**DRAFT 1**

*“I need to tell you something.”*

*Those were the very first words I’d ever said to Mrs Karanja, my 40-year-old therapist in the year I had been under her care. Needless to say, the surprise was evident on her perfectly maintained, oval shaped, chocolate-toned face. Her mid-size cat-like eyes widened just slightly as she scooted closer to me.*

*Trying to mask what she clearly saw as a breakthrough, she composed herself and, in what I assume was an attempt at calmness, said “I’m here Cya. Anytime you’re ready, let’s begin.”*

*She had a calming, sweet voice —the kind that lulls you to sleep with nothing but thoughts of marshmallows and fluffy clouds in your mind. If I hadn’t known any better, I would have believed the illusion of control she had so well crafted.*

*But I knew better.*

*Behind the expensive Fendi makeup, delicate floral perfume and the neatly styled human hair wig —one that cost no less than 300 thousand Ksh — paired with a beautiful green kitenge dress she wore today, I saw a woman fighting her own battles. An abusive husband and a drinking problem to numb the pain.*

*Don’t get me wrong, she was a master of illusion. I only knew because, early in our sessions, I had arrived an hour before my scheduled time and walked right into the truth. A slap so hard the poor woman fell on the floor in a pile landed on her left cheek, before the big bellied bully stormed out of her office.*

*Took me half an hour to finally walk into her office and when I did, I found her drowning a glass of Black and White whiskey. And before you start judging, the labelled bottle was right on her table. I hadn’t yet started drinking by then.*

*But before I begun, I had to be sure.*

*“Whatever I say here, you won’t repeat it to anybody, right?”*

*Still caught up in her enthusiasm, with a book perched on her lap, ready to jot something for the first time, she quickly answered, ”No honey, I won’t repeat it to anyone. I’m under oath remember?” And with the sweetest of smiles, sealed her fate,”Nothing to worry about honey.”*

*I smiled back..*

*I needed to tell someone —anyone. And with the confirmation, I finally let it out. I narrated the saga that brought me here —truthfully this time because if I didn’t, the voices in my head would drown me.*

*“It was on Sunday morning, the 24th of May last year when I first laid my eyes on Jax.*

**TO BE CONTINUED ..**