



3 LIVES AWAIT  
1 ANSWER

# 3 lives await an answer

Venuhya

This book is available at <https://leanpub.com/3livesawaitananswer>

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This is a [Leanpub](#) book. Leanpub empowers authors and publishers with the Lean Publishing process. [Lean Publishing](#) is the act of publishing an in-progress ebook using lightweight tools and many iterations to get reader feedback, pivot until you have the right book and build traction once you do.

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# Writing in Markua

Writing in Markua is easy! You can learn most of what you need to know with just a few examples.

To make *italic text* you surround it with single asterisks. To make **bold text** you surround it with double asterisks.

## Section One

You can start new sections by starting a line with two # signs and a space, and then typing your section title.

### Sub-Section One

You can start new sub-sections by starting a line with three # signs and a space, and then typing your sub-section title.

## Including a Chapter in the Sample Book

At the top of this file, you will also see a line at the top:

```
1 {sample: true}
```

Leanpub has the ability to make a sample book, which interested readers can download or read online. If you add this line above a chapter heading, then when you publish your book, this chapter will be included in a separate sample book for these interested readers.

## Links

You can add web links easily.

Here's a link to the [Leanpub homepage](#).

## Images

You can add an image to your book in a similar way.

First, add the image to the “Resources” folder for your book. You will find the “Resources” folder under the “Manuscript” menu to the left.

If you look in your book’s “Resources” folder right now, you will see that there is an example image there with the file name “palm-trees.jpg”. Here’s how you can add this image to your book:



If you want to add a figure title, you put it in quotes:



**Figure 1. Palm Trees**

If you want to add descriptive alt text, which is good for accessibility, you put it between the square brackets:



**Figure 2. Palm Trees**

You can also set the alt text and/or the figure title in an attribute list:



**Figure 3. Palm Trees**

Finally, if no title is provided, and the `alt-title` document setting is the default of `all`, the alt text will be used as the figure title instead of as alt text.



**Figure 4. Palm Trees**

You can set the important document settings at Settings > Generation Settings.

## **Lists**

### **Numbered Lists**

You make a numbered list like this:

1. kale
2. carrot
3. ginger

### **Bulleted Lists**

You make a bulleted list like this:

- kale

- carrot
- ginger

## Definition Lists

You can even have definition lists!

### **term 1**

definition 1a

definition 1b

### **term 2**

definition 2

## Page Breaks

We don't recommend that you manually break pages, since that is brittle and can lead to unexpected formatting if you edit text earlier in your chapter and forget about the manual page breaks. But if you really want to add a page break, you use the `{pagebreak}` directive on a line by itself, with blank lines above it and below it.

## Code Samples

You can add code samples really easily. Code can be in separate files (a “local” resource) or in the manuscript itself (an “inline” resource).

### Local Code Samples

Here’s a local code resource:

**Figure 5. Hello World in Ruby**

---

```

1  require 'time'
2
3  # This is just some pointless code so you can see the syntax highlighting...
4  def display_info
5      pi = Math::PI.round(10)
6      time_last_year = (Time.now - 365 * 24 * 60 * 60).getlocal("-08:00")
7      formatted_time = time_last_year.strftime("%Y-%m-%d %H:%M:%S")
8      puts "Pi to 10 decimal places: #{pi}"
9      puts "The time 1 year ago in Pacific Time: #{formatted_time}"
10 end

```

---

### Inline Code Samples

Inline code samples can either be spans or figures.

A span looks like `puts "hello world"` this.

A figure looks like this:

```

1  require 'time'
2
3  # This is just some pointless code so you can see the syntax highlighting...
4  def display_info
5      pi = Math::PI.round(10)
6      time_last_year = (Time.now - 365 * 24 * 60 * 60).getlocal("-08:00")
7      formatted_time = time_last_year.strftime("%Y-%m-%d %H:%M:%S")
8      puts "Pi to 10 decimal places: #{pi}"
9      puts "The time 1 year ago in Pacific Time: #{formatted_time}"
10 end

```

You can also add a figure title using the title attribute:

**Figure 6. Hello World in Ruby**


---

```

1 require 'time'
2
3 # This is just some pointless code so you can see the syntax highlighting...
4 def display_info
5   pi = Math::PI.round(10)
6   time_last_year = (Time.now - 365 * 24 * 60 * 60).getlocal("-08:00")
7   formatted_time = time_last_year.strftime("%Y-%m-%d %H:%M:%S")
8   puts "Pi to 10 decimal places: #{pi}"
9   puts "The time 1 year ago in Pacific Time: #{formatted_time}"
10 end

```

---

## Tables

You can insert tables easily inline, using the GitHub Flavored Markdown (GFM) table syntax:

Header 1	Header 2
Content 1	Content 2
Content 3	Content 4 Can be Different Length

Tables work best for numeric tabular data involving a small number of columns containing small numbers:

Central Bank	Rate
JPY	-0.10%
EUR	0.00%
USD	0.00%
CAD	0.25%

Definition lists are preferred to tables for most use cases, since reading a large table with many columns is terrible on phones and since typing text in a table quickly gets annoying.

## Math

You can easily insert math equations inline using either spans or figures.

Here's one of the kinematic equations  $d = v_i t + \frac{1}{2} a t^2$  inserted as a span inside a sentence.

Here's some math inserted as a figure.

$$\left| \sum_{i=1}^n a_i b_i \right| \leq \left( \sum_{i=1}^n a_i^2 \right)^{1/2} \left( \sum_{i=1}^n b_i^2 \right)^{1/2}$$

**Figure 7. Something Involving Sums**

## Headings

Markua supports both of Markdown's heading styles.

The preferred style, called atx headers, has the following meaning in Markua:

```

1 {class: part}
2 # Part
3
4 This is a paragraph.
5
6 # Chapter
7
8 This is a paragraph.
9
10 ## Section
11
12 This is a paragraph.
13
14 ### Sub-section
15
16 This is a paragraph.
17
18 #### Sub-sub-section
19
20 This is a paragraph.
21
22 ##### Sub-sub-sub-section
23

```

```

24 This is a paragraph.
25
26 ##### Sub-sub-sub-sub-section
27
28 This is a paragraph.

```

Note the use of three backticks in the above example, to treat the Markua like inline code (instead of actually like headers).

The other style of headers, called Setext headers, has the following headings:

```

1 {class: part}
2 Part
3 ====
4
5 This is a paragraph.
6
7 Chapter
8 =====
9
10 This is a paragraph.
11
12 Section
13 -----
14
15 This is a paragraph.

```

Setext headers look nice, but only if you're only using chapters and sections. If you want to add sub-sections (or lower), you'll be using atx headers for at least some of your headers. My advice is to just use atx headers all the time. (The `{class: part}` attribute list on a chapter header to make a part header does actually work with Setext headers, but it's really ugly.)

Note that while it is confusing and ugly to mix and match using atx and Setext headers for chapters and sections in the same document, you can do it. However, please don't.

## Block quotes, Asides and Blurbs

Block quotes are really easy too.

—Peter Armstrong, *Markua Spec*

Asides are useful for longer text.  
But typing them like this isn't fun.

Asides can be written this way, since adding a bunch of A> stuff at the beginning of each line can get annoying with longer asides.

Blurbs are useful

Blurbs are useful

There are many types of blurbs, which will be familiar to you if you've ever read a computer programming book.



This is a discussion.

You can also specify them this way:



This is a discussion



This is an error.



This is information.



This is a question. (Not a question in a Markua course; those are done differently!)



This is a tip.



This is a warning.



This is an exercise. (Not an exercise in a Markua course; those are done differently!)

## Good luck, have fun!

If you've read this far, you're definitely the right type of person to be here!

Our last piece of advice is simple: once you have a couple chapters completed, publish your book in-progress!

This approach is called Lean Publishing. It's why Leanpub is called Leanpub.

If you want to learn more about Lean Publishing, read [this](#) or watch [this](#).

3 stories 3 lives 1 destiny and which one will they choose?

Hello, reader. Have you ever wondered why you call your family as "family"?

Well these miracles haven't- and they'll never have to-because they chose their family themselves. They were given a choice by destiny itself. But where did it all begin?

Perhaps with the dark and twisted world of Ava, the dangerous and vengeful life of Max, or the inspiring story of Lila, whose voice no one cared to hear.

For the answer, reader, you must keep reading-even if it makes you question your own life. The only thing I can tell you is this: within these pages lies three stories, three lives and one destiny which awaits them, no matter what they choose.

Chapter 1 Ava “Ava honey, it’s time for school. Get up already!” Ava’s mum called out. “Ahhhh already?” Ava yelled across the room while burying her face in the pillow. “Better get going then.”

With that Ava quickly got up and came downstairs for her usual breakfast which was orange juice and pineapple pieces. Unusual breakfast isn’t it? She despised milk so small details like these made her unique.

“Quick I’ll drop you off and then drive back home to take mum to an important meeting” Ava’s dad explained. “Ya definitely an important meeting!” Ava replied sarcastically.

As Ava waved goodbye to her parents, her best friend Arena ran to her at the speed of light to gossip about the new rumours going around the school. Moments like these happen a lot around the world.

“Freakin no way, was she really pushed into the water by that guy!” Ava said astonished in middle of history class. “Crazy ain’t it?” Arena whispered a bit too loudly causing them both to be the centre of attention once again. The room went pin drop silence.

And just like that they ended up in detention. Ava shot Arena a glance so intense it could have burnt holes in her skull. Arena winced knowing exactly what was coming next.

Chapter 2 Max Everyone stood in straight lines like soldiers – stiff, silent, and alert. No one dared to move. No one dared to speak. Among them stood Max, a young girl whose eyes carried more anger than fear. She didn’t believe in hope anymore. She believed in revenge. Max lived in an orphanage – a place that called itself a home but felt more like a cage. The walls were old, the rules were strict, and freedom felt like a distant dream. “Crap,” Ana muttered under her breath as they sat down for dinner. “They ran out of rice again.” Max sighed, already knowing the answer. “It’s porridge, isn’t it?” Ana nodded. “Again.” They ate in silence. The porridge was thick, tasteless, and cold – barely enough to fill the emptiness in their stomachs. Max pushed her spoon around the bowl, her mind far away from the room. “I’ve been thinking,” Max whispered, leaning closer to Ana. “This place... I can’t stay here any longer.” Ana stiffened. “Max, you’ve tried to escape before. More than once.” “I know.” “And you never succeeded,” Ana added quietly. “Just accept it. We’re stuck inside these four walls until we turn eighteen.” Max’s grip tightened around the spoon. “I’ve been here long enough,” she said, her voice low but burning. “You know why I want to leave.” Max said Ana looked at her, eyes soft with understanding. “Your

revenge?” Ana asked knowingly. Max nodded. The pain behind her anger was still raw, still fresh – as if time had refused to heal it. “They took everything from me,” she whispered. “I won’t forgive them. And I won’t forget.” The bell rang, sharp and unforgiving. As they stood and returned their bowls, Max glanced at the locked doors ahead of them. To everyone else, they were just doors. To her, they were the only thing standing between her and the justice she believed she deserved. And one day, she swore, they would open.

Chapter 3 Lila “What is this so called government doing with our taxes?” Lila protested to people who cared to listen.

“They say they help the ones in need by donating to help them.” “But really it’s just an excuse to raise the Gross National Income for the god’s sake!” She added.

“What about the orphans who can barely eat?

What about the poor that can’t even afford clothes?

What about the roads, highways that take thousands of lives everyday?

What about woman who are still not heard or free?

What is the government doing? She questioned, already knowing the answers.

“It’s understandable if they don’t have enough money but they do! How is it fair for those devastating orphans who were abandoned from the beginning?” “Okay! The ones in power aren’t doing anything but what are WE doing?” She questioned.

Even she knew nothing was the answer so did everyone who listened but did they dare to speak a word? No.

Why? Because in their eyes she’s just a young girl who’s trying to make her voice heard. Little did they know this one girl, one magnificent girl actually is using her voice to be heard.

Not to be famous but to help the poor and prove every man who ever doubted her wrong. And she was nearly succeeding.

Destiny never has and never will knock politely, It arrives quietly, unnoticed and disguised as just a coincidence.

Chapter 4 It begins Ava sat in detention, tapping her pen quietly on the rusty, old desk while the teacher went on and on about making “poor choices.” Ava

wasn't listening. Her mind was stuck somewhere else- the flyer that she saw this morning was what distracted her.

#### YOUTH VOLUNTEERS NEEDED Community outreach program

She had no idea why it caught her attention. She assumed it was probably because of boredom. Maybe curiosity. Or the destiny had already started pulling the strings loose.

In a different world, there was Max laying on her narrow bed, staring at the cracked ceiling of the orphanage. The lights were off. No surprise as the so called orphanage didn't even have money to pay rent. She tried to overcome her trauma by sleeping, but as usual it refused to come. Tomorrow was the time donors and high authorities come pay a visit, pretending to care, pretending it was a safe place, but really it was just an other way to pretend like they are nice people for the world's sake.

Max hated nights, but this one particular, she despised.

"They don't want justice nor do they even care to see us," Max whispered to nothing. "They only care about numbers in their bank accounts while some of us never even heard of that word."

She clenched her fist tightly. Tight enough to bleed. It did bleed, but not for the first time. Her heart was filled way too many emotions for a person to be burying in themselves. Her fist which was covered in marks of trauma contained a small paper. A paper she stole weeks ago. Her plan wasn't perfect, but it was close. Very close.

Unlike destiny, freedom is not unexpected. If you want it you fight for it.

Lila took a deep breath and stepped onto the stage with her eyes closed tightly and her body stiff as a rock. She slowly relaxed her body, unclenched her fist, opened her eyes which were full of hope, courage and the desire to be heard.

She took 3 more steps up the stage to see fewer people than she hoped for to be present there. But she decided to speak anyway.

Because somewhere deep inside her she knew silence doesn't make a difference.

She grabbed the microphone and stopped her voice and hands from trembling and spoke words that came from her heart not her brain.

“They call it aid,” she spoke as firmly as she could scanning the audience. “But aid that doesn’t reach people is not called aid it’s called something else, something completely different- it’s theft.” “And not taking action just because a minor spoke, is completely unacceptable and by that I blame everyone who didn’t show up because you were my the last chance of changing anything, changing people’s lives!”

Far away from the stage sat a man wearing a suit. He had black hair and blue eyes with an expression that looked unreadable. He didn’t come to clap. He didn’t come to judge. He didn’t come to agree.

He just sat legs crossed, only there to observe.

One would dream of answers The other dreamed of freedom She dreamed of justice

None of them knew there dreams would collide, not by chance but by destiny.

When that moment comes.... Which will they choose?

Chapter 5 The calmness before it erupts The city was quiet in the morning, but inside three lives stirred with thoughts and plans they fully haven’t understood yet. Ava stretched on her bed half asleep. She looked at the flyer on her bed side table-the one she saw yesterday while going to detention. She tucked it in her bag And went on with her daily routine.

She quickly dressed up and came downstairs to her parents. “Where’s my juice and pineapples?” She asked her mum. “Here honey, and I forgot to tell you dad and I are going to meet up with a lawyer so we won’t be home till 10pm so take care.” Her mom said smiling. Ava nodded with pineapple in her mouth and sat in her dad’s car. Then they drove to school where Arena was trying to hide from Ava but clearly failed.

Somewhere else, Max sat on her bed cross legged thinking about the “inspection” that took place today an off the revenge she craved for. She traced her fingers across the small paper-a map.

She whispered under her breath, “Mom, dad. Don’t worry I’ll get revenge for you, for me, for us.”

She planed, counted, imagining how she can get her revenge and her freedom. she knew freedom wasn’t a gift, it was something that needed to be earned, stolen, taken or taught for. And Max tried every way except fighting for it.

Lila was at her desk reviewing her next speech for the hundredth time even though she knew she'd improvise in the spot. She made a list of people to visit, to attend and to help so that her voice will be heard. She felt that she could find others like her out there fighting for justice in their own way.

The three of them moved separately, unaware the invisible, strings were slowly pulling them to the same place.

Ava finished her breakfast. Max studied the map. Lila stacked her papers. They were all preparing in their own way, unknowingly building a foundation for a collision the destiny had planned for them long ago.

Chapter 6 The clues in a game so huge The morning sun stretched over the city, touching streets, rooftops and quiet corners. But it also touched something invisible-the threads of fate weaving the lives of three complete strangers together.

After a long day of school, Ava came back and looked at the flyer.

YOUTH VOLUNTEERS NEEDED community outreach program

She didn't know why it mattered so much, but for some sort of reason it did and she couldn't tell why. But with her parents gone for the first time, she felt a thrill of being alone in the house by herself. Although she wondered why her parents needed to talk to the lawyer, she didn't think too much.

Max crouched behind the orphanage's wall when Ana came up to her and asked "How well is your plan going?" "Good." Max replied. "Wait how do you know?" Ana's eyes spoke so did her mouth, "Girl, we've been friends for a pretty long time for me to know you!" Max's lips curled upwards as she continued with the plan.

Lila a went through her folder once again as she flipped every page she only felt more heartbroken. "The poor, the orphans, the ones in need they are struggling and no one's helping." She blamed herself.

She decided it was time she sped up things a bit faster. Every action counted. She didn't know Ava or Max, but something in her told her that she wasn't the only one preparing to fight for justice.

The city moved around them, the cars honked, pedestrians bustled, dogs barked. But Ava, Max, and Lila didn't notice. Theirs mind only focused on their next steps.

Destiny, patient and quiet, was already tugging at them. Each choice they

made, each action they made, counted. Soon they would arrive at the same place - still strangers.

For now they are still separate. Planning, waiting, preparing.

And the world, unseen and patient, watched.

Chapter 7 It becomes Quiet The city didn't know it yet.... But things had already begun to shift.

Ava sat on her bed, the flyer rested beside her phone.

YOUTH VOLUNTEERS NEEDED Community outreach program

She reread it for the third time, unsure why it mattered so much. She had seen plenty of flyers before, but this one felt heavier like something she wouldn't be able to overcome.

Her parents words echoed through her head Meeting with the lawyer Won't be home till 10

Ava frowned.

She shoved the flyer into her bag, and zipped it shut.

"Just once," she murmured. "I'll just check it out."

She didn't realise that choosing has its way of changing anything, even destiny.

Max crouched behind the orphanage walls again. Her fingers traced the map's every edge, every corner.

Every line was memorised. Every corner was counted.

Ana leaned against the bricks behind her, "You're quiet."

"I'm thinking." Max replied.

"About escaping?"

Max hesitated, "About timing."

Ana tilted her head, "The inspection... it felt strange."

"I know, it was perfect, too perfect."

She glanced back at the building. Fresh paint. Smiling staff. And food that would disappear by morning.

“They don’t fix things,” Max said. “They pretend to when someone’s watching.”

Ana swallowed, “So what now?”

Max folded the paper and stuffed it in her sleeve.

“Now, I just wait and see.”

She didn’t know yet that watching would change everything.

Lila sat alone at her desk, papers spread out like broken pieces of a puzzle.

She wasn’t looking for names anymore.

She was looking for patterns.

Road accidents dismissed too quickly. Shelters praised but never funded properly. Charities that only appeared when attention was there.

She circled dates not people.

Her pen stooped.

The same months. The same years. The same signatures.

Her heartbeat quickened.

“This isn’t random,” she whispered.

Lila leaned back, staring at the ceiling.

If she was right, then it wasn’t just neglect.

It was design.

The next afternoon, the community hall buzzed softly with unfamiliar energy.

Ava stood just inside the door, gripping the strap of her bag like it was an anchor. She felt overdressed. Out of place. Like she had walked into a story she didn’t belong.

Across the room, Max stood near the exit, hood low, eyes alert.

She always stood near exits.

Max scanned the room automatically—adults, teens, volunteers. Nothing dangerous. Nothing important.

Then her gaze flicked to Ava.

Clean, comfortable, unsure.

She doesn't know what this place is, Max thought.

And for the first time in a long while, Max wondered what it would feel like to be that unaware.

Lila arrived moments later, her folder pressed tight to her chest.

She paused at the doorway, something tugging at her instincts.

Three people. One room. Different reasons for being there.

None of them knew each other. Not yet.

But they felt it—the quiet pull of something aligning.

Destiny didn't crash into lives.

It slipped in softly, through ordinary choices, through doors left slightly open.

And none noticed. Not them at least.

Chapter 8 The yarn is coming to end as it starts its weaving The room smelled like old wood and fresh paper.

Ava shifted her weight from this foot to another, clutching her bag tighter than necessary. Voices echoed softly around her. Introductions, instructions, polite laughter that sounded slightly fake.

She wondered, for a second, if she should leave.

Before she could, a woman at the front clapped her hands lightly. "Alright everyone, let's get started by pairing up for today's activity!"

Ava froze.

Pair up?

She glanced around, her eyes landing on the nearest person— a girl standing close to the exit, hood pulled low, posture alert like she was ready to bolt at any second.

Max felt the stare.

She looked up meeting Ava's gaze for half a second too long.

Neither smiled.

"Well," the woman said, pointing, "you two look free."

They stood awkwardly at a small table stacked with papers and donation forms.

Ava broke the silence first. "Uh... I'm Ava."

Max hesitated. "Max."

Another pause.

"So... have you been here before?" Ava asked, trying to sound casual.

Max shook her head. "No."

Ava nodded, relieved to have something in common. "Same. I just thought I'd help. You know. Do something useful."

Max's lips twitched - not quite a smile.

"Useful," she repeated quietly.

Ava didn't notice the edge in her voice.

Across the room, Lila watched.

Not openly. Not obviously.

She noticed how Max stood - always angled toward the door. How Ava kept glancing around like she expected someone to tell her she didn't belong.

Interesting, Lila thought.

She returned to her notes, but her focus slipped. Something in this room felt different today. Not louder. Not bigger.

But closer.

As they worked. Ava pointed at one of the forms. "What's this for?"

"Funding requests," Max replied. "Places like shelters. Orphanages."

Ava swallowed. "Oh"

She hesitated before asking, "Do they... Actually help?"

Max didn't answer immediately.

"Sometimes," she said firmly. "When people are watching."

Ava frowned, unsure why the words unsettled her.

At the back of the hall, the man in the suit sat quietly.

Still observing. Still unreadable.

His eyes moved from Lila's papers to Max's guarded posture to Ava's confused expression

He leaned back slightly.

The game had begun long before any of them realised.

When the session ended, chairs scraped and voices rose again.

Ava packed her bag slowly. "So... maybe I'll see you around?"

"Maybe."

As Max walked back, the paper slipped from her sleeve. A man whose eyes were as blue as hers, hair as dark as the night and with an expression that was identical to hers, picked the paper and handed it to her.

She didn't say thanks immediately, she studied his eyes which looked unreadable but somehow carried hope and pain at the same moment.

She eventually said thanks to the man in suit. And glanced back at Ava before turning back.

They walked in opposite directions, neither Ava nor Max turned back.

But something had changed.

Not answers. Not truth.

Just awareness.

And sometimes, that was far more dangerous.

Chapter 9 A new yarn comes into the the game

The door of Ava's house closed softly behind her.

The Familia smell of citrus cleaner and warm wood wrapped around her, usually comforting. Tonight, it felt heavy. Too quiet.

She dropped her bag near the stairs and froze.

Voices.

Her parents they were home.

Not in the living room.

Not loud.

Not meant to be heard.

“...we were lucky no one traced it back,” her father said.

Ava’s breath caught.

She took one slow step to the kitchen, careful not to make a sound.

“It was eight years ago,” Her mother replied, her voice tight “ the case is buried.”

Eight years.

Ava pressed her back against the wall.

“The accident shouldn’t have happened,” her father continued. “But if we haven’t entered everything would’ve fallen apart. Careers. Reputations.”

“What about the child?” Her mother whispered.

Silence.

“She was sent away. The records were.....adjusted.”

Ava’s heart pounded so loud she was sure they could hear it.

“This never leaves the house,” her mother said firmly. “Ever.”

Ava passed away slowly, her mind spinning.

Accident. Child. Covered up.

Her parents, the same people who packed her juice and pineapple every morning were hiding something dark.

And for the first time in her life, Ava wondered who they really were.

Lila didn’t go home.

She sat under the harsh white light of her desk lamp, files spread out like evidence at a crime scene. One folder sat back from the rest.

Orphanage inspection report – eight years ago.

She hadn’t meant to notice it.

But once she did, she couldn’t unsee the inconsistencies.

Funding spikes followed by certain drops. Staff changes that weren’t documented. Children transferred with no destination listed.

One name appeared more than once.

Max.

Lila's pen hovered.

"This doesn't make sense," she murmured.

She pulled another file, then another.

The same dates.

The same signature signatures.

The same people.

Her jaw tightened.

"These aren't mistakes," she whispered. "They're patterns."

Lila leaned back, heart racing.

If this orphanage was tied to something larger – something hidden – then wasn't just another orphan.

She was evidence.

And someone had gone great lengths to erase parts of her story.

Lila closed the folder carefully.

Tomorrow she would dig deeper.

And once she did, there would be no turning back.

Max sat on her bed, the lights flickering overhead.

The map lay unfolded beside her, but she wasn't looking at it.

She was thinking.

The people. The sudden kindness. The man in the suit.

And the way he looked at her.

Not like a donor. Not like staff. Like someone who recognised her.

Max clenched her fists and looked around the orphanage.

Eight years ago.

That was when everything changed.

The accident. The fire. The night she lost her parents in eternal darkness. And her brother, who was nowhere to be found. The day that changed her life. Forever.

She swallowed hard. Trying hard not to let the tears in her eyes fall down her cheek. But she was too late. Her face was dull, tired and full of tears.

“What do you want from me?” She whispered into the empty darkness.

Her thoughts drifted back to the man’s eyes – blue, steady, unreadable.

He knew something.

She was sure of it.

And whatever he knew was connected to why she was here.... Why she had never been able to escape..... why the doors always stayed close.

Max folded the map and slid it beneath her pillow.

Revenge had always been a goal.

But now?

Now she wanted answers.

Three homes. Three truths. One answer rising to surface.

The accident from 8 years ago never ended.

It was buried.

And they thought that was the end of it.

But little did they know, it only just began.

And as per destiny, it’s as impatient and precise as it always is.

It was only a matter of fact before they meet. Right?

Chapter 10: The Collision

The morning sun barely reached the city streets, painting them in soft gold, yet its warmth didn’t touch the invisible threads pulling three lives together. Destiny stirred quietly, patient as ever.

Ava held the flyer in her hands again, the words nearly burned into her memory:

YOUTH VOLUNTEERS NEEDED Community outreach program

Her curiosity had grown into a quiet insistence. Eight years ago... a child... an accident... her parents’ words haunted her. She tucked the flyer into her bag, heart racing with a mix of fear and anticipation. Maybe, just maybe, this was the reason.

She stepped into the community hall, early, almost hesitant. The smell of old wood and polished floors mingled with paper and faint perfume of volunteers. Voices echoed softly, polite greetings and laughter brushing against her ears. She felt out of place, overdressed, yet something nudged her forward.

Near the exit, hood pulled low, stood Max. She leaned against the wall, fingers tracing the folded map tucked in her sleeve, eyes sharp, scanning every person, every movement. Each detail mattered—every adult, every teen, every paper on a table. Her jaw tightened as she remembered: the fire, the accident, the parents lost, the doors that never opened.

At a corner table in the hall, Lila flipped through her folder once more. Files, inspection reports, orphanage documents—all scattered like pieces of a puzzle. Dates, signatures, funding spikes, sudden drops, children transferred without record. Then she saw it: one name appeared repeatedly.

Max.

Her heart skipped. The coincidences were impossible. Or maybe... destiny had aligned these threads long ago. She leaned back, breath shallow, feeling the pull of the collision about to happen.

The woman at the front clapped her hands. “Alright, everyone, today we’re pairing up for the first activity. Find a partner and start on your project.”

Ava’s eyes scanned the room, landing on the girl near the exit—alert, guarded, posture ready to bolt. She swallowed nervously. “Uh... I’m Ava.”

“Max,” came the low, measured reply. Her voice was steady, but her eyes flickered, wary, reading Ava like a puzzle she hadn’t yet solved.

Lila watched silently, her notebook resting beside her like armor. She noticed everything: the cautious stance, the fleeting glances, the tension in the air. This wasn’t just a random pairing. Something larger was unfolding.

They sat together at the table. Papers shuffled. Donation forms, lists of shelters, funding requests. Ava tried to make conversation, her voice light. “So... do these programs actually help?”

Max’s reply was firm, low: “Sometimes. But only when people are watching.” Her eyes never left the papers.

Ava felt a shiver. Something in that statement unsettled her, though she didn’t understand why.

Lila leaned closer to her own folder, scanning once more, tracing dates and names. The connections were undeniable. This orphanage, these documents, the child who had been hidden—Max was tied to something bigger, something buried. And she was evidence.

The first threads of awareness had appeared. The quiet pull of fate was now tangible. And in that space between hesitation and action, the question remained:

Which path will they choose?

Destiny didn't crash into lives. It whispered, it tugged, it waited. And now, it had begun.

Next chapters coming soon so stay tuned!