



Silent Battles Abroad

**Finding Strength Through the Struggles of
Life in a Foreign Land**

WRITTEN BY

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This book is a work of non-fiction. All events, experiences, and opinions expressed within are based on the author's personal journey and extensive research. Any similarity to real individuals, living or deceased, outside of the intended context, is purely coincidental.

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Before You Begin

Scripture Reflection

“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you, and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you.

When you walk through fire, you shall not be burnt, and the flame shall not consume you.”

— Isaiah 43:2 (ESV)

Inspirational Quote

“To be a foreigner is to carry two worlds in one body, one in your memory, and one on your shoulders. But with faith, you will find your balance and build a bridge between them.”

— Michael Tosin Adesanwo

African Proverb

“No matter how long the night, the day will surely break.”

— Yoruba Proverb

Disclaimer

This book is a work of inspiration rooted in personal experience, testimonies, and general insights. It is not intended to replace professional medical or psychological advice, diagnosis, or treatment.

While some mental health topics are addressed, readers experiencing serious emotional or psychological distress are strongly encouraged to seek help from a qualified mental health professional or counsellor.

Names and identifying details in some shared experiences may have been changed to protect privacy. The content is offered with sincere respect for all cultures, communities, and personal beliefs.

The goal of this book is to encourage, uplift, and offer hope, not to judge, prescribe, or generalize.

Why This Book Matters

In every airport line, crowded subway, and late-night shift, there are men and women holding back tears behind tired smiles – people who have left everything familiar in search of a better life. These individuals – migrants, expats, refugees, students, and workers – are often portrayed as brave, bold, and blessed. But what is often missed is the silent suffering behind the journey.

This book matters because **it gives voice to what has too often been silenced:** the depression, anxiety, rejection, and identity crises that come with living in a foreign land. It acknowledges the pain behind the progress, the loneliness behind the visa approval, the mental toll of survival, and the strength it takes to start over.

In many cultures, especially African, Latin American, and Asian societies, conversations around mental health are avoided, masked with silence or spiritual clichés. But our minds matter. Our peace matters. And our stories deserve to be heard.

This book is for those silently crying out for hope.

This book is for those tired of pretending everything is okay.

This book is for **you**, because your story matters.

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PART 1

THE INVISIBLE WEIGHT — Understanding the Silent Struggles

*Understanding the emotional and mental toll
of starting over in a foreign land*

- Chapter 1 -

The Excitement Before the Storm

Understanding the Silent Struggles

The Spark of a Dream

There's something uniquely powerful about a dream. A vision of what life could be like on the other side of the world often begins with hope – pure, unfiltered hope. For many of us, moving abroad isn't just about seeking greener pastures; it's about rewriting our life story.

We imagine freedom, success, safety, or the chance to give our children a better life than we had. The dream glows so brightly that it eclipses everything else.

In small towns, busy cities, and rural villages, the stories are the same. There's always someone saving money, waiting on visas, praying for breakthroughs, or sharing whispered plans with trusted friends. There's often the image of a better version of ourselves, confident, fluent in another language, earning a good salary, sending money home, and walking with a purposeful stride in foreign streets.

But dreams are not just made of desire; they are woven with sacrifice.

My Story Begins

When I first boarded that plane years ago, leaving behind the rich red soil of Nigeria and stepping toward the unknown, my heart raced with a strange mix of joy and fear. I remember my mother's tearful hug, my father's silent prayer, and my younger siblings who waved until I was out of sight. In that moment, I felt chosen. Chosen to break generational barriers, to rise above limitations, and to create a new legacy.

There was no turning back. The flight was long, but my thoughts were longer. I kept replaying every encouraging word I'd heard, every moment of preparation for all the visa interviews, all the goodbye parties, and even the warnings people gave: "Just be strong over there; things are not always easy." I nodded, but deep inside I believed my case would be different. I would succeed fast.

When I landed, the air smelt different, the buildings looked unfamiliar, and the people moved with an energy I didn't yet understand. But I was ready. Or so I thought.

The Romance of a New Beginning

The first few weeks felt like a dream. I took photos of almost everything: buses, food, skyscrapers, shops, signs in foreign languages, and even my first snow. I sent them to my family and posted them on social media with hopeful captions. Everyone back home was proud. They kept saying, "You made it!" And for a while, it felt like I had.

I was full of adrenaline, learning new things every day, smiling at strangers, trying different foods, and telling myself that life was about to get better and better. Every corner held mystery. Every moment felt like a victory.

But excitement is a fuel; it burns bright, but it doesn't last forever.

When Reality Creeps In

No one warned me about the silence that greets you when the excitement fades.

After the first few weeks or months, life settles into a routine, and the dream begins to wear its true clothes. The language barrier feels heavier. You start missing family deeply. Time zones make phone calls awkward. The price of everything seems higher. People are polite but distant. And slowly, the questions creep in:

“Was this the right move?”

“Why do I feel so alone?”

“Why am I struggling when I prayed so hard for this?”

The dream had not failed; it just had more layers than I anticipated.

Behind the Smiles

For every airport selfie and social media update that paints a perfect picture of life abroad, there are silent cries buried beneath. There are nights when you lie awake, asking yourself if you made the right decision. There are mornings when you force yourself out of bed because your family is counting on you, but your spirit feels depleted.

Some people around you may never understand. To them, you are living the dream. But only you know the full weight of your emotional suitcase filled with homesickness, cultural disorientation, and the burden of high expectations.

You smile in photos, but the joy is sometimes hollow. You say “I’m fine” out loud, but your prayers tell another story.

You Are Not Alone

This is why this chapter exists – to remind you that your feelings are valid. That you are not alone. That what you’re going through is part of a much bigger journey.

I’ve spoken to many others who left their home countries chasing new lives. Some were students, some were workers, and others were refugees. All of them, at one point, felt the dual emotions of excitement and silent sorrow. It’s the unspoken cost of transition.

You’re not weak for feeling down. You’re not ungrateful for missing home. You’re not failing because you’re struggling to adjust. You’re simply human.

Embracing Emotional Preparedness

Dreams are sacred, but they must be paired with mental readiness. It’s okay to romanticise the future, but it’s essential to also prepare for emotional realities. Before you cross borders, ask yourself:

- How will I cope with loneliness?
- Who will I turn to when things feel overwhelming?
- How can I stay connected to my values, culture, and faith?
- Am I willing to be patient with myself?

These questions don't weaken your ambition; they strengthen your foundation.

Practical Tips

1. **Create a realistic transition plan** — Prepare emotionally and financially, not just logistically.
2. **Talk to others who have been through it** — Learn from their experiences.
3. **Stay grounded in your faith or values** — They will anchor you when everything else feels foreign.
4. **Journal your emotions** — Give your thoughts a safe space.
5. **Celebrate small wins** — Every new word learnt or connection made matters.

Spiritual Encouragement

"Commit your way to the Lord; trust in Him, and He will act." — Psalm 37:5

This verse has carried me through countless moments of doubt. There's comfort in knowing that your journey is not just about location; it's about divine direction. God doesn't waste pain. Every silent cry has been heard. Every broken dream can be rebuilt.

Quote to Remember

"The strongest souls are the ones who've dared to dream big and still chose to carry on when reality tested their vision."

Let your dream live not in fantasy, but in resilience. This is only the beginning.