

SHADOWSIDE

Written by

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EXT. SKYSCRAPER ROOF - NIGHT

COLIN, 18, immaculate white suit, blue tie and pale hair, stands at the top of a skyscraper staring out over a city skyline. His hands are in his pockets. The windows and cars fill the black night with glimmering lights. His mouth is drawn tight in a stern expression.

COLIN (V.O.)  
Hey, Blake. It's been a while. I  
know we didn't part on the best of  
terms...

Colin takes a step forward. His feet hang halfway off the roof's edge. The wind blows his blue tie. Colin stands like a king, surveying his kingdom.

COLIN (V.O.)  
...but you're still the closest  
thing to family I have left. I need  
to see you. There's a lot that's  
been kept from you, but it's time  
that came to light.

Colin takes a step off the building. His blue eyes narrow with grim focus. He cuts through the air like a knife, hands in his pockets as the lights of the city blink out. Colin's face is overtaken by shadow as he disappears into thin air.

COLIN (V.O.)  
We'll catch up as soon as you're  
back in town --

INT./EXT. TRAIN - DAY

BLAKE, 19, dark jacket, black jeans and a colorful kitschy t-shirt, reads from a letter in their hands bearing Colin's words.

COLIN (V.O.)  
Let's meet at the old theater. I'll  
be waiting for you inside. See you  
soon. Your Brother, Colin Luman.

Blake folds the letter and slips it into their messenger bag.

BLAKE  
Seriously, who still sends letters?

Blake looks out of the train's window. The sprawling cityscape of New Orphus is rapidly approaching. Colin rests their head on the window, shutting their eyes.

INT. TRAIN STATION - DAY

Blake strolls off the train onto a bustling platform. They take the time to stretch their arms and roll their shoulders.

BLAKE

Did you miss me, New Orphus?

EXT. DREAMTIME THEATER - DAY

Blake stands before a large decrepit movie theater. It looms like an old southern manor, long abandoned to the elements. Even the "NOW CLOSED" sign hangs askew on the chain link fence. A large sign that once read "DREAMTIME THEATER" still stands on the building's fading facade. However its "A" now hangs pitifully by a thread, and the "I" has fallen to the ground.

BLAKE

What happened? This place used to be packed.

Blake weaves their fingers through the fence. They hang their shoulders, looking up at the urban decay.

BLAKE (CONT'D)

Looks like the city forgot about both of us.

Blake looks around.

No one is watching. No one else has been on this street for a long time.

Blake climbs up the fence and hops over, making their way into the theater.

INT. DREAMTIME THEATER LOBBY - DAY

Blake pushes open the velvet-lined theater doors. The old doors groan in protest, but slowly swing back. Blake tentatively walks into the dark theater, trying to feel around with their hands.

BLAKE

Hello? Colin? I guess I must have beaten him here. Weird, he's Mr. Punctual.

The lights of the lobby suddenly flare to life, illuminating the red carpets and yellow walls of the theater, lined with dust covered posters.

Blake jumps and looks around.

BLAKE (CONT'D)  
Oh, ha-ha! Aren't you a little old  
for hide and seek?

Blake places their hands on their hips, waiting for a response.

BLAKE (CONT'D)  
(beat)  
Hello?

Blake walks through the lobby, arms tight to their chest. There are two halls before them. The lights on the left hallway turn on as Blake looks to them.

BLAKE (CONT'D)  
Okay... down the rabbit hole then.

INT. DREAMTIME THEATER HALLWAY - DAY

Blake follows the hall, glancing behind their back now and again. The sound of a film projector grows louder as they approach a set of doors with "IV" emblazoned above them.

BLAKE  
We doing a private show? How did  
Colin arrange all of this?

Blake pushes the doors open. Unlike the front doors they open silently and smoothly.

INT. DREAMTIME THEATER CINEMA FOUR - DAY

Blake looks around the theater. Empty again. The screen shows nothing but a black rectangle slowly swirling and distorting. Blake pouts, trying to look frustrated instead of nervous. Blake looks up to the projectionist's room. They glimpse a shadowy figure standing there.

Blake smiles.

BLAKE  
There you are.

INT. DREAMTIME THEATER PROJECTION ROOM FOUR - DAY

Blake throws open the door to the projectionist's room, grinning from ear to ear.

BLAKE

Aha!

Blake points their finger forward at... nobody.

The small room is empty, with only the projector running. It hums, projecting a cone of darkness through the air and onto the screen.

Blake eyes the odd projector and moves a finger into the dark beam. The moment their finger touches the darkness, their hand stretches like putty.

BLAKE (CONT'D)

What's going on?

Blake tries to pull back, but their arm is sucked in, as if they'd plunged their hand into quicksand. Blake struggles, but soon they're sucked into the dark beam, slurped up like a noodle.

INT. SHADOW THEATER PROJECTION ROOM - DAY

Blake groans, placing a hand on their head. They're sprawled out on a faintly glowing violet floor in a large rotunda. The walls are smooth and dark, as if they were carved from solid onyx. The door has a small diamond shaped window.

Blake pulls themselves up, walks over to the door and peeks out.

The SHADOW-WOLF, a large dog-like creature tramps down the halls. Its body is jet black. Tendrils waft like the stingers of a jellyfish from the back of its lupine head. Six pale circles of light resembling eyes drift along its head, occasionally submerging into its dark surface before resurfacing.

Blake covers his mouth, stifling a gasp. The shadow-wolf growls, sniffing around the door.

Blake steps back instinctively, trying not to tremble.

The shadow-wolf opens its mouth. The splitting jaws spread down its throat forming a massive maw of ruby red teeth.

ABAGAIL (O.S.)

Get away!

The shadow-wolf charges away, in the direction of the shout.

Blake slumps to the floor, shaking. They take a deep breath before rushing over to the projector.

BLAKE

What the hell? Take me home. Take  
me home!

Blake tries to get the inert projector to turn on, running  
their hands along the projector to find a switch.

ABAGAIL (O.S.)

Help!

Blake pauses. Blake bites their lip and looks back toward the  
door. They turn back to the projector with desperation in  
their eyes. With gritted teeth, Blake tears themselves away and  
runs through the door.

BLAKE

This is such a stupid idea. So  
stupid...

INT. SHADOW THEATER ANTECHAMBER - DAY

Blake runs through the hall and emerges in a large circular  
room lined with doors, like the hub of a wheel. A large  
chandelier bathes the room in an alien light. Between door  
"I" and door "XII" stands a white staircase leading upwards.

ABAGAIL, 18, pale skin, red hooded dress runs from the shadow-  
wolf.

ABAGAIL

Stay back!

Abigail turns to the wolf and holds up her hands. A wave of  
small pale sparkles fly forward from her palms and form a  
shield of glowing light.

The Shadow-wolf lunges forward, catching the shield in its  
massive jaws.

The shield cracks and shatters like glass. Abigail locks eyes  
with Blake.

ABAGAIL (CONT'D)

Help!

Blake takes a step backwards, trembling.

The wolf charges forward, its body twisting at odd angles, as  
if it were made of ink. Its fangs clamp down on Abagails arm.

Abigail lets out a shriek as the wolf drags her to the  
ground.

Blake's eyes go wide. They charge forward.

BLAKE  
Leave her alone!

Blake swings their bag like a flail, striking the wolf on the side of its head.

The wolf's head bursts open into a bundle of tendrils. Abigail wriggles free. The wolf's head reforms, looking none the worse for wear.

Blake locks eyes with Abigail.

BLAKE (CONT'D)  
Run!

The wolf lunges at Blake.

Blake raises their arms with a scream. The wolf is too fast for them to outrun and too strong to fight.

Blake is dragged to the ground as the wolf's fangs plunge into their chest. Blake lets out a blood choked scream.

VISION - EMPTY VOID

Blake floats in an empty void. Streams of red pour out from their chest.

ANIMUS(V.O.)  
There's nowhere left to run.

Blake looks around in the emptiness. The color is fading from their face.

BLAKE  
Where am I?

ANIMUS (V.O.)  
Nowhere to hide.

BLAKE  
Help me! This isn't fair. I haven't managed to do anything yet. I haven't managed to be anyone.

ANIMUS (V.O.)  
Help? Very well, I'll help you fight or fade. What is your choice?

Blake bites their lip, grasping at the red ribbons flowing from their chest.

BLAKE

Fight. Let me at least fight!

Blake grasps one of the ribbons. It hardens forming into a red chain. The chain glows brighter until its light eclipses the void.

BACK TO SCENE - INT. SHADOW THEATER ANTECHAMBER - DAY

A fist emerges from Blake's shadow. The fist slams into the wolf, launching it into the air.

Blake stands, as if an unseen force has dragged them up. Their head hangs limp, but their body is enveloped in a blood red aura.

Blake's shadow surges upward, like a pool of living ink. It congeals and solidifies into ANIMUS, a tall hooded figure connected to Blake by a red chain. Its arms are long and angular. Its legs are slender, terminating in sharp points rather than feet. Its face is smooth and wide eyed, like a marionette.

Blake's shadow roars and grabs the wolf by the tail. It slams the wolf into the ground in a frenzy before tossing it at the path labeled "IV." Animus opens its mouth and fires a crimson beam into the shadow-wolf. The beam causes an explosion, collapsing the tunnel. Animus melts into Blake's shadows once again. Blake collapses, like a puppet with its strings cut.

Abigail rushes to Blake's side. Her hands glow and she places them on Blake's chest. The wounds of the wolf's attack slowly recede.

BLAKE

I'm alive? How?

Blake stirs and slowly sits up. They give Abigail a nod.

BLAKE (CONT'D)

Thanks. I guess you ended up saving me.

Abigail holds out her hand to Blake. Blake blinks in confusion.

BLAKE (CONT'D)

Huh? Oh, my name is Blake.

Blake reaches out and shakes Abigail's hand.

BLAKE (CONT'D)

Nice to meet you --



ABAGAIL

Abigail.

Blake nods and stands up.

BLAKE

Abigail. Great. So where exactly  
are we, Abigail?

Abigail stands as well, floating an inch off the ground. The hem of her red dress billows as if it were made of mist. She stares at Blake, like a cat eyes a mouse.

ABAGAIL

An answer for an answer. We're  
trapped on the shadowside. Now, how  
did you do...whatever that was.

Blake pats their chest, finding it healed. They look around the room, avoiding Abagails gaze.

BLAKE

Shadowside?

Abigail nods.

ABAGAIL

A tree in the sun will cast a  
shadow, right?

Abigail holds out her hand, palm first, to Blake.

ABAGAIL (CONT'D)

Well, imagine there's a spiritual  
sun. The minds and hearts of people  
cast this place as a shadow...

Abigail turns her hand around, showing Blake the back of her hand. There's a lace-like glowing glyph emblazoned on the back of her hand. It hums with energy.

ABAGAIL (CONT'D)

... the other side of the mundane  
world.

Blake shakes their head.

BLAKE

You say that like it's obvious.

ABAGAIL

It's my turn. How did you do that?

BLAKE

Do what?

Abagail mimes Anima's brutal uppercut, her expression studious and stoic.

ABAGAIL

How did you control a shadow.

BLAKE

Control...

Blake looks down at their hands. Their arm is emblazoned with a scar or tattoo resembling a chain. Blake runs a thumb along the mark, but it doesn't wipe away.

BLAKE (CONT'D)

I don't know what to tell you it just... happened. Maybe it's an effect of this place?

Blake gestures around themselves.

BLAKE (CONT'D)

Look, we'll have all the time in the world to discuss it when we get back to the normal side.

Blake turns to the collapsed tunnel. Their shoulder slump.

BLAKE (CONT'D)

Oh.

Abagail crosses her arms.

ABAGAIL

Yeah, oh. You don't remember doing that either?

Blake nervously rubs the back of their head.

BLAKE

You wouldn't happen to know another way out, would you?

Abagail lets out a sigh. She furrows her brow, thinking.

ABAGAIL

Getting in is the easy part. Getting out? That's much harder. The only exit I know of is at the top of this...place.

BLAKE  
"Shadow Theater."

Abagails head perks up.

ABAGAIL  
What?

Blake shrugs as they begin to pace around the room in a wide slow circle.

BLAKE  
You said we're on the Shadowside. I got here through the theater, so this is the "Shadow Theater" right?

Abigail smiles a little.

ABAGAIL  
Very well, "...this Shadow Theater."

Blake rolls their shoulders and takes a deep breath.

BLAKE  
Do you mind if we stick together?

Abigail looks surprised.

ABAGAIL  
We've just met. How do you know I'm not dangerous?

Blake crosses their arms as they turn toward the staircase.

BLAKE  
Where do you belong, Abigail?

Abigail tilts her head.

ABAGAIL  
Excuse me?

BLAKE  
Everything has a purpose. Everyone has a place. Where is yours?

Abigail shakes her head.

ABAGAIL  
I'm not sure.

Blakes smiles sadly, trying to seem at ease.

BLAKE

Yeah, I'm the same. Wherever I belong though, it's not here. My brother, Colin, is waiting for me in the real world. I'm sure there's someone waiting for you, too.

Blake turns back to face Abigail. They hold out their fist.

BLAKE (CONT'D)

If we wait here, we'll just be attacked again. If we go up, at least we have a shot. I know it's a lot to ask, but will you back me up?

Abigail slowly holds out her fist. She takes a second before bumping it against Blake's. Abigail floats to Blake's side and nods.

ABAGAIL

Well, if you insist, we can go together. You clearly have no idea what's going on. If I let you go alone, you'll end up consumed by shadows.

Blake chuckles.

BLAKE

The longer I can avoid that, the better. C'mon, it's time for us to go back.

Blake takes their first step up the staircase, Abigail floating at their side.

BLAKE (CONT'D)

Back to where we belong.