TIKTOK GONE WRONG

BY PETER KITHAE

Copyright Page

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Author's Note

Thank you so much for choosing *TikTok Gone Wrong*! I'm truly grateful for your time and support. I hope you will enjoy from start to finish. Writing this book has been an incredible journey, and I'm excited to share it with readers like you.

If you want to stay connected, get exclusive behind-the-scenes content, updates on new releases, and all things related to my books, be sure to follow me on my WhatsApp channel. It's the best way to stay in the loop and be the first to know about upcoming books.

Thanks again for your support, and I look forward to connecting with you!

Join my WhatsApp Channel*:* https://whatsapp.com/channel/0029VbAKw0g9Gv7YO3QnB02i

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Chapter 1: #WhereIsZahki?

Karura Forest always had that eerie calm after 6 p.m.—the kind of stillness that makes your skin crawl even before anything happens. The sun had dipped low, golden through the tall trees, and Nairobi's wind felt like it carried whispers. But Zahara Kimani—known to her 487K TikTok followers as @Zahki—didn't mind. She loved the drama of it.

Her final TikTok went up at 6:42 p.m.

It was dark. Moody. Filtered in crimson tones. Her face half-shadowed, lips trembling as she whispered a challenge:
"If I survive this, I'm untouchable."
Then silence. She turned the camera, walking deeper into the forest.
Footsteps. Breathing. A faint giggle.
Then she screamed.

Cut to black.

By 7:20 p.m., the video had already hit 140K views. By 8:00 p.m., she was officially missing.

Brian, her boyfriend of three years, was home sorting through shots from a recent high-profile event in Nairobi, where he worked as a freelance photographer covering the city's biggest gigs. His phone buzzed to life with a flood of WhatsApp notifications. He opened Instagram. Saw her latest post.
It was captioned: "Watch till the end. Don't blink."
The comments section was chaos.

"Is this a skit or???"
"Hii ni real ama she acting?"
"Bro I got chills—who screamed?"
"Wait… is that Karura??"

He called her. No answer.

He texted her. Nothing.

Then he called again, and again—until it rang and then cut off. That was when the panic set in.

By midnight, she hadn't returned calls, hadn't posted, hadn't come home. Her parents called Brian. They thought maybe she was with him. He said no. Her mother, Mama Zahara, started crying softly on the phone before passing it to Baba Zahara, who kept it together—for now.

At 2:14 a.m., Zahara's iPhone was found by joggers in Karura. It was face down, shattered, smudged with dirt and something that looked like blood.
The Forest Guard on duty refused to speak on record, but later admitted:

"There are places we don't go at night. That area is one of them. Even thieves fear it."

NTV picked up the story by dawn.

"BREAKING: Viral TikToker @Zahki Missing After Posting Disturbing Video from Karura Forest"
Footage of Zahara's TikTok played on loop, her scream echoing through breakfast rooms across the country.
NTV host Susan Waruguru frowned at the screen, whispered, "This doesn't feel like content. This feels real."
And it was.

Zahara was more than just an influencer. She was Nairobi's digital darling—sharp-tongued in Sheng, soft-spoken in English, serving looks that left timelines shaking. She'd gone viral for her "Broke Girl Fashion Hacks," her "Nyash Dancing Tutorials," and her brutally honest vlogs about Gen Z real-life drama, Nairobi street culture, and Gen Z survival in streets.

She was the face of a generation: ambitious, unfiltered, daring.

So when she vanished, Gen Z didn't scroll past. They screamed.

Hashtag #WhereIsZahki started trending by 9:15 a.m.

TikTokers began reacting to her last video, some even dressing like her, lip-syncing the words, repeating the steps.
But one video stood out.
A teenage boy played her audio *backwards*. It went viral instantly.

In the reversed audio, her whispered "If I survive this, I'm untouchable" turned into:

"Help me. They're here."

The internet froze.
No one was playing anymore.

Brian went to Karura with the police. DCI officers had already cordoned off a stretch deep inside—an area long rumored to be a burial ground during the post-election violence, whispered about in Facebook posts and matatu gossip. Some called it *"mwili zone."*

There, beside Zahara's shattered phone, they found a lipstick cap, her pink scarf, and a torn bracelet with a tiny pendant:

"ZK 💔 B."
Brian couldn't speak. He just stared.

By noon, NTV aired exclusive footage from the forest.

Susan Waruguru, now dressed in somber black, interviewed a Karura guide who said:

"We've lost people here before. Not influencers. Just people who thought the forest was safe."

"And Zahara?"
"She didn't run. From the tracks, someone dragged her."

Questions swirled in the minds of Kenyans. *Who was involved? And most of all—why?*

Zahara's mother collapsed during the afternoon press briefing.
"We just want our daughter back," her father said, voice tight, fighting tears. "Alive or… we need to know."

By 4:00 p.m., Gen Z was out for blood.

TikTok, Twitter, IG stories flooded with rage:

"Where's the president now?"
"This gov moves faster for missing weapons than missing women."
"DCI, do your job!"
"Aki Zahki, please not you."

A peaceful protest was planned outside DCI HQ for the next day.
Even celebrities chimed in.

"She danced her heart out for us. Now we dance for justice." – *Njoro The Comedian*

But behind the noise, Lyn—Zahara's closest friend and collab partner—was silent.

She hadn't posted anything since the night before.

People noticed.

"Why is Lyn quiet tho???"
"They were together a few hours before she vanished."
"Lyn knows something."

And they were right.

That night, Zahara's TikTok account posted again.

It was a repost of the same Karura video—but this time, it included 2 more seconds at the end.

She turns to the camera, smiles nervously, and whispers something.

But the sound is corrupted. Glitched.

The screen flashes. A shadow appears behind her.
Then: static.

📍 *Karura Forest, Zone D-9. Sunday, 6:42 p.m.*

Final frame: Zahara's eyes go wide. She gasps.
Then nothing.

Her account goes dark.

No more uploads.

Just one pinned comment from the original post:
“Someone help her. This ain’t a game.”

DCI audio engineers enhance the last seconds of the reversed sound from Zahara’s TikTok. After clearing noise and distortion, the audio becomes clear:

A voice—not Zahara’s—whispers:

“We told her not to post.”

Chapter 2: No One's Talking

Brian hadn't slept. Not even a blink.

He sat on the cold concrete steps outside Zahara's apartment in South B, hoodie over his head, phone in hand, refreshing TikTok every two minutes—hoping maybe, just maybe, she'd post. Maybe it was all just one big PR stunt. Maybe she'd appear on Live and say, *"Aki guys, mrelax! Niko fiti!"*

But it had been over 24 hours. And nothing.

His hands shook when he scrolled to her last DM.

BriBri 💙💉**:** "Babe, supper kesho? Miss you."
Zahki 👑**:** "Sina energy leo. Kesho maybe."

That was the night before she vanished.

He stared at the messages, blinking away hot tears. Zahara never ignored him. Never. And now her name was on headlines.

Outside Zahara's flat, reporters had started gathering. KTN, Citizen, Inooro, Modern TV, Gen Z studio, even TV47. Microphones with fuzzy logos. Journalists pushing for soundbites from neighbours.
"Did she seem depressed lately?"
"Did she have enemies?"
"Is it true she was dating a politician?"
Brian felt sick.

He walked through South B's dusty lanes to Umoja, where Lyn stayed. They used to hang out there all the time—Zahara, Lyn, Brian—eating mutura and chips mwitu by the roadside, laughing into the night like the world was just theirs. Together, they were always out wildin' till stupid o'clock — vibes, shots, no regrets.

Today, it felt like a ghost town.

Lyn opened the gate slowly, hair in a messy bun, no makeup, just a large t-shirt with *#TheEnlightenedPath* printed in cracked pink letters. Brian did not ask about the print. To him the it had no meaning. He was there for a mission. To demand for answers.

"You're not gonna talk to the media?" he asked.

Lyn shrugged. "What's the point? They'll twist it."

Brian stepped in, studying her face. “She told me she was home all weekend.”

“She lied,” Lyn said, eyes flat. “She asked me not to tell you.”

Brian’s heart twisted. “Why? What was she doing there alone?”

Lyn leaned against the doorframe. “She said she needed to go viral again. That her numbers were slowing down. She had an idea. Said it would shake Kenya. But she didn’t say what exactly.”

Brian’s voice cracked. “You didn’t stop her?”

“I thought it was just content, B. She’s always been extra. You know that.”

Inside, Zahara’s laugh echoed faintly from a paused video on Lyn’s laptop.

Zahara, wearing an oversized hoodie, fake crying in a skit about breakups.

“She left me,” she said on screen, pouting. “But at least I got content.”

Brian closed the laptop gently. “That’s not funny anymore.”

At 8:00 p.m., NTV went live with their prime segment:
“Where is Kenya’s Viral Queen?”

Susan Waruguru sat in studio, eyes solemn, wearing Zahara’s signature color—royal blue.

“We are still following the tragic disappearance of Zahara Kimani, known to many as @Zahki. DCI has now officially taken over the case, but the public continues to demand answers…”

Clips rolled: Zahara dancing at the Nation Centre rooftop, on red carpets, joking in Sheng, vlogging from Gikambura.

Susan's voice trembled.
“This is no longer just a viral story. This is a young woman, lost.”

Meanwhile, Citizen TV’s evening panel lit up with opinions.

A middle-aged panelist laughed coldly:
“These TikTok girls, they want fame without understanding the dangers. This isn’t America. Hii si Hollywood.”

A younger guest fired back:
“No one deserves to disappear for chasing their dreams. This country only cares when bodies show up.”

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Outside DCI Headquarters, protesters gathered holding signs:
#JusticeForZahki
“Find Her or Resign”
“Being Famous Isn’t a Crime!”

Motorbikes revved loudly, matatus honked in solidarity, and Twitter Spaces lit up with raw voices: Gen Zs speaking from the gut.

“She gave us free content. Free therapy. Free hope. Na sasa she's gone and we’re just tweeting?”

DCI finally released a statement at 10:15 p.m.

“We are actively pursuing all leads. Preliminary forensic analysis of the phone found in Karura suggests possible foul play. Several individuals have been summoned for questioning.”

Brian clung to those words.

Foul play.

So, she didn’t just get lost. She didn’t run away.

Something happened.

The next morning, DCI officers went to Zahara’s apartment for a digital sweep. Brian stood by the door, arms crossed, watching as a tech specialist pulled up her WhatsApp, Telegram, and IG messages.

The room was silent. No one blinked.

Then came a hit: Deleted Telegram messages.

Recovered. Timestamped two days before she disappeared.

Zahara had sent a message to a contact saved only as “Vibe Master 🕶️”

“This better blow me up, or I swear it’s over for us both.”

The room went quiet.

Brian’s knees buckled slightly.

Lyn’s breath caught in her throat.

And for the first time… the DCI officer frowned.

DCI zooms into the contact info for “Vibe Master 🕶️.” The registered number is untraceable—masked through a server in Garissa.

And the profile picture?

A photo of Zahara.

Chapter 3: Karura Screams

Karura smelled different that morning.

Not like its usual damp earth and eucalyptus breeze. No, today it smelled of ash, anxiety, and something unspoken—something heavy that clung to the backs of the DCI officers walking in with clipboards and bloodhounds.

Zahara's name was now on every radio update, every boda boda speaker, and every tea shop conversation in Nairobi.

But here, in the heart of the forest, she had no name.

Only traces.

The officers moved through the Zone D-9 path in silence, boots crunching dry leaves. Police dogs sniffed furiously, trailing back and forth around a muddy bend where the ground was disturbed—fresh.

DCI Inspector Murage paused, motioned to the forensics team.

"There," he said.

In a small ditch, half-buried under sticks, was something bright pink and shiny.

A lip gloss tube.

Brand: Fenty Beauty.
Shade: *Hot Blooded.*
Zahara's favorite.

Just beside it, a half-burnt sweater, charred at the sleeves, the collar singed. The fabric still held scent of perfume, one her mother later confirmed: "That's Zahara's. I bought it from Carrefour."

The sweater had a faded slogan across the chest: *"Don't chase clout. Let it chase you."*

Brian watched from behind the tape, fists clenched. He wanted to run in, to tear through the trees, to find her—any sign of her laugh, her voice, even her scent. Anything but this silence.

Lyn stood a few feet away, chewing her nails, avoiding eye contact with everyone.

It was only 10:00 a.m., but Nairobi's sun felt violent.

A forest ranger—old, half-blind, and chain-smoking—approached the lead officer with a tremble in his voice.

"Saw something, juu ya usiku ya Saturday," he said in broken Swahili.
"Saa tisa, I think… maybe 3 a.m."

"What did you see?"

"Black Prado. No headlights. Drove out like it knew the place well. From Zone D. I thought….."

"License plate?"

"Couldn't see. But tinted windows. Heavy sound. Diesel engine."

The officer wrote it all down. But something in the ranger's eyes said: he knew more.

DCI called Zahara's parents for questioning.

Mama Zahara sat with a damp handkerchief, her voice barely audible.

"She always came home. Even if late. Always. Zahara feared darkness. She wouldn't go to a forest at night."

"But she posted the video," the officer said.

"She does many things for likes. But not stupid things. Not this."

Her father added, firm: "Check the people around her. Her so-called friends. Don't just blame her."

Meanwhile, the media had set up outside Karura like it was a crime drama unfolding live.

Citizen TV: "BREAKING: Zahara's Items Found in Karura – Lip Gloss, Burnt Sweater Spark Foul Play Theory"

KTN News: "Witness Claims Black Prado Drove Out of Karura at 3 A.M. – Who Was Inside?"

NTV: "Parents of Missing Influencer Call for Full Investigation Into Close Circle"

But it was a *Twitter leak* that really broke Kenya.

A screenshot from an anonymous TikTok tracker account showed Zahara's page was still active.
Uploading.
From Nairobi.
Geo-tagged.

One post, scheduled that morning, showed her dancing in her signature white hoodie and ripped jeans—inside what looked like a bedroom.

Caption:

“Stay soft, even when the world is hard. #NewDrop #ZahkiForever”

Gen Z couldn’t hold back. Never. They flooded social media with messages.

“Ama she’s playing us all?”
“Someone else is using her account???”
“Hii ni Netflix or what?”
“She’s gone but still chasing the algorithm?”

And then someone noticed something chilling:

The hoodie.
The jeans.
The shoes.

All identical to what Lyn had worn two nights earlier… in an Instagram story she later deleted.

Brian stared at the screenshots. Then at Lyn.

He walked straight into her small Umoja flat without knocking.

Her ring light was still on. Her TikTok account open on her laptop. A half-finished smoothie on the table.

"Lyn," he whispered. "What the hell are you doing?"

She froze.

“I had the footage. From before. I didn’t know what to do with it. I thought maybe if I keep her page alive, she’d… she’d feel close,” she mumbled.

“You said she left you out. Now you’re uploading dressed like her?”

“She asked me to keep things going if anything happened.”

Brian stepped back. “You're lying.”

Outside, a tweet was going viral:

@_eMkenya:
“If Zahki is really gone, why is her bestie wearing her clothes, posting like her, and acting like it’s all normal? Something stinks.”

The post had 18,000 retweets by sundown.

Zahara’s mother watched it all unfold on her Tecno phone from the bench in the police station.

She whispered, “They turn grief into views now.”

DCI made their move.

They called in TikTok for metadata access.
They demanded IP logs, device footprints.
The requests went out to global servers.

One officer stared at the upload logs.

He shook his head slowly.

“This isn’t just scheduled content. These are live updates.”

At exactly 6:42 p.m.—the same time Zahara vanished—a new post drops on her TikTok.

She’s dancing again. Same hoodie. Same earrings.

But the mirror behind her reveals the camera.

And the reflection isn’t Zahara.

It’s Lyn.

Chapter 4: Investigators Under Fire

It had been five days since Zahara disappeared.

Five long days filled with rumors, rage, recycled TikTok videos, conspiracy threads, tearful interviews—and not a single confirmed lead. Every morning, Kenyans woke up hoping to see a "FOUND SAFE" headline. Instead, it was the same recycled phrase:

"Investigation Ongoing."

By now, Zahara wasn't just a missing girl.
She was a movement.
She was a mirror of every young Kenyan hustling online for attention, relevance, and survival.

Outside the DCI HQ, the tension snapped.

Hundreds of Gen Z gathered, dressed in Zahara's favorite colors—royal blue and white—chanting:
"#JusticeForZahki!"
"TikTok is not a crime!"
"Mnatupima akili?"

They carried placards with her quotes, her screenshots, and her captions. Someone even printed her last dance on a poster with bold text:
"She danced for you. Now dance for her freedom."

DCI tried to calm the crowd with a press update.

Spokesperson Njoki Peter stood before the flashing cameras, sweat glistening on her forehead. "We are working closely with TikTok global teams, tracing metadata and geolocation of recent posts. There is no evidence of Zahara's death. The case is active, and we urge the public to remain calm and cooperative."

But calm is hard to maintain when someone you watched daily is possibly dead—and the system is still 'gathering information.'

Citizen TV ran a heated panel that night. The hashtag #Mnatupima trended before midnight.

"This is what happens when institutions are reactive instead of proactive!"

"Young women disappear every week. But because she had followers, now it's a priority?"

"No, no. This one touched heart. And that's why it's a national issue."

NTV followed suit with a primetime special called “Influencers in Danger.”
They aired a collage of missing persons—half of them young women from Nairobi’s Eastlands. Zahara was just the most visible.

And somehow, her visibility made her more human to a whole nation.

By day six, President Wamalwa was forced to address the matter.

At a national function in Mombasa, after unveiling a new project, a journalist shouted, “Mr. President! Any comment on Zahara’s disappearance?”

He paused.

The cameras zoomed in. The crowd hushed.
And then came the soundbite that flooded every screen in the country:

“Let me be clear—we are on top of the matter. DCI, CID, and digital forensics teams are working overtime. We are confident Zahara will be found. We are tracking all leads.”

But, Kenyans did not stay silent.

Gen Z Twitter exploded.

“Mko juu ya nini? Lies.”
“This one won’t be swept under the carpet.”
“Keep trending until she’s home.”
“You’re on top of vibes.”

Memes followed. One had President Wamalwa climbing a TikTok chart with the caption:
“On top of the matter.”

But under the jokes was a wound. A deep, collective ache.

Meanwhile, Zahara’s father stood outside Parliament buildings with tears in his eyes.

“Mr. President, I voted for you. I believed in you. Please… find my daughter.”

Citizen ran the clip uncensored. For once, no interruptions. Just raw pain, beamed into every Kenyan home.

Inside DCI’s digital forensics room, the truth was proving slipperier than expected.

Every TikTok post Zahara had made in the past week had no login fingerprint. Her scheduled posts were automated. Geo-tagged from Nairobi, yes, but from different towers each time. Someone was using VPNs. Or worse—had access to Zahara’s cloud.

Still, no demands. No ransom. No credible sightings.

No Zahara.

Brian had barely slept. He was holed up in his bedsitter trying to connect dots no one else saw. TikTok videos, Telegram chats, old vlogs, call logs—he was drowning in content.

But grief sharpens instincts.

And that's why, when his Twitter DM pinged at 2:11 a.m., he didn't hesitate.

It was from an anonymous account named:
@NairobiEyes999

No followers. No bio.

Just one message:

"She's not dead. She's hiding."

Brian blinked.

Typed back quickly.

"Who are you?"
"Where is she?"
"Tell me now or I'm going to the cops."

Nothing.

The account vanished within seconds.

Deleted.

His hands trembled as he reread the message again and again.

Hiding?
Why would Zahara hide?
From who? From him? From her parents? From the world?

Or worse—was someone trying to throw him off?

The next day, on Instagram, Lyn posted a picture of herself in Zahara's shoes. The caption read:

"She believed in the glow up. So, we keep glowing for her. #ZahkiForever 💙*"*

But Brian didn’t feel inspiration.

He felt dread.

Because those weren’t just Zahara’s shoes.

They were the same ones she wore in her last known video.
Brian opens Zahara’s archived emails, hoping to find something that makes sense.

Instead, he finds a deleted draft—never sent:

“If this goes wrong, it’s on me. But if it works… the whole country will be watching.”

And below it, a saved address:

“Mogadishu Rd, Eastleigh.”

Chapter 5: Mombasa Footprints

It was a quiet Sunday morning when the tip came in.

An old man from Old Town, Mombasa, walked into a local CID post, holding a cracked Tecno phone. On it, a blurry clip of a girl—light-skinned, slim, dreadlocked—walking past Fort Jesus in a flowy white leso and sunglasses.

He told the officer, "Hiyo ni yule msichana wa TikTok. The missing one. Zahara."

By mid-morning, that clip was all over WhatsApp groups, Facebook pages, and even forwarded to the *Kenyans.co.ke* editorial desk. The caption read:
"BREAKING: Zahara Spotted in Mombasa—Alive?"

Screenshots flew across Telegram channels. Speculation lit up TikTok like dry grass.

"Why Mombasa?"
"Is she in hiding?"
"Someone's protecting her."
"Might be cult stuff—remember Shakahola?"

By 1:00 p.m., NTV interrupted their Sunday programming.

Anchor Susan Waruguru, back in her signature dark suit, leaned forward with breaking news:

"Unconfirmed reports suggest viral influencer Zahara Kimani has been sighted in Old Town, Mombasa. DCI has dispatched a team to verify the footage."

Within hours, a convoy of three unmarked vehicles left Moi International Airport carrying forensic specialists, undercover operatives, and two senior DCI analysts.

Local news teams followed on boda bodas, reporting live from Old Town, capturing every minute. Children ran behind them shouting, "Ni Zahara!"—as if they could pull her from thin air with sheer belief.

Brian saw the footage and froze.

He wanted to believe. He *needed* to believe. But something in the way the girl walked—too graceful, too staged—made his stomach churn.

He called Lyn.

"I saw it," she said. "But it's not her. Zahki never covers her neck. That girl's hiding something."

“You think it’s fake?”

“I think it’s bait.”

At 3:00 p.m., the DCI’s Mombasa unit confirmed to media that the woman in the video was “under identification” and being questioned.

By 5:00 p.m., she had been released.

She wasn’t Zahara.
She was a tourist from Uganda.
And the video? AI-generated.

The clip had been altered using Face Swap software and reposted by a TikTok user with a history of pushing fake news for views.

NTV’s special correspondent, Alex Maina, broke it live:

“We can now confirm that the Mombasa sighting was false. Experts say the video used deepfake technology, and the girl in question was never Zahara.”

NTV blurred the woman's face. She later posted a tearful IG Live, begging Kenyans not to harass her.
“I didn’t even know who Zahara was,” she sobbed.

The backlash was immediate.

People were furious—not just at the troll who made the clip, but at the system.

“How are we falling for AI nonsense now?”
“DCI ni clowns.”
“You’re chasing shadows while she could be dead.”

NTV brought on tech expert Joseph Mwenda for a panel:

“Deepfake is not the future—it’s the now. Anyone with a smartphone can fake a video. This is not just a media crisis. It’s a national security threat.”

At 7:00 p.m., Zahara’s mother was invited for a live interview on KTN’s “CheckPoint”.

She wore her daughter's denim jacket.

She sat beside Zahara’s father, stiff with emotion.

The host, Lilian Muli, asked gently, “Mama Zahara, what do you want to say to Kenyans right now?”

Her voice cracked halfway through her answer:

“I want my daughter back. I want her home. But this country... this country is hiding the truth.”

Lilian blinked. “What do you mean?”

“She trusted this country. She believed if anything happened, the system would help her. But they’re playing games.

They took my baby!”

The studio fell silent.

Even the control room paused.

And across Kenya, millions felt something shift.

This wasn’t just a case anymore.

It was a wound.

NTV aired the clip ten minutes later, fully uncensored. It went viral in seconds. Hashtags trended again.

#ZaharaSpeaksThroughHerMother
#BringZahkiHome
#WeAreTired

Meanwhile, at the DCI HQ, Inspector Murage sat with an immigration officer reviewing border data.

They were cross-checking Zahara’s ID, passport, and any trace of movement beyond the country. Just protocol, the officer said. Probably nothing.

Then he blinked.

“Wait,” he said. “Run that again.”

The screen refreshed.

There it was.

Kenya-Somalia border — Liboi checkpoint. Garissa County.

Entry Date: One week before Zahara disappeared.

Traveler: Zahara Kimani.

Passport No. KC0283...
Verified by thumbprint.

Murage sat up, heart racing.

“No way.”

He called Brian. “We found something.”

Brian stood up in the middle of a dingy Java House, nearly knocking over his tea.

“What?”

Murage hesitated. “We have records. Zahara… used her passport. She crossed into Garissa. A week before she vanished.”

Brian’s world blurred for a second.

“She was in Garissa?” he whispered. “Why?”

“I don’t know,” Murage said. “But if she went willingly, this isn’t just a disappearance.”

Brian whispered to himself, “It’s a plan.”

NTV News flashes a red banner:

“EXCLUSIVE: Zahara’s Passport Used to Cross Garissa Border Week Before Disappearance.”

A photo flashes onscreen—grainy CCTV from Liboi border post.

The girl in the hoodie looks straight into the camera.

She’s smiling.

And it’s unmistakably Zahara.

Chapter 6: Ghost Uploads

Zahara's TikTok was more alive now than when she was.

Three new videos in just two days.

All of them deeply emotional. Raw. Vulnerable.

One featured a shadowy figure sitting by a candlelit table, head bowed, voice distorted:

"Will you miss me when I'm gone? Or will I just be another hashtag, another reel to scroll past?"

Another video was an old montage—Zahara laughing, dancing, crying in her room—all spliced together with a moody Sauti Sol instrumental. The caption read:

"What if I told you I disappeared to finally be seen?"

Kenyans were spiraling.

TikTok Kenya was on fire.
Twitter threads read like investigative journals.
YouTube gossip channels were hosting "Zahara specials."

Everyone had a theory.

"She was cloned."
"She's dead and someone's milking the content."
"A.I. is being used to manipulate us."
"Her ghost is uploading. Hii ni Black Mirror live."

A TikTok conspiracy page, @DeepZKenya, called it "AI Ghost Content".
They claimed the videos were generated posthumously by Zahara's management team. But Zahara *had no manager*. No known team. No official PR.

Still—her TikTok kept posting.

Every night. Like clockwork.

Brian watched the newest post in his dim South B apartment.

The video showed Zahara standing alone in a hallway. Her face was dimly lit, half in shadow. Her lips didn't move, but the caption flashed:

“Tell my story right. Or don’t tell it at all.”

He’d had enough.

He stormed down the dusty South B inner roads, eyes blazing, fists clenched. He wasn’t waiting anymore. Lyn had answers, and today, she was going to talk. She will tell the truth. At all cost.

No more pretending.

No more "I don't knows."

She opened the gate with swollen eyes. No lashes. No wig. Just a faded Boniface Mwangi tee and tracksuit pants.

“Brian… I don’t know what else—”

He pushed past her. “Stop lying.”

She froze.

“I saw the metadata. I saw the hoodie. I saw the damn reflection, Lyn! That was YOU in that video.”

She sank into the couch.

“You’re right.”

The room went still.

“I didn’t want to lie. I just—she made me promise.”

Brian stared at her like she was a stranger.

“She planned this?” he asked, almost whispering.

Lyn nodded. “Zahara was tired. She said she was done being average on TikTok. Said the only way to get Kenya to care… was to disappear.”

“She faked this?”

“She wanted to break the algorithm, Brian. She said the system only respects death or scandal. So, she created both. But the way Zahki was talking to me, I could see something hidden in her eyes. Something disturbing her emotionally. Something she didn’t accept to give out”

Brian stumbled back, pressing his hand to his fore head.

“And Karura?”

“Someone did the shot for her. Everything was planned. They even used tomato sauce for the blood. The smashed phone? That was her old one. They ordered a fake from Dubois. Said it had to look *real*.”

Outside, a group of teens passed the gate, blasting a viral TikTok audio that now sampled Zahara’s distorted voice:
“Miss me when I’m gone… gone… gone...”

Lyn flinched.

“She didn’t mean it to go this far,” she whispered. “Now I think… she’s trapped in her own game.”

Brian sat down, trying to process.

“So where is she now?”

“I don’t know.”

Across Nairobi, the story had reached fever pitch.

Citizen TV did a late-night segment called “Content or Crisis?”
A panel of psychologists, influencers, and journalists debated if Zahara had spiraled into mental health collapse—or was the greatest Kenyan media manipulator of her generation.

One Gen Z guest put it plainly:

“We’re all chasing attention. Zahara just chased harder. And now, the nation’s watching her game like it’s a Netflix series. But who’s really winning?”

At 10:58 p.m., a final shockwave hit the country.

Zahara’s TikTok went LIVE.

The notification exploded across phones:

“@Zahki is live now.”

Thousands poured into the stream within seconds.
The view count passed 50K.
Then 200K.

But it wasn’t clear.

The screen was blurry—deliberately distorted.

A figure sat in front of the camera, head low, face hidden by light flickers.

The voice was glitched, deepened. Robotic.

Still, unmistakably her.

The caption at the bottom chilled the entire country:

“You all blamed the wrong people.”

Chapter 7: Tears on Live TV

Uhuru Park was no longer just a park.

On this grey afternoon, it became a shrine.

Candles flickered around Zahara's portrait—one from her 200K celebration shoot, white suit, gold hoop earrings, laughing wide like she owned the world. Posters were pinned to trees. Young girls sobbed openly. Boys with dyed dreadlocks wore custom T-shirts reading:
"#ZahkiForever 💔"

A hand-painted banner stretched across the grass read:
"Bring Her Home. Or Tell Us Why."

Her mother stood in front of the press, trembling.

Wearing her daughter's old TikTok hoodie.

Trying to breathe.

Citizen, Digital TV, Gen Z TV, News TV, and NTV had their cameras lined up like a state function. Everyone knew something was coming.

Mama Zahara stepped forward, wiped her face, and looked straight into the lens.

"If my daughter is alive, let her speak. If she's dead, let me bury her. But this silence? This circus? It's killing us more than the truth."

"This country..." she paused, trembling, "This country loves you when you're trending. But when you disappear, suddenly, you're not convenient."

She broke mid-sentence, leaning into Zahara's father's chest as the crowd behind her broke into chants.

"DCI do your job! DCI do your job!"

Twitter exploded in real-time.

@_Kayvibe (activist & Gen Z firebrand):
"Kenyan gov fakes concern. DCI can find weed in Umoja in 3 hours but can't find a girl uploading LIVE from Nairobi for 3 weeks?"

@GirlWithNoChill:
"President said they're on top of the matter. Maybe that's why everything's upside down."

@NairobiMess:
"DCI out here chasing shadows like it's an episode of CSI: Nairobi. Meanwhile, Zahki trending worldwide."

NTV cut to studio. Anchor Susan Waruguru looked visibly shaken.

"This vigil is more than grief. It's a referendum on trust. The youth are watching. And so far, the system is failing them."

Panelists argued in studio:

"Is this a failed state situation?"
"Is Zahara now Kenya's Gen Z martyr?"
"Was this a stunt gone too far—or is someone pulling strings behind the scenes?"

Meanwhile, deep in DCI HQ, Inspector Murage's phone pinged.

New crypto alert.

His team had been monitoring Zahara's phone backups and cross-referencing financial activity.

And one name had come up again and again—Jamal Kimani, Zahara's maternal cousin. Known for flashy living, designer drip, and late-night IG Lives where he flaunted watches but never explained where the money came from.

Now, there it was. On-chain evidence.

$500,000.
Received one week after Zahara "disappeared."
Via Monero—a crypto known for being untraceable.

But it hadn't disappeared fast enough.

The sender's tag?

@GhostHandles

The message attached?

"We go silent now. Don't contact me again."

Murage didn't hesitate.

A team was dispatched.

In South B, Brian sat silently in a rooftop shisha spot, hood up, hoodie zipped.

He was scrolling through TikTok, shaking.

The latest Zahki video had just dropped.

She was dancing. Alone. Blurred. But the caption screamed louder than the visuals:

“You were too busy chasing who’s guilty… you forgot who’s missing.”

The Gen Z comments were savage.

“This ain’t art. It’s manipulation.”
“We’re done playing.”
“If she’s alive and doing this… she doesn’t deserve our love.”
“Cancel Zahki.”
“Gen Z has limits.”

Even the fans were cracking now.

Back at Uhuru Park, the vigil turned tense as police trucks parked quietly on the edge of the lawn.

The chant got louder.

“Justice! Justice!”

Then someone with a mic yelled:

“If DCI can’t bring her home, maybe we bring them down!”

The crowd roared.

Cops tightened their helmets.

But just before anything erupted, NTV cut to BREAKING NEWS:

Anchor Alex Maina at HQ spoke urgently:

“We have just received confirmation that DCI has arrested a suspect in connection with the Zahara disappearance.”

“Sources reveal that the individual is Zahara’s cousin, Jamal Kimani, who allegedly received over half a million dollars in crypto shortly after her vanishing.”

The feed switched to shaky phone footage:

A man in a Gucci sweatsuit being dragged into a black Prado, hands cuffed, face down.

Crowd shouting. Someone throwing a slipper. Someone else yelling:

“You sold your cousin for clout!”

“Blood money!”

Back at Uhuru Park, the crowd gasped.

Mama Zahara fainted.

Zahara’s father, tears running down his face, just kept asking:

“Why, Jamal? Why would you…?”

Twitter exploded:

@OfficialMutemi:
“Her own cousin? Kenya’s becoming a real-life thriller.”

@SheLaughsLast:
“500K to disappear your cousin then dance on her name. Wicked world.”

@DCI_Kenya (Official):
“We confirm the arrest of one suspect in relation to the ongoing Zahara Kimani case. Investigations continue. Kenya deserves answers.”

Back in his cell, Jamal stared at the concrete wall, silent.

Inspector Murage entered slowly, placed a phone on the table.

Pressed play.

Zahara’s LIVE.

The voice. The blurred face.

Then that final caption again.

“You all blamed the wrong people.”

Murage looked Jamal dead in the eye.

“Is it you?”

Jamal smiled. Not cocky. Tired.

Chapter 8: The Lyn Lie

Brian didn't sleep.

He hadn't eaten properly in days, surviving on cold Mandazis and warm Fanta from corner vibandas. His fingers trembled not from caffeine or exhaustion—but from truth overload. Every detail since Zahara vanished was unraveling fast—and the loose thread was Lyn.

She'd pretended to be broken.

At some point, she'd cried with her friends while whispering:

"I just want her back."

But now he knew.

She didn't want Zahara back.

She was building her own brand… on Zahara's grave.

It started with one M-Pesa statement.

Brian had borrowed Zahara's mum's log-in to check anything unusual. What he found was like getting slapped by reality:

Daily deposits. Consistent. Not from friends or fans—
—but from TikTok Kenya monetization accounts.

He double-checked the name tied to the business account connected to Zahara's TikTok.

Not Zahara.

Not her mum.

Not even her cousin.

Lyn Wanjiku Kamau.

He stormed into Lyn's estate in Umoja, cutting through kids playing "Kati" on the dusty plot. His heart pounded like it had its own mission.

He didn't knock this time.

She was filming.

Lighting ring on. Phone propped up. Voice soft.

“Today marks 27 days since Zahara went missing, and not a moment goes by that I don’t feel her in the silence.”

Brian waited till she ended the take.

Then, calmly:

“Turn it off.”

She jumped. “Brian, what—?”

He stepped forward, holding up screenshots. Bank statements. Receipts. Account names.

“Explain. Or I post everything right now.”

Her voice cracked before her mask did.

“She told me to do it.”

“Zahara planned it. The challenge. The disappearance. The content strategy. She said if she went off-grid, I should keep posting, collect revenue, keep the brand alive.”

Brian’s jaw clenched.

“So, you knew she was safe? This whole time?”

Lyn looked away.

“I thought she’d come back in two weeks. I didn’t know… it would blow up like this.”

Someone had hacked Brian’s phone to leak important Zahara related information for views. And all statements, receipts, and IP addresses was leaked.

That night, NTV dropped the bombshell.

A special investigative segment titled:
“The Lyn Lie: Exploiting Disappearance for Views?”

The footage showed split screens:
Zahara crying in her old videos.
Lyn fake-crying in new ones.
Receipts. Bank logs. IP addresses.

Citizen TV followed with a brutal panel.

Dr. Mwakisha, a media ethics lecturer, said:

"This is emotional fraud. A clout-chasing era gone too far. Gen Z is being taught that disappearing is more lucrative than existing."

A Gen Z creator pushed back:

"We don't all fake. We hustle. We share our lives. But this—this was manipulation."

Twitter was *merciless*.

@DigitalTearsKE:
"Lyn cried her way into Zahara's followers. And pockets. Madness."

@NyumbaniNoma:
"This is why we don't trust influencers. They'll sell grief if it trends."

@WatuWaRohoMbaya:
"DCI should arrest her next."

But the one that went most viral:

@_KayVibe:
"This ain't just Lyn. This is a system. DCI went quiet. Zahara vanished. The gov fumbled. The tears were monetized. And no one's accountable."

And then, like a wounded animal retreating into silence—

DCI disappeared.

No press briefings.

No social updates.

Just... nothing.

The silence was louder than any accusation.

One Tuesday morning, President Wamalwa addressed the nation from White House Gardens.

He wore a dark blue suit. No teleprompter. Just two notes in his hand.

Behind him stood the Interior general and DCI Chief.

He looked into the camera, breathing deeply before speaking:

“We have heard the cries of our people. The Zahara case represents more than a disappearance—it’s a crisis of faith.”

“Let me make this clear: We will leave no stone unturned. Whether this is a hoax, a crime, or a digital manipulation—we will find the truth. We want our people safe.”

The clip was posted on White House’s socials with the hashtag:
#FindZahara

But Gen Z wasn’t clapping.

The comments were raw:

“You left every stone *under*.”
“Speech is not search.”
“Try digging instead of tweeting.”

Even the press was starting to bite back.
TV74 ran a late-night opinion segment titled:
“Government or Ghosts? Who’s Really Looking for Zahara?”

Meanwhile, Brian sat in the Java House parking lot in Eastleigh, shaking, reading a fresh update on his phone.

New upload.

Not just a video.

A TikTok LIVE.

Geo-tagged from Eastleigh.

His heart dropped into his stomach.

The notification burned on his lockscreen:

@Zahki is LIVE.

He opened the app, barely breathing.

The screen was shaky at first—then stabilized.

A woman’s silhouette in a long hoodie, standing in a dim hallway, face turned to the side.

Then a voice—unfiltered. Unedited.
It was Zahara.

Not AI.

Not deepfake.

Zahara.

And she spoke with fire in her voice:

“You all blamed the wrong people.
You pointed fingers.
You screamed at the system.
You blamed gov, you blamed DCI.
But none of you asked...
Why I left in the first place.”

Chapter 9: Burn the Prado

Thika Road was still waking up when the Prado was found.

Not parked. Not abandoned.

Torched.

The fire had consumed everything—metal, rubber, upholstery. Only the charred skeleton remained, a blackened husk in the bushes near the Safari Park Hotel. But inside, amidst the soot and ash, lay a single item untouched by the flames.

Zahara's watch.

A white ceramic piece she'd worn in her last TikTok video in shadows.

Forensics were swift. The watch was sent to the DCI's Forensic Chemistry Lab for analysis. The results were conclusive and damning.

Zahara had never worn it that day.

The watch had no trace of her DNA. No skin oils. No fibers. It hadn't been on her wrist for at least a week before the fire.

The revelation hit like a thunderclap.

Zahara was alive.

She had orchestrated her disappearance. She had planned every detail. The videos. The captions. The silence.

And now, the watch—her signature piece—was planted in a burnt-out vehicle to mislead the investigation.

Public reaction was swift and unforgiving.

On Twitter, the hashtag #BurnThePrado trended nationwide.

@_KayVibe:
"So Zahara was playing us all along? This is next-level manipulation."

@GirlWithNoChill:
"She had us all fooled. But why? For clout? For money?"

@NairobiMess:
"This is why we don't trust influencers. They'll do anything for views."

The media was relentless.

WTV aired a special report titled:
"The Prado Deception: Zahara's Masterclass in Manipulation."

Modern TV followed with:
"Burned Evidence: How Zahara Played the Nation."

Analysts debated the ethics of Zahara's actions. Was it a social experiment? A cry for attention? Or something more sinister?

Detectives remained silent.

No press releases. No updates. The public's frustration grew.

@WatuWaRohoMbaya:
"Investigators, are you still investigating? Or have you given up?"

@DigitalTearsKE:
"Zahara exposed the system, and now the system is silent."

Then came the bombshell.

A phone number linked to *Lyn Wanjiku Kamau* was found in the transaction records of a Somali mobile money service. The number was registered with Hormuud Telecom, a major mobile provider in Somalia.

The same number had been used to receive payments from Zahara's TikTok revenue.

Authorities confronted Lyn.

She laughed.

"You really thought she was dead?"

The nation was in shock.

Zahara had faked her disappearance and she is alive. Hiding for something sinister. Lyn had been complicit. And the public is left questioning everything. Furious. But at the same time they tried to forget about Zahara.

Chapter 10: One Year Later

Nairobi had moved on. At least, it looked like it had.

Life pressed forward on Kenyatta Avenue—matatus blasting TikTok audios Zahara once made viral, boda bodas weaving dangerously between traffic, hawkers shouting "camera ring light, boss!" like nothing ever happened.

But somewhere under that rhythm, Kenya still whispered Zahara's name.

Not with hope.

With bitterness.

It had been a year since the livestream.

Twelve months since Zahara's TikTok went dark—no new videos, no reposts, not even AI edits.

She simply… vanished again.

The case turned cold.

Detectives filed her as "Missing — Presumed Deceased."

The hashtags stopped trending.

Influencers stopped posting about her.

TV stations shifted to newer scandals, celebrity cheating sagas, a boda boda protest in Rongai, and national holidays events.

Zahara Kimani had become just another name in countries' long list of unclosed cases.

Even Gen Zs were tired.

Tired of debating if she was dead or playing the game.

Tired of reposting pain.

Tired of caring.

@NairobiMess:
"Zahara's ghost content got us good. Honestly? Let her be."

@TheGirlK:
"Gen Z cried. We rioted. We trended. For what? A ghost?"

@SheLaughsLast:
"One year later and we still don't know the full story. Wueh."

TV stations fell silent too.

Gen Z TV, once the loudest voice screaming "Justice for Zahki," now danced awkwardly around the topic.
Citizen had dropped the segment "Missing Spotlight."
TV74 replaced the 9 p.m. Zahara series with reruns of local comedy skits.

Even Susan Waruguru, the NTV anchor who once teared up on air, had moved on to hosting a tech show.

The news cycle had buried her.

Until 8:57 p.m. on a sleepy Tuesday night.

The Modern TV newsroom buzzed back to life.

A breaking image had just hit the newsroom via Telegram.

A Kenyan backpacker named Marvin Chege—traveling across East Africa on a student grant—had posted a grainy photo on Instagram from Mogadishu, Somalia.

The caption:

"I swear this was Zahara. Alive. Same face. Same nose ring. Same damn laugh. Somalia is wild."

She was in a café. Wearing a hijab, sunglasses on her head, sipping a drink. The picture was slightly blurred—but unmistakable.

It was her.

By 9:10 p.m., NTV interrupted their usual broadcast.

Anchor Susan Waruguru returned to her old desk. No preamble. Just eyes locked on camera.

"Breaking News: Zahara Kimani—missing TikTok influencer declared presumed dead—has reportedly been seen alive in Somalia."

The picture flashed across screens in thousands of homes.

Twitter exploded.

@_KayVibe:
"WHAT DO YOU MEAN ZAHARA IS ALIVE?"

@GirlWithNoChill:
"I need three therapy sessions. Now. People we need to apologize to the DCI. To the system."

@WatuWaRohoMbaya:
"Kenya needs to apologize to the government. Lowkey."

By midnight, it was everywhere.

BBC Africa. Al Jazeera. Vice World News. East Africa News.

"KENYAN TIKTOK STAR FOUND ALIVE IN MOGADISHU AFTER YEAR OF DISAPPEARANCE."

At 12:17 a.m., White House tweeted for the first time in weeks:

"We told you we were working on it. ᴋᴇ #ZaharaReturns"

Silence.

Kenya froze.

The same government that had been blamed, mocked, dragged on Twitter, and accused of cover-ups… had quietly been working behind the scenes.

Same DCI that was mocked and blamed released a short but clear statement:

"Surveillance and intelligence efforts with Somali counterparts have yielded credible visual confirmation of Ms. Zahara Kimani. Details remain classified as repatriation talks continue."

Gen Z TV's late-night panel, resurrected on short notice, couldn't agree what to say.

The same panelists who once screamed "cover-up!" now awkwardly sipped bottled water, nodding at each other.

In a different TV station.

Dr. Mwakisha, the ethics professor, admitted it plainly:

"We misjudged. Perhaps she wasn't just hiding for clout. Maybe… maybe there's more we never knew."

Citizen ran a segment the next morning titled:
"The Ghost Who Lived: What Zahara's Return Means for Kenya."

One anchor said:

“We owe the government some credit. It seems they knew something we didn’t.”

Still—Gen Z didn’t know how to feel.

Relieved? Betrayed? Humbled?

Confused was the only word that fit.

In a Zoom call between Brian and a BuzzFeed Kenya journalist, his voice cracked:

“She’s alive? After everything? I don’t even know if I’m angry or happy.”

He turned off his camera.

By noon, the photo from Mogadishu had been shared over 10 million times.

And then… Zahara’s TikTok profile updated.

No video. No livestream.

Just a single pinned post. New. Quiet.

“I never left for views. You will know the truth soon.”

Then a video leak.

Chapter 11: Zahki.exe

It had been some days since the Mogadishu photo broke the internet.

Zahara Kimani was alive.

White House confirmed it. DCI said they were in contact with Somali counterparts. NTV brought back Susan Waruguru just to "humanize the coverage." Even Lyn gave a short, trembling secret interview on Citizen TV:

"I knew she'd come back. I just didn't think it would be like this."

But now… something was off.

Zahara hadn't posted. Not on TikTok. Not on Threads. Not even a single IG Story. Instead, her account was uploading without her.

And what it posted was not her voice.

The first video seemed normal at a glance—just Zahki staring at the camera, half-smiling. But then she spoke:

"Digital manipulation is real."

That wasn't her voice. Not really. It had her tone, her face, her style—but none of her spirit. Kenyans could tell. Especially those who'd followed her since her "Broke Girl Hacks" days.

Within hours, digital forensics pages began to flag the content: deepfake suspected.

Then came the second video. And the third. And the fourth.

Each one darker, more unsettling. Zahara talking about "digital slavery," "puppet pastors," "a new order." The hashtags grew cryptic: #UnplugKenya, #CodeObey, #WatuWaMaombi.

The worst part? The algorithm loved it. The numbers shot up—shares, stitches, duets. Kenyans, influencers, conspiracy accounts—everyone was talking. But not all believed.

DCI released a statement branding Zahara's account a "digital risk entity"—a potential vessel for AI-driven misinformation. The Ministry of ICT requested TikTok moderation to sake Gen Zs. For the good of the country. To bring more positivity than negativity to the young generation.

But TikTok did nothing.

Zahki's account was now uploading daily. Sometimes twice. Always with that same corrupted smile.

Brian paced alone in his flat in South B, screens lit with Telegram threads and YouTube breakdowns of Zahki's content.

He watched a Nairobi vlogger say, "This isn't even about clout anymore. It's psychological warfare. Someone's trying to rewire us using her face."

Brian finally snapped.

He took to X (formerly Twitter):

"That's not her anymore. That's not Zahara. That's a puppet show. We're watching her soul get erased in real-time."

The post blew up.

Kenyans responded in a flood.

@MatheWaBaraka:

"This is giving digital cult vibes. First Shakahola. Now this?"

@NyukiMan:

"We need to unplug before they turn us all into bots. Someone's testing something on us."

@MukamiKE:

"I can't even tell what's real anymore. That's the scariest part."

Meanwhile, DCI's Cyber Division had been working in silence. A young analyst named Joel discovered something strange buried in Zahara's account backend—a hidden wallet key linked to a crypto laundering ring. One transaction trail led to a Dubai address. Another to a church in Nairobi.

Not just any church.

The kind with six services every Sunday, live-streamed miracles, and glowing testimonials about deliverance through "digital fasting."

Under layers of shell companies and offshore holdings, the DCI traced back over KSh 117 million routed through Zahara's brand. It wasn't clout money. It was funding.

From who?

A religious group operating across borders—one that disguised its network under church crusades, healing seminars, and influencer collabs. The same group that had been whispered about in America. The one that used scripture to silence followers. The one that had been quietly building a digital army through young content creators. Through Gen Zs.

Zahara hadn't just faked her disappearance.

She'd been bait.

Back in Umoja, Zahara's parents stayed mostly silent.

Since the Mogadishu photo, Mama Zahara had refused interviews. Baba Zahara had only addressed the church once during Sunday mass:

"We will know the full story. One day. When she tells it herself."

That day arrived in a brown envelope.

Delivered by boda, no return address. Just their names handwritten in blue biro: *Mr. & Mrs. Kimani.*

Inside: a USB. And a note. Just one line.

"Her Truth."

They didn't plug it in right away.

They prayed.

Then, with the old family laptop on the dining table, Baba Zahara inserted the USB.

A single file blinked on screen: VID_0425_LASTROOM.MP4

They clicked.

The footage was grainy. Black-and-white. A single fixed camera.

Zahara.

Alive. Alert. Looking older. Paler.

She was seated behind a church building, in a room with no windows. Just one plastic table, a jug of water, and three men in robes.

Their faces were covered with plain white masks.

One placed a document in front of her.

Zahara hesitated.

She picked up the pen.

Then signed.

The video ended.

And before they could breathe, the file closed on its own.

A black screen replaced it. Then, a livestream notification.

Their daughter's TikTok account had gone live.

The screen glitched, scrambled, then resolved.

Zahara's deepfaked face appeared.

A voice—glitchy, robotic, but still hers—spoke just one line:

"Kenya watched. Now Kenya obeys."

Chapter 12: The Interview You Weren't Meant to See

Nobody knows who leaked the video.

It wasn't posted on Zahara's TikTok. Not even her shadow accounts or burner Telegram. It dropped at 2:17 a.m., buried in a Reddit thread titled *"They're Not Done With Her."* The username was gibberish. The link redirected to a private server hosted in Iceland.

But once it hit Kenyan Twitter, there was no stopping it.

Zahara was sitting in a dim room. A bare bulb swung above her head. No ring light. No aesthetic background. The wall behind her had strange scribbles—symbols that looked like scripture, but distorted. She wasn't made up. Her hijab was loose. Her nails chipped. Her voice…

…wasn't performing.

"This video was never meant to go public."

She paused. Swallowed hard.

"But I need someone to hear this. Before they stop me again."

It wasn't confidence in her voice. It was dread.

The Confession

"Everyone thought I disappeared for clout. That I faked everything. Even Brian, even my family. But I wasn't running from fame. I was running from them."

She looked off-camera, breathing through her nose like someone trying to keep it together.

"It started at a prayer event. I was invited to speak about faith and Gen Z. I thought it was legit. Pastor vibes. Gospel tent. Watu wa maombi. But the place wasn't even marked on Google Maps. Somewhere past Tana River. We took Land Cruisers. No network. No Safaricom bars. That should've been the first sign."

She blinked, eyes wet.

"They called themselves Wana wa Mwisho. The Last Children. Said the world was ending and I was chosen to 'lead the digital flock.'"

Twitter caught fire.

Reddit exploded.

The threads multiplied.

#ZahkiUnfiltered trended in under 20 minutes.

"They didn't want me to preach. They wanted me to disappear. Symbolically. To 'cleanse the noise.' To become an example. They told me: 'Real influence is in silence. Your vanishing will shake the earth.'"

She laughed bitterly.

"At first, I thought it was some cultic metaphor. You know how Kenyans get dramatic with religious stuff. But then I saw the rooms. I saw the girls. Silent. Eyes down. No phones. No IDs. No names."

Her hands trembled.

"One of them had been there since she was 13. They told her she was 'sacrificed from the city to the Light.' They don't kill them. Not physically. They erase them. They manipulate them."

She inhaled sharply.

"I was next."

The Escape

"They didn't stop me because they thought I was still under. Still part of the plan. They wanted me to post my 'departure.' They helped shoot the Karura video. The scream? That wasn't fake. It just wasn't mine."

She wiped her eyes. Her voice started breaking.

"I thought I was in control. But I wasn't the only one planning this. I thought the script was mine. But it wasn't content anymore. It was a ritual."

The screen glitched. Just slightly. Like static was creeping in.

Suddenly she leaned in, whispered fast:

"They have contacts worldwide. They are great Digital Manipulation organization internationally. And many people are benefiting from this game."

Then a sound behind her—a soft knock.

Her eyes widened.

"I have to go."

She reached for the camera.

The screen turned black mid-sob.

But it was too late.

The video was already ripped, reposted, dissected.

By dawn, digital detectives had freeze-framed every second. One user zoomed in on the symbols behind her, claiming they matched the carvings found on a "spiritual fasting camp" in North Eastern part of the country near Somali boarder.

Another pointed out the phrase *"Wana wa Mwisho"* had once appeared in a deleted YouTube sermon titled *"Gen Zs Chosen for the End Times."*

But the most disturbing detail?

In the video, Zahara was wearing a black woven bracelet.

Someone noticed it matched one found beside a shallow grave in coastal region months prior.

At exactly 6:42 p.m.—same time as her infamous Karura post—a new video popped up.

A TikTok duet.

Left screen: Zahara crying, whispering, confessing.

Right screen: A masked figure in ceremonial white. No face. No voice. Just a flickering flame in front of them.

They raised one finger to their lips.

Then pointed at the screen.

Then pointed up.

Caption:

"You talk, you vanish again."

The video had no comments.

Comments were disabled.

Dramatic citizens were never late to react. Never when everything has to trend.

News anchors tripped over words. Morning talk shows cancelled normal programming. Online forums pulsed with unease.

Modern TV's 9:00 p.m. bulletin opened with:

"What began as a TikTok stunt may be the surface of something far more sinister. Who are the Wana wa Mwisho? And why does Zahara fear them?"

Susan Waruguru returned to NTV's late bulletin. No laughter. Just this line:

"We called her a liar. But what if she was warning us?"

The Fallout

Until now Zahki story feels like a scam to Kenyans leaving everyone in a confused mood. So, the country remained quiet but never Gen Zs. They can't afford to. They didn't.

@SheLaughsLast:

"That's not performance. That's trauma. She saw something."

@KenyanGirlInterrupted:

"These cults don't operate on paper. They operate in whispers. In valleys. In 'prayer missions.' Believe her."

@DigitalTearsKE:

"What if Zahara's not the first influencer they tried to use? What if she's just the one who lived?"

At 2:06 a.m., the original video was taken down.

But it had already reached over 8 million views.

Only one comment remained, pinned by the anonymous uploader:

"If this disappears, you know it was real."

But the greatest mistake, the puppetmasters has seen the video. Country is watching. And Zahara? She might not get to speak again.

Chapter 13: The Puppetmasters

The morning sun had barely risen over Nairobi when the news broke. Lyn Wanjiku Kamau, the influencer who had once been Zahara's closest ally, was found unconscious in a hotel room in Westlands. The circumstances were unclear—some speculated overdose, others a breakdown—but the truth was more sinister.

Her phone, left unlocked on the bedside table, revealed a chilling discovery. Deleted voice notes, recovered by investigators, painted a picture of manipulation and deceit. In one, Lyn's voice trembled:

"Zahki thinks she was the mastermind. She's just one of the pawns."

The words echoed in Brian's mind as he sat in his small apartment, staring at the screen of his laptop. The DCI had been tracking Zahara's digital footprint for weeks, and what they uncovered was nothing short of explosive.

Millions of shillings had flowed through Zahara's accounts during her disappearance—funds that didn't originate from her TikTok earnings or brand deals. The transactions led to a complex web of cryptocurrency wallets, offshore accounts, and shell companies. But the most shocking revelation was the source of the funds.

A powerful international religious cult, operating under the guise of a charitable organization, had been funneling money through Zahara's disappearance. This group, known as *The Enlightened Path*, had branches worldwide, including one in Kenya. Their influence reached into the highest echelons of society, businessmen, and even renowned pastors.

The cult's reach was insidious. They preyed on vulnerable individuals, offering promises of spiritual enlightenment and financial prosperity. In exchange, followers were coerced into acts of loyalty and silence. Zahara, it seemed, had been one of their puppets.

As the investigation deepened, the DCI uncovered a series of meetings held at a secluded location in Nairobi. CCTV footage from a nearby building captured masked individuals entering and exiting the premises at odd hours. The footage was grainy, but the urgency of the situation was clear.

Brian's phone buzzed, snapping him back to reality. It was a message from Zahara's mother:

"We received a package. It's addressed to us, but there's no return address."

His heart raced as he read the message. Could this be the breakthrough they had been waiting for?

He met with Zahara's parents at their home later that evening. The package was small, unassuming, but the weight of its contents was immense. Inside, they found a letter with a USB drive labeled "Her Truth."

With trembling hands, Zahara's father inserted the USB into the family computer. The screen flickered to life, displaying CCTV footage from a building Brian recognized—*The Enlightened Path*'s headquarters. The timestamp on the footage read two days before Zahara's disappearance.

There she was.

Zahara, looking eerily calm, stood in a dimly lit room behind the church. Surrounding her were several men, their faces obscured by masks. She was signing a contract. The details were unclear, but the implications were undeniable.

The footage ended abruptly, leaving more questions than answers. Who were these masked individuals? What had Zahara agreed to? And most importantly—was she still under their control?

As Brian sat in stunned silence, the weight of the situation pressed down on him. Zahara had been a pawn in a much larger game, manipulated by forces beyond her understanding. But now, she had a chance to take control back.

But would she?

The phone rang, breaking the silence. It was a video call from Zahara's mother. Her face was pale, her eyes wide with fear.

"Brian, you need to see this."

She turned the camera to show a message on her phone screen. It was a TikTok video, but not one posted by Zahara. Instead, it was a duet—a split-screen video where a masked figure stared into the camera, their voice distorted.

The caption read: *"You talk, you vanish again."*

The implications were clear. Whoever was behind this knew Zahara was alive. They knew she had spoken out. And they were sending a warning.

Brian's mind raced. The cult, *The Enlightened Path*, had orchestrated Zahara's disappearance. They had used her as a tool to manipulate the public, to test the limits of their control in the country. And now, they were watching her every move.

He looked at Zahara's parents, their faces etched with worry. They had lost their daughter once. They were ready to have her body buried. But now they had an idea she was alive. They couldn't bear to lose her again.

"We need to find her," Brian said his voice firm. *"And we need to do it before they do."*

But as he spoke those words, a chilling thought crossed his mind. What if Zahara didn't want to be found? What if she had chosen this path, knowing the risks?

The video call ended abruptly, leaving Brian with more questions than answers. The game had changed. The stakes had been raised.

And the puppetmasters were watching.

As Brian sat in the dim light of his apartment, his phone buzzed. It was a message from an unknown number. He hesitated before opening it.

The message was simple, but the implications were terrifying.

"We know you're looking for her. But be careful. The truth is more dangerous than you think."

Before he could respond, the screen went black.

And then, a new message appeared.

"You talk, you vanish."

The words sent a chill down his spine. The puppetmasters were real. And they were always watching.

Chapter 14: The Real Upload

Brian sat hunched over his laptop in his dimly lit room in South B, the city's steady hum of life barely filtering through the window. His fingers, which had once been used to the easy rhythm of scrolling social media and checking emails, now trembled with a sense of dread and determination. His mind raced—he had come so far, but it felt like every answer only led to more questions. Zahara was still alive. That much he knew. But who or what was pulling her strings?

He had already combed through every inch of Zahara's social media accounts, every TikTok video, every post, every comment. What had started as a missing persons case had turned into a nightmare that had swallowed not only Zahara but the whole country. And the more Brian uncovered, the more he realized how deep the rabbit hole went.

But now, he was about to dive deeper than ever before. Zahara's cloud storage had been his last hope, and somehow, he had gained access to it. His breath caught in his chest as he navigated through the files. He hesitated before clicking on one of the videos that had been marked as "Zahara_Plea_0425.mp4." He wasn't sure what he would find, but he had to know the truth.

The video started with a shaky camera angle, a handheld view that zoomed in on Zahara's face. She was sitting in what looked like a dark room, her eyes wide, almost frantic, as if she was recording this against her will. Her face, once full of life and vibrance, was now pale and drawn. Her hair was unkempt, and there were dark circles beneath her eyes—she hadn't slept, hadn't eaten properly.

"Please," she whispered in the video, her voice trembling. "Please, if you're seeing this, I need you to know—" Her words cut off as a loud thud echoed in the background, making her flinch. She quickly composed herself, but there was no hiding the fear in her eyes.

"They said this would make me immortal," she continued, her voice growing weaker. "But I think they're erasing me... bit by bit."

Her words echoed in Brian's mind as he watched her face flicker with emotion. The fear in her eyes was undeniable. This wasn't the confident Zahara who once dominated TikTok. This was a young woman caught in something far beyond her control. Something dangerous.

The video flickered, and then, just as quickly as it began, it cut out. The screen went black.

Brian's hands shook as he stared at the empty screen, his heart pounding in his chest. The truth was clear now. Zahara wasn't faking this. She hadn't disappeared to chase fame or to manipulate her followers. She was trapped, controlled, used. But by who? Who was behind this? Who had the power to erase someone like Zahara from existence?

Brian quickly downloaded the file, carefully pulling the metadata to check for any hidden information. The timestamp indicated that the video had been shot just days before the Somalia leak. That didn't make sense. Zahara had been recorded here in Nairobi, not Somalia. Something wasn't adding up.

He quickly scanned the metadata, eyes widening as the IP address from where the video had been uploaded appeared on the screen: Nairobi CBD. That was impossible—Zahara was supposed to be in Somalia. She hadn't left the country at all. She had been taken.

Brian sat back, a cold wave of realization crashing over him. Zahara had been manipulated, yes, but she had never left Kenya. She had been right under their noses the whole time, hidden in plain sight. And whoever was controlling her had gone to great lengths to ensure she stayed invisible.

His thoughts were interrupted by his phone buzzing on the desk. It was a message from an unknown number. Brian's pulse quickened as he read the text on the screen.

"Burner phone delivered to Brian rings once. Text appears: 'You want her back? Trade your silence.'"

Brian stared at the message for a long time. His mind raced, but no words came. This was no coincidence. This was a threat. Whoever was behind this knew exactly who he was. They knew he was getting too close. And now, they were offering him a deal—a dangerous deal.

The silence in his room felt deafening. He knew what was at stake now. Zahara wasn't just some influencer caught in a viral trap. She was the target of something much larger. Something with influence, power, and connections that reached far beyond anything he could have imagined.

He tried to keep his composure, but his hands were shaking. This wasn't just about exposing the truth anymore. This was a game of life and death.

Brian stared at the phone, his thoughts conflicted. He could take the deal. He could remain silent and save Zahara, but at what cost? What if remaining silent meant more people would get hurt? What if Zahara was just one of many, pawns in a game controlled by some shadowy organization with money, power, and a reach that extended to the highest levels of society?

The messages kept coming. The message had hidden meaning. The deal was simple: Keep quiet, protect Zahara, and live. Or speak out, expose them, and lose everything—perhaps even his life.

The next step was crucial, and Brian had no choice but to move forward. But his fear intensified as he realized the truth: He wasn't just up against a faceless criminal syndicate. He was up against an organized force, one that had the resources to erase anyone worldwide who threatened to expose them. The religious cult, the powerful digital manipulation, the international game, the hidden financial transactions—everything was interconnected. Zahara's disappearance, the deepfake videos—all of it was part of something far bigger than Brian could have ever anticipated.

He glanced at the message again, his breath shallow.

Then, as if on cue, his phone rang once more. The display read: Unknown Number.

He answered.

“Hello?” he said, his voice trembling slightly.

A deep, distorted voice came through the line, chilling him to his core.

“Do you want her back, Brian?” the voice asked. “You don’t get to play hero in this story. You don’t get to be the one who exposes the game.”

Brian’s blood ran cold.

“Who are you?” he demanded, trying to keep his voice steady.

A cold laugh echoed through the phone.

“We’re the ones who decide who stays and who disappears, Brian. You can’t fight us. But we can make you one offer. Keep silent, and Zahara lives. Speak, and you’ll never hear from her again.”

The line went dead.

Brian’s mind raced. What was he going to do? Was this the end of Zahara’s story? Or the beginning of something far darker?

Suddenly, a new text appeared on his screen.

“If you want her back, Brian. Trade your silence.”

It was the same message. But it wasn’t over. It had only just begun.

Chapter 15: This Isn’t the End

The days blurred into one long, unnerving stretch. Brian had been gone for days now, and with each passing hour, the tension thickened worldwide. It was as if the world, a living, breathing organism, was holding its breath, waiting for something—anything—to break the silence. Get manipulated.

It was the morning of the fifth day since Brian’s disappearance when the news broke.

“Breaking news,” the TV74 anchor’s voice echoed through the living rooms of millions of Kenyans. “Brian Mwangi, boyfriend of missing influencer Zahara Kimani, has now gone missing. The DCI has confirmed there is no foul play…yet.”

The words hit like a slap, sharp and unrelenting.

Country was torn. Social media exploded with reactions—some mocking the entire situation, calling it another viral stunt, a publicity move gone wrong. Others, however, were filled with dread, their gut feelings telling them this was more than just a stunt. This was real. Something bigger than they could comprehend had taken hold of the world. Zahara, Brian, the cult—none of it made sense, but it was all connected. And they couldn’t look away.

It wasn’t long before Brian’s disappearance was linked back to Zahara’s chilling TikTok videos, the ones where she’d spoken of immortality, of being erased bit by bit. And in the days leading up to her disappearance, the digital world had witnessed her unraveling. But what did it all mean? Why were Brian and Zahara caught in the center of this web? Was this just some twisted game? Or was it a warning?

And then, just as the country began to digest the news, something unexpected happened.

Zahara’s account posted again.

The first few seconds of the video were shaky, almost like it was being filmed in a rush. A dark figure stood in front of a camera, their face barely visible. But then the screen flickered, and a familiar voice—Zahara’s voice—cut through the static.

“You made me famous,” she said, her voice oddly detached. “But digital manipulation made me disappear.”

Brian’s heart sank as he watched the video from a hidden location—his hiding spot, his last refuge. It felt like the walls were closing in on him. Zahara’s words hung in the air, a statement so simple, so terrifying, that it made his stomach twist.

The figure behind the camera shifted slightly, revealing just enough for Brian to recognize the setting. It was the same room from the previous videos. The room that haunted his every waking

moment. Zahara was still trapped. But where was she now? What had happened to Brian? And why had she posted this?

The voice continued, now with a touch of desperation that hadn't been there before.

"If you want the truth…" Zahara's voice cracked. There was a long pause before she added, "Keep watching."

And just like that, the video ended. The screen went black. No caption, no message, nothing but silence.

Brian sat frozen. The weight of those final words pressed down on him like an anchor. *Keep watching.* But what did that mean? Was there more to come? What truth was Zahara referring to? The entire country had been waiting for the next piece of the puzzle, but now the pieces were scattered, out of reach.

The next few hours were a blur. Social media erupted in a frenzy, with endless theories, suspicions, and accusations. Some people, like Brian, believed that the video was a clue, that Zahara was still alive and that her words were meant to be a cryptic message to those who still believed in her story. Others, though, dismissed it as just another glitch in the system, another manipulation of the digital world. But for Brian, and for the few who understood the depth of this dark web, the answer seemed clear: Zahara was still in danger.

But here's the truth no one saw coming: This wasn't the end.

As Brian stared at the screen, trying to make sense of it all, a sudden realization hit him like a truck. He hadn't been the only one following the digital breadcrumbs Zahara had left behind. Somewhere, in the depths of the nation, another presence was watching, tracking the same movements, uncovering the same mysteries.

A sharp knock at his door broke through the haze. He froze. He hadn't told anyone where he was, hadn't shared his location with a soul. His mind raced—had they found him? Had the cult finally caught up with him? The hairs on the back of his neck stood on end.

He opened the door, and his breath caught in his chest.

Standing in front of him was the same dark figure from the video. But now, as they stepped into the room, their face was fully visible—an expression of calm that sent a chill down Brian's spine.

"Zahara…?" he whispered, not sure if he was seeing reality or some twisted figment of his mind.

The figure smiled grimly and shook their head. "You're looking for the wrong person, Brian."

A pause. The air felt thick, oppressive.

“We all are,” the person added, their voice cold and devoid of warmth.

Suddenly, the room felt smaller. The walls closed in. Brian’s stomach turned. He didn’t know whether to trust this person or run. But before he could ask another question, the figure raised a finger to their lips, signaling for him to be silent.

“You need to understand,” they said softly, “This game isn’t over. It’s just beginning.”

Brian’s mind reeled as he stared into the face of this stranger. The connection—the one he had fought so hard to uncover—was slipping away, and the reality of the situation hit him like a freight train. He was no longer just a participant in Zahara’s story. He was now a piece of the puzzle himself. A pawn in a game too big for him to understand.

The figure moved closer, their voice lowering to a whisper, “You think you’re the only one looking for answers? You’re just one more soul to be sacrificed for a greater cause.”

Brian’s heart pounded in his chest. This wasn’t a cult. This was something worse. This was a force beyond human understanding, something that had reached deep into the fabric of their society. And now, he was in too deep.

“I told you,” The figure said as they turned to leave, their final words sending a jolt of terror through Brian. “Zahara isn’t the only one who will disappear.”

Before Brian could speak, the figure was gone, leaving nothing behind but an oppressive silence.

The video was still fresh in his mind, still playing on loop.

“You made me famous. But someone else made me disappear. If you want the truth… keep watching.”

As the reality set in, Brian understood: The truth wasn’t what he had hoped for. It wasn’t something you could find by digging deeper into the digital world or by following clues. It was bigger. It was alive. And it was coming for them all.

Brian’s breath caught as the thought sank in.

This wasn’t the end.

Author's Note

Thank you so much for reading *TikTok Gone Wrong*! I'm truly grateful for your time and support. I hope you enjoyed the story and that it kept you hooked from start to finish. Writing this book has been an incredible journey, and I'm excited to share it with readers like you.

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