

Conscience

The knife's weight was familiar in my scarred fingers as I waited in the chilly darkness. A door opened down the alley, casting a rectangular patch of orange light on the wet bricks opposite. My shoulder's tensed. Drawing myself closer to the wall, I lifted the blade, taking a slow, silent step toward the opening.

"Hey."

I whirled, knife out, but the alley was still empty.

"This is your conscience," the voice sighed, echoing through my mind. "My boss says I need to start doing my job, so..."

Heart thundering, eyes darting, I looked around again, but found nothing in the lonely, damp night. *Something's finally snapped*, I thought, gripping the knife tighter. It took a few seconds, but I forced myself to turn back toward my target. *I don't have time for this*.

The shadow of a broad man blocked out a tall column of light down the alley. My window was closing.

I took another step.

"Dude, are you about to murder that guy?"

"Will you just shut up for a minute?" I muttered, giving in to the crazy, eyes still fixed on my goal.

"Cool. I'll come back when you're less busy."

Blinking, I felt the foreign presence in my mind fade away. I glanced down at my weapon. "Well, that explains a lot."