could muster.

"I don't want the past to define us," she said, her hand finding mine. "But I want you to know... what I've been through, so we can start something real."

I felt a mix of awe and admiration. Here was a woman who had faced pain, yet still chose to open her heart. I realized that love was not just about passion or attraction; it was about trust, vulnerability, and courage. We spent the night sharing stories, holding each other's hands, and comforting each other with quiet words. The room was filled with the soft glow of a lamp, the sound of distant wind rustling through the trees, and the unspoken promise that we were building something genuine.

That night, I reflected on everything that had brought us together the hardships, the guidance of her grandmother, the support of friends like Nicholus, and the courage we both had to trust each other. I felt a sense of peace, a knowledge that even the complicated past could not diminish the sincerity of our connection.

I left that night with a heart fuller than I had ever known. The experience taught me that intimacy is not only about physical closeness; it is about being present, being honest, and sharing your soul with someone who values it. I admired Rose more than ever, not just for her beauty, but for her strength, her honesty, and the way she had allowed me to become part of her life.

That night became a turning point in our story. It was the moment I realized that love, when handled with respect and patience, could heal wounds, build trust, and create memories that last a lifetime. Even five years later, I remember it vividly the quiet conversations, the laughter, the tears, and the sense of belonging that made everything feel possible.

CHAPTER SIX

Care, Sacrifice, and School Life

As our relationship grew, life at school continued to test me in ways I had never imagined. But somehow, Rose and her grandmother became a lifeline. Rose would often bring food for me whenever she could. She would come to my room at school, cook for me, wash my clothes, and even look after my small needs without asking for anything in return. Sometimes she would bring a few coins just enough to buy something simple to eat. I had never felt that kind of care before, and it touched me deeply. It was more than kindness; it was love in its purest form, expressed through small acts that carried a world of meaning.

Whenever I was not around, Rose had my spare key. She would come quietly, tidy up my space, cook meals, and sometimes leave small notes of encouragement. For a boy who had little, who could go days without a proper meal and whose family could not always be reached, this was a blessing I could not fully put into words. My phone would ring, and I would try to call home for even a single comforting word but most of the time, no one could answer. My father worked long hours with low income, and the household was crowded with many siblings, all needing attention. I understood my background, the limitations of my family, and I never blamed anyone for the hardships I faced.

There were days when hunger gnawed at me so fiercely that I had to find ways to distract myself. I remember walking to the cinema late at night and watching a film for hours, just to take my mind off the emptiness in my stomach. Somehow, those hours of darkness, surrounded by the flicker of the screen and the laughter or tears of strangers, gave me the illusion of fullness, if only for a moment.

My uncle, Phillip Owino Ngani, was one of the few people who could sometimes help. He would send a few coins or tokens for basic needs, and I

treasured every shilling as though it were gold. I remember riding a bicycle from Rongo all the way to my home in Kanam, Karachuonyo, just to return with fifty shillings. That money would last me days if I was careful, but it was never enough to satisfy all needs. There was another day I walked from Rongo back home when the hostels were closed for holidays. There was no fare for public transport, and I had to make the long journey on foot, my legs aching, my stomach empty, but my determination strong.

Through all of this, the care from Rose and her grandmother became a source of hope and warmth. Their presence reminded me that even in the harshest of circumstances, someone could care deeply, selflessly, and with consistency. It wasn't just about food or money it was about feeling seen, valued, and loved. Rose would bring small surprises, like fruits, bread, or even a letter telling me to stay strong, to study, and to believe that one day, my efforts would bear fruit.

These experiences shaped me in ways I could never have imagined. I learned resilience, patience, and gratitude. I learned that love is not just about grand gestures, but about consistency, care, and being present when it matters most. Rose and her grandmother became part of my survival story in school, providing not only support for my body but also guidance for my mind and heart.

Looking back, I realize how these struggles-built character. I grew to understand the value of every small act of kindness, every sacrifice, and every moment of care. I learned to cherish relationships, not for what they could give me materially, but for the emotional and moral strength they offered. Even the hardship, the hunger, and the long walks from Rongo to home taught me endurance and humility.

School life was not easy, but with Rose and her grandmother by my side, I felt I could face any challenge. Their care and faith in me made me stronger, and their

quiet love inspired me to believe that one day, I could rise above circumstance not just for myself, but for those who had believed in me when no one else would.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Diversion and Determination

As I neared the end of my college years, life began to feel heavier. What had once been a period of youthful exploration, quiet love, and survival slowly became a time of tension and reflection. Rose, who had always been my pillar of strength, began to change. I could sense her emotions shifting. She became anxious, stressed, and often complained about the distance that was gradually creeping between us. I would see her eyes, glistening with worry, as she spoke about us and the possibility of being separated again.

Her concern was not baseless. I had begun to set my mind on the future not just for us, but for my life as a man ready to meet the world head-on. I was thinking about what it would take to care for my future, to secure a life where hardship and hunger would no longer dominate my days. I wanted a future where love, stability, and respect would be constants, not fleeting moments. And yet, as much as I wanted to push forward, I realized Rose was right. The emotional bond we shared was vulnerable. She feared losing me, feared the distance might become insurmountable, and I couldn't blame her. Her worry mirrored my own unspoken anxieties.

In the quiet moments, I began to reflect on my family. My parents had been divorced for more than ten years. Growing up, I had witnessed the bitterness, the violence, and the deep resentment that had grown between them. They were constantly trying to prove each other right, and in the process, they neglected everything that mattered most the well-being of their children. I had lived through their fights, their silences, and the chaos of a home that was supposed to be a sanctuary. My siblings and I were often caught in the middle, feeling like slaves in our own house. There was no guidance, no proper upbringing, only a constant undercurrent of anger, abuse, and neglect.

To make matters worse, we lived in poverty. There were days when food was scarce, when clothing was tattered, when our home felt more like a prison than a place of love. Sometimes, we were abandoned, mocked, or treated as if our lives did not matter. Other times, hopelessness would settle like a heavy cloud over the household, suffocating every sense of ambition or joy. I remember watching cousins who seemed to have everything food, care, guidance, and love and feeling the sting of envy and exclusion. It was as though we were rejects in our own society, condemned to a life of struggle simply because the adults around us had failed.

It was this pain that fueled my determination. I vowed to myself that the moment I stepped out of college, I would not be trapped by circumstance or history. I would change everything. I wanted to bring my family together, to show my siblings the love of parents who had been divided, and to build a home that was guided by care and respect rather than conflict and neglect. I wanted a life where children would not have to witness violence or endure the helplessness I had known for so long.

Rose, understandably, felt unsafe with my dreams and ambitions. She feared that in pursuing my goals, I might be taken away by life itself, leaving her behind. She worried that I could leave forever, swept up in the rush of work, ambition, and rebuilding my life. I understood her fear. Our love had always been tied to survival, to closeness born from hardship, and the thought of being separated again brought old wounds and anxieties back to the surface. I wanted to reassure her, but I knew that words alone would not be enough. She needed to see my actions, my commitment, and my determination to create a future where distance would no longer threaten us.

As I navigated these final months in college, my heart was heavy but focused. Every decision, every late-night study session, every meeting, and every football

match became part of my preparation for life beyond the gates of school. I carried the weight of my childhood, the dreams of a family I wanted to heal, and the love of a girl who had trusted me with her heart. The pain of the past, the hunger, the neglect, and the fear of being forgotten they all fueled me to rise, to endure, and to dream of a future that would honor every struggle I had faced.

Those months were not easy. They were a mixture of anticipation, anxiety, love, and fear. Rose's stress and tears reminded me daily of what was at stake not just my life, but the lives of those I loved and the integrity of the bond we had fought so hard to build. And in the quiet moments, I would make a silent promise to myself: no matter how painful, how challenging, or how uncertain the road ahead, I would not falter. I would face life head-on, and when I emerged, I would bring with me not only a life rebuilt from hardship but a love strengthened by the trials we had endured together.

CHAPTER EIGHT:

Reunion and Laughter

After my final exams, I stepped out of school with a mix of relief and uncertainty. I had worked so hard, endured hunger, sleepless nights, and endless responsibilities, and now the world was in front of me. My first stop was my aunt's house in Ogande, Kanyada, Homa Bay County. I had made up my mind that this was where I would start building my life, where I could find work, plan for the future, and prepare a foundation for myself and, hopefully, for Rose.

But life has a way of testing even the best-laid plans. Almost immediately, I began to feel loneliness creeping in. Rose was still in school, busy with her own responsibilities, and I was off money for airtime and calls. Our communication, which had always been a lifeline, became sporadic. Days and weeks passed, stretching into almost an entire school term. I had told Rose where I was, and she had promised she would locate me when she got time. But I was unsure. She did not know the place, and I wanted her to focus on her studies. I thought it was best to give her space, to allow her to finish school without worry, while I carved out a life for both of us.

Then, one evening, around 7 pm, my life turned upside down. A friend from my aunt's place came running to where I was resting, breathless and panicked, saying, "There's a lady at the road with a bag looking for you. She's got a picture of you!" My heart skipped. Shock, fear, and disbelief filled me all at once. I was not ready for this moment. I had never expected Rose to find me like this, alone, in a new place, in a house where introducing anyone was out of the question. I had seen many girls before, visiting my aunt's place, confessing love or seeking attention. This was nothing new in concept but this was Rose, and it was real.

I stepped outside to the road, my mind spinning, my heart racing. And then I saw her. Rose, holding a small bag, standing quietly but determined, a photo of me as her phone wallpaper in her hand. When our eyes met, she began to cry. I did not know what she was crying for was it relief, love, frustration, or a mix of everything? I stood frozen, unsure how to respond. I was not crying, not because my feelings were less; I was overwhelmed, confused, and unprepared. My heart was full, but my mind had yet to catch up.

Eventually, I took a deep breath, stepped forward, and accepted her presence. She was my love. I had to welcome her, regardless of confusion or hesitation. I brought her to my aunt's house, and we stayed in my cousin Bob's house. Bob was away, looking for work and survival, and his house offered us privacy and space. My aunt, ever jovial and kind, welcomed Rose warmly. She laughed, teased me, and said, "Richard, you have finally brought someone serious! Thank God she is hardworking." Rose smiled shyly but confidently.

From the first day, Rose proved herself to be amazing. She worked tirelessly during her five-day stay. She washed clothes, fetched water, cooked meals, carried firewood everything she could manage, she did without complaint. My aunt could not stop praising her, repeatedly thanking me for "choosing wisely." And indeed, Rose was impressive. But she also brought laughter into the house. We would crack jokes, sing songs, and tease each other endlessly. Rose loved Nigerian love movies, and we would laugh at the drama, imitating characters and adding our own commentary. Her voice was beautiful, and she sang softly to fill the quiet evenings, making even simple moments feel special.

Those days were magical. The mundane tasks cooking, cleaning, fetching water became shared experiences that brought us closer. We celebrated small victories: a meal cooked well, water fetched without spilling, or a firewood

bundle carried in triumph. Rose had a way of turning labor into laughter, and I found myself appreciating her more with every passing moment.

Before leaving, Rose confided in me that she had lied to her father, telling him she was visiting an aunt, somewhere far away. Since her father had no way to confirm, he had to believe her story. It was a small deception, but it highlighted her courage, creativity, and devotion. I admired her even more.

When she finally left, there was a quiet emptiness in the house. The laughter, the music, the shared meals all of it vanished with her departure. But the memory of those five days stayed with me, a reminder of what love could be when nurtured with care, effort, and mutual respect. It was not just romance; it was partnership, patience, and shared experience. It was life, in all its messy, beautiful, exhausting, and joyful reality.

Those days shaped the way I saw love, responsibility, and partnership. Rose had become more than my girlfriend she was a partner, a helper, a guide, and a companion through both joy and hardship. And even though the world outside was uncertain, with hunger, struggle, and responsibility waiting for me, I felt ready to face it all because of those moments with her.

CHAPTER NINE

Decisions and Distance

One afternoon, as I was carrying out the usual chores at my aunt's house, Rose called me on my phone. Her voice trembled slightly, though she tried to sound composed. She explained that high school had become overwhelming for her. The subjects were difficult, the workload heavy, and the pressure unbearable. She confessed that she was considering dropping out and joining a college where she could take a course more suited to her skills and interests.

I felt a storm of emotions. On one hand, I understood her struggles high school can be brutal for those who are driven by curiosity but not naturally aligned with the rigid system. On the other hand, I feared for her future, worried that dropping out would limit her opportunities. I pleaded, reasoned, and suggested alternatives. I reminded her of her potential, encouraged her to persevere, and even promised to support her in any way I could. I offered ideas for tutoring, weekend study sessions, anything that could help her stay.

But my efforts were futile. Rose had made up her mind. She was determined, resolute, and focused on the path she believed would lead her to success. Her decision was not rash it was deliberate, informed by her own understanding of her abilities, her ambitions, and her desire to find a path where she could truly thrive.

A few days later, while I was fetching water from the well for my aunt, I was surprised to see her approaching from the road. My heart leaped, a mix of joy and anxiety, and I immediately tried once more to persuade her to reconsider. I spoke quickly, my words tumbling out, urging her to finish high school, to think of the long-term consequences.

Her gaze, however, was steady, calm, and unyielding. She told me that she had already quit school. She wanted to pursue a course elsewhere, one that would give her practical skills and prepare her for life. I asked her about her plans, where she intended to go, and what she hoped to achieve. She explained that she was going to stay with her step-aunt in Kisii her mother's sister, Maria who at the time worked as an accountant at Tabaka Mission Hospital. During her childhood, Rose had stayed with her aunt after her mother passed away, so this was familiar ground.

I felt helpless. I was still broke, searching for a job, trying to secure a foothold in life, and yet here was Rose, boldly setting out on her own. I realized that I could only respect her decision. Love, I thought, sometimes means letting go even temporarily so that the person you care about can grow, even if it hurts you.

Three days later, she left for Kisii. I remember watching her disappear down the dusty road, a bag slung over her shoulder, carrying her dreams and determination. I felt a pang of worry but also a deep admiration for her courage. Her aunt in Kisii was well-established, married to a man living in Canada, which meant Rose would have support, shelter, and enough resources to maintain some independence. She could buy airtime, call me, update me about her life, and continue our chats as lovers separated by distance but united in affection.

Meanwhile, her father was upset, believing that I was the reason she had chosen to quit school. I understood his concern, but it was unfair; Rose had made the choice for herself. She had weighed her options and decided what she thought was best for her life. I accepted this truth, even though it was painful. Love, I learned, is sometimes about trust trusting that the person you care about knows what they want and can make the right decisions for themselves.

In Kisii, life started to take a better shape for Rose. With her aunt's guidance, support, and the stability of a well-placed home, she began to thrive. She had the freedom to focus on her course, manage her studies, and maintain contact with me. Our conversations became more meaningful. The distance that might have weakened other relationships instead strengthened ours. Every call, every text, every shared laugh reminded me of the bond we had nurtured for years the trust, the patience, and the love that had grown through adversity.

Though I remained in Ogande, struggling to find my own way, I felt pride for her courage. I knew that her decision, though difficult to accept, was a turning point in her life and in ours. It was a reminder that growth often requires sacrifice, and that sometimes the hardest choices lead to the greatest rewards.

Even from a distance, Rose continued to be my partner, my confidant, and my source of hope. Her determination, hard work, and ability to adapt inspired me to keep striving, to work harder, and to prepare a future where we could finally be together without limitations. In those quiet moments, I realized that love was not just about proximity or shared space; it was about understanding, supporting, and believing in each other's dreams, even when the path seemed uncertain.

CHAPTER TEN

Life, Struggle, and Love

Rose's life in Kisii had taken a turn for the better. Her aunt, Maria, a woman of wisdom and guidance, offered to take her to Kisii Polytechnic to pursue a certificate in catering. Rose embraced the opportunity wholeheartedly. She was diligent, disciplined, and open to learning, and her aunt treated her with care and respect, guiding her as if she were her own child. Every day, I imagined Rose in her classes, learning, growing, and carving out a future for herself. Even from a distance, I felt pride swelling in my chest. She was doing exactly what she needed to do to build a life that would sustain her dreams and our future together.

Meanwhile, I had secured a teaching position at Early Bird School in Marindi. I realized that operating from Ogande was no longer feasible, given the distance and the demands of my new job. My aunt, ever supportive, gave me some household items to help me start life independently. I found a small house in Rodi, close enough to Marindi that I could walk to work. The house was modest, and I did not even have a mattress I slept on the duvet I had brought from college. Rose, using her savings from Kisii, came to visit me often, bringing warmth, laughter, and love into the sparse rooms.

Life in Rodi was simple, but it was a life I was determined to make work. I met my landlord, Robert Ouko, a steady man who became an important figure in my early days there. I also met my friend Victor Onyango, who quickly became like a brother, sharing advice, jokes, and the struggles of building life from scratch. Rose's visits were always the highlights of my days. Even sleeping on a single blanket, sharing small meals, and surviving on limited resources, our love grew stronger. She brought joy, laughter, and light to every corner of the house.

I worked at Early Bird School, but during the holidays, I also helped Robert at his wine and spirit shop in Rodi. The work was tough, often long and physically demanding, but it gave me some income and allowed me to provide small comforts for both Rose and myself. Together, we celebrated small victories meals cooked, water fetched, a blanket to sleep on, a coin saved. Each small success was a triumph in our journey.

But life, as always, tested us. On June 14, 2018, I met with a serious accident at Rodi Ndhiwa junction. I was transporting some wine to Robert's branch in Maram, carrying one of his friends. The accident was severe the man broke his legs, and I was injured as well. The fear and pain were overwhelming, but Rose came to my side immediately. She did not hesitate. She held my hand, spoke words of encouragement, and stayed with me at the hospital, offering support when I felt most vulnerable. The accident was a harsh reminder of life's unpredictability, of how quickly everything can change, yet it also revealed the depth of Rose's commitment and love. I never saw the man again, but the memory of that day stayed with me as a lesson in resilience, care, and partnership.

Life gradually began to improve. I relocated to Marindi, bought some basic household items, and slowly built a life we could call our own. Rose continued to support me in every possible way. I encouraged her to work at a nearby hotel so she could help contribute to our meals and household expenses. Though the work was difficult, she never complained. People admired her her beauty, her dedication, and her kindness and I often found myself humbled by her strength and commitment.

Marindi became our home, a place where we could dream, struggle, laugh, and plan. We faced challenges together: the school where we worked was eventually closed by the county government, leaving us without steady jobs. I

met a friend, Bakari, my former head teacher, and together we assumed the work of “mjengo men,” doing construction labor to feed ourselves and continue our journey. Life was not easy, but it was honest. Every hardship, every challenge, every moment of uncertainty became a shared story that strengthened our bond.

Through it all, Rose remained my anchor. Even during moments of scarcity, uncertainty, and struggle, her presence, her laughter, and her commitment reminded me why I had fought so hard to build a life with her. Love, I realized, was not only about grand gestures or shared comfort it was about showing up, working together, sacrificing, and building a life with patience, resilience, and trust. Rose was more than my partner; she was my equal, my guide, my source of joy, and the heart of the home we were slowly constructing.

Those days, though difficult, taught me invaluable lessons: that love is strongest when tested, that commitment is proven in hardship, and that life’s beauty is often hidden within the struggle. We learned to survive together, to adapt, and to celebrate even the smallest victories, knowing that each step forward was part of a larger journey toward a future we both dreamed of.

PART TWO:

CHAPTER ONE

New Ventures and Determination

After the difficult period of being jobless and doing odd jobs, I realized I needed a more stable way to provide for myself and for Rose. Life in Marindi had taught me the value of resilience, patience, and hard work, but it also showed me that I could not rely on temporary jobs or other people's generosity forever. I had to create my own path.

It was then that I partnered with Ajuka, a friend I had known through the neighborhood. Ajuka ran a small kinyozi, a simple barbershop, and was a diligent, focused man. I approached him with a proposal to diversify into fish selling. We agreed to partner in business he would manage the shop, I would handle the logistics of the fish business. It was not a glamorous start, but it was honest work, and we both understood that consistency, trust, and effort would be our keys to success.

The fish business began small. I would go to the market early in the morning, selecting the best fish we could afford, carrying them to our small shop, and preparing them for sale. Every day brought lessons: some days the market was empty, prices were high, or customers were slow, but Rose's unwavering support kept me motivated. She continued to work hard in her hotel job to help sustain our household, while also cheering me on in every new endeavor.

Working with Ajuka taught me much about entrepreneurship: patience in dealing with customers, negotiation skills, financial management, and the importance of honesty. Each transaction, whether big or small, felt like a step forward. I began to feel the satisfaction of creating something on my own, of standing on my own two feet, and of providing for my future with Rose.

Despite the progress, I knew I could not stop here. I had bigger dreams opportunities beyond fish selling, beyond the small shops of Marindi. I wanted to expand, diversify, and achieve more. My mind was constantly searching for ideas: new businesses, small investments, ways to create multiple streams of income. I wanted stability, a home, and a life where Rose and I could grow together without constantly worrying about survival.

This period of my life was transformative. I realized that success is never instant; it is built through persistence, learning from failure, and seizing opportunities when they arise. Partnering with Ajuka gave me the confidence to believe that I could handle bigger challenges. Rose remained my anchor, my motivator, and my trusted confidant. Every sale, every step forward, every setback, and every small victory strengthened our bond and shaped our vision for the future.

I often reflected on how far we had come from the early struggles in Rodi, the accident, the closures of schools, the hard work, and the long periods of uncertainty to this stage of shared effort, planning, and enterprise. It was a reminder that life rewards those who are willing to endure, adapt, and remain committed. Rose and I were no longer just surviving; we were learning to thrive.

As I worked with Ajuka, I began preparing for the next stage looking for diverse opportunities beyond fish selling, seeking ways to expand, invest, and create a future that was no longer limited by circumstance. The fire within me was stronger than ever. I wanted to grow not only for myself but for Rose, for our home, and for the life we had always dreamed of building together.

CHAPTER TWO:

Kisii, Hustle, and Uncertain Shelter

Life kept shifting, and with it, our direction changed again. In Kisii, Rose had been staying with her aunt Maria while attending Kisii Polytechnic. Her aunt had supported her well in the beginning, giving her stability and a place to focus on her studies. But as time went on, things changed. I cannot fully recall what happened between them, but Rose reached a point where she felt she needed her own space, her own independence.

By then, I had started earning small money from my hustle in Marindi. It was not much, but it was honest. I gathered what I could, sacrificed what I needed, and sent her money. With that, she bought a few basic household items utensils, bedding, small things that make a house feel like a home. She also added what she had saved together with her friend Miriam, a girl she had met at school. The two of them decided to live together, sharing rent and responsibilities. It was not easy, but it was a step toward independence.

After they settled, I began thinking deeply about my own next move. Marindi had given me experience, but I knew I needed to explore more. I wanted better opportunities, a bigger environment, a chance to grow. Kisii started calling my mind not just because Rose was there, but because I believed there could be something for me. Something bigger.

One day, I made the decision and traveled to Kisii. But when I arrived, reality hit me immediately. I had no house, no job, no clear plan. The only place I could turn to was where Rose was staying with Miriam. But even that was not straightforward. Two ladies were already sharing that small space. Me joining them was not ideal, not comfortable, and not something anyone would recommend. But life does not always give you ideal conditions. Sometimes, you work with what is available.

Rose welcomed me, and she introduced me to Miriam properly. Miriam was understanding, though I could sense the adjustment it required. Life in that house was tight physically and emotionally but we made it work.

Rose also introduced me to Felix Okwako, a young man she trusted. He offered me another option, a place where I could sometimes stay, rest, and reorganize myself as I figured out my next steps. Felix became part of that season of life, someone who, knowingly or unknowingly, gave me space when I needed it most.

Days turned into a routine of survival. I would wake up early, step out into Kisii town, and walk from place to place looking for any kind of job. At that point, I was ready to do anything. Pride had no place in my life anymore. I just needed an opportunity.

I remember one hotel in Kisii town called Mississippi. I walked in with hope, asked for a cleaning job, and spoke to the manager. He would look at me, listen halfway, then say, “Come tomorrow.” Tomorrow became another tomorrow, and another one. Each time I returned, hoping this would be the day, but it never came. What hurt the most was that the manager was a fellow Luo. I thought maybe he would understand, maybe he would see beyond my worn-out clothes and tired eyes, and recognize a young man desperate to work. But he didn’t.

Life continued like those rejections, delays, uncertainty.

One day, I walked into a liquor store looking for work. They asked for my CV. I didn’t have one. I stood there for a moment, thinking, then I stepped aside, borrowed a pen and paper, and wrote my own CV by hand. Right there. No formatting, no printing, just my story written in ink. I handed it in and walked away with hope.

Up to today, I still joke with myself that maybe that job will come in the next life.

Despite everything, Rose remained constant. We found ways to see each other, to talk, to laugh even in hardship. Sometimes we would sit quietly and just share space, no words needed, just presence. Other times, we would talk about the future, imagining a life where things would finally work out.

Those days in Kisii taught me humility in a deeper way. I learned that struggle is not just about lack of money it is about uncertainty, rejection, and the feeling of being unseen. But I also learned that love, when genuine, survives even in the tightest spaces, even when there is nothing material to hold onto.

I was no longer just dreaming. I was fighting. Fighting for a place, for an opportunity, for dignity, for a future that at times felt very far away.

But one thing I knew for sure this journey, no matter how hard, was shaping me into someone stronger than I had ever been.

CHAPTER THREE:

Nights Without Shelter

Life in Kisii continued, but not without its storms. As much as Rose and I had built something strong over time, there came a point where we began to see things differently. Small disagreements slowly turned into bigger misunderstandings. It was no longer just about opinions it was about how we communicated, how we listened, and how we handled each other's emotions.

I began to feel that Rose was changing in how she perceived situations. There were moments I felt misunderstood, moments where instead of talking things through calmly, we would end up in quarrels. I longed for conversation, for understanding, for the kind of connection we once had where we could sit and listen to each other. But instead, tension grew. Words became sharper, emotions louder.

One night, everything reached a breaking point. What started as a disagreement turned into a full argument, and before I knew it, I found myself outside the house. The door was closed behind me, and the night swallowed me whole. I stood there for a moment, confused, hurt, and unsure of what had just happened.

The streets of Kisii at night are not forgiving. The cold settles deep into your bones, and silence carries a weight that makes loneliness louder. I had nowhere to go. No friend to call. No money to get a place. Just myself, my thoughts, and the darkness.

The following day came with no direction. I wandered around town, trying to look normal, trying to hide the fact that I had nowhere to return to. I continued looking for a job, moving from place to place, asking, hoping, being turned

away. Hunger started to take over. I had not eaten, and the little strength I had was fading.

That night, I found myself near a small tabernacle in town. It was quiet, almost empty, but people passed by occasionally, and some came early for prayers. I had to be careful. I slipped inside quietly and found a corner where I could rest. The cold was intense, the kind that makes your body tremble without control. I used the church curtains to cover myself, pulling them gently around me, trying not to draw attention. It was not comfort, but it was something.

Lying there, I thought about everything about Rose, about life, about how quickly things can change. One moment you are laughing, sharing meals, making plans, and the next you are alone, hiding in a church, trying to survive the night. Sleep came in fragments, interrupted by footsteps, whispers, and the fear of being discovered.

Morning came slowly. My body was weak, my stomach empty, but I had to keep moving. There was no space for giving up. I walked again, aimlessly at times, purposefully at others, still searching for work, still holding on to hope.

The second night was even harder. I found myself at Daraja Mbili stage, among people who had traveled from Nairobi and had nowhere to go until morning. We sat there together, strangers connected by circumstance. Some were resting, some were talking quietly, others just staring into the distance. I had nothing but an envelope with my documents, holding onto it as if it was the only proof that I existed, that I had a future somewhere beyond this moment.

Hunger was now unbearable. It was no longer just discomfort it was pain. My body felt light, almost empty, and my thoughts became slow. I didn't know what to do, where to go, or how long I could continue like this. But something inside me refused to break. Maybe it was the experiences I had gone through

before, maybe it was the dreams I still carried, or maybe it was simply the will to survive.

Days passed in that state uncertain, difficult, humbling. But life has a way of circling back.

Eventually, Rose and I found our way back to each other. The anger had cooled, the emotions had settled, and we began to see things more clearly. We talked, really talked this time. Not shouting, not blaming, but listening. Understanding. Accepting where we had gone wrong.

I went back.

It was not easy, and things were not perfect, but there was a renewed sense of awareness between us. We had both seen what distance, silence, and pride could do. We had both felt the weight of separation. And in that, we found a reason to try again more carefully, more patiently, more honestly.

Those nights without shelter changed me. They taught me humility in a deeper way. They taught me that life can strip you down to nothing, but as long as you are alive, you still have a chance to rebuild. They also taught me that love, when not handled with care, can become a source of pain but when nurtured with understanding, it can still find its way back.

I returned not as the same person who had walked out that night, but as someone who had seen a different side of life raw, cold, and real. And from that point, I knew that whatever came next, I had to face it with strength, patience, and a clearer mind.

CHAPTER FOUR:

New Paths and Hard Truths

As I continued walking through the dusty paths of Kisii, carrying my documents and my hope, life slowly began to shift again. One afternoon, as I moved through town with no clear direction, my eyes caught a poster pinned on a wall. It was simple, almost overlooked by many, but to me it felt like an answer. It was a job advertisement.

I stopped, read it carefully, and without hesitation, took the number and called. On the other end was a Ugandan man who introduced himself as Simon Chabalia. His voice was calm, composed, and welcoming in a way I had not experienced in a long time. We spoke briefly, and he asked me to meet him at a nearby hotel for an appointment.

That meeting changed something in me.

Simon was not just a recruiter; he was a man who understood life. When I met him, I expected the usual questions, the usual judgment, but instead, he listened. I explained my situation, my struggles, my journey, and for the first time in a long while, I felt heard. He did not look down on me. He did not dismiss my efforts. Instead, he encouraged me.

The job was about a company based in Nairobi dealing with sales and marketing. It was not easy work, but I did not hesitate. I needed something to hold onto, something that would give me direction. I accepted to be trained and was recruited as a sales agent.

Training was intense. We learned how to approach people, how to communicate, how to convince customers, and most importantly, how to believe in ourselves. After training, we would walk through towns, moving

from place to place, selling products to anyone who showed interest—men, women, young, old. It was not glamorous, but it was honest work.

For the first time in a while, I could return home with something in my hands food, a little money, a sense of purpose. I was still staying at Rose and Miriam's house, but now I was no longer just a burden. I was contributing. That small change gave me dignity.

Simon became more than just a boss to me. He became a mentor. I opened up to him about my life, my struggles, my dreams, and he never judged me. Instead, he guided me, corrected me where necessary, and constantly reminded me that life could change if I remained focused and disciplined. He was a man who had seen life, and through him, I began to see things differently.

As time passed, Rose and Miriam completed their studies. It was a proud moment, but it also marked the beginning of another transition. Around that time, I met Brenda, one of Rose's friends. Our conversation started casually, but slowly it took a different turn. She began to tell me things about Rose's time in school things I had never known.

She mentioned a boy called Derrick. According to her, there were times when others were in class, but Rose would remain behind, hiding with him, talking, laughing, sometimes flirting. At first, I refused to believe it. My mind rejected the idea completely. I trusted Rose, and I believed in what we had built.

But something about the way Brenda spoke stayed with me. It planted a seed of doubt.

Later, I began to connect certain things. There was a day Rose had told me she was coming to see me, but she delayed. When she finally came, something felt different. Much later, she admitted that she had passed by Derrick's place first,

where she was welcomed and even cooked for. She spoke about it casually, but to me, it carried weight.

That revelation shook me. It did not destroy everything, but it explained many of the conflicts we had experienced the arguments, the misunderstandings, the tension that had built over time. It was painful, not just because of what happened, but because of the realization that there were parts of her life I had not fully known.

It became one of the issues that fueled our disagreements. Trust, once shaken, becomes difficult to hold onto firmly. I found myself questioning, thinking, replaying moments in my head, trying to understand what was real and what I had simply believed.

Still, life did not pause.

After finishing school, Rose and Miriam made their decisions and eventually left Kisii. Their departure left a silence in the house, a kind of emptiness that echoed through the rooms. I was left behind, still trying to build my life, still working, still learning, still searching for stability.

Standing in that house, I reflected on everything the journey from campus, the struggles, the love, the fights, the growth, the disappointments, and the small victories. Life had not been straightforward, but it had been real. Every experience, whether painful or joyful, had shaped me into someone stronger, someone more aware, someone still determined to move forward.

Simon's guidance, the hustle in the streets, the lessons from love and heartbreak all of it became part of my story. And even though I stood there alone at that moment, I knew one thing for certain:

I was not the same person who had once walked into Kisii with nothing.

I had grown.

CHAPTER FIVE

Return, Responsibility, and a New Beginning

When Rose and Miriam left Kisii, I thought she would finally return home, to reconnect with her roots and perhaps reflect on everything we had been through. But that was not the case. Instead, she chose to go with Miriam to her home. At first, I did not understand it. I was against the idea. Deep inside me, I felt displaced, almost as if I was being left behind not just physically, but emotionally too.

But Rose had grown close to Miriam. She no longer saw her as just a friend; she saw her as a sister. Miriam came from a well-off family, a place where life was more stable, more comfortable than the struggles we had known. And maybe, just maybe, Rose needed that environment at that time. Still, it was not easy for me to accept.

What made it even heavier was the truth I had come to realize Rose was already pregnant when she left Kisii.

That reality settled in my heart with weight. It brought questions, responsibility, confusion, and also a silent fear of the unknown. Life was no longer just about survival or dreams. It was now about consequences, about stepping into manhood in a way I had not fully prepared for.

I remained alone in the house in Kisii, surrounded by silence and memories. The small space that once held laughter, conversations, and shared struggles now felt empty. I had to make a decision. Staying there without direction would only drain me further. I needed to move. I needed to start again.

I sat down and thought deeply. I decided that the best thing for me was to go back home, to Homa Bay, and try to rebuild from there. But before making the move, I consulted Simon. He had become more than a mentor he was someone I

trusted with my decisions. When I explained my situation, he listened carefully and then assured me that I could continue working from anywhere. He promised to support me by sending products once I settled so that I could continue with sales.

That assurance gave me the courage to move.

I gathered everything that was left in the Kisii house the few household items we had struggled to build over time. They were not expensive, but they carried memories, effort, and pieces of our journey. I packed them and boarded a bus to Homa Bay. It was not an easy journey. Carrying those items felt like carrying the weight of everything I had been through.

When I arrived, I took the items to a shop owned by my brother-in-law, my sister's husband, who was running a business there. He allowed me to keep them temporarily as I figured out my next steps. From there, I went to my sister's place. Being around family again felt different. It was not perfect, but it gave me a sense of grounding.

The next challenge was finding a place to live. I knew I needed a location that would support my work in sales. After moving around and observing different areas, I settled on Olare. It looked like a place with potential busy enough, active enough, and with people who might be interested in the products I would be selling.

It took me two full days to find a house. Walking from one place to another, asking, negotiating, being turned away, and trying again it was exhausting. But eventually, I found a small house. It was simple, but it was mine. A place to restart.

I then went back, collected my belongings from my brother-in-law's shop, and moved into the house in Olare. Setting up that house was an emotional

experience. Each item I placed reminded me of where I had come from Rodi, Marindi, Kisii, and now here. It was not just a house; it was a continuation of a journey that refused to end.

Life in Olare began slowly. I waited for Simon to send the products, preparing myself mentally and physically for the next phase of hustle. I knew it would not be easy, but I had come too far to give up.

At the same time, my thoughts often drifted to Rose. She was far away now, in a different environment, carrying a child, living a life I was no longer part of daily. It was a painful realization. There was love, there was history, but there was also distance, change, and uncertainty.

I began to understand that life does not always move in straight lines. Sometimes people who walk together are forced to take different paths, not because the love was not real, but because circumstances demand growth in different directions.

Still, I held onto hope. Hope that one day things would make sense. Hope that my efforts would bear fruit. Hope that the struggles I had endured would build a future worth living.

Standing in that small house in Olare, with nothing but determination and a few belongings, I made a silent promise to myself:

No matter how many times life starts me over, I will rise again.

CHAPTER SIX

Love, Responsibility, and New Purpose

After settling in Olare and preparing myself mentally for a new beginning, Simon finally kept his promise. One morning, I received the products he had talked about, and that marked the true start of my journey in sales. I now had something in my hands not just hope, but a tool to build a life.

The work was not easy. It was purely commission-based, which meant if I did not sell, I did not earn. Every day became a test of determination. I would wake up early, organize my products, and move from place to place, talking to people, convincing them, sometimes being rejected, sometimes making a sale. It required patience, resilience, and a strong heart.

But I gave it my all.

Days turned into weeks, and weeks into a couple of months. Slowly, I began to understand the rhythm of the business. I learned how to approach customers, how to read people, and how to persist even when things were tough. Life started to stabilize, even if only slightly.

After about two months, I made a decision that had been sitting in my heart for a long time. I sent money to Rose and asked her to come and live with me. This time, it was not just about love it was about responsibility. She was carrying our unborn child, and I knew it was time for me to step up fully as a man, to take care of her and prepare for the life ahead.

She came.

But I could sense that something had changed. The influence of Miriam's family had shaped her in some ways. She had gotten used to a different kind of life, a more comfortable environment, and at times it felt like she had drifted from her

natural home, from the simplicity we once shared. Still, we were together again, and somehow, love found its way back.

We settled in Olare, and this time, it felt different more serious, more real. Maybe it was the child growing inside her that brought us closer again. I became everything to her. I made sure she was comfortable, cared for, and happy. I would take her out just to change the environment, make her laugh, and remind her that even in our struggles, there was joy.

I remember one small but consistent thing I would buy her Coca-Cola almost every day. Someone had once told me that expectant women should take it, though I never really knew why. But it became my routine, my way of showing care in the little ways I could afford.

At home, I did everything I could. I helped her cook, washed clothes, cleaned the house, did the dishes anything to ease her burden. I wanted her to feel supported, to know that she was not alone in this journey.

We created small moments of happiness. One day, I took her to see the rice plantations in Nyangweso. It was not a big trip, but it was meaningful. We walked together, talked, laughed, and for a moment, life felt peaceful and full of promise.

My brother-in-law also had an M-Pesa shop in Olare, and I started using that space as part of my work. It became like a small base for me a place where I could keep my products, interact with customers, and continue building my hustle. He trusted me deeply because of my honesty, and that trust meant everything to me.

Rose would sometimes come and sit with me at the shop after finishing her chores at home. She would help attend to customers, talk to people, and

support me in small but meaningful ways. Those moments felt like teamwork, like we were building something together.

As days passed, her belly began to grow. It became more real with each passing day. I became more protective, more conscious of her health. I would tell her not to do heavy tasks, to rest more, to take care of herself. But sometimes, I noticed she was becoming a bit too relaxed, even lazy in some moments.

I found myself encouraging her to stay active not to overwork, but to remain strong for delivery. In my mind, I believed that some level of activity would help her during labor. But at times, she saw it differently. She would say I was putting her through “mateso” suffering or hardship. To me, it was care; to her, sometimes it felt like pressure. It was one of those moments where intention and perception did not always align.

Still, we continued, teaching each other again in this new phase of life.

Then one day, something unexpected happened. My aunt called me. Her voice carried excitement. She told me she had found another opportunity for me a teaching job at Ogande Primary School. I would be teaching language, something I had always loved.

That call felt like a breakthrough.

It meant I could now balance continue my sales work part-time while also stepping back into teaching, a profession that gave me purpose and identity. It felt like life was finally opening a new chapter, one where I could grow not just financially, but also professionally.

Standing there, holding my phone after the call, I felt something I had not felt in a long-time hope that was steady, not fragile.

Life in Olare had taught me resilience. Love had taught me patience. Responsibility had taught me maturity. And now, opportunity was teaching me that no matter how long the struggle lasts, there is always a turning point waiting somewhere ahead.

CHAPTER SEVEN:

Shelter, Fear, and Simple Joys

At this stage of life, I had only introduced Rose to a few people close to me my aunt and my sister. That decision did not come easily. It came from fear, from uncertainty, and from the reality of the kind of home I came from.

Our family was scattered. The divorce between my parents had left deep cracks that had never fully healed. My father was not ready to welcome my mother back, and there was no sense of unity in the home. It was not a place I could confidently take someone I loved, especially someone carrying my child. I feared that if Rose saw the reality of where I came from the brokenness, the struggles, the lack of structure she might change her mind about me, about us.

So I chose to protect her from that side of my life.

Instead, I kept her close within the circle of people I trusted, people I knew would receive her with understanding. My aunt welcomed her warmly, and my sister treated her like family. In those small spaces, I found comfort, knowing that at least she was not completely alone in my world.

Rose, despite everything, remained a very friendly and warm person. She had a natural way of connecting with people. Even children in the neighborhood loved her. I remember how she would sit with them, talk to them, laugh with them, and sometimes even help take care of them. It came naturally to her, like she was preparing herself, unknowingly, for motherhood.

Even when we visited my sister, she would not sit idle. Despite the growing weight of her pregnancy, she would still help with chores sweeping, cooking, cleaning doing what she could. But I could see the tiredness in her body. The pregnancy was beginning to take its toll, and though she tried to stay active, there were moments when she needed rest more than anything.

One particular visit to my sister remains unforgettable. We had gone to spend some time there, and since the house was small and already full, arrangements were made for us to sleep at a neighbor's house. At first, it seemed like a good solution. The night was calm, and we were grateful just to have a place to rest.

But around 10 pm, everything changed.

The house was suddenly invaded by red ants what we call “morni” in Luo. They were everywhere, crawling across the floor, the walls, even the bedding. It became impossible to stay. We tried to endure it at first, brushing them away, shifting positions, hoping they would pass. But they kept coming, biting and disturbing us until we could no longer take it.

We had no choice but to leave the house in the middle of the night.

Outside, the air was cold, and the compound was quiet. We looked around and found an unfinished room nearby a structure with no proper doors or windows, just walls and a rough floor. That became our shelter for the night.

We entered quietly, carrying what little we had, and settled there. It was not comfortable, not safe in the usual sense, but it was peaceful compared to the invasion we had just escaped. We sat close to each other, sharing warmth, talking softly, and eventually drifting into a light, uneasy sleep.

Moments like that defined our life not perfect, not planned, but real.

Back in Olare, life continued with its usual rhythm. Rose found joy in cooking, especially fish. She loved preparing big tilapia, cooking it with care and pride. That love for fish is what kept sending me to Homa Bay again and again. No matter how far or tiring the journey was, I would go, knowing how happy it would make her.

There was something special about those meals. The aroma of fish cooking, the way she would serve it, the satisfaction in her face it made all the effort worth it. We would sit together, eat, talk, and for a moment, forget all the struggles around us.

Those were the simple joys that kept us going.

Life was not easy, but it was ours. We were learning to navigate it step by step through fear, through love, through uncertainty, and through small moments of happiness that gave us strength.

Looking at Rose during that time, carrying our child, still smiling, still trying, I felt a deep sense of responsibility. I knew I had to keep pushing, to keep building, to make sure that the life we were creating would one day be better than the one we had known.

And even in the most difficult nights whether chased by ants or sleeping in unfinished rooms we held on. Because sometimes, survival is not about comfort. It is about staying together and believing that tomorrow will be better.

CHAPTER EIGHT:

Distance, Duty, and Doubt

The job I got at Ogande Primary School became a turning point in my life. For the first time in a long while, I felt like things were beginning to align. Teaching was something I loved, especially language, and stepping into that role gave me not just income, but identity and purpose. I accepted the opportunity without hesitation.

But with that breakthrough came a new challenge distance.

At that time, I was using a simple phone, the kind we used to call “mulika mwizi.” It could only make calls and send messages, and even that required airtime that I often struggled to afford. I did not like spending money unnecessarily, especially when every coin had to be planned for food, rent, and basic survival. Because of that, there were days I could go without speaking to Rose.

My routine became demanding. Every Monday morning, I would leave Olare early and head to Ogande. I would spend a few days there, teaching, focusing on my work, then return after every two days to check on her. It was not ideal, but it was the best I could do at that time.

Before leaving, I would always make sure I left her with money for food and basic needs. I tried my best to ensure she never lacked anything essential. And truly, in Olare, I can say I never let her go hungry not even for a single day. No matter how hard things were, I made sure there was always something for her to eat.

But from her side, it did not always feel like enough.

She would sometimes complain that the money I left was insufficient. I understood her situation pregnant, alone most of the time, managing the house but it was still painful to hear, especially knowing how hard I was working to provide with the little I had.

As days went by, I began hearing things. Reports started reaching me from friends and people around. They told me that Rose was not cooking as much as expected, that she preferred buying ready-made food from nearby hotels instead of preparing meals at home. At first, I did not think much of it. I told myself maybe she was tired, maybe the pregnancy was making it hard for her to stand and cook.

But the reports did not end there.

I also heard that she had started spending a lot of time gossiping with a certain woman someone connected to my landlord's family, a lady who had run away from her husband. That detail unsettled me. It wasn't just about the gossip; it was about influence. I began to wonder what kind of conversations they were having, what ideas were being shared, and how it might be shaping Rose's thoughts and behavior.

When you are far from someone you love, your mind begins to fill in the gaps. Small things become big. Doubts grow quietly. And without communication, it becomes even harder to separate truth from fear.

Whenever I returned from Ogande, I would observe quietly. Sometimes things seemed normal. Other times, I sensed a difference small change in attitude, in how she spoke, in how she responded. I wanted to address it, but I also feared creating unnecessary conflict, especially during such a sensitive time in her life.

Inside me, there was a constant struggle. On one side, I wanted to trust her, to believe in the love we had built over time. On the other side, I could not ignore what I was hearing and what I was beginning to feel.

Still, I chose responsibility over reaction. I focused on my work, on providing, on preparing for the child that was coming. I reminded myself that this phase required patience, understanding, and maturity.

Life was teaching me that love is not only tested in moments of joy, but even more in moments of distance, silence, and uncertainty.

And in that season, I was learning to balance it all being a teacher, a provider, a partner, and a man trying to hold everything together, even when things did not feel entirely steady.

CHAPTER NINE:

Provision, Suspicion, and Silent Battles

Since Rose was mostly at home and not engaged in any work at that time, I began thinking deeply about how to improve our situation not just for the present, but for the future. I wanted her to feel comfortable, occupied, and secure, especially with the child on the way.

I gathered the little money I had been saving, coins put aside from sales, from teaching, from sacrifices that only I understood. With that, I made a decision. I bought a television. It was not a luxury purchase it was intentional. I wanted her to have something to keep her company whenever I was away, something that would keep her indoors, away from unnecessary movements and influences from the neighbors.

Alongside that, I also bought a blender. In my mind, this was not just an item it was a seed for the future. I envisioned a small business after she delivered, maybe making juices or simple refreshments to sell. It was my way of planning ahead, of trying to build something sustainable for us.

At that time, I had started noticing that the environment around us was changing. The neighbors had begun talking quietly, indirectly, but enough for it to reach my ears. They spoke about Rose in ways I did not fully understand, things that felt exaggerated, sometimes even untrue. I made a conscious decision not to listen.

I chose her.

Whether she was right or wrong, I decided that I would stand by her. I listened only to her side. I believed that as a man, especially at that stage of life, my role was to protect, not to judge based on outside voices. I shut out the noise and focused on keeping peace in my home.

But peace is not always easy to maintain.

A few months later, things slowly began to change.

There was a woman nearby who sold chips and soda. I used to buy sodas from her shop regularly. She had children young, respectful, and trying to find their way. One day, one of her sons approached me. He asked if I could help him get a SIM card using my ID. He explained that he and his sister, who were both in Form One, needed it for communication and school-related matters.

I thought about it carefully, then agreed, but with clear conditions. I told them there would be no borrowing or misuse of the line, and that I would occasionally check on it to ensure it was being used properly. It was not just about helping it was about guiding them responsibly.

From time to time, I would check in with them, asking how they were doing, making sure everything was in order. To me, it was a simple act of mentorship, something I wished someone had done for me when I was younger.

But what I saw as help, others saw differently.

Rose began to accuse me of having a relationship with the woman's daughter . It started subtly, then grew stronger. At the same time, other female acquaintances people I interacted with through work, potential clients, or just normal social contact became sources of suspicion.

People around her began to talk. They told her things stories, assumptions, exaggerations that painted me in a different light. Slowly, I began to see a shift in her behavior. Her tone changed. Her reactions became sharper. Trust, which we had fought so hard to build, began to shake again.

I tried to explain myself. Many times. Calmly, patiently. I reminded her of everything we had been through, everything we had built together. I told her how much I loved her, how I would never put her or our unborn child in danger by risking our relationship.

But it felt like my words were no longer reaching her.

It was as if she was listening, but not hearing. Seeing, but not understanding.

That period became one of the hardest emotional battles for me. Not because I was guilty of anything, but because I felt powerless. I was doing my best providing, planning, caring and yet, doubt had found its way into our home.

I stood firm, though. I did not retaliate. I did not change my commitment. I chose patience, even when it was painful. I believed that time, truth, and consistency would eventually speak louder than rumors and suspicion.

But deep inside, I began to realize something important

Love alone is not always enough.

It needs trust. It needs understanding. And without those, even the strongest bond can begin to feel fragile.

Still, I held on. Not just for myself, but for her, and for the life we were about to bring into this world.

CHAPTER TEN:

When Peace Left the House

As life continued, something began to shift in a way I had not prepared for. What was once a home filled with effort, hope, and shared struggle slowly turned into a place of tension and emotional distance.

I was doing everything I could. I woke up early, worked hard to earn money, made sure there was food in the house, cooked when necessary, cleaned, and tried to create a stable environment for Rose and the child she was carrying. I carried the responsibilities of a provider, a partner, and a soon-to-be father all at once.

But despite all that, something was missing appreciation.

It was not that I expected praise or recognition every day, but there was a silence that began to grow between us. A silence where effort was not acknowledged, where sacrifices went unseen, and where even the smallest things I did seemed to carry no weight.

Rose had changed. Or maybe the situation had changed her.

There were moments when conversations would quickly turn into arguments. Small issues would escalate, and instead of resolving things calmly, we would find ourselves going in circles, raising voices, misunderstanding each other. It felt like we were no longer on the same side.

The house no longer felt like a place of rest. It felt heavy.

There were days I would come back from work, tired and drained, hoping for peace, only to be met with tension. Words would be exchanged, emotions

would rise, and the environment would become difficult to stay in. I tried to remain calm, to avoid unnecessary conflict, but it was not always easy.

What hurt me the most was not the disagreements themselves it was the feeling that nothing I did mattered anymore. I could provide, care, sacrifice, and still be seen as not doing enough, or not doing it right.

I began to question myself.

Was I failing as a partner?

Was I not understanding her enough?

Or was life simply placing too much pressure on both of us at the same time?

Rose, on her side, was also going through a lot. Pregnancy had its own weight physical, emotional, and mental. The changes in her body, the uncertainty of the future, the influence of people around her all of it played a role. But in the middle of all that, we were losing something important: our ability to understand each other.

At times, the atmosphere in the house became too tense. Silence would take over after arguments, a silence that felt louder than the words we had spoken. We would sit in the same space, but feel miles apart.

I kept pushing, though.

I continued working, continued providing, continued trying to hold things together. Not because it was easy, but because I believed in responsibility. I believed that walking away was not the answer, especially with a child on the way.

But deep inside, I was tired.

Tired of trying to prove myself.

Tired of feeling misunderstood.

Tired of carrying both the physical and emotional weight of the home.

That period taught me a painful truth

Sometimes, even when you give your all, it may still not feel like enough to the other person.

And in those moments, the real challenge is not just surviving outside in the world, but surviving within your own home.

Still, I held on. Not because everything was perfect, but because I was not ready to give up on what we had built, even if it was slowly slipping through our hands.

.

PART THREE
CHAPTER ONE
The Storm of Corona

Just when I thought we were slowly finding balance, life decided to test us in ways we could not have imagined. Corona came. The world changed overnight, and so did our lives.

Schools closed, and I could no longer go to Ogande Primary School. The job that had been giving us stability vanished almost instantly. No routine, no income, no certainty. The company that had been sending me products to sell also shut down. Our little plan for progress, for slowly building a future together, collapsed in front of us.

I had to go back to what I knew, what I could rely on the in-laws' motorbike. I rode every day, from morning to evening, taking people around town to earn the little we could. It was exhausting, but it was survival. Every drop of sweat was for Rose and the child growing inside her. Every turn of the wheel was to keep hunger from entering our house.

But survival came with a cost.

Back home, the house felt smaller, tighter, heavier. The stress of our uncertain lives began to show itself in ways I could not control. Arguments became frequent. Even the smallest disagreements what to cook, who should clean, how to spend the little money we had became battles.

Rose was stressed, frustrated, and understandably scared. Pregnancy already brings so many pressures, but now, with the world outside locked down, the financial strain, and the constant uncertainty, everything seemed to weigh on her. Her tone became sharper, her patience shorter. I tried to speak, to explain,

to reason but the words often fell on ears that were too weary or too frightened to hear.

I tried to manage the house while also managing my work, but the boundaries of energy and time were stretched to their limits. Sometimes I came home exhausted from riding all day, only to be met with complaints or emotional outbursts. The tension was palpable. Even the child's room, the little space we had prepared for our future, felt suffocating.

Yet, in the middle of all this, I kept going.

I woke up before dawn to ride, I came back to cook, to clean, to organize, to try to restore peace. I reminded myself constantly that this was temporary. That life would return to some sense of normalcy. That Rose and I had already survived much worse, and we could survive this too.

Still, the nights were the hardest.

I would lie awake, hearing Rose's frustrations, feeling my own exhaustion, wondering if we were losing more than just income. Were we losing our love, our patience, our ability to trust each other? Were the walls of our house becoming prison bars rather than shelter?

And yet, despite everything, there were small moments of humanity. A quiet thank you when I brought her food, a shared laugh over some small thing in the house, a hug when words failed us. Those moments reminded me why I was fighting, why I kept going.

Corona did not just bring a virus; it brought isolation, fear, and tension. It tested every part of our relationship, every ounce of our patience, every fiber of our resilience. But it also revealed strength I didn't always know I had.

In that storm, I learned that survival is never just physical it is emotional. It is knowing how to carry a household when nothing is certain, knowing how to maintain love when words fail, knowing how to hold a family together even when the world seems determined to tear it apart.

Life was cruel, unpredictable, and unforgiving but we were still there, still fighting, still holding on to the hope that the sun would rise again.

CHAPTER TWO:

The Arrival of Mary

The day had been long, exhausting, and full of tension, but nothing could prepare me for the moment that would change my life forever. It was late in the evening when my neighbour Liz called me frantically. Rose was in labor, and I was the only one available to help her. My heart raced as I gathered everything I could my thoughts, my courage, and my limited knowledge of what to do. There was no one else I could rely on; this moment was ours alone.

The journey to Homabay Referral Hospital was tense. Rose was in pain, but she tried to hold her composure. I tried to reassure her, though inside I was terrified. I kept thinking of the baby, of the life that depended on both of us making it through this night. Every bump on the road, every delay felt like an eternity.

When we arrived, the first obstacle was the ultrasound. The line stretched out of the room like a river of despair. People waiting, pushing, shuffling, and complaining it felt like a line to hell. Time was running out, and I knew I could not let my baby or Rose wait. My palms were sweaty, my heart pounding. With a deep breath, I did what I never thought I would I bribed the doctor to let us skip the line. I hated that I had to do it, but I had no choice. My babies' lives were on the line.

The ultrasound finally began. Rose lay there, exhausted, pale, and trembling. I held her hand tightly, whispering encouragements, even as my own voice shook. The doctor's eyes scanned the screen, nodded, and confirmed that we were ready. Relief mixed with fear coursed through me. From the ultrasound, we rushed to maternity. I had to get supplies 123 items I didn't even fully know how to use but I grabbed them as fast as I could, my mind racing with worry and anticipation.

The labor was intense. The doctor, seeing Rose's condition and the urgency, prepared her for delivery. I was by her side, holding her hand, tears streaming down my face. Watching Rose in pain was unbearable. The blood, the struggle, the exhaustion it was real, raw, and overwhelming. I whispered prayers, begging God silently to guide the hands of the doctors, to protect my child, to protect Rose.

And then, finally, after hours of anxiety and fear, Mary was born. A tiny, fragile life, crying out into the world. The doctor handed her over briefly before cleaning and weighing her. My heart swelled. I cried openly tears of relief, tears of joy, tears of overwhelming love. Rose was still under anesthesia or perhaps simply drained beyond words. I stayed close, reassuring her that everything was okay.

It was 2:00 am when we finally left the ward. Exhausted, emotional, and trembling, I carried the news to Liz, who had stayed behind to help. She broke it to our families and friends: Mary had arrived. She was safe. She was alive. She was ours.

We named her Mary, after Rose's mother, a woman long gone, whose love and memory we wanted to honor. And we called her our "Angel," for that is exactly what she felt like a divine gift after all we had endured.

The night ended with a strange mix of exhaustion, relief, and gratitude. Our little family had survived yet another storm. I held Mary close, feeling the warmth of life in my hands and knowing that no matter what battles lay ahead, this child would always be a reminder of resilience, love, and hope.

Even in the chaos of the hospital, the long lines, the bribes, and the exhaustion, one thing was clear Mary's arrival marked the beginning of a new chapter, one that demanded courage, patience, and unwavering love.

CHAPTER THREE:

Life After Mary's Arrival

After Mary arrived, I thought life would settle into a rhythm, that the joy of her birth would bring us closer. But reality had other plans. Within just two months, it became clear that things had changed. Rose had shifted in ways I hadn't anticipated. The woman who had fought through labor, who had shared dreams with me for our little family, now seemed withdrawn, distant, almost like she had been waiting only to deliver and was no longer interested in the daily struggles of life.

I found myself carrying almost everything. Every day, I washed her clothes and mine, and carefully washed Mary's tiny garments by hand. I cooked meals, sometimes skipping my own, to make sure Rose and our daughter were fed. I even tended to Rose's wound, ensuring it was clean, changing her dressings, and applying medicine as the nurses had instructed. I became both the father and mother, the caretaker, and the provider all at once.

My days started before sunrise and ended long after the village had gone to sleep. I would fetch water, prepare food, light the jiko outside, wash clothes, and ensure our little home was livable. Meanwhile, I continued working, walking long distances to sell products, doing odd jobs to sustain us. I remember standing at the corner of Olare with Mary in my arms while trying to negotiate sales, my hands smelling of soap and food, my back aching from long hours of labor, but I kept going.

Neighbors began noticing. Some whispered that I was being mistreated, that I was being "stirved" by Rose, and that I was overworked and unappreciated. They saw me scrubbing clothes on the outside jiko under the hot sun, carrying water in large containers, cooking over charcoal, and wondered how I managed

it all. Some shook their heads, others offered advice I didn't ask for, but I ignored it. I had only one focus: keeping my family alive and safe.

Life was not easy. Many nights, I would sit outside under the faint glow of a kerosene lamp, holding Mary in my arms as she slept, thinking about how to stretch the last shilling I had. I had to calculate every meal, every small expense, every movement. If I bought soap for clothes, I had to save for fuel; if I bought maize, I had to save for oil. Every decision mattered because failure would mean hunger or illness for my little family.

Yet, through it all, I did not complain. I did not allow despair to take root. I reminded myself daily that love is not just in words or gestures but in sacrifice, in patience, and in showing up for the people who depend on you. Even when Rose ignored my efforts or seemed cold, I continued, knowing that the love I showed Mary and Rose would leave an impression that no hardship could erase.

Some days, I would catch Rose watching me from the doorway, quietly observing, perhaps realizing everything I did for her and our child. But even that was not enough to make her step forward. I learned that love sometimes requires doing everything without immediate recognition or thanks. It was exhausting, emotional, and relentless but I had no choice. Mary was counting on me, and I would not fail her.

The irony of it all was that while I was burdened with work and responsibility, I found small moments of happiness. When Mary smiled, when Rose's voice softened for a brief moment, when a neighbor lent a helping hand those moments reminded me why I endured. They reminded me that love is not only felt in joy but proven in sacrifice.

And so, life went on. The days blurred together in endless cycles of labor, worry, and fleeting smiles. I learned that building a family is not about comfort or ease; it is about endurance, resilience, and unshakable commitment. Every task I completed, every hardship I bore, was for the promise of a future where Mary could grow knowing her father loved her, and where Rose could someday remember that we had survived these dark, difficult days together.

CHAPTER FOUR:

Mary's Sickness and the Prophecy

Life has a way of testing you when you least expect it, and for me, the hardest moments often came through Mary. One evening, Mary fell seriously ill. Her little body was burning with fever, she was weak, crying continuously, and nothing I did seemed to comfort her. Rose panicked, tears streaming down her face as she held her, and I felt a surge of helplessness. As her father and protector, I had never felt so powerless. My heart ached seeing our child suffer.

Desperate, I took Mary to a nearby herbalist known for her remedies and prayers. The journey was tense; Mary was fragile, and Rose was exhausted and anxious. The herbalist received us, her eyes sharp and calm, as if she could see into the future. She examined Mary carefully, whispered prayers, and then spoke directly to me and Rose. She treated Mary with herbs and concoctions, gently applying them while praying for her recovery.

Then, with a solemn voice, she spoke words that pierced me. She warned that Mary's life was delicate, and that we needed to be vigilant. She also said something that I could not ignore: "Guard her well, for the path ahead will test your strength. Choices you make now will shape her life." Her words were heavy, almost prophetic, and I felt the weight of responsibility pressing down on me.

Mary slowly began to respond to the treatment. Her crying eased, her little body became calmer, and Rose breathed with relief. I watched closely as the herbalist continued her prayers, softly chanting blessings over both Mary and Rose. It pained me to see the depth of vulnerability in our child, and the thought that our family's stability rested so heavily on my shoulders was overwhelming.

On the way back home, I held Mary close, feeling the fragility of life. I thought about the herbalist's words and the sense of prophecy in her tone. Though my mind was filled with fear, I also felt a renewed determination. I had to protect Mary at all costs, to ensure her health and safety, and to shield my family from the trials that seemed already lurking in our lives.

Back at home, I settled Mary carefully, gave her medicine as instructed, and made her comfortable. Rose stayed close, watching over her daughter with a mixture of relief and exhaustion. I went about the household chores cooking, cleaning, fetching water but the words of the herbalist echoed in my mind. Every action I took, every sacrifice I made, now carried a heavier purpose.

That night, I sat quietly, Mary asleep in her small bed, Rose resting beside her, and I reflected on the journey ahead. Life had shown me its fragility and unpredictability. The prophecy reminded me that I could not take a single moment for granted. I vowed to remain vigilant, patient, and steadfast not just for Rose, but for Mary, whose life and future depended on my strength, wisdom, and love.

Even as the days moved on and Mary regained her strength, the memory of that night stayed with me. It shaped how I approached every challenge, how I loved, and how I protected my family. It was a lesson in resilience, a reminder that life could be both fragile and precious, and that love was proven not in ease but in sacrifice.

CHAPTER FIVE:

The Weight of a Whisper

One evening, I returned from the hustle

Mary lay gently on the bed, her small chest rising and falling with a fragile rhythm that made every second feel like a prayer. The herbs tied around her wrist gave off a strong scent, mixed with the faint smoke of incense that still clung to our clothes. Rose sat beside her, one hand resting on Mary's forehead, the other hanging loosely as though she had lost the strength to hold anything together.

I stood by the doorway, watching them.

A father.

A man.

But in that moment, I felt like neither.

What the herbalist had said kept echoing in my mind like a stubborn drumbeat. Her voice had not been loud, yet it carried a weight that pressed deep into my chest.

"She will leave your life... unless you stand strong."

I did not know whether she meant Mary... or Rose.

And that uncertainty was tearing me apart.

That night, we barely spoke.

Rose tried to be strong, but I could see the fear in her eyes. It was no longer just about sickness. It was about something deeper something we could not touch, yet it surrounded us.

“Do you believe what she said?” Rose finally asked, her voice low, almost breaking.

I hesitated.

As a man, I wanted to dismiss it. To stand firm and say, *No, we create our own destiny*. But as a father looking at a sick child... doubt found its way in.

“I believe,” I said slowly, “that our child will be okay.”

It was not a direct answer.

But it was the only truth I could hold onto.

Days passed, but peace did not return with them.

Mary’s condition improved slightly, then worsened again, like a candle flickering in uncertain wind. Each cough, each weak cry, felt like a warning we did not understand. We followed every instruction the herbalist had given herbs, prayers, silence at certain hours but inside me, a storm was building.

I started thinking differently.

About life.

About love.

About loss.

For the first time, I realized how fragile everything was. The dreams I had built with Rose, the future I imagined for Mary... all of it suddenly felt like it was hanging by a thin thread.

One afternoon, as the sun stretched lazily across the walls, I stepped outside alone.

I needed air.

I needed space to think.

But most of all, I needed strength.

I walked a short distance from the house and sat under a tree. The world around me continued as normal people passing, children playing, life moving forward without hesitation. Yet mine felt paused, stuck between fear and hope.

I bowed my head.

Not as a man who had all the answers...

But as one who had run out of them.

“God,” I whispered, “I don’t understand this path... but give me strength to walk it.”

When I returned inside, I found Rose quietly singing to Mary.

A soft lullaby.

Her voice was not perfect, but it carried something stronger than perfection—love.

In that moment, something shifted inside me.

Maybe the herbalist's words were not just a warning.

Maybe they were a test.

Not of fate...

But of who I would choose to become in the face of fear.

That night, I sat beside Rose.

"We will get through this," I told her, firmly this time.

She looked at me, searching my face for doubt.

But I did not allow it to show.

Because sometimes, being a man is not about having certainty...

It is about becoming the strength others lean on when certainty is gone.

Still, deep inside...

The whisper remained.

And I knew

This was only the beginning.

CHAPTER SIX:

Between Fear and Faith

Morning came, but it did not bring light into our hearts.

The sun rose like any other day, stretching its rays across the compound, touching walls, doors, and faces but inside me, there was still darkness. The kind that sits quietly in your chest and refuses to leave.

Mary lay in Rose's arms.

So small.

So fragile.

Only two months old... yet already fighting a battle bigger than her tiny body.

Her breathing had improved slightly, but not enough to calm a parent's fear. Every small sound she made pulled our attention. Every movement made us pause.

We were no longer living normally.

We were watching life... second by second.

That was when Mzee appeared.

He walked slowly toward us, leaning slightly on his stick, his eyes fixed on the child. He did not greet us immediately. Instead, he observed like someone who had seen such things before.

"There is something not right," he finally said, his voice low but firm.

I felt something tighten in my chest.

He sat down, closer now, and looked at Mary again.

“This disease,” he continued, “is common among small children. But if ignored... it becomes dangerous.”

Rose held Mary closer.

I swallowed hard.

“I know someone in Ngegu,” he said. “An old woman. She has treated many. People come from far.”

There was no hesitation.

No debate.

Hope even uncertain hope is something a desperate heart cannot reject.

“We go,” I said.

The journey began almost immediately.

I started the motorbike, but my hands were not steady. Rose climbed on behind me, wrapping one arm around me and the other tightly around Mary. The Mzee joined us, giving directions.

The engine roared to life.

But inside me, everything felt unstable.

As we rode, the road ahead blurred not because of speed, but because of the thoughts flooding my mind.

What if we are making the wrong decision?

What if this is too late?

What if I lose her...?

My grip tightened.

Too tight.

My focus slipped.

And then

The bike skidded.

Everything happened in a flash.

The ground rushed toward us.

The sound of metal scraping against dirt.

A cloud of dust rising around our bodies.

Silence.

For one second... two... maybe more.

Then reality crashed back.

“Mary!” I shouted, my voice breaking.

I struggled to stand, ignoring the sharp sting on my arm. My heart was beating so loudly it felt like it would burst.

Rose was already up on her knees holding Mary against her chest.

Tightly.

Protectively.

Instinctively.

“I have her... I have her...” she repeated, her voice trembling but strong.

That moment...

That image...

A mother shielding her child even in a fall

It stayed with me.

It defined everything.

We checked ourselves.

Bruises.

Scratches.

Pain.

But we were alive.

Mary was safe.

And that was enough.

I lifted the bike slowly, my hands shaking not from injury, but from realization.

I had almost made things worse.

Because I let fear control me.

This time, when I started the engine again, I changed.

I rode slower.

Focused.

Present.

Not just as a rider

But as a father carrying everything that mattered.

When we finally arrived in Ngegu, the place felt quiet... almost sacred.

The house was simple, old, and surrounded by a calm that made you lower your voice without being told.

She was there.

The old woman.

Seated outside, as if she had been expecting us.

Her eyes were sharp, but not harsh. They carried years experience, pain, healing.

She did not ask many questions.

She simply reached for Mary.

Looked at her.

Touched her forehead.

Then nodded slowly.

“She will be fine.”

Those four words...

They broke something inside me.

Not in pain

But in relief.

Then came the moment I was not prepared for.

She brought out a razor blade.

Clean.

Sharp.

Simple.

But to me it felt like danger.

Before I could process it, she began.

Small cuts.

Precise.

Intentional.

Again, and again.

Mary cried.

A soft, painful cry that pierced through my soul.

Not loud.

Not dramatic.

But deep.

Real.

I turned my face away.

My eyes burned.

Not because I was weak

But because I was human.

Because no father is ever ready to watch his child in pain.

But Rose

Rose did not turn away.

She held Mary firmly, whispering softly through tears.

“My child... it’s okay... mummy is here...”

Her voice was shaking, but she stayed.

Strong.

Unmovable.

Love, in its purest form.

The medicine was rubbed into the cuts.

The process continued.

And then

It was done.

We were given instructions.

Simple.

Clear.

Follow them... and wait.

That evening, we returned home.

Tired.

Drained.

But holding onto something we had almost lost

Hope.

The first day passed.

Then the second.

Then the third.

And slowly...

Something changed.

Mary began to respond.

Her cries softened.

Her body relaxed.

Her eyes once heavy and distant started to shine again.

One morning, I watched her closely.

She moved slightly.

Stretched.

And for the first time in days...

She looked peaceful.

I sat beside Rose.

Neither of us spoke immediately.

We just watched.

Watched a small life return.

Watched a miracle unfold quietly.

“She is getting better,” Rose whispered.

I nodded.

But my heart was saying more.

At only two months old...

Mary had gone through pain, fear, uncertainty

And yet she held on.

Stronger than we imagined.

That experience changed me.

Completely.

I realized something I had never understood before:

Life is not always controlled by plans, strength, or even knowledge.

Sometimes

It is carried by faith.

Tested by fear.

And revealed through moments that break you... then rebuild you.

That night, as Mary slept peacefully between us, I did not speak.

I just watched her.

And in that silence

I made a promise.

To protect.

To endure.

To stand strong

No matter what comes next.

But deep inside...

I knew this journey was not over.

CHAPTER SEVEN: The Silence of Deception

There is a kind of peace that feels real...

Until it isn't.

After everything we had gone through fear, sickness, sleepless nights, and prayers that came from the deepest parts of our souls life finally began to slow down. Mary was getting better. Her body had regained strength, her cries had softened, and her tiny face carried a calm that reassured us.

For the first time in a long while, we could breathe.

Not fully...

But enough to believe that maybe, just maybe, the storm had passed.

We tried to rebuild.

Quietly.

Carefully.

Like people walking on a cracked floor, afraid that one wrong step might break everything again.

There had been tension before arguments, misunderstandings, moments where emotions rose higher than they should. At one point, we had even called Rose's grandmother, hoping her presence would bring wisdom, calm, and reconciliation.

She came.

She spoke.

She tried.

But not all fires are put out by advice.

Some burn quietly beneath the surface... waiting.

Still, as time passed, the visible conflict faded.

And we convinced ourselves

We are okay now.

It was one night in June 2020.

A calm night.

One of those nights that feels simple, yet later becomes unforgettable.

We had eaten together.

Nothing special just a normal meal but it felt different. Peaceful. We sat close, talking, laughing softly, sharing stories like we used to. Mary lay beside us, wrapped gently, her small eyes opening and closing as if she too was listening.

That moment...

It felt like a family.

Complete.

Rose looked at Mary and smiled.

A real smile.

Not forced.

Not tired.

Just... real.

Then she looked at me.

“I want to visit Miriam,” she said gently.

The words did not feel heavy at first.

Miriam was her friend. Someone she trusted. Someone who had been part of her life even before me.

And at that moment we were at peace.

So why would I refuse?

“Okay,” I said.

Simple.

Understanding.

Supportive.

That is what I wanted to be.

But something inside me shifted.

A small voice.

Quiet.

Unclear.

Yet present.

Why now?

Why suddenly?

Why does it not feel normal?

I pushed the thoughts away.

Because sometimes, when things are finally going well, you don't want to question them.

You don't want to look too deeply.

You don't want to disturb the peace you've been praying for.

That night ended softly.

No arguments.

No tension.

Just silence... and what I believed was trust.

The next day, I went to work.

Like any responsible man would.

Providing.

Building.

Trying.

But something stayed with me.

A feeling I could not explain.

Later, when I returned...

I noticed something.

Not immediately.

But gradually.

Like a picture forming in your mind piece by piece.

Things were missing.

Not one or two items.

Many.

Clothes.

Bags.

Personal belongings.

Almost everything.

My heart paused.

Not in panic

But in confusion.

“Rose...” I called.

She came out calmly.

Too calmly.

“Why have you packed all these things?” I asked.

My voice was steady, but inside, questions were rising fast.

She looked at me, then at the bags.

“You should understand,” she said. “Mary is still young. Everything I have packed is necessary.”

Necessary.

The word echoed.

I looked again.

All the clothes.

All the bags.

Everything.

“For how long are you going?” I asked, this time more directly.

“Are you going for a year?”

There was a small silence.

Then she said, almost casually:

“Don’t mind... I will only take a week.”

A week.

But nothing about what I was seeing looked like a week.

In that moment, I stood between two realities.

What I was being told...

And what I was seeing.

But I chose peace.

Maybe out of love.

Maybe out of denial.

Maybe out of fear of creating another conflict.

“Okay,” I said quietly.

I left some money for her.

Support.

Trust.

Responsibility.

Everything a man believes he is doing right.

Later, I heard that some children had helped carry her bags to the bus stage.

Simple.

Normal.

Ordinary.

But life was changing.

And I did not know it yet.

That evening, the house felt different.

Too quiet.

Too empty.

Even the walls seemed to notice.

Mary's presence was gone.

Rose's laughter was gone.

The small life we had built

Gone.

And slowly...

Very slowly...

The truth began to rise.

This was not a visit.

This was not a week.

I sat down.

Alone.

The same place where we had laughed the night before.

The same place where everything felt right.

Now it felt cold.

Memories replayed in my mind.

Her words.

Her calmness.

The way she packed.

The way she avoided my eyes.

And then it hit me.

Not loudly.

Not dramatically.

But deeply.

I had not just been left.

I had been deceived.

There is a pain that comes from loss.

And then there is a deeper one

The pain of realizing that while you were trusting...

Someone else was already leaving.

That night, I did not cry.

Not because I was strong.

But because I was empty.

And in that silence...

I understood something that would change me forever:

Not every goodbye is spoken.

Some are planned in silence...

And carried out with a smile.

CHAPTER EIGHT: When Truth Breaks Through

There are moments in life when your heart already knows the truth...

But your mind still fights to deny it.

Later that same day, after the silence had settled heavily in the house, I sat down with my phone in my hands. I stared at it for a long time before making the call.

I told myself I just wanted confirmation.

Just peace of mind.

Just to hear her say, *"I've arrived safely."*

I called.

It rang.

For a moment, I hoped she wouldn't pick—because somehow, not knowing felt easier than what I was about to hear.

Then she answered.

"Hello?"

Her voice was calm.

Too calm.

"Have you reached Miriam's place?" I asked.

Simple question.

Clear.

Direct.

There was a pause.

A small one.

But long enough to say everything.

“I didn’t go to Miriam,” she replied.

Something inside me dropped.

“I went to my aunt... in Bondo.”

The words landed heavily.

Not because going to an aunt was wrong—

But because it was different.

Different from what she had told me.

Different from what we had agreed.

Different from the trust I had held onto.

In that moment, something shifted inside me.

Not loudly.

Not suddenly.

But deeply.

Deception.

Betrayal.

I could feel it.

Not as a thought

But as a weight.

“Why didn’t you just tell me that from the beginning?” I asked, trying to keep my voice steady.

There was no clear answer.

Only avoidance.

Deflection.

Coldness.

And then...

The conversation changed.

What started as a simple call turned into something else.

Something painful.

Her tone hardened.

Her words sharpened.

Blame came first.

“You are the problem,” she said.

“You don’t understand me.”

“You have made my life difficult.”

Each word felt like a stone thrown at something already broken.

Then came the mockery.

The kind that doesn’t just hurt

But humiliates.

She dismissed me.

Spoke as if everything we had built meant nothing.

As if I had imagined it all.

As if the struggles, the sacrifices, the nights we fought together for Mary’s life—
were nothing.

I listened.

Not because I agreed

But because I was trying to understand.

But understanding never came.

Only more wounds.

Then came the words that changed everything.

“I am no longer interested in you.”

Silence followed.

But it was not empty.

It was heavy.

Final.

I did not know what to say.

Not because I had nothing to say

But because nothing I could say would change what I had just heard.

My mind began racing.

Questions flooding in.

If there was a problem... why didn't she say?

Why not go to her father's home?

Why not allow us to sit down and solve things?

Why leave like this... in silence... in deception?

I would have followed her.

I would have gone.

I would have tried.

But she did not give me that chance.

That is what hurt the most.

Not just the leaving

But the way it was done.

That was the moment everything inside me began to change.

Something broke.

Not physically.

Not visibly.

But internally.

I felt it.

A shift.

A crack.

I became restless.

My thoughts no longer had order.

They moved fast... too fast.

From confusion...

To anger...

To sadness...

To disbelief...

All within moments.

I tried to sit still.

But I couldn't.

I tried to think clearly.

But I couldn't.

I was losing control

Not of my actions...

But of my peace.

Days began to feel longer.

Nights became unbearable.

Sleep avoided me.

Food lost its taste.

Even silence became loud.

Every corner of the house reminded me of her.

Of Mary.

Of what we had.

Of what I thought we had.

And slowly...

I sank into something deeper.

Sadness.

Heavy.

Constant.

Unrelenting.

It was not just heartbreak.

It was something more.

It was betrayal.

The kind that makes you question everything:

Your love.

Your decisions.

Your worth.

Your reality.

I found myself sitting alone, asking questions that had no answers.

Talking to myself.

Replaying conversations.

Trying to find where things went wrong.

But the more I searched

The more lost I became.

I was not just hurt.

I was changing.

Becoming quieter.

More withdrawn.

More broken than I had ever been.

And in that state...

I realized something painful:

Sometimes, the people you fight hardest for...

Are the same ones who walk away without looking back.

That chapter of my life did not end with closure.

It ended with questions.

With silence.

With wounds that had not yet begun to heal.

And as I sat there, alone in that house that once felt like a home...

I knew

This was not just an ending.

It was the beginning of a different kind of battle.

A battle within myself.

CHAPTER NINE: A Stranger in A Strange Place

There comes a point in pain where effort no longer brings results...

But you keep trying anyway.

After that call, I refused to give up.

I told myself this was just a phase. A misunderstanding. Something that could still be fixed if only I tried harder... spoke better... explained myself clearly.

So I called.

Again.

And again.

And again.

Sometimes the phone rang without answer.

Sometimes it was picked only to be met with coldness.

Short replies.

Harsh tones.

Words that closed doors instead of opening them.

I sent messages.

Long ones.

Careful ones.

Messages filled with honesty... with questions... with apologies even for things I did not fully understand.

But none of it worked.

Silence became the loudest answer.

I felt helpless.

Like a man trying to hold water in his hands.

The more I tried to fix things...

The more everything slipped away.

In those days, I remembered someone.

A man of faith.

A shepherd I had once trusted.

A bishop from the church I used to attend **Joseph Dao**.

I went to him.

Not as a strong man.

Not as a confident man.

But as a broken one.

I sat before him and narrated everything.

From the sickness...

To the struggle...

To the sudden leaving...

To the words that had cut deep into my soul.

He listened.

Quietly.

Patiently.

Without interruption.

Then he prayed.

Not a rushed prayer.

Not a casual one.

But a deep, intentional prayer.

The kind that reaches into places words cannot.

“Be still,” he told me.

“God sees what you cannot see.”

At that moment, I wanted to believe him.

But my heart was restless.

Because faith is hardest...

When pain is loud.

Days passed.

Still no change.

Then one day, I made a decision.

If she would not come back...

If she would not speak...

Then I would go to her.

I traced where she had gone.

Step by step.

Asking.

Searching.

Following every small lead I could find.

Until I found the place.

It did not feel familiar.

It did not feel welcoming.

It felt... distant.

Like I had stepped into a world where I did not belong.

But I went anyway.

Because love does not fear distance.

It only seeks answers.

I arrived at Miriam's home.

I was received not by Rose but by an elderly woman.

Her mother.

She welcomed me in.

Calmly.

Respectfully.

I sat down.

Gathered myself.

And told my story.

Everything.

She listened.

Like someone trying to understand both sides of something already broken.

After I finished, she sighed.

Then said something that stayed with me:

“Just try your best... Rose is under some influence.”

Influence.

The word echoed.

Was it people?

Was it thoughts?

Was it something deeper?

I did not know.

But I held onto that small hope

That maybe, just maybe, she was not fully herself.

Later, they took me to another house.

A younger woman's house.

That is where she was.

My heart began to beat faster.

Not out of fear...

But anticipation.

Maybe this is where everything changes.

Maybe this is where we talk.

Maybe this is where we fix it.

But life had something else planned.

The moment she saw me

Her face changed.

She twisted her mouth...

As if she had seen something unpleasant.

Something unwanted.

No greeting.

No acknowledgment.

No warmth.

Just rejection.

Pure.

Cold.

Immediate.

That moment...

It crushed something inside me.

Still, I tried.

I spoke.

Explained.

Calmly.

Respectfully.

Like a man who still believed in what he had built.

But it was useless.

She had already spoken.

Not to me

But about me.

Stories had been told.

Versions of me I did not recognize.

Accusations I had never heard before.

A narrative I had no chance to defend.

And suddenly...

I was no longer a man trying to reconcile.

I was an outsider.

Mockery began.

Not loud.

But sharp.

Words about my background.

My family.

My life.

One woman spoke in a tone that cut deeper than anger:

“How can Rose live with a man without parents?”

That sentence...

It did not just judge me.

It reduced me.

As if my worth depended on something I could not change.

As if my love, my effort, my sacrifice meant nothing.

I wanted to respond.

To defend myself.

To explain.

But I was not given that chance.

Every attempt to speak was cut short.

Every word dismissed before it could land.

I stood there...

Present.

But unheard.

Among them, there was one voice that stood out.

A young man.

Miriam's brother.

Unmarried.

Quiet.

Observant.

He looked at me not with mockery...

But with something close to understanding.

"You should move on," he said softly.

"Leave Rose alone... focus on your life."

His words were not cruel.

But they felt final.

Like someone closing a door gently

But firmly.

Days later, I saw something that broke me even more.

A picture.

Posted.

Rose...

And another man.

He was holding Mary.

My daughter.

That image...

It shattered me in ways words cannot fully explain.

Because it was no longer just about rejection.

It was replacement.

I had not just been left behind.

I had been erased.

I left that place quietly.

No fight.

No argument.

No closure.

Just silence.

And a heart that was almost finished.

That place had never been mine.

Those people were never my own.

Even Rose...

Felt like a stranger.

And as I walked away, I realized something painful:

Sometimes, you travel far looking for answers...

Only to find out

You were never meant to be heard there.

That day, I did not just lose a relationship.

I lost a part of myself.

And for the first time...

I felt completely alone.

CHAPTER TEN: Turned Away

There are wounds that bleed quietly...

And then there are those that expose you in front of others.

That day carried both.

I left that place the first time broken.

Not just hurt but shaken to the core.

As I rode away on my motorbike, my mind was not on the road. It was trapped in everything I had just seen... everything I had just heard.

Her face.

Her rejection.

That picture.

Those words.

At one point, I almost lost control of the bike.

A sharp bend came, and for a second, I did not react in time. The bike swerved slightly, and my heart jumped.

That moment brought me back.

Back to reality.

Back to the road.

Back to the fact that even in pain life was still moving.

That night, I did not sleep.

I lay down, but my mind refused to rest.

I kept replaying everything.

Asking myself questions I could not answer.

But by morning, one thought became clear:

I cannot end it like this.

I needed one more chance.

Not alone this time.

I needed someone who could bring calm.

Someone she might listen to.

Someone respected.

I went back to the bishop **Joseph Dao**.

He saw it in my face before I even spoke.

The pain.

The exhaustion.

The desperation.

“I want us to go there,” I told him. “Maybe if you are there... things can change.”

He looked at me for a moment.

Then nodded.

“I will go with you.”

That small agreement gave me hope again.

Fragile.

But real.

We set off together.

Two men on a mission of peace.

One carrying faith...

The other carrying a broken heart.

The journey felt longer this time.

Heavier.

As if the road itself knew what was waiting for us.

When we finally approached the gate of that place, something felt different.

Too quiet.

Too arranged.

Then we saw them.

People gathered.

Seated.

As if something had already been decided.

Before we could even get off the bike...

We heard her voice.

“Go back!”

It came from a distance at first but strong.

Clear.

Final.

She was walking toward us.

Fast.

Determined.

“Go back we don’t want to see you here!”

Those words...

They did not just reach my ears.

They hit my dignity.

I froze.

Still seated on the bike.

My hands gripping the handles but my strength leaving me.

I felt exposed.

Not just as a man

But as a human being.

And beside me was the bishop.

A man I respected.

A man I had brought with hope.

Shame wrapped itself around me.

Tight.

Heavy.

She came closer.

Her face carried no softness.

No hesitation.

“The father here doesn’t want you,” she said. “You are not welcome.”

That was it.

A decision had already been made.

Without me.

Against me.

The bishop tried to speak.

Calmly.

Gently.

Like a peacemaker.

“Let us talk,” he said.

“We have not come to fight.”

But she would not listen.

Her mind was closed.

Her heart already gone.

I felt something break inside me again.

But this time...

It was deeper.

I stepped down slowly from the bike.

My legs felt weak.

But I forced myself to stand.

I walked a few steps forward.

Then I did something I never imagined I would do.

I knelt.

Right there.

In front of her.

In front of everyone.

Not out of weakness.

But out of desperation.

“Please...” I said.

My voice was low.

Heavy.

Carrying everything I had left.

But even that

Did not move her.

She stood there.

Unshaken.

In that moment, I reached into my pocket.

I took out the little money I had.

Not much.

But it was for Mary.

My daughter.

“I brought this for the baby,” I said, stretching my hand toward her.

For a second, I thought

Maybe this will soften her.

Maybe this will remind her...

But instead

She pushed my hand away.

Rejected it.

Completely.

That action...

It did not just refuse the money.

It refused me.

As a father.

As a provider.

As part of that child's life.

The bishop stepped in again.

Even he was shaken now.

“Even if you don’t want him,” he said, “take the money for the child.”

But she refused again.

Firm.

Cold.

Final.

There was nothing left to say.

Nothing left to do.

We stood there...

For a moment that felt like forever.

Then slowly

We turned.

No argument.

No noise.

No fight.

Just a silent surrender.

We got back on the bike.

And left.

That ride back to Olare...

Was the longest journey of my life.

No words were spoken between us.

Not from me.

Not from the bishop.

Because some pain...

Does not need explanation.

It just sits there.

Heavy.

Unmoving.

I stared at the road ahead.

But I was not seeing it.

I was seeing everything I had lost.

Everything I had tried to hold onto.

Everything that had been taken from me

Without a fight I was allowed to finish.

That day, I lost more than a relationship.

I lost my voice.

My place.

My dignity.

And as we rode into the quiet of Olare...

I realized something that cut deeper than anything else:

Sometimes, no matter how much you fight...

Some doors are not just closed

They are sealed.

And you are left outside...

Alone.

PART FOUR
CHAPTER ONE:
A Day Without Justice

When we returned to Olare that day, I carried more than just exhaustion I carried humiliation. The silence around me felt heavy, almost suffocating. Even when people spoke, I could barely hear them. My mind was still stuck at that gate, replaying the moment I had been turned away like I did not belong. Still, something inside me refused to rest. I told myself this could not end like that.

That evening, I decided to call Rose's father. If she would not listen to me, maybe he would. I held the phone in my hand for a while before dialing, trying to gather my thoughts. When he answered, I greeted him respectfully and explained everything that had been happening. I did not exaggerate or accuse; I simply spoke the truth as I knew it. He listened quietly, then told me he would call her. For a moment, I felt some relief, like maybe someone would finally bring sense into the situation.

But that hope did not last long. Later, my phone rang again. It was Rose. I picked up, expecting maybe a calmer conversation, maybe even a step toward reconciliation. Instead, I was met with anger. She mocked me for involving her father, asking why I was telling him "Nonsense." Her tone was cold, dismissive, and filled with something that felt like contempt. I did not want to argue. I did not want to fight. All I wanted was for us to find a way back to each other. But she was not interested in that. Every word I spoke seemed useless, as if it had no place in her world anymore.

After that call, I sat for a long time thinking. Then I made another decision. If talking on the phone was not working, I would go there in person. This time, I involved my father, and we also went with my uncle. But looking back, we were not properly guided. There are ways of approaching in-laws, traditions that

require elders who know how to speak and handle such matters. My uncle was still young, and we lacked that experience. Still, I believed that truth would be enough.

I dressed well that day not to impress, but out of respect. When we arrived at their home, I immediately felt the tension. It was not loud or aggressive, but it was there, cold and unwelcoming. We were allowed in and asked to sit, and the meeting began around nine in the morning. I thought it would be a chance to talk openly, to explain, to listen, and to find a solution. But it quickly became something else entirely.

The stories started not my story, but stories about me. Allegations I had never heard before were presented as truth. Accusations were made with confidence, as if they had been rehearsed. Then Rose spoke. She spoke with emotion, with tears in her eyes. And as she cried, I watched the room change. People listened to her differently. They believed her more easily. Her tears carried a weight that my words could not match. I tried to explain myself, to defend what I knew was true, but it felt like I was speaking in a place where judgment had already been made.

Miriam was there, sitting quietly, observing everything. Her presence did not feel accidental. It felt deliberate, like she had been brought there to witness or perhaps to influence the situation. And deep inside, I began to sense something more that her brother had an interest in Rose. Suddenly, many things started to make sense: the resistance, the rejection, the environment that felt so closed against me. It no longer felt like a misunderstanding. It felt like I was being replaced.

The hours dragged on. From nine in the morning until five in the evening, we sat there talking, arguing, explaining, and defending. Yet nothing changed. There was no warmth, no hospitality, no sense of reconciliation. We were

present, but not welcomed. My uncle sat quietly, unable to contribute much, perhaps overwhelmed by the situation. As for me, I spoke the truth as clearly as I could. But the voices against me were too many, and the accusations too strong.

At some point, I stopped trying to win. I realized this was not a place where fairness existed for me. It was a place where I had already been labeled the problem. No matter what I said, it would not change anything.

Finally, the meeting came to an end not with agreement or understanding, but with silence. We stood up slowly and walked out. No one stopped us. No one called us back. No one suggested trying again. We simply left.

That walk away felt heavier than anything I had experienced before. Because this time, deep inside, I knew the truth there was nothing left to fight for in that place. And yet, I was not at peace. I was more stressed, more confused, and more broken than before.

Because sometimes, the hardest thing is not losing... it is not understanding why you lost.

And as we left that home behind, I carried with me a painful realization: truth alone is not always enough.

CHAPTER TWO:

Voices From Every Side

After that long and fruitless meeting, I returned with a heart that was no longer just heavy it was crowded. Crowded with questions, with voices, with memories that refused to stay in the past. I tried to sit in silence, but silence itself had become loud. It carried everything back to me. That is when I decided to call her aunt Maria. She was someone I respected, someone who had once opened her home to me in Kisii, and someone I believed could speak truth without taking sides. When she picked up, I greeted her and began to narrate everything that had happened from the moment Rose left, to the calls, to the humiliation at Miriam's place, and finally the meeting that led nowhere. She listened carefully, and as I spoke, something began to return to my mind something she had once told me long before all this happened.

Back when I had visited her home with Rose in Kisii, when everything still felt possible, she had looked at me calmly but seriously and said, "Rose is not yet ready for what you are doing... she is not ready for marriage." At that time, I did not take it as a warning. I took it lightly, maybe even ignored it, because when you love someone, you believe love itself is enough to prepare both of you. But now, sitting there, broken and trying to make sense of everything, I remembered her words clearly too clearly. And then another memory came, her father's voice, firm, direct, almost confrontational. He had once told me something I did not fully understand at the time: "Do not try to hold my daughter with witchcraft." That statement had confused me back then because in my heart, I knew what I felt was real. It was love, not control, not force, not anything dark. But now, as everything unfolded the way it did, I began to question everything. Why would he say that? What did he see that I did not? Or was it just fear, misunderstanding, or judgment?

All these thoughts began to mix together. The past and the present collided, and suddenly nothing felt simple anymore. Meanwhile, back in Olare, life around me did not stop. People were watching, talking, asking, “Where is Rose? What happened? Why are you alone?” Then came advice from every direction. “You should go and bring her back.” “A man must fight for his family.” “Don’t let your home break like that.” Even my own relatives joined in my sister, my in-laws everyone had something to say. But what they did not know was that I had already tried, over and over again. They saw me sitting quiet, still, and assumed I was doing nothing. They did not see the calls, the journeys, the humiliation, the rejection. They did not see how much I had already lost trying to hold everything together. That made it even harder because now I was not only dealing with pain, I was also carrying pressure, pressure to fix something that was already beyond my control.

One day, my landlady called me aside. She had been observing everything silently, watching, understanding in her own way. She looked at me and said, “Don’t worry too much. That girl had already made a plan to leave.” I looked at her, confused. “She had told someone,” The landlady continued, “that she was no longer interested in you.” Those words hit me differently not like new information, but like confirmation, confirmation that what I was experiencing was not sudden, not accidental. It had been planned. “She was promised a better life,” the landlady added. “By people with money, by people who showed her something different.” I did not respond immediately. I just stood there listening. Because deep inside, I had already begun to sense it the way things changed, the way she distanced herself, the way she spoke. It did not feel like a decision made in pain. It felt like a decision made with intention.

And that realization broke something deeper in me. Because it meant that while I was fighting to save what we had, she was already walking toward something else. I went back to my room and sat down, alone again. And for the first time, I

stopped asking, “What did I do wrong?” Instead, I asked a harder question: “Was I ever meant to win this?” Everything around me was speaking the aunt’s warning, the father’s words, the neighbors’ pressure, the landlady’s revelation different voices, different times, but all pointing to one painful truth. I was holding onto something that had already been let go. That day, I did not find peace, but I found clarity. And sometimes clarity hurts more than confusion.

CHAPTER THREE:

The Path of Confusion

A few days after the painful visit to Miriam's home, I realized that holding on to hope in the same way was becoming impossible. Communication with Rose had become a wall I could not scale; it seemed I had been blocked everywhere she could possibly be reached. The calls went unanswered, messages bounced back, and even the people I thought might help could not bridge the distance. I felt as if every attempt to reach her only pushed me further into emptiness. It was at that fragile moment, riding my motorbike through Olare, that I encountered a woman I did not know. She asked me for a ride, and without thinking too much, I agreed. We drove to a place I did not know, and I waited outside as she went in. Hours passed, and when she returned, she told me it was a house where a woman prayed for people who were facing problems. I did not fully understand, but in my desperation, I felt compelled to try anything.

Later, I returned to that woman, hoping she could pray for me or somehow remove whatever forces I imagined were keeping Rose from me. She told me to call Rose again, claiming that her prayers could make communication possible. When I finally reached her line, I was met not with reconciliation but with verbal abuse. Every word from Rose's mouth cut deep, and I felt helpless. The woman reassured me, insisting I follow her instructions carefully, giving me items to use while calling and chanting, telling me to "chew, call her name, this is love that is doing you like this." I obeyed, desperate to fix something beyond my control, but nothing worked. Each attempt left me more confused, more frustrated, and more isolated.

Months passed, and the gap grew wider. No matter what I did, I could no longer reach Rose. There was no way to ask about Mary's welfare, no way to hear her voice, no way to feel any connection to the life we had built together.

Memories of rejection haunted me the way she had thrown back my money, the way she had refused to let me provide for our child. I could not help but imagine that she had moved on, perhaps with someone wealthier, someone who could offer her what she wanted while I was left struggling to understand how everything had fallen apart. The sense of loss was heavy, a weight that clung to every thought, every quiet moment.

In trying to hold onto hope, I had wandered into confusion. What I thought were solutions became distractions; what I thought were signs of guidance became traps that left me questioning myself even more. And through it all, the ache for my child remained a silent reminder that part of my heart was still tethered to a love and a life that might never be mine again. It was a slow, painful acceptance that I could no longer reach Rose, that communication had been severed, and that I would have to begin moving forward, even if I did not yet know how.

CHAPTER FOUR:

The Dark Days

After months of trying and failing, communication with Rose was completely lost. Those days were dark in ways that words hardly capture. No one seemed willing to answer my calls not her friends, not her family, not even the people I thought might help mediate. I was left alone, rejected, blamed, and painted as the villain in a story I had no control over. My reputation suffered quietly but sharply. Every effort I had made, every sacrifice, every step I took to protect and provide, seemed erased, replaced by whispers and assumptions that I was the one at fault.

In those days, I realized I had to start over. From zero. Not just rebuilding life materially, but emotionally, mentally, spiritually. And the hardest part perhaps the part that cut the deepest was losing touch with Mary. Since that time, I had not set eyes on our child. That absence became a weight I carried silently, a constant ache that reminded me of what had been taken and what could not be reclaimed. The blame did not stop with others; Rose had her reasons and mechanisms to defend herself, and in a way, I understood. She needed someone to bear the fault, someone to carry the blame for her choice. And somehow, I accepted it, because resisting felt pointless when the doors had closed on both her and our child.

In the midst of all this, I heard unsettling news about Mary. Rose, it seemed, had neglected the child at some point; the little one had almost starved. My heart sank when I imagined the danger my daughter had faced, and the thought of her suffering in silence filled me with guilt I could not shake. Eventually, Mary was taken back to her aunt Maria, who had been taking care of her before and was now a safe presence in her life. This small comfort, however, could not erase the distance that had formed between us. Later, I learned that Rose had

gone to Dubai, seeking employment, leaving the child under the care of her aunt. It was a reality that left me conflicted relieved that Mary was safe, yet broken that the family I had dreamed of was scattered across continents and circumstances beyond my control.

Years passed. Life continued in Olare, but the memories never softened. Every moment of joy was shadowed by what I had lost, every plan for the future touched by a quiet, persistent sorrow. In 2024, Nicholus stepped in and helped us talk again, opening a small door for dialogue that had been closed for so long. Yet even then, the bitterness lingered. Some wounds heal, but the scars remain, reminders of pain endured, lessons learned, and love that once was. And the rest of the story... well, that is for another day. For now, these are the dark days days of loss, reflection, and the quiet understanding that some chapters in life shape us in ways we cannot undo, but they also teach us how to endure.

CONCLUSION:

End Of One Chapter, Beginning of Another

Looking back at everything that happened the rejection, the humiliation, the lost child, the broken communication I realize that those days in Olare were some of the darkest in my life. I was left alone, blamed, and misunderstood, carrying wounds that were invisible to the world but heavy in my heart. I lost not just a partner, but the vision of the family I had dreamed of. I lost touch with Mary, and for a long time, the thought of her suffering haunted me. Every step I had taken to protect, to provide, and to hold on had seemed in vain, replaced by rumors, accusations, and the judgment of people who could not see the truth.

Yet, even in those darkest days, I began to learn something important life does not end with betrayal, and love, no matter how deeply lost, teaches resilience. Though I could not reach Rose or Mary, I discovered the need to accept what I could not control. I realized that some people walk out of your life not because you failed them, but because they chose a different path. And sometimes, holding on too tightly only deepens the pain.

The experiences in Olare every humiliation, every heartbreak, every moment of confusion taught me to rebuild myself from zero. I learned that while we cannot always reclaim what was lost, we can reclaim ourselves. We can find strength in our failures, wisdom in our pain, and courage in our scars. Those days shaped me, not as a man defeated, but as one who understands the fragility and complexity of love, the importance of boundaries, and the necessity of moving forward even when the heart resists.

And so, as this chapter closes, I leave Olare behind not with bitterness, but with understanding. The story of those years is a testimony to endurance, to

faith in the unseen, and to the quiet strength that comes from surviving even when everything seems lost.

Now begins the next chapter: life after Olare. The days of rebuilding, the journey of self-discovery, the pursuit of peace and purpose, and the work of shaping a life that, while marked by the past, is not defined by it.

Epilogue

Life after Olare has been a journey of reflection, rebuilding, and growth. I have learned that even when the people we love walk away, life continues, and strength can be found in the most unexpected places. I focused on healing, on becoming the father I could be for Mary, and on building a life that honors the lessons of the past.

Though the pain of separation remains, it has also given me clarity and resilience. I have learned to value self-respect, to forgive even when it is difficult, and to recognize that some things like love, trust, and family cannot be forced. Life after Olare has been about reclaiming myself, my purpose, and my peace, even while carrying memories that are bitter but instructive.

This story is both an end and a beginning. It closes one chapter of heartbreak but opens another chapter of understanding, hope, and personal growth.

Author's Note

To my readers,

This book is my truth. It is the story of love, loss, betrayal, and the resilience that follows. I share it not to seek sympathy, but to show that even in our lowest moments, we can find strength and clarity.

Life will challenge you. People will leave. Plans will break. But every trial carries a lesson. Guard your heart, fight for what matters, and never forget that your worth is not defined by the choices of others. To anyone facing heartbreak, rejection, or loss: your story is not over. You can rise, rebuild, and walk forward with dignity.

Thank you for taking the time to read my journey. I hope it inspires courage, reflection, and hope in your own life.

Richard Ojwang

About the Author

Richard Ojwang is a writer and an educator from Homa Bay, Kenya. He has professional experience in education, ICT, sales, and leadership, and is passionate about sharing stories that inspire resilience and personal growth.

Richard's life experiences from love and heartbreak to personal loss and rebuilding inform his writing, giving it emotional depth and authenticity. He believes in the power of storytelling to teach lessons, heal wounds, and encourage hope.

When he is not writing, Richard enjoys mentoring youth, exploring creative projects, and reflecting on the lesson's life has taught him.

Scriptures and Quotes

- Proverbs 3:5-6 – “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.”
- Psalm 34:18 – “The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.”
- Life Quote: “Pain is inevitable. Suffering is optional. Strength comes when we learn to rise.”

Invitation / Call to Action

Thank you for reading my story. If you wish to share your thoughts, reflections, or connect about my work, you can reach me at:

Email: richardojwang60@gmail.com

Follow me for future writings, reflections, and stories of life, love, and resilience.

Legal Notes

This memoir recounts real-life experiences. Names of some individuals have been changed or generalized for privacy. Any resemblance to persons not mentioned in the text is purely coincidental.