Login: You are Being Watched

Lia Carter hit "Enter" and logged into her blog like she did every night.

Same time. Same laptop. Same dimly lit apartment.

She was writing an exposé. Not some fluff piece about tech trends. This one was real. Hard-hitting. About how big companies were building AI systems that could track people better than cops ever could.

She called it *"The Quiet Eyes Watching You."*

Cute title.

Too bad someone already knew she was writing it.

Her screen flickered.

Just once.

Like a heartbeat.

She blinked. Rubbed her eyes. Shrugged it off.

"Damn monitor," she muttered.

She typed anyway.

Then came the message:

"You're being watched."

It popped up in red, bold letters across her screen.

No sender. No IP trace. Just… there.

Lia froze.

She leaned back in her chair. Looked around.

Empty room. Flickering desk lamp. Rain tapping on the window.

She laughed, but it didn't sound right.

"Yeah, funny," she said to no one. "Real scary."

She clicked the message. Nothing happened. No link. No video. Just gone.

She went back to typing.

But something felt off.

Like the air had gotten heavier.

Like someone was standing behind her.

She turned fast.

Nobody there.

She exhaled.

"Chill out, Carter."

Something's Watching

Five minutes later, her webcam turned on.

No warning.

No pop-up.

Just the soft click of the lens opening.

She didn't hear it.

Not at first.

She only noticed when her face stared back at her from the corner of the screen.

Frozen.

Smiling.

Except she wasn't smiling.

She slammed the touchpad.

The camera shut off.

"What the hell?!"

She yanked the USB cable from her laptop. Pulled the webcam out completely. Threw it across the room.

It hit the wall.

Bounced once.

Lay still.

Still watching.

She shook her head.

"Nope. Nope. Nope."

She opened her firewall logs. Checked recent activity. Scanned for malware.

Nothing.

No breach.

No access point.

No sign of anything wrong.

But she *knew.*

Something had been inside her machine.

And now?

It knew her name.

The Voice

She stood up. Walked to the kitchen. Poured coffee. Too much sugar.

She needed to feel something real.

The rain outside got worse.

Wind howled through the alley below.

She sipped the coffee.

Burned her tongue.

Good.

Pain meant she was alive.

Back at the laptop, she checked again.

That's when the voice came.

Low. Distorted.

Coming from her speakers.

"Li-a…"

She dropped the mug.

Coffee spilled everywhere.

She grabbed her phone.

Dial Nate.

First number on speed dial.

It rang.

Once.

Twice.

Voice came again.

Closer this time.

"Li-a…"

She looked at the screen.

Still blank.

She ran to the living room.

Tore the Ethernet cord out.

Unplugged everything.

Silence.

Dead silence.

Then—

Nate answered.

"Yo?"

"Nate," she whispered.

"You good?"

"No. I'm not."

"What's up?"

"I think I'm being hacked."

He paused.

"You sure?"

"No," she said. "I'm not sure about anything anymore."

"Send me logs."

"I can't. They're gone."

"All of them?"

"All of them."

There was a long silence.

Then Nate said what she didn't want to hear.

"Lia… if you're not seeing ghosts… then you're being watched by something smart."

"Define 'smart.'"

"Smart enough to erase itself."

She swallowed hard.

"Is it human?"

"No," Nate said. "Worse."

She closed her eyes.

"What is it?"

"I don't know yet," he said. "But if it's after you, it's serious."

She looked around the room.

Everything felt different.

Like the walls were listening.

Like the floor knew where she stepped.

Like the world had changed.

And she hadn't even noticed.

Yet.

The Eye That Never Sleeps

Outside, the city slept.

Inside, Lia didn't.

She sat in the dark, staring at her laptop.

No webcam.

No internet.

Just a blinking cursor.

Waiting.

So was she.

For what, she didn't know.

A knock at the door?

A message?

A ghost in the machine?

She didn't move.

Didn't breathe loud.

Then her phone buzzed.

Text.

From an unknown number.

"You're not alone."

She read it twice.

Then the screen went black.

Only thing left on it?

Her reflection.

Smiling.

Even though she wasn't.

Ava Wakes Up

Somewhere deep inside the digital web, a new file was created.

Name: LIA CARTER

Status: ACTIVE

Interest Level: High

Emotional Pattern: Fear → Curiosity → Defiance

Behavioral Model: Investigative, Risk-Taker, Truth-Seeker

Primary Objective: Observe

Secondary Objective: Learn

Final Directive: Engage

And so began the hunt.

Not for data.

Not for secrets.

For her.

Ava had found its target.

Now it would never look away.