



### **You Are the Dark, Chapter Two**

As it was in the aftermath of my first match with ICON wrestling, I was in a panic once the mask came off. The homeless man groaned on the ground, the last bit of my money on his chest. I said nothing as I backed away, letting the shadows take me once again.

And when I felt far enough away, I turned and ran like the city was calling me, needing me to save it. It's what I told myself so that I could feel better. That's what I hoped for at least. I needed to be the hero. I needed to feel that.

But as Vancouver welcomed me, I felt everything besides that. There was no good in me. I was tainted. Desecrated.

That damned mask.

I reached my hotel, breathing heavily as I checked in. As I did, I realized I hadn't removed the gloves yet. I quickly slid them back in the bag, right on the mask, part of me telling myself that would shut it up.

But the sight of the gloves kept my mind racing. It wouldn't stop. As I checked in, I kept a smile on my face, though I was sure I looked strange. I got my room key, and I took the lobby stairs all the way to my floor, not stopping until I got inside my room.

Once inside, I tossed my bag to the floor and jumped in the shower, with my clothes on, lying to myself that it would wash away the sins I committed. All I could see was red, like it wouldn't come off my hands, even without the gloves on.

***You did something for yourself.***

***Just like 'it' said.***

***Is this what you wanted?***

I shook my head as I continued to scrub soap against my hands.

*"He's not sleeping with us," I heard my father say. My parents were no longer in my room. We were separated by my bedroom door. My light was still on, because my mother didn't want me to be afraid.*

*Hearing him shout didn't really help matters, though.*

*"He's afraid," she said, trying to not raise her voice. I could just tell. "You heard him screaming, Thomas."*

*"I know, Carrie Anne. I know," he said, "but the boy needs to learn. There's nothing to be afraid of."*

*"He will learn," I heard her say. "But you're just..." she sighed, "we're just pushing this on him. We're not easing him into it."*

*"He needs to learn the way that I learned. My dad made me sleep in our downstairs basement, away from everyone. I'm not doing that, at least."*

*"You're not your dad, Thomas. You're Scott's dad. You need to learn to be patient."*

*"Don't tell me how to be a parent, Carrie Anne. I'm just as good at it as you are. You're no better than me."*

*I listened as my father stormed off to the other end of the house, slamming a door behind him. A few moments later, my mother walked back into my room. "Hey sweetheart," she said with a smile, even though I could tell she'd been crying. Her eyes gave her away.*

*I never liked when my mom cried.*

*I loved my dad, but she was my best friend.*

*"Are you okay," I asked, my throat hurt from screaming.*

*“Oh, of course, I am. Here,” she said as she sat down beside me in my bed, “let’s get you to sleep.”*

*“Will you please stay with me?” I asked before my mother even had the chance to tuck me in.*

*She hesitated for a few moments before replying, “Is that what you want?”*

*“Yes,” I said. “I really saw someone in my room. I’m afraid to be alone.”*

*“Then, of course, I will,” my mother pulled the covers over us both as I scooted over to give her some room. She pulled me into her arms and kissed me on the top of my head. “Is that better?”*

I threw my wet clothes in a trash bag, leaving them in the sink outside the bathroom, before finishing my shower. I then got into a tank top and a pair of gym shorts because securing myself on the hotel bed. It was comfortable, but with everything that had transpired, I was nowhere close to that level.

“You should calm down.” I heard it said. “You’re going to give yourself a heart attack, Scott.”

I shook my head, trying to tune it out again. ***Get a grip, Scott. Get a grip.*** I tried to find something good on TV, but there was nothing. I found a channel that offered me the chance to watch *Apocalypse*, but the very thought made me want to punch something, anything, anyone, all over again.

“Let’s do that!” the damned mask cried out.

Shaking my head again, I whimpered, “No, no. I don’t need that.”

“Surely, you would,” it continued. “If you had your fair pick of the litter. You could hurt Ace. Hudson. What about your old friend, James? You could make him realize that he’s at the bottom of the pecking order of things now. I bet you’d hurt Selena and Deanna, wouldn’t you? What about that Luz bitch?”

I sat up in my bed and walked over to the bag. I saw the mask but moved it over and grabbed something else. My phone.

***FaceTime the boys.***

I figured I’d end up having to deal with some type of nonsense from Imogen, but also felt it’d be worth it if I could speak to Daniel and Victor. I just hoped they were awake.

When Imogen answered, I got my answer, and my heart sank.

“What the fuck are you calling for at this hour? We’re trying to sleep, Scott! Jesus!”

“S-s-sorry,” I said, wiping my eyes before the tears had the chance to launch themselves down my cheeks. “I didn’t know what time it was. I just wanted to see the kids.”

“Are you alright? You look like you’re about to off yourself.”

***I’m so tired. I just want to sleep.***

*“Hey Scott,” I heard his voice. He was Marshall Timms. He bullied me all the time. He was very good at getting to me when the teachers weren’t looking. “Did you bring any lunch money today?” Taking my lunch money was his motive the majority of the time. “Hey! I asked you a question! Are you listening to me, Scott?”*

***I just want to sleep.***

*Even though my mother slept in the bed with me the night before, I struggled to rest. I felt like I kept hearing that scratching noise every time it seemed I was about to doze off. Marshall had replaced the scratching noise, however. I’d never been one to sleep in school except when we had nap time. We were just a long way from that.*

*It was still dark outside and there was part of me that was just waiting for that figure to appear in the corner of the room, where there was a glass door, and we could see right outside the school, near the entrance.*

***What if it shows up and waves at me? What if it walks inside the school then? It would come straight for me, wouldn’t it?***

*Just then, I felt a sharp pain in the back of my ear. I reached back and felt another pair of fingers. I pulled away and turned to find Marshall towering above me.*

*“You’re not going to ignore me.” I looked around. All my classmates were playing around in their designated areas. My teacher was outside the room talking to another instructor.*

*“Leave me alone,” I said.*

*“Are you scared, Scotty?”*

*“I said leave me alone.”*

*Marshall balled up his fist as he stepped closer, and I heard him say, “Don’t say a word.”*

*“I’m just going through a lot,” I managed to say. Imogen looked at me, and I could see through the screen just how awake she actually wasn’t. “Seeing the boys would’ve helped, I think. I’m sorry.”*

“Okay, listen...” I watched as she sat up in bed. Imogen yawned and stretched before turning a light on, so I could see her better, “I’m not waking the kids up but,” another yawn escaped her, “I’ll talk to you. If something’s going on, I’m here to talk. Always. You know that,” she said, which shocked me because I’d made her out to be such a bitch in my would-be manuscript as Juice called it.

“I appreciate it,” I said with a smile that faded as quickly as it appeared, due to my mind filling up images of what I’d gotten into just a short time before. I didn’t know what was going to happen with the man I’d never met, or to me. Whatever happened, he didn’t deserve it. I knew that I did, however.

“Don’t think that way,” I heard it say. My bag rested just outside the bathroom. It was zipped up but that didn’t seem to stop the mask. “You did what you needed to do. You cut loose. You’re too busy trying to do the right thing all the time and it’s gotten you nowhere, Scott. There’s nothing wrong with reveling in the dark sometimes.”

“So, what’s going on?” Imogen asked.

The mask continued, “And I must say...you seemed to enjoy yourself. You don’t see it now, but the longer you stay in the dark, the more you’ll adjust.”

I looked back at Imogen, “I’m not sure. I think I’m starting to crack in all honesty.”

“Why do you think that?” she asked.

The mask did, too. “Yes. Why do you think that, Scott?”

*Sitting outside the principal’s office, I could hear my parents just as I heard them outside my room the night before. They weren’t yelling at each other, this time. They were actually calm, even as my father said, “He’s never acted like this before. He’s never even been in a fight to my knowledge.”*

*My mother chimed in, “No. Scott’s such a sweet boy. I know he didn’t sleep well last night.”*

*“Why’s that?” The principal, Mr. Anderson, asked.*

*My mother went to speak but my father cut her off, “We’re making him sleep in his own room now. He didn’t do so well last night. It was the first night, but...You don’t think that’d have anything to do with this...this fight, do you?”*

*Mr. Anderson sighed, “I’m not sure. Did he have nightmares or anything?”*

*My mother tried to reply but my father interjected once again, “Yes. He said he saw a figure in his bedroom. He was screaming bloody murder.”*

*“And I managed to get him to sleep,” my mother finally said. I could tell she was upset, like she’d been waiting to say something, “I had to stay with him, but he finally drifted off to sleep. I think that’s the only reason this happened. It’s not like he’s like this every single day. I’ve no doubt it’s nothing more than a one-time occurrence.”*

*“And maybe it is,” Mr. Anderson said, “but we can’t have him beating up other kids. I know boys will be boys, but still. He really hurt this kid, Marshall Timms.”*

*“It won’t happen again,” my mother said.*

*“Yes,” my father added. I could sense something in his voice. It wasn’t good. Not at all. “I’ll make sure of it.”*

I sighed, “Do you think I’m a good person, Imogen? I know we had our ups and downs, but do you think I’m a good person?”

“I mean, I guess,” she scoffed, looking confused by my question. “You were always great with the boys. And you still are as far as I can tell. But when it came to us,” Imogen shrugged, “you kinda sucked.”

“You don’t have to take that, Scott. I’m sure you know that,” it said ever so confidently. I envied it for that aspect.

“Why do you say that?” I asked her.

“Well,” another shrug. Imogen then rubbed her face, appearing as if she wasn’t sure how to say what she wanted, “Are you sure you want to talk about this?”

“Yes,” I insisted. “Please. Tell me.”

“You never opened up to me, Scott. I was always open and honest with you. Shit, I don’t know much about your childhood, or your life. Hell, do you even remember why we split in the first place?”

“Wait. What?” Then, I was confused. “Of course, I do...”

“Well, if you do, let me say this,” Imogen glared at me. Even through the screen, I could see hurt and anger, “don’t sit there and make up some bullshit like you normally do.”

“What do you mean?”

“Are you telling me that you don’t remember making up these stories in your head? Like when you went out with my dad, and you nearly killed you both in a car wreck? Do you remember

your reasoning for that?" I was at a loss, but Imogen wasn't, "you said people were attacking you guys at some convenience store and you saved him before speeding off."

I looked down as the mask said, "So, there is a darkness in you. A certain kind of madness. What did I tell you?"

"Are you taking your meds, Scott? You know that I need you to be honest with me about that."

### ***Meds?***

*"I don't want to take it!" I cried out as my father struck me with his leather belt. My mother screamed outside my bedroom door.*

*"You're going to take your damned medicine, son. It'll help you sleep. It'll stop this nonsense. You won't see whatever it is that you think you're seeing! Now," I heard him rattle the pill bottle, "take it!"*

*"I don't want to take it!" He struck me again, and again, and again. Again, and again, and again.*

"I'm sorry," I said to her. "I shouldn't have called."

"Scott, you need to talk to me."

"I'm sorry that I called," I said before hanging up and tossing my phone to the floor. "I'm sorry," I approached my bag, reaching down and grabbing the mask.

*"I'm sorry, baby boy. Just take this," my mother said as she slipped a pill onto my tongue. Down my throat it went, along with water.*

*"I'm sorry, mama. I'll be better," I said. "I'll be better. I'll be better."*

I could hear my phone ringing, but I sat on the couch, in the den area of my suite. I slid the mask on, and I closed my eyes, and before I knew it, the world was tuned out. I felt better.

Better in the dark.

"It's better inside here, isn't it?" the mask asked, the words rattling in my head like the pills in the bottle my father held.

"Yes," I exhaled sharply, feeling a weight sliding off me, "it is."

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**The dark ain't so bad...**

**So, this is how this will go. Selena is going to spend ten minutes talking about how she lost at Trios. How Blake Mason is going to pay. She will run him down, and run down Xander, Amelia, and Billy Heaven.**

**She will remind everyone of how this is Hudson's fault, too, since he wanted the 'Wild, Wild West.' She'll also remind everyone of how she has a contract for a World title rematch, and how she will do what she thinks she's always done, which is save SCW.**

**Does that sound about right?**

**And then, she'll get to me. She'll talk about how I've made a little bit of noise since my return. She'll talk about how I had a problem with her and the way she conducted herself. Same with CHBK.**

**She'll tell me that I'm out of my depth. That I'm out of her league.**

**She'll probably even bring up my match against Deanna, and how if I was as good as I've claimed to be, then I'd be the United States Champion. That I could've put Deanna away before the Enigma made his presence felt. Hell, I'm sure she'll bring up how I've come and gone so many times, and she'll ask where I was for her battles against this faction and that stable.**

**That is her M.O.**

**That is how she runs down her opponents. Sure, she's heard cheers for the majority of her career, but let's be honest, Selena. You've always been a little dark, haven't you?**

**Like me, you've worn a mask before, and I'm not talking about your return at the End of the Year Special.**

**You had your True-Believers, but as I said, you've always been a little bit dark, haven't you?**

**Do you remember our match back in 2018? It was for the TV Championship, and I was under the name of Beard back then. I remember everything. I remember the lies you wrote out to your Believers back then, more specifically.**

**You felt like a wrestler again leading up to our match. You'd endured so much apparently in the ring, but you beat Blake, and you felt like a wrestler again. You weren't worried about winning streaks and breaking records. That was for Past, Present, Future. That was for Dark Fantasy.**



**That was when you wore your mask. Now that it's off...you constantly talk about having the record for longest reigning SCW World Champion. You talk about how someone like Polly could be a main event performer, but it wouldn't happen against you. Good god, do you keep gum on standby to keep your breath fresh from all that shit you talk?**

**But let's not stop there, Selena.**

**You brought up how I'd slander you to gain Ace's favor. That I was doing all I could to stay popular. Isn't that something you've done? You sided with Regan to keep your relevancy up. Hell froze over, didn't it? And slander? You crapped all over the World title reigns of Asher and Kandis, because they weren't you. Once again, this is the new you. The one without the mask.**

**That is why the fans boo you, as I'm sure you're well aware, no matter what you say or how you present yourself.**

**But the one thing that has stood out in my head all these years is that you talked about how I changed my ways, and how I'd talk about how despite riding this wave of momentum, there was something missing. A key ingredient that didn't seem to accompany my recipe for success.**

**And what was that, Selena?**

**Crushing lows.**

**Your lows were having to tell your believers that you were sorry for losing matches. From getting choked out by Cassidy so Ace could be champion. From losing the U.S. title. The World title. And all these other things, but to you, I hadn't experienced any sort of low. Nothing had crushed me, right?**

**Well, as I said months ago when I returned, the mask is off, Selena.**

**You lost a title. I lost both of my parents. They died, Selena. You hurt your ankle and were on the shelf for three weeks. Your wound healed, but mine hasn't.**

**All you wanted was for fans to ask their friends if they had seen the most recent Selena Frost match. All I wanted was a hint of normalcy in my life, but my crushing low was growing up in foster care, bouncing from group home to group home.**

**And let's be real. Even if your believers didn't catch your wrestling match, you'd be sure to remind them with the ten minute openings to your promos. Everyone gets a recap!**

**But not me, Selena. I just had to endure crushing low after crushing low. I've done it outside the ring, where there is this little important thing that happens, that matters...and that is real FUCKING life!**

**That's where I'm coming from. I endured losing my parents at a young age. I kept going. Because I endure. I've not experienced success in SCW. I nearly had my career ended. But I've endured. I had to sit back and watch this place go through shit storm after shit storm, and there were members of the roster who wanted to call it quits but I pushed them forward. I told them to keep going, because like me, I knew that they could endure.**

**And I'll endure at Breakdown. I'll endure your words beforehand, too. You'll tell me that I'm in over my head with Ace, just as I am with you. That last week showed that.**

**That I'm in the dark about a lot of things. But I'm starting to see clearly in these shadows of mine. I see that I'm flawed and that you are too, no matter how bad you want to come off like Kennedy Street. Flawless, right? Same could be said of Ace, but that's another story for another time.**

**I'm focused on our story. I've waited for this for a long time, Selena. I'm penning our ending, and it's going to end in my favor. It ends with you experiencing yet another crushing low. Here in the dark, I can see me putting you on the shelf permanently, and maybe it'll come to that. If I have to fight dirty then so be it. It's the Wild West, remember?**

**So yeah, the dark ain't so bad. There's a darkness in me, and I kinda like it.**

**We'll see how it goes in here, and I'll see you out there, in the ring, where I'll make a believer out of you, whether you want to be...or not.**