

Title: The Vanishing Key It was a quiet autumn evening in the small town of Marlowe. The leaves rustled in the wind, their golden hues scattering across the cobblestone streets. It was the kind of town where nothing ever happened—until, of course, something did. Detective Emily Stone leaned against her desk, sipping her lukewarm coffee. She had been with the Marlowe Police Department for three years, and while the job was never exciting, it was comfortable. Most of the time, it consisted of minor thefts, lost pets, and the occasional domestic dispute. But tonight, she had been summoned to the old Wexford Mansion on the edge of town, where an unusual case had emerged. The mansion, once a grand estate, was now a crumbling relic of the past. It had been abandoned for years, but recently, it had been sold to an eccentric billionaire named Victor Wexford. Rumor had it that Wexford had moved into the mansion with his wife, Eleanor, and their two children, but the family rarely made public appearances. Detective Stone had arrived to find the mansion's gates wide open, an odd sight for such a private place. She approached the front door and rang the bell. A butler, dressed in a pristine black suit, answered. "Detective Stone," he said with a nod, his voice as cold as the evening air. "Mr. Wexford is expecting you." She stepped inside and was immediately hit by the scent of old wood and polished marble. The mansion's interior was as lavish as one would expect from someone like Victor Wexford: ornate chandeliers hung from the ceiling, and priceless paintings adorned the walls. But there was an unsettling chill to the place, as though something was amiss. Wexford himself was standing in the grand hallway, his tall figure imposing even in the dim light