

The Shadow at 12:03

Timeline: Before Chapter 1 began

At exactly 12:03 a.m., the streetlight outside her window went dark.

Not flickered.

Not burned out.

Dark.

She noticed because she'd been staring through the glass instead of sleeping. The moon remained strangely bright above the rooftops, silver light spilling across lawns, cars, and empty sidewalks. Then she saw someone standing across the street. She couldn't see a face.

Only a silhouette.

Tall.

Motionless.

Watching her house.

Her phone vibrated.

She looked down.

UNKNOWN: Don't look outside.

Her stomach dropped. She slowly raised her eyes. The sidewalk was empty. Then came a soft sound against the window behind her.

Tap.

She froze.

She hadn't closed the curtains. And her bedroom was on the second floor.