Mail has been an illusion to me. How the carriers get their jobs, how to get things from point A to point B. How the mail carriers always seem to put the most important mail at other people's houses. This one seemed to be correct.

The mail is a silly thing. It brings you things you need, things you want, things from loved ones afar. I don't think this was any of these.

I heard the bell at 3:09 on a random Tuesday afternoon. I was home alone, both parents at work in the summer. I was quietly reading on our living room couch when I heard that life changing sound. I'm not supposed to answer the door so I checked subtly to see if it was a person- it was not. Though to this day, I still swear I saw a shadow…

I didn't remember ordering a book online. I very well could have, knowing me. I could have accidentally ordered a book paperback instead of getting it sent to my very old yet reliable e-reader. It hasn't happened yet but it's possible.

Yet the moment I picked it up, it screamed that this isn't mine. It had something about it that wanted me to throw it across the lawn.

I opened it anyway. It had my name and address right, so it must be mine. That was mistake number one.

The cover had this beautiful house on the cover, with a silhouette girl. The title was something I knew all too well: The Secretive Lives of Those You Know. My name at the bottom, credited as the author.

I had always imagined writing a book, with the same title. I had told my mom this, once, in passing. I assumed it was a custom notebook she made on Amazon to let me know she supports the hobbies I have and that she believes in me. A place to write the tale as it comes to my head. That was mistake number two.

Mistake number three was opening that forsaken book to realize that it was not a notebook, but an actual book.

Mistake number four was reading it. When it arrived, I was reading a boring summer requirement book that I could not get into to save my academic life. I figured this was some sign from the universe to stop reading the very long classic and change to this one.

This book had a very unreliable narrator. It started as a baby, which is never how I wanted to start mine. I wanted mine to be a coming of age story with adventure and friendship. I would soon come to see that this was so in this book too, but it would be all too familiar.

It soon talked about a messy divorce, which was odd because the story seemed to line up with stories my mother has told me. Though some that don't.

I can't remember at what point I realized why I knew this story so well. Realized that this was wrong. Realized these are details only I would know about myself.

The worst were the illustrations, clearly meant to be me and the people I love. They were so uncanny yet there was stuff slightly off, things that people who didn't know who I was wouldn't catch due to how slight the difference was. Some people were slightly too tall, others slightly too small. Some faces were too stretched, others that looked too expressed. Eyes that were pinched, fists that were clenched.

I sat on the couch, not moving a muscle unless to turn the page until my parents got home. It wasn't until after dinner and random small talk about our days that I realized that it was updating *in real time*.

This was the most unsettling thing of this book. Believing that was mistake number five.

It didn't go farther than what I was experiencing. It didn't tell my future, or rewrite it if I didn't follow. It told my life as it was, no additions, no omissions. The truth and the whole truth. Of course, it told the lies I did and explained in full detail of why this was. It told my feelings directly, some I didn't know I had myself.

When I realized this, I did what most humans do in this day in age: google it to see if there were any Reddit posts about it. Of course, I found similar things. This one post described in detail of someone finding a book like mine in their local library, hopped up on caffeine. I wondered if that was my problem, if I had drunk too much Mountain Dew that day. I then realized I had run out the day before. The book they described was heavy, leather bound, and old, but mine was cheaply made, paperback, and looked brand new. The person who made the post, perhaps a face behind a screen, tried to get rid of their book. Tried to be free of their curse. That was their first mistake, one that I did not make. One that turned into my sixth mistake.

I could only find one source, could only find one other who has experienced something like this. I then looked at the forum's name. r/nosleep, something I had never heard of. So of course, I did a full deep dive on the internet of both the poster and the forum.

The poster had nothing on them, as they used a pseudonym. The only thing I could find was their hundreds of stories that happened to them. So I read, to see if any of our lives matched up, to figure out why this happened to only us. That was mistake number seven.

Mistake number eight was not checking out the forum and its history first. How did I not figure out that it was fake, that it was all stories written by inspiring authors like myself, to scare others? How did I not immediately think that this is fake? It's Reddit, most things are fake.

I felt betrayed, by both myself and the internet. Felt betrayed that the universe only chose me. I then decided to try to figure out *why* the universe chose *me.* That was the first of what would be many corrections.

I scoured the book, reread it, to see if I missed anything. Annotated it to analyze my life. Which wasn't different from my everyday life, it just happened to be written on paper this time.

I found little inconsistencies this time, things that didn't happen. To me. Things that others around me experienced. And then I found more. And more. Too many for this to be *my* life. This wasn't *my* life. Realizing this was correction number two.

I've always theorized about other dimensions, other realities of me. As a fantasy reader, you have to. You think about what would happen to these characters beyond the books, deeply ponder if they are real in some other place, some other time. Perhaps they, perhaps they're not.

Next thing I know, I'm back to the internet, looking to all lengths to find *real* answers this time. I found black web websites, fake websites, telling of *real* experiences like mine. They told me how to get this book back.

It didn't belong with me. I knew this from the beginning. So I did the one thing they told me to do to get rid of this curse. Not curse in the wrong way, but not in the right either. Just in the way that it isn't my life.

It was risky. I knew it. But I did it anyway. Because I had to correct my mistakes. I had to get it away from me, I can't know what other versions of me are doing.

I succeeded. I got some cuts and too many run-ins with police but I made itIn fact, the only reason this was ever written was because of them. They said with each word, a little bit of my memory would be erased. At this current moment, I couldn't tell you what the first page says without reading it. But they said I couldn't, for all progress will be lost.

If you're reading this, you shouldn't. Unless you're them. They are the only ones who may know. They are the supreme. But if you're me, run. Our lives are far too entangled now. Other versions of one another should *never* know that the other exists. Should never know their story. I may not remember it, but the feeling will always be there. Run. We're not safe anymore.