

– Chapter 6.

The sharp cry of a baby pierced the quiet of the house and pulled Winny out of sleep. She had fallen asleep on the sofa in the living room, exhaustion claiming her without warning. For a moment she remained still, disoriented, her body heavy, her mind slow to awaken. How did I fall into such a deep sleep? she wondered.

She sat up slowly and pressed her palms against her face. The room felt colder than usual. She had grown thinner over the past months—ever since her life had shifted into something she had never prepared for.

Her reflection no longer resembled the woman she used to be. Her thoughts never rested. Even in sleep, sorrow followed her.

She often imagined leaving the house—walking away from the weight, the whispers, the daily humiliation. But each time the thought came, it ended the same way. Where would I go?

“I have no one loyal to depend on,” she whispered to herself. “I cannot burden my only brother.” Her voice trembled, though no one was there to hear it.

“I must endure this suffering. I will raise my children. I will pray to God to help me see them grow, fully grown, strong, and happy.”

She closed her eyes, fighting the sting of tears.

“I will work. I will guide them toward a better future. No matter how much I suffer, they will be educated. They will not end up like me.”

That resolution was the only thing she truly owned.

Since her pregnancy, everything she had built had slowly slipped through her fingers. Her business had collapsed. The premises stood empty. Equipment and machinery were stolen. The little money she had saved disappeared into hospital bills and survival. She had fought quietly. She had promised herself she would not give up.

And on the other hand, her elder son had recently begun working with Jaben and brought home a little money. It was never enough, and whatever she tried to keep aside for later was soon used for immediate needs. Jaben himself contributed only sparingly. Ever since his secrets surfaced, something invisible had broken inside the family.

Now the responsibility felt heavier than ever.

All these thoughts clashed inside her mind, refusing to settle.

“Robert,” she called softly.

“Yes, Mother,” he answered, stepping inside. “Yes.”

She studied him for a moment. He was no longer the little boy she once shielded from every storm.

“I need to tell you something important.”

He stood quietly.

“For months now, you have been working—finding ways to get money, even from Jaben.”

“Yes,” he replied.

“You must continue. But this time, you must work harder. With others too.”

Robert opened his mouth to speak, but she continued.

“You are grown now. Life will not treat you gently. Jaben has done what he could, even if it does not seem enough. One day you will understand that some help is greater than it appears.”

She paused, then added with quiet firmness:

“You are going to a school we can easily afford. If you do not work hard now, this suffering will be wasted. I pray that one day you will see that every struggle was worth it.”

Her body leaned back against the sofa. She looked tired—not just physically, but deeply, spiritually tired.

Her words settled heavily in Robert’s mind.

“I will pray harder,” he finally said. “And I thank God.”

A faint smile crossed her lips.

“It seems you understand.”

After a moment, she continued.

“My condition does not allow me to work fully. I need more rest. I was thinking... if we rent out that spare room, we could earn a little income.”

Robert froze.

He understood her reasoning. It was practical. Necessary.

But he also knew the tension inside that house. The space was already small. Arguments came easily. Recently, he had overheard words that made his heart sink—threats of being sent away if things became inconvenient.

He stepped outside, his mind racing.

I must speak to him, he thought.

“Do you agree?” his mother called gently.

“Yes,” he answered. “But I will not accept humiliation for us in this house.”

That afternoon, his aunt, a neighbour to their house, a family friend, sat on her wooden stool outside, cooking over a small charcoal stove. The air smelled of smoke and boiling food.

“Good afternoon, Aunt,” Robert greeted respectfully.

“Good afternoon, Robert,” she replied.

He explained everything carefully—the financial struggles, his mother’s condition, the idea of renting the room, and his fear of what might follow.

“So you want permission to use the store space for sleeping?” she asked.

“Yes. If you do not mind. I fear what might happen.”

She looked at him for a long moment. Then she nodded. “I understand the situation. I have no problem, as long as you arrange your space properly and manage yourself.”

Relief washed over him.

“Thank you, Aunt,” he said sincerely.

He returned to his mother and told her everything. After discussing it quietly, she agreed. The plan moved forward—not because they wanted it, but because they had no other choice. And in that small house, beneath the weight of uncertainty, they continued surviving

Note;

some of the art piece of chapter 6 is missing. so forgive, it will be improved later with reference to the writer. Mutebi Robert.

Chapter 6 marks the end of part 1 of Victim novel.

Chapter 7 will commence part 2. which is like to be quiet longer of about 15 or 16 other chapters consisting of a total of 21 or 22 chapter.

So we request patience.

To be continued. Victim chapter 7. By Mutebi Robert 0746929839.