



INVISIBLE SHADOWS

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Intro.

In my world, privacy is a thing from the past.

The government watches over us through the surveillance lenses implanted in our eyes ever since we are born.

These tiny devices see everything we see, recording our every action and store in mass digital archives.

Only those in power can access these archives. They claim it's for our safety. They say crime has become old fashioned, that no one can hide from the eyes.

However, I have always wondered what "safety" truly means. From whom are we being protected? How much does it cost?

I am Mira, an architect and designer. I design buildings to keep people safe, to ensure that they live in designated areas in an orderly manner. I thought my work was about creating beauty within these boundaries, protecting people. But over time, I realized that the more precisely the world was ordered, the more humanity seemed to disappear from it.

My neighbor Pia was the one who made me realize this fact . Pia was an artist. She chose expressing truth over following rules, a rare quality in this world. Her art questioned everything surveillance, the endless eyes, the way we sacrificed freedom for the fake safety. I didn't realize what was waiting for until one day she disappeared. She was gone without a trace, without explanation.

At first, I thought she had left for search of inspiration. She would often disappear without warning like that. But gradually, rumors began to spread among her friends. Voices. Some claimed that Pia was working on a new project, something targeting the very core of the system.

I didn't want to believe the worst, but one question popped up in my head: In a world where everything is perfectly visible, how could one person just disappear?

That question triggered me. The more I tried to ignore it, the tighter it squeezed. I had never questioned the system before, but now, as I walked through the city, the endless surveillance lights seemed to close in on me like a weight. They were all eyes, all watching me. And I couldn't shake the thought that at any moment, I could be erased.

I began searching for clues. At first, it was small, quietly visiting the places Pia often went, speaking to a few people who still remembered her. I didn't tell them what I was doing. I only asked vague questions about Pia. But no matter how carefully I watched, my movements were noticed. Slowly, I moved away from the safe, bright center of the city, into forgotten and shadowed corners.

Eventually, in the dark backroom of a cafe, someone whispered a name. "Tom." They told me he was a hacker, someone who could avoid the system, and that he might know what happened to Pia.

Finding him wasn't easy. After days of discreet questions, I finally found Tom in a hidden underground bar behind an old auto repair shop. He looked at me with suspicion. In a world where trust had almost vanished, one didn't simply trust strangers. But when I mentioned Pia's name, his expression softened slightly, though fear still shadowed his face.

"She found something," Tom said in a low voice. "Something about the lenses."

My heart started to pound. ". "What did she find?"

"They can't see in the dark," he said.

At first, I didn't understand. It sounded too absurd, too simple.

"But... doesn't everyone know that?"

"That's the key," he said, lowering his voice even further.

"The government has kept it hidden.

Only a few people know, those who tried to escape from the system."

Tom explained that Pia had accidentally discovered this flaw.

While working in an old warehouse, experimenting with shadows and space, she realized that in a completely dark room, the lenses didn't record anything. At first, she thought it was a glitch, but after several experiments, she realized. Without light, the all seeing eye couldn't see.

The government would never reveal this, he said, because it would expose the weakness of their system.

Pia had likely intended to expose it, and someone had betrayed her.

The government knew what she had discovered, and they removed her for it.

“Why are you telling me this?” I asked.

“I want you to understand what’s actually happening.”

Tom said, staring at me. “Pia underestimated them. She thought she could wake people up through art. But the truth is different. They’ll get rid of anyone. Just like they did to her.”

I knew Pia’s story can’t end here.
I had to know what she had discovered. With Tom’s warning in my mind,
I wanted to experience what Pia had experienced.
I ventured to an old factory which was swallowed by darkness.

I entered the factory. Moving through dark corridors,
I eventually found myself in a place completely devoid of light.
My breathing slowed, and I held my breath. In that moment, I was free.
My lens made no sound, it couldn’t see me. The feeling was unusual.

But that moment of freedom was brief. Someone was following me.
Before I could leave, government agents in black uniforms appeared.
Their faces were masked.
They grabbed me and swiftly pulled me back into their world,
the world of light and surveillance.
I was dragged into a bright room, and the interrogation began.

For hours, I struggled against their aggressive words, dealing with their threats.
Their control over me grew, and I felt myself becoming more and more trapped.
But even in that room, one thought came into my mind:
the light they relied on was their weakness.
If I could find darkness, even for a moment, I could escape.

Suddenly, the lights flickered, and the building became pitch dark.
I faced with an opportunity, making my way quickly out of the room.

Using the blueprints I knew as an architect,
I ran through a hidden escape route that led underground.
It was a secret passage I had designed, a hidden emergency exit.
It was my key to freedom.

In the dark tunnels, I continued to move.
Eventually, I found a group of resistance.
They lived deep beneath the city, in places where the lenses couldn't see.
They were like shadows, surviving by avoiding the government's surveillance.

Lena greeted me briefly. When I asked her about the blackout, she pointed out something I didn't expect. "We did it," Lena said. "We caused the blackout. We've been shutting down the power regularly, disrupting the surveillance system to help people escape."

With Lena's help, I began training with the resistance.
I learned how to temporarily disable the lenses
and how to move through the city without leaving a trace.
They had a bigger plan than Pia had ever imagined a massive movement
to expose the system's flaws and get people to question the truth.

I was no longer just an architect.
I was building something much stronger in the absence of light,
a world where free spirits would not be erased or forgotten.
As long as there were shadows, we would endure.
One day, we would prove that there is brightness because there is darkness.