

*I caught Polly's remark about David when I was speaking with her a few weeks ago. She isn't wrong. It is just that in the moment her matters were far more pressing than mine. Maybe sometimes I am too much of a protector, too much of a shield for my own good. But when I really care about someone with a passion, it is how I let them know it. It's not the weakness, it's not the crutch that Enigma makes it out to be. I don't expect him to understand that though. He is a far different person than I am and I am completely okay with that.*

*Heh. I'm sure he is breathing a sigh of relief that he made it to the finals of the Trios Tournament, probably cementing the fact that he will soon have a contract for any match he chooses as long as he uses it within a year. He will have yet another reason to delay the obligation that he has not to me, but to the SCW Underground Championship. I am not going to act like I am bigger than the Championship, because I'm not. I just wanted to pick his opponent. I just want him to be challenged like how I challenged him. That is a very big important piece that makes the Underground what it is. You should have to be always ready, willing, and able as its Champion to enter any kind of arena and thrive under pressure. Last year, I understood that quickly, which is part of why I walked out of the Elimination Chamber last year as the new SCW Underground Champion, when everyone around me and everyone out in the seats and in TV land had written me off as just filler.*

*A clue if none of you still get it. This year I am entering the Elimination Chamber again and yet again I have this feeling that you are all just doing the same thing you did towards me last year. You are all doubting Colleen MacDonald. I don't know why you'd be doing that, but I'm not going to waste my time on you all trying to dismiss me as a threat to be the last one remaining in the fabled Chamber yet again.*

*Volunteering to me was a must, especially since Enigma being preoccupied left an obvious void that needed to be filled. I did the right thing and took the place that I was going to put him in. I may as well just let the cat out of the bag. He was going to have to face Xander Valentine, you know, being that he was not at his best when the Underground Championship wasn't on the line. I was going to give Enigma the chance to prove himself against SCW's Original Executioner.*

*Everyone's attention has been captured now, right?*

*Making that choice was the obvious one, but of course the wheels of fate just had to go and ruin things. But it's fine really. Enigma is just delaying the inevitable and now, may as well let the SECOND cat out of the bag, before Waylon went and just had to use his filthy fingers, I was able to speak with Mr. Desoubrais and it will still be up to me who Enigma's next challenger is coming out of Under Attack. This has made me think some more about who should get the opportunity. Guess we will have to see how everyone does, both inside the Elimination Chamber... and out.*

*A grade of A+ for effort is what I am looking for. It is that effort that Enigma needs to be confronted with. I admittedly only gave him an A both at Rise to Greatness and Apocalypse. As much as he has shown disrespect to me, he deserves to face the best that we have.*

*Do I think that is Kimberly Williams? No. No I don't. Do I think it's anyone else that will be inside Konrad's Wet Dream Come True? Resounding no. There are only two of us in that Chamber that deserve to hold the SCW Underground Championship and besides Xander, you are looking at the other one.*

*Everyone else is more than welcome to prove me wrong at Under Attack. Just like how everyone is free to have whatever opinions they have about me.*

**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2025**

**No Masks Necessary**

From the moment that Colleen was last on the phone with David, who asked her to meet with him, Colleen has been unsure of what to say to him when she does sit down with him. Probably a major reason for why she chose to stall when he invited her out for Philly Cheesesteaks. She instead went for "How about we talk before Under Attack out in Minneapolis instead? I'm not all that hungry right now." Even now at this very moment though she still looks unsure of herself when it comes to him, but she pushes herself to go to the restaurant that she texted to him earlier in the day.

Not wanting to wait outside in the chilly autumn air, she heads inside and checks in before sitting on one of the benches. As soon as she is situated she just looks at the door, just waiting for him to arrive. She crosses her left leg over her right and even remains this way acting casual even when he enters the place. David spots her and walks over to the bench she is on in a nonchalant fashion. She looks up at him, not even looking at his apparel.

"Sorry I'm late. You know that-"

"You have a lot to think about. Yeah. I get it. No harm, no foul. I have found myself feeling the same way. Come on."

Colleen stands up on her own, even though David offers his right hand to her. She goes up to the greeter to see if the table is ready. The greeter nods and has a waiter come out to seat them. When they are shown their table, Colleen slides out her chosen chair and takes a seat. David takes the other one and is quick to tell her "You can take off your coat."

"I don't want to. You know me, ice block, colder than Selena Frost herself. That's how I'm feeling, so I'll keep it on. Just because you were able to melt me a little doesn't mean I'm going to stop being who I am."

David doesn't push such a minor issue any further. The waiter can sense the tension between the two, so he quickly takes their drink orders and walks away. When he's gone, David wastes no time with addressing the elephant in the room.

"Fair enough Colleen. I just hope that you aren't acting this way because of what has happened involving Polly and myself up on the scaffold back at Rise to Greatness."

"No. That isn't it. I'm just being careful. I have seen what you have been doing and well, I don't like that you have kind of abandoned the guy that you call your best friend. That is something I will never do to Polly, and it's something that quite honestly, I don't want you doing with me."

Colleen lowers her voice, so none of the other surrounding tables can hear her.

"I've been abandoned enough for a lifetime. Polly feels the same way. We get one another. It's why I told her to go and find her true self. It's not my fault that she doesn't like you. You gave her a reason not to like you, and Rise to Greatness aside, you gave me a reason as well. Friends don't turn their backs on their friends. Yeah, Chris did go too far when it comes to Fall of Man to prove his point, but did you ever ask him WHY he did what he did?"

She stares him right in the eyes, not scared of being face to face with him, awaiting his response.

"It isn't just because of what happened to Aisling."

"I kinda figured that."

"It goes deeper. Chris told me that our friendship was a waste of his time and effort."

Colleen's dark eyes are fully open, not blinking as she comes out with "Ohhhhkayyyyy. I wasn't expecting to hear that. Um."

She looks away from him but he keeps looking at her. Collecting herself from hearing what she just heard, she lays her dark eyes back on him and leans in a little from her side of the table.

"I'm sorry. I haven't had a lot of friends in the past, for obvious reasons. So no, I don't know what that feels like to hear that. I understand if you don't want to continue to talk about it while we're here. We can just eat and maybe just enjoy the fact that we aren't alone, I guess."

"I would tell you more, but I'm not ready."

"That's fine. I'm not going to push you, David. Just like how I don't want to be pushed to do things that I don't want to do and be someone that I know I'm not. What you see is what you get from me."

David nods, saying “And I wouldn’t change a thing about you.”

Colleen nods, laying her left hand out on the table as the waiter returns with their drinks. She retracts her hand as both of the glasses are set down. Neither of them has had time to look at the menu so the waiter gives them more time. Both take a gander and when the waiter comes back, both place orders in for something light, likely both of them not being too hungry. With him gone again Colleen stands up and now chooses to remove her coat, revealing that she is wearing a long black skirt with a matching black blouse. Around her neck is a necklace that has a cat dangling from it. David looks to be taking note of it, but doesn’t say a word as Colleen sits back down.

He just looks right at her which gets her to look back at him. Even though there is still clearly some tension in the air, both of them actually seem to be strangely comfortable with each other’s presence. It’s Colleen who breaks the silence, again lowering her voice so only he can hear her.

“Thanks. I also would appreciate it a lot if you don’t try to get Polly to change. Yeah, she isn’t your biggest fan right now. If you don’t feel comfortable around her, don’t approach her and she won’t approach you. It’s not worth tipping over the apple cart. She’s enjoying some success that she really, REALLY needs right now. I’m sure you don’t disagree with me on that.”

“I understand that. I just... I just can’t get the look in her eyes and that smirk on her face out of my mind. That look and smirk when Gavin shoved me off the scaffold after I won the United States Championship shot that both he and Polly clearly wanted.”

“Her green eyes do tend to do that. They’re more powerful than even she thinks. They have always made an impact, on me included. As far as the look she had on her face, she was frustrated. To her it was the last proverbial straw. I’m sure you have been there yourself. Probably there right now.”

David does look down at the table but slowly lifts his own head back up and nods at her.

“If you want my advice David, I’m going to tell you pretty much the same thing I told Polly. Be yourself. If you feel like you need to go rogue in order to find yourself and get the success that you want, then do that. If you feel like you need to control the situation that is in front of you, then do it. If-”

He holds up his right hand, through motions wanting Colleen to stop. She gets the message and cuts her own words off. It’s a few moments before he verbally responds to her.

“You mean like how I got revealed as one of the Foundation the other week on Breakdown?” is what comes out of his mouth, followed by a slight chuckle. “Ironically, Chris’s dad came to me with that one.”

Colleen just sits in her chair now, her elbows up on the table, not having the best of table manners.

“If it makes you feel better about things, I guess. Though I’m not sure how trustworthy the Shinigami Foundation can be. Uncertainty is something that both Polly and I simply cannot have in our lives.”

She pauses before adding “But no matter what happens involving you and them, it doesn’t mean I’m no longer interested in you. Pierce was too fast to judge me. I just don’t want you doing the same.”

Colleen gently tosses her hair a little before straightening it by running her right hand through it, looking in his direction the entire time.

“I’m not going to do that. Remember, I took what you told me to heart. Even if I do something unpopular, just know that I’m doing what I feel is best. I will make sure no matter what I do that I won’t hurt you.”

“And Polly? And Aisling? And Marissa?”

“I won’t hurt them either.”

“Stick to that and maybe we can have more meetings such as this one.”

“I like the sound of that. A lot.”

She nods. It isn’t long after when their food arrives. As they eat, both of them do give glances to one another. Even when they are both done, the mood and tension between them is stable. David offers to pay for the bill. As he checks his own pockets, Colleen tosses some cash out onto the table for the tip.

“You don’t have to do that. I’m paying for you.”

“It’s not for you. It’s for the waiter.”

“I was going to take care of that too.”

“You shouldn’t have to be responsible for everything. I’m not poor, obviously.”

David does the smart thing, telling her “I won’t argue with you.”

“Good. I’m glad you won’t. You’re learning.”

“That I am.”

Colleen gets up and puts her coat back on around her. David follows suit, only having to get up being he isn't wearing any sort of coat. Both head back to the front of the restaurant where David pays. As soon as the transaction is deemed successful and a receipt prints, David signs it and gets a copy of the receipt. As he is getting the copy, Colleen gets a little bit of a head start and heads outside into the crisp autumn air. She takes her time heading back in the direction of the hotel, which gives David the time to catch up with her and walk with her the rest of the way. He just walks alongside her, neither of them going to hold each other's hand. When they arrive back at the lobby, both of them go their separate ways after David tells her "Have a good night Colleen."

"You too."

David heads off down one of the hallways here on the ground floor, meaning he likely has a room on the first floor. Meanwhile Colleen heads for the elevator. As the doors open and she walks inside of it, she sighs. But for once it isn't a bad one.

When the doors open back up she is on the fourth floor. She uses her left fist to knock on the door that is directly across the elevator, meaning the room is not hers. It isn't long before the door opens, with Polly being on the other side. Colleen doesn't even need to say a word as Polly ushers her to come in. After the door is closed and relocked, Colleen tells Polly what she needs to know.

"I met with him."

"Oh. I guess that's good?"

"Yeah. I told him why you feel the way you feel about him. I hope you aren't mad at me for that."

Polly looks at her before dropping a simple "No, I'm not."

"I also told him to avoid you, at least for now. Polly, if you were thinking about doing anything to him, like playing any games, I want to ask you that you don't. He's a decent guy. Kind of similar to yourself actually."

Polly takes off the light jacket she had been wearing, showing that she has a brand new black halter top underneath it. For her bottoms she is in a matching short black frilly skirt. From the looks of it, she too had been out this Halloween Evening. Colleen isn't shy about asking her "Just come back from having a little Halloween fun?"

"Maybe. Maybe I'll tell you more, but you have me intrigued by what you found out. If he's similar to me, then that means he also has someone or multiple people in his life that he just can't trust."

“Um, well, I can’t say much to that. But yes.”

“Interesting. Okay. I’ll bite. I trust you. He leaves me to my business? I will leave him to handle his. One less game that I will have to play. I’m totally fine with that, Coll. Besides, I can see from the look in your eyes that you like him.”

Colleen shrugs Polly’s words off, even though they are true.

“Yeah. Anyways, he’s not feeling like he’s in the best of head space right now either. Hopefully my words and me just being there in the restaurant with him will help him realize the same thing that you already know about me. Even if I may not show it on my cold exterior, I’m not just going to let someone that I care about fall. Not you and not him.”

Polly nods as she now looks at the mirror in the room. She takes out the black hair clip that she has in her hair and allows her hair to fall down to her shoulders. Polly’s green eyes can see Colleen in the mirror.

“Thank you. I’ll be fine going forward. Everyone can think of me in whatever way they please, but each and every single one of them will face the proper consequences when their time comes. Perhaps you should take your own advice and make sure Enigma faces his.”

Colleen thinks on this, but only for a moment before giving Polly a “Yup. Exactly.”, before she makes her way back to the door. Polly can hear her footsteps.

“Going so soon Coll? You can stay if you want. I don’t mind telling you what I have been doing this evening.”

Upon Colleen reading Polly’s face when Polly turns around, Colleen nods and makes herself comfortable after she walks over and hops into the recliner that’s in the room. She waits for Polly to divulge what she is willing to, treating this as her second meeting with a friend on the same night.