

Chapter 9: The Night It Changed

The room was too quiet. Their breath felt heavy in the thick silence as they stood, staring down at the letter on the table. The red wax seal glistened under the dim light, and their name was scrawled across the front. It wasn't a surprise, not really. They had been waiting for something like this. Hands trembling, they ripped the seal open and unfolded the letter. *We know what you did. You can't run from this.* The words felt like a punch to the gut. Their mind raced—who could've sent this? And how much did they really know?

A faint creak from the hallway snapped them back to reality. Their heart raced as they turned toward the door, just as it slowly opened. A shadowy figure stepped inside, each footfall echoing louder than the last. Panic surged through their chest. They pressed their back against the wall, trying to steady their breathing. The intruder's voice, low and chilling, filled the room. "Did you really think you could hide?"

Their throat felt tight, the words barely escaping. "Who are you?" they managed, voice trembling. The figure took another step forward, the silhouette faint in the dim light. "That's not the question," they replied, almost amused. "What matters is that I know what you did that night. The only question left is... will you admit it?"

"I don't know what you're talking about," they lied, the words sticking in their throat. But the intruder was relentless, their voice cold and steady. "Lying won't save you. I want to hear it. I want you to say what really happened." Silence hung between them, thick and suffocating. They felt their pulse in their ears, their heart pounding as the memories flooded back—the alley, the scream, the face they'd tried so hard to forget.

Finally, their voice broke. "It wasn't supposed to happen." The confession slipped out before they could stop it. The figure took one more step closer, inches away now. "Then say it," the intruder whispered, each word dripping with menace. "Say what you did." Their vision blurred as guilt clawed at their chest. "I didn't mean for them to die..."