

FELISTER WANJIKU

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Felister lived with her grandmother in Matasia. Her grandmother is a remarkable woman. After the death of Felister's parents to AIDS, the grandmother took in Felister and her little brother Eric. Also living with the grandmother in a very small shanty was her own teenage son, two orphaned boys from the village (their mother had been killed by a speeding drunk driver), and her second son's three children. The oldest son, a small shop owner, had been supporting not only his own wife and five children, but all this extended family as well, until he was stabbed to death during a robbery of his shop. The shop was burned to the ground. Suddenly there was neither a regular income nor a regular supply of food and five more children were added to the household. Everyone contributed to the family coffers in whatever way they could, but life was a constant struggle. Despite the large number of children to provide for with means to do it, the children were clean, obedient, and polite.

Felister and her family had been the victim of a particularly viscous fraud. Every Christmas an American and a Kenyan came to take pictures of her and to get her to write a letter to her alleged "sponsors" in the United States. In exchange, the family received a one month portion of the money that had been sent for her alleged care, food, clothing, and school supplies while the total of all the monies sent for the other eleven months was kept by the con men. With the help of Providence staff these thieves were chased off. Threats of violence were made to Providence, but God safeguarded everyone involved.

Felister had to leave school for over two years in order to care for her dying mother and younger brother. In fact her mother died in Felister's arms. Thus one tragedy became compounded by another. She was nearly three years behind in her schooling. Education was valued by Felister's grandmother and she and her brother were the brightest of this sizable brood. The grandmother traded school tuition for these two in partial payment for her labors as a cleaner at Providence Children's Home at that time. The grandmother was not able to work anymore because of her health and old age she was forced to retire earlier.

Felister continues to bloom. She finished her O level studies in 2015 and later joined a local computer school to study computer application. Felister has also completed a Diploma course in Beauty Therapy at Ashleys Hair and Beauty Academy. Her main areas of specialization are pedicure, manicure, aromatherapy, reflexology, facials and massage. Felister's brother currently joined a local secondary school with the help and support of well-wishers.