1. **A**

**A.1**

**Whispers in the Fog**

The city had never been quiet, but tonight was different. There was a stillness in the air, like the calm before a storm, but it wasn’t a storm anyone had been expecting. The streets were lit by the faint glow of streetlights, casting long shadows that stretched out like fingers reaching for something just out of their grasp. The usual hum of traffic and voices had dulled to a murmur, as if even the city itself was holding its breath.

Lena stood on the corner of 5th and Main, her coat wrapped tightly around her, though the night air was unseasonably warm. She glanced up at the skyline, where the buildings seemed to rise out of the mist like ancient monuments, their tops vanishing into the low-hanging clouds. There was something otherworldly about the scene tonight, a sense that the city had crossed some invisible threshold into the unknown.

She checked her watch, though she didn’t need to. The time had been etched in her mind for days now—midnight. The hour when everything was supposed to change. She wasn’t sure what she expected, but the weight of anticipation pressed down on her chest, as though the very moment itself was slipping through her fingers. She shifted her weight, feeling the cool metal of the key in her pocket, its presence a reminder of promises made and things yet to come.

From somewhere down the street, a car engine roared to life, breaking the silence like a gunshot. Lena turned her head instinctively, but the car was already gone, disappearing into the fog. She was alone now, truly alone, with nothing but the promise of something she couldn’t quite name looming ahead. And then she heard it.

A soft, almost imperceptible sound, like footsteps behind her. Slow, deliberate, as though someone was testing the ground before them. She spun around, but the street was empty. No one was there.

For a moment, she stood frozen, unsure of whether she had heard anything at all. But then, there it was again—the sound of footsteps. Closer now. And this time, there was no denying it. She wasn’t alone.

Lena's heart began to race. She knew she had to stay calm, that panic would only make things worse. Her hand brushed the key in her pocket once more, and she instinctively took a step forward, her eyes scanning the empty street. The fog thickened, curling around the edges of the buildings like something alive, shifting and moving, hiding whatever—or whoever—was lurking just out of sight.

The footsteps continued, now unmistakable and nearing. But still, no figure appeared. Lena’s breath caught in her throat. She had heard about these things—stories passed down, whispered in corners, hidden away from those who didn’t want to believe. Spirits, shadows, something other than human. She had always dismissed them as nonsense. But tonight, she wasn’t so sure.

Then she saw it—a flicker of movement in the mist. At first, it was just a shape, barely visible, but it grew clearer with every second. It was a figure, a person—or what had once been a person—moving slowly toward her, their form distorted by the fog. She couldn’t make out their face, but their posture was unmistakable: hunched, almost unnatural, like they were being pulled forward by invisible strings.

Her instinct was to run, but something stopped her. The key. It was pulling her toward the alley just ahead, as though the very metal itself was vibrating with the promise of whatever awaited

**A.2)**

**B) Bar**

a)