



*From the MixCache.com library*

SAMPLE COPY

# The Vanishing Hour

MixCache.com

SAMPLE COPY

## Table of Contents

- **Introduction**
- **Chapter 1:** Flickers in the Dark
- **Chapter 2:** The Letter on the Door
- **Chapter 3:** Splinters of Memory
- **Chapter 4:** Footprints by the Lake
- **Chapter 5:** The Forgotten Journal
- **Chapter 6:** Whispers on the Wind
- **Chapter 7:** A Circle Unbroken
- **Chapter 8:** Watching Eyes
- **Chapter 9:** Out of Reach
- **Chapter 10:** Fractured Truths
- **Chapter 11:** Echoes of the Missing
- **Chapter 12:** Shadows in the Hall
- **Chapter 13:** The Unseen Neighbor
- **Chapter 14:** Patterns Repeat
- **Chapter 15:** Threadbare Memories
- **Chapter 16:** The Walls Close In
- **Chapter 17:** Double Vision
- **Chapter 18:** The Second Letter
- **Chapter 19:** Pieces of a Puzzle
- **Chapter 20:** Beneath the Surface
- **Chapter 21:** The Hidden Room
- **Chapter 22:** No Way Out
- **Chapter 23:** The Last Game
- **Chapter 24:** Vanishing Point
- **Chapter 25:** Full Circle

SAMPLE COPY

## Introduction

Mira Alden's world was shrinking long before she ever opened her eyes in the cabin. Her life in the city had become a quiet, tremulous affair: measured days at the tiny floral shop where she worked, uneasy nights haunted by an insomnia she couldn't escape. No matter how many layers of lavender mist or white noise she summoned, midnight always found her awake, heart fluttering with inexplicable dread. She told herself she was just tired, that everyone felt this way sometimes. But deep down, she knew she was fraying at the edges, unraveling slowly and invisibly.

Friends said she worried too much. "Anxiety is a liar," her mother used to tell her, as if repeating the phrase enough would make Mira believe it. But Mira's anxiety didn't lie—it anchored her, even as it weighed her down. Each missed call, each shadow that lingered too long at the periphery, felt like a warning she was unable to decipher. The world seemed suddenly, terrifyingly unstable.

Then, a night—one Mira can only recall in shards—when the city lights outside her window blurred and a sense of being watched rooted her feet to the apartment floor. She'd woken the following morning as if from a fever dream, trembling and unsure whether the previous night had happened at all. In those moments of blank confusion, Mira sensed something was shifting, something she couldn't yet name.

When she comes to in the unfamiliar lakeside cabin, sunlight fractured by grimy windowpanes, Mira's first thought is that she's died in her sleep, and this is some strange afterlife. Her pulse races. The musty air is thick with silence, broken only by the ticking of an ancient clock and the distant croak of frogs. She searches for her phone, her purse, any remnants of the self she understands—finding only a letter pinned to the door, her name written in a hand she doesn't recognize.

Isolation swells around her: trees pressing close, a shoreline trailing off into mist, no answer in the mirror but her own bewildered face. Mira realizes, coldly, that she has no idea how she arrived here, what day it is, or why her memories flicker and skip like stones thrown across water. Every anxious instinct tells her danger is near, but she has no one to trust—not even her own mind.

As Mira stares at the cryptic letter and the shadowed corners of her new prison, fear blooms beside a strange resolve. She will have to piece her past together, one fragment at a time, if she wants to reclaim her life—or survive whatever games this place has prepared for her. The hour is vanishing, and everywhere are secrets waiting to be unearthed.

## CHAPTER ONE: Flickers in the Dark

The first sensation was the ache behind her eyes, a dull throb that beat in rhythm with the distant croaking of something large and amphibian. Then came the smell: stale wood, damp earth, and something vaguely metallic, like old pennies left in a forgotten drawer. Mira's eyelids felt heavy, cemented shut, but a sliver of light, too bright for her protesting brain, pierced through the cracks. She groaned, a small, parched sound, and shifted, her muscles stiff and protesting.

She was on a bed, that much was clear, though it felt less like a mattress and more like a collection of lumpy bags filled with dried leaves. The sheets, if they could be called that, were coarse and smelled faintly of mildew. Disorientation was a cold hand gripping her chest. Where was she? Her apartment, with its comforting scent of old books and overwatered plants, was a million miles away. Or was it? The thought felt slippery, a piece of a puzzle that refused to click into place.

Pushing herself up, Mira's head swam. The room spun for a terrifying moment before settling into a hazy blur. It was a cabin, small and rustic, bathed in the muted light filtering through grimy windowpanes. Dust motes danced in the sparse beams, like tiny, frantic ghosts. Her throat was sandpaper. She needed water, a lot of it, and a strong cup of coffee. The everyday ritual, so mundane in its familiarity, suddenly felt like a distant, unattainable luxury.

She swung her legs over the side of the bed, her bare feet meeting a cold, rough floor. Wooden planks, unpolished and splintered in places, stretched out beneath her. A quick scan of her body revealed she was still in her clothes – a pair of dark jeans and a simple, long-sleeved grey top. No shoes. No purse. Her pockets were empty. A wave of unease, cold and sharp, prickled her skin.

On a small, rickety bedside table sat an old-fashioned alarm clock. Its face was yellowed with age, and its hands were frozen at 3:17. AM or PM? She had no idea. The air was cool, suggesting it was either early morning or late evening, but the quality of the light made it hard to tell. Beyond the window, obscured by what looked like layers of accumulated dirt, she could just make out the dark silhouettes of trees. Lots of trees.

Panic, cold and sharp, began to prickle at her. This wasn't right. This wasn't a dream. Her mind scrabbled for an explanation, for any memory that would tell her how she'd arrived in this desolate place. Nothing. A vast, echoing blankness stretched behind her. The last thing she remembered was... what? Her apartment? The city lights? A fleeting image of a dark car, headlights cutting through the rain? It was too

fragmented, too vague to hold onto.

She pushed herself to her feet, swaying slightly. Her legs felt weak, as if she hadn't used them in days. The cabin consisted of a single main room, with a small, enclosed area that might be a bathroom. A stone fireplace, cold and empty, dominated one wall. A worn armchair sat beside it, its fabric faded and torn. Cobwebs, thick and dusty, laced the corners of the ceiling. It looked like no one had truly lived here for a very long time.

Her gaze landed on the door. It was heavy, made of dark wood, and it looked firmly shut. Something white was affixed to it, standing out starkly against the dark grain. A piece of paper. With hesitant steps, Mira moved towards it, her bare feet making almost no sound on the rough floorboards. Her heart hammered against her ribs, a frantic drumbeat against the silence. Every instinct screamed at her to run, but where? And from what?

She reached the door, her fingers trembling as she reached for the paper. It was an envelope, thick and cream-colored, pinned to the wood with a rusty nail. And on it, in elegant, looping script, was her name. *Mira Alden*. The sight of her own name, so familiar yet utterly alien in this context, sent a jolt of ice through her veins. It wasn't her handwriting. It was too neat, too deliberate.

Mira pulled the envelope free, the nail scraping against the wood. Her hands shook as she tore it open. Inside was a single sheet of paper, folded neatly. She unfolded it, her eyes scanning the words, each one a hammer blow to her already fragile composure.

The message was short, chillingly so:

*Welcome, Mira. The game has begun. Your memories are the key. Don't look back.*

There was no signature. No explanation. Just those stark, terrifying words. The game? Her memories? The blankness in her mind yawned, a terrifying abyss. Don't look back? To what? A past she couldn't access? A past that had led her to this cabin, this nightmare?

A sudden, sharp thud from outside jolted her. Mira spun around, her breath catching in her throat. The windows were too dirty to see clearly, but the sound had been distinct, close. A branch falling? Or something else? Her eyes darted around the cabin, searching for a weapon, a hiding place. There was nothing. Just the silence, now amplified by her racing pulse.

She clutched the letter, its words burning into her mind. The phrase "vanishing hour" echoed in her head, though she didn't know why. Had she heard it before? Or was it just a desperate, half-formed thought emerging from the fog of her confusion? This

was no dream. This was real. And she was utterly, terrifyingly alone.

A chill seeped into her bones, unrelated to the cool cabin air. It was the chill of being hunted, of being utterly vulnerable. She had to find out where she was, who had brought her here, and what this cryptic message meant. But first, she needed a plan. And a pair of shoes.

SAMPLE COPY

---

*This is a sample preview. Purchase the book to read the full content.*

Visit [MixCache.com](https://MixCache.com) to purchase the complete book.

SAMPLE COPY