

Abigale: An African Girl Chigozirim

This is a story of 9-year-old Abigale, who lived with her mom in a small, rural fishing and farming village, in a coastal country in Africa. Abigale had two other younger siblings; Jacob, who is 7 years and Michel, who is 5; both boys. Their father died when Michel was 2 years, Jacob was 4 years, and Abigale was 6 years.

Their family was very poor and the absence of their father, who died due to complication of tetanus, which he got from farm land, made it even worse. Abigale's mom, Bridget, who is 32 years, was a full-time house wife, uneducated and never learned any skilled trade. During the years after the death of the husband Stanley, the whole family got food from missionary sisters from Europe, resident in their local Catholic Church.

After about three years, these missionary sisters left back to Europe, and Abigale's family once again became financially handicapped. At this point in time, the family has grown a bit, with increased nutritional and clothing needs. And Mrs. Bridget cannot afford to feed and clothe her children. Also, Abigale has attended the school year in their community and needed to start school.

Entry to the only elementary school, which was about 10 miles, required money for enrollment and tuition fees. These are very difficult tasks for this poor widow to accomplish.

So, to find a way to solve part of these family problems, Abigale's mom decided to send Abigale to her Uncle James, from her dad's side, who is 55 years. Who lives and does business in a distant suburban city. So, that Abigale can start school, or learn a vocational skill.

Mr. James operates a restaurant in a busy interstate road. Servicing more of haulage sixteen-wheeler drivers, who transport commercial goods from the city to a small coastal wharf for exports and picking up imported goods into the city.

His typical customers are strange fellows with different backgrounds and personalities. This restaurant environment poses a big danger for a little girl of Abigale's age to work or play.

Instead, when Abigale arrived at her uncle's house, he immediately put her to work at his busy restaurant. Abigale's typical day starts by bathing two of her younger cousins, Bartholomew who is 4 years and David who is 2 years.

Abigale then walks them to the house of their nanny. She also was the last person to close the restaurant. She constantly smells of a lot of spices, looked unkept, developed finger fungi (whitlow) and was never taken to a real doctor.

Rather, her illness was managed at a local drug shop, very common in their community. Abigale was never enrolled into school. So, she suffered mentally, physically, and poor health, so, she was given chores beyond her age.

One day her uncle was invited to a wedding by his business partner. In this wedding, Mr. James will be presenting the bride, who is also the partner's daughter to the bride-groom. Abigale made the trip to the wedding with her uncle's family. This was the first time Abigale went to church since she came to her uncle's house.

In that wedding, Abigale recognized the officiating priest, who had worked with missionary sisters in her native community. After the ceremony, Abigale went up to speak to the priest. The catholic priest noted she was not taken care of and asked if she was in school; to which Abigale answered no.

He commanded church security to take her away to a safe place. The priest, and Irish missionary father, confronted Abigale's uncle for answers on Abigale's condition without help.

The priest later invited Abigale's family to this new community, sent Abigale to school, and opened a small business for her mom.

Abigale attended school, performed brilliantly, and continued until she received a PHD in economics and management from Howard University in the United States. Later, Abigale became a minister for women and children affairs in her home country, and helped orphans, widows, and the poor.