

The Iron Lady

By

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***Free*editorial** 

CHAPTER ONE

“Help me! Help me! Woyee! The father of my children, please stop it! Please stop it! Am sorry. I won’t repeat it again”, cried Laisita rolling and growling in pain, “My husband you will never see me again I promise you, please have mercy on me for the sake of our children.” This is not the first time Laisita received blows and kicks from her husband Mr. Mambo. Our story is narrated from humble beginnings from a small town referred to as Luckysammer. Mr. and Mrs. Maweale were blessed with six children four daughters’ two boys. Life for them was easy compared to the economy of the country. They lived in a three bedroom house that had electricity and water and in those days that was referred to as luxury. Their children went to good private schools and they use to perform well especially their eldest daughter Laisita. She was hardworking and at only fourteen she used to help her mother take care of her other siblings, since her mother was a house wife. Things became so tough for them when Mr. Maweale the solo bread winner of the family suffered an accident at the railway station when he tried to save a boy who was stuck at the rail roads while trying to cross the railway. By then, He was employed at the station as one of the supervisors. The train did not manage to stop on time and Mr. Maweale got entangled while trying to pull the boy. Unfortunately his left side was severely injured and the boy unfortunately died on the spot due to the fatal accident. Mr. Maweale was hospitalized for two months but afterwards he was discharged but could not go back to work because he was paralyzed on his left side. Things became so tough that their livelihood changed, they moved from being rich to poor. In the sense that having two meals a day was a luxury and not a necessity for them. Mrs. Maweale tried to follow up at her husband’s work place to claim for compensation since he was injured in the line of duty but the bosses who were supposed to cater for their needs decided to bribe the people heading the case and the case was pushed aside. The couple talked and they decide that the only solution was to move back to their rural place in Maasai Land since Mr. Maweale had initially inherited a family land there. They moved there but before they could even settle down, things started heating up.

Mr. Maweale initially moved to the city to save her daughters from their customs but little did he know that fate will have it way and he would return to the same place he was running away from. Trouble started brewing up for Lasita who was the eldest daughter of the family. Elders would stream their home day and night wanting her hand in marriage but his father would deny over and over again.

One day the elders met in private and decided to come up with a plan to kill Mr. Maweale and his two younger sons, since they were the only standing block between them and the girls. They hired Samburu warriors to do the dirty job for them telling them that the land that the man owned was to be divided amongst them. One day while the Maweales were asleep, they were ambushed and Mr. Maweale and his two sons were stabbed to death and they died on the spot, the warriors also took with them the two cattle's and four sheep's that the family owned to make it look like a raid. The burial was held and the community members led by the elders blamed the neighboring Itika community for carrying out the raid saying that they will retaliate the same way.

Before the dust could even settle Laisita who was just fourteen and her three sisters aged six, eight and eleven were taken by women of the community for them to be circumcised as there custom demanded. Her immediate sister Laito and Ellena who were eleven and eight years respectively managed to escape while Laisita and Puru who was the youngest were caught. Their mother cried for them to be released taming the custom as something of the past but her cries fell on deaf ears. The women went ahead with the "cut" as it was known by then circumcision. Unfortunately the young girl bled to death due to improper means of circumcision and since the hospitals were so far they could not managed to take her for proper treatment. This was another bomb shell for the mother. Things were happening in their family as if someone had placed a curse on them. Laisita was strong and she recovered quickly just after four days. She then started to search for her two sisters but all was in vain.

"Mother what should we do?" asked Laisita, " There is nothing we can do. The elders and the community at large are against us, if we make a fuss by insisting to the elders for the search of yours sisters we shall be sent packing. We have nowhere to go and all we can do is sit and wait and pray that the lord will come through for us," said her mother.

A year passed and the elders decided to marry off Laisita to some old rich man by the name of Mr. Mambo. He was known for his ruthlessness with women and every woman he married either died from beatings or became a cripple. The elders knew that if they married her off the late Mr. Maweales farming lands would be there's. They knew that Laisita would now take care of her mother because she would be now married to the old man. The men's riches were normally measured by the number of cattle he had in his possession. Laisita tried to tell her mother to intervene but her mother had nothing to say but to agree with the elders or face the consequence of being excommunicated. The council of elders had always the last say. In those days anything that a man said had no objection and was to be followed to the latter.

The marriage ceremony took place and she was sent packing to her husband's place. The amazing thing was that Mr. Mambo's heart was so soft on Laisita. He termed her as his jewel because of her beauty that complemented her light skin. Laisita used to cry every day blaming his late father and the heavens for cursing them and making their lives miserable. After a few months she got pregnant and her husband decided that he will make her a manyatta as he made for the other four wives that he married so that she can also raise her children in her own house. A manyatta is a house that is built from mud, twigs and grass.

After her seventh month in pregnancy Laisita was now allowed to go out since her pregnancy was visible and no man would want to follow a pregnant lady around even if, she was young and beautiful. One day on her way to the market she met with a mission lady called Grace. Grace was the first white she had ever met in Samburu. She used to see only white people back in the city. When Grace saw her she was filled with pity because Laisita was young and to make matters worse she was also pregnant. Grace was so nice and kind to her and she won the heart of Laisita. After the introductions, Grace wanted Laisita to come to the camp to learn but Laisita refused she narrated everything to Grace and she told her if her husband would hear about it he would not agree, but Grace just offered to help her. Grace gave her directions to the camping site in Samburu town and told her that they taught women on how to read write and do other things like weaving, beading and tailoring and all was for free. Laisita was so eager to learn that she told Grace that she will find a way to come. They parted ways and after a weeks' time Laisita decided to go check on the camp because she was eager to learn and be skillful in life. Laisita loved what she saw she stayed until it was late. She was scared while going home because it was already night fall. Since she was the husband's favorite when she reached home, she lied to her husband that what she was looking for was not in the near market but far so she decide to go look for it in the next town. Her husband did not scold her but told her never to go that far again if she wanted anything she was to tell him and he will send for it if it was not readily available. Things continued like this until she gave birth to twin babies and she named them Lolo and Lee. She stayed home until she became strong enough and she started going back to the camp. There, Grace was to pick up from where she left to teach her. After sometime, the husband was feed up with her going early and coming back late. He decided to hire someone to follow her and when he was told where she normally goes he decided to tell her to stop. Laisita was adamant at first, that she did not stop going to the camp consoling herself that if she comes home early her husband would not realize. Unlucky was she that her husband followed her and he gave her a thorough beating asking her why she defied his authority. Laisita stayed home for some days nursing her injuries. After a few weeks she started going back

to the camp. Her other co-wives tried to warn her but their warning fell on deaf ears. One day when she left the camp hurrying home she found her husband waiting for her in her manyatta. "Where are you from?," her husband asked shouting at her.

"Ammmm! Mmmmm! I had gone for a wal.....," before Laisita could even finish her statement blows and kicks fell on her like rain falling on the roof top. Mr. Mambo did this not because he wanted to beat up his jewel but it was to protect his ego and always have the final word in the home. In their community to beat up a wife was not something strange or unusual but was a daily occurrence.

"Woyeee! Woyee! The father of my children, please stop it! Please stop it! Am sorry. I won't repeat it again", cried Laisita rolling and growling in pain, "My husband you will never see me again I promise you, please have mercy on me for the sake of our children." Mr. Mambo was so hot tempered that no one interrupted him or even intervened when he was disciplining his wives. Everybody would listen from far and just nod their heads in disbelief of how a human being can be so merciless. Laisita in pain picked her eight month old children who were screaming and crying not knowing what was happening and started to console them. Her whole body was filled with bruises and she was aching all over. News reached her mother of what had happened that one day she just packed her clothes and decided to go see her daughter.

"Mother!," Laisita cried out while she ran to embrace her mother with tears rolling down her chubby cheeks. She cried so dearly that her mother who was trying to be strong was filled with tears." Hush my daughter, I am here with you now. I cannot heal your pain but I can just afford to make you smile just for today." Her mother coming to visit her at her husband's place was the best present she had ever received since she got married. She prepared something small for her mother to fill her stomach with and they talked and laughed and when she asked after her siblings who ran away her mother just bowed her head and a drop of tear just rolled down. She just concluded that they were not found. After sometimes Mr. Mambo came to see Laisita's mother. They talked for some time and since it was getting late Laisita's husband retired to his manyatta to sleep. After Laisita had put the children to sleep her mother sat her down and told her what she had heard about her going to the camp to learn and her husband beating her up because of that. Laisita did not deny when her mother asked if it was true. Instead of her mother giving her lectures of how she should obey her husband she started telling Laisita of the mistake she herself had made and how she regrets it till this day and if only she could turn back the hands of time she would change on her approach to life itself. Her mother regretted on how she used to stay at home and just wait for their late father Mr. Mawele to cater for everything in the house.

“If I was working, even if your father had lost his job I would have managed to take care of you and your siblings even if it meant struggling but we were together as a family. But the fact that I was a house wife there was nothing I would have done,” her mother said, “Since am here I have decided that I will help you. I will pretend that am sick and I will take care of the kids as you will be going to the camp to learn my daughter. I want you to make something out of yourself. I don’t know for how long this will continue but before your husband realizes you would have done something or even learnt a skill that will help you in future. I know this will not change everything, but it will give you a head start in life it will at least help you to help your children and give you an opportunity in life.” Laisita thanked her mother and promised that she will work hard and be more discreet so that her husband would not realized when she was going and coming. The following morning Laisita told her husband that her mother was not feeling well and that she wanted to take care of her for a few days, since if she goes back to her place in the village, no one would take care of her since she was all alone. Her husband had no other option but to agree with his jewel. He told her only for a few days, because he did not want to miss his wife visiting him in his manyatta at night. Laisita was so happy that they placed everything in motion. Immediately her husband left the house the following morning, Laisita waited for some time and then sneaked to go to the camp. Laisita did this every morning just to go to the camp to learn. Laisita started catching up so fast because the children were now safe at home with their grandmother and they were no longer a distraction. Grace was so impressed she decided that she would aid in giving her books to go read at home.

Laisita learnt how to do bead work, how to design clothes and saw them, she learnt how to read and write and many more. Her mother stayed with her for weeks, they turned into months and finally a year. One day Laisita told her mother of how Grace had offered to help her establish herself in the city and help her start a business since she was good in what she did. Her mother was so happy but told her that she should first wait for her to return to her home so that she can run. After two days Laisita’s mother left for her home town. Mr. Mambo was now happy that he would have ample time with his wife. Little did he know that very soon his beloved wife will be nowhere to be seen. When Grace’s mission was almost over at the camp she told Laisita to prepare herself that they would be living in a weeks’ time. When the day arrived Laisita packed all her necessary belongings she was really praying to the heaven to show her favor. When she was about to sneak out her husband called her. It was her turn to lie down with her husband. At first she was resistant but she realized that time is not on her side and she did not want to give her husband the impression that anything was going down so she immediately gave in. Grace was really anxious because she did not know if Laisita will make it at

the bus terminal on time or not. This was the only opportunity for young Laisita to make a life for her and her children. “Vuuuum! Vuuuum!,” the bus driver started the engines and Grace lost all hope. When the bus was living the terminal fortunately Grace looked back and saw Laisita hurrying towards the leaving bus. She was so happy that she shouted at the bus driver to stop the bus that a passenger who was to travel with her was chasing after the bus. The driver stopped and immediately the door opened Grace ran out to help Laisita. She hugged her and helped her with one of the twins. Sweat was dripping all over her body. She was panting so hard and told Grace she had run so fast as if a lion was chasing after her. They both laughed and hurried inside the bus and their journey started. It was a long journey to the city and Laisita was so exhausted because it had been long since she last travelled to search a distant place.

CHAPTER TWO

“Cooorocoooo!” The cock crowed in the morning, Mr. Mambo woke up and went to search for his beloved wife. He wanted Laisita to make him breakfast that morning. Shock on him when he called out but there was no answer. Mr. Mambo called out several times and that attracted the other wives attention. They all gathered at Laisita's manyatta to find out what the problem was. “May be she is unwell,” one of the wives insisted. The first wife her name Lucypa went into the manyatta to find out why Laisita was not responding. What a rude shock she met with when she opened the door and saw that there were few clothes on the rack of the room and the place looked like it was deserted a long time ago because of the way things were left in a mess. “Ohhhh! My co-wives,” Lucypa called out in a shaking voice, “Our young wife is nowhere to be seen”. Mr. Mambo was filled with rage and banged the door of the manyatta to see for himself. “Where is she?,” he shouted “This early in the morning she has gone out with the children. Where can she be?”. “My husband some of her clothes and the children's clothes are missing?,” Lucypa said. Mr. Mambo was filled with a lot of bitterness in him he thought to himself where she might have gone but he had no clue. He assembled the elders and some of the samburu warriors and they sat down to deliberate on the matter. Some of the wives were happy that Laisita had disappeared and that now since she was nowhere to be seen, they might now have their husbands' attention, but Mr. Mambo was determined to have Laisita back.

One of the elders asked, “Did you see her yesterday night?” “Yes I was with her at night it was her turn to lay with me and after that I took her to her

manyatta and she closed the door after me and I went to my manyatta to sleep. I did not notice anything unusual and I am still shocked that she carried the babies and also took some of their clothes with her,” Mr. Mambo replied. Mambo loved Laisita so much because she was still young, beautiful and energetic in bed. Even after giving birth she still went back to her size eight figure. Unlike the other wives, Laisita was the most expensive bride he had paid for and the one that all the villages envied him for because of her beauty. He loved her so much and despite the beatings that he gave her, he still bought her everything that she wanted. Mr. Mambo was still not convinced that Laisita had gone because he thought that money and all the materialistic things that he gave her was all that a woman needed he did not think once to himself that there is much more than what meets the eye. That is self driven motivation, curiosity to explore different things the urge to learn and become someone by one self.

Nightfall came while they still waited. One of the elders suggested that tomorrow morning they should go see Laisita's mother maybe she went there or might know where she is. They retired to sleep but Mr. Mambo did not even want to close his eyes because all that was going through his mind were questions that he needed answers to. “What would people say about me? I am the richest man in this village. My word is always final and people fear me. Was it that I was too harsh on my wives? Or maybe too soft on them that Laisita ignored my authority and fled from her manyatta. Was she seeing anyone? Who helped her escape?” No one had ever done something as brave as what Laisita did in the Maasai land she was the first and stories spread like bush fire and everywhere Mr. Mambo was going people glanced in secret while whispering.

“Finally it's morning,” Mr. Mambo said as he walked out of his manyatta. He had been up all night asking questions that he had no answers to. His eyes were red and sore due to lack of enough sleep. He did not even think that one can experience a very long day or night, he only heard people saying the phrase but as people say experience is the best teacher. He called out to the elders and they assembled and the journey to Laisita's home began. Mambo was so restless that whenever the bus stopped he asked if they had already reached. After a few hours they came to Laisita's home. Mrs. Mawele saw her in-laws and her heart jumped with joy she knew that her daughter had finally succeeded to run away but she pretended as if everything was okay. “Welcome my in-laws,” She said with a broad smile, “What do I owe this unexpected visit for and why did you not inform me so that I could prepare one of your best dishes my husbands.” “We are here not for pleasure but for serious business,” one of the elders lashed out, “How have you trained your daughter? Is that what you were taught by your own parents?” “My husband's I don't

understand why are you insulting me?” Mrs. Mawele asked looking at Mambo. Mambo was so furious and he was just looking around the house like he was searching for something.

The elders then explained to Mrs. Mawele that her daughter had gone missing and that they came to see if she was there. Laisita's mother broke down into tears blaming them that he had left her daughter in their care but they had lost her. She threw a tantrum and the elders got scared that they left telling her that they will do everything in their powers to find Laisita. When they left, Laisita's mother jumped with joy and prayed for Laisita to the heavens to protect her and that her sacrifice be not in vain, that she may prosper and make a change in her life. She just hoped and prayed that she will live long to see her daughter one day and her grandchildren.

In the city Laisita had already settled down. Grace was so helpful that within a matter of weeks she helped Laisita acquire employment in a cleaning agency. The work was hectic but because she had promised her mother that she will make it in life she worked so hard even without complaining because she knew that she had two more mouths to feed at home. Laisita was doing well and sometimes she used to take double shift and stay without seeing her children so that she could earn the extra cash that she needed so much. Within the first few months she started saving an eighth of her monthly income and the more over time she did the more money she got. Her aim was to start her own business of bead work and sewing and Grace helped her by buying materials for her that when she was not at the cleaning job she made some nice pair of earrings and necklace.

Business was doing well and within a short time she had managed to start a cultural shop in Nairobi an area referred to as the Maasai market. This was a place where tourist would go to buy souvenirs to take back to their home country. Laisita thought that only Maasai were found there but the more she frequent the market the more she found all sought of tribes and different cultures that brought their products there to sell. Life became so easy for her that she quite the cleaning job and enrolled herself back to school. Her children were well taken care of by Grace and since she had a flowing income she managed to employ another helper to take care of the kids when Grace was out on a retreat mission with the church and also when she was either at work or at school.

Time passed and Lolo and Lee reached the attainable age to attend school, by then Laisita had cleared school and gotten a job as a receptionist in a hotel. She never imagined that life would be this good considering how she had struggled in the past. She often remembered her mother by sending her money through letters that were to be delivered by bus drivers who used to pass near

their home on their way to Nairobi. Laisita also knew that her husband Mr. Mambo was still looking for her and that he was now the Member of Parliament from her constituency back at home. Laisita could not even travel back to see her mother because she knew that if Mr. Mambo got wind that she was in the area no one could save her because now his powers were beyond since he now controlled the chiefs ,police and all the administrative officials.

It reached a point that Grace was to return back to her homeland in England because her mission contract was over. Laisita was so sad because Grace was like her second mother, her sister and also like the best friend she never had. They parted ways but Grace left her a contact number in case she needed anything. Grace was relieved that at least of all the young girls that had been married off she had managed to save one and at least she left knowing that even when she is not there that Laisita and her children will live comfortably.

Laisita did so well at her work place that she was later promoted to a supervisory position. In her new position she had ample time to at least spend time with her kids, take them to fun place and buy them lots of fun toys and finger licking foods that they enjoyed at least twice a week. It reached a point that Laisita took her mother in so that she could live with her and also help with the children. Her mother was so happy because her daughter was living a very comfortable life. She was working hard and putting food on the table, paying all the bills of the house and buying clothes for them. Laisita also hired a detective to go look for her lost two sisters, Laito and Ellena. They just prayed and hoped with their mother that the two were not dead.

CHAPTER THREE

In our mother tongue we normally say, “Mountains don’t meet but people do” the world is indeed a small place. One day when Laisita was on duty she heard someone who sounded exactly like her husbands’ voice. She did not look back immediately but glanced in a proper like manner and shock on her it was the father of her children. She moved swiftly through the crowd to go hide. Her heart was pounding so fast that you could think the next thing it would do is jump out of her skin. After she managed to escape she went to the receptionist desk to enquire of what Mr. Mambo was doing at the hotel. Maggie the receptionist told her that the M.P was in the hotel because they had a three day conference at the hotel. She asked why she was not informed but the receptionist told her that she had given her the memo that had been made. When Laisita recalled the specific date it dawned on her that the same day was

the day she got rained on and all her books and documents were so wet that the ink on them had faded so she decided to discard them. “Damn! Why didn’t I ask for the documents again at least I would have aligned my offs with the function or even taken a sick leave.” She told her herself. She then rushed to her office and closed the door behind her. Her worst nightmare had come right before her eyes.

Laisita was so scared that when she was still imagining of how she wanted the ground to open up and swallow her. A knock was heard at the door. A scissor like pain cut through her stomach. It was as if someone had lit a match in her stomach. “Who can it be? Does he know that am here? Should I open the door or should I just sit still and let the person who is knocking at the door get tired and go away?” these were the thoughts that were going through her mind. But the knock was persistent the person was not going away and Laisita became so frighten and also she thought that if she did not open the door it would attract so much attention that she opened the door and Alas! It was her mother she had just passed through the office to tell her daughter that she had been to the hospital to see the doctor and she only brought the prescription to her so that when she lives work she would pass by the chemist to buy the drugs for her.

“Mother! Have you not seen Mr. Mambo?” Laisita asked curiously, “His here in our hotel. He came for a meeting with the other member of parliament.” Her mother just looked at her and was asking if she was sure he was the one. The fact that the two might come across him gave her mother chills all over her body. They were asking each other how they can manage to get outside the premises of the hotel without attracting attentions and mostly without meeting with Mr. Mambo. “We are doomed,” her mother said, “If that man even gets a scent of us in this hotel we are just dead meat. Do you know what he can do to us? When you left he changed so much he is heartless and killing for him is not a big deal it’s like the morning greetings. We should get out of this place as fast as possible I want to see my grandchildren getting married.” Laisita then made a phone call to one of the security personnel that she trusted. The watchman came rushing to Laisitas office because he knew that if Laisita was asking for a favor he would get a tip for himself that is inform of money. Laisita then asked for permission from her boss to take her mother home pretending that she was so ill that she could not go alone. Her boss agreed and she was told that the whole day the following day she would have to work double shifts it was not easy for Laisita but she had to agree so that she could escape.

Sneaking out was not easy but fruitfully they managed to escape through the back door of the hotel and they paid the watchman for his assistance. They also had to walk quite a distance from the hotel to get a bus because unlike the

front way where buses would pass in front of the hotel the back gate was quite deserted. On arriving home, they were too exhausted that they immediately took their showers had dinner and retired to bed. The whole night Laisita wondered what she would do if they met face to face. But she gathered confidence and told herself whatever was to come she will face it. She had seen worse and experienced difficult things. The following morning Laisita woke up prepared herself but before she left she told her mother that incase she did not come back before midnight she should inform the police. Her mother begged her not to go to work but she refused, all she could say was that she had to or the bills of the house were not going to pay themselves. Her heart was just pounding when she entered the compound of her work place to her amazement the flashy cars that were packed outside the packing area were nowhere to be seen. She then asked the watchmen where the M.P.S were and she was informed that their trip was cut short because the vice president was holding a harambe in one of their constituencies so they had to postpone the meeting so that they could attend. She was so happy and she smiled to herself. That day she did her job so well that her boss was happy with her, there were no hiccups or hitches in everything that she did.

On the other hand the detective that Laisita hired had found a lead regarding her sisters. He informed her but they were too late. When they arrived at the place they were directed to, not many people were willing to talk. They asked around but the news they got was that the sisters had already been adopted and the transaction normally did not take place on paper since most of the agents did not want the security agents to get knocking on their doors. It was normally a black market operation. They had hit another road block. Laisita just gave up because she did not know where she could even find them. This was the closest she had got to find her sisters. Nairobi was so big and the possibility was that they could have been taken anywhere in the country because in those days devil worshipping was prone and many people had been killed and their bodies were found dumped and most of their private parts mutilated and missing. Laisita's mother was so heartbroken she had done everything in her powers to get back her girls but all was in vain. She had visited several witch doctors but they all swindled her money and gave her false hope. She also had gone back to the shelter to find out if there was anyone who could give her leads to where the girls were at a price but some of the agents asked for outrageous amounts that they could not afford and the ones they could afford to pay gave her wrong directions. She finally gave up and said that if they were to meet in this world or the next she would still be happy to see them.

Lolo and Lee were doing so well in school they had grown so big and they were now in their second grade. Their mother was so happy because the two

were top perform ace in their classes. One day Lee who is self spoken asked his mother, “Mum! Other children have two parents why do we only have one?” His mother was dumb founded and she did not know what to tell him. Laisitas mother jumped to her rescue and told the boy that they had a dad but he was traveling around the world because he was a very busy man. It never dawned on Laisitas that one day her kids would start asking questions about their dad. She thought that she was saving them from his kind of life and forgot that he will always remain their father whether he was a good or a bad man. Lee just brushed the story of and continued playing with his sister.

What a life Laisita thought to herself, what will be my next answer if the children ask after their father again and again? Will she give them the same answer or what will be the next lie? Her mother called her to the bedroom and interrupted her thoughts. “Mother,” she called out, “I know what you are thinking, but I have decided to face my past, I have been running too much but if I don’t confront my fears I will forever remain a fugitive in my own world. These are his children and right now am a stable woman. I am now the manager at the hotel and I can now face Mr. Mambo. He might have more money than me but the law will never be defeated I also have my connections and I know my rights and number of people who will stand by me in my time of need.” Her mother was so impressed that she just hugged her daughter and told her that it was time. She had stayed with her all this while so that Laisita could face her fears the fact that she had now grown up and had become the iron lady she was now ready to go back to her homeland and face the elders. Mrs. Mawele told her daughter that if her father was alive he would have been the happiest man on this planet and that despite the hard time and trials his daughter conquered above all odds.

CHAPTER FOUR

After three months Mrs. Mawele left for the village. She was her daughters’ pillar of strength but she had to live and let her conquer her fears alone. Laisita also saw it fit for her to go back to the village and give back to society as Grace taught her. She was now well established and well educated and could express herself fluently and these were the qualities that she was going to take back to the village. She knew that if she wanted to impress the elders who were still traditionalist and did not want to be more cultured with the western form of life she had to find a way to help their women to better themselves. She knew that the key was to educate the women since the women are normally the pillar of the community. Giving girls’ knowledge is like

educating the whole community. Laisita knew that this was the hardest battle to conquer but she prepared fully. She looked for NGOs that dwelt with women by helping to teach them how to sew, make bead work and also on health issues like family planning methods and safe delivery. She did all this because she had experienced it first hand and she knew their culture that the samburu people delivered at home and it was risky. She also knew that the women there did not know about family planning and that is why most of them gave birth too many babies they could hardly care for. She also wanted to concentrate on the girl child education and tackle early marriage and the most pressing issue was female genital mutilation. These she knew was the hardest of them all because this was a community that had started practicing these cultures way back as early as before her parents were even born. She knew that if she conquered this milestone the rest will be a walk in the park.

When Laisita had already prepared everything she arranged a meeting with her husband. She sent him a letter to his office implying that she was an investor looking to develop his constituency. Mr. Mambo was so impressed because the letter showed that the investor had a lot to offer and he really needed investors to improve his constituency in order to buy him another term in office and also his area was filled with constant raids which made investors to fear for their money. An opportunity like this was something he couldn't afford to turn down. He prepared everything for the meeting and even called some of the community members to come and witness the occasion. Laisita on the other hand arranged everything in order and just to be on the safe side they hired extra security personnel. The meeting started with the Ngo delegates arriving, Laisita came on time but decided to stay in her vehicle. Her heart was racing but so fast and she told herself it was now or never. The meeting then started without the guest of honor who was Mrs. Laisita Mambo and Mr. Mambo was so confused when he was given the leaflet that had the day's program and saw the name. He thought many people shared the same names so it was not that bigger deal.

On the other hand Laisita's mother prepared to bring the children to the meeting so that they could meet their father. They had planned everything and just hoped that the plan will not fail and blow up on their faces. "Grandmother, what is this place and where is mother? We have not seen her since morning," asked Lolo, "She just told us that today she had a big surprise for us. What is the surprise?" "Harsh children! If I told you then it wouldn't be a surprise is it? We are going to meet your mother and she will tell you all about it," their grandmother said. The children got prepared quickly because they had already wasted precious time asking questions and they couldn't wait to go meet their mother and see what was in store for them.

"Welcome everyone to this glorious occasion. As your leader am the most

happiest of you all because today marks the day that our constituency graduates from being a boy to a man. I have been waiting for this day and today's occasion will serve as a landmark for the development of our community. We have toiled, labored and seen our fruits grow but today we will harvest our produce and show the rest that we can also do better," said Mr. Mambo. Screams of joy and ululation was heard and the community members started chanting his slogan, "Mambo! The lion, Mambo! The lion." "Rawwwwwww!" He was heard mimicking the lion. He was so happy and he introduced other members of the delegates to give their speeches. But Mambo was worried when he realized that the list of delegates was almost through but the guest of honor had not yet arrived. He tried to enquire around but the delegates told him that when the time arrived for the guest of honor to come on the podium she will show up.

After a short time Mr. Mambo got on stage after the delegates to introduce the guest of honor. Shock on him when he finds out who he was to introduce with high flying words of beating all odds and conquering men was his long lost wife. If he only knew he would have asked the ground to open up and swallow him alive. He also went further to urge people to be like her. "As you all can see am curious as you to see the guest of honor," he said laughing jokingly, "Am honored to introduce a woman of this community a successful one in deed. Not many women always manage to shine in our community but this lady has beaten all odds and today she has showed the community that she will give back to society. I would urge everyone who is seated to stand up and give this lady a standing ovation as we welcome Mrs. Laisita Mambo." Laisita gathered courage and the security personnel opened the door. She walked out of the car and wow! It was a sight to behold. She had worn a gold coated watch and earrings with a touch of matching necklace. A well ironed Shanna Jones tailor made material trouser suit black in color. She complemented her dress code with gold high heels and a black Sandra West design hand bag. Mambo was left speechless when she saw Laisita being helped by one of the bodyguards up the podium. Am lost for words, Mambo just sat down and did not even wait for Laisita to greet him. He wanted to storm out of the meeting but he could not because he did not want to leave a bad impression to his guests so he remained calm and gave a fake smile just to defend his ego. His heart was filled with so much bitterness but on the other side he was happy to see her. He never forgot her smile. He had a flash back of how Laisita used to massage him after they had layed together. In spite of his ruthlessness with women he always had a soft spot for Laisita. People did not know who she was she left the place when she was just a teen and twelve years later she comes to town as a grown, beautiful, educated and prosperous woman. Many people would refer to her as a lady of substance.

“Thank you my people,” Laisita spoke eloquently with a soft calm voice, “Am and still is a daughter of this community. I have been through tough, temptations, trials and name them all hardship. It was not easy for me but I had to come through for my beautiful twins.” Whispers were heard all through the stadium and then one of the delegates arose to harsh people down and let Laisita speak. “I am a married woman if I may say so but I had to sacrifice my children’s happiness and leave a gap that no other man could ever fill as a father to them. So that I could give them a better life.” Laisita then called on to his children to come and join her on stage. News spread throughout the community that Laisita was back and everyone including her co-wives came to see for themselves. They were always prohibited to attend such functions but they wanted to see for their own eyes if it was just a malicious rumor or truth itself. When Mr. Mambo saw his twins his heart melted and as the saying goes blood is thicker than water he ran and without thinking what the community would say he embraced them with tears in his eyes and referred to them as his children. Everyone was dazzled because how can this god come out of his high horse and show his tender side. The kids were confused because Mr. Mambo was old enough to be there grandfather. Laisita told one of the delegates to take Mr. Mambo off the stage so that the meeting could continue. She knew he needed ample time with his children but told his mother to keep a close eye on him. Laisita then went forward to tell the people of how they were to change the perception of the community they were way backwards inform of technology, education ,facilities and even there customs were moving them backwards.

“My people, as women we are the back bone of the community if we sit back and relax by doing nothing we are just like sitting ducks and digging our own graves. I have been around this country and I have seen what women can do. Our jobs are not only restricted in the kitchen, to take care of the kids, do the cleaning and pleasure our husbands. No! We are much more, we deserve to be educated. Our girls should be given an opportunity to make their own decisions. Marrying them off will not solve the problem of reducing the mouths you are supposed to feed. If my late father was alive this day, he would term me as a woman among men because I did the impossible. If I can do it what about you? Don’t I have the same number of eyes, the same two hands, the same feet but what I did I just grabbed and held on to an opportunity for myself. As my friends of the Ngos have said, we do not want to give you fish, but we want to teach you how to fish.” Screams were heard and women started singing traditional songs. Laisita then harshed them after abit of dancing and singing, “We respect our men, because they are the head of our families and we cannot do this alone. We are appealing to all men to come and help us to rise up as one. No circumcision for the girl child, no more lack of education for our children we should forger ahead for a brighter tomorrow.

Accepting change does not mean that our culture will be eroded forever we want a better today, tomorrow and the future of a well educated community. We have lost our men, our young boys and even women and children in raids. Circumcision has also taken away our young girls because others die due to excessive bleedings and the teenage girls die due to complications during delivery after they passed the rite of passage and are married off. Can we say enough is enough, because culture has taken so much but we will not allow it to ever harm us again. Who is with me? ,” “We stand with you,” a woman shouted and the rest replied the same.

Laisita was so happy that she had made a step towards winning the peoples heart. She knew that some of the women will not stand by her, but already she had won the hearts of the majority that were there. The problem was that she was not very sure about the men. She knew that if she had the support of just a few elderly men of the community her work would be a bit easy. To her utmost surprise Mambo came on stage and took the mic from Laisitas hands gently. With a smile on his face he said, “I don’t know why it has taken me this long to realize that without women, we would not be here,” he then paused everyone looked at him in utter disarray. “The fact that our mothers carried us in there womb for full term that is the whole nine months without thinking of aborting our lives, is a clear indication of the love they have for us. Most of us men are pushed by ego not to listen to a woman because in our community there word is flawed. This is a new generation we may be an analogue generation but we must transit to the digital era. I am happy because as you all know me I am a woman scholar. I believe that in everything that happens I always have the final word whether good or bad. I have learnt today by seeing my children have you ever seen young children speaking English as if they are from the English countries,” People laughed because they thought he was joking. He then called his children and with his broken English he asked them questions and they replied fluently. The villagers were amazed because to them only the white people’s children can talk that good. “Can you see? Is that not a miracle? If these children can be this good what if we decided to educate the rest, how good will they be?”

Cheers and jubilation was heard everywhere. Mr. Mambo held Laisitas hand and they lifted their hands in unison to show that they would work together to fight till they conquered. Laisita did not think that it would be this successful. On the other hand what was to be like a business venture for Mr. Mambo turned out to be his redemption. He was determined to do whatever was in his power to increase the well being of his people whether he was to be elected for a second term or not. Provided he left a mark on his community was all he cared for.

CHAPTER FIVE

After the function Laisita meet with her husband one on one. As old as he was he was still playful with her forgetting that she was now a grown lady. They talked in length of why she decided to leave without informing him and the reason she had decided to come back. Mr. Mambo was so happy because as a politician he now needed someone with a strong mind and a wide scope thinker to help him with running the constituency because as many say behind every successful man there is a woman. He knew that together they could make a difference in their motherland. Laisita was happy with the offer and she decided that this was the opportunity she had always been longing for to be a voice for the women and put her ideas into action. The support of her husband to her was the most assuring one because since he had the majority vote of the men her agendas will be accomplished.

Mr. and Mrs. Mambo drove to their homestead where she once lived to see her step children and co-wives and she knew if one wanted to make a change then charity should begin at home. The other co-wives were happy to see her. The homestead had reformed from grass thatched houses to bricked electrified homes. They all settled down to have their meals and discussed of how they were to take all the girls of the homestead to start going to school and stop the circumstion for their girls because some of Mambos daughters had ran away to shelters to avoid getting the cut. Mr. Mambo knew it was not going to be easy because his elderly wife valued tradition and as much as you can take a woman out of tradition it was not easy to get the tradition out of her.

The following weeks were tough for Mr. Mambo because they faced a lot of opposition from some prominent opposition leaders who slandered his name saying that Mr. Mambo was being dominated by his town wife. They also spread rumors that Laisita was a prostitute when she escaped from Mr. Mambo and that is why she dresses so expensively and boosts of the money she has. Mr. Mambo at times got so annoyed but Laisita was always there to calm him down. The Mambos' opened schools in the area and they made sure to offer bursaries to the children who were bright and willing to learn but had no financial capabilities. They also introduced a feeding programme in the area that made sure to keep the children in school and they would learn on a full stomach. To make learning easy they looked for sponsors from the ngos who brought books, pencils and shoes for the pupils every year making sure that they learnt with comfort.

They also went ahead to open up dispensaries' in every locality for easier access of medical attention and also to stop the menace of sick people walking

to farfetched areas to search for medical provisions in which in most cases almost all the patients died, firstly due to lack of money because some hospital demanded for money before anything is done to the patient. The presidents first lady also came up with the idea of the beyond zero campaign. This is where by mobile clinics were introduced to cater for home to home medical attention. The mobile clinics attended to scenarios where a patient cannot be able to move and they go to their aid. They were equipped with all minor surgery equipments the necessary medication and also a nurse and a doctor. The Mambos also solved the water problems by digging bore holes around dried areas to stop children who would at times skip school to go fetch water for their families. Last but not list they started training courses that helped women with learning extra work like sawing ,braiding ,beading and other services that required a short period to learn since most of them complained that they did not want vast education since they were old. Some of them joked by asking if they are the ones who will learn or their kids and will they all sit in the same classroom. When most of them showed the urge to want to read and write that is when Laisita called on Grace for assistance. They were tight on money and she needed volunteers to help. Grace responded positively by sending three ladies from England. They teamed up with Laisita and offered the ladies the adult education. Apart from that they were taught them on how to speak in English and not forgetting to honor and respect their husbands.

These deeds changed the community. The constituency that was deemed a war zone area of pastoralist proved to be a haven for many who called it home. Mr. Mambo was the talk of the country. People and even news channels praised him of his tenacity and rap ore with his people and mostly called him for interviews on the secret of his success and he always went boost fully with his beloved wife and he would jokingly tell the news anchor that the secret of their success lies with his wife. Things were going so well until one day when Mr. Mambo was from a meeting going home, his car was hijacked by gun men and they rained bullets on the car until they made sure not a single soul was left alive. Laisita was informed immediately when she was conducting one of the classes of the adult education in one of the camps. She left immediately and drove speedily to the scene of the crime. Tears covered her eyes when she saw her husband's lifeless body around. She knew that this was a political crime. She threw a tantrum crying out aloud why they had killed her husband. "I have lost my men," She cried bitterly, "First it was my father, now my husband, why did you do this to me? Why did you not kill me also?" The women who were there tried to carry her away from there but she just held on to her husband corpse. Her white spotted dress had already changed its color to red because it was soaked with blood. Laisita had lost all hope in life. This was the same man who destroyed her life but gave her ten folds more. She had learnt to love him the way he was. He reformed for the better and who said

age cannot love because age to her was just but a number. The policemen came and took over the scene of the crime they promised to carry out the necessary investigations but Laisita knew it was just a way to cover their tracks.

After a week's long moan the burial date was held on a weekend. Many politicians came to give their condole senses which Laisita and the other wives took cordially. Before her husband was laid to rest Laisita was told to give the final word. In tears she composed herself, "My friend, the father of my children, the love of my life, because it's you I have known since marriage and my most precious jewel. I never thought that after being so far away from you for a long time, the cruel hands of death would snatch you away from me and deny me the prevelaige to see you grow old and take care of you. But am glad, that I was the one who made you become who you were even if it was just for a short period of time. I cherish the moments and I love you and I will always love you," she then cleared her throat and continued with a stern voice, "I know you have left most of your businesses unattended to or pending. My love, this I promise you that I will pick up from where you left. I will fight and make sure that the post you left will not be filled up with a selfless, egocentric, schovanist who will only want to take us back from where we are from, just to quench his ego. This is a war that I must win and even if it means that you will also kill me the same way you have killed my husband you are free to do so. I will not be intimidated, I will not be scared and I will never step down for anyone. We shall face off at the ballot." Screams of joy were heard and some of the men called out the late Mr. Mambos slogan but in a different way, "Laisita! The lioness, Laisita! The lioness" and women were heard rowing like the lioness. "Ashes to ashes and dust to dust." She then poured soil on her husband's grave and walked away.

When the time of the by elections were approaching, the opposition leaders based senseless accusations against her to try and pin her down but she had the eye of an eagle, the skin of a hippo and the courage of a tiger and not forgetting the support of her family and people. To her, victory was not something that was bought on mere words but through actions and deeds. Laisita won the election not with a land slide but with a margin that no one has ever broke the record till date. She stands out not only by actions but by her wise wisdom with words. She had the "it factor" and am till today searching for her replacement. This is the story of the "iron lady."

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