**THE TRUTH BEHIND THE BROKEN**

**Introduction**

In a world where silence often speaks louder than words, and pain is a language understood by many, there lies a truth, a truth that the broken are not lost, but are in the process of finding their way.

**“Be kind on me,”** they whisper, not as a plea, but as a testament to resilience. For in kindness, there is healing; in understanding, there is strength. The broken are not defined by their scars but by their capacity to rise, to love, and to continue. They seek peace, not in perfection, but in acceptance. Peace is not the absence of struggle but the presence of compassion amidst it.

They have been laughed at, lied to, and left behind. Yet, they stand, not because they are unscathed, but because they have learned to dance with their wounds, to turn their pain into power. They embrace their humanity in all its flaws and beauty. To be human is to be broken, and to be broken is to be beautifully whole.

This is not just a story; this is a movement. A movement that says:” We are not our brokenness; we are the strength that emerges from it”. A movement that calls for kindness, for understanding, for unity.

As you turn these pages, remember: the truth behind the broken is not found in their fall, but in their rise. Not in their tears, but in their smiles. Not in their silence, but in their voices that echo resilience.

Welcome to the journey of discovering **the truth behind the broken**.

### Chapter 1: The Beginning of the Journey

Life does not come with a manual, and childhood is rarely kind to those who must navigate it alone. From the very beginning, I learned that the world was both a classroom and a battlefield, and I was expected to learn its lessons without much guidance.

I was born in **Kigali City, Rwanda**, on a cool morning in **September 2004 it is when the truth’s evidence started to be written**, the second child in a family of five children. Among four brothers, I was the second son, and though the home was filled with voices and laughter, there was an absence that no one could fill my father. My mother often spoke of him, a man who shared my name and whose face I resembled and to e honest I can’t imagine his face, yet whose presence I never knew. At first, his absence felt like a wound but I used to be like that but that made me stronger. Later, I realized it gave me a chance to carve my own path, to become strong, resilient, and determined in ways that might have been impossible otherwise.

Growing up, I was not like other children. I did not have all that others had, but I had my mother a force of love, sacrifice, and quiet endurance. She worked tirelessly, she working so hard to raise me safely, cooking, cleaning, and doing everything she could to make sure we survived. I watched her struggle, and though I was just a child, I felt the weight of life pressing down on us.

And yet, I was foolish, a little boy full of mischief and curiosity. I did crazy things, laughed in places where I shouldn’t, cried in silence when I felt powerless. I lied sometimes, disobeyed sometimes, and made my mother’s days harder than they already were. Looking back, I see now how those moments of chaos were also moments of growth lessons in empathy, patience, and understanding.

There were days when hunger gnawed at us, and nights when hope seemed distant. I had never known freedom from worry, yet in the small corners of life, I discovered resilience. I discovered that even when laughter was scarce, the human spirit could find a way to smile. I discovered that love, even from a single source, could sustain a soul through the hardest storms.

School was another challenge. My studies were far from perfect; I stumbled, I struggled, I often felt behind my peers. But I kept moving forward. Every mistake became a lesson, every failure a stepping stone. I began to understand that intelligence is not measured solely by grades or recognition, but by the ability to learn, adapt, and rise after every fall.

Despite the hardships, there were moments of wonder. I remember running barefoot across dusty streets, playing in the rain, imagining worlds far beyond the small village I called home. I remember laughter that felt like freedom, and small victories that felt like triumphs. These fragments of childhood both painful and joyful shaped the person I was becoming.

Through it all, my mother remained my anchor. Her sacrifices were not in grand gestures but in quiet endurance. I often found myself thinking: “I want to honor you, to rise for you, to make every tear you shed worthwhile.” Her strength became mine, her courage became my compass. And in her love, I learned the first lessons of kindness, empathy, and resilience.

The first light of dawn always carried with it a strange promise. In Kigali’s hills, morning rose like a whispered song, weaving through the banana plantations and mist-draped valleys. The air was cool, gentle, as if the night itself had left behind a blessing before retreating. For some, that first light meant hope. For others, it meant survival.

Mugisha, sixteen and restless, stood barefoot at the doorway of his family’s small brick house. His eyes followed the slow rise of the sun. The orange glow brushed against his face, but inside his chest he felt a heaviness no light could soften. Today was supposed to be a new day, yet the memories of yesterday still clung to him the fights, the debts, the words spoken in anger.

“Wake your sister,” his mother called from inside, her voice roughened by years of labor but carrying that same gentle firmness that had raised them.

Mugisha didn’t answer immediately. He was listening to the silence of the morning broken only by distant rooster calls and the low hum of motorcycles already carving the road. Life was moving, whether he felt ready or not.

He stepped inside, brushing the dirt from his feet. A faint smell of sorghum porridge drifted from the pot on the fire. Their home was simple mud-plastered walls, a tin roof that sang when rain visited, and a narrow corridor leading to two small rooms. His sister, Aline, still slept, curled beneath a worn blanket, her face softened in dreams. She was only twelve, but already the world was pressing her to grow faster than she should.

“Aline,” Mugisha said gently, shaking her shoulder. “Time to get up.”

She blinked, rubbed her eyes, and groaned. “It’s too early.”

“It’s never too early,” Mugisha replied, forcing a smile he didn’t feel. “School won’t wait for you.”

Aline sat up, her hair a tangled halo around her head. She looked at him curiously. “Why do you always wake up before everyone? You don’t even sleep properly.”

Mugisha shrugged. He couldn’t tell her that sleep was not a refuge for him. It was a battleground where memories kept him awake the sound of his father’s voice raised in frustration, the nights when hunger gnawed louder than crickets, the dreams of a future that felt too far.

Instead, he said, “Someone has to watch the sun rise. If no one does, how will it know we are ready for the day?”

Aline giggled. “You’re strange.”

“Strange is better than lazy,” Mugisha teased, pulling the blanket off her.

Their mother, Claudine, entered carrying a basin of water. Her face was lined with years of sacrifice, but her eyes carried a quiet strength. She set the basin down and looked at Mugisha. “You’ll be late too if you stand here pretending to be a poet. Hurry.”

Mugisha nodded. But inside, her words stuck to him. Pretending to be a poet. Maybe that’s all he was doing—pretending. Pretending he wasn’t afraid, pretending he believed tomorrow would be brighter, pretending that kindness alone could shield him from the roughness of the streets.

By the time I began to understand the world beyond my small home, I realized that life was not about fairness. It was about how we respond to the cards we are dealt. It was about choosing to rise, to grow, and to find light even in the darkest corners. And though I had only begun my journey, the first chapters of my life had already taught me that being broken was not a weakness it was the beginning of understanding the truth behind strength.

## Chapter 2: Lessons in the Shadows

I was six years old when my world cracked open. Until then, my mother had been everything the shield, the comfort, the only proof that love was real. Then one day, without warning, I was sent to live with my uncle.

At first, I didn’t understand why. I thought maybe it was temporary, a visit, a chance to see cousins and hear new stories. But as the days passed, and my mother’s face no longer appeared at the door, the truth settled in: I was no longer under her roof.

The house was not cruel, but it was not home. My uncle carried authority like a heavy stick. His words were commands, his silences judgments. I was just a child, yet I felt like a stranger in my own bloodline. The food was there, but tasteless. The bed was soft, but cold. The laughter I knew from my mother’s presence was absent.

The housekeeper watched me with stern eyes. She wasn’t unkind, but she was sharp, and her discipline cut deeper than any belt. Sometimes she would scold me for playing too much, for not doing things the way she wanted. And yet, strangely, she became the reason I found my way back to my mother.

One night, I whispered, “I want to see Mama again.”

She didn’t soften. Her eyes stayed hard, but her words changed my life:  
“If that’s what you want, then you must ask. You must speak it, not hide it.”

Her words pushed me to confront what my heart already knew. And after weeks of quiet yearning, I asked to go back. Somehow, my voice, small as it was, carried weight. Soon, I found myself walking back into the arms of my mother.

For thirteen years, we lived in rented houses. Moving from place to place, always packing and unpacking, never fully belonging anywhere. The walls were thin, the roofs sometimes leaked, and the neighbors looked at us with a mixture of pity and gossip. But we survived.

I wore clothes that had seen better days. Shoes with soles nearly gone, stitched so many times they looked more like patchwork than leather. Some days we ate well enough, other days we ate little. But my mother’s strength was constant. She stretched every coin, every opportunity, to make sure I had something.

People in the community whispered.  
“There goes the bastard,” some would mutter.  
“Son of a woman,” others sneered, as though I was missing half my soul.

I learned to live with it. I became quiet, not because I was weak, but because silence protected me. Words from others couldn’t wound me if I refused to give them space.

Still, at night, when the house was silent and the oil lamp flickered, I would whisper to myself, Why me? Why must I carry names I did not choose?

But my mother — my warrior — was proof that the world’s names meant nothing. She became my pride, my example, my proof that resilience is louder than gossip. School was another warzone. I wasn’t the best student. Lessons escaped me at times, numbers danced on the page, and words felt like they mocked me. Teachers scolded, classmates laughed, and sometimes I believed them when they said I wasn’t enough.

Yet, slowly, I discovered something powerful. While others memorized words, I studied people. While others solved math problems, I solved situations. I could tell when a teacher was about to ask a question. I could sense when a classmate’s laughter was hiding their own pain. I began to see patterns no one else noticed.

This, I realized, was my gift. Not in books alone, but in life itself. I was learning how to survive, not just how to pass exams.

At home, my mother filled the gaps left by my absent father. She became everything, nurturing, protecting, guiding. Once, a man asked me,  
“Do you have a father?”

I looked him in the eye, my chest tight but my voice steady.  
“I have a mother,” I replied.

That was enough. It had always been enough.

As I grew older, the insults turned into challenges. Every time someone called me “bastard,” I used it as fuel. Every sneer became a reminder that I was more than their words. By my teenage years, I had built an inner strength. Pain was no longer just suffering; it was training. Loneliness was no longer emptiness; it was clarity.

I began to see myself not as broken, but as sharpened by struggle. Each hardship was a hammer, each insult a fire, and together they forged me into something harder, stronger, and unbreakable

Teenage years are the proving ground, a time when life forces you to confront yourself before anyone else can. Mine began under circumstances that would have broken most children, yet shaped me into someone who could endure, survive, and rise.

From a young age, the world labeled me. People called me **“Bastard”**, a name meant to wound, to define, to limit. Others whispered behind my back, using words like “son of a woman” as if they could erase my existence. At first, the names burned deep, cutting through the innocence of childhood. But over time, I learned to wear them as armor, reminders of the battles I had survived and the resilience I was quietly building.

At the age of six, life pulled me away from my mother and into the house of my uncle. It was a world both unfamiliar and harsh. The first weeks were the hardest. The rooms smelled different, the routines were strict, and the affection I had taken for granted vanished. For the first time, I truly understood the weight of absence. My mother, the anchor of my early life, was far away. I missed her warmth, her voice, her reassurance. But life demanded that I adapt.

The house had rules I didn’t understand, and at times, cruelty masqueraded as discipline. Yet, fate often works in mysterious ways. A housekeeper, stern and unyielding, became the instrument of my return to my mother. She pushed me to demand what my heart yearned for — to go back to the one place where love was unconditional. And so, slowly, I was reunited with her.

We lived in rented houses for thirteen years, a life marked by scarcity but rich in lessons. Clothes were often worn and patched, shoes bore the marks of endless streets, and meals were modest, sometimes barely enough. Yet, even in hardship, there was purpose. Every challenge, every discomfort, became a lesson in resilience. I realized that life does not grant comfort automatically — it must be earned, understood, and embraced.

Even as a quiet child, I observed the world keenly. I watched people, listened to their words and intentions, and learned to navigate life with subtlety. The nickname “Bastard” never defined my worth; it defined the perception of others, which I began to understand as separate from my own truth. My mother became my shield and my guide, her sacrifices carving a pathway for me to grow stronger. She became both parents in one, nurturing me, feeding me, teaching me to walk tall when the world whispered that I could not.

School was another battlefield. I was never the model student, never the first in class, yet my mind was always absorbing, calculating, observing. Failures taught me humility; mistakes taught me strategy. I began to see patterns others missed, understand situations before they unfolded, and develop an intuition that would later define my genius. My education was not solely academic; it was a lesson in life, patience, and human nature.

Outside of school, life was even more complex. The streets, the neighborhood, the whispers of society — they tested me daily. Friends were rare, trust was scarcer. I learned to be cautious, to speak carefully, to observe before acting. Every insult, every ridicule, became a lesson. I discovered that the world often judges on appearances, not essence, and that strength is born not from comfort, but from endurance.

By the time my teenage years were in full swing, I began to notice small victories. Moments of insight, flashes of understanding, instances where my intellect and instinct surpassed expectations. I could solve problems, strategize, and even read people’s intentions. It was in these moments that I realized the early signs of genius — not in grades or accolades, but in the ability to navigate a complex world with clarity and courage.

And yet, the pain of separation, the weight of names, and the scars of judgment were never far. I carried them quietly, turning hurt into fuel. My mother remained the constant, my warrior, my pride. She had raised me alone, done the work of two parents, and instilled in me the understanding that love and guidance can come from resilience, not only presence. She was the first lesson in endurance, in courage, in being unbreakable.

Being alone during these years shaped not just who I was, but who I would become. I learned that life is rarely fair, that labels are meaningless unless accepted, and that strength comes from within. I began to understand the power of observation, the importance of patience, and the value of calculated action. Every hardship became a building block, every insult a sharpening stone for the mind and spirit.

Through it all, I remained quietly defiant. The world could name me, judge me, or underestimate me, but I knew the truth — that I was capable of more than anyone realized. The quiet strength within me was growing, preparing me for the battles yet to come. And though the teenage years were harsh, lonely, and challenging, they were also the crucible in which the foundations of my resilience, strategy, and eventual brilliance were forged.

# **Chapter 3: The Weight of Silence**

Life carried me into a storm I did not choose. The streets, the corners, the faces I met every day each one taught me a lesson about survival. I was young, but life forced me to grow older than my years. Silence became my best companion, because whenever I tried to speak, the world seemed too loud to hear me. People saw me, but they did not know me. They judged me by the dust on my clothes, by the shoes that barely held together, by the hunger in my eyes.

In those days, I carried nicknames like heavy chains. “Bad boy.” “Bastard.” Words thrown at me as if they could define my soul. Some laughed, some mocked, and some used my pain as their entertainment. But inside, I was not broken, I was becoming stronger. Each insult was like a hammer shaping steel.

The hardest part was pretending. Pretending I was fine when my stomach was empty. Pretending I was strong when my heart longed for a father I never had. Pretending that the cracks in my spirit did not exist. I learned to live with the mask on, because without it, the world would eat me alive.

I still remember nights with my mother, when the lamp burned weakly in our small rented room. She would sit quietly after a long day of labor, her hands raw from scrubbing, her back bent from carrying the weight of two parents in one body. Sometimes she said nothing, but her silence spoke louder than words it told me, “Son, I am tired, but I am here. Don’t give up.”

Even in my quietness, my dreams were loud. I dreamed of being more than what they called me. I dreamed of building something no one could destroy. I dreamed of turning the shame they gave me into honor. I dreamed of proving that a boy called “bastard” could rise and write his name in history.

But the world was not gentle. I faced rejection even from places that were supposed to bring hope. At school, other children carried neat bags and sharp pencils. I carried torn notebooks and borrowed pens. Teachers looked at me as if I did not belong, as if poverty meant stupidity. They did not know that every number I wrote, every word I read, was a battle won. They did not know that my scars were my textbooks, my hunger was my teacher.

Yet, deep inside, a voice whispered: “Keep going. The truth behind the broken is not weakness—it is strength.”

There were days when I felt invisible, like a shadow passing through the world. People would look at me, but never into me. They saw only the surface—a boy with no father, a child of poverty, a face that carried more pain than joy. But what they never understood was that silence does not mean weakness. Silence is where the strongest battles are fought.

At my uncle’s place, I learned this the hard way. His house was bigger than ours, his words sharper than knives. The housekeeper, cruel in her authority, treated me like I was less than human. She gave me leftovers that even dogs refused, she made me work twice as hard as her own children, and whenever I tried to complain, she would silence me with insults. For her, I was not family. I was just “the son of a woman,” a burden to be tolerated.

It was in that house that I began to understand the meaning of dignity. Not because I was given any, but because I had to protect my own from being completely destroyed. Even when I was hungry, even when I was tired, I told myself: “Don’t let them break you. You are more than what they call you.”

But life had a strange way of turning cruelty into direction. The housekeeper’s wickedness became the very reason I returned to my mother. She pushed me so far that I had no choice but to cry out for home. And when I finally went back, when I finally saw my mother’s face again after those months of separation, I understood something powerful: no one can replace the bond between a mother and her child.

We went back to renting. Thirteen years in houses that never belonged to us. Rooms that leaked when it rained, doors that cracked in the wind, walls that listened to our prayers at night. Thirteen years of moving, packing, and starting over. But my mother never gave up. She turned every empty room into a home, every broken wall into a place of comfort. She carried pride in her struggle, and I carried pride in her.

I was still the “bastard” to some, the “bad boy” to others. But to me, I was simply her son. That was enough.

School became another battlefield. I didn’t just fight with books and exams—I fought with the labels people put on me. Teachers sometimes looked at me with doubt, classmates whispered behind my back, and the world seemed to wait for me to fail. But every time I held a pen, I reminded myself: this is my weapon. Every page I filled with words or numbers was proof that I would not be erased.

Still, the challenges were brutal. I remember sitting in classrooms where other children brought packed lunches, while I counted the minutes until the bell rang, just to run home and share a plate with my mother. Sometimes, there was no food at all. Hunger wasn’t just in my stomach; it was in my bones, in my thoughts, in my dreams. Hunger made me restless, but it also made me determined.

There were moments when I wanted to scream, to let out all the pain I carried. But I stayed quiet. Quiet because I didn’t want to add to my mother’s burden. Quiet because I had learned that the world rarely listens to broken voices. And yet, in that quietness, something powerful was growing: resilience.

Looking back, I see that those years shaped me more than anything else could. They taught me that strength is not about having everything—it’s about surviving with nothing. They taught me that being called “bastard” could not erase my worth. They taught me that silence can be louder than words when it is filled with courage.

And so, even as the world tried to write my story for me, I held the pen tighter. My life was not going to be a tragedy written by others. It was going to be a testimony—the truth behind the broken.

# **Chapter 4: Shadows of Rebellion**

Life, I discovered, was full of challenges that no one teaches you about. The hardest of all was the way people saw me—not for who I was, but for what they wanted to believe. To them, I was the “bad boy,” the one without manners, the one to be watched and whispered about. Words like “bastard” weren’t just labels—they were chains, and I carried them quietly, letting them define how the world perceived me, even if I refused to believe them fully myself.

There was one man, whose name matched mine, who decided to call me a rebel by his own mouth. He didn’t know my story, didn’t see the nights I went hungry, didn’t feel the emptiness of being far from my mother. Yet his judgment weighed heavily, because in silence, my truth had no voice to fight back. I learned that silence can protect you, but it also isolates you.

Happiness, the way others enjoyed it, was foreign to me. Children laughed, played, and celebrated moments I could not share. I could never fully join them—not because I didn’t want to, but because their joy was like sunlight in a room I could not enter. I found no interest in their games, their chatter, their shallow victories. I preferred solitude, far away from human boys whose worlds did not touch mine. In that darkness, I discovered a space where I could breathe, reflect, and understand myself without interference.

Yet solitude came with its own battles. I often grew mad at my mother, snapping at her for reasons even I could not explain. I annoyed her, tested her patience, and sometimes made her cry. But she never stopped. Her love was like a river cutting through stone—persistent, unyielding, unstoppable. It healed my anger, softened my resentment, and reminded me that her strength was greater than any insult, any rebellion, any challenge the world could throw at me.

I was also challenged by life itself. I lived in a world I did not choose, one where every day brought new discomfort, new expectations, and new pain. The word **“papa”** struck me like fire in my ears. It was a reminder of absence, of a man who should have been my protector but who was instead a ghost in my story. Each mention of him brought anger, sadness, and a hollow ache I could not fill.

But even in that darkness, a light emerged. I discovered writing. Words became my refuge, my weapon, and my escape. When I wrote, the world slowed down. When I wrote, the names people threw at me lost their power. When I wrote, I was no longer the “bad boy” or the “bastard”—I was simply a creator, shaping worlds, expressing truths, and discovering myself.

The act of writing taught me that strength is born not from approval, but from authenticity. It showed me that love—especially the love of my mother—could repair even the deepest wounds. It revealed that solitude is not weakness, but a place where vision is born. And it reminded me, over and over, that the world may try to judge, label, and hurt, but it can never take away the truth of who I am.

Through the shadows of rebellion, through anger, loneliness, and absence, I learned that life is not about fitting into the expectations of others. It is about finding the fire inside yourself and letting it burn bright. It is about turning pain into expression, silence into power, and absence into strength.

Life’s challenges came at me in ways I could never have expected. The hardest battles were not the ones I could see, but the ones that lingered in the eyes of people who judged me without knowing me. Everywhere I went, whispers followed me like shadows: “Bad boy,” “Bastard,” “Rebel.” Each word stung, yet each word carved the fire that would later define me.

There was a man, whose name mirrored mine, who looked at me with contempt and called me a rebel. “You will never be anything,” he said one day, voice sharp as broken glass. I remained silent, though anger raged inside me like a storm. I realized then that silence could be stronger than words, that the world’s judgment could not define me if I refused to let it.

Happiness, as others knew it, was foreign to me. I watched friends play, laugh, and celebrate, yet I felt no part in it. Their joy seemed like sunlight I could not touch. Instead, I sought solitude. I wandered streets and empty fields, climbed hills, and hid in quiet corners where the world could not reach me. In those moments alone, I discovered a truth: being away from people did not mean being weak; it meant finding space to grow, to reflect, to survive.

Yet isolation carried its own battles. I often lashed out at my mother, letting anger spill for reasons I could not explain. I would snap, make harsh words, and watch her sigh with weary patience. But she never gave up. Her love was relentless, a shield that healed my wounds even when I refused to accept it. Every time I yelled, every time I stormed out of the house, she remained steadfast. It was in her quiet resilience that I learned my first lesson about real strength: love can endure, even when tested by anger and rebellion.

School and society presented their own hardships. I was looked down upon, underestimated, and often mocked. Teachers whispered that I lacked discipline. Other students laughed at my patched shoes and tattered notebooks. Yet each insult became fuel. I began to notice patterns: which teachers were fair, which classmates were envious, which words could wound and which were empty. Life, I realized, was not fair—but it was also a teacher that never slept.

The word **“papa”** was another wound I carried. Every time I heard it, it felt like fire in my ears, a reminder of a man who should have been present but was not. His absence left a hole in my world, a pain I could not escape. At first, it made me bitter, made me lash out at others, even at my mother. But eventually, that same pain became fuel for creation.

It was through that emptiness I discovered writing. I remember the first time I picked up a pen and let my thoughts flow onto paper. The words trembled at first, unsure, fragile—but they were mine. I wrote about anger, about loneliness, about the injustice I felt every day. I wrote about my mother, about the shadows that haunted me, about the dreams no one else could see. Writing became my refuge, my silent rebellion against a world that judged too quickly.

Even in my darkest moments, I began to see the power of expression. I wrote short stories about boys who felt invisible, poems about nights when hunger gnawed at the stomach but hope glimmered in the heart. With each word, I felt lighter, stronger. I realized that my talent could turn pain into power, silence into voice, and loneliness into connection.

There were small victories too, hidden from the world. A teacher complimented my essay once, unaware that the boy she had doubted was the one writing with fire in his veins. A friend noticed a story I had left in class and told me, “You have a way with words.” Those moments, though rare, reminded me that even in isolation, recognition could find its way.

Through rebellion, anger, and solitude, I discovered that strength is not born from approval, but from authenticity. That even when life is unfair, even when people judge and misunderstand, one can rise. My mother’s love, my quiet observations, my first writings—they all became the foundation of resilience. I learned to turn the labels the world threw at me into armor. I learned to embrace the shadows, because they taught me more than sunlight ever could.

By the end of my teenage years, I understood something profound: life may try to define you, to break you, to cast shadows on your name—but the truth lies in how you respond. And I chose to respond with words, with silence that carried power, and with a spirit that refused to be diminished.

# **Chapter 5: Rising from the Shadows**

The years of silence, anger, and solitude had a purpose that I could not yet see. Each moment of hardship, each insult, each pang of loneliness, was slowly building something stronger inside me. And one day, I realized that the boy who had once been invisible was beginning to emerge—not to fit in, not to please anyone, but to claim his own space in the world.

School, once a battlefield, began to show its hidden paths. I discovered that my mind was sharper than most assumed. While others memorized facts, I saw patterns, connections, and possibilities. Numbers and words were no longer just lessons—they were tools I could wield. I began to excel quietly, not for attention, but for the satisfaction of proving to myself that I could rise above what others had written for me.

Recognition came slowly, like sunlight through clouds. A teacher who had once doubted me took notice of my essays. She said, “You have a way of seeing things others cannot.” Those words, though simple, burned into me. For the first time, I felt that the effort, the struggle, and the nights spent writing alone were not wasted. I realized that my talent, my observations, and even my silence had a value that others could finally see.

But life did not hand me victories easily. The streets I wandered, the friends I had, and the people around me still carried judgment. I was tested daily—by peers who envied, by strangers who scorned, by circumstances that refused to bend. Yet I had learned the art of patience. I had learned that true resilience is not loud; it is quiet, persistent, and relentless. I endured, and in that endurance, I discovered power.

At home, my mother’s guidance remained my anchor. She celebrated my small wins quietly, never boasting for the world to see. Her pride in me was a shield against the criticism that still tried to follow me everywhere. She taught me that success is not just about achievements, but about integrity, perseverance, and the courage to keep moving forward when no one else believes in you.

It was during this time that I began to push myself further. I wrote more, experimenting with style and expression. I poured my anger, my loneliness, and my reflections into stories and essays. Each piece was a step forward—a declaration that my voice mattered, that my perspective could shape worlds. And slowly, people began to notice. Friends, teachers, even strangers would stop to ask what I was writing. The boy who had once been silenced was speaking through ink and paper.

Alongside writing, I faced challenges in life itself. Hunger, poverty, and the weight of responsibilities tested me. But every trial became a lesson. I learned to budget, to make do, and to find joy in small victories. I discovered that happiness was not given—it was earned through resilience, perspective, and courage.

By the end of this period, I was no longer just surviving. I was rising. Rising from the shadows of judgment, from the chains of labels, from the silence that had once defined me. I began to understand that life does not give power to the unprepared, but to those who endure, observe, and act with intention.

And in this realization, I found my purpose: to take the pain, solitude, and struggle of my past and turn them into a force for my own growth. To prove that the boy who had once been called a “bastard” and a “rebel” could rise not by anger or revenge, but by wisdom, strength, and the courage to be himself.

There were nights when the questions would not leave me alone. They sat heavy in my chest like stones, rolling around until I could barely breathe. The more I tried to fit the world’s answers into the shape of my life, the less they seemed to matter. So I stopped trying to ask people. I stopped looking for answers in the mouths of men who had already decided what the truth should look like.

Instead, I turned to paper and to the quiet that lived between one breath and the next. I wrote the questions I dared not say aloud. I wrote like a man who had nowhere else to lean. What came out was neither sermon nor scripture — it was a confession, a challenge, a prayer, a cry. I folded my doubts into words and let them burn on the page.

This is what I wrote one night when the lamp guttered and the house was asleep:

Dear god  
There’s a lot of questions that I have about the past  
And I don’t want hear it from a human you made so you’re the last person that I’m ever going to ask  
Tell me what’s real  
Tell me what’s fake  
Why is everything on about you a debate?  
What’s the point of love?  
Every time I’ve showed it I was broken and it’s forced me just to only want to hate  
Why’s there only one you but multiple religions?  
Why does ever conversation end in a division?  
Why does everybody want to tell us how to live but they won’t listen to the same damn message that they giving?  
Tell me how to feel  
Tell me what’s wrong  
I tried to call, pick up the phone  
I’m on my own  
Everybody says you’re coming back then man why the hells it taking so long?  
Why do I hurt?  
Why is there pain?  
Why does everything good always have to change?  
Why does everybody try to profit off another mans work then destroy it just for monetary gain?

Tell me are you black or are you white?  
I don’t even really care I just really want to know what’s right  
They been saying one thing but I’ve been looking in the book and it seems like they’ve been lying for my whole damn life.

Tell me where I’m going  
is it heaven or hell?  
I just hope this message greats you well  
I had a dream that I was walking with the devil I don’t remember how it feels but I swear that I remember the smell  
looked me right into my eyes and told me Everything I wanted could be mine if I gave up and decided to sell but I said I’d rather die then get mine now I’m here no fear one man with a story to tell

Dear god where were you when I needed it?  
When I fucked up and repeated it?  
When they set the bar and I exceeded it? My life is like a book that they’ve judging by a cover but have took the time to fucking read the shit,  
I remember telling you my goals and my dreams but you didn’t even answer so I guess you didn’t believe it,  
I remember sitting with a gun to my head trying to ask you for some help but I guess you didn’t believe in it!

I don’t want religion I need that spirituality I don’t want a church I need people to call a family,  
I don’t want tell my sins to another sinner just because he’s got a robe and he went to some academy  
I dont wanna read it in book I wanna hear it from you  
don’t want learn it in a school because they’re hiding the truth  
don’t want to talk about it with another fucking human and that only reason that I even stepped in the booth

Dear god,  
How do I take this darkness and turn it into light?  
How do believe in concept where I speak to A man I’ve never seen with my own two eyes?  
How do I know that religion wasn’t made just the separate the world and create a whole disguise just to keep us in these chains while the rich get richer and poor pray to you and perpetuate a lie?  
How do I know this Eint some big joke?  
How can have Faith when there is no Hope?  
How the hell does one man have 100 billion dollars and we still have people on the street dat are broke?  
Theres a lot of things I wanna talk about and get off my chest  
I can’t sleep cause the devil won’t let me rest  
I used to know a fucking pastor in a church and I can still hear the screams of the kids he would fucking molest

Dear god  
Do you hear me?  
I’m supposed to fear you but you ain’t said shit so maybe you who actually fears me ?  
I don’t know the answer I just want to see it clearly so many lies there’s a 1000 different theories  
All I want to know is who really made religion because I know it wasn’t you but don’t nobody believes me

No more lies  
no more death  
bring back King  
bring back X please dear God let their souls rest protect who’s left and watch their steps  
Dear God  
I don’t want to have to ask you again all I hope is that you know that I’m still a believer so I’ll end this all by saying AMEN.

When I read it again the next morning, the paper looked different. The words didn’t solve my doubts, but they had taken form — a map of the questions that lived inside me. I realized writing to God was not a demand for answers; it was a way to be honest with myself. It was the first time I allowed my confusion to exist without someone else’s explanation plastered over it.

That confession became a turning point. It taught me that faith and doubt could sit on the same bench. It taught me that religion is not the only doorway to the divine; sometimes the divine is found in the courage to name your pain and keep walking. My writing moved from private scraps into sharper essays and raw poetry. I used my doubt as material and my anger as ink. The truth I was searching for started to take shape not as a dogma, but as testimony.

People began to notice something different in my work — not just the anger, but the honesty. A classmate handed one of my pages to a teacher who normally ignored me. The teacher looked up, eyes softer, and said, “Where did this come from?” I shrugged, embarrassed and proud. The words had come from the nights I sat under a thin blanket, trying to wrap my fear into something that could be shared.

My mother found one of those pages once. She read it slowly, the lines softening the stern set of her mouth. She didn’t ask about God or about religion; she only said, “You speak what I can’t.” That was the highest praise I had ever heard. Her approval did not need to be loud. It was enough. It tethered me back to the work.

From that night, my writing changed the way I moved through the world. It gave me a voice for questions others swallowed. It gave me a way to talk about the absence of a father, the cruelty of men who judge, the hypocrisy of those who preach and then destroy. It gave me a place to place my rage and my tenderness in the same sentence.

And slowly, the world began to answer — not with easy truths, but with recognition. Small things shifted: a teacher who once sneered now assigned me extra reading; a friend who mocked me in the past now asked for my opinion; a neighbor who used to pass by without a glance stopped to say, “Keep writing.” None of it was fame or money. It was simple validation that my truth carried weight.

By learning to speak to the unseen, I learned to speak to the seen. I took my questions and turned them into fuel for meaning. The prayer I had placed on paper did not hand me answers to everything. But it did give me a place to stand. It gave me permission to be both furious and faithful, both doubtful and determined.

In those years, rising from the shadows meant more than surviving insults or hunger. It meant refusing to let the world decide my truth. It meant taking the darkness and shaping it into light — one sentence, one page, one confession at a time.

The page with my prayer changed the rules of the game. It started as something private — a confession scrawled in the dark — but once ink met paper, it became impossible to pretend the questions didn’t exist. The words were jagged, full of anger and truth, and they forced me to look at myself differently. For the first time I wrote not to be heard by those who would judge me, but to hear myself.

A classmate found one of my sheets, folded and left on a desk. He brought it to the wrong crowd — boys who laughed at weakness and wore cruelty like a badge. I expected them to tear it up, to make a joke, to hurl it back at me. Instead, something unexpected happened: one of them handed it to a teacher, quietly, with a look that said, “Read this.” The teacher read, silence fell across the staffroom, and later, in a way I had never felt before, someone who could shape my future looked at me and saw me.

“You have a voice,” she said, not loudly, but with a clarity that made the room tilt. “Why don’t you write more?”

I wanted to lie — to say it was nothing. Instead I said, “I will.”

That exchange was the hinge that swung my life. The teacher — Mrs. Mukamana — began to give me extra prompts, old magazines she thought might sharpen my style, and a place to hand in work that would be actually read. She didn’t praise me for the sake of praise; she pushed because she believed. Her belief was a new kind of nourishment. It fed a part of me that hunger had never touched.

The first time I read my words aloud in front of a small crowd — not a stadium, but a classroom, the same room where I used to be invisible — my voice shook. The boy who had once preferred to stay alone stood under the hush of attention. I read about absence and hunger and God and the devil and the way people pretended. I read the prayer and the questions. For the first time, my anger didn’t feel like an isolating thing; it felt like a bridge.

Afterwards, something changed in the way people walked past me. Not every stare shifted to respect, but enough did. A friend, the one who had once mocked, came and whispered, “That was raw. Keep going.” A classmate who had never spoken with me asked if he could read my piece later. My mother, when she found the paper folded in the kitchen, pressed it to her chest the way someone clasps a rosary. She did not lecture. She didn’t ask how I’d gotten it published. She sat, quiet, and said only, “You speak what my heart is always saying.”

Recognition did not make me invincible. It did not erase hunger or the memory of insults. But it remade the margin of my life. People began treating me like someone with patience and insight rather than like a troublemaker. Doors that had been shut sometimes cracked open. A local youth center invited me to read in a small event. I walked there with the same patched shoes, the same old backpack, but my hands trembled in a different way — not with shame, but with purpose.

At those small gatherings I met others who carried their own dark weather. An older poet with missing teeth and a voice like gravel told me he had slept on benches for a year and still kept a notebook. A woman who ran the community center handed me a small envelope one evening after my reading. Inside was a note: *We believe in you. Keep writing. There are people who will listen.* There was no money in it, no promise, only a small kindness — a recognition that mattered more than cash.

With time, writing began to solve practical problems as well. I wrote a short piece for a local pamphlet about the struggles of young people in our neighborhood. It was honest to a fault. Someone who read it forwarded it to a small NGO worker who was looking for voices to include in a community project. That project offered a small honorarium for the pieces they selected. It was not much, but it helped buy a pair of shoes that didn’t leak. The shoes weren’t the point. The point was this: the story had moved through paper into the world and come back with something that helped. That cycle — writing, being read, being recognized — rewired the way I thought about my work and myself.

Not everyone changed. Some old critics kept whispering. The man who once called me a rebel still spat words when we passed. But the echo of his label no longer found purchase inside me. Where once I might have folded under his disdain, I now had a place to put that energy. I wrote about him, I wrote about the sting, and in writing the hurt, I drained it of much of its poison.

My relationship with my mother shifted subtly. She had always been my fortress, but now she also became my audience. She’d sit with a cup of tea and ask not to interrogate, but to understand. Sometimes she would read a line and nod; other times she would cry. Her pride was quiet, like the steady sound of rain on the roof — not showy, but constant. As I found small recognition outside, I brought it home, and it was as if each small victory brightened the bulb of our cramped room just a little more.

There were also darker nights. There were times when the old questions crashed through my mind again: why, how, to what end? I wrote and rewrote, and sometimes I folded the paper and burned it in a tin. But then a new voice inside me began to whisper not only about anger, but also about responsibility. If my words had weight, how would I use them? Would I merely shout my pain into the void, or would I use that clarity to build with others?

That question became the seed of a new plan. I started mentoring younger boys who had the same hollow look I once wore. I would sit with them after school, not with lectures, but with notebooks. I taught one boy how to shape a sentence; I taught another how to read a page without caving into shame. Watching them lift their heads as they read their own words gave me a strange, steady joy — a proof that my voice could multiply and change other lives too.

By the time the school year closed, people in the neighborhood knew me differently. I was still the quiet son of a tired woman, still someone with scars no one could see. But I had also become someone who could turn darkness into light for others. I had seen my first pieces travel from hand to hand, from page to paper, from a kitchen table to a small envelope, and in those travels they gathered something: recognition, a little cash, a pair of shoes, a small platform.

Rising from the shadows, I learned, was neither a singular leap nor a sudden reveal. It was made of small, stubborn acts: writing through the night, handing a page to a teacher, reading before a trembling room, mentoring boys who were younger than me, and bringing my mother into the center of that narrative by letting her see me stand. Each small act bent the arc of my life toward something that was mine to claim.

And as the chapter of those years closed, a larger door opened — not because the world had suddenly become kind, but because I had become a little more courageous. The stories I wrote had found their first audiences. The questions I had screamed into the dark had been heard. The work of taking darkness and shaping it into light had just begun.

The night of my first real reading arrived quietly, like most turning points do. It wasn’t in a stadium, it wasn’t on television. It was a modest room in a community hall with cracked walls, where the smell of boiled tea leaves mixed with the scent of dust and wood polish. The kind of place where broken benches carried the weight of many stories long before mine.

I had my notebook clutched so tightly in my hand that the corners bent. My heart was louder than the murmur of the crowd — a mix of mothers, restless children, a few teachers, and young people like me, carrying invisible bruises. The host, a local youth organizer, called my name. For a moment, I wanted to pretend I hadn’t heard. My legs felt heavy, but something — maybe my mother’s quiet faith, maybe my own stubbornness — pushed me forward.

I stepped onto the small wooden platform. A single bulb hung overhead, casting more shadow than light. My palms were slick with sweat. The paper shook in my hands, and I wondered if the people in the front row could see it trembling.

I began to read. At first my voice was thin, like a crack in a wall. But as I moved through the lines — my questions to God, my confessions of hunger, my rage at being called a bastard, my refusal to sell my soul — something happened. The silence in the room thickened, but not with indifference. It was the silence of listening. Even the restless children grew still. My voice grew stronger, and the trembling paper no longer felt like a burden but like a weapon.

When I finished, there was no immediate applause. For a terrifying moment, I thought I had failed. Then someone — a woman in the back — began to clap slowly, deliberately, as if testing whether it was allowed. Another joined. Then the room erupted, not into wild cheers, but into a kind of steady, respectful thunder. People were nodding, some with tears in their eyes, some with the look of recognition that says *I know this pain too.*

Afterwards, strangers approached me. A boy younger than me said, “I thought I was alone. But you spoke my heart.” An older man, eyes glazed with years of his own battles, placed a hand on my shoulder and said, “Don’t stop. We need this.” My mother stood at the back, her hands pressed together, not clapping, not speaking — just glowing with the quiet fire of a woman who had carried me through storms.

That night, I walked home differently. The streets were the same, the hunger was still there, the same patched shoes scraped the dust. But I was no longer invisible. I had discovered a new kind of strength — not the loud violence people feared in bad boys, not the silence that suffocated me, but the strength of a voice. A voice that carried truth, pain, and resilience in equal measure.

I slept little that night. I kept replaying the moment when the silence broke into applause, when my words became more than mine. Lying on the thin mattress, I whispered to myself: *this is how brokenness becomes light.*

# Chapter 6 : Becoming Unbreakable

After that night in the community hall, things did not explode into success. They did not hand me a crown and a name on a golden plaque. What changed, quietly and insistently, was the direction of my life. A small current began to flow, and I learned how to move with it.

Recognition arrived in slow, precise measures. A teacher gave me extra reading. A neighbor said hello in the market. A youth organizer invited me to another reading. Each invitation felt like a key placed into my hand, one that opened a door just wide enough to slip through. The rooms I entered were modest — school auditoriums with folding chairs, church basements, the library of a small college where a lecturer would lend a mic for an hour. The stages were simple, the lights harsh, the audiences uneven. Sometimes there were five people; other nights there were fifty. It did not matter. The work was the work.

I learned how to stand under a single bulb and make it feel like the sun. I learned how to hold my voice steady when the words wanted to splinter. I learned how to keep my hands from shaking and to treat the page in my hand like a map, not a cage. The first time a stranger told me my writing had moved him to tears, I felt something I could not name—not pride, exactly, but a fierce tenderness. It was as if my chest had been hollow and someone finally put light inside.

Money came in small, scattered drops. A local magazine published a short essay and paid me a little. The community project that hired voices for a campaign gave me an honorarium that paid for a month of rice and the first pair of shoes that felt like a step into another life. I kept a careful ledger in the back of my notebook: dates, small amounts, what the money bought. I wrote the entries in the same ink I used for poems. The ledger became proof: words could become something beyond feeling. They could become food. They could become shoes.

With that modest stability came responsibility. I was invited to work with a small youth program that ran evening classes and writing circles for boys in our neighborhood. The woman who ran it — a patient, serious woman who had the habit of folding her hands when she spoke — said she liked the way I listened. “You have a way of letting people speak what they cannot say,” she told me. “Teach them to shape it.”

Teaching was not what I had planned. If someone had asked me two years earlier whether I would counsel boys who smelled like the gutters and had been called worse names than I was, I might have laughed. But the first time a little boy showed me a story he had written — shaky sentences, clumsy metaphors, the rawness of someone trying to make sense of pain — something inside me shifted. I wanted to teach him how to find the shape of his feeling. I wanted to hand him a pen and show him that the hand that holds it can also hold the things that break you. If my words had helped me survive, then perhaps they could help another.

There were nights when the past pressed hard. Old insults would return like mosquitoes at dusk. Men who had once spat at me still existed; some of them had not changed. I learned to meet their scorn with the steady pull of a breath and the knowledge that power sometimes arrives not as shouting but as composure. I refused to let their labels reset my identity.

Not all offers were pure. One evening a slim man in a pressed shirt came to the community center after a reading. He wore a watch that glinted too bright and carried a business card that smelled like another city. He liked my voice, he said. He could make me known, big stages and radio. He offered money, access, the kind of attention that could sweep a man from the margins into the center.

When he asked what I would be willing to change to get there, the question was a test: soften the truth, cut the anger, avoid naming men who hurt, make pain palatable for audiences that liked it neat. He used the language of success like a net. He offered a choice thin as a coin. Sell your story to be more comfortable for them, he implied, or hold the edges of your authenticity and stay small.

I sat across from him and smelled his cologne and felt the ledger I kept in my bag. I thought of the boy whose story I had read in my first circle, of my mother’s hands folded after she read my prayer, of the nights I had promised myself I would not be someone who traded pain for applause. I told the man, gently and then with more strength, that I would not change my words to please his agenda. He frowned, surprised by a refusal he probably expected to be absent. He left with the same cologne and the same clean intentions. Later, some friends told me I had turned down the chance to be known. They said I was foolish.

Maybe I was. But the decision taught me an important lesson: independence is not only about money or visibility. It is about the cost of your voice. To keep your story whole is, sometimes, to choose smallness for the sake of truth. I would not call it purity, only survival.

As my reputation in the small circuits grew, the world beyond my neighborhood began to notice in small ways. A local radio program invited me to speak about youth and literature. A teacher at the district school recommended me for a writing residency at a cultural center in the city. These were not the kinds of things that bankrolled a life, but they were steps — each one a narrow plank in a bridge I was building toward something I could not yet name.

In the city’s cultural center I met people who had the language to make art a profession. I met poets whose vocabularies were deep like wells, singers who stitched words to rhythms that made the body remember, and organizers who could move a crowd with a single question. I watched them work and learned. I learned how to shape a story for a longer arc, how to edit without flinching, how to take something raw and let it breathe on the page.

It was also in the city that I confronted class in a more brutal form. My neighbor’s son from the outskirts, who had once shared beans with me, could not hide the way he craved the world that lay beyond our day-to-day survival. We stood outside a café one afternoon, watching men with laptops and briefcases move in and out, and I felt the distance as a physical thing between us. He looked at me, then at the men, and finally said, with a small bitterness that had no place else to go, “They will never understand us.”

“They might not,” I replied. “But maybe they will listen.”

He scoffed, and we walked home in silence. The streets taught me that the world’s doors were neither kind nor fair; they were bent by money, opportunity, and networks. As long as we remained on the outside, many of the rooms would stay closed. The knowledge forced me to learn more than craft: I needed to learn navigation.

So I learned to network with purpose. I would arrive at a reading early and sit near the speakers; I would hand a copy of my piece to the person who introduced me and ask a single, simple question about their work. I learned that kindness that was not weak was strategic — a network built on respect, not flattery. I began to keep a contact list in the same notebook as my ledger and my poems. Names, phone numbers, small notes: who liked what, who could help with printing, who had a spare desk for an editing afternoon. The ledger of survival became a map of possible futures.

Love, in its ordinary form, appeared slowly and with awkward timing. I met a girl in a workshop — she had a laugh that broke up a sentence and a way of reading my lines that made me hear them differently. Her name felt ordinary and complicated at once. We shared tea after classes and talked about books that smelled old. I was scared at first; I had learned to carry solitude like armor. Opening to someone else felt like removing stitches I wasn’t sure would hold. But she read me without pity. She said she liked the way my anger never forgot kindness. We walked home together once and found a small stand selling roasted corn; we ate and shared it, laughing at how simple the moment was. If I had been a different boy, maybe I would have been swept away by the fantasy of love as escape. But my life had taught me that attachment without purpose was a risk. So we moved slowly, carefully, learning each other in the margins.

There were losses. I wrote a tribute when a young poet I admired died after a long night on the streets. I attended a funeral where people who had called him worthless years earlier now spoke in protracted grief about the talent that had been there all along. The hypocrisy stung. It made me harden edges I did not want hardened. I began to understand that the world’s appreciation often arrives late. That taught me to keep my own clock. If recognition comes late, I would still make the work anyway.

By the time I was twenty, my life had grown more complex, not simply bigger. My schedule filled with workshops and readings and mentoring sessions. I still wrote at night on a thin mattress under a mosquito net, the same way I always had, but the words now traveled: forwarded emails, printed pamphlets, small magazines. I met editors who asked difficult questions. I sat across from them and learned to take critique without folding. I learned to defend my choices not with anger but with explanation, letting the clarity of my intent do the work anger once tried to do.

One winter morning, a man from a small independent press sent me a note. They wanted to include my essay in an anthology about youth voices. The fee was tiny, but the anthology would be distributed in neighboring towns and at a small festival. I said yes, and the giddiness that followed felt unsteady and holy. When I held the first printed copy, my hands shook. My name on a spine of paper — something that had once been only an ache had become a tangible thing. I took the book home and placed it on the table where my mother kept the tin of sugar. She stroked the cover with reverence. “You did this,” she said simply. I wanted to cry in front of her but I held back, because crying is a softness I reserve for the nights alone.

Becoming unbreakable did not mean I was invincible. I found new doubts: what if the critics came, what if the friend I trusted revealed my weaknesses, what if the attention changed me into the very person I swore never to be? Each fear required a small ritual of answer: write, revise, read aloud, sleep, wake and do it again. My work became a practice not of vanity but of discipline. I learned to treat writing like training — daily repetitions that sharpened muscle.

And slowly, like a plant bending toward light, I grew. People who had once been indifferent now sought my opinion on other writers. Community youth invited me to judge contests. A university professor asked me to run a small creative-writing session in the summer program. The invitations were still modest, but the arc was clear: the world was beginning to make channels for me where none had existed before.

At the heart of all of this remained my mother. She would never have called herself an architect of careers, but she built mine with the quiet labor of belief. She ironed my shirts for readings — shirts I could not afford to wear if they were not clean — and she walked me to the bus stop, knitting in her hands, as if every little stitch could pull me toward a future she could not fully imagine but trusted. Once, when I felt the first flush of recognition and the frightening possibility of forgetting where I came from, she took my hand and said, “Remember who gives you bread when you forget.” The line has stayed with me like a warning and a benediction.

By the time this chapter of my life was ending, I had learned a new vocabulary: resilience translated into habits. I had patterns of practice that could be counted on even when the world was not: write every morning before the chores, read one essay a week, meet the boys on Thursdays, save a little from any money that arrives, refuse offers that ask me to bend my truth. Those small rules built structure out of chaos.

What some called luck was actually persistence; what others called talent was often endurance. I became unbreakable not because I never felt the fracture — I felt it a hundred times — but because I learned how to repair the cracks and how to live with them so they did not define the shape of my life. My voice, honed by needs and sharpened by refusal, began to reach farther than my neighborhood, and with that reach came responsibility: to the boys I taught, to the mother who believed, to the city that had held me, and to the idea that the truth behind brokenness is not pity but possibility.

As the lights dimmed on this period of small stages and small victories, I understood something that would carry me forward: becoming unbreakable was less an arrival and more a choice, made again and again, in small acts that accumulate into a life. I closed the notebook that night, the pages heavy with edits and the ledger heavy with small wins, and I felt, for the first time in a long while, the strange and steady comfort of a road beneath my feet.

The nights of my youth were always longer than the days. I carried questions in my chest like heavy stones, questions no one around me dared to answer. My mother was strong, but she was tired; my neighbors had their own lives; my father—well, he was more of a ghost than a man, a shadow in my blood that never stood in front of me.

So I turned my questions upward, to the sky, to the God I had been told ruled over everything. But every time I prayed, silence was the only response. The silence wasn’t peaceful—it was sharp, like a knife cutting through my thoughts.

I remember nights where I lay awake on the thin mattress my mother and I shared, my body aching from hunger, my mind burning from confusion. “God, do you even see me?” I whispered into the dark. “Or am I just another mistake You made?”

People in the streets called me bad names. They laughed, mocked, labeled me a rebel. To them, I was the bastard, the unwanted son, the one with no father to defend him. And when you hear something enough, you start to believe it. Their words became a mirror, and when I looked into it, I saw nothing but rejection staring back.

But deep inside me, there was a voice louder than their insults. A quiet fire, refusing to die. It told me: You are more than what they call you. You are more than their laughter. I clung to that voice like a drowning man clings to a piece of wood in a storm.

### The War Inside

Chapter 6 is not about the battles outside, but the battles within me. You see, the world can hurt you, but the real war begins when those wounds turn inward.

Every day I struggled with my own mind. I wanted to belong, to laugh with the boys in the village, to play like them without fear. But happiness felt foreign to me. I hated crowds. I hated gatherings. When people celebrated, I stood at the edge, a ghost among the living. Their joy reminded me of everything I didn’t have—peace, family, and a father’s embrace.

Sometimes, in the quiet of my room, I broke down in anger. I shouted at my mother for no reason, slammed the door, acted like I hated her. But the truth? I was afraid. Afraid that she would leave too. Afraid that love wasn’t real, that it was just another lie the world tells children until they grow old enough to feel betrayal.

My mother always forgave me. Her love was patient, deeper than I deserved. She held me when I pushed her away. She cooked with nothing and somehow filled my stomach. She prayed over me when I doubted God. And slowly I realized: my mother was the proof of love I had been searching for.

### Wrestling With God

But still, questions haunted me. I looked around at the world—at the rich getting richer while children like me dug through dust—and I wondered: God, if You are real, why this?

I didn’t want religion. I didn’t want the empty words of preachers who shouted on Sundays and sinned on Mondays. I wanted answers. I wanted truth. And so, at night, I spoke to God not like a believer, but like an accuser.

“Where were You when I was hungry?” I asked.  
“Where were You when my mother cried herself to sleep?”  
“Why give me life if all I taste is pain?”

Sometimes, in those moments, I felt like I was speaking to myself. Other times, I felt something—like the world pausing to listen. And in those rare silences, I believed maybe, just maybe, God was real.

### The Temptation

At my lowest points, temptation whispered. There were voices in the dark saying, You can escape this pain. Just quit. Just give up. Trade your soul for peace.

I remember one night—cold, silent, hopeless. I thought about ending it. I thought about leaving this world the way my father had left me: without explanation. I even picked up the blade, stared at it, felt the metal in my palm.

But then another voice came. It wasn’t from outside—it was from within. Strong, stubborn, alive. It said: No. You are not done yet. You have a story to tell.

And in that moment, I realized: survival was my rebellion. Every breath I took was proof that I could not be defeated.

### Discovering the Pen

When life gave me no answers, I found a way to create my own. I began to write. At first, it was small—scraps of paper, broken sentences. But writing became my escape. It was my way to shout when no one would listen. My way to bleed without scars.

The pen turned into my weapon. Every insult they threw at me, I turned into ink. Every tear I shed became a verse. Every doubt in God became a question on the page. Writing didn’t fix my pain, but it gave it a home. And in that home, I was free.

**The Weight of Being Heard**

Being quiet was not instant—it was a process, a series of small decisions I made after countless failures. Every time I tried to explain myself, it felt like shouting into a void. I would speak, gesture, argue, and cry, only to be ignored, misunderstood, or mocked. It wore me down until my words felt like pebbles thrown into an ocean, sinking before they ever reached anyone.

After a while, I realized: the world may never listen, but I could. I could listen to myself, and that listening became a form of rebellion. By refusing to feed my voice into the wrong ears, I was reclaiming it. By holding my thoughts inward, I was learning discipline and patience.

Quietness became armor. Not the kind that shields you from blows, but the kind that protects your soul from wasting energy where it won’t matter. It allowed me to breathe. It allowed me to observe. It allowed me to plan my steps instead of stumbling blindly in anger.

**Solitude as a Teacher**

When I stopped trying to be heard, the world seemed emptier—but paradoxically, richer. Solitude became my teacher. I spent hours walking alone through the streets, not looking for company, not trying to prove anything, simply observing. I watched people as if they were stories unfolding. I watched their gestures, the way they smiled without knowing it, the cracks in their bravado. I began to see patterns in human behavior, lessons about patience, about caution, about trust.

Being alone also gave me a chance to explore the landscape of my own mind. I traced memories like maps, revisiting moments I had tried to forget: the ridicule from neighbors, the loneliness after my father’s absence, the nights of hunger, the small betrayals that had stung like fire. And slowly, I began to understand them—not to excuse them, but to extract meaning from them.

Writing became a bridge in that solitude. Words poured onto paper, mapping the labyrinth of my thoughts. I wrote without expecting anyone to read. I wrote because it was the only way to contain the storm inside. Those pages became my confidants, my safe space, my therapy.

**The Battle Within**

Silence is not empty. It has weight, and it has battles. My quietness was not peace at first—it was tension, a constant struggle to hold my tongue when every instinct screamed to shout. I fought endless battles inside my head: anger against the people who ignored me, frustration with myself for not being able to force them to listen, sadness at the life I had been given, and fear that I might lose myself entirely if I kept retreating into isolation.

Every battle left scars. Some nights, I would lie awake, thinking about the insults, the betrayals, the pain, and I would grind my teeth until my jaw ached. The quiet was not passive—it was active resistance. It was a choice to endure, to sit with pain rather than let it erupt and destroy what little control I had.

In that silence, I became familiar with myself in ways I hadn’t been before. I learned my triggers, my fears, my hopes. I recognized the lies I told myself to survive, and I began peeling them away, one by one. Each layer removed made me stronger, though also more vulnerable, because now I could see clearly both the power and fragility of my own heart.

**Lessons in Observation**

Being quiet taught me to see more than I ever could when I was speaking. When I had been loud, I had been blind. My mouth moved faster than my mind could process, and I missed the subtle details of the world. In silence, everything was sharper: a friend’s hesitation, a stranger’s fleeting kindness, the sorrow behind a smile.

I discovered that the people who try to dominate conversations are often the ones who fear being truly known. Quiet people see that. We learn to read the invisible currents of intent. We learn to measure energy, to assess truth, and to navigate without relying on others to show the path.

It was a lonely education, but it was invaluable. Every observation added depth to my understanding of the world. I learned empathy in ways I could not have learned in argument. I learned patience in ways I could not have learned in noise. And I began to see the power of restraint: sometimes the best response is no response at all.

**The Power of Reserved Words**

Silence made my words precious. When I spoke, I spoke with intention. Every sentence was weighed, measured, considered. I discovered the impact of saying less but meaning more. People began to notice that when I spoke, it was worth listening. Not because I was loud or flashy, but because the words carried weight that had been built in the long hours of quiet.

This taught me a crucial lesson: **value is not in volume, but in integrity.** My life had taught me that shouting often accomplishes nothing. Words used recklessly are easily discarded. But words chosen deliberately, grounded in truth and experience, have power.

**Quiet as a Path to Peace**

Ultimately, quietness gave me something I had been searching for my entire life: a measure of peace. Not the false, easy peace of pretending everything is okay. Not the peace that comes from avoiding struggle. But a deeper peace—the kind that emerges when you stop fighting for the attention of the world and start listening to your own heart.

I was tired. Tired of being misunderstood, tired of defending myself, tired of explaining the unexplainable. But in that exhaustion, I found calm. My thoughts no longer screamed for validation. My anger softened into clarity. My loneliness became a sanctuary instead of a prison.

Through quiet, I discovered a truth I had been blind to for years: life does not demand that we always perform for others. Sometimes, survival, growth, and strength come from doing nothing but observing, reflecting, and holding the line inside.

**The Quiet Warrior**

Becoming quiet was not surrender—it was strategy. It was armor, education, therapy, and preparation all in one. I became a quiet warrior: strong, patient, and observant. I learned to fight without noise. I learned to influence without shouting. I learned to preserve my energy, my sanity, and my integrity for battles that truly mattered.

Silence became a superpower. In a world that demanded constant performance, my quiet became my rebellion. It allowed me to think, to grow, and to plan. It allowed me to choose when to speak and what to say. It allowed me to be fully alive in the spaces that others had overlooked.

And in that quiet, I found myself—not the boy they labeled, not the rebel they feared, but the man I was meant to become.

**Finding Solace in the Shadows**

Silence gave me refuge. It became a place where I could be fully myself without fear of judgment. When people called me names, ignored me, or tried to provoke me, I no longer reacted immediately. I retreated—not out of fear, but out of strategy. I learned to stand in the shadows of my own thoughts, letting the noise of the world pass over me while I sharpened my mind, my patience, and my understanding.

The world teaches children to speak loudly, to argue, to shout for attention, to perform for validation. But I learned that the loudest voices are not always the wisest. Sometimes, the quietest soul sees the clearest path. While others wasted energy proving themselves, I observed, learned, and collected wisdom that would carry me farther than arguments ever could.

**Silence as Strength**

At first, people misinterpreted my silence. Teachers, neighbors, and even friends thought I had become withdrawn because I was weak. But silence is not weakness. It is preparation. A silent mind absorbs, understands, and grows while others are still reacting.

Through my quiet, I began to notice patterns in people: who was genuine, who was false, who could be trusted. I learned to detect dishonesty without words being spoken. I learned to sense intentions before actions revealed them. Quietness became my armor and my guide.

Even my mother noticed the change. She saw a calmness in my eyes that had never been there before. She began to trust that, even though I spoke less, I was still learning, still growing, still observing the world with careful attention. Her quiet pride was a comfort I could not yet put into words.

**Learning to Be Alone**

Being quiet also meant being alone, sometimes more than I wanted. Loneliness can feel like an empty room filled with echoes of your own thoughts. But in that emptiness, I began to understand myself. I faced my fears, my doubts, my anger, and my regrets without distraction. I started to write them down, turning my pain into sentences, my questions into paragraphs, my observations into reflections.

The act of writing became a companion. It did not judge me. It did not laugh at me. It simply listened, patiently, as I spilled my heart onto the page. And in that process, I discovered something crucial: words, when chosen carefully, have power. They can heal, transform, and preserve what silence alone cannot contain.

**The Transformation**

Over time, quietness transformed me. It taught me patience, strength, and resilience. I no longer needed constant validation from others. I no longer sought approval from those who would never give it. I had learned that my energy, my focus, and my voice were precious—and that giving them away recklessly only diminished their value.

I also began to notice the subtle influence I had on others. People started to approach me differently. When I finally spoke, they listened. My words, measured and intentional, carried weight. Quiet had become a tool, a power that commanded attention without the need for noise.

**The Inner Battles**

Quietness did not erase the battles inside me. There were still moments of anger, frustration, and doubt. I still wrestled with the scars of my childhood, the absence of a father, and the pain of growing up in a world that seemed indifferent to me. But silence gave me the space to confront these battles on my terms.

I learned to fight internally before reacting externally. I learned that some battles are won not by noise, but by endurance, reflection, and strategy. And slowly, I realized that the quiet boy the world underestimated was becoming a man who would never be underestimated again.

**Preparing for the Future**

The quiet did not isolate me from life—it prepared me for it. It allowed me to see clearly where I wanted to go and who I wanted to become. It taught me that the world would try to define me by its standards, but I could define myself by mine.

Every day I spent in silence, observing, reflecting, and writing, was a day spent building my future. I was learning the value of patience, the power of observation, and the strength that comes from knowing yourself deeply.

Quietness was no longer just a shield; it had become a foundation. It gave me the ability to act with intention, speak with authority, and choose my battles wisely. It was the beginning of a new chapter in my life—one where I would no longer be dictated by the judgments of others, but guided by my own vision, strength, and purpose.

### ****Closing Reflections****

In the quiet, I found more than peace—I found myself. The boy who had shouted, argued, and tried to prove his worth to everyone had been replaced by someone stronger, sharper, and calmer. Silence had taught me patience. Silence had taught me resilience. Silence had taught me to see what others missed and to value what others overlooked.

I realized that being quiet was not surrender; it was strength disguised as stillness. It was a choice to protect my energy, focus my mind, and build my inner world while the chaos of the outside tried to claim me. And in that stillness, I discovered the tools I would need to survive and thrive: observation, reflection, and the written word.

My mother had always known this. Her quiet pride, her unwavering love, had been my anchor while I learned to navigate the storm of life. And now, I understood her strength, her patience, and her wisdom in ways I never could have if I had stayed loud, reckless, and reactive.

As I closed this chapter of silence, I felt a readiness I had never known. I was prepared to face the world not with anger, but with intention. Not with noise, but with meaning. Not with reaction, but with strategy. The quiet had shaped me, but it had not defined me. I was ready to act, to speak, and to live—with purpose, with clarity, and with power.

And so, the quiet chapter ends. But the story, my story, continues.

# **Chapter 8: Lessons in Love and Chaos**

### The First Temptation

High school is a battlefield for the heart. I learned that the hard way. It all started in Senior 2, a year when my world seemed small but suddenly bigger than I could handle. My crew, as usual, was full of advice I didn’t really ask for—but they insisted: “Go talk to her.”

Her name was **IMANISHIMWE KELIA**. She was new to the school, a quiet newcomer who carried herself with a strange mix of elegance and mystery. But my eyes didn’t see that; my heart saw temptation. I couldn’t help myself.

I approached her, fumbling with words, trying to act cool while my mind was screaming like a storm. At that time, I was too young to understand love, too naive to know boundaries, and too impulsive to consider consequences. I was like a moth drawn to a flame, knowing the risk but unable to resist.

Looking back, I realize it was a kind of poison I was trying to swallow—a risk, an emotional gamble I had no business taking. And though the chaos didn’t explode immediately, I hadn’t yet seen the ripple effects of what my heart was capable of.

### Falling into the First Trap

One year later, I thought I had learned enough. I hadn’t. That’s when **UMUTONI EMMANUELLA** came into my life. Unlike the first fleeting temptation, this felt different. I convinced myself this was love, real love, the kind they write songs about.

But as the saying goes, love is not for the young. Our emotions were immature, our understanding shallow, and our actions reckless. The relationship did not last. Pain followed as predictably as dawn, but I was not broken—only bruised. I realized then that love, at my age, was a teacher, harsh but honest, giving lessons I would need later.

### True Love, or What I Thought Was True

Then came **GWANEZA JOVIALE JOSEE**. For a moment, I dared to believe in the possibility of true love. She was different, unique, and her presence consumed my thoughts. But her character—her choices, her flaws—revealed that the fool boy in me was not yet ready for such responsibility.

Love, I learned, is not just about desire; it is about understanding, compromise, patience, and wisdom. I had none of these. I was young, foolish, and easily trapped by my own emotions.

### The Cycle of Bad Friends and Traps

Throughout high school, I made mistakes fueled by friendship and peer pressure. I was surrounded by people who didn’t always guide me wisely. I fell into traps again, saying “I love someone” without truly understanding what love required. I was still learning life’s hard lessons—but I was not learning fast enough.

By the end of O’Level, I thought I would change for good. I promised myself I would be smarter, more cautious, more resilient. But life, as usual, had its own plan.

### Senior 4: Jealousy and Misunderstandings

In Level 3 (Senior 4), my heart faced a storm again. **ISHIMWE YUSRA JOICE** entered my life. To everyone else, it might have looked like love—but I was caught in confusion, jealousy, and emotional turmoil. My kindness and openness were read as weakness. People around me grew jealous. I felt misunderstood and isolated. I was trying to navigate emotions I barely understood while my peers judged every move.

Then came **NDAYISHIMA BELLA**. She entered like a light, guiding me for one and a half years. With her, I experienced a version of high school love that was tender, supportive, and full of small joys. She helped me study, laugh, and feel alive in a way I had not before.

But like all things fragile, it did not last. Time revealed what I had not seen: love, when young and inexperienced, can fade as quickly as it appears. When it ended, I realized that some feelings are lessons, not destinations.

### Final Lessons: Abera Aliane

Finally, there was **ABERA ALIANE**. What started as friendship transformed into something more—my heart caught again. I admitted my feelings, opening myself to vulnerability after years of emotional trials.

Yet even this was a test. The nightmare of young love, misunderstandings, and emotional chaos had prepared me. I had grown enough to face it with reflection rather than recklessness. I survived heartbreak, confusion, and the weight of emotions that once would have crushed me.

By the end, I understood: love is not always what it seems. It is messy, unpredictable, and often painful—but it is also a mirror, reflecting who we are, what we need, and how we grow. High school love taught me lessons no book could teach: patience, self-awareness, resilience, and the importance of understanding my own heart before giving it away.

### Reflection

Looking back, I see a pattern. Each girl, each heartbreak, each mistake was a step toward understanding myself. I fell into traps, yes—but each trap was a teacher. Each heartbreak left scars—but those scars became maps to navigate future relationships. I learned that youth is for mistakes, for falling, and for learning. True wisdom comes not from avoiding pain, but from surviving it and emerging stronger.

And through it all, I realized: love is not just a feeling; it is a journey. One that I was only beginning to understand.

**Temptation in Senior 2**

It started with a whisper from my friends: “Go talk to her, man. She’s new, you’ll never know unless you try.” I didn’t need much convincing—my eyes had already decided. **IMANISHIMWE KELIA**. Her name alone felt like it carried light in a dark room. I saw her walking through the school yard for the first time. Her hair framed her face in a way that made everything else blur. Her smile—small, shy, almost hesitant—was enough to make my heart race.

I approached her, fumbling over my words. “Hi… I… um… welcome to school,” I said, my voice cracking like fragile glass.

She looked up at me, eyes cautious but polite. “Thank you,” she said softly, and in that moment, I felt both victory and fear.

I didn’t realize then that my actions were a kind of poison, an emotional gamble. My heart was playing with fire, but fortunately, it didn’t explode the way it could have. The seed of temptation was planted, but it didn’t consume me yet.

**The First Trap: Umutoni Emmanuella**

One year later, Senior 3 brought **UMUTONI EMMANUELLA**. Unlike Kelia, this was not just a spark—it was a flame. I convinced myself this was love, real love. My friends noticed, my heart noticed, and the world… well, the world would soon teach me lessons I wasn’t ready for.

Our conversations were filled with laughter and secrets. I would walk her to class, and she would tell me stories about home, about her dreams, about things I hadn’t thought of in my own mind. I listened, captivated, thinking I was building something eternal.

But love at that age is fragile. Misunderstandings grew like weeds. Jealousy, insecurities, and immaturity became invisible chains that neither of us could break. The relationship crumbled. I felt the sting of heartbreak for the first time, but it didn’t destroy me—it taught me.

**The Fool’s Heart: Gwaneza Joviale Josee**

Then came **GWANEZA JOVIALE JOSEE**. I thought I had learned. I thought I was ready for something real. Her presence felt like gravity pulling me in. But her character, her choices, her moods—they were too unpredictable for the naive boy I still was.

I gave everything I had, my time, my attention, my devotion. And yet, it wasn’t enough. I discovered that love is more than feelings; it is patience, compromise, and understanding. My heart, though sincere, wasn’t equipped for the complexity of hers. I learned the bitter truth: sincerity alone cannot sustain love.

**The Cycle of Peer Pressure and Emotional Traps**

I was still young, and I had friends who were less than wise. They nudged me into emotional traps, into situations I was not ready for. I found myself saying, “I love her,” when I didn’t fully understand what love required. I was learning lessons, often the hard way, but my youth made those lessons painful.

Every heartbreak, every emotional mistake, was a teacher. Each time I fell, I collected knowledge that no classroom could offer. I learned to discern feelings, to recognize patterns, and to understand the consequences of my choices.

**Senior 4: Ishimwe Yusra Joice**

By Senior 4, I thought I was ready to navigate love wisely. But life had other plans. **ISHIMWE YUSRA JOICE** entered, and I was drawn in again. Everyone around me assumed this was love, but it was complicated. Jealousy, misunderstandings, and emotional turbulence surrounded me. My openness and kindness were misread as weakness. People judged me, envied me, and my heart suffered quietly.

In the middle of this storm, I began to notice a pattern: love, friendship, and chaos often intertwined. I was learning to survive emotionally while still caring deeply, balancing heart and reason.

**Ndayishima Bella: A Brief Light**

Then came **NDAYISHIMA BELLA**, who became a guiding light. For a year and a half, she showed me what high school love could look like when tempered with support and companionship. She helped me with studies, encouraged my efforts, and shared laughter and small joys.

But even the brightest lights sometimes burn out. Our relationship ended quietly, without dramatic confrontation, but it left a mark. I realized that emotions can be fleeting, that love is a lesson, and that heartbreak can sometimes teach more than happiness.

**Abera Aliane: Friendship and Lessons**

Finally, there was **ABERA ALIANE**, who began as a friend. Over time, my feelings grew, and I admitted them. This was not impulsive like before—it was cautious, thoughtful. I had learned, though not completely, how to navigate emotions, how to balance vulnerability with self-preservation.

The experience with her closed the circle of my teenage love. I learned that not every attraction is love, not every crush is meaningful, and not every heartbreak is a failure. Sometimes, emotional trials prepare us for the maturity we have yet to achieve.

**Emotional Fallout**

Each heartbreak left a mark, not always visible but deeply felt. After UMUTONI EMMANUELLA, I realized that love could hurt more than anger or disappointment. My chest felt heavy, nights became long and restless, and I often found myself staring at the ceiling, wondering why feelings could betray you so completely.

With GWANEZA JOVIALE JOSEE, I discovered that love isn’t always fair. Giving everything does not guarantee a return. My heart had been foolishly generous, but her unpredictability left me bruised and questioning my own judgment. Yet, it was in these emotional bruises that I started to understand the delicate balance of trust and self-preservation.

**Lessons in Observation**

I began to notice patterns—not just in relationships, but in myself. My own reactions were predictable. My tendency to trust quickly, to give fully, and to ignore warning signs was something I could work on. High school love was teaching me emotional intelligence in its rawest form.

Friendship, I realized, could be as dangerous as love. My peers influenced me, often steering me into situations I wasn’t ready for. I began to measure advice carefully, listening but not always following. I learned that not all guidance comes from wisdom; some comes from folly.

**The Maturity of Acceptance**

By the time NDAYISHIMA BELLA and ABERA ALIANE came into my life, I had begun to understand one essential truth: love and relationships are teachers, not destinations. I started to accept that my feelings were valid, my mistakes were lessons, and my heartbreaks were preparation.

With Bella, I learned how joy and support can coexist with responsibility. I saw that relationships could nurture growth instead of just causing chaos. With Aliane, I discovered the importance of honesty and vulnerability, and that friendships could evolve into something deeper when handled with care.

**Self-Reflection**

Looking back, I saw a pattern repeated over and over: I was drawn to love before I was ready. I gave my heart fully while still learning how to manage it. I trusted too quickly, listened too deeply, and assumed feelings were mutual without confirmation. Each mistake was painful, but it became a lesson etched into my understanding of myself and others.

I realized that being young did not excuse mistakes, but it contextualized them. Emotional naivety, impulsive decisions, and misunderstandings were part of growing up. Each experience prepared me for future relationships and for life itself.

**Emotional Growth**

By the end of high school, I was no longer the same boy who approached Imanishimwe Kelia with naive temptation. I had seen the complexity of feelings, the weight of decisions, and the unpredictability of human nature. Love had tested me repeatedly, exposing my vulnerabilities and forcing me to confront them.

I learned patience, self-awareness, and the value of emotional boundaries. I learned that love could be fleeting, friendship could be complicated, and life would not always go according to plan. But most importantly, I learned resilience—the ability to continue despite disappointment, heartbreak, and the chaos of teenage emotions.

**Preparing for the Next Stage**

High school love, with all its mistakes and lessons, became a foundation for the man I was becoming. I understood that life would continue to test me, that emotions would never be simple, and that I would face new challenges. But the lessons of UMUTONI, GWANEZA, NDYISHIMA, ABERA, and all the others were now part of me.

I was stronger, wiser, and more prepared. I had survived heartbreaks, learned to navigate complexity, and discovered the importance of observing before reacting. I had grown emotionally, even if I didn’t yet realize the full extent of my growth.

And as I looked forward, I knew that love would come again—but this time, I would meet it with the strength, patience, and wisdom that teenage mistakes had forged in me.

**The Weight of Memories**

Every name carried a story. IMANISHIMWE KELIA was temptation. UMUTONI EMMANUELLA was heartbreak. GWANEZA JOVIALE JOSEE was disappointment. NDAYISHIMA BELLA was stability for a time. ABERA ALIANE was confusion that ended with clarity.

Each left a fingerprint on my heart — some soft, some sharp, some healing, and others wounding. But together, they made me understand what it truly meant to live through emotions. Love wasn’t just about having someone; it was about learning who I was in the process.

**The Turning Point**

I realized that I had been chasing love while I was still in the middle of discovering myself. My mistakes weren’t failures — they were the tuition I paid in the school of life.

I was jealous, I was insecure, I was desperate at times. But I was also kind, honest, and genuine. I gave love, even when I had no guarantee of it being returned. And that, in its own way, was a strength.

**Letting Go**

By the end of high school, I knew something important: I didn’t need to keep carrying the weight of every broken story. Love had shaped me, but it didn’t have to define me.

I had to let go — of the pain, the jealousy, the guilt of mistakes. To forgive myself for being young and reckless. To accept that love at that stage was never meant to last forever; it was meant to teach.

And so, I began to release it all, one by one — the bitterness, the regrets, the unspoken words. What remained was not emptiness, but space. Space for growth, for maturity, and for a different kind of love in the future.

**A Quiet Resolve**

Walking away from that chapter of my life, I didn’t feel broken anymore. I felt prepared. High school had been messy, emotional, and confusing — but it had also been a classroom.

The lessons were clear:

* Never rush into what you don’t understand.
* Not everyone you love will love you back, and that’s okay.
* Good friends don’t push you into mistakes; real ones help you grow.
* True love isn’t proven by how long it lasts, but by how much it teaches you.

I had learned these lessons the hard way, but I had learned them nonetheless.

**Closing the Chapter**

As I stepped forward, leaving those years behind, I didn’t carry the same desperation for love. Instead, I carried understanding. Love had been chaotic, messy, painful — but it had also been a mirror, showing me who I was becoming.

And so, with a deep breath and a quiet heart, I closed that chapter of my life.

**Chapter 8 ended not with bitterness, but with gratitude — for the mistakes, for the people, for the lessons, and for the strength I found in myself.**

# **Chapter 9: Finding My Faith**

I grew up between two worlds. My father was a Muslim, my mother a Christian. From the moment I was born, that difference already planted questions in my life. I didn’t choose it. I was too young to know, too young to decide. Like they say, “the tree is pruned while it is still young.” So I bent whichever way they told me to bend.

In my earliest years, I followed the path of my mother. I went to church because that was her way. I prayed in the words she believed in because I had no voice to choose otherwise. At that time, choice wasn’t even a thought — it was survival. I did what the elders said, because to disobey meant to disrespect.

When I went to live with my mother’s brother, the routine continued. The prayers, the church, the same rhythm repeated. I never questioned it openly. But inside, there was always a restlessness, a silent voice whispering that maybe there was more. Still, I stayed quiet. A child doesn’t argue with adults. A child obeys.

### When God Found Me

But the thing about God is this: when He loves you, He will find you — no matter where you are, no matter what darkness surrounds you. At the age of nine, I encountered the man who would change everything for me. His name was **Ndikumana Abudul**, the father of Sadik and Nuriath, a man of Madina.

Through him, I was introduced to Islam. For the first time, I didn’t feel like I was following out of duty. I felt like I was being led toward truth. Something inside me connected deeply, like a key finally finding its lock.

I didn’t become Muslim because of him alone. I didn’t accept Islam because of family pressure, because others expected it, or because I wanted to please anyone. No — it was different. This was the first time I felt my soul fit somewhere. It was as if my heart had been searching all along, wandering through faiths, until it finally found rest.

### The Challenges of Belief

But truth never comes without challenges. The first one was my own mother. She could not understand how her son, who grew up in her hands, under her church, could take another path. It wasn’t anger alone; it was disappointment. And for me, it was pain. To see the woman who raised me, who poured her love into me, look at me with confusion — that was not easy to bear.

The second challenge came when I returned to my uncle’s house. His house was still wrapped in the Christian way, and now I stood in the middle as the outsider. They looked at me differently. I was no longer just the boy who followed their rules. I had become the boy who questioned them with his very life.

Being young didn’t protect me from the weight of those looks. Every meal, every prayer, every word I spoke seemed like a reminder that I was no longer “one of them.”

### Strength in Conviction

But even with those struggles, I didn’t turn back. The more resistance I faced, the stronger my conviction grew. Because true belief isn’t about pleasing people. It isn’t about avoiding conflict. True belief is about standing in the place where your heart feels most at peace — even if the whole world turns against you.

For me, that place was Islam. And for the first time, I could say with certainty that my faith was not borrowed. It was not inherited. It was chosen.

### Closing Reflection

Chapter 9 wasn’t about rejecting my mother or disrespecting my uncle. It wasn’t about shame or rebellion. It was about discovery. About listening to the quiet truth inside me that no one else could hear.

And though I was still young, I knew this: faith is not about being born into the right house. Faith is about being reborn into the right belief. And in that moment, I had been reborn.

Faith is not something that can be borrowed. It is not something that can be stitched onto your skin by tradition, nor forced into your mouth by the voices of elders. Faith is something deeper something that must flow naturally into the soul, like water into a thirsty ground. My journey into faith was not a straight line. It was a long, winding road, marked by conflict, silence, and the quiet discovery of who I truly was.

### Living between Two Worlds

From birth, I was caught between two worlds. My father was a Muslim, my mother a Christian. Their love brought me into this world, but their differences carved questions into my heart before I was old enough to even spell the word religion.

With my mother, I went to church. She prayed with all her strength, and I saw in her eyes that she believed deeply. She held my hand in the pews, taught me songs of worship, and whispered to me that Christ would protect me. As a child, I had no reason to doubt her. I didn’t have a voice to choose otherwise. I simply followed.

Later, when I lived with my mother’s brother, the routine continued. Church on Sundays, prayers in the same tone, sermons repeated like they were carved into stone. I never asked why. Children weren’t allowed to ask. To ask meant to challenge, and to challenge meant disrespect. So I swallowed my questions, buried them deep, and wore obedience like a mask.

But inside, there was a storm brewing. A restlessness that words couldn’t explain. A whisper that told me, “Maybe there’s more than this. Maybe this is not the full story.”

### When God Came Closer

It’s true what people say: when God loves you, He will find you. Even in the darkest places, even in the corners where you feel unseen, His light will reach you. For me, that light came at the age of nine, in the form of a man named **Ndikumana Abudul**.

He wasn’t a preacher screaming from a pulpit. He wasn’t a man trying to force his way onto me. He was simple. Gentle. A father to Sadik and Nuriath, known in the community as a man of Madina. Through him, I first touched Islam.

It wasn’t pressure. It wasn’t fear. It wasn’t duty. It was something else — something new. For the first time in my life, belief didn’t feel like a chain. It felt like freedom. It felt like truth.

I didn’t become Muslim because of him alone. I didn’t embrace Islam because my father was Muslim, or because of anyone else’s name or family tradition. I embraced it because my heart told me, “Here is home. Here is where you belong.”

### The First Resistance

But no truth comes without a test. My first resistance came from the closest person in my life: my mother.

She had raised me in the church, fed me on her faith, and shaped me to follow her path. To her, Christianity was not just belief; it was identity. It was protection. So when she looked at me and saw me walking in a different direction, she was wounded.

Her face held disappointment, and her words carried the weight of confusion: “How can my son, the one I raised in the Lord, turn to another way?”

That pain cut me deeply. I loved my mother. She was both my father and my mother at the same time. She had carried me through hunger, through rejection, through years of renting houses and scattered clothes. To hurt her felt like betraying her. But what could I do? My heart had already found its resting place, and no amount of guilt could turn it back.

### Back at My Uncle’s House

The second resistance came when I returned to my uncle’s house. By then, my identity had already shifted. I was no longer the silent boy who followed every word without question. I was now the boy who had chosen a different faith.

That choice made me an outsider. Every prayer, every meal, every family moment reminded me that I no longer fit. Their glances spoke louder than their words: “You are not one of us anymore.”

I was still young, but I felt the sting of rejection as sharply as a blade. Being left out. Being misunderstood. Being measured and found different. Those were heavy burdens for a boy still finding his way.

### Standing Firm

But with every challenge, my conviction grew stronger. The resistance did not push me away from Islam it pulled me closer. It taught me that belief is not about comfort. It is not about blending in. It is about standing firm in what your soul knows to be true, even when the world turns its back on you.

Faith, I realized, is not about being born in the right family. Faith is about being reborn into the right belief.

### Reflection

Looking back, I see that my path was not a rejection of my mother or my uncle. It was not rebellion. It was discovery. God had written my story in such a way that I had to walk through both Christianity and Islam before I could finally see where I belonged.

And now, when I kneel, when I bow, when I recite the words of prayer, I know that I am not following anyone’s voice but God’s.

### ****Closing Reflections****

My journey into faith was never about choosing sides between my parents, my family, or the people around me. It was about choosing truth, the truth that spoke to my heart when all other voices fell silent.

Yes, it hurt to feel my mother’s disappointment. Yes, it was heavy to stand as the odd one out in my uncle’s house. But those moments taught me that faith is not always comfortable, and the path of conviction is often lonely.

Yet, even in the loneliness, I found strength. I found peace. I found a God who met me not through force, not through fear, but through love and clarity.

Now I walk with certainty, not because my life is free of struggle, but because my heart finally knows where it belongs.

And that, above everything, is the truth behind the broken — a truth that no rejection, no resistance, and no misunderstanding can ever take away.

# Chapter 10: Lessons on the Blackboard

School for me was never the bright classroom every child dreams of. It was a dim place where the sun rarely reached, a room where light arrived late and left early. From the very first day my mother tried to put me with the other children in nursery, the shape of my education was already different — not because I was not capable, but because the ledger of our life had empty lines where fees should have been written.

When the headmistress called for school fees and my mother said she had none, I remember feeling something cold and small coil inside my chest. It was shame more than fear. She decided it was better to pull me out than to promise what she could not keep. At the time, it felt like an ending. Later I would learn that it had been a detour.

In 2011 my uncle sent me to start primary at G.S. Cyahafi. I was a bad boy then—lazy, careless, proud in a way that hid how small I felt. I spent a year floundering in Primary One, and when the teacher talked about repetition, I did what frightened boys do: I cheated my way into promotion. I remember the hollow feeling of copying answers and the louder hollowness afterward. I told myself lies—it’s only once, it’s just this time—but those lies stacked into the messy reports that followed. My schoolbooks were full of scribbles and half-finished exercises. I was weak in study, weak in habit, weak in discipline.

My mother refused to let me be erased by my failings. She went to the principal and asked, pleaded, bargained—whatever the word was, she did it. She arranged for me to continue on a poor permit, a place in school reserved for children who had no money but a mother who refused to give up. I felt ashamed of that permission every day. The pity in the eyes of others burned me more than any insult. I swore silently I would never give my father cause to think I was lesser, but the truth was that anger at him and shame at myself were tangled so tight I could not separate them.

Primary Four was a low point. I came last in class. Being out of step with the rhythms of school, I did not understand what was happening to me. The mark-sheet said I had to repeat the year. That word—repeat—sat heavy like a verdict. Yet the repetition was the beginning of a small, painful change. The second time through the year, I began, slowly, to notice patterns in lessons. I started to shape a routine. My failure became my curriculum.

Then life turned again. My mother migrated from Kigali to Musanze. That move changed everything. In Musanze I was someone else. The boy who had been a joke, a shame, the quiet one in class, started to feel new edges. There were no old neighborhood eyes to remind me of past missteps. I had space to rebuild. I had to learn how to be that new person. I had to learn to be patient with myself.

Primary Six was the first school milestone that felt like a small victory rather than an accident. I worked with a pressure that wasn’t only of teachers or curriculum but one that came from my mother’s expectations and the quiet anger at myself. I passed with a score that would have seemed impossible a few years earlier—fifty-seven percent. For me that number felt like a miracle.

But miracles are rarely simple. When the chance to go to boarding school was taken away—when my friend’s father and his family decided I would not be accepted into that life—something in me broke and then stitched differently. I cried and cried, not for the lost convenience of a dorm bed but for the narrowness of doors I thought I deserved. My mother worked, saved, and scraped. With the little she could gather, she sent me to G.S. Muhoza II. She said simply: “You will be first, and you will finish.” I took that sentence and held it like armor.

The common level years were struggle after struggle. My marks were never the ones people expected for a boy they had once called “lazy.” I blamed myself constantly—every wrong decision, every wasted hour. I criticized myself for forgetting who I was and what I wanted. But the grind changed me. I learned rhythms of study that pain had taught me: show up, do the work, revise again. My mother’s pressure was not anger; it was faith distilled into insistence.

Advanced level (Upper secondary) brought new trials. There were times when I thought the story would stop—when school fees were denied, when a voice said “you’re done”. I remember a day when it looked like I would not continue; there was a round of silence in the house where hope had always lived. But God had other plans. By a surprise I cannot explain cleanly—sometimes a small generosity, sometimes a late payment, sometimes a quiet sponsor—doors that seemed shut opened just enough for me to step through. Those arrivals taught me the bitter and beautiful truth: survival is often a series of narrow rescues.

There were whole months when I did not sleep properly, running to school with the same patched shoes, carrying books heavier in my bag and in my chest. I lived under the pressure of absence—of a father who had been distant, of money that never stayed, of classmates who read me like an open book and used it to mock. Envy circled me. Haters whispered. Still, I kept moving.

The campaign of small victories culminated on a day I will never forget. On **15 July 2025, at 11:30 a.m.**, with the ceremony small but thick with meaning, I finished high school. Standing there, a certificate in hand, I felt the weight of everything that had been poured into me. The sacrifices of my mother—her late nights, her wages turned into lunch packets and school fees—arrived all at once like an answer to a prayer I had not known how to voice. I bowed my head and prayed for her, wishing with all I had that her reward would be more than comfort here—that she would find honor in the next life.

My studies had once been darkness, but the darkness taught me how to light a candle. I had cheated once to survive a repeat; I had been a lazy boy who learned discipline the hard way; I had been humiliated and made to feel small. And yet each of those moments stacked into something solid: a work ethic, a humility, a hateful memory of shame turned into fuel.

I criticize myself still—there are things I wish I had done differently, habits I wish I had broken earlier—but regret is a poor teacher when it becomes a prison. So I used it as a lesson. I promised myself: no more wasted chances. The ledger in my notebook that once recorded small payments and shoe repairs now held plans, short lists, and ideas. Study became a practice of survival, then a practice of pride.

Finishing high school did not solve everything. Money remained uneven. The future was still a road with potholes. But I had passed the threshold I had once thought would never open. I had shown up when it counted. And most importantly, I carried with me the face of the woman who had made the journey possible—Uwihoreye Amina—whose hands had hardened with work and whose heart had stayed soft for a son she would never quit on.

That certificate was not only my paper; it was my mother’s small victory in the world’s quiet war. When I put my hand on her shoulder after the ceremony and said, “Mama, this one is for you,” she smiled through tears. “May God bless you,” she whispered. I want that blessing to return to her a thousandfold.

My study life had been a story of darkness and then of stubborn light. It taught me that school can break you or fix you depending on how you choose to stand in it. I chose to stand. The truth behind brokenness is not only in the pain but in the person who shows up anyway.

My study life was nothing but darkness at the start. It began when my mother sent me to nursery school, just like every other child in the neighborhood. I was full of innocence, with a small bookbag on my back and curiosity in my eyes. But it didn’t last long. The moment the school asked us to pay fees, my mother had no money. She looked at me with eyes full of sorrow, and instead of pushing me forward, she decided to pull me out. It was not her fault—she had nothing. I was too young to understand, but old enough to feel the sting of being different.

Years passed, and in 2011, my uncle decided to send me to **G.S Cyahafi Primary School**. That was the first time I felt like a real student. But the truth is, I was lazy. I was weak, careless, and stupid when it came to books. I repeated **Primary One twice**, and the only reason I escaped a third time was because I cheated. Even then, my results were nothing but shame.

My mother begged the headmaster to let me study under poor permity—a condition where no school fees were required. I remember the exact day. She walked into the principal’s office wearing her old kitenge, her face pale from worry.

“Please, sir,” she said softly, almost whispering. “Let him continue. I cannot pay, but he deserves a chance.”

The principal sighed, adjusted his glasses, and tapped his pen on the desk. He looked at me, then at my mother. “Fine,” he said. “But remember—this is the last time. If he fails, don’t bring him back here to waste our space.”

I felt the shame burn through my skin. To be in school on charity, to hear my fate being decided in front of me—it hurt deeply. At that moment, I made a silent vow: one day, I will repay my mother’s sacrifices.

But life wasn’t kind. In **Primary Four**, I came last in class. I didn’t even notice. My head was empty, my thoughts were scattered. I was forced to repeat. That was another wound to my pride. Still, somehow, repeating gave me strength. My second attempt was better, and I moved on to **Primary Five**.

It was during those years that my mother moved from Kigali to Musanze. That move changed everything. I became quiet, friendless, but curious. Slowly, I trained myself to do things differently. In **Primary Six**, I started scoring around **57%**, which was a miracle compared to my past. The teachers pressured me, my mother encouraged me, and I worked hard enough to pass.

When the results came, I celebrated. But the joy was short-lived. I wanted to join a boarding school, but my father and his family denied the fees. I cried until my chest ached. I cried for nights, but tears didn’t pay bills. Then, once again, it was my mother who saved me. Through her small savings, she sent me to **G.S Muhoza II**.

There, something in me changed. I decided that I would no longer be the boy of shame. I pushed myself, fought laziness, and aimed for the top of my class. I stumbled, I struggled, but I rose again. Every time I thought of giving up, I remembered my mother in that office, begging for my chance.

But even as I tried, obstacles came back. In Advanced Level, things grew worse. My father refused to pay again, and I was nearly expelled for school fees. One day, the principal called me into the office.

“Tomorrow, don’t come back without the money,” he said sternly.

I left his office trembling, wondering if my dreams had finally died. But the next day, my mother arrived at the school gates. She was holding a small bundle of money, wrapped in a handkerchief. It wasn’t much, but it was enough to keep me in school.

“Take this to your teacher,” she whispered. “You are not dropping out. Not while I still breathe.”

Her sacrifice gave me the strength I needed. From then on, I carried her face in my heart every time I opened a book.

Finally, the day of graduation came: **15/07/2025 at 11:30 a.m.** The ceremony was simple, yet it felt like the world had stopped for me. I walked across the school compound in my uniform for the last time, clutching my certificate with trembling hands. I could see my mother standing at the edge of the crowd, her eyes wet with pride.

That day, I wasn’t the boy who had been last in class. I wasn’t the boy who repeated. I wasn’t the boy who studied under poor permity. I was a survivor.

As I stood there, I whispered a silent prayer: May God bless my mother. May she rest in heaven in the most honorable place one day. Everything I am, I owe to her.

My journey in learning was not perfect. It was broken, painful, and shameful at times. But it was also full of grace, strength, and God’s hidden plans. It taught me that destiny isn’t about how you start—it’s about how you rise from the fall.

# **Chapter 11: How I Increased My Aura**

There came a time in my life when I realized that true strength was not about how loud you speak, how many friends you have around you, or how much attention you draw. It was about **presence**—the silent, unshakable energy you carry wherever you go.

I started small. I taught myself to **smile with my mouth closed**. Not every smile was for the world to measure, not every joy needed to be displayed. There’s power in holding back. I remember once in school, when a group of classmates was trying to provoke me with jokes and insults, waiting for me to explode like I had before. Instead, I smiled faintly, said nothing, and walked away. That small closed smile confused them more than any argument could. They expected noise, but silence disarmed them.

I also stopped **talking about my plans**. Before, I used to tell people everything—what I wanted to do, who I wanted to become, how far I wanted to go. But all it did was invite criticism, jealousy, and doubt. One time I told a few friends about wanting to perform well in my exams and aim higher than ever before. They laughed, told me I wasn’t the type, that I’d never reach there. That day I made a decision: from then on, I would keep my plans in my heart and let results be my voice. Months later, when exam results came and I had risen higher than most of them, I didn’t need to say a word. The silence was louder than their mockery.

Books became my companions. I started **reading in public spaces**—under trees, in schoolyards, even on buses. Some laughed, saying I was pretending to be smart. But soon, teachers started noticing. They’d call on me in class, and I had answers others didn’t. That respect was born not from showing off, but from the discipline of quietly feeding my mind while others wasted their time. Reading gave me confidence, and confidence became part of my aura.

Another change came when I learned the power of **nodding instead of saying yes**. One teacher once scolded me in front of the class, demanding if I had understood the assignment. Normally, I would rush to explain myself, maybe even argue. But that day I simply nodded. That nod showed both respect and control. It said, “I heard you,” without submission or fear. After class, that teacher pulled me aside and told me he respected my calmness. That was the moment I realized: sometimes, restraint is more powerful than defense.

I stopped being always available. I used to be the kind of person who showed up anytime someone called me, even if it drained me. But I learned that being everywhere meant being valued nowhere. So I began to choose my presence carefully. At first, people complained, saying I had changed. But later, when I did show up, my presence carried more weight. Friends waited to hear my thoughts, because they knew I wouldn’t waste words. **My absence had created respect for my presence.**

I also stopped **talking too much about myself**. In class discussions, in conversations with friends, I spoke less and listened more. And because I didn’t talk endlessly, people began paying attention when I did. One day, during a heated debate among classmates, I stayed silent until the very end. When I finally spoke, the room grew quiet. My words had impact because they were rare, like drops of water in the desert. That was the birth of influence.

And in all these lessons, life revealed to me undeniable truths:

* **No pain, no gain.** Every scar, whether from failed exams or broken friendships, toughened me. Without them, I wouldn’t know endurance.
* **No risk, no reward.** When I dared to step outside comfort, like speaking up in front of teachers after long silence, I earned opportunities that fear would have stolen.
* **No loyalty, no love.** Real bonds weren’t about words; they were proven by who stood with me when I had nothing.
* **No trust, no result.** I saw how even in group work, if no one trusted each other, the work collapsed. Trust was the bridge.
* **No sacrifice, no opportunity.** My mother’s sacrifices gave me education; my own sacrifices of sleep, time, and comfort opened doors for me.

That is how I built my aura—not with noise, not with show, but with **silent power**. My aura became my armor, my shield, and my introduction before I even spoke. People began to respect not what I said, but what I carried within.

### Chapter 11: The Person I Am Now

My mama gave me the name **Bizimana**. The man they said was my father gave me **Adam**. I carried that shit for years, but deep down I hated it. Those names weren’t me — they felt borrowed, like chains I never asked for. So I cut them off. I crowned myself **KING NUR BENJAMIN**. Online, I go by **kingnur1**. That’s mine. That’s me. Nobody gave me that — I built it.

I used to be soft. I used to give a fuck. I used to **take care of people who wouldn’t even spit on me if I was burning**. I remember one time, I gave my last coin to a so-called friend. He promised to pay me back, never did. Later I saw him laughing, buying drinks for others. That’s when I realized — I was the clown in someone else’s circus. Never again.

I used to **love without limits**. Sent long-ass texts late at night, telling a girl how much I cared. She left me on read. Hours turned into days. That silence? That was a bullet straight to my chest. From that day, I swore I’d never bleed for anyone who wouldn’t fight for me.

Now, I don’t care. **Say I’m wrong. Say I’m heartless. Fuck it — you don’t feed me, you don’t own me.** I keep my circle small. I’m not friendly, but if I call you my friend, then you’re solid. Don’t get it twisted — I’m a good friend, but I’m not out here begging to be liked.

I’m quiet. Serious. Not the funny guy in the room. I’d rather grind, write, and let my thoughts spin until they hurt. I mind my own shit.

Emotions? Dead. Buried. I don’t show weakness anymore. I hate girls, I hate relationships. Yeah, I see beauty, but talking to them? Waste of breath. My conversations don’t fit their shallow shit. I’ll admire from a distance and keep walking.

And yeah, I lie. A lot. But it’s not out of shame — it’s survival. I remember one dude asking me about my father. I looked him dead in the eyes and fed him a lie so smooth he believed it. Why? Because the truth wasn’t his to know. Lies are my shield. If you got lied to by me, it’s ’cause you earned it.

I stay alone. That’s my comfort zone. I think too much, I overthink, I tear my brain apart in silence — but I’d rather that than fake laughs with fake people. Music? I only fuck with tracks that hit the soul, not that weak noise everybody else calls music.

This is me now. **KINGNUR1.** No longer the soft kid who cared too much. No longer the fool who loved for free. I’m the man who burned, who got broken, who rose out of it harder. You don’t gotta like me. You don’t gotta understand me. But you damn sure gonna respect the name.

## **Chapter 12 – What It’s Like to Be a Man**

I can’t hide myself. I never really could.  
And I don’t expect anyone to understand, because truth is, nobody really cares to. They only see the surface, the mask, the performance you give them. What’s under it? That’s yours to hold. Yours to bury. Yours to carry until your back breaks.

Being a man is not about feelings. It’s about survival. It’s about what you provide. And it’s a lonely road, trust me, lonelier than most can imagine.

I learned this the hard way.

### ****The Weight Nobody Sees****

I remember being that boy, standing outside the principal’s office, waiting on whether I’d be allowed back to class or thrown out because school fees weren’t paid. My mother walked in, her face tired but her voice strong, fighting for me with words that cut sharper than any blade. That day, I saw what sacrifice looks like. That day, I understood: a man is measured by what he provides, not how he feels.

Nobody asked me how I felt standing there. Nobody cared if I was afraid, ashamed, or angry. All that mattered was whether the fees were paid. That’s when I started swallowing emotions like bitter pills, hiding every tear that wanted to fall.

As a man, you don’t get points for pain. You only get respect for results.

### ****The Silent Rulebook****

This world runs on unspoken rules:

* Don’t cry when it gets hard.
* Don’t break when it gets heavy.
* Don’t complain when you’re tired.

Unconditional love? That’s not for us. That’s for women, children, and dogs. Men are expected to be the rock — strong, silent, unshaken. But here’s the truth about rocks: they crack too, only difference is, they do it in silence.

I used to love with no reason, care with no boundaries, give without asking. All it ever gave me back was hurt. So I stopped. That was the day I killed that old version of me. The boy who wanted to please everyone. The boy who thought kindness would be returned.

Now? I smile with my mouth closed. I nod instead of saying yes. I keep my plans locked up and only show results when the time is right. Silence became my weapon, discipline became my shield.

### ****The Generational Curse****

Fathers matter, whether they show it or not. A father’s absence is still a lesson. A father’s neglect still shapes you. I watched mine, and in many ways, I became him without even wanting to. Cold. Silent. Absent. Carrying burdens alone because that’s what we saw.

Our fathers don’t let us see them hurt, because they know we’d copy it. And that’s how the cycle spins — generation after generation. Sons growing into men who don’t know how to cry, who don’t know how to ask for help, who drink their pain, smoke their demons, and keep fighting invisible wars.

That curse? I felt it heavy. And I fought it every day.

### ****The War Inside****

No wonder most men are depressed. No wonder so many of us don’t make it. We go to war outside — working, grinding, providing — then we come back home and face another war inside our minds. And nobody claps for us. Nobody checks if we’re okay. They just expect us to keep going.

I’ve seen brothers break down quietly, behind closed doors. I’ve seen the bottle become their only friend. I’ve felt that same pull, that same darkness, that whisper saying, “You’re alone, no one’s coming to save you.”

And maybe that’s the truth. As a man, you realize one day: nobody’s coming. You have to save yourself.

### ****Flashbacks of Silence****

I think back to moments where silence gave me more power than words ever could:

* The day classmates laughed at me for repeating classes, and I just nodded, walked away, and kept studying. That silence stung them more than any insult I could have thrown back.
* The time I loved a girl, gave her everything, and she treated it like nothing. I didn’t beg, didn’t fight. I just turned cold and let her wonder why my silence burned louder than her excuses.
* The nights I went hungry but didn’t complain, because I knew complaining wouldn’t put food on the table. All I could do was keep moving, keep working, keep building.

Each silence was a scar. Each scar was a lesson. Each lesson built the man I am now.

### ****The Circle of Life****

It’s the circle of life for men: you provide, you endure, you keep your mouth shut. People don’t see your worth until the day you die. That’s when the tears fall, the speeches come, the “we loved him” stories pour out. But where was that love when he was alive, struggling, carrying the weight in silence?

That’s the cruel truth. They only recognize the value of a man when he’s gone.

And knowing that — it changes you. It hardens you. It makes you realize that you have to live for yourself, fight for yourself, and leave your own mark, because nobody’s handing you peace or recognition while you breathe.

### ****My Truth****

So here I stand. King Nur Benjamin. KingNur1. No longer that boy who wanted everyone to like him. No longer that fool who thought love was enough. I’m a man now, shaped by struggle, sharpened by betrayal, strengthened by silence.

I don’t give a damn what anyone says. If I call you my friend, you’re my brother. If not, keep your distance. I’m not friendly, but I’m a good friend. I don’t chase, I don’t beg, I don’t explain.

I write. I work. I think. I overthink. I lie when I need to, and I don’t regret it — because sometimes lies are armor. And if you ever feel I lied to you, trust me, you deserved it.

I hate relationships, but I admire beauty. I stay alone, because solitude feeds me more than fake company ever could. Music is my therapy, but not every track. Only the ones that speak truth. Only the ones that hit the soul.

That’s me now. This is what it’s like to be a man.

Not perfect. Not soft. Not broken. But alive.  
And sometimes, being alive is the loudest victory of all.

## **Chapter 13 – On That Lonely Dirt Road**

When I need space, that’s where I go.  
Not to a club, not to a bar, not to people.  
I go to a place nobody knows.  
A dirt road cut between old trees and broken fences, where even the air feels heavier.  
Where my phone stops working, where my past can’t chase me.  
That’s my escape.

I bring everything with me.  
My hatred. My pain. My mistakes. My guilt.  
All the emotions I don’t know how to explain.  
I load them into my car like passengers — faceless ghosts sitting in the back seat, whispering my regrets.  
And then I drive.

On that lonely dirt road it’s just me, God, and the engine.  
No noise, no lies, no crowd.  
That’s where I found Him — not in a church, not in a mosque, not in a book — but in the silence between the trees when the engine died and the only thing I heard was my own breath.  
That’s where He filled the hole.  
That’s where I stopped being afraid to look at myself.

### ****The Drive****

I fire up the engine and let it roar.  
Every mile, I’m speeding through emotions.  
Anger, sadness, shame, hope — they all flash by like signs on the roadside.  
My family never sees me cry. They never will.  
They’ll never know how heavy it is to try and provide, how many nights I’ve sat in the dark wondering if I’m man enough.  
So when they ask if I’m okay, I flash them a smile.  
They don’t see the weight, the pressure, the darkness.

But the road knows.  
The road takes it from me.

I remember something my father once said about times like these — about finding a place where you can breathe.  
Back then I didn’t get it.  
Now I do.  
Because on that road, my mind is at ease.  
It’s the only place I can face the evil that burdens my soul without breaking in front of somebody.

### ****The Seeds****

I tried my best to plant seeds.  
Work hard. Be honest. Build something.  
Water everything in my life and hope it grows.  
But as a man, you learn quick:  
The only flowers you get are the ones they put on your grave.  
Respect? Maybe. But not now. Not while you’re alive.

Sometimes I feel my father’s pain living inside me.  
Looking back, all I see are his eyes.  
That same quiet, that same weight.  
He told me once, “A house is not a home unless you build it on respect, with some kids and a loving wife.”  
I thought I understood.  
But these days I wonder if I’m burning everything I touch.

### ****The Walls****

If these walls could talk, they’d call me out.  
They’d tell me it’s my fault.  
They’d say I don’t try hard enough.  
That I’m not man enough.  
That I stand silent when I should speak.  
That I burn everything my hands touch.

If these walls could talk, they’d blame me.  
They’d say my addictive ways chased people off.  
They’d say my silence built the chains I’m wearing now.  
They’d say I hurt myself by not explaining how broken I am inside.

But walls don’t talk.  
They just watch.  
And I just keep driving.

### ****The Hell Inside****

I’m broken in places I can’t even see.  
I know there’s a heaven somewhere, because the hell that’s in me is real.  
It’s dangerous. It’s heavy.  
And I’m paying for it with every piece of my soul.

So I keep driving that dirt road.  
Me, God, and the ghosts in my backseat.  
I bring my hatred. I pack my pain.  
And mile after mile, I let pieces of it go.

Because on that lonely dirt road, I’m not BIZIMANA, not Adam, not even KingNur.  
I’m just a man — no mask, no armor, no noise.  
And for a few moments, I feel free.

## **CHAPTER 14 – Leave My Mom Alone**

Being alone is hard.  
It’s not some Instagram quote. It’s not a line in a sad song.  
It’s a real, thick silence that sits in your chest at night and laughs at you.

It’s been years now.  
Years of sitting at kitchen tables with empty chairs.  
Years of walking through markets, people whispering behind their hands.  
Years of telling myself I’m good, I’m strong, I’m different — and still feeling like a dog tied up outside of a party.

Judging is easy.  
Especially when you’ve never tasted it.  
It’s easy to point fingers from the warmth of a clean house, with a father in the living room, a mother in the kitchen, siblings laughing in the hallway. It’s easy to talk when you’ve never had to swallow shame like medicine.

The hardest part was the first time.  
First time I realized people weren’t seeing me — they were seeing a rumor.  
First time I saw my mom’s name in their mouths like a dirty joke.  
First time I realized my family was a headline and not a home.

And the second hardest part?  
Knowing when the last time will be.  
The last time you’ll see her cry.  
The last time you’ll answer the phone before it becomes another number in prison.  
The last time someone will spit your name like it’s poison.

It’s true, I don’t mind a little tenderness from time to time.  
I’m not made of stone.  
I’m not as cold as the streets want me to be.  
But life makes you hard. Life trains you to cut your own heart open before someone else does.

This time, well… this time I could do it by insulting her.  
Yeah. People think that’s weakness, but it’s survival.  
Better I take the words out of their mouths than watch them spit it at her like knives.  
Everything is negotiable in life, for a fee.  
Besides, I’m probably her best client — not in money, but in loyalty.  
I’ve paid the price for both of us a hundred times.

But **oh!**

Leave my mom alone.  
I said leave her alone.  
You hear me?

Yes, I know. It’s true she’s not perfect.  
But she’s a hero.  
She’s my hero.  
And I’ll always be proud to talk about it.  
I’ll talk about it until my throat bleeds.

I’m a son of a bitch, as they say.  
I’ve heard it in alleys, in courtrooms, in whispers.  
But after all she’s done for them — the neighbors, the family, the city — they should shut their mouths.  
Forgive their stupidity, she always says.  
“Forgive them, son.”

Oh dear mother! They dehumanize you.  
It’s easier for them that way.  
The same ones who court you in private are the ones who spit on your name in public.  
Everyone turns a blind eye.  
Everyone acts like they don’t know.

Why does everyone hate me?  
When I’m the one who feeds them.  
Their lives would be much more modest without me.  
Without me, they would be rotten.  
Beds and security, even their food — they all have a price, Madam.  
But in life, everything has to be paid for.

They accuse me of human trafficking.  
They whisper about “dirty money.”  
They print stories.  
But 50, 40, 30, or 20% — I’ve given them more than they deserve.  
They shouldn’t think they’re models too much.  
Ladies… or should I say, whores.

I know it’s your job.  
But I have to do mine, right?  
Between yours and mine the difference is that I pay taxes.  
I pay the price.  
I take the heat.

Go on, move along, Madam.  
Take back your papers and what’s left of your dignity.  
Poor woman, pffff.  
Find yourself a real job.

This is where it gets twisted.  
This is where you see me — the boy they called a dog, a thief, a bastard — standing in the middle of a street, saying these things.  
I’m not proud of it.  
But this is what the world built.  
This is what they made.

You want to know who I am?  
I’m the son who still calls his mom a hero even when she’s on her knees.  
I’m the man who feeds the same mouths that curse him.  
I’m the guy who learned to throw fire at the world before it burns me first.

And somewhere inside, a voice still says:  
Maybe one day, they’ll stop.  
Maybe one day, someone will see me, see her, see the truth.

But until then?  
I keep my chin up.  
I keep my hands dirty.  
I keep walking.

And every time they bring her name up,  
Every time they call me what they call me,  
I stand taller.

Leave my mom alone.

This is my warning.  
This is my prayer.  
This is my chapter.

## **CHAPTER 15 – Oaths and Regrets**

We do things we regret.  
That’s not just a phrase, that’s a stain that doesn’t come off your hands.  
Some nights I sit and stare at my palms and wonder how many fingerprints I’ve left on mistakes I can’t undo.

Over time I took an oath.  
Not the kind with judges and flags — my own oath.  
I did it sincerely. I whispered it at night like a prayer nobody could hear.  
I told myself I’d do better.  
We stupidly forget, though.  
We get distracted by survival.  
We’re out here dodging shadows, taking risks for money, for family, for names that ain’t ours anymore.

I dream of a life where I fall asleep wisely.  
Where the pillow isn’t wet with sweat and shame.  
Where closing my eyes isn’t like stepping into a courtroom.  
But that life isn’t mine yet.  
Right now, I’m still up at 3 a.m., writing my own confessions in my head.

I’m aware that I owe you so much.  
You — my mother, my father, my brothers, my ghosts.  
Over time I took an oath, and I still repeat it.  
I did it sincerely, and I’m saying it clearly now:  
I did things that I really regret.

They tell me, “Put your own into it.”  
Do they even know what that means?  
Do they know how much “own” I’ve already poured into this?  
Blood, sweat, nights with no food, days with no rest.  
How many get lost along the way because nobody ever showed them another road?  
What would I do if I were you?  
What would you do if you were me?

They tell me again, “Put your own into it.”  
How many have reached out to me with empty hands and open mouths,  
and when I gave them what I had, they disappeared?  
What would I do if I were you?  
What would you do if you were me?

I came, I saw, I wasted my time.  
People talk like I was out here winning, but half the time I was just treading water,  
trying not to drown in my own promises.  
I couldn’t do anything but grit my teeth.  
There’s only so much you can show — pain becomes a language you speak with your jaw clenched shut.

I dreamed my life through the window.  
Staring out, watching other kids live their lives, go to school, laugh.  
We desire mercy without effort, but mercy is expensive in this city.  
The one who takes life is behind the door — sometimes you can hear him breathing.  
And then you realize: everything has passed so quickly.  
Your twenties gone, your dreams gone, your friends buried or in cells.

I continued on my way.  
We do things we regret, it’s true.  
But I learned to step back.  
Sometimes I’m distracted and I’ve done too much.  
I live at night because I dream in secret.  
All these pains that I’m going to take away someday.

In the trials, I shut myself away.  
Courtrooms, police stations, hospital waiting rooms.  
I put myself in danger, I build, I undo.  
It’s like trying to fix a house while it’s on fire.

We do things we regret, it’s true.  
I don’t want to believe anything anymore.  
I have no more hope.  
Let me have what I don’t have.  
I’m lost. I don’t sleep anymore.  
In broad daylight, I don’t see anymore.  
I’m lost. I don’t sleep anymore.  
In broad daylight, I don’t see anymore.

But even in that darkness, some part of me still holds onto the oath.  
Some part of me still writes these chapters.  
Because maybe if I put the words down, someone will understand what I mean when I say:  
I did it sincerely.  
I did it for survival.  
I regret it all.  
And I’m still here.

## **CHAPTER 16 – Number One for Me**

I was a foolish little child.  
Crazy things I used to do.  
And all the pain I put you through —  
Mama, now I’m here for you.

For every time you wiped my nose while I fought you,  
for every time you pulled me close while I tried to pull away,  
for every day I slammed the door because I thought I knew everything,  
I see it now.  
All those times I made you cry,  
the days I told you lies,  
the nights I didn’t come home —  
now it’s time for you to rise.  
Now it’s my turn to stand for you.  
Now it’s my turn to cover you like you covered me.

Oh, if I could turn back time, rewind,  
if I could make it undone,  
I swear that I would.  
I’d rewrite those nights.  
I’d swallow my pride.  
I’d stand behind you instead of against you.  
I’d be the boy you deserved.  
But time doesn’t move backwards —  
it just hands you the bill for what you broke.

Mum, I’m all grown up now.  
It’s a brand‑new day.  
I’m not perfect, but I’m trying.  
I’d like to put a smile on your face every day.  
Not just on Mother’s Day.  
Not just when I post a picture online.  
Every day.

Mum, I’m all grown up now.  
And it’s not too late.  
I’d like to put a smile on your face every day.  
To take away some of the wrinkles that pain carved into you.  
To bring back a little of the laughter you gave up raising me.

And now, I finally understand your famous line about  
“the day you’ll face in time.”  
I remember you saying it in Kinyarwanda,  
in that quiet but deadly tone,  
and me rolling my eyes like I was bulletproof.  
You’d say, “One day, you’ll understand when you have your own.”  
And now I’ve got a child of mine.  
And suddenly your words have teeth.  
Suddenly your warnings are real.  
Suddenly I’m you —  
standing over a small life,  
terrified of messing it up,  
praying for patience,  
willing to bleed for them.

Even though I was so bad,  
I’ve learned so much from you.  
You didn’t teach me with books;  
you taught me with your back bent over work,  
with your hands cracked from cleaning,  
with your prayers whispered before dawn.  
Now I’m trying to do it too —  
love my kid the way you do.  
Even when I’m tired.  
Even when nobody’s clapping.  
Even when I feel invisible.

There’s no one in this world who can take your place.  
You’re not just my mother.  
You’re my first shield,  
my first teacher,  
my first home.  
I’m sorry for ever taking you for granted.  
I’m sorry for making you small so I could feel big.  
I’m sorry for every time I made you cry behind a closed door.

Now I will use every chance I get  
to make you smile whenever I’m around you.  
Now I will try to love you like you loved me,  
even when I was unlovable.  
Only God knows how much you mean to me.  
And He knows I mean these words.

You know, Mama, you are the number one for me.  
Always have been.  
Always will be.  
Even when I call myself King Nur,  
even when I build walls around my heart,  
even when I act hard and cold —  
the truth is, you’re still my soft place to land.  
You’re still the reason I’m alive to write these words.  
And I want the world to know that.

This is your chapter, Mama.  
This is my confession.  
This is me, a grown man, telling you:  
I see you.  
I honor you.  
I love you.  
Number one, forever.

## **CHAPTER 18 – THE TRUTH BEHIND THE BROKEN**

This is the end of the journey — or maybe it’s just a pause before the next one. I’ve walked through fire, water, and shadow, and I’ve come out with scars that are mine to carry. They tell a story no one can take from me, a story that begins before I could even understand the world and continues to today, in every decision, every breath I take.

I was born BIZIMANA Adam — a name that carried expectations, family, and history. But the man I’ve become calls himself King Nur Benjamin, or Kingnur1, because I had to pull myself from the shadow of names I didn’t choose, from a past I didn’t control. I had to claim myself, my identity, my voice. I had to build a fortress around my mind and my heart, because the world was ready to take everything if I left it unguarded.

I’ve learned that life is unkind, that people will judge you before they know you, and that the weight of silence can be heavier than any prison. But I’ve also learned that silence can be power. Discipline can be armor. Love can be both a weapon and a shield. The lessons I’ve learned — from the pain of being alone, from love that hurt more than it healed, from the struggle to stand when there was nothing to stand on — these lessons are the currency of my soul.

I’ve been a bad boy, a silent rebel, a foolish child. I’ve been reckless, angry, and broken. But I’ve also been resilient. I’ve been the son who witnessed his mother’s sacrifice and swore, in small silent vows, to repay her with my life. I’ve been the boy who failed exams, struggled with learning, and fought the shame of poverty, only to rise one step at a time toward knowledge, discipline, and strength.

Faith found me in fragments — in the teachings of my mother, in the guidance of a man who showed me Islam, in the quiet moments when God whispered in ways no one else could hear. I’ve learned that belief is more than rituals; it’s a refuge, a compass, and a truth that holds even when the world does not.

Love has been my battlefield. I’ve fallen for people too soon, trusted too easily, and lost too much. I’ve learned that young love is often pain disguised as sweetness, and that real love begins with knowing yourself before you give yourself away. I’ve learned that relationships are mirrors — reflecting back our mistakes, our growth, and our resilience.

I’ve learned to walk with my head high, to move quietly, to build silently. I’ve learned that the world respects results more than intentions, that trust must be earned, and that life rewards those who understand that pain, sacrifice, and patience are inseparable. I’ve learned that no one will fight my battles for me — not even family, not even friends — and that sometimes the strongest thing I can do is stand alone and face myself.

Now, I am King Nur Benjamin. I am quiet, deliberate, and observant. I am loyal to those who deserve it, protective of those I love, and fiercely independent. I do not seek validation from the world. I do not waste energy on people who cannot see the truth in me. I move with purpose, and I measure my words carefully because I know that silence often speaks louder than any shout.

This is the truth behind the broken: that a life filled with pain, struggle, mistakes, and confusion can still give birth to clarity, strength, and purpose. That being broken does not mean being defeated. It means having the power to rebuild, to rise, and to write your story your way. Every scar I carry is proof that I survived. Every mistake is a lesson. Every lonely night, every betrayal, every heartbreak — they were the tools that shaped me.

And through it all, one thing remains: the love of my mother, the faith that guided me, and the courage I discovered in my own reflection. They are the light I carry when darkness tries to pull me back. They are the reason I continue, the reason I fight, and the reason I write this story — so that anyone who reads it can understand that even the broken can rise.

So this is my conclusion, my declaration, my testament:  
I am who I am. I am flawed, strong, stubborn, and relentless. I am King Nur Benjamin. I am the boy who once cried in silence, the student who failed and rose, the man who loves carefully and lives deliberately.  
I am the truth behind the broken.  
And I will continue to rise.

THE END..!!