

MIRAVA BOOKS

The Silent Floor

The Case of the Missing Manuscript

English edition

Free excerpt

The Silent Floor

The Case of the Missing Manuscript

English edition · Revised edition · October 2026

An intimate mystery about a missing notebook, a paper star, and people who delayed telling the truth for too long. Read the ten chapters in order: each brings the solution closer. All characters and events are fictional; any resemblance is coincidental. The text and translations were prepared with assistance from artificial intelligence.

MIRAVA · Text and translation prepared with AI assistance.

Contents

- 01 Cabinet Number Seven
- 02 Three Keys
- 03 A Star from a Draft
- 04 A Voice in the Wall
- 05 A Letter to the Journalist
- 06 The Room without a Number
- 07 Someone Else's Signature
- 08 Rehearsing a Theft
- 09 The Last Reader
- 10 The Silent Floor Speaks

Cabinet Number Seven

The top floor of the House of Books was so quiet that Mira Levchenko could hear the kettle cooling in the next office. In two days, an exhibition of Orlov's last manuscript would open here. She straightened a sign on the table, unlocked cabinet number seven, and stopped. Between two cardboard supports lay only a linen cloth. The blue notebook was gone.

At seven the previous evening, she and the director, Vera Stanislavovna, had counted its pages and signed an inspection report. One hundred and twenty-six pages, a worn spine, a small tear beside the lower staple. Now the lock was intact, the window closed, and a paper star lay on the table. Mira left it untouched. First she photographed the cabinet, the floor, and the door.

Arsen Vetrov, the conservator, hurried up from the floor below, still wearing gloves. "Could someone have moved it?" he asked. The director shook her head. She usually answered promptly and at length; today she adjusted her collar instead. A similar star had stood on her desk for a week, left over from a workshop for schoolchildren.

A trail of white dust led away from the cabinet. It seemed to vanish beneath the ventilation grille, but nobody could hide a notebook behind a gap two fingers wide. Mira crouched. Beside the decorative column, the dust formed a semicircle, as though a small door had swept across the floor.

"No cleaning up here until we know what happened," she said. Vera allowed her to check the records and cameras with Arsen. Postponing the exhibition seemed dreadful. Mira thought opening it with a beautiful empty space at its centre would be worse.

Three Keys

There were three working keys to the cabinet: the director's, Arsen's, and the night watchman's, Egor Mikhailovich. A fourth, a spare, lay in a sealed envelope; its seal was intact. Mira opened the top-floor logbook. It recorded people using the main staircase, rather than everyone entering the building. For the moment, nobody thought that distinction important.

Vera had gone down to her office at 19:12. Arsen left at 19:20, returned at 19:31, and finally went downstairs at 19:45. Between his return and departure was an entry: "Round completed, 19:35." It bore the watchman's signature. Egor himself remembered drinking tea in the room containing old posters at that time.

"I didn't open the cabinet yesterday evening," Arsen said. Mira noticed blue pigment on the thumb of his glove. The inside of the notebook's cover shed that same powdery colour. The conservator hid his hand behind his back, then brought it straight back to the table. "I treated the spine before your inspection." That explained the stain, but not his first statement.

Nikita Ros arrived from the district newspaper. He was covering the exhibition and presented a printed access pass. Two thin grey lines ran across its lower part. Nikita complained about the newspaper's printer. "Still leaving marks after the repair." Mira placed the pass beside the logbook.

Nobody had broken glass or forced the lock. But a tidy logbook did not prove that everything had happened tidily. Especially if the building offered another way upstairs.

This is a free excerpt. The complete PDF contains every chapter listed in the contents. Sales have not opened yet.