



Thirty One
That Sixth Sense

I took the children to church whenever I went, but one Sunday night, Kianna asked to stay home to complete a project she had for school the following day. I couldn't stay away from church because I had a part in the program that evening. It was also raining, so I told Ricardo I would leave the children home.

"No problem," he said. "I ain't plan on going anywhere." He was ironing some clothes for work.

I returned home within three hours. The children were still up. Ricardo was in the bedroom. I decided to get something to eat before tucking Romaine into bed. Kianna was then almost 13 and still small for her age. Normally she didn't say much, but there were times when I could tell something was bothering her. While eating, I noticed she kept looking at the bedroom door, and even though she said she had an assignment, she didn't seem to be doing much of that.

"What happen?" I asked. She didn't respond, but got up and went to the bedroom. I stared after her, and wondered if she was annoyed I went to church and left her at home. After my meal, I went to the children's bedroom and found her sitting at the edge of the bed, staring at the floor. I sat down next to her, placing my arm around her shoulders. Glancing over at Romaine, I noticed she was asleep.

"I know, you're annoyed with me because I went to church and leave you home," I said, eyeing her closely.

She shook her head.

"Then what's the matter? Remember you can tell Mommy anything," I said, removing my arm from her shoulders and turning to face her. The frown on her face was replaced with nervousness. She unfolded her hands and wrapped her nightgown's hem around her fingers.

"I want tell you something, but I don't want cause any trouble," my daughter said, glancing quickly over her shoulders to the bedroom door.

I froze. It was as if a sixth sense instantly revealed what she intended to say. My stomach churned, my heart began racing and I felt hot. I wished I was having a bad dream, but I wasn't. Kianna was looking at me nervously.

"Go ahead. Tell me," I gasped, "There will be no trouble. I promise."

She seemed to gain some courage and began skeptically. "Junior was doing his homework in the living room and me and Romaine were lying in the bed. I was reading so I could get the answers for the questions I was working on. Then Uncle

"Uncle Ricardo lay on me and started kissing me on my mouth like the people do on TV. I try to fight him off, but he was too heavy..."

**Waiting around without support
could cause damaging scars water
cannot wash away.**



Ricardo come and lie down in the bed with us and he started to play with Romaine. After a while, Romaine said she was hungry, and Uncle Ricardo called Junior and tell him take Romaine and get her cookies. As soon as they left the room—” Kianna stopped speaking, glanced at me, then lowered her eyes and started to chew on her nightgown hem. I gently removed the material from her mouth and placed my arm around her shoulders.

“Yes, I’m listening. Go on,” I urged. By this time, my heart thumped wildly.

“As soon as Junior and Romaine left the bedroom,” my daughter continued, “Uncle Ricardo lay on me and started kissing me on my mouth like the people do on TV. I try to fight him off, but he was too heavy. Then quickly after, Romaine push’ the door and he came off me. Then he get off the bed and left the bedroom. Not too long before you come home, he tell me I must not tell you anything, or he will beat me,” she finished.

Shame washed over me. I didn’t know what to say, neither could I utter a word to make her feel better. It was clear I had failed Kianna by bringing her into this situation. My parents’ words turned over and over in my mind. “*Angie yo’ could leave the children with us. A second marriage is not always easy with children of a previous marriage.*” I hugged my daughter tightly and prayed silently.

Dear God, how do I handle this? What do I do?

I felt sick and disappointed in myself. Frustration enveloped me and a bitter anger grew within me. I felt an urge to rush to the bedroom and choke Ricardo until his eyes popped out of his head, but I remembered I promised Kianna there would be no trouble. Tears streamed down my face.

Dear God, what do I do?

“Kianna,” I started, looking at her directly. “I am glad you told me this. It was probably hard for you to tell me, but I’m glad you did. Also, I’m really sorry to put you through this. I promise I will protect you from now on. I will never ever leave any of you alone with him again. I will look for another house and we will move out and leave him here. But I want you to do something for me.

“What?” she asked looking up at me.

“Keep this incident a secret between you and me. This is shameful, and I really don’t want to tell this to anyone.”

“Okay,” she said.

When I retired to bed, Ricardo was asleep. I tossed and turned wondering how to deal with the situation. I didn’t want to betray my daughter’s trust by starting a fight with Ricardo. By morning, I felt weighed down by a heavy burden. I went to work but left

“Angie yo’ could leave the children with us. A second marriage is not always easy with children of a previous marriage.”

**Sometimes we wait too long, hoping for change. Faith without works is DEAD!
Take action!**



before 10 AM telling my boss I wasn't well. Yet, I couldn't go home. I chose all the desolate streets and walked and walked and walked, then I found myself near our assistant pastor's house. She worked part-time and I hoped she was at home that day. I walked up to her house and knocked on the door. Waiting for a response, the tears came in torrents.

Sister Gladys opened the door with her usual smile, but it quickly vanished, and she hugged me and led me inside.

"Want some tea or something?" she asked.

"No thanks," I sobbed. "I'll be okay."

"Give me a couple o' minutes. I have something on the stove," she said, hurrying to the kitchen.

I looked up and saw a picture hanging on the wall. It was of a cat clutching for dear life on a breaking rope. Under that picture the words said--*Lord, Help Me To Hang In There!*

I was certain that picture was there all the time, but I never saw it before. It was grace that caused me to see it at the appropriate time. I had to hang in there. If I had chosen to let go, I would have come crashing down on three innocent children.

A loud knock on the door interrupted my thoughts. Sister Gladys looked through the eyepiece before answering.

"Angelique," she whispered, "it's Sister Barbara. You wouldn't mind her being here, would you?"

I was only close with a few people at the church, and Barbara was one of them.

"No, it's okay," I said, wiping my face with a tissue Sister Gladys had given me.

Barbara entered and took one look at me.

"Whatever the situation, Angelique, remember God can fix it," she said, hugging me.

Between sobs, I explained to them what Ricardo did. Sister Gladys was always calm and collected, but Barbara was emotional.

"Angelique, no! He didn't do that to that poor child. This is outrageous!" Barbara said, pacing the carpeted floor. "So, what you plan doing?"

"That's the thing. I really don't know what to do besides move out with the children."

"Angelique, it is 'for better or for worse' and I really don't think you should leave your husband," the assistant pastor said. "You can arrange some counseling sessions for him. He needs counseling."

"Well Angelique, I won't advise you on what to do regarding your marriage, but I suggest you allow Kianna to stay with me at my home until this situation is sorted out," Barbara said.

"Will you keep her?" I asked.

"Yes, I will get her this afternoon," Barbara said.

Leaving Sister Gladys' home, I felt no better than when I first arrived. I picked up Romaine from school and went home. I told Kianna I was sending her to stay with Barbara for a while.



“Okay, Mommy,” she responded.

When it was approaching the time for Ricardo to come home, I asked Junior to take Romaine to the nearby pasture, so she could ride her tricycle.

He was hardly in the doorway when I addressed him:

“I had my suspicions but I tried ignoring them. I know all the while you molested that woman back then, but you not going to do that to my daughter and get away with it. You will die tonight, or I’ll get you lock’ up.

Ricardo stopped abruptly, looked at me, a smirk appearing on his face, and then he proceeded to the kitchen.

“What is that you talking ‘bout now, nah?” he asked casually over his shoulders.

“Is this a joke? Do you see a smile on my face? Why the hell did you molest my child? You know what you playing with? Prison!” I screamed.

I followed him to the kitchen. He washed his hands and took a plate to take out his food. I grabbed the plate and tossed it hard into the sink. It shattered into pieces.

“Look, Angie, I don’t know what you talking ‘bout. That girl lie! I ain’t do she nothing!” he shouted.

“My child has no reason to lie on you and I know she won’t make up such a tale!” Why did you do it, Ricardo? Ain’t there enough whores on the streets since I’m unable to satisfy you? Why did you do it? Why did you do it?” I shouted, pounding my hand hard on the cupboard top. Then I couldn’t say any more as my body heaved from sobs.

“Alright Angie, alright, I sorry. Stop crying, now,” he said, approaching me with outstretched arms. “Don’t – you – ever – touch – me – again!” I spat at him, the same time heading for the sink and retrieving the largest piece of the broken plate.

He retraced his steps and heavily sat down in the chair.

“I didn’t mean to do that. I really sorry, Angie, and I would never do that again.”

“I have no guarantee I can trust you. I believe now you indeed put your hand under the woman’s skirt. You are sick and I will take my children and leave here. I cannot continue to have them at your mercy. Heaven knows what you will try next!”

Ricardo bent his head on the table and began crying. His shoulders wracking from sobs. The assistant pastor’s words turned over in my mind.

“It is for better or worse, you can’t leave your husband. You should get counseling for him.”

I looked at him long and hard. “Will you go to counseling?”

“It is for better or worse, you can’t leave your husband. You should get counseling for him.”

Every advice is not good advice.



“Yes, Angie,” he said, raising his teary face, looking at me. “I will do anything to keep you and the children. I am really sorry.”

I heard Junior and Romaine in the yard.

“Then hear me and hear me good. I will arrange some counseling for you, but if you ever touch any of my children again, this marriage will be over and I will lock you away in prison!”

Subsequently, anytime that incident crossed my mind, shame washed over me. I knew I needed to take the children and go far away, but I couldn’t do it.

The next day I called a counselor the assistant pastor recommended. The first appointment for Ricardo was fixed for three weeks later and the counselor advised me to attend the sessions with him.

Kianna stayed with Barbara for about three days, then she said she wanted to come home. After that incident, I never left the children alone with Ricardo. Kianna seemed happy to be home although I noticed her keeping her distance from Ricardo. I eyed his every move. I tried talking with Kianna to find out how much that Ricardo incident bothered her.

“I’m fine, Mommy” she would reply.

“Are you awake in the nights thinking about it, or do you get bad dreams?”

“Mom, I said I’m fine.”

I knew she wasn’t fine, and a call from her teacher confirmed my suspicions.

“Mrs. Coppin?” The voice asked when I answered the telephone.

“Yes, it is.”

“This is Mrs. Brathwaite, Kianna’s math teacher. I am concerned about Kianna. For a while now, I noticed she is lagging behind in her assignments, doesn’t participate in class, and her mind seems to be preoccupied. I was glad this call came while I was at home. I explained the situation to the teacher and asked her to be patient with Kianna. After talking for a while, Mrs. Brathwaite said goodbye. The next day, Kianna’s guidance counselor called me.

“Mrs. Coppin,” she said,
“We need your permission to call in the childcare board in this matter with Kianna and her step-father.”

“How would that help? What would be the result?” I asked.

“A court case—and he may be locked up,” the guidance counselor bluntly said.

“Ma’am, I really don’t want to do that. I am trying to find an apartment so we can leave here. Ricardo may not be Kianna’s father,

Subsequently, anytime that incident crossed my mind, shame washed over me. I knew I needed to take the children and go far away, but I just didn’t do it.

In moments like these victims should reach out to someone they trust. . don’t suffer alone.



but he is Romaine's dad. I really don't want to have him locked up. I prefer you leave it alone."

I came to regret those words a little later. The guidance counselor called me twice more, then backed off.

On the day of the first appointment, Ricardo said he had to work and refused to go. There I was, trying to help him, and he acted as if he was doing me a favor. That day I made my decision. My children and I weren't going to remain at his mercy. I began apartment hunting.

Our marriage had ended. We had numerous quarrels because I refused to sleep in the same bed with him. I couldn't stand the thought of him ever touching me again. One night, I tried sleeping with the girls and Ricardo ventured into the children's room to molest me for sex. I didn't want to wake them, so I hurried out of their room. There were nights when Ricardo wrestled with me nearly all night for sex.

Many times, at work a few of my coworkers remarked, "Angelique you look tired." Or, "Angelique you look like you had no sleep last night."

There were times when to get some much-needed sleep, or not to awake my children, I submitted myself to his abuse. Then I began having nightmares of beatings I received from William. But when I compared these two situations, the abuse from Ricardo was worse. I would have preferred to go through anything myself than for my children to endure what they had. I prayed an apartment would become available, so we'd be free of him. I began inquiring about a place to rent. I asked church members, co-workers, friends, almost everyone with whom I could have a conversation. Finding a place to live seemed to be taking longer than I expected. Staying with anyone was not an option I was willing to consider because there were four of us.

It was a Friday afternoon while I was apartment hunting when I stopped to visit Susan.

"I'm looking for an apartment for my children and me. Your brother and I are finished," I said. She was eating a sandwich and watching a re-run of the soap, *The Bold and the Beautiful*.

"What?" Susan asked. Her head jerked briskly in my direction and the sandwich was suspended in her hand halfway to her mouth.

"Yep," I said, nodding my head. "He wants to have sex with mother and daughter, and before I kill him and end up in prison, I will leave. I tried getting counsel for him and he refused. I give up. I cannot trust an animal like him around my daughters."

"This is disgraceful! You telling me Ricardo interfere' with Kianna?" Susan asked, tossing her sandwich to the plate, bounding out of the chair and pacing the unpolished hardwood floor of the dining room.

"Exactly!"



“No, no, no! Tell me no, Angelique! Susan screamed. This is disgusting! You good, girl, if that was me, he would be paralyzed by now or dead. Angelique, I am Ricardo’s sister and I telling you this afternoon--You right! Leave his sorry tail!” she shouted.

Susan sat down again. “Ricardo was always different to all of us. There were times when I was bathing, I used to see him peeping through cracks in the bathroom. We were much younger, though. Now he is a grown man, I thought he would be done away with those kinda’ things.”

“I also now have no doubt he did put his hand under that woman’s skirt all those years ago. I’m so stupid. I should have left him since then.”

“Of all the things, I never expect’ hearing this,” Susan said. “So, you looking for a house to rent?”

“Yes.”

“Well le’ me tell you,” she said, shaking her forefinger, “while he still around, try and watch he with the other children too, especially Romaine. Don’t mind she is his child, you neve’ know what somebody like he would do. He makes me sick,” Susan finished, sighing, shaking her head.

During that same month, the church held its harvest service, and the children and I went. Ricardo was not at home all that Sunday and when we returned, he still wasn’t home. We went to bed and shortly after falling asleep, I was awakened by a banging on the door. I opened

the door and Ricardo was standing there. He had forgotten his keys. I let him in and went back to sleep on the sofa. The next morning, Kianna shouted for me.

I walked in her room and found her sitting up in bed.

“Mommy, I was sleeping last night when I feel somebody spreading my legs. When I open’ my eyes, I see Uncle Ricardo walking out the bedroom . . .”

I believe I became insane that moment! Not wanting to know anything else, I ran to the kitchen, charging at Ricardo, lashing out at him—punching, kicking, biting, butting. He grabbed my neck and tightened his grasp. Lifting my right leg, I drove my knee to his crotch. His grip loosened. He doubled over, clutching his private part. Stumbling back, everything my hands found, I hurled at him—plates, glasses, silverware, pots, everything!

There were times when I was bathing I used to see him peeping through cracks in the bathroom. We were much younger, though. Now he is a grown man, I thought he would be done away with those kinda’ things.

Before committing to a relationship, it is best to find out about that individual, their childhood, hobbies, cravings, family background – everything. Truthfinder.com gives some interesting insights.

<https://www1.cbn.com/marriage/12-traits-of-an-abuser>



Eventually, he ran into the bedroom and locked the door. All the while the children were screaming and there was a mess to clean afterwards, but I didn't care.

Taking some deep breaths, I hushed the children then took them to their room.

"Okay, okay, y'all stop crying. It will be fine. Mommy will not let anything happen to y'all."

Soon the house was quiet, and I realized Ricardo had sneaked out.

Oh, how I wished there was someone I could talk with. I thought about calling Barbara, but she was at work. There was no energy to get the children ready for school and then go to work, so, I called out and kept the children home.

I still didn't want to move to anyone's home with my children, but then the idea of shelters came to my mind. I searched the telephone directory but was unsuccessful since in Barbados, shelters were mostly available during times of hurricane or other disasters.

That afternoon, a sister from the church called me.

"Angelique, I heard you looking for some place to rent," Carlotta said.

"Yes, I am. You know of any?"

"Yes, I rented this three-bedroom house in Christ Church and it is too big for me. You want share it?"

I paused.

Carlotta was only an acquaintance and could be unfriendly. She was two years my junior. Her offer was certainly not the best, but given my circumstances, it was *any coat for a storm*. The children and I had to get away from Ricardo and fast. "Are you sure you can live in a house with three children?" I asked.

"Come on, Angelique--I know your children. They're not bad kids."

"Okay, what's the rent and how soon may I move in?"

"It's \$700. How much can you afford? You will have two bedrooms and one bathroom. I'm in the self-contained room," she said.

"Is it okay if I pay four hundred dollars?"

"You sure you can manage that?" Carlotta asked.

Although I knew it would be hard to start paying my own rent, I wanted to be professional and I didn't expect her to share the rent equally since we outnumbered her.

"Yes, I can. How soon may I move in?"

"Tonight, if you want."

That's risky.

"I'll move in tomorrow."

I felt relieved, discussing my moving plans with Carlotta.

Ricardo didn't come home at his usual time, so later that evening I gathered some courage and called my mother. She listened in complete silence while I retold the events.

"Gosh Angie, I don't understand why all this happenin' to you. I don't understand," she cried.

"Mom stop crying. It'll be okay once we get out of here."

"He might look to worry you on the road or at yo' job," she said.

"The police will take care of that. I have to go. I'll call you later in the week."



“Angie?”

“Yes, Mom.”

“You is a good mother. Them children goin’ love you fo’ doin’ that fo’ them.

“Thanks, Mom. Bye, now.” Those words made me feel a tad better.

My next call was to arrange a truck for the move. I decided to call Lloyd. He was a brother from our church who loved my children. It was difficult, telling Lloyd my reason for leaving Ricardo. Yet, I couldn’t sweep it under the carpet anymore. The first time Ricardo molested my daughter, besides telling the assistant pastor and Barbara, I kept it to myself. I couldn’t do this any longer. Embarrassment washed over me, filling Lloyd in on the situation and asking his help with a mover.

“Angelique, you blurted out all that in one breath. How you holding up? How is Kianna? This must be real hard for you. I agree you should leave.”

“Under the circumstances, we aren’t doing too bad. Anyway, Ricardo may soon be home. You know anyone with a truck?”

“Yes, but I will have to call him and get back to you,” Lloyd said.

“Don’t call me back, Lloyd, I will call you first thing in the morning. Thanks a lot,” I said, before hanging up.

Ricardo came home about half an hour after my last call. He said nothing. Romaine was all over him as he ate.

That night, I lay on the sofa and the entire scenario of the end of my first marriage flashed before me like scenes from a horrifying movie. Those scenes were about to be replayed. I wished I would awake and find it was all a horrible nightmare. *Weren’t some people made to be happy?* The pain I felt when I knew my marriage to William ended was different to what I felt then. The pain William caused wrenched at my heart’s strings and left me empty. Now, deep down in my soul there was another pain—a pain I was unable to describe. But I do know the hurt Ricardo inflicted filled me with shame and drove me to choose my children over him.

While lying on the sofa the following morning, Ricardo came to me.

“Angie,” he began, touching my arm.

“Don’t push yo’ luck. Don’t touch me,” I snapped, springing to my feet.

“I wan’ tell you I will go for counseling. We can’t continue living like this.”

“Of course, we can’t continue living like this, and you may go to whatever counseling you want to. I don’t care anymore.”

“I wan’ tell you I will go for counseling. We can’t continue living like this.”

Abusers behave this way... They promise to change but hardly do – insincerely repentant

<https://bit.ly/2kpxLPA>



Ricardo sighed and headed to the bathroom. By 7 AM he was on his way to work. As soon as he left, I dialed Lloyd's number.

"I spoke to the gentleman last night and told him you will call him this morning and let him know the time. Write down his name and number."

"Thanks, Lloyd."

Junior and Kianna helped with the packing. They both seemed nervous, and kept glancing out the window at every opportunity.

"Mommy what if Uncle Ricardo come back and catch us?" Junior asked.

"By the time he gets back, we will be long gone."

"My daddy coming with we?" Romaine, then five, asked.

"No Ro, daddy's not coming."

"Why?"

"Your daddy doesn't have manners. When he learns some manners, he will come with us," I said. Romaine repeated those words a couple of times afterwards when people asked her about her father.

Only Kianna didn't ask any questions. She packed her things with urgency.

By 9 o'clock the trucker arrived with a helper and immediately started loading our stuff. I didn't take anything Ricardo purchased. I planned to buy a bunk bed and a television. Carlotta told me we could share her refrigerator and stove.

"If you wouldn't be offended, le' me guess—you movin' and leavin' your husband," Mr. Jackson said.

"You got that right," I muttered under my breath without looking up. I wished he wouldn't start a conversation.

"I know you'll say it's none of my business," Mr. Jackson continued on a more serious note, packing some utensils into a washing pan. "But I hope you considered this decision. After all, you have three children."

"Okay," I said, straightening up from the box over which I was leaning. I quickly glanced around for the children. They were in the patio. "If you should know, yes, I considered long, and I considered hard. But the worst part—I shouldn't have considered at all. Who wants a husband who would sleep with both his wife and her daughter?" I asked, eyeing him purposely.

Mr. Jackson looked away, then concentrated on lifting the wash pan to his shoulder.

"I—I—I'm sorry Madam, I'm so sorry," he said on his way out, shooting me a remorseful look.

Within 90 minutes we were on our way. Junior rode in the back of the truck with the helper while Kianna, Romaine, and I rode in the front with Mr. Jackson.

"It's probably really hard for you, but you did the right thing," Mr. Jackson said, driving along the narrow Sugar Hill road. I allowed his comment to slide, then he finally changed conversations to the sunny and warm weather.



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After we arrived at our destination and were finished unpacking, Mr. Jackson handed me a business card.

“Take this,” he said. “In case you need help with anything or even if you need someone to talk to, feel free—give me a call.”