

## PAPA SHARK

“I hope you will forgive me,” Rubia cried earnestly as he straightened his new, silk tie and looked long and hard at the reflection on the king-size mirror in his bedroom. How he wished that this was one of those evenings that he had stood right here admiring himself after a long day at Meha Primary School where he was head teacher and had been for the last four years.

Looking across the room one last time, his eyes rested on the glass lying patiently on the dressing table. It was time: the hour of cleansing had come. As he reverently approached the Judgement Table...the altar from whence the inevitable punishment would be meted, he felt so helpless, so alone.

“This is my fate, my destiny...” he whispered as he clenched the glass. He squinted at its contents and shuddered. He could almost feel his insides being ripped apart by this dreaded liquid. The fact that rodents breathed their last, merely seconds after encountering it was proof enough of its lethal nature. There was no other way out, Rubia knew that now. Just a sip of this concoction would surely purge him of all guilt and put an end to his misery.

\* \* \*

“Thank God it’s over!” he thought. This is not the complete story. To read further, please either register as a new reader or login now if already registered. It had been a long, tedious day and he needed to sit back and reflect on the week’s highs and lows. He understood how terribly demanding this job was: the task of steering a public school such as this one from academic dwarfism – the teacher shortages, lack of funds, low morale and other seemingly insurmountable challenges notwithstanding – forever weighed heavily on his broad shoulders. The pressure kept piling each year with the influx of children from within and without the illustrious Murang’a County and for good reason too.

Everyone could not help but marvel at the consistency with which Meha had continued to flood national and county schools with its products, year in, year out. Having landed at transfer from yet another far-flung school barely days after his wife’s untimely demise, Rubia’s entry had taken Murang’a by storm.

A quiet, reserved man with peculiar principles, Rubia did not have many friends. That, and the fact that there was absolutely no one to go home to every night, propelled him as he plunged into the ocean that was his work with unrivalled passion. Soon, he had infected his teachers and staff alike with this fever.

After only two years at the helm, Rubia had put Meha firmly at the apex of Murang’a, having dispatched two girls to Alliance High School and four more to equally well performing