

LEGAL JARGON

DIVORCE, CUSTODY ETC

simplified

**With Reflection Prompts And Cultural Notes
For Nigerian Women Worldwide**

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My Dear Sister



I know you are sitting in a quiet kind of pain—confused, tired, and holding yourself together for everyone else. You are a professional woman. You are used to being in control, solving problems, and being the strong one. But now, your marriage and family life—the foundation of your world—is shaking, and you feel like you’re drowning in a mix of legal terms, family opinions, and cultural expectations.

I wrote this for you. Not just as a lawyer, but as a Nigerian woman who understands the unique weight you carry. The weight of “What will the Village say?” The pressure to protect your children. The fear that if this marriage ends, you might lose everything you’ve worked so hard for—your dignity, your stability, your sense of self.

This isn't about quick fixes or rebellion. It's your map from pain to power, confusion to clarity. Like the widow in 2 Kings 4 who cried to Elisha for oil, God sees your empty jars. He'll fill them as you act. No more enduring toxicity "for the children's sake" while they watch you break. No more fearing poverty post-divorce—law backs your contributions.

You do not need to be a lawyer to walk this road. You just need clarity, calm guidance, and truth. This book is your first gentle step toward that clarity. As you read each page, my hope is that the noise around you will reduce and your own voice will become clearer.

Take a deep breath. You are not crazy. You are not weak. You are not alone. And you are far stronger than you feel right now.

With love and solidarity,
Aronke (SisiLawyer)



ABOUT THIS BOOK

You have seen or searched legal information from all over the internet. The lawyers are speaking jargon you do not understand. They say information is power yet all you hear seems confusing and not people-friendly. How can you take well-considered decisions confidently?

This e-book is written with you in mind. It is your first aid before you seek legal advice. It explains legal words you will hear judges, court officials, and policemen use. It is designed to help you understand what happens to your children, your assets, and your peace of mind when a marriage ends.

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CHAPTER ONE

Know Your Marriage Type

The Foundation Of Your Exit Strategy

My sister, before we dive into separation or divorce, pause and breathe. You're hurting—nights of tears, days of pretending for the kids or office—but rushing without knowing your marriage type is like fighting blind. In Nigeria, your wedding vow style dictates the laws for ending it. No two marriages dissolve the same. Let's clarify yours: statutory, customary, or Islamic. This knowledge is your first step from pain to power.

1. Statutory Marriage: The "Registry" or "Church" Union

This is your white wedding—the one with the government license from the Marriage Registry, then church vows in your gown and suit. Under the Marriage Act, it's strictly monogamous: one man, one wife. No side chics allowed legally.

Why it matters for ending it: Courts handle dissolution via the Matrimonial Causes Act. You get equal property split based on contributions (even homemaking counts), maintenance, and custody. Prove breakdown (adultery, cruelty, etc.), and you're out—clean, certificate in hand.

Cultural reality: Common among educated couples in Lagos or Abuja. But if he cheats anyway, the law backs you—no "African man needs variety" excuse.

2. Customary Marriage: The Traditional Tie

Your traditional wedding—introduction, wine-carrying, kola nuts, bride price paid to your family per Igbo, Yoruba, Hausa, or other customs. It's valid under native law and custom, and potentially polygamous—he can marry more wives legally.



Why it matters for ending it: Customary courts or High Courts apply ethnic rules. Refund bride price? Possible, but courts increasingly protect women (no automatic "return to sender"). Polygamy means shared assets get messy—other wives and kids compete.

Cultural reality: Pressure from elders is huge—"divorce scatters the compound." But modern rulings favor you if violence or neglect happened. Get it registered (Births, Deaths etc. Compulsory Registration Act) for proof.

3. Islamic Marriage: The Nikah Bond

Conducted by an imam with witnesses, walima feast, mahr gift—only between Muslims, under Islamic personal law.

Why it matters for ending it: Sharia courts or Upper Area Courts handle it. Talaq (husband's divorce) is easy for him; for you, khul (fault-based) needs proof like harm. Maintenance and kids follow Quran—fair, but male-biased custody til age 7-9.

Cultural reality: Community enforces it tightly, but Nigerian law allows appeal to secular courts for equity.

The Serious Truth: All three are fully valid—no need for a "white wedding" to legitimize your traditional one. Today those who marry under customary law can get a certificate under the Birth Deaths etc Compulsory Registration Act. This is a great stride as they are bale to prove their status better and find it easier to claim any rights they may have.

Identify yours now—check your license, family elders, or registry. This isn't just legalese; it's your map out of hurt. Wrong path wastes time, money, emotions. From confusion to clarity: which type is yours?



CHAPTER TWO

Separation vs Divorce

Understanding the Middle Ground

In our Nigerian culture, marriage feels like a lifelong juju—once tied, it's hard to loosen without village people talking, in-laws fighting, or bride price drama. Many high-achieving women like you feel trapped: "Do I suffer in silence like Mama taught, or jump straight to divorce and face the 'ashawo' label?" But there's a wise middle ground. It's not "stay and chop endurance" or "divorce and scatter everything."

Separation and staged divorce give you breathing space, legal protection, and time to decide—from pain to power, confusion to clarity.

1. Judicial Separation: Live Apart, But Still "Married" on Paper

Imagine this: You're done with the constant fights, his wandering eyes, or the zero support while you're hustling as a banker or lawyer in Lagos or Umuahia or even in high brow Abuja. Judicial separation is like a court-issued "time-out" order. You live separately—maybe back in your family compound or your own flat—without ending the marriage legally.

- What it protects: The judge can order your husband to pay maintenance (like monthly allowance for you and the kids), sort out who stays in the matrimonial home, and even divide assets fairly. No remarry o— you're still his wife on paper, so no new bobo drama.
- Cultural fit: Perfect for when your pastor or family says "divorce is taboo," but you need peace. It buys time to heal, pray, or consult elders without rushing. In our courts (under Matrimonial Causes Act), it's cheaper and faster than full divorce—think 3-6 months vs. years of wahala.



- Power move: Use it to test if he changes. If not, transition to divorce later with your evidence ready.

Many sisters ignore this and endure toxic vibes, fearing "what will people say?" But legally, it's your right—claim it!

2. Divorce Stages: Decree Nisi vs. Decree Absolute—Step-by-Step Freedom

Full divorce isn't one big bang; it's two stages, like cooking jollof—first the base, then the finish. This protects you from rash decisions amid emotions or family pressure.

Decree Nisi: The "Provisional Yes" (First Stage)

After proving the marriage has "irretrievably broken down" (e.g., adultery, desertion, or cruelty—common in our cases), the court issues this. It says, "We see the problem; marriage is kaput." But you're not divorced yet. Wait 3-6 months. Use this time for counseling, asset talks, or kid custody plans. Culturally, it shields you from remarrying too soon and inviting "second wife" curses.

Decree Absolute: The Final Chop (Second Stage)

Apply after 3 months (or more if kids are involved). This ends it officially—you're single, free to remarry, inherit, or build anew. Now, divide property (your contributions count, even as housewife), get alimony, and custody. In Nigeria, customary law might pull bride price back, but court overrides for fairness.

Under our laws (Matrimonial Causes Act 1970), prove one fact like "his infidelity with office girl" or "no support for 2+ years." Women win more with evidence—texts, witnesses, bank statements. Avoid rushing; use the middle ground to gather proof.

Sister, this isn't weakness—it's strategy. From enduring like our mothers to owning your power like the boss you are. Consult a lawyer early; don't let fear or culture cage you.



CHAPTER 3

GROUNDS FOR DIVORCE

The "Why" Behind the Filing

Before any woman files for divorce in Nigeria, the court must understand why she is asking to end the marriage. Under the Matrimonial Causes Act, the law uses one main sentence: "The marriage has broken down irretrievably." But that is legal English. In real life, it means: "This thing has scattered beyond repair. I have tried. It is no longer safe or reasonable to continue." To prove this, you must show the court certain facts from your story.

The "Why" Behind the Filing

When you stand before a judge, you are not just telling your side of the story; you are answering a spiritual and cultural question: "Have you truly done all you can, and is this marriage now beyond saving?" The court cannot see your tears, your late-night prayers, or the prophecies you received. It only sees facts. The law calls them "facts proving irretrievable breakdown."

Think of it this way: in church, you may say, "My heart is broken, I can't continue." In court, you must say, "Here is what happened, here is how long, here is why I can't stay," and match it to one or more of these legal categories. Let's break them down in simple, real-life language.



1. Adultery – “His Body has Left the Marriage”

Legal idea: Your husband has committed adultery, and you find it intolerable to continue living with him.

Plain language: He is sleeping with another woman (or women), and it has broken you in a way you cannot honestly live with anymore. You may have forgiven once, twice, or many times. But now, even sharing a bed feels like a wound. Your body tightens, your spirit is restless, your peace has left the home.

- Culturally, some aunties will say, “All men cheat; just close your eyes and stay for the children.” You may even feel guilty for wanting faithfulness, as if you are asking for too much.
- Spiritually, you may have heard sermons on forgiveness and “standing in the gap” for your husband. Forgiveness is powerful, but it does not always mean you must remain in a harmful marriage bed.
- The law does not say, “All men cheat.” It says if he has committed adultery and you find it intolerable to live with him, you can ask for a divorce.

Here, your truth matters. Not what culture says you should endure, but what your heart, health, and sanity can genuinely carry.



2. Intolerable Behaviour – “His Conduct Is Breaking You”

Legal idea: Your husband has behaved in such a way that you cannot reasonably be expected to live with him. This includes physical, emotional, verbal, financial, sexual, or spiritual abuse.

Plain language: His pattern of behaviour is damaging you—body, mind, and soul. You have become a shadow of yourself. Friends say, “You’ve changed.” Even your relationship with God feels strained because you are always anxious, fearful, or walking on eggshells in your own home.

Examples include:

Beating, slapping, pushing, or any physical or domestic violence.

Constant insults, name-calling, threats, or humiliation in private or public.

Controlling money to punish you, refusing basic support for you and the children.

Isolating you from family, church, mosque, or friends.

Forcing sex, ignoring your consent, or using your faith to coerce you (“A good wife will do this...”).

Cultural and spiritual nuance

In many Nigerian homes, women are told, “Endure, that is how marriage is,” especially if the man is a provider or has social status.

Some spiritual leaders may focus only on “God hates divorce,” without addressing that God also hates violence, oppression, and injustice.

The law looks at reasonableness: can a reasonable woman, in your shoes, be expected to keep living like this? If the answer is no, this behaviour can prove that the marriage has broken down irretrievably.

Here, you are not judged for being “weak.” You are recognised as a human being who deserves safety and dignity.



3. Desertion – “He Left You and the Marriage”

Legal idea: He has deserted you for a continuous period of at least one year immediately before you file your case.

Plain language: He walked away from the marriage and did not look back—for at least one full year. No support, no intention to return, no serious effort to reconcile. It is not just travel for work or temporary separation; it is abandonment.

To count as desertion, the court looks for:

Physical or practical separation (he is not living as a husband with you).
A clear intention on his part to end cohabitation even if you are the one who was compelled to flee the matrimonial home.

No good reason for him to leave (for example, not self-defence from abuse).

Cultural and spiritual nuance:

- Sometimes, when he leaves, the family blames you: “What did you do? Why didn’t you keep your home?” You may even start to question yourself. You may remain spiritually “married” in your heart, praying for his return, while physically parenting alone and bearing all the financial and emotional load.
- The law sees beyond appearances: if he has effectively abandoned you, the court can treat it as desertion and accept that the marriage has broken down.

Desertion reminds you of this truth: you are not asked to stay in an empty, one-sided marriage where you are the only one still present.



4. Living Apart – “You Have Already Separated”

Legal idea: You have lived apart for at least 2 years and he agrees to the divorce, or you have lived apart for at least 3 years and he does not have to agree.

Plain language: You and your husband have already been living separate lives—different houses, different cities, or even different countries—for years. The marriage may still exist on paper, but in reality, the relationship is over. No shared home, no real partnership.

There are two key situations:

2 years apart with his consent: If you’ve been apart for two years and he says, “Yes, let’s end it,” the court can rely on that.

3 years apart without his consent: If you’ve been apart for three years, the court can still grant a divorce even if he refuses, as long as the separation is proven.

Cultural and spiritual nuance:

Many Nigerian couples stay “separated but not divorced” for years because of shame, church or mosque stigma, or family pressure. You may already be living as a single woman but still answering “Mrs” to keep the peace.

Spiritually, you may feel stuck in the middle: not fully in, not fully out. You may fear that finalising a divorce means you have “failed God,” even though the reality of the marriage ended long ago.

The law recognises this limbo. It says, in effect: “You have already been apart for this long; it is honest to admit the marriage has broken down.” You are not the first woman to be separated and confused. This provision is a door for honest closure, not a punishment.



As you read these facts—adultery, behaviour, desertion, living apart—I want you to remember this: the law uses hard words, but behind each word is a human story. Your story. Your tears. Your prayers. Your efforts to make it work.

This chapter is not here to push you into divorce. It is here to help you see clearly: if you ever reach the point of filing, you will not just be “complaining.” You will be presenting your lived reality in a language the court understands, while trusting God to guide your steps and heal your heart.



CHAPTER FOUR

Custody & Maintenance

The Golden Rule - The Best Interest of the Child

When a marriage is breaking, most Nigerian women are not just afraid of losing their husbands—they are terrified of losing their children and their peace. Custody and maintenance are where culture, law, and faith all collide, and it can feel overwhelming. This chapter helps you calm the noise and understand what the court is really looking at, in plain language.

In Nigerian law, the judge has one main compass in any custody matter: the best interest of the child. Not the ego of the father, not the pain of the mother, not the demands of the in-laws. The court must look at the child's emotional, physical, educational, and even psychological needs and ask, "Where will this child truly be better off?" This principle is written clearly in our laws—both in the Child Rights Act and the Matrimonial Causes Act—stating that the child's welfare is the paramount consideration.

The law does not "belong" to the father or the mother.

There is no automatic entitlement to the children just because someone paid bride price or is the "head" of the home.

The court can even refuse custody to a seemingly "good" parent if it believes another arrangement will better protect the child.

Spiritually, think of it this way: God also cares first about the safety and wholeness of the child. Your child is not a reward or punishment in this process; they are a soul to be protected.



2. Types of Custody – What Exactly Is the Court Deciding?

Many women hear “custody” and imagine it is just about “who the child stays with.” In reality, the court can split custody into different types to protect the child’s welfare.

Legal Custody

This is about who makes the big decisions in the child’s life:

What school they attend.

What hospital they go to and what medical treatment they receive.

What kind of religious upbringing they have.

A parent may have sole legal custody (making major decisions alone) or joint legal custody (both parents must consult and agree).

Physical Custody

This is about where the child actually lives day-to-day:

Whose house the child sleeps in most of the time.

Who handles daily routines—school runs, homework, meals, bedtime.

A parent can have primary physical custody, while the other has access/visitation—weekends, holidays, or specific times.

Joint Custody

This is when both parents share responsibilities and rights, either:

Joint legal custody (shared decision-making), or

Joint physical custody (the child spends significant time living with each parent).

Joint custody does not mean a perfect 50–50 split like mathematics. The court looks at what is practical and stable for the child’s schooling, routines, and emotional balance.

Culturally, we are used to thinking, “Children belong to the father’s family,” or “Young children must follow the mother.” The court is not bound by these simplistic ideas; it can mix and match these custody types to serve the child’s best interest.



3. Cultural Myth vs. Legal Reality

One of the most common fears women voice is this:

“Once my child is 7, they will automatically take them from me and give them to their father.”

This is a myth, not the law.

Historically, there was something called the “tender years” doctrine, a belief that very young children should usually stay with their mothers. In Nigeria, courts sometimes lean toward mothers for babies and toddlers because of practical care and bonding needs. But even then, the courts keep repeating: the best interest of the child is what truly matters.

The legal reality is:

There is no fixed age in Nigerian law where a child must automatically leave the mother and go to the father.

The court looks at the age and health of the child, the emotional bond with each parent, who has been caring for the child day-to-day.

The stability, safety, and moral environment of each home.

A father can get custody if that better serves the child’s welfare; a mother can retain custody even as the child grows older, if that remains best for the child.

So, when a man threatens you—“Once this boy is 7, I will collect him”—understand this: that is emotional blackmail, not law. Your job is to focus on being a stable, nurturing, and responsible parent; the court will examine the real picture, not empty threats.

Spiritually, this should calm you: God is not handing your child over because of an age number. He is interested in where that child will be safest and most loved.



4. Maintenance (Child Support) – The Child’s Right, Not a Favour

Many fathers speak as if “helping” with school fees is a gift they can give or withdraw depending on how you behave. The law thinks differently. Under Nigerian law and the Child Rights Act, maintenance (child support) is the child’s right, not a favour from the father or a bribe to the mother.

When fixing maintenance, the court looks at:

- The actual needs of the child: food, housing, clothing, healthcare, education, transport, and sometimes extracurricular activities.
- The standard of living the child was used to before the separation or divorce.
- The financial capacity of both parents—income, expenses, and earning potential.

This means:

- A rich father cannot pay peanuts and claim he is “trying.”
- A struggling father cannot be ordered to pay an unrealistic amount just to punish him; the order must be fair and sustainable.
- Mothers may also be expected to contribute, especially if they are high-earning professionals.

Maintenance is not:

- A salary for the mother.
- A tool for revenge.
- It is a structured way to ensure the child does not suffer because the marriage failed.
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Spiritually, you can see maintenance as stewardship: both parents remain accountable before God to provide for the child He entrusted to them—whether they stay married or not.



5. Reflection Prompts – Bringing Law Back to Your Reality

As you think about custody and maintenance, these questions can help you move from fear to clarity:

- Who is the true “primary caregiver”?
- Who wakes up at night when the child is sick? Who attends open days, PTA meetings, and doctor’s appointments? Who knows the names of teachers, classmates, and the child’s best friend?
- Who knows the children’s medical and emotional history?

Who can tell the court about their fears, allergies, triggers, and dreams without guessing?

- Is my fear of losing the custody of the children based on the law—or on his threats and cultural pressure?
- Have I actually checked my rights, or am I just repeating what aunties, in-laws, or my husband have shouted during quarrels?
- Am I prepared to co-parent if the court orders joint custody?
- Can I separate my pain as a wife from my responsibility as a mother?
- Can I communicate about the children without fighting, for their sake?

Take a moment to pray over these questions:

“Lord, show me the truth of my situation. Help me protect my children wisely, without fear, bitterness, or ignorance. Give me favour where decisions are made about their lives.”

Remember, Sister: your children are not bargaining chips. They are gifts. This chapter is not here to scare you, but to reassure you that the law, when properly understood and applied, is designed to shield their welfare—and to give your heart some peace as you walk this hard road.



CHAPTER FIVE

The Divisions Of Assests

Claiming Your Value: Beyond the Bank Statement

When a Nigerian marriage is shaking, the argument often shifts from “You don’t respect me” to “This is my house; you have nothing here.” This chapter is your reminder that you did not spend years as a tenant in your own life. You were a partner, and partners have stake—even when their names are not on the documents.

1. Direct vs Indirect Contribution – What Did You Really Bring In?

In many homes, property is quietly bought in the husband’s name only.

Later, when separation or divorce comes, he beats his chest:

“I bought the land. I paid the contractor. I paid the lawyer. You have nothing here.”

But under modern Nigerian thinking and case law, courts are increasingly looking beyond just bank alerts to see the full picture of contribution.

Direct Contribution – The Money You Can Point To

Direct contribution is the obvious one:

- The transfer from your account to the developer.
- The portion of your salary that paid for roofing, tiles, or school fees.
- The rent you covered when his business was down.
- The capital you provided for a joint business.



If you:

- Sent money with narration like “for block,” “for rent,” “for school fees,”
- Have receipts in your name for building materials, furniture, or appliances,

then those are strong direct contribution proofs. Nigerian judges often rely on this kind of paper trail to recognise your financial input.

Indirect Contribution – Your “Sweat Equity”

This is where many Nigerian women lose out—not because the law fully ignores them, but because they don’t know this counts and they don’t document it. Indirect contribution includes all the things that:

- Freed him up to chase contracts and do late nights.
- Saved the family money.
- Built the stability that allowed properties to be acquired at all.

Indirect contribution looks like:

- **Homemaking:** Cooking, cleaning, supervising domestic staff, doing school runs, managing repairs. You gave him the “peace of mind” he boasts about in public.
- **Childcare:** Raising the children so they did not have to be dumped with paid nannies or boarding schools early; staying home when they were sick, helping with homework.
- **Support and management:**
 - Being the unpaid PA—picking calls, arranging meetings.
 - Helping to manage tenants, follow up on rent, or supervise building sites.
 - Acting as his emotional anchor when business went bad and encouraging him not to give up.



Nigerian courts have started recognising that “management of the home and care of the children” can be a real contribution that must be weighed when sharing assets. It’s not charity; it’s labour.

Ask yourself:

If you had taken your hands off the home and children for five years, would he have had the same freedom to “hustle”?

2. The “Matrimonial Home” – More Than Just a Building

Not all properties are the same in the eyes of the court. The matrimonial home—the main house where you and the children actually lived—is often treated with special sensitivity.

This could be:

- The family bungalow in his village.
- The duplex in Lagos where you raised the kids.
- The rented or owned flat that has been “home” for years.

Even if:

- The deed is in his name,
- He keeps saying “This is my father’s land,”

the fact that:

- You lived there as his wife,
- You contributed (directly or indirectly) to maintaining that home,
- You and the children built memories and a life there,

can give you what lawyers call an “equitable interest.”

What can a court do with the matrimonial home?

- Allow you and the children to remain there for a period, especially if you have custody.
- Order the home to be sold and the proceeds shared in a fair way.
- Consider who needs the stability of that home more—often the parent with primary care of the children.



This does not mean the woman will always get the house. It means the court can look past the name on the title and ask: What is just and equitable in this family's situation?"

Culturally, his family may say, "This is our son's house. You must go." Legally, the court can say, "No one will use culture to render this woman and her children homeless after years of contribution."

3. Property in Your Name – Your Own Growth Also Matters

Sometimes, in the middle of supporting the family, you have quietly:

- Built your own business.
- Bought land somewhere.
- Bought a car or started a small investment in your own name.

Just as he may claim sole ownership of "his" assets, remember:

- Assets in your name are also part of your financial story.
- The court may look at both of you when dividing things, so be clear and honest about what is yours.

You must:

- Know exactly what you own—business registration, land documents, cars, savings, pensions.
- Keep those documents safe (not just in a drawer he controls).
- Understand that your own growth is not shameful. You are not the "bad wife" because you also planned for yourself and your children.

Legally, if you bought land with your own money and documents show only your name, that is strong evidence that it is your asset. Spiritually, you are a steward of what God placed in your hands. Protecting it is wisdom, not wickedness.

Cultural Note – From "Materialistic" to "Fair Share"

In our Nigerian context, once a woman mentions property during separation or divorce, the labels start flying:

- "She is materialistic."



- “So that was why she married him.”
- “Women nowadays just want to eat and go.

But look at the truth:

- You may have given 10, 15, 20 years of your life to building that home.
- You may have sacrificed promotions, dreams, and health to maintain the family.
- You may have stood with him when he had nothing, only for wealth to appear when your hair is already greying.

You are not “taking his things.”

You are collecting your share of a joint venture you helped sustain—directly and indirectly.

Emotionally, you may feel guilt:

“Let me just go with my children and my clothes; God will provide.”

Yes, God provides—but God also expects you to use your head and your rights. Walking away empty-handed when you have a legal stake is not holiness; often, it is fear, conditioning, or pride.

Ask yourself honestly:

If your daughter had contributed in the same way you have, would you advise

her to walk away with nothing, just to avoid being called “greedy”?

Reflection Prompts – Your Quiet Financial Mirror

Use these prompts as journaling questions in a notebook or a password-protected note. They are not for self-condemnation, but for clarity.

1.The Hidden Ledger

If I were to bill my husband for my “management and childcare services” over the last 10–15 years, what would that invoice look like each month?

- Housekeeping
- Cooking and planning meals



- Childcare, school runs, homework
- Supporting his business (calls, errands, tenant management)

2. The Paper Trail

Do I have copies of receipts or proof, even for the “small” things like:

- Buying the curtains and furniture,
 - Paying for the generator or inverter,
 - Paying domestic staff salaries,
 - Contributing to rent or building materials?
- If not, what can I start quietly gathering now?

3. My Independent Assets

- What do I own strictly in my name?
- Land?
- Shares or investments?
- A registered business?
- A car or equipment?

Where are the documents? Are they safe, or lying in a place where they can

“mysteriously disappear”?

4. The Future View

If I walk away with nothing but my clothes and my children, how long will it take me to rebuild the comfort they are used to?

- Is my decision to take nothing coming from faith—or from fear, pride, or shame?
- Would accepting my fair share of assets reduce their future suffering?



Sister, this chapter is not about turning you into a property hunter. It is about helping you see yourself as a partner, not a passenger. Legally, culturally, and spiritually, you have poured value into this home.

If the marriage ends, you are allowed to say, calmly and clearly:

“I am not fighting. I am simply asking for my share of what we built together.”



CONCLUSION

YOUR FIRST AID KIT

From Legal Jargon to Your Daily Power

Dear Sister,

Knowledge alone is like having medicine but not applying it to the wound.

This guide has given you the clarity—now take action. Here is your SisiLawyer 7-Day Checklist, simple steps to secure yourself without drama or confrontation.

These are your first moves from pain to power.

1. Audit Your Documents – Gather Your Proof Quietly

In Nigeria, paper is power. Without your Marriage Certificate, children's birth certificates, property deeds, or pension statements, you fight blind.

Do this in 7 days:

- Find originals (registry drawer, family home, lawyer's office).
- Scan or photograph clearly (use your phone).
- Save to a secure cloud folder (Google Drive, iCloud—password protected).
- Give a trusted sister or friend access as backup.

Why it matters culturally: When in-laws say, "Show us proof you were married," you will have it. No begging, no excuses.

Spiritual anchor: "A prudent wife is from the Lord" (Proverbs 19:14)—prudence includes protecting your legal identity.



2. Financial Snapshot – Track the Family Money

You know garri price, but do you know where salaries, rents, and school fees truly go? Bank statements are gold in court.

Do this in 7 days:

- Print/download your bank statements (last 6 months).
- Note joint accounts, transfers (“for block,” “school fees,” “rent”).
- List fixed costs: children’s fees, house help salary, utilities.

Cultural reflection: Many wives say, “Money matter na man work.” But when maintenance or property sharing comes, ignorance hurts you and the children.

Power move: Knowledge of numbers calms fear. You cannot claim what you cannot see.

3. The "Silent" Diary – Facts for Evidence, Not Venting

Courts need dates + events, not just tears. Your WhatsApp screenshots and witness notes become proof of behaviour, desertion, or adultery.

Do this in 7 days:

- Buy a small notebook (hide it safely) or use a password app (Notes, Google Keep).
- Log calmly: “15/01/26 – He left home 8pm, no call. Returned 4am smelling perfume.”
- Save screenshots, voicemails, witness names.

Why it’s wise: Village people will say, “No be fight?” But facts silence lies in court.

Spiritual truth: God is a God of order. Documenting protects your testimony.



4. Consult with Legal Jargon– Interview Your Lawyer Like a Boss

Not all lawyers speak your language. Test them with smart questions.

Prepare these questions:

- “How do you apply the Best Interest of the Child in custody?”
- “What’s your view on indirect contribution like homemaking for property?”
- “In a case like mine, what’s realistic for timeline and costs?”

Red flags: Dismisses your feelings, uses too much legalese or legal jargon, pressures quick decisions.

Cultural nuance: Many women pick the “biggest” lawyer or church member. Pick the one who hears your spirit too.



Final Thought

Your New Strength

Confidence is not “I know everything.” It’s “I’m no longer afraid of the questions.”

You now understand:

- Marriage types and their exit rules.
- Grounds like adultery, behaviour, desertion.
- Custody, maintenance, your indirect contributions.
- Divorce steps from petition to Decree Absolute.
- Asset division beyond bank statements.

Sit with any in-law, pastor, or lawyer with calm eyes.

Pray this: “Lord, wisdom to act, peace to wait, power to claim what’s mine.”

From pain to power. From confusion to clarity.

You’ve got this.

**With unshakable love,
Aronke (SisiLawyer)**

