

Sabrina tapped her foot as the elevator made its way to the third floor. Eager to be in her own space, key at the ready, she hurried down the hall and unlocked her door.

“Damn it, Merry,” she muttered under her breath. “How hard is it to leave the mail on the table?” Sabrina abandoned her luggage, draped her coat over it, and stooped to gather the envelopes scattered over the tiled entryway. “Get my mail, water my two lousy houseplants. That’s all I asked.”

It wasn’t until she’d gone to hang her coat in the entryway closet that a sense of foreboding—that there was more wrong here than mishandled mail—twisted through her belly. Merry, her best friend and good neighbor, wouldn’t have left a mess. Sabrina tiptoed farther into the apartment, clutching her brass letter opener.

*What good will this do?*

She set it down, went for her purse and punched 911 into her cell phone, her finger poised over the Send button. Barely breathing, she listened for any signs of an intruder, but all she heard was the blood pounding in her ears. She crept along the short hallway toward the kitchen. Rounding the corner, she froze. Sabrina had left in a hurry when she’d heard about her brother, but her apartment had been clean. Her finger jammed the button.

Phone to her ear, she relayed the information to the dispatcher as she snatched her key ring and hurried next door to Merry’s apartment. When Merry didn’t answer Sabrina’s knock, she let herself in.

*It’s not like there was someone in the apartment. It’s so you don’t destroy evidence.*

At least that’s what she kept telling herself as she paced Merry’s living room, waiting for the cops.