

THE MASKS OF DECEIT

written by

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Based on
Frank's Reagan Book Series

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Chapter One: The Wolf and the Cat

EXT. MARSEILLE - NEIGHBORHOOD SQUARE - NIGHT

Firecrackers burst above the rooftops.

It's summer in Marseille.

A local street ceremony is underway.

Music, dancing, lanterns swinging in the warm air.

Kids run through the crowd with sparklers. Strangers laugh over shared wine bottles.

NOURA BEN SALAH (30s) – poised, magnetic, with piercing eyes that don't miss a thing – dances barefoot in the square.

Her laughter is free, almost childlike.

Watching from the edge is LUCIEN "LUC" VIDAL (34) – jeans, leather jacket, eyes carrying a quiet storm.

He smiles faintly as Noura spins toward him, grabbing his hand.

NOURA

Come on. Dance like you're not
always thinking.

LUC

(half-hearted)
I am dancing. Internally.

She tugs him into the rhythm. For a moment, they're lost in the warmth of the night.

BUZZ. Luc's phone vibrates in his jacket.

He pulls away slightly, checking the screen discreetly.

ON PHONE SCREEN:

Private Message: "Event confirmed. Invitation pending. All collaborators to attend."

Luc's expression stiffens.

NOURA (O.S.)

Work?

LUC
 (hides it quickly)
 Spam. Crypto bros won't leave me
 alone.

She narrows her eyes but lets it go.

The music swells.

INT. LUC & NOURA'S APARTMENT - LATE NIGHT

The small flat is dimly lit, scattered with books, cables,
 and a laptop glowing on the dining table.

Luc sits alone now, typing. The screen displays a group chat:
 usernames only.

ON SCREEN:

@Foxified: Final build is done. He better pay.
 @BearCode: He always pays. Eventually.
 @PeacockFly: Who cares? This weekend sounds *divine*.
 @R4T: So do locked rooms. Just saying.
 @W0lf: Anyone know where exactly it is?

Luc stares at the screen, typing as W0lf.

He hesitates.

Then: *DING* – an encrypted PDF invitation appears.

He clicks.

A sleek digital invitation loads:

*"You are cordially invited to the final stage of the B2B+
 launch. Attire: Elegant. Transportation will be arranged.
 Location undisclosed until boarding."*

Behind him, Noura appears in a silk robe.

NOURA
 You coming to bed, Wolf?

Luc startles slightly.

LUC
 Don't call me that.

NOURA
 Why not? You use it enough.

She crosses to him and sees the open screen. Her gaze sharpens.

NOURA (CONT'D)

This is about that secret project again?

LUC

It's not secret. Just... protected.

NOURA

You told me you quit.

LUC

(beat)
I lied.

She sits across from him, waiting.

LUC (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

It's the only thing keeping us afloat. Since the last contract died, I've been freelancing on this team-remotely. We built something big. Maybe too big. He wants us all together. One weekend. One house. Masks and all. Some kind of reveal.

NOURA

And you didn't think to tell me?

LUC

I didn't want to worry you.

NOURA

So worry me now. I'm coming with you.

LUC

No. They don't know you. You weren't invited.

NOURA

I don't care. I'm not staying behind while you go God-knows-where with digital strangers and mystery instructions.

Luc exhales.

LUC

You're impossible.

NOURA
(soft smile)
I know.

A beat of silence.

NOURA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
At least bring wine. So when we all
get murdered, I'm drunk.

EXT. MARSEILLE - DAWN

Birdsong over the waking streets.

A taxi pulls away from the curb as the sky brightens.

Luc and Noura step outside with a single shared suitcase.

She holds a black clutch. He holds his phone. Neither speaks.

They walk toward the edge of the harbor.

EXT. MARSEILLE - COASTAL HIGHWAY - DAY

The city fades behind them.

The salty air blasts through the open windows of a modest,
beat-up Peugeot 206 barreling along the coast.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

NOURA BEN SALAH props her feet on the dash, sunglasses on,
chewing on a dried fig.

She's dressed like a woman who knows how to charm a customs
officer or a killer.

LUCIEN "LUC" VIDAL drives with both hands on the wheel,
sunglasses low on his nose.

Jaw tense.

Eyes locked on the road like it might pull a gun.

NOURA
So let me get this straight. You've
been building a website with six
strangers for a man you've never met
in person, and now he wants to throw
a party... with masks?

LUC

Not a party. A launch retreat. For the final integration.

NOURA

That's even worse. Cult vibes. Are you sure this isn't one of those rich Frenchmen who hunts his freelancers for sport?

LUC

(dry)

Only in the terms and conditions.

She shoots him a look.

NOURA

You said you were the only developer on this thing.

LUC

I was. At first. Then came the others.

NOURA

And you didn't think that was suspicious?

LUC

I thought he wanted options. Now I think he wanted chaos.

She studies him. He doesn't meet her eyes.

NOURA

What exactly is this platform?

LUC

Something between LinkedIn and a private vault. High-end. Data privacy. B2B+ model, he called it. Corporate matchmaking with encryption.

NOURA

(murmuring)

And we trust him?

LUC

I don't trust anyone. But he pays in crypto before deadlines.

A long pause.

NOURA
And the masks?

LUC
Branding. He said it's about
identity. How we hide behind roles.
"The beast within the browser."

NOURA
He sounds exhausting.

LUC
He is.

Beat.

NOURA
You don't want me there, do you?

Luc exhales.

LUC
I don't know if it's safe. And I
don't know why he wants us all in
one place.

NOURA
You think he's testing you.

LUC
(quiet)
Or setting us up.

The car continues along the cliffs.

EXT. HARBOR - EARLY EVENING

A vintage wooden boat rocks softly at the edge of a private dock.

The sea reflects the amber sky like mercury.

Guests begin arriving. Each alone. Each carrying a small bag and a sealed envelope.

Everyone avoids eye contact.

ON SCREEN:
"16 HOURS BEFORE THE MURDER."

Luc and Noura approach the boat.

They slow down as they see a line forming.

A large man in a crisp black suit checks names from a list —
THE DOORMAN.

He's got the posture of an ex-bouncer, and the eyes of
someone who's seen things that don't add up.

DOORMAN
Name?

LUC
Luc Vidal.

The doorman scans down.

DOORMAN
Wolf. Confirmed.

He glances at Noura.

DOORMAN (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
And you are?

NOURA
(smiling)
The Cat.

The doorman frowns, flips the page.

DOORMAN
There's no Cat on the list.

NOURA
(without hesitation)
Then your list is out of date. The
Wolf doesn't hunt alone. He's
partnered. You want to separate us,
you'll answer for it later.

DOORMAN
Ma'am, if you weren't invited—

NOURA
(cutting him off, softly)
Do you really think a man like that
would want six developers and no
eyes? No storyteller? No artist?

She leans in close enough for the doorman to smell her
perfume.

NOURA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
Let me in. I'll stay out of your
way. Or kick me out, and I'll stay
in everyone's way. Including his.

A tense silence.

The doorman hesitates.

He nods curtly.

DOORMAN

Fine. Mask on when you board.

He hands them two masks in slim black envelopes – one with a stylized Wolf, the other a sleek Cat.

INT. BOAT - MOMENTS LATER

They board silently, the deck polished to a mirror shine.

A row of masked figures already sit spaced apart, staring out at the sea. Fox. Bear. Raccoon. Dog. Rat.

No one says a word.

Noura clutches Luc's hand as the boat begins to pull away from the dock.

The sun sets behind them.

INT. BOAT - EVENING

The polished vintage boat sways gently.

Inside, the space is sleek, minimal—mahogany panels, chrome fixtures, leather benches running along the edges.

Luc (Wolf) and Noura (Cat) take their seats, joining the five others already present—each face anonymous.

No one speaks. The tension is visceral.

CHARACTERS PRESENT:

FOX – Lean, nervous energy. Tapping his leg.

DOG – Clean-cut, over-pressed blazer, fingers drumming with control.

BEAR – Broad shoulders, resting arms crossed. Silent.

RACCOON – Hoodie over formalwear. Slouched, aloof.

RAT – Suit too tight, checking a smartwatch every five seconds.

WOLF (LUC) and CAT (NOURA) – side-by-side, but their closeness is about to change.

The DOORMAN enters from the helm. Remote in hand.

He switches on the flat screen TV hanging near the bow.

ON SCREEN:

A grainy black-and-white live video feed.

The CLIENT, mid-40s, French accent, styled like a man who cares too much about appearances and control.

He sits in a velvet chair with a drink in hand.

CLIENT (ON SCREEN)

Bonsoir, collaborators. Welcome. You are here because you earned it. Or because I need to know if you did.

He takes a sip. Smiles faintly.

CLIENT (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

This isn't my mansion. Not yet. First, we sail. No names. No resumes. Just masks and truth.

A pause.

CLIENT (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

On board: Six talents. One outsider.

Luc flicks his eyes toward Noura. No reaction from anyone else.

CLIENT (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

This is not just a retreat. This is the final test. Of character. Of allegiance. You will arrive at the estate in twenty-five minutes. Make an impression. Or disappear.

He raises his glass.

CLIENT (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Let the weekend begin.

The screen cuts to black.

The Doorman walks to the cabin door, about to shut it—when—

FOOTSTEPS on the dock.

Everyone looks up.

A tall figure approaches, already wearing a sleek, shimmering Peacock mask.

Tailored cream suit.

Pocket square. Leather gloves. Moves like the world's his stage.

DOORMAN

You're late.

PEACOCK

Fashionably. You're welcome.

DOORMAN

(unimpressed)

Name?

PEACOCK

(without missing a beat)

Peacock. Obviously.

Luc narrows his eyes. Something twitches in his memory.

He turns slightly to Noura, whispers:

LUC

I saw him before. Earlier today.
Without the mask.

NOURA

(quietly)

I bet he sleeps with it on.

As Peacock passes the row of seated guests, he pauses mid-aisle.

He turns his head slightly to Luc and Noura—reading them.

PEACOCK

Quite the audience. Love what you've
done with the tension.

Then moves to sit front and center—alone, centered like a king at court.

The Doorman shuts the door.

Locks it with a *metallic click*.

EXT. BOAT - MINUTES LATER - OPEN SEA

The boat leaves the Marseille coast behind, slipping into deeper water.

Twilight fades into night.

INT. BOAT - CONTINUOUS

Seats are now assigned.

The Doorman separated everyone. No one talks.

No phones allowed.

No names exchanged.

Luc (Wolf) is two seats away from Noura (Cat)—he keeps stealing glances at her, but she's busy.

Noura scans the room with feline precision. Every detail sticks:

Fox wipes sweat with a silk handkerchief. Nervous hands.

Dog keeps adjusting his collar. His jaw tight.

Bear never moves. Just watches the waves.

Raccoon picks at his nails. Wears sneakers with a wrinkled suit.

Rat—legs crossed too tightly, eyes flicking like he's replaying a spreadsheet in his mind.

And then there's Peacock.

Leaning back.

Relaxed.

Staring ahead, like he's already solved the puzzle and finds it boring.

Luc, on the other hand, grows paler.

He's clearly unraveling inside.

His knee bounces, his hand trembles just slightly. He wipes his palms on his jeans.

He looks at the others.

Then at the darkening window. The island is somewhere out there, unseen.

The hum of the motor is the only sound.

EXT. SEA - NIGHT

The boat glides silently. A mist begins to roll in.

Ahead, faint lights flicker in the fog: the silhouette of a mansion on a private island.

CUT TO:

Chapter Two: The Peacock

INT. GRAND FOYER - MANSION - NIGHT

The heavy double doors swing open.

The masked guests step in cautiously—Raccoon, Bear, Rat, Dog, Fox, Wolf, Cat, and Peacock—led by the Doorman.

Their footsteps echo on marble floors. The house is opulent, sterile, and eerily quiet.

There are no staff.

No music.

Just the sound of an automated voice echoing faintly from overhead speakers:

AUTOMATED VOICE

Welcome to the Villa. Dinner is served in the Salon. Please wear your masks.

They begin to scatter toward their respective rooms.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT - HOURS LATER

Noura (Cat) walks alone.

Her heels click softly on the tile. She pauses at the edge of a dim hallway where a door hangs ajar.

Wine trickles from under the door.

She frowns. Pushes it open.

INT. STUDY - CONTINUOUS

A corpse slumped at the desk—it's the Client.

His mask lies beside him. A bloody knife in his back. A wine bottle shattered across the floor.

NOURA

Oh my God—!

She backs away, hand over her mouth—then screams.

CUT TO: SIRENS —
EXTERIOR — EARLY
MORNING

SUPERIMPOSE: "10 HOURS LATER"

EXT. MANSION GROUNDS - DAYBREAK - FRENCH POLICE PRESENCE

A perimeter is secured.

Officers stand outside the gates.

Two cars, one unmarked.

Inside: crime scene techs. Forensics bags. Blue gloves.
Camera flashes.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The suspects sit in silence—still masked. The tension is nuclear.

FOOTSTEPS.

Enter: DETECTIVE FRANK REAGAN (mid-40s). Tall, trench coat, creased suit, eyes like cracked glass.

A man too tired to be fooled and too sharp to miss a detail.

He looks over the scene like a man reading the last page of a book before starting the first.

Next to him is Erica Vidal, Luc's sister, frustrated, holding a paper coffee cup. Her stare burns.

ERICA

They arrested Luc. My brother.
That's bullshit and you know it.

FRANK

No, I don't. But let's find out.

He walks past her.

FRANK (V.O.)

One body. Eight masks.
And one of them was too late to be
part of the crime. Or just late
enough to hide in plain sight.

His eyes settle on Peacock, still wearing his mask. Legs
crossed. At ease.

INT. PRIVATE ROOM - DAY - INTERROGATION

FRANK sits across from PEACOCK, who now has his mask off.
He's slick. Expensive cologne and sarcasm.

FRANK

You arrived last. Walked in like it
was a fashion show.

PEACOCK

That's how I enter every room.

FRANK

Funny. The host didn't laugh. He's
dead.

PEACOCK

Tragic. But I didn't kill him. And I
certainly wouldn't have done it in
such a... provincial way.

Frank leans forward.

FRANK

Then tell me what happened. From the
top.

INT. BOAT, 16 HOURS EARLIER - FLASHBACK

The *Peacock*, mask already on, stands at the dock.

But we now see the truth:

He was already near the boat *an hour earlier*, wearing
different clothes, observing from the shadows.

He watched Luc and Noura board.

He changed outfits. Put on the charm. Showed up again—later—as if arriving late.

Back in the boat:

Peacock catches everyone's eye, soaking in attention.

But his gloved hands are clenched tighter than anyone sees.

INT. MANSION - DINNER - NIGHT (FLASHBACK CONTINUES)

The guests eat in silence. Peacock breaks it.

PEACOCK

You know what's wild? None of us know the real names of the people we're sharing wine with. It's like Russian roulette, but everyone's rebranded.

A few scoffs. Fox laughs nervously.

The Client raises a glass from the end of the table—still alive then.

CLIENT

That was the point, Monsieur Peacock. Anonymity breeds truth.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - BACK TO PRESENT

FRANK

You didn't like him.

PEACOCK

(shrugging)
He didn't like anyone.

Frank lays a photo on the table.

FRANK

He wrote your real name in his notebook.
And beside it? "Overstepped."

PEACOCK

(beat)
That's a branding term.

FRANK

It's also motive.

A long pause.

Peacock's expression drops just slightly.

INT. VILLA ENTRANCE HALL - NIGHT

The grand marble foyer is drenched in gold light.

Each guest stands in silence under a towering chandelier shaped like a cracked globe.

An unsettling detail, barely noticeable.

FOOTSTEPS APPROACH.

THE CLIENT enters with theatrical calm, holding a wine glass. Black turtleneck.

Perfectly trimmed beard.

A man who orchestrates people like code.

CLIENT

Good evening, animals. I trust the voyage was uncomfortable.

No one answers.

CLIENT (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Good. Clarity is born of discomfort.

He sips, then gestures to Peacock.

CLIENT (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

You. The last one in. You have flair.

PEACOCK

Naturally.

CLIENT

That's dangerous. Here, we respect substance. Not sparkle.

PEACOCK

(grinning)

Sometimes they're the same thing.

The Client steps close, nose to nose. Tension crackles.

CLIENT

Not in this house.

He breaks the moment with a polite clap.

CLIENT (CONT'D)
 Your tasks are simple.
 You came here to prove your
 contribution. Now you will finish it
 —under observation.

He gestures to the Doorman, who holds a list.

CLIENT (CONT'D)
 You'll each be assigned a room. A
 workstation. A riddle.
 Solve it, or don't.
 But know this—your future with me
 depends on what I see this weekend.

INT. VILLA - PEACOCK'S ROOM - LATER

A sleek suite with designer furnishings.

Chrome desk, an old-school rotary phone, and a screen with a
 blinking cursor.

A document open: "Reputation Leak v2.0"

The Client enters quietly.

CLIENT
 You always liked being the loudest
 in the room. Why?

PEACOCK
 Because silence gets you ignored.
 And I don't work for free.

CLIENT
 No one does. But you sell ideas like
 perfume.
 I need firewalls. Not fireworks.

PEACOCK
 Then why keep me?

CLIENT
 Because you make my monsters look
 beautiful.

The Client sits.

CLIENT (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
 Do you know what *reputation*
management really is?

PEACOCK

Spin?

CLIENT

It's war.
And I need generals, not
influencers.

A pause.

CLIENT (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Impress me this weekend. Or go back
to charming CEOs with your voice and
zero backend.

He stands. Walks out.

PEACOCK sits back, thoughtful. The arrogance dims. Just a
flicker.

ROUGH CUT TO:

CHAPTER THREE: FRANK & ERICA

"One Day Earlier"

INT. HOTEL ROOM - SÃO PAULO - NIGHT

DETECTIVE FRANK LECLAIR (mid-40s) walks slowly through a
blood-streaked hallway in a budget hotel.

He's calm. No gloves.

His suit is damp from the rain.

A naked man lies cuffed on the floor—smeared in something
red.

A woman's dress is balled up in the corner.

A uniformed officer hands Frank a phone. Onscreen: Breaking
News—"CARNAVAL KILLER CAUGHT."

FRANK

Tell Interpol I'm done.

COP

With the case?

FRANK

With this continent.

INT. AIRPORT TERMINAL - DAY (NEXT MORNING)

Frank sips black coffee while flipping through two folders:
FRANCE and AUSTRALIA.

Both labeled "Temporary Leave Approved."

A flight attendant walks by. French. Gorgeous. Cold.

He stares at the folder in his hand.

FRANK (V.O.)

One has sun. The other has secrets.

He throws the Australia folder in the trash.

Stands. Grabs his coat.

CUT TO BLACK.

SUPERIMPOSE: "Now Boarding - Flight 282 to Marseille."

INT. MARSEILLE APARTMENT - EARLY MORNING

Sunlight bleeds through linen curtains.

DETECTIVE FRANK LECLAIR wakes up in a T-shirt and slacks.

His room is minimalist—records stacked near the player, an
old revolver on the shelf, books dog-eared to hell.

He pours espresso into a chipped cup. The local radio blares:
*"Explosion in Corsica... Tech firm under investigation in
Paris... Weather for Marseille, light mist—"*

Frank switches it off.

He stares out the window, takes a sip, and scratches at a
scar near his collarbone.

A photo pinned to the wall catches our eye:

A body in a bathtub. A woman. The wallpaper is identical to
the villa we saw earlier.

FLASH CUT - YEARS AGO - INTERROGATION ROOM

Frank, younger.

A Brazilian tech magnate in cuffs.

Blood under his nails.

A projector shows masked employees.

VOICE (O.S.)
They built a digital pyramid scheme.
He killed anyone who tried to speak.

FRANK (YOUNGER)
He used anonymity as a weapon.

INT. SCOTLAND YARD - INTERVIEW ROOM - LONDON - NIGHT

ERICA VIDAL (early 30s), composed but visibly exhausted, sits across from a Middle Eastern teenager, bruised and bleeding.

ERICA
You were there. Just tell me what you saw.

The boy looks down. Silent.

ERICA (CONT'D)
(soft)
I don't want to be your enemy.

Before she can go further—

DOOR OPENS HARD.

CHIEF YARDLEY (60s), stone-faced, suit too clean, walks in.

YARDLEY
Detective Vidal, step out.

She hesitates.

YARDLEY (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
Now.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Erica slams the door behind her.

ERICA
Are you kidding me?

Her colleague, SIMON (mid-20s, British, charming), leans on the wall.

ERICA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
I had him. He was close. You saw that.

SIMON
Yardley doesn't do "close." He does
PR.

She scoffs, pacing.

ERICA
I didn't come here to smile and nod
at bigots in pressed suits.

SIMON
You miss Frank?

Silence.

ERICA
(quietly)
He listened.

Before Simon can reply, her phone rings.

Unknown number. She hesitates, then answers.

INT. PHONE CALL - INTERCUT WITH NOURA WALKING IN FRANCE -
STREET, DAY

NOURA (V.O.)
Is this Erica Vidal?

ERICA
Yes. Who's calling?

NOURA (V.O.)
My name is Noura Ben Salah. I was
told to contact you by Alain.

ERICA
(stiffens)
Luc's friend?

NOURA
His girlfriend.

Beat.

NOURA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
He's been arrested. For murder. He
didn't do it. He couldn't have.

ERICA
(cold, sharp)
What happened?

NOURA

There was a gathering. A project. On an island near Marseille. Someone— someone was killed. I found the body. It was the man who hired them. The Client. The police say Luc had a motive.

Erica grabs a pen from Simon's chest pocket and starts scribbling on a folder.

ERICA

Tell me everything. Dates. Names. Who else was there. I need profiles. I need truth.

NOURA

(rushed)

They all used masks. No real names. But he called Luc "Wolf." And I was Cat. That's how we were labeled.

ERICA

(writing fast)

Good. Keep going.

She jots down:

Wolf - Luc

Cat - Girlfriend

Client - Murdered

Masks - Animal theme

Project - Confidential platform

Suddenly—

CHIEF YARDLEY enters the hallway behind her.

YARDLEY

Vidal. Back in the room.

Erica freezes. Looks at her notes.

ERICA (INTO PHONE)

I have to go.

She hangs up.

INT. SCOTLAND YARD - OUTSIDE GLASS OFFICE

ERICA walks up to Yardley and stops in front of his desk. Calm.

YARDLEY

You don't walk out on a case mid-interrogation.

ERICA

I didn't. I quit.

She drops her badge on the desk.

YARDLEY

You're throwing your career away.

ERICA

(leaning in)

No. I'm choosing who I trust. That list doesn't include you.

EXT. LONDON STREET - MINUTES LATER

Rain falls lightly.

Erica marches across the pavement.

Yardley follows her out, shouting behind her.

YARDLEY

This isn't São Paulo, Vidal! You don't just fly across borders to chase ghosts!

ERICA (OVER HER SHOULDER)

Good thing I'm chasing killers.

SIMON runs after her, jacket half-on.

SIMON

Wait—what are you doing?

She hails a cab. Opens the door.

ERICA

I'm going to France.

SIMON

Train or flight?

ERICA

(smiling, fierce)

Whichever gets me to the truth first.

CUT TO:

CHAPTER FOUR: THE CALL

INT. TAXI - EARLY MORNING - FRANCE BORDER

ERICA sits in the back seat of a cab, legs crossed, phone to her ear.

She watches raindrops streak the window as the landscape rushes by.

Her notebook is open on her lap, half-filled with scrawled notes and names.

ERICA
 (into phone)
 He's been set up. I know it. The others—masks, aliases, all code-named. Some twisted trust experiment gone to hell.

INT. BEACHFRONT COTTAGE - NICE, FRANCE - SAME TIME

A radio plays old jazz in the background.

DETECTIVE FRANK LECLAIR is seated shirtless, beer in hand, watching two old fishermen argue over dominoes outside.

His phone rings.

He answers without checking.

FRANK
 Whoever you are—make it quick, I'm happily retired.

ERICA (V.O.)
 Frank. It's Erica.

Frank sits up slightly.

FRANK
 You know it's illegal to call me before espresso.

ERICA
 There's a body. A group of freelancers, masked identities, locked island, and my brother is sitting in cuffs.

FRANK

Then call a lawyer. I'm in Nice.
That's at least two beaches away
from giving a damn.

ERICA

It's in France, Frank.

Silence.

FRANK

...What part?

ERICA

Just off Marseille. Private island.
Guy ran a digital company. Invited
all the devs for a final "task."

Frank rubs his jaw. Looks outside at the quiet coast.

FRANK

Marseille's only a few sins away.

ERICA

His name was Luc Vidal. Mask name:
Wolf. Girlfriend found the body. Guy
was stabbed in his study. No sign of
forced entry.

FRANK

What's her alias?

ERICA

Cat.

FRANK

Figures.

A beat.

FRANK (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

I'll need them all in the house.
Locked in. No one leaves.

ERICA

Already on it. Talk to Drouet—
Detective in charge there. Arrogant
but scared of paperwork.

FRANK

Tell him I want three days.
If I don't find your killer by then,
I go back to retirement. Full tan,
no guilt.

ERICA

He'll agree. He knows your file.
Hell, the French still owe you for
catching the hacker cell in Lyon.

Frank grabs his coat and revolver from the shelf.

FRANK

Then let's see what your brother
stepped into.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE RACCOON

INT. MANSION - STUDY - DAY

FRANK now wears his badge like a threat. He walks slowly
around the bloody study, gloves on, alone.

He notes:

The wine trail under the door—carefully poured, not spilled.

The knife angle—clean insertion, right-handed.

The Client's laptop is missing.

A small burn mark on the corner of the desk—like an
overheated USB.

Frank reaches under the desk—finds a single playing card: *the Rook*.

FRANK

(muttering)

Rook. Not a king. Not a pawn. You
move sideways in shadows.

INT. DINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The guests sit around the long table. The tension could slice
a steak.

Frank walks in, tossing the playing card onto the table.

FRANK

Anyone here play chess?

FOX

I mean, metaphorically?

Frank ignores him. Points to RACCOON.

FRANK

You. Hoodie. Back of the boat. Come with me.

RACCOON

Why?

FRANK

Because you were always watching. Never speaking. That's what coders do when they're not coding.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - LIBRARY - LATER

RACCOON sits across from Frank, slouched. Bag under his chair. Hoodie still on.

FRANK

Real name?

RACCOON

(shrugging)

Rami. Doesn't matter.

FRANK

Rami, tell me what exactly you were doing here besides stealing WiFi and hiding your eyes.

RACCOON

Client brought us here to run tests. We each had one segment of the system. Mine was data purge.

FRANK

So you handled deletion.

RACCOON

I handle making things disappear.

INT. RACCOON'S ROOM - NIGHT BEFORE MURDER - FLASHBACK

Rami (Raccoon) is staring at his screen.

A code sequence loops.

Outside the window, a reflection—someone walks past, unseen.

He types a string:

Execute /client/archive/purge - 11:57 PM

He pauses. Doesn't hit enter.

Behind him, a hand briefly touches his doorknob—but doesn't enter.

BACK TO INTERROGATION

FRANK
You were going to wipe something.
Why stop?

RACCOON
(beat)
He changed the password.

FRANK
So you didn't do it?

RACCOON
I couldn't. Someone beat me to it.

Frank studies him.

FRANK
You ever seen this?

He shows the playing card. Raccoon freezes.

FRANK (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
Someone left it in the room.
You react like it's not the first
time.

RACCOON
Because it's not.

CUT TO:

INT. MANSION - TECH ROOM - EVENING

FRANK stands behind a flickering monitor.

A security tech (local cop, late 20s, bored) scrubs through grainy surveillance footage with a joystick.

ON SCREEN:

The masked guests board the boat. Each enters the mansion.

Then — nothing.

FRANK
It cuts off?

TECH

It loops. From there, every camera goes dark. System resets at 21:03.

FRANK

(to himself)

Right before the murder.

He stares at the final frozen frame: Peacock and Cat entering together, shadows stretched behind them like echoes.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Bring me Bear.

TECH

The big one?

FRANK

The quiet one. Always is.

INT. BEAR'S ROOM - NIGHT

BEAR stands at the window, her back to Frank.

Broad-shouldered. Wears a minimalist black shirt.

Hair tied up in a bun.

She turns—revealing a sharp jawline and steady, knowing eyes. She is a woman.

FRANK

Didn't expect that.

BEAR

People rarely do. It's helpful.

FRANK

Helpful for what?

BEAR

Being underestimated.

Frank smirks.

FRANK

That makes two of us.

He glances around. Her desk is the only one *without* a device.

FRANK (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

No laptop?

BEAR

I don't need one to write code.

FRANK

But you do need one to check your messages. The client's final instruction came via email blast—two hours before the murder.

BEAR

Mine didn't arrive.

Frank narrows his eyes.

FRANK

Or you erased it?

BEAR

You tell me, detective.

EXT. MANSION BALCONY - NIGHT

ERICA leans against the railing.

Frank joins her, lighting a cigarette.

Below, the estate glows under the moon—backed by a wide, motionless lake that stretches into the forest.

ERICA

Drouet's out. Gave us forty-eight hours. Left a babysitter, though.

FRANK

Let him watch the walls. I'll watch the water.

ERICA

(frowning)

The water?

Frank flicks the ash of his cigarette.

FRANK

Mansion's got 360° security. Except behind.
They say paranoia builds walls.
But guilt? Guilt throws things in lakes.

She follows his gaze to the glassy black surface behind the mansion.

FRANK (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
A murder this clean? Someone got
dirty somewhere.

ERICA
You want to dive?

FRANK
Not yet. First, I want to know what
she saw.

ERICA
Who?

FRANK
Cat.

CUT TO:

CHAPTER SIX: THE FOX

INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

FRANK sits across from THE FOX — real name SÉBASTIEN, mid-30s, sleek, smirking, wearing a designer vest like he's at a cocktail pitch.

A watch glints on his wrist, expensive. His hands are clean. Too clean.

FOX
You don't like me. That's fine. Most
people don't. Until I write them a
billion-dollar conversion funnel.

FRANK
Your job was interface design.

FOX
And human manipulation. Same thing.

Frank tosses a folder on the table. Opens it to a screenshot.

FRANK
You changed the codebase. A hidden
redirect protocol added two days
before we got here.

FOX
Correction. I suggested the change.
Peacock implemented it.
Raccoon deleted it.
And now the Client is dead.

Frank watches his face.

FRANK
That's a neat alibi sandwich. Just
missing mustard and motive.

FOX
(leaning in)
I didn't kill him. But I did warn
him.

FRANK
Warn him of what?

Fox's smile fades.

INT. CLIENT'S PRIVATE OFFICE - TWO NIGHTS EARLIER - FLASHBACK

Fox stands, arms crossed. The Client leans against his desk,
drinking espresso.

FOX (FLASHBACK)
You've got eight freelancers here—no
names, no pasts.
You think you're safe because they
wear masks?

CLIENT
I think truth demands risk.

FOX
Truth? This isn't philosophy. It's
ego. You're playing roulette with
code and corpses.

The Client laughs.

CLIENT
That's the idea.

Fox turns, exiting.

FOX
One day, someone's going to spin the
chamber when you're not looking.

BACK TO LIBRARY

Frank closes the file. Stands.

FRANK
You said you warned him.

FOX
He didn't listen. Narcissists rarely do.

FRANK
Where were you at 9:03?

FOX
(smiles)
Fixing the lighting in my ego chamber. Alone.

Frank nods, walks away—then stops.

FRANK
Nice watch.

FOX
Custom. Italian.

FRANK
Strange. The same brand the client wore.

Fox stiffens.

FRANK (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
Except his is missing.

EXT. MANSION BALCONY - NIGHT

ERICA stands with DROUET'S PARTNER, a jittery local detective named VINCENT.

They drink instant coffee from paper cups.

Suddenly—
A CRACK. A SCREAM. A BODY FALLS.

THUD!

They rush to the side path behind the hedge—RAT lies in the grass, blood from a gash on his forehead, clutching his shoulder.

ERICA
Get the med kit!

RAT
It wasn't me—it wasn't me!

ERICA
What happened?!

RAT

The stair—collapsed. Wood snapped
clean through. Almost pushed me.

Vincent shines a flashlight on the splintered stair edge.

Too clean.

ERICA

(to herself)

That wasn't an accident.

INT. MANSION - NIGHT - COMMON ROOM

Frank returns to the main hall.

Raccoon, Cat, Bear, and Dog watch silently as Rat is helped
inside.

Peacock flips a tarot card casually on the coffee table. It's
Death.

Frank turns to Erica.

FRANK

No more games. No more dinner.
Everyone stays in the same room
tonight. Together.

ERICA

They'll complain.

FRANK

Good. Guilty people hate being
watched.

FRANK (TO ALL) (CONT'D)

We start at dawn. No one sleeps
until I speak to the Cat.

Noura meets his gaze—calm, unreadable.

CUT TO:

CHAPTER SEVEN: THE CAT

"To Love a Stranger"

INT. MONTPELLIER - APARTMENT - THREE WEEKS AGO - DAY

NOURA BEN SALAH (30s) walks through a sunlit art gallery
where canvases lean against every wall.

Paint splatters stain her bare arms and old jeans. French-Arab soul music plays on the stereo.

She wipes her hands, opens the window, and lights a cigarette.

In the kitchen, LUC VIDAL (34)—half-shaven, wearing an old MIT hoodie—is trying to cook something he'll definitely burn.

NOURA (O.S.)

You're not going to make it to your own funeral if you keep trying to fry that chicken.

LUC

It's tofu.

NOURA

That's worse.

They exchange a smirk. Their rhythm is authentic—two people who've grown into each other's flaws.

INT. APARTMENT - LATER THAT NIGHT

They lie in bed.

Luc types obsessively on his laptop while Noura reads a graphic novel under a lamp.

NOURA

You ever gonna tell me what this project really is?

LUC

I told you. Business platform. Matching clients with secure services.

NOURA

So Tinder for corporations?

LUC

With encryption and without unsolicited nudes, yes.

NOURA

(after a pause)
Does it scare you?

LUC
 That I built something no one
 understands?
 Yes. A little.

INT. APARTMENT - A WEEK LATER - EVENING

Luc is out. Noura checks his laptop—it's unlocked.

On the screen:
 A project management dashboard.
 Users: Fox. Bear. Dog. Raccoon. Rat. Peacock. Wolf.
 No photos. Only tasks, encrypted comments, and redacted chat
 logs.

She scrolls.

Finds a message from the Client:
 "Masks on. No aliases at the estate. Truth demands no faces."

Her brow furrows.

Then—Luc enters. Sees her. Stops.

LUC
 That's private.

NOURA
 It's disturbing.

LUC
 It's paid.

She closes the laptop.

NOURA
 Then I'm coming with you.

INT. BOAT - NIGHT BEFORE THE MURDER

Noura watches the others board. The masks, the silence, the
 posturing.

She leans close to Luc.

NOURA
 This is a tech cult. I hope they
 have wine.

INT. MANSION - DINNER - NIGHT

Everyone sits in eerie silence.

The Client toasts. Noura observes every face behind the mask. Their gestures, hands, how they cut their food.

She spots something strange:

Raccoon writes something in a notebook—but closes it quickly when Fox glances over.

Peacock seems to already know where the wine is.

Dog doesn't eat. Just sips water, staring at Luc.

Later, after dessert—the Client takes Luc aside.

NOURA (V.O.)

He said he wanted Luc for something bigger. But bigger often means dirtier.

INT. MANSION - MASTER HALLWAY - NIGHT

Noura walks alone toward their shared suite. A soft hum echoes from the study down the hall.

She pauses. Hears a muffled voice—the Client—arguing with someone.

She hides in a shadow.

CLIENT (O.S.)

You think you can rewrite the protocol without telling me?

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

You gave us freedom. I used it.

A crash. Then silence.

Noura quickly steps away.

INT. STUDY - LATER THAT NIGHT

Noura returns. The hallway is silent.

She pushes open the door—

The Client is slumped at his desk, lifeless.

Mask off.

Knife in his back.

A symbol drawn in wine stains the tablet beside him.

She steps back in shock—almost slips.

She doesn't scream immediately.

Instead, she studies the window. Locked.

The knife handle. Clean. Wiped.

She sees a faint lipstick stain on the rim of a wine glass.

Then she screams.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NEXT MORNING

Frank and Erica speak in hushed tones.

FRANK

She saw too much. She's the only one
looking for answers. That makes her
a threat.

ERICA

Or a target.

Frank lights a cigarette.

FRANK

Bring her in.

CUT TO:

CHAPTER EIGHT: THE DOG

"Beneath Obedience"

INT. MANSION - KITCHEN - EARLY MORNING

A kettle whistles. The guests sit in forced silence around
the main table, all sleep-deprived and simmering.

DOG (real name: DANIEL COHEN) stands alone near the coffee
machine, fists clenched behind his back like a soldier in
formation.

FRANK enters, takes a seat across from him. Doesn't say a
word.

Lights a cigarette. Waits.

Dog doesn't flinch.

FRANK
You like structure, Daniel?

DOG
(*calm*)
I like clarity.

FRANK
You're ex-military. Tactical
engineer. Honorably discharged after
six years.

DOG
None of which has anything to do
with a dead client.

FRANK
Funny. Every soldier I've met knows
a clean kill when they see one.
This one was... surgical.

Dog doesn't react.

FRANK (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
You also were the first one to
volunteer for "*security protocol*"
during the boat ride.

DOG
I believe in order.

FRANK
Then explain this.

Frank drops a ziplock bag on the table.

Inside: a small metal flash drive wrapped in gaffer tape—
found under the edge of Dog's bed.

Dog looks at it. Calm. Too calm.

DOG
I've never seen that.

FRANK
It contains a deleted system
override. Someone tried to erase the
entire chat log from the project.
Almost succeeded.

INT. SERVER ROOM - THREE DAYS EARLIER - FLASHBACK

Dog walks through a sleek, cold glass-walled room with server lights flickering around him.

He stands before a terminal. Inserts a flash drive.

He doesn't type.

He *hesitates*.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Do it.

Offscreen, someone stands in the dark—a figure with a mask still on.

VOICE (CONT'D)

You were hired for obedience, Dog.
Not ethics.

Dog's jaw tightens.

DOG (FLASHBACK)

You touch him, you answer to me.

VOICE (O.S.)

I already have. Now finish your
part.

BACK TO KITCHEN

Dog looks at Frank.

DOG

You think I killed him?

FRANK

I think you're protecting someone.

Dog looks across the room. His gaze lingers on Bear, just briefly. She watches him without blinking.

FRANK (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

You're not the kind of man who hides
evidence under your bed.
But you are the kind who takes the
fall.

DOG

I take the hit. Not the fall.

INT. MANSION - HALLWAY - LATER

ERICA and FRANK walk side by side.

ERICA

He's cracked, but he's not guilty.

FRANK

No. He's scared. That's worse.
Someone here knew how to break
loyalty without leaving
fingerprints.

ERICA

What do we do?

FRANK

We stop thinking like cops.
Start thinking like hackers.

They both turn toward the study.

INT. MANSION - STUDY - NIGHT

Frank opens the drawer where the Client's old leather notebook was recovered.

He flips to a page with handwritten animal names and notes.

Next to "Dog" is a single phrase:
"Willing to obey. But not to betray."

Frank closes the book.

FRANK (V.O.)

The murder wasn't random. It was
tailored. Each suspect wasn't just
invited—they were *tested*.

CUT TO BLACK.

CHAPTER NINE: THE BEAR

"Guardians Lie Too"

INT. MANSION - WORKOUT ROOM - EARLY EVENING

BEAR (real name: AMAL JAHAN) punches a hanging bag in measured rhythm.

No music.

Just breath and impact.

The room is dim, lit by an overhead light that flickers slightly. Frank enters, slowly clapping.

FRANK

Nice form.

BEAR

Want to hold the bag?

FRANK

Not unless you're hiding something behind it.

She stops.

Wipes her brow.

Doesn't turn around.

BEAR

I didn't kill him.

FRANK

That's not why I'm here.

BEAR

(turns)

Then why?

FRANK

Because everyone else is cracking and you're still iron. That means either you're innocent... Or trained not to show the shake.

BEAR

You ever seen a system collapse, Frank?

FRANK

Once or twice.

BEAR

It doesn't start with fire. It starts with someone pretending nothing's wrong.

INT. CLIENT'S PRIVATE SUITE - TWO MONTHS EARLIER - FLASHBACK

Amal (Bear) sits across from the Client, in a room full of wires and diagrams.

He hands her a tablet.

CLIENT
Your job is to watch the others.
Security from within.
You see instability, you report it.

BEAR
I'm not a spy.

CLIENT
You're a protector. You said that in
your pitch deck.

BEAR
I protect people. Not egos.

CLIENT
Then prove it.

BACK TO PRESENT - WORKOUT ROOM

FRANK
So you were his internal control
system?

BEAR
I didn't accept. But I didn't say no
either.
I thought maybe—if I stayed close
enough—I could stop whatever he was
planning.

FRANK
Did you?

She looks at the bag.

Her knuckles are red.

BEAR
I thought I did.

INT. MANSION - HALLWAY - SAME TIME

ERICA and NOURA walk slowly along the second-floor corridor
overlooking the foyer.

Night has fallen.

ERICA
You know, I never really liked my
brother's taste in women.

NOURA

(calmly)

Good thing I wasn't picked off a shelf.

ERICA

How long have you two been together?

NOURA

Almost a year.
Started in a train station. He dropped his laptop. I picked it up. He offered me coffee. I said no. He followed me to the metro.

ERICA

Romantic.

NOURA

Stupid. But... real.

ERICA

You're an artist. You lie for a living.

NOURA

So does he. He just calls it "tech."
We had fights. Silent days. But I never lied about loving him.

Erica pauses by a window. Looks out at the lake.

ERICA

You know what it's like watching someone you love walk into a fire and call it progress?

NOURA

(quietly)

I do.

Erica softens slightly, but her eyes remain sharp.

ERICA

If I find out you're playing us—

NOURA

Then I'll deserve what's coming.

They stare at each other. No words needed.

INT. MANSION - SECURITY OFFICE - LATER

FRANK studies the list of task assignments.

He sees Bear's section—no code.

No development logs. Just a repeated status line:
"Observation Active."

Next to it:
A hidden folder—"SJ-Protocol"

He clicks.

A video file opens.

It's grainy footage of the Client in his office.. arguing with
someone off-screen.

CLIENT (ON VIDEO)
I trusted you.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
You shouldn't have.

Frank pauses the frame.

Zooms into a reflection in the window—

A partial silhouette.

Wearing a Raccoon mask.

Frank exhales.

FRANK
Now we're getting somewhere.

INT. MANSION - MAIN HALL - NIGHT

Storm clouds bleed across the tall windows. Thunder murmurs
behind the walls.

FRANK stands in front of the group—Cat, Bear, Peacock, Dog,
Raccoon, Fox... all seated in an uneven circle like a jury of
liars.

RAT sits apart, arms folded, bandage on his forehead from the
earlier stair fall.

FRANK
Alright. New rule.
We don't sleep alone.
(MORE)

FRANK (CONT'D)

If someone in here's a killer, I don't want them having room to breathe, let alone stab.

FOX

Charming bedtime image.

FRANK

Sleep in the salon. Use cushions. Pile blankets. Except for *him*.

He points to RAT.

FRANK (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

He's next.
He sleeps near the study.

RAT

I didn't even get dinner.

FRANK

You get truth. That's enough for now.

INT. MANSION - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Everyone spreads out slowly, awkwardly grabbing cushions and eyeing each other with predator suspicion.

ERICA walks over to Frank as he double-checks door locks.

ERICA

You want to check outside. I can feel it.

FRANK

There's a barn. North side. Something's off about the terrain. But if I step out, we lose control in here.

ERICA

Then let me go.

Frank looks at her—eyes scanning her face.

FRANK

If you go, take Vincent.

ERICA

He's jumpy.

FRANK

Then he'll run faster if it goes
bad.

EXT. MANSION GROUNDS - NIGHT - RAIN

ERICA and VINCENT walk in the downpour with flashlights,
heading toward a small wooden barn just beyond a cluster of
dying trees.

VINCENT

You think he stashed something?

ERICA

If the killer panicked, yeah.
They wouldn't go for water. Not in
the storm.
They'd go for shelter. Hide it
close, fast, sloppy.

The barn creaks in the wind.

They enter.

INT. BARN - NIGHT

Dust, tarps, old gardening tools.

Vincent walks ahead, flashlight scanning.

Erica checks behind boxes. A flash of something metallic
glints under hay.

She kneels—pulls out a burnt flash drive half-melted at the
tip.

ERICA

Frank's going to want this—

THUD.

SILENCE.

ERICA (CONT'D)

Vincent?

She turns around.

VINCENT IS GONE.

ERICA (CONT'D)

Vincent?

INT. MANSION - LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

THUNDER CRASHES.

Frank locks the last window. He hears something—

A faint tap.

He turns to the group.

FRANK
Where's Peacock?

Everyone looks around.

He's gone.

FRANK (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
Shit.

EXT. BARN - NIGHT

Erica backs up slowly. The flashlight shakes in her hand.

She reaches for her phone.

A SHADOW moves past the doorframe.

She steps forward—

Suddenly VINCENT STUMBLES IN, soaked, blood on his temple.

VINCENT
Don't go back. Don't trust—
CRACK!
He collapses unconscious at her
feet.

ERICA
Shit!

She kneels beside him.

A faint light flickers outside the barn—a second flashlight...
moving away.

Someone was watching.

INT. MANSION - NIGHT

Frank looks out the window. Rain blurs everything.

ERICA (V.O.) (VIA RADIO)
Frank-Vincent's down. Someone else
was out here.

FRANK
How bad?

ERICA (V.O.)
Alive, but he was chased. I think
someone used us as a distraction.

Frank slowly turns back to the study door.

FRANK (V.O.)
Then they were doing something while
we were gone.

He runs toward the hallway.

INT. STUDY - NIGHT

Frank enters. The body is still there.

But the desk?

Ransacked.

Papers shredded. Wine glass broken. The symbol drawn on the
tablet: *wiped clean*.

Footsteps approach from behind-

RAT.

Standing silently.

Frank doesn't look at him.

FRANK
Sit down.

RAT
Why?

FRANK
Because it's your chapter now.

CUT TO:

CHAPTER TEN: THE RAT

"Everyone Has a Price"

INT. STUDY - NIGHT

FRANK sits across from RAT (real name: TEO MARCHAND).

Teo looks soaked, jittery, and yet defiant—like a hacker on too much espresso and not enough conscience.

The only light comes from a single desk lamp—now pointed at Teo's face.

FRANK

You ran your mouth all week.
Now you run alone.

RAT

I didn't run. I hid. Difference.

FRANK

Not from a killer.

RAT

From a system I helped build.

Frank tosses a file in front of him. In it: printed logs, intercepted metadata, project snippets.

FRANK

You weren't just the Data Analyst.
You were copying user files.
Private notes. Code drafts. Payment records.
Even aliases. Why?

RAT

(smirks)

Because that's where the value is.
You don't sell the engine. You sell the fuel.

INT. MANSION - TWO DAYS EARLIER - FLASHBACK

Teo (Rat) sits alone at his terminal.

Multiple USBs labeled "DOG," "FOX," "BEAR," etc. One open file reads: DOG - Surveillance Protocol / PTSD history / discharge cause - classified

He laughs to himself.

RAT (FLASHBACK)

Y'all got secrets. I got leverage.

He opens another file:

PEACOCK - real name: Hugo Baptiste. Lawsuit settled. Tech laundering connection: REDACTED

Then another:

WOLF - Luc Vidal. Hired post-ban. Source code tampering flag: Unconfirmed

He pauses. Eyes narrow.

RAT (FLASHBACK CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Oops.

INT. CLIENT'S PRIVATE STUDY - SAME NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Teo hands the Client a flash drive.

RAT

Everyone's price is here.
You wanted dirt. I brought the mine.

CLIENT

I didn't ask for this.

RAT

Didn't have to. You just didn't say no.

The Client looks furious.

CLIENT

Delete it.

RAT

Make me.

A tense pause. The Client stands.

CLIENT

You just made yourself very expendable.

BACK TO STUDY - NIGHT - PRESENT

FRANK

You tried to blackmail him?

RAT

I didn't ask for money.
I asked for a seat at the real table.
He said no. Then he got stabbed.

FRANK
So did your plan backfire?

RAT
(genuine for once)
I don't know.

Frank steps closer. Eyes sharp.

FRANK
Someone used you. Or needed you
silenced. That stair fall?
Wasn't an accident.

Teo's bravado cracks. Slightly.

RAT
I didn't kill him, Leclair.
But if you find my flash drive
missing, *someone thinks I did.*

INT. MANSION - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Frank paces while Erica examines the burnt USB Erica found in
the barn.

ERICA
There's still partial data on this.

She plugs it into her tablet.

One file opens—video only.
A grainy feed from the Client's office.

We see the Client talking to someone off-screen.

CLIENT (ON VIDEO)
You'll take the fall. That's the
deal.

A pause.

BEAR (O.S.)
And if I don't?

CLIENT
Then someone else will.
Maybe the girl. Maybe the wolf.

Erica looks up. Shaken.

ERICA
He was playing all of them.
Even Luc.

INT. MANSION - COMMON AREA - NIGHT

The guests now sit in total silence.

Vincent, patched up, eyes everyone like he's waiting for a second fall.

Frank stands, arms crossed, thinking aloud.

FRANK
The Client built a system where
everyone had something to lose.

ERICA
And everyone wore a mask.

FRANK
But the killer?
The killer knew which mask to remove
first.

He turns toward the hall.

FRANK (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
And now we find out who's next.

EXT. WOODED PATH BEHIND THE MANSION - PRE-DAWN

Rain has stopped.

Mist curls off the wet earth.

VINCENT and ERICA walk quietly toward the boathouse, checking for missed evidence from earlier.

Suddenly—the dog starts barking. Loud. Urgent.

They run toward the noise.

Behind a thicket of trees, half-buried under leaves and soaked mud—

The DOORMAN'S BODY.
Slumped, one eye open, rain pooled in his open mouth.

Vincent stumbles back.

VINCENT

No. No way. He stayed behind.

ERICA

That means he never left the island.

She kneels beside the body.

His throat was slit-clean.

Not fresh.

ERICA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

He's been dead since the night of
the Client's murder.

INT. MANSION - STUDY - MOMENTS LATER

FRANK stares at the news.

Pale. Processing.

FRANK

He died before we got here.

ERICA

Which means... when the police called
them back-
They'd already left the body
outside. They knew.

FRANK

Or someone made sure he'd never
speak.

Frank slowly turns toward the fire.

FRANK (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

There was a window of time-after the
Client was killed, before the cops
were called-
When they all left the mansion.
They could've dumped the Doorman's
body.
That's why the cameras cut out.

He turns toward the hallway.

FRANK (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

That's it.

INT. DINING ROOM - EARLY MORNING

Frank walks in. Eyes blazing.

All suspects seated.

Tension heavy as fog.

FRANK

Everyone up.
We're having breakfast together.
Masks on the table. Secrets on the
floor.

FOX

Another round of truths and
consequences?

FRANK

This time, the consequences are
real.
One of you killed the Client.
But one of you killed the witness.

Everyone freezes.

FRANK (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

The Doorman's dead.

A gasp. Even Peacock loses his smirk.

FRANK (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Which means the killer didn't stop
at one.

CUT TO:

CHAPTER ELEVEN: THE MASKS FALL

INT. DINING ROOM - EARLY MORNING

Long wooden table. One chandelier. Cold coffee and untouched
fruit.

Everyone is seated.

Tension electric.

No one wears their masks.
Their faces now weapons.

FRANK stands at the head. Arms folded. A small stack of files
sits in front of him.

Each file has an animal drawn crudely on the cover.

FRANK

If you're still hiding something,
now's your last moment to volunteer
it.

No response.

FRANK (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Let's begin.

He opens the first file.

Walks slowly behind their chairs like a war general.

1. THE DOG - DANIEL

FRANK (CONT'D)

Discharged for aggression. You once
pinned a sergeant against a concrete
wall during a training op.

DOG

(flatly)

He insulted my daughter.

FRANK

You were offered a clean record if
you agreed to private freelance
defense work.
Guess who was on that list?

Dog's jaw clenches.

FRANK (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

The Client. He owned your silence.
And maybe your leash.

2. THE FOX - SÉBASTIEN

FRANK (CONT'D)

Marketing genius, manipulator. Filed
three lawsuits against former
clients who "stole" your pitch
decks.

FOX

Because they did.

FRANK

And one of them died in a car crash
just days before a court date.
Brakes cut. Case buried.

(MORE)

FRANK (CONT'D)
 Guess who paid for his car insurance
 the week before?

Fox freezes.

Glances at Peacock.

3. THE RACCOON - TEO

FRANK (CONT'D)
 You built backdoors. Collected
 secrets. Sold data.

RAT
 You said I was helping.

FRANK
 You helped create a system of
 betrayal. Then tried to blackmail
 the king.

4. THE BEAR - AMAL

FRANK (CONT'D)
 Security mole. Shadow ethics.
 You didn't take the job—but you
 didn't stop it either.
 And you were the only one who could
 access every room without being
 noticed.

Bear stays still. Expression unreadable.

BEAR
 Observation isn't murder.

FRANK
 But it's damn close when you say
 nothing.

5. THE PEACOCK - HUGO

FRANK (CONT'D)
 Charm is camouflage.
 Your consulting firm handles PR for
 criminal defense firms—some with
 blood money ties.

PEACOCK
(mocking)
 Please, Frank, if we put every
 Frenchman with money in jail, who
 would pour your wine?

FRANK

You said you arrived last.
But your clothes say different.
You were there earlier. Maybe
watching. Maybe waiting.
And your watch?
Same brand, same year, same limited
edition as the Client's.
His is missing.

Peacock's smile fades.

6. THE CAT - NOURA

FRANK (CONT'D)

You followed Luc out of love—or
ambition?

NOURA

(quietly)
He didn't ask me to come.

FRANK

No. But you read his files. Broke
into his laptop.
You knew what this was before the
boat even left.
And the lipstick on the wine glass
in the study?
Doesn't match yours.
So whose was it?

Everyone looks at her. Suspicion lingers.

7. THE WOLF - LUC (absent)

FRANK (CONT'D)

And Luc?
Luc was the only one still trying to
finish the project.
Even after the Client told him it
would burn.

Frank slams the last file shut.

FRANK (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

You were all pieces of his game.
But someone flipped the board.

SILENCE. A beat. Then—

CRASH!

THE CHANDELIER ABOVE BEAR SHATTERS AND FALLS.

She dives back just in time.

Glass explodes across the table.

PEACOCK dives to the floor. Fox screams.

Dog pulls Noura out of her chair.

Frank yells—

FRANK (CONT'D)
EVERYONE STAY DOWN!

INT. CEILING - MOMENTS LATER

A faint wire is cut—a razor-thin filament rigged to a timed pulley, now hanging loose.

A mechanical trap.

Someone set this hours ago.

INT. DINING ROOM - AFTERMATH

Bear has a cut above her brow. She presses a cloth to it.

ERICA
That wasn't random.

FRANK
No. That was surgical.

He looks around the room.

FRANK (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
Someone tried to shut her up.
She knows who the killer is.

BEAR
(low)
Yes.

They all turn to her.

FRANK
Then say it.

BEAR
(beat)
Not yet.

Frank steps forward.

FRANK

Why not?

She meets his eyes, bleeding but unwavering.

BEAR

Because I want to be sure.
And when I say their name...
no one will leave this house alive.

CUT TO:

CHAPTER TWELVE: THE BLOOD IN THE WALLS

INT. INFIRMARY ROOM - LATER THAT DAY

Bear sits on a chair, bandaged.

Erica cleans the cut in silence.

Frank watches from the doorway.

FRANK

You said when you reveal the name,
no one leaves alive.

BEAR

Because everyone here thinks they're
one step ahead.
But they're not playing chess.
They're playing *truth or death.*

Frank closes the door. Leans in.

FRANK

Then help me reset the board.

Bear looks up. Then...

BEAR

I saw someone leave the study after
the scream.
Right before the body was "found."
They went down the left hallway.
No camera. No sound.

ERICA

Who?

Bear doesn't blink.

BEAR

Fox.

INT. COMMON ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

FOX is sipping cold tea, legs crossed.

FRANK storms in.

FRANK

Funny thing, Sébastien.

FOX

I'm very funny.

FRANK

You said you were in your room when the scream happened.

FOX

Alone. Tragic.

FRANK

Except Bear saw you in the hallway. You were coming *from* the study. Not your room.

Fox tenses.

Slowly puts down his cup.

FOX

She's lying.

ERICA (O.S.)

Then prove it.

Fox stands.

FOX

Alright. I admit I passed by. But I didn't kill him.

FRANK

You moved the body?

FOX

No. But I saw someone else running out.

FRANK

Who?

FOX
Raccoon.

INT. HALLWAY - FLASHBACK - NIGHT OF THE MURDER

Fox walks toward the dining room.

Sees a *blur of motion*—a figure in a hoodie sprinting past with something in their hand.

We don't see the face. Just the Raccoon's silhouette.

BACK TO PRESENT - COMMON ROOM

Frank turns to Teo (Rat), seated nearby.

FRANK
You said you never entered the study.

RAT
I didn't!

FOX
You ran like your USB had blood on it.

RAT
Because I thought someone would kill me if I didn't!

ERICA
What were you holding?

Teo swallows hard.

RAT
The Client's phone.

Everyone freezes.

FRANK
You stole it?

RAT
No—I found it on the ground outside the study door.
Wiped. Already reset. I panicked.

ERICA
Where is it now?

RAT
(quiet)
Gone. Someone took it from my room
this morning.

INT. GUEST ROOMS - MOMENTS LATER

Frank storms into Rat's room, rips up the sheets.

Nothing.
Then he turns... eyes Peacock's room across the hall.

He steps in.

The room is pristine. Except-

Frank spots a broken perfume bottle near the desk. A
shattered glass vial.

He kneels.

The shards are clean.

Except for one.

A drop of blood.

INT. MAIN ROOM - MINUTES LATER

Frank storms back in.

FRANK
Someone's bleeding.

Everyone looks confused.

FRANK (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
I checked the rooms.
One of you has a cut. A fresh one.
Probably from stealing something
this morning.
And you bled on glass.

DOG
Who?

Frank looks at their hands. No visible bandages.

Until-he sees Raccoon's sleeve. Slightly pulled down.

He grabs it. Pulls it up.

A fresh cut.

RAT

No—I cut myself *after* I found the phone was missing. I swear!

ERICA

Or you fought for it.

INT. HOUSE - POWER ROOM - THAT MOMENT

A hidden hand—*unseen, unidentified*—pulls a breaker switch.

THE POWER SHUTS OFF.

INT. MAIN ROOM - NIGHT - DARK

SCREAM.

A glass shatters.

SOMEONE YELLS.

THUD!

A body falls.

Flashlights scramble.

FRANK

(shouting)

NO ONE MOVES! LIGHTS UP NOW!

INT. FOYER - LIGHTS RETURN

Dog stands over a collapsed Fox—his head bleeding, unconscious.

PEACOCK is holding a chair like a weapon.

ERICA is pointing a flashlight at the ceiling—a hanging rope tied to a chandelier brace.

Another trap.

FRANK

(quiet)

They're hunting us one by one now.

He looks around.

FRANK (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
And they know the walls better than
we do.

ERICA
Then we're out of time.

CUT TO:

CHAPTER THIRTEEN: THE BLUEPRINTS OF MURDER

INT. BASEMENT HALLWAY - EARLY MORNING

FRANK and ERICA descend a creaky staircase with a single
working flashlight.

The walls are brick, warped from age.

A trail of dust disturbed leads them to a locked door.

Frank kneels, uses an old security card found in the
Doorman's coat.

CLICK.

They enter.

INT. SECRET PASSAGE - CONTINUOUS

A narrow tunnel stretches beneath the house.

Ancient, lined with exposed wires, camera lenses, and labeled
breaker boxes.

ERICA
This isn't new.

FRANK
It was built for observation. Maybe
even control.

They follow the path. Frank notes peepholes aligned with
rooms above—study, salon, guest rooms.

FRANK (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
Someone's been watching them... and
us.

They turn a corner and find—a locked compartment.

Frank forces it open.

Inside:

A pair of wet gloves. A second Dog mask. A torn piece of fabric with bloodstains.

And a burned security tablet.

ERICA

They weren't just hiding.
They were *switching roles*.

INT. MANSION - MAIN ROOM - MINUTES LATER

Frank throws the gloves and mask on the table in front of the group.

FRANK

There were two of each.
The killer had a copy of one of your identities.

RAT

You mean someone *wasn't* who they said they were?

ERICA

Or someone *became* someone else once the cameras went off.

BEAR

But the voice. The way they moved—we'd know.

FRANK

Unless it was deliberate.
Unless it was meant to confuse you.
Us.

Suddenly—SCREAMS from upstairs.

They rush—

INT. FOX'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

FOX lies in bed, blood pouring from his mouth.

PEACOCK backs away from the room.

PEACOCK

He was fine ten minutes ago!

DOG

Is this poison?

Frank leans in, checks the lips—darkened. The cup by the bedside: tea.

He smells it.

FRANK
Fox is dead. And someone wanted it
to look quiet.

He stares at the teacup.

FRANK (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
But now we know...
The killer is *still pretending to be*
one of us.

INT. STUDY - NIGHT - LATER

Frank sits alone.

Erica enters, places a bottle of wine and two glasses on the desk.

He doesn't move.

ERICA
You're doing the math. I can hear it
in your silence.

Frank finally speaks.

FRANK
What if they swapped masks?
What if someone walked in wearing
Raccoon's mask, but it was Peacock
underneath?

ERICA
Or Cat was allowed because she was
already meant to be here.

Frank stares at the wall.

FRANK
What if it's all of them?

ERICA
What?

FRANK
What if they *all* did it—each one
played a part.
(MORE)

FRANK (CONT'D)
Or pairs. Lovers. Friends.
Manipulator and tool.

Erica hesitates.

FRANK (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
Or... what if Luc isn't innocent?

ERICA
Frank...

FRANK
She said he didn't ask her to come.
But what if that's the lie?

He paces now.

FRANK (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
Let's say Cat is a plant. Let's say
Luc planned this.
Let's say the murder wasn't just to
stop the Client—
But to test how far they'd go to
keep secrets dead.

ERICA
You think Luc is the killer?

FRANK
No.
I think Luc *thought* he was saving
them.

INT. MANSION - CAMERA LENS POV - UNKNOWN TIME

A figure watches through a peephole.

Breathing slow.

Notes being scribbled.

We see a hand in a glove.

The page reads:
"Frank suspects Cat. Start pushing toward endgame."

INT. STUDY - NIGHT

Frank sips wine.

FRANK (V.O.)
Unless... none of it matters.

He looks at a wall map of the estate. Every room marked in red.

FRANK (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Unless the house picked the killer.
 And we've just been *living inside*
their story.

CUT TO:

CHAPTER FOURTEEN: THE FINAL FIVE

INT. MANSION - MAIN ROOM - NIGHT

FRANK, ERICA, BEAR, RAT, PEACOCK, CAT (NOURA), and DOG are gathered again. No one speaks.

The chandelier is still cracked from the last trap. The power hums faintly overhead.

FRANK
 Fox is dead.
 Which means the killer isn't done.

He looks around the room.

FRANK (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
 I want everyone in plain sight until morning.

DOG
 And if they're already planning the next one?

ERICA
 Then we watch the watchers.

Frank nods to Bear.

FRANK
 Where's your room key?

BEAR
 I left it in the gym bag. Storage hall.

FRANK
 Go get it. Vincent will go with you.

Vincent rises.

They head off.

INT. STORAGE HALL - NIGHT

Bear opens a gym bag. Pulls out a set of keys.

VINCENT stands guard by the hallway.

BEAR

What happens after this? If Frank
picks wrong?

VINCENT

Then I guess we hope we're not the
next file in his drawer.

As they turn to leave—THE DOOR SLAMS SHUT.

LOCKED.

They push. Bang. Nothing.

Then—a hissing sound.

BEAR

(low)
Gas?

VINCENT

GO! Window!

They run to a small rear ventilation panel—

GLASS SHATTERS.

A SHADOW MOVES OUTSIDE.

INT. MAIN ROOM - SAME TIME

RAT is pacing.

PEACOCK is on edge, refusing to sit.

CAT (NOURA) stands apart, staring at the window.

FRANK

We're not safe here.

ERICA

Frank—Bear and Vincent have been
gone too long.

He nods, grabs a flashlight.

INT. STORAGE HALL - MINUTES LATER

Frank bursts in.

Smoke hangs in the air.

No sign of Bear.

Vincent lies slumped near the window, coughing hard.

FRANK
Where's Bear?

VINCENT
She... she pushed me out.
She stayed in.

Frank looks back in. No body. No sound.

Just one word—written in red on the mirror:

"JUDGE."

INT. MAIN ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Frank returns alone.

Everyone watches him.

FRANK
She's gone.

RAT
What do you mean gone?

FRANK
Gone. Vanished. Like the others.

PEACOCK
She was the killer, wasn't she?

FRANK
No.

He turns to Erica.

FRANK (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
We're being led. Step by step.

ERICA
To what?

FRANK
A confession. Or a collapse.

INT. FRANK'S ROOM - LATER

Frank stares at the case wall. Each name scratched out. Only five remain.

He pins Bear's torn glove beside Fox's photo.

ERICA enters.

ERICA
What are you thinking?

FRANK
That the killer isn't hiding
anymore.
They're setting the stage.

ERICA
Then what's next?

Frank exhales.

FRANK
A performance.

INT. STAIRCASE - LATE NIGHT

Camera watches from above as each guest returns to their room.

In the corner—a shadow watches.

A gloved hand presses a notebook closed. On the page:
"One more before the end. Let Frank bleed the truth."

CUT TO:

CHAPTER FIFTEEN: THE FINAL THEORY

INT. MAIN ROOM - EARLY DAWN

A hazy light breaks through broken blinds. Dust hangs in the air like ghosts.

Only Frank, Erica, Noura (Cat), Rat, Dog, and Peacock remain.

Each face is bruised, silent, pale. The storm has passed. But it's not over.

ERICA

They'll be here by noon.
Paris has sent federal oversight.

FRANK

Then we've got three hours. One
name.

He stands, gestures to the map on the table—strings and
photos of every guest, with red yarn pinned to every
falsehood uncovered.

FRANK (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Let's say the killer didn't just
want silence...
They wanted spectacle. A reveal.
Which means someone here has been
filming this entire thing.

They stare. No one speaks.

ERICA

You're thinking Luc?

FRANK

No. I think Luc is the only one who
saw it coming.
And maybe... he's the only one who can
still change the outcome.

INT. STUDY - MOMENTS LATER

ERICA on the phone. Her hands tremble.

ERICA

(into phone)

Luc, listen to me. You're still in
holding. I know. But this is bigger.

Luc's voice crackles on the other end.

LUC (V.O.)

They think I killed him.

ERICA

Did you?

LUC (V.O.)

No.

ERICA

Then I need the name.
Who else had access to your code?
Who knew what the Client feared?

Luc is silent.

Then—

LUC (V.O.)

The Client was never scared of me.
He was scared of her.

Erica freezes.

ERICA

Her who?

LUC (V.O.)

He never said. But she painted a
wolf once.
Left it in his room.
He tore it up.

A beat.

LUC (V.O. CONT'D)

He said: "She's the one who knows
how the game ends."

INT. MAIN HALL - SAME TIME

Suddenly—a SCREAM from upstairs.

Frank and the rest run.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Peacock and Dog hang from ropes—both suspended from the
staircase beams.

One rope is cracking.

Peacock is screaming. Dog is unconscious.

FRANK

(to Erica)
Get me a knife!

Erica tosses one from her belt.

Frank runs—only one can be saved in time.

He looks at them both.

RAT (O.S.)
CUT PEACOCK! HE'S SLIPPING!

CAT (NOURA)
NO-DOG CAN'T MOVE!

Frank yells—slashes the rope holding DOG.

Dog falls—hard—unconscious but breathing.

Peacock SCREAMS—rope snaps—

Frank lunges—grabs his arm just in time.

FRANK
HOLD STILL!

He drags Peacock up with Erica's help.

Both men are safe. But barely.

INT. SALON - DAWN LIGHT - LATER

Everyone sits around, shaking. Frank holds the knife. Still.

FRANK (V.O.)
This wasn't about secrets anymore.
This was about watching who I'd
save. This was about breaking the
detective.

INT. BASEMENT - HIDDEN ROOM - SAME TIME

The killer writes in a notebook:

"He chose the soldier.
He doubts the artist.
We're almost ready."

We glimpse the corner of a torn painting behind them—a wolf
staring at the sea.

INT. MAIN ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Frank stands.

FRANK

I've got one more move left.
And then... someone confesses.
Or I *build the truth myself*.

He turns toward the wall where all the strings connect.

Then, whispers to Erica:

FRANK (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Luc didn't do it.

ERICA

How do you know?

FRANK

Because he said *she painted the end*.
And I just realized...
*someone brought a paintbrush to a
crime scene.*

He looks at Noura.

She doesn't blink.

CUT TO:

CHAPTER SIXTEEN: THE KILLER'S SCRIPT

INT. STUDY - DAWN

FRANK pins a torn canvas to the wall—a half-painted wolf in blue and red.

A final thread of yarn connects it to NOURA.

She sits quietly. Calm. Unflinching.

The others surround her like a trial without a judge.

FRANK

The Client didn't invite you.
But you came.
You knew about the mansion. You read
Luc's files.

NOURA

You're repeating yourself.

FRANK

I'm building your confession.

NOURA
That's not how this ends.

Frank steps forward.

FRANK
You weren't here for Luc.
You were here because the Client
destroyed someone you loved.
You killed him because this wasn't
justice anymore—it was design.

She tilts her head.

NOURA
You think it's just me?

FRANK
It was just you.

A pause.

She smiles.

NOURA
You're wrong.
It was always the story.

INT. STUDY - NIGHT OF THE MURDER (FLASHBACK)

The Client stands at his desk, pouring wine.

VOICE (O.S.)
You always liked control.

The Client turns.

NOURA, unmasked, walks in, calm as night.

CLIENT
You weren't invited.

NOURA
I didn't come for an invitation.

She holds up a brush—dipped in wine.

CLIENT
You painted this story.
Even Luc doesn't know what you are.

NOURA
 No. But you did.
 And you knew I'd finish it.

She approaches. He steps back.

CLIENT
 This isn't justice. This is
 performance.

NOURA
 Same thing.
 You wanted masks. I gave you a final
 act.

She stabs him—*slow, centered, deliberate.*

He gasps. She catches him as he falls.

NOURA (FLASHBACK CONT'D) (CONT'D)
 You always said truth needs risk.
 Here's the truth:

She paints a small wolf sigil in wine beside him.

NOURA (FLASHBACK) (CONT'D)
*You wrote your own ending the day
 you built this house.*

INT. STUDY - PRESENT - DAWN

Frank breathes heavy.

NOURA stands.

The others step back. Even Dog.

She looks at Frank.

NOURA
 You solved the crime.
 Now tell me—what did it cost?

Frank doesn't answer.

EXT. MANSION GROUNDS - MID-MORNING

Rain-soaked gendarmerie and federal police begin setting up
 perimeter tape.

A convoy of dark cars arrives. Officers in clean black suits
 begin taking witness statements.

Erica speaks to the lead officer. Behind her, Frank is pacing alone by the back of the property.

INT. BASEMENT PASSAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Frank enters the passage again.

This time, he walks deeper—past the wire room, into a sealed corridor, door ajar.

A small red thread hangs from the hinge.

Frank enters. His flashlight scans the walls.

Then stops.

INT. SECRET ROOM - CONTINUOUS

BEAR lies on the ground—alive.

Chained at the ankle, shivering, weak.

Blood on her wrist where she tried to fight the lock.

She blinks slowly at the light.

BEAR

(weak)

Frank...?

Frank rushes in, breaks the chain with a crowbar.

She grabs his coat.

BEAR (CONT'D)

She... made me scream.

Frank pauses.

FRANK

What?

BEAR

She was already in the room.

When I got there.

She grabbed me, whispered in my ear—

BEAR (FLASHBACK V.O.) (CONT'D)

"Scream now. Or you're next."

INT. STUDY - NIGHT OF MURDER - FLASHBACK

Bear walks into the study.

Sees the Client's body—already dead.

Then Noura steps from the shadows. Calm. Holding a knife already wiped clean.

She presses it to Bear's throat. Whispers.

NOURA (WHISPER)

You're not dying today.

But you will remember how this ends.

Bear screams. The rest come running.

INT. BASEMENT - PRESENT

Bear coughs. Frank steadies her.

BEAR

She didn't kill him for justice.

She killed him to prove she could control the story.

Frank's jaw tightens.

FRANK

She planned everything. Even how we'd remember it.

EXT. MANSION - LATER

Frank walks outside with Bear, Erica by his side.

In the distance, Noura is handcuffed, placed into a police SUV. She doesn't fight. Doesn't speak.

As the car door closes, she locks eyes with Frank—and smiles.

INT. POLICE STATION - INTERROGATION AREA - LATE MORNING

Luc sits in a holding room, unshaven, drained.

The door opens.

ERICA walks in.

Behind her: Frank.

Luc stands slowly.

FRANK
You're free.

Luc exhales—but something in him doesn't relax.

LUC
It was Noura...?

FRANK
Yes.

LUC
Did she say why?

Frank pauses.

FRANK
She said the story needed an ending.

Luc sits back down. He looks older than yesterday.

LUC
Then what happens now?

Frank glances toward the mirror—on the other side, Erica watches.

Then to Luc:

FRANK
Now we write the truth.
Even if it's not the story she
wanted.

FADE TO BLACK.

EPILOGUE: THE WOLF'S PAINTBRUSH

EXT. MARSEILLE - COASTLINE - SUNSET

Gentle waves crash.

A painter sits at an easel, unmoving.

We don't see her face.

NOURA (V.O.)
He dropped his laptop.
I picked it up.
He offered coffee.
(MORE)

NOURA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I said no.
Then followed him home.

INT. LUC'S APARTMENT - ONE YEAR AGO - FLASHBACK

Luc explains the startup idea to Noura, glowing with belief.
She listens intently—asks clever questions, pushes him further.

NOURA (V.O.)

He thought he invented something
pure. But he was just the vessel.

INT. NOURA'S STUDIO - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Noura paints a mask on a canvas. Each brushstroke deliberate.
On her laptop: files open. Background checks. Psychology profiles.
She pins the Client's picture to the wall.
Then next to it: Fox, Dog, Bear, Peacock, Raccoon...
One by one.

NOURA (V.O.)

I didn't kill for revenge.
I killed because they needed an
ending. One they wouldn't forget.

INT. MANSION STUDY - NIGHT OF THE MURDER - FLASHBACK

The Client lies dead.
Noura calmly wipes the knife clean. Hears footsteps.
She smiles.

NOURA (V.O.)

You don't need to survive a story to
win it.
You just need to write the last
chapter.

INT. PRISON CELL - DAY

Noura sits alone.

A guard drops a tray. She doesn't flinch.
She's painting on her wall—with toothpaste and ash.
A shape appears: a mask.
She whispers:

NOURA
Still got one story left.

EXT. BORDEAUX - VINEYARD - DAY

FRANK walks down a quiet vineyard row.
Casual shirt. No badge. No gun.
A waitress brings him espresso and a notebook.
He opens the notebook: inside are clippings.
Client Found Dead. Startup Secrets. Serial Strategist
Exposed.
Next to it—Frank's final report.
Stamped:
"CLOSED - CONFESSION FILED"

INT. COFFEE SHOP - SAME TIME

Erica reviews an email from Bear:
"Therapy's going well. Got offered a consulting job. I might
say yes."
She smiles.

INT. STUDIO - SAME TIME

Luc stares at a blank screen.
Then he turns it off.
Walks outside. Into light.

EXT. BORDEAUX - VINEYARD - CONTINUOUS

Frank sips his espresso.
Closes his notebook.

Breathes.

FRANK (V.O.)
Some stories end in truth.
Some in silence.

He looks up at the sun.

FRANK (V.O. CONT'D)
But the ones we survive?
They're the ones that never let go.

FADE OUT.