

TRAPPED IN THE SHADOWS

Lydia couldn't sleep well for three nights. It was because of her exams, or at least, that's what she thought. The truth is that every night, she felt like someone was watching her.

Her room in the university dorm was small and quiet. Only the sound of the rain came from outside. She sat at her desk, reading about ghosts and dark rituals. She was studying occultism- she loved the mystery, but she didn't want it to be real. The clock showed 2.38 a.m. Her eyes were tired. She looked at the wall for a second, and then she saw it- a shadow.

It wasn't from her lamp, and it wasn't moving like a normal shadow. Lydia blinked, trying to ignore it. "I'm just tired", she thought. But when she looked again, the shadow was closer.

Lydia turned off her computer and went to bed. She tried to sleep, but her heart was beating too fast. She had read too many stories about ghosts. She closed her eyes and took a deep breath. Then, she heard a soft sound- like someone walking slowly on the floor. Her eyes opened wide. Lydia looked around but there was nothing. Still, she felt it. Something was standing in the dark, watching her.

Lydia sat up in her bed. She wanted to turn on the light, but it was too far. Then, she heard it again. Her books fell from the desk by themselves. Lydia gasped. She ran to the light and turned it on. The room looked normal, everything was in its place. But in the mirror there was still a shadow.

The next morning, Lydia woke up late. She laughed a little. "It was just a dream"- she said to herself. She picked up her books from the floor. But then she saw something strange. One book had a long, dark mark on the cover- like a handprint. Lydia touched it. It was cold. Her smile faded away. Maybe it wasn't a dream after all.

That evening, Lydia couldn't stop thinking about the mark. She searched online for stories about her house. Most results were old news articles, but one name appeared again and again- Victoria Allen.

The articles said Victoria used to live in the same house as her. She had told the police that a shadow had attacked her at night. But nobody believed her. She found Victoria's email at the end of one article and decided to write. "Hello, my name's Lydia. I think the same thing that happened to you is happening to me". She waited all night for an answer, but she didn't receive.

The next morning, Lydia opened her email and saw a new message from Victoria. "Lydia, please stop. Don't write to me again. If you're seeing the shadow, you must leave that house now".

Lydia read that message twice. She wrote back. "Please, I need your help. I don't know what to do". But Victoria didn't answer. Lydia sat there, staring at the screen. Someone else had seen it. It was real.

That night, Lydia could sleep again. The room was quiet. She tried to read, but her eyes kept looking at the dark corner near the door. And then she saw it. The same shadow was there, taller than before. Her breath stopped. Lydia whispered: "go away". The shadow didn't move. Then, slowly, it began to cross the room. The light flickered. Lydia felt something cold touch her arm. She screamed and everything went dark.

The next day, Lydia tried to send Victoria another email. "Please, I need to see you. I'm scared. I don't know what to do". Hours passed. No answer. Lydia sent another email. And another. Finally, in the evening, another email arrived. "I will meet you, but only for a short time. I'm really afraid". Lydia felt hope and answered back. "Thank you. I promise it'll be quickly". Lydia knew it was dangerous, but she needed to find answers. The next day, Lydia went to the cemetery. Victoria was waiting near an old tomb. "I don't want to do this", Victoria said. Her voice was shaking. "I understand. But I need to know. Please".- Lydia replied. Victoria took a deep breath. "It was many years ago. I lived in your house. At night the shadow came. Nobody believed me. I left, but I never forgot". Victoria looked around as if she were expecting something to appear. And then she saw it. The shadow was there. Victoria gasped. The shadow didn't move, just watched them. Lydia felt fear in her chest. Victoria stepped back. "I can't do this. We should go!" Lydia grabbed her arm gently. "I need answers. Please". Victoria looked into her eyes. Something in Lydia made her stay. "Okay, but be careful". She led Lydia to a small old tomb. "This is him". Victoria said- "the shadow is his spirit. He died many years ago in your house. He was murdered while he slept. Nobody solved the crime. That's why he stays. He comes to everyone who lives there". The shadow slowly changed, becoming clearer. Now they could see a man; tall, pale, with sad eyes. He walked closer. "My name was Thomas. I was killed by someone I trusted. My body was never found. But there's something you must know. The person who killed me still lives. They're close, watching. If my story's not told, someone else might die". Thomas slowly faded. The shadow was gone, but now they knew the secret.

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