

The Sample

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Preview Edition

Chapter 1: The Static Before the Sample

The Houston air hung thick and humid, a familiar cloak that Darius usually found comforting, a sign of home. But tonight, it felt oppressive, mirroring the suffocating stillness within their apartment.

He stood by the panoramic window, the city lights a distant, indifferent galaxy of pinpricks against the bruised velvet of the sky.

The silence in their marriage was a deafening roar. Not a sudden break, not chaos... just a slow fade. A gradual erosion of connection.

He remembered the early days... the energy, the raw spark that once made everything feel alive.

But now? Everything felt muted. Like a record left in the sun too long... warped, distorted, fading.

The impending arrival of their child should have been joy. Instead, it felt like pressure. Like something closing in on him.

He felt like a fraud in his own life.

He found himself searching for something... anything... to break the silence inside him.

And then... he found it.

Not in his home. Not in his marriage.

But somewhere else...

In the digital static... where the first real signal began to form.

This is just the beginning...

The real sample hasn't even dropped yet.

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