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I.

Chapter 1

“The first thing I noticed when I stepped out of the car was the cold. It wasn’t just the temperature, but the way it seemed to seep into your bones. I shivered, pulling my coat tighter around me. The street was empty, the only sound the distant hum of a city far away. I looked down at my hands, feeling the texture of the gloves. A small, dark mark was visible on the back of my left hand. I frowned, trying to remember when I’d noticed it. It didn’t feel like it was there yesterday. The car door closed behind me with a soft click. I took a deep breath, the air tasting strange, like metal and something else I couldn’t place. The building ahead was old, its windows reflecting the pale light of the sky. I walked towards it, each step feeling like a heavy burden. The door opened, and a man in a dark suit stood there, his eyes fixed on me. He didn’t smile, didn’t say a word. He just looked at me, and I felt a chill that had nothing to do with the cold outside. He gestured for me to enter, and I followed him into a dimly lit hallway. The walls were covered in a pattern of small, dark squares, like a mosaic. The floor was polished, reflecting the light from a single lamp at the end of the corridor. I walked towards it, the man following closely behind me. The light grew brighter as we approached, and I saw a door at the end of the hallway. The man opened it, and I stepped inside. The room was large, with a high ceiling and a chandelier that hadn’t been lit. In the center of the room was a large, dark wooden table. On it sat a few objects: a glass of water, a small box, and a book. The man stood behind the table, his hands clasped in front of him. He looked at me, and I felt a strange sense of familiarity. It was as if I’d been here before, even though I knew I hadn’t. He spoke, his voice low and steady. “Welcome. You’re here for a reason. We’ve been expecting you.” I nodded, not knowing what to say. The man gestured towards the table. “Take a seat. We have much to discuss.” I walked to the table and sat down. The man stood there, watching me. The silence was heavy, and I felt a growing sense of unease. The man’s eyes were on me, and I couldn’t look away. The door behind him closed, and I was alone in the room. I looked at the objects on the table. The glass of water was full, the box was small and unmarked, and the book was thick and old. I picked up the book, its cover made of a dark, textured material. I turned the pages, looking for something familiar. The words were in a language I didn’t know, but the structure of the sentences felt like I’d read them somewhere. I closed the book, feeling a sense of disappointment. The man’s words came back to me. “We’ve been expecting you.” Who was he? What was he expecting? I looked at my hands again, the dark mark still there. I tried to remember when I’d noticed it, but my mind was blank. The door opened, and the man came back. He looked at me, and I saw a flicker of something in his eyes. “You’ve found it,” he said. “That’s good. Now, let’s talk about what you’ve found.” I looked at the book, then at the man. “What have I found?” he asked. “A piece of the puzzle,” I said. “A piece of what?” he asked. “I don’t know,” I said. “But it’s important.” The man nodded. “It is. And now, you need to tell me everything you know.” I looked at him, feeling a sense of dread. “I don’t know anything,” I said. “Not yet.” The man smiled, a small, knowing smile. “That’s all right. We have time. We’ll wait until you do.” He gestured towards the door. “Go. But don’t leave the building. We’ll be watching you.” I walked to the door, feeling a sense of relief. I opened it and stepped out into the cold. I looked back at the building, feeling a sense of unease. The door was closed, and the man was gone. I walked away, feeling a sense of mystery. The dark mark on my hand was still there, and I knew it was just the beginning.

Chapter 2

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Chapter 3

Chapter 4

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Chapter 5

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Chapter 6

Chapter 7

Chapter 8

Chapter 9

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