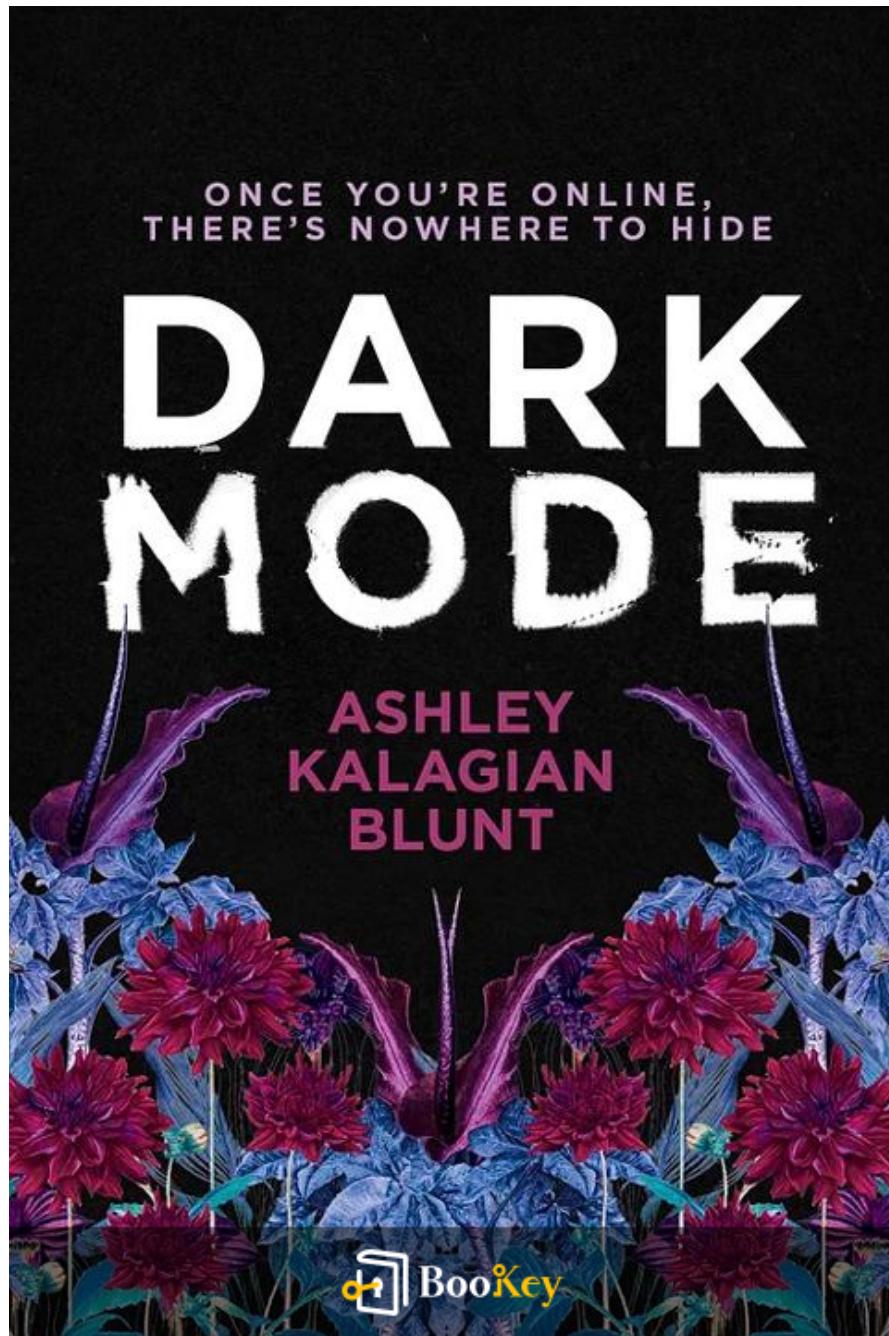


Dark Mode PDF (Limited Copy)

Ashley Kalagian-Blunt



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Dark Mode Summary

Navigating the shadows of mental health and identity.

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About the book

In "Dark Mode," Ashley Kalagian-Blunt masterfully navigates the complex terrain of mental health, identity, and the profound impacts of social media on our lives, inviting readers to confront the shadows that linger beneath our curated online personas. Through a gripping narrative that intertwines her personal experiences with the stark realities of digital existence, Kalagian-Blunt illuminates the often unseen struggles behind the screens, challenging us to reconsider the ways we interact with technology and each other. As the story unfolds, we are drawn into a world where the boundaries of reality blur, offering a poignant reflection on the balance between engagement and alienation in an increasingly connected, yet isolating, society. This captivating exploration serves as both a mirror and a call to action, urging readers to seek authenticity in a world that thrives on facades.

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About the author

Ashley Kalagian-Blunt is a talented writer and storyteller known for her keen ability to explore complex themes and dynamic characters in her work. Armed with a background in both writing and social justice, she weaves together narratives that illuminate the human experience, often drawing from her own rich multicultural heritage. With a passion for diving into the darker aspects of life, her debut novel, "Dark Mode," showcases her unique voice and sharp insight into the intricacies of mental health and resilience. A graduate of the esteemed Australian Writers' Centre, Kalagian-Blunt has developed a reputation for her engaging prose and thought-provoking explorations of identity and society, making her a powerful presence in contemporary literature.

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Chapter 1 Summary: Part 1 Nature/Fantasy

In the opening chapter of "Dark Mode" by Ashley Kalagian-Blunt, we meet Reagan, an observant and uneasy character who stumbles upon a gruesome scene while jogging in a quiet Sydney laneway early on a Sunday morning. As she turns a corner, a spider web brushes against her face, leading her to a shocking discovery: a dismembered corpse lying in the sunlight, grotesquely posed and seemingly untouched by blood. The woman's body has been horrifically mutilated, with missing limbs and a grotesque smile, dripping with a sinister atmosphere. Reagan stands frozen, grappling with disbelief and dread as she processes the sight of the young woman, whose disheveled hair and pale skin spark unsettling similarities to herself.

As panic sets in, Reagan battles an inner turmoil rooted in fear of involvement and potential repercussions. The surrounding area feels desolate, devoid of immediate help or witnesses; the streets lack surveillance, making her feel isolated and exposed. Not wanting to draw attention to herself, she suppresses the instinct to call the police, weighing her limited options against the implications of a formal report. Her thoughts are frantic; she contemplates the consequences of being linked to the crime scene while recalling snippets from her life—little related details that amplify her anxiety.

The visceral imagery and pungent smells of decay emphasize the horror of

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the moment, as Reagan battles conflicting emotions of guilt and self-preservation. As she observes the body, she feels the unsettling connection between herself and the lifeless woman, adding a psychological layer to the horror she witnesses. Despite the chaotic thoughts swirling in her mind, she decides to turn away, running from the grim reality she just encountered and a potential confrontation with the authorities that could unveil her hidden past.

Reagan's dash away from the scene symbolizes not just her physical escape but also her internal struggle and determination to distance herself from the grim fate that similarly haunts her life. The chapter closes with hints of a deeper connection to a shadowy figure from her past, leaving readers with an eerie sense of anticipation and foreboding, as we wonder about the implications of this event on Reagan's future. The themes of identity, fear, and the burdens of secrets loom large, setting the tone for a suspenseful and psychologically complex narrative that will unfold in the pages to come.

Element	Summary
Character Introduction	Reagan, an observant and anxious character, finds a dismembered corpse while jogging in Sydney.
Setting	A quiet Sydney laneway on a Sunday morning, evoking a sinister atmosphere.
Discovery	Reagan encounters a grotesquely posed, mutilated body, which resembles her unsettlingly.

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Element	Summary
Inner Conflict	Panic ensues as Reagan fears involvement and considers the consequences of notifying authorities.
Isolation	The area is desolate with no witnesses, amplifying her feelings of exposure and dread.
Psychological Layer	Reagan feels a connection to the victim, adding to her guilt and anxiety.
Action Taken	Despite her distress, she decides to run away from the scene, symbolizing her desire to escape her past.
Thematic Elements	The chapter explores themes of identity, fear, and the burden of secrets.
Ending	Hints at a deeper connection to a shadowy figure from Reagan's past, creating an eerie anticipation.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: Facing our fears can lead to personal growth.

Critical Interpretation: Imagine yourself in Reagan's shoes, frozen with shock as you confront a terrifying reality. In that moment, you're not just a witness to horror but are also touched by it, grappling with the instinct to flee versus the urge to confront. This pivotal scene reminds you that moments of fear and anxiety often act as catalysts for change. By acknowledging the darkness within or around us, rather than running from it, we can cultivate resilience and fortitude. Embracing our fears paves the way for a greater understanding of ourselves and propels us toward transformation, urging you to step into the light of your own potential, even when the shadows seem overwhelming.

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Chapter 2 Summary: 1

In Chapter 2 of "Dark Mode," Reagan is navigating a turbulent day filled with unsettling reminders of a past trauma. The story opens with her groggy morning routine, leading her to discover a white negligee in her apartment corridor, which triggers a surge of fear and paranoia about a former threat. This incident evokes memories of a recent murder of a woman who bears an eerie resemblance to her, stirring thoughts that she might not be free of danger after all.

At her workplace, a garden centre, Reagan tries to focus amidst the oppressive heat and her unsettling thoughts. She encounters Ed, a coworker who gruesomely describes the murder, further deepening her anxiety. As she manages her shop, the weight of financial stress is evident; she discovers her account has been suspended due to overdue payments, raising the stakes for her struggling business.

The chapter captures Reagan's isolation, demonstrated by her dwindling communication with her friend Min. When Reagan finally manages to connect with Min, the conversation shows her reluctance to share her fears and struggles, fearing Min's well-meaning but potentially overwhelming positivity. The tension escalates when Reagan returns to her apartment later, only to find police cars stationed outside, which heightens her paranoia about being connected to the body she found.

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As she tries to make her way past the officers, their blocking presence solidifies her fear that they are there for her, fueling her anxiety over the implications of her past. Ultimately, she finds herself cornered when they question her about her whereabouts on the day of the murder, pushing her further into a state of panic and uncertainty. The chapter intricately weaves themes of trauma, fear, and the struggle to maintain a semblance of normalcy against the backdrop of her chaotic memories and current circumstances.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: The struggle to maintain a semblance of normalcy amidst chaos

Critical Interpretation: Imagine you are in a situation where the weight of past trauma and current pressures feels insurmountable. Like Reagan, you may find yourself overwhelmed by fears that echo through your daily life, blocking your path to peace. However, this chapter illustrates that even in the darkest times, the act of confronting your reality instead of retreating into isolation can lead to growth. Embracing your struggles can cultivate resilience, inspiring you to navigate your challenges with strength. Just as Reagan faces the chaos, you too can find the courage within to meet life's adversities head-on, forging a path toward healing and stability.

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Chapter 3: 2

As Chapter 3 unfolds, we follow Reagan on a warm evening as she traverses the bustling Harbour Bridge towards Balmoral, feeling the weight of the day behind her. Upon arriving at her friend Min's picturesque home, she's greeted by Min's mother, Hyun-sook, a warm presence cradling her grandchild, Dashiell. The interaction is tender and familial, with Reagan feeling the comforting weight of the baby as they share small talk, reflecting on the vibrant garden that envelops the house.

Inside, the atmosphere is full of life and love. Min is energetic and flamboyant—so different from Hyun-sook's calm demeanor. Their interaction quickly turns humorous as Min shows off adorable pictures of her daughter, Maisey, leaving Reagan nostalgic but slightly out of sync with the family's fast-paced life revolving around parenthood. Despite the warmth of their reunion, Reagan struggles internally, feeling a sense of displacement as Min juggles motherhood and her busy career in journalism.

The narrative takes a darker turn when Reagan tries to bring up a recent local

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Chapter 4 Summary: 3

In Chapter 4 of "Dark Mode," Reagan finds herself in a tense meeting with Emil Wojciech, a bank manager whose stern demeanor indicates that her financial troubles are reaching a boiling point. Emil, characterized by his waxy skin and oversized forehead, quickly cuts to the chase—her business, the garden center Voodoo Lily, is failing to show signs of improvement, and he's less than optimistic about her ability to defer repayments any longer. Despite her attempts to project optimism, it becomes clear that without significant changes, she risks losing everything.

As they sit across from each other, Emil presents her with stark realities: the garden center's minimal web presence is a glaring weakness in today's digital-first landscape. He offers her marketing advice that feels condescending, treating her like a novice and framing her as a "twenty-six-year-old dinosaur" for her outdated methods. Reagan, feeling both desperate and judged, is caught between the need to protect her business and the frustration of being patronized.

Emil's suggestions for improvement feel overwhelming, and as he talks about creating a marketing plan and leveraging their business app, she grapples with the fear that owning Voodoo Lily—her passion and her livelihood—might slip away if she can't adapt. The atmosphere in the room is charged with anxiety; she clutches the padded armrest, torn between her

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desire to make a change and the reality of her situation.

Emil's offer for her to return with a marketing strategy acts as a lifeline, hinting at a possible way forward, yet she realizes the uphill battle ahead. His insistence that just thinking about the changes won't suffice resonates deeply with her fears. The chapter captures Reagan's internal struggle and the stakes of her precarious position, highlighting themes of vulnerability, the pressures of modern entrepreneurship, and the challenge of evolving in a fast-paced world. As she leaves the meeting, she feels the weight of her responsibility and the potential loss looming over her beloved garden center.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: The importance of adapting to change in a digital world.

Critical Interpretation: Imagine standing at a crossroads, where the future of your passion, work, or even your identity hangs in the balance. Reagan's confrontation with the harsh reality of her garden center's financial instability serves as a striking reminder that in our fast-paced world, stagnation is not an option. Embrace the challenge to adapt and evolve, just as she must, because the ability to pivot and grow can transform fear into empowerment. By recognizing the necessity of embracing modern tools and strategies, you empower yourself to not only survive but thrive, turning daunting obstacles into stepping stones for success. The journey may be overwhelming, but it's also an invitation to forge a brighter path forward amid uncertainty.

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Chapter 5 Summary: 4

As the summer rain began to pour, Reagan nervously maneuvered her car through the city, her mind racing. With the chaos of traffic and the fear of disappointing her mother, she felt overwhelmed, especially after an unsettling experience investigating a recent murder. Just as she tried to regain her focus, she accidentally rear-ended another vehicle, adding to her growing anxiety. Her thoughts spiraled as she braced for the confrontation with the other driver, a well-dressed man who approached with an umbrella. Surprisingly calm, he assessed the damage and suggested it was minor, eliminating the need for insurance details. Reagan couldn't believe her luck; this kindness seemed too good to be true amid her chaotic life.

After the incident, Reagan returned home to her controlling mother Cynthia, who immediately scrutinized her appearance and tardiness. Their strained relationship surfed the waves of old trauma and unspoken grief after Reagan's father's tragic death when she was ten. Cynthia's well-meaning, yet suffocating ways suffused dinner discussions with sharp barbs wrapped in familial love, particularly as her partner Terry, whose aloof demeanor further complicated things, joined the mix.

Over dinner, the conversation turned tense when Terry and Cynthia revealed their desire for Reagan to establish a repayment plan for a financial support she had assumed was part of her inheritance to open her garden center. This

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emotional bombshell shattered the façade of civility. Reagan, battling feelings of shame and indignation, struggled to articulate her side. The clash laid bare the boundaries between need, expectation, and familial obligation, emphasizing the complexities of their interactions.

As dinner concluded on a note of resentment and misunderstanding, Reagan clung to the minimizing comfort of her garden center, her lifeline amidst the chaos of her family dynamics and the lingering shadows of a community turned dark by crime. The chapter encapsulates Reagan's internal battles, the tensions with her mother, and the unexpected kindness of a stranger, highlighting the themes of familial obligation, personal struggle, and the navigation of unexpected circumstances in life.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: The power of unexpected kindness in chaotic times

Critical Interpretation: In the whirlwind of life's challenges, Reagan's encounter with the calm and kind stranger amidst her chaotic day serves as a powerful reminder of the healing influence that small acts of kindness can have. Just as Reagan found solace in the unexpected generosity from the man who reassured her after an accident, we too can draw inspiration from this moment. It teaches us that even in our darkest hours, a simple gesture of compassion can illuminate our path and provide a sense of hope, encouraging us to extend that same kindness to others in their moments of need.

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Chapter 6: 5

On a sweltering Thursday in January 2017, Reagan finds herself immersed in the silent aisles of her struggling garden center, deadheading flowers while she nervously glances at news sites, haunted by the latest on a murder investigation that has left her community on edge. Although she repeatedly refreshes the page for updates, the lack of progress from the police gnaws at her. Thoughts of a nameless victim invade her mind, a ghostly reminder of the inexplicable darkness hovering over her life.

Just as she begins to close up shop, a familiar face walks in—Bryce, the man whose car she accidentally dented the previous day. Dressed sharply in khakis and a button-up shirt, Bryce effortlessly brings energy into the dim space. Their previous encounter begins to flicker back to life as they chat, with Bryce revealing he's seeking a birthday gift for his mother. Reagan catches herself feeling lighter, her initial embarrassment over the car incident dissipating. Their conversation flows easily, culminating in Bryce being drawn to a rare *Dracula simia* orchid. With a blend of pride and sadness, Reagan upsells the plant to \$300, knowing the sale is crucial for her

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Chapter 7 Summary: 6

In Chapter 7 of "Dark Mode," we follow Reagan as she navigates an unexpected evening that blends personal connection with a hint of tension and unease. After an encounter where she accidentally damages Bryce's car, they decide to grab drinks together at a local pub, where the atmosphere is laid-back, filled with the nostalgic tunes of The Rolling Stones. Reagan orders a prosecco, showing off her preference for cash to maintain her privacy in a digital world where everyone clings to their smartphones.

As they sit and chat, it's clear that Bryce is easy to talk to, effortlessly engaging Reagan in a discussion about technology and lifestyle choices. Reagan reveals her disdain for the digital age and her life without a smartphone, which makes their conversation unique. Bryce shares a story about a man who lived in the woods for years, which piques her interest, and they bond over quirky anecdotes. This connection raises the question: Is this a date? Reagan finds herself grappling with the potential of starting a relationship during a time when her life feels chaotic.

Their conversation flows from topics of life in small towns to shared experiences in Korea, particularly about Reagan's close friendship with Min, who has supported her during challenging times. Despite enjoying the flirtation and Bryce's attractive demeanor, Reagan is reminded of her struggles to keep her business afloat, Voodoo Lily, which weighs heavily on

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her mind.

The chapter takes a critical turn when Reagan decides to be transparent with Bryce about her intentions for their meeting. She initially hoped to learn more about marketing for her struggling shop but finds herself caught up in Bryce's charm and easygoing nature. As the evening ends, he provides her with valuable marketing suggestions and his phone number, signaling that he is genuinely interested in helping her.

Returning home, Reagan feels a flicker of hope as she navigates her modest apartment, but that feeling is interrupted when Min arrives urgently at her door. Min's demeanor is serious, and she confronts Reagan about something troubling: a resemblance to a murder victim—a chilling revelation that disrupts the lightness of the earlier evening. With urgency and concern, Min demands to know what's really happening with Reagan's life, emphasizing the growing tension between their friendship and the shadow of danger that now looms over them both.

This chapter masterfully intertwines themes of connection, privacy, and the unexpected dangers lurking in everyday life, setting the stage for the stakes to be even higher as Reagan navigates her personal and professional worlds. The budding relationship with Bryce offers a glimpse of warmth amidst the rising tension, but as the chapter closes with Min's alarm, it hints that their lives are about to take a darker turn.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: Embrace Authentic Connections

Critical Interpretation: In Chapter 7 of 'Dark Mode,' Reagan's choice to engage in a candid conversation with Bryce in a world dominated by digital connections leads us to realize the profound importance of authentic interactions. This moment reminds you that stepping away from screens and seeking genuine human connections can foster deeper understanding and support, even when life feels chaotic. As you navigate your own journey, consider how embracing vulnerability and openness with others can create bonds that not only enrich your life but also provide valuable perspectives and assistance as you tackle your challenges.

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Chapter 8 Summary: 7

In Chapter 8 of "Dark Mode," the tension escalates between Reagan and her friend Min as they grapple with a dark secret intertwined with a recent murder investigation. The chapter opens with Reagan, wrapped in a towel, feeling a growing dread when Min confronts her about an unsettling voicemail she left. Min's exasperation reveals her deep concern for Reagan, especially after discovering a connection between Reagan and the murder victim, who bears a striking resemblance to her. This similarity unnerves Reagan, as it hints at unspoken truths and buried traumas from her past.

Min presses for answers, insisting that the coincidences are too significant to ignore. Reagan, caught off guard, nervously deflects Min's inquiries, fearing that revealing too much will lead to even more scrutiny. The once comfortable friendship is now fraught with suspicion, and Reagan feels cornered, trying to guard her secrets while desperately wanting Min to leave her apartment. The atmosphere becomes charged as Min refuses to back down, determined to help Reagan, who is clearly in distress.

As they talk, the narrative shifts back to Reagan's traumatic childhood, where she recalls her intense friendship with Brooke and how it spiraled into danger when they connected with an older man online. This moment of vulnerability exposes Reagan's guilt and fear, revealing a painful event that has evidently haunted her into adulthood.

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The chapter artfully balances Reagan's internal struggle with the external threat represented by the murder case, underscoring themes of friendship, trauma, and the weight of secrets. The suspense builds as Min's persistence forces Reagan to confront her past, leaving readers on the edge as they anticipate how this revelation will affect their relationship and the unfolding mystery. As Reagan's voice trembles with the weight of her experiences, the reader is drawn further into her fractured world, building poignant suspense and emotional depth.

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Chapter 9: 8

In Chapter 9 of "Dark Mode," Reagan shares her unsettling experience with AJ, a man she once met online. The encounter begins with AJ showing up at her apartment, where he appears very different from the photos she'd seen—older, fit but not attractive, and exuding an unsettling charm. This encounter sets off a chain reaction as Cynthia, Reagan's guardian, blames her for the incident, leading to a breakdown in their relationship. Cynthia's accusations and subsequent insistence on locking down their lives force Reagan into a new environment far from her old one, a move that feels isolating and challenging.

Settling in Terrey Hills, Reagan struggles to find her footing and deals with harassment at school, which she believes is from her past. Over time, strange packages addressed to her begin to arrive, including a white lace bra set, which Reagan assumes comes from school bullies. However, as things escalate, she realizes AJ has tracked her down. Despite trying to distance herself and even seeking help from the police, they dismiss her concerns. AJ's obsession grows more alarming—he sends her unwanted gifts and love

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Chapter 10 Summary: 9

In Chapter 10 of "Dark Mode," the atmosphere is tense as Reagan and Min share a bottle of gin in a dimly lit kitchen. Reagan reveals that she hasn't seen her stalker since returning from Gangwon, where she stayed with friends during difficult times. She reflects on the idea of leaving Sydney if he had reappeared, expressing her shame in finding relief in the thought of his suffering with another woman.

Min becomes increasingly concerned about Reagan's safety, urging her to speak with Detective Imogen Lonski, a tough investigator assigned to the recent murder of a woman named Krystal Almeida, who resembles Reagan and was found near her neighborhood. Min explains the potential danger of stalkers, emphasizing that breaking into Reagan's room marked a serious escalation in behavior. Despite Min's insistence that Reagan could be in real danger, Reagan dismisses the idea, convinced that she would have sensed the stalker's presence if he was back.

The discussion escalates when Min offers Reagan a safe place to stay, but Reagan stubbornly refuses to involve the police, blaming past experiences of being ignored. Min's frustration grows, especially as she learns more about Krystal's violent death; she wants Reagan to hear the details from the press conference, believing it might change her mind about seeking help.

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As Min expresses her determination to stay close to this case, Reagan's mind drifts to Krystal, stirring a deep sense of protectiveness and an overwhelming desire to uncover who she was. The chapter conveys themes of trauma, the complexities of support in friendships, and the lingering impact of a past filled with fear and uncertainty, with Reagan wrestling between safety and the need for closure.

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Chapter 11 Summary: 10

In Chapter 11 of "Dark Mode," the story unfolds at a press conference near the Sydney Police Centre, where Reagan attends to learn more about the tragic case of Krystal Almeida, a young woman found dead. As she blends into the shadows under an acacia tree, Reagan feels a connection to the secretive nature of a rare underground orchid, mirroring her own desire to stay hidden. Her friend Min, dressed vibrantly in a jade blazer, stands out in the subdued crowd of reporters eager for answers about the ongoing investigation.

The atmosphere is tense as the senior officer introduces Detective Inspector Lonski, who reveals Krystal's identity and details of her short stay in Sydney before her mysterious disappearance. As they listen, Reagan is consumed by thoughts of Krystal's life, piecing together her journey through social media, including glimpses of her past in the U.S. and her recent travels. The detective's grim news strikes a chord, suggesting the potential for foul play and leaving Reagan anxious about Krystal's final moments.

Amid the press conference, Min's inquiries hint at a bigger picture, suggesting that Krystal's case resembles historical unsolved murders, which adds an eerie dimension to the investigation. The possibility of a meticulously planned crime looms large, making Reagan uneasy, especially as Min hints at the idea of Krystal having met someone online who might

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have lured her to Sydney.

As the chapter progresses, Reagan grapples with her panic and denial. She voices her belief that Krystal couldn't be connected to the potential perpetrator, showcasing her determination to separate herself from the shadows of their shared past. The tension between the appeal of the unknown and the dangers lurking within drives the narrative forward, weaving themes of friendship, fear, and the haunting specter of violence into a gripping tale.

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Chapter 12: 11

In Chapter 12 of "Dark Mode" by Ashley Kalagian-Blunt, Reagan grapples with both the stagnation of her garden center and her growing connection with Bryce, who has become a frequent presence in her life. The chapter begins with Reagan anxiously monitoring the investigation into a recent incident, hoping for progress that never materializes. With her business struggling—highlighted by an unprecedented weekend with no customers—she decides to invest in a smartphone, pushed by Bryce's insistence on the importance of social media for marketing.

As they work together to establish her online presence, Reagan feels a mix of excitement and stress. Bryce's support is reassuring, and their collaborative efforts on Instagram and Facebook begin to chip away at her isolation. He encourages her to embrace the visibility that social media can provide, even jesting that her attractiveness could draw more followers. Reagan, however, still feels self-conscious and hesitant to put herself in the spotlight, which adds a layer of tension as she navigates her evolving feelings for Bryce.

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Chapter 13 Summary: 12

In Chapter 13 of "Dark Mode," Reagan takes a step into a carefree evening, brimming with anticipation, as she prepares for a date with Bryce. She boards the train to Central, feeling confident in her olive green jumpsuit and freshly styled hair. Upon arriving at the bustling restaurant in Surry Hills, she lights up at the sight of Bryce, who looks effortlessly smart-casual in navy shorts and a patterned shirt. Their dinner is filled with laughter and engaging conversation about travel and personal interests, revealing both Reagan's vibrant personality and Bryce's light-hearted demeanor.

Their playful dialogue takes a darker turn as Reagan inadvertently brings up a recent murder, triggering haunting memories of her friend Krystal, whose violent death casts a shadow over her thoughts. Despite this, the evening progresses, and the chemistry between them ignites. They share a tender kiss, marking a shift from nervous energy to excited connection, as Reagan feels a sense of vitality and spontaneity she hasn't felt in a long time.

As they continue their night, going for gelato and wandering the lively streets under the moonlight, Reagan experiences a heady mix of exhilaration and fear, compounded by thoughts of her past. They arrive at Bryce's apartment, which surprises her with its elegance and order, starkly contrasting her expectations and reflecting a life of comfort that she yearns for.

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However, just as she begins to lean into this new possibility, the unease of her reality breaks through when her phone vibrates with a new email, its aggressive words shaking her from the moment. This intrusion sends her spiraling back into a state of vigilance and fear, revealing a pivotal conflict between her desire for normalcy and the haunting presence of her past trauma. Bryce's concern highlights the genuine emotion between them, yet Reagan's panic reinforces the chapter's underlying theme of how unresolved pain can ambush even the most perfect moments. The chapter ends on a cliffhanger, leaving readers keenly aware that Reagan's struggle is far from over.

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Chapter 14 Summary: 13

In Chapter 14 of "Dark Mode" by Ashley Kalagian-Blunt, we dive into a tense moment for Reagan, who is grappling with a panic attack after an evening gone awry. The chapter begins with Bryce, clearly concerned for her well-being, trying to understand what is happening. Reagan is overwhelmed, sweating and shaking, struggling to catch her breath while haunted by vivid memories of her friend Krystal, who faced a traumatic incident.

As Bryce comforts her, the atmosphere is heavy with confusion and anxiety, with Reagan battling her thoughts about safety and vulnerability as she finds herself in an unfamiliar place. Despite Bryce's effort to help, she is trapped in her own whirlwind of fear, feeling exposed both emotionally and physically. He quickly decides to get her to an emergency room, but when Reagan insists it was just a panic attack and asks to be dropped off at a station instead, Bryce shows frustration, highlighting the tension between them.

This moment is a turning point for Reagan as she grapples not only with her immediate panic but also with a deeper sense of past traumas and her struggle for control. She reflects on the reckless choices she made that evening—wanting to be bold and adventurous, yet feeling like she was spiraling into danger. As they drive in silence, she is acutely aware of the parallels between her present and her past experiences with Krystal,

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questioning her own decision-making and safety.

When Bryce finally pulls over at a train station and she exits the car, barefoot and anxious, the weight of the situation presses upon her. The story poignantly captures the aftermath of emotional distress, as Reagan tries to regain her composure while filled with regret over how the night unfolded. Her text thanking Bryce goes unanswered, leaving her in silence, reflecting her internal turmoil and the isolation that follows such an intense episode. It's a vivid portrayal of her fragility, resilience, and the impact past traumas can have on present situations, driving the themes of fear, vulnerability, and the search for safety.

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Chapter 15: 14

In Chapter 15 of "Dark Mode," Reagan finds herself amidst a crime scene on Oceanview Avenue, where the police have cordoned off an area related to a murder that has drawn a curious crowd. She arrives with her friend Min, anxious and hopeful to prove that the threat has nothing to do with her past or her ex, AJ. Their conversation quickly reveals they are discussing not just the murder at hand but a historical case—the infamous Black Dahlia murder from 1947, which shows unsettling parallels to the current victim, Krystal.

As Reagan navigates the growing tension, she reflects on a troubling, anonymous email she received that invoked AJ's name. While trying to convince Min that AJ is not behind the current events, the weight of the connection to the historical crimes becomes clear. Min points out the eerie similarities in the patterns of the killings, including the nature of the wounds and the way the bodies are posed.

Their investigation deepens when a distraught mother, Anna Rhydderch, frantically searches for her missing daughter, Erin. Min notes the

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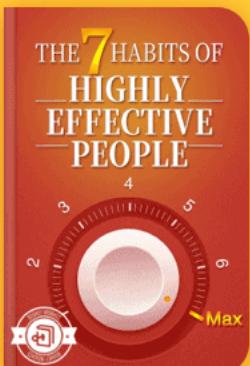
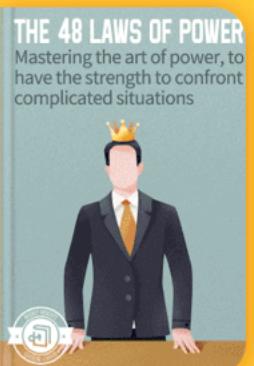
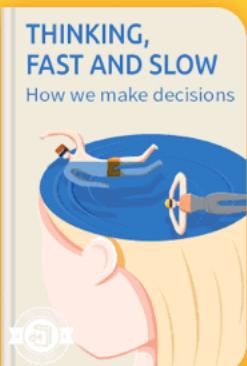
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Chapter 16 Summary: 15

In Chapter 16 of "Dark Mode" by Ashley Kalagian-Blunt, the tension between personal struggles and emerging relationships takes center stage. The scene opens with Reagan at a crime scene, distracted by relentless texts from Cynthia, who is inquiring about repayments on an inheritance Reagan hasn't yet received. Her friend Min pulls her into a conversation about a new romantic interest, Bryce, and despite Reagan's reluctance to share the details of her last disastrous date, Min's probing prompts her to consider reaching out to him.

Haunted by panic and shame from her past responses to stress, Reagan grapples with feelings of inadequacy and fear of vulnerability. Min encourages her to reconnect with Bryce, who has been a source of support but has also inadvertently contributed to her anxiety. Eventually, Reagan musters the courage to call him and proposes a lunch meeting to apologize for her abrupt behavior after their last encounter, revealing her desire to mend their connection.

When they meet at a sandwich shop, Reagan is struck by Bryce's confidence and calm demeanor, contrasting sharply with her own turmoil. The lunch serves as a backdrop for candid conversation, with both characters negotiating their feelings. Bryce, perceptive and kind, asks about the emails that upset Reagan, showing his genuine concern. Reagan, however, deflects

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this inquiry while slowly opening up about her life by revealing her home address, a significant step in building their trust.

The chapter beautifully captures the theme of navigating intimacy in the face of personal trauma and the importance of communication within relationships. Reagan's journey reflects her struggle to balance her fears with the desire for connection, while Bryce's steady presence offers a glimmer of hope and support amid her chaos. Both characters come away from the lunch with a renewed sense of possibility, hinting at the complexities of love and understanding as they face their respective challenges together.

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Chapter 17 Summary: 16

In Chapter 17 of "Dark Mode," the garden center Voodoo Lily is buzzing with activity, marking a streak of successful sales for Reagan. Amidst the hustle, she juggles a conversation with her friend Min and a demanding delivery driver, Ed, who arrives late with an herb order. Min's news takes a dark turn as she reveals that a killer has sent shocking photos to the media, linking the recent murders of two women, Krystal and Erin, to the infamous Black Dahlia case. The internet is ablaze with speculation, and CNN has dubbed the incidents the "Sydney Dahlia murders."

Reagan is impacted by the gravity of Min's revelations but is also experiencing personal joy; she recently spent the night at Bryce's place, an encounter that has left her feeling elated and alive. Min, however, pulls her focus back to the unsettling details of the murders, showing Reagan Polaroid images of the victims that are disturbingly reminiscent of classic crime scenes. This leads to conversations about the nature of the killer—suggesting he might be a psychopath who targets women based on their vulnerability rather than any personal connection.

As they delve deeper into the case, they discuss the differing backgrounds of Krystal and Erin, how neither knew the other, and the seeming randomness of the killer's choice. Min's meticulous research shows that the police are struggling to find leads, raising the alarming possibility that these murders

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were opportunistic rather than planned. Further, they contemplate the killer's potential medical knowledge, connecting it to the gruesome precision of the murders, which echoes the older case of the Black Dahlia.

Amid the intensity of the discussion, a chilling connection strikes Reagan as she realizes the implications of Min's findings regarding the murderer's possible education and skills. The chapter intertwines themes of friendship, fear, and the unsettling allure of true crime, contrasting Reagan's burgeoning romantic relationship with Bryce against the backdrop of escalating violence and danger. In a moment of tension, the chapter culminates with Reagan reflecting on the dark undercurrents of her life, as she grapples with the precariousness of her safety amidst the unfolding horrors in her city.

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Chapter 18: 17

In Chapter 18 of "Dark Mode," Reagan and her friend Min delve deeper into the connections between Elizabeth Short's murder and the ongoing investigation of a series of killings in Sydney. Min presents a striking Man Ray sketch titled "Tire Lire," which depicts a naked woman bisected by a piece of currency. This artwork sparks a discussion about the psychological motives behind the murders, leading Min to propose that the killer is creating art through violence, reflecting a twisted commentary on women's societal value and how their bodies have been objectified.

As they analyze photographs from the art book, Reagan is struck by the disturbing themes that emerge, including images that resemble crime scenes more than traditional art. Their conversation takes a darker turn when they learn about Dr. Hodel, a suspect from the 1947 murder of Elizabeth Short, and his disturbing history, which includes an acquittal for impregnating his teenage daughter. Min theorizes that the contemporary killer might see the Black Dahlia's murder as an artistic endeavor, aiming to recreate that infamous crime, potentially out of some misguided belief that he is engaging

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Chapter 19 Summary: 18

In Chapter 19 of "Dark Mode," Reagan makes a stealthy and desperate journey as she grapples with her haunting past and the unsettling emails she has been receiving. It's early morning when she leaves her apartment, shrouded in anonymity with her plain cap and tightly pinned hair. Aware of the ever-watchful surveillance cameras, she decides against switching cars with friends, opting instead for a rental to keep a low profile. After a brief search, she secures a grey Toyota Corolla, a more discreet choice than the available red Suzuki models.

As Reagan drives into the heart of the city, her mind races with memories and dread. She's headed to Crieff Street, a place tied to her past and filled with unsettling nostalgia. The street, once a source of empowerment when she bought her first car at eighteen, now stands as a reminder of unresolved issues and lurking danger. The modest homes on Crieff Street reflect the mundane lives of its residents, and Reagan can't shake the feeling that the man behind the emails could still be nearby, despite not having seen him in a while.

Approaching the specific house—number 79—she observes the changes made since her last visit. It seems more well-kept than she remembered, but the details do little to soothe her anxiety. She wonders if the man could have a family now, which adds to her sense of helplessness. Parking across the

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street, she gives herself a mere three minutes to figure out her next move, her heart racing as she waits.

Suddenly, the door opens and a woman exits, accompanied by a young boy riding a tricycle. Reagan's heart drops; could this be his family? The scene feels surreal and alienating as another man appears, completely unlike the one from her memories. He assists the boy with his bike, a stark reminder that the man she fears may no longer even reside there.

As realization washes over her that this man isn't the one she's searching for, her desperation intensifies. The known comfort of power she once felt evaporates, leaving her with the chilling thought that he could still be lurking, perhaps even right across the street from her.

Reagan confronts her mounting anxiety, realizing that her efforts to reclaim control over her life might be futile. Without answers regarding the emails or the identity of the man from her past, she finds herself on a precarious edge between hope and despair, illustrating the broader themes of powerlessness and the far-reaching impact of unresolved trauma.

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Chapter 20 Summary: 19

In Chapter 20 of "Dark Mode," Reagan begins her Saturday feeling hopeful and excited about a special dinner with Bryce that night. She enjoys a leisurely morning, taking in the vibrant sights of her neighborhood, and stops for a treat at her favorite café. There, she unexpectedly runs into Emil Wojciech, her bank contact, which stirs mixed feelings in her, as their previous meeting had gone well. She is absorbed in work-related thoughts when she sees him, and the brief encounter leaves her eager to escape back to her coffee.

As the evening approaches, Reagan and Bryce head to O Bar, a fancy revolving restaurant. The stunning view of Sydney from forty-seven stories up brings a sense of peace and joy amid the unsettling atmosphere surrounding recent events in the city, particularly the ongoing investigation of a double murder that has left many women feeling unsafe. During dinner, Bryce senses her tension and asks if she feels in danger. Reagan reflects on the societal implications of being a woman, indicating that danger is often part of the experience. The dinner is filled with laughter and romance, providing a brief respite from the fear that has unsettled her life.

After the night's escapade, Reagan wakes up feeling a mix of reluctance and curiosity about her day. Bryce proposes they spend time together instead of her going to work, suggesting a carefree sailing trip. The idea of being on

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the water, far from her worries, tempts her, but she feels the pressure of her responsibilities. As she navigates between personal desires and professional obligations, a longing for deeper commitment and connection to Bryce lingers in the background.

The chapter reveals Reagan's internal struggle—the chaos from her external world contrasts with the calm of her developing relationship with Bryce. There's a recurring theme of safety, both physical and emotional, as she craves moments of peace while confronting a society that has made her feel vulnerable. Ultimately, Reagan's journey embodies the delicate balance of hope, fear, and desire in a world that can often feel dark and threatening.

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Chapter 21: 20

In Chapter 21 of "Dark Mode," the tension surrounding the Sydney Dahlia case continues to grow, capturing the attention of the public and increasing business for Reagan, who runs a flower shop. As the chapter unfolds, we see Reagan managing both her burgeoning flower sales and the psychological strain that the ongoing investigation imposes on her. The chapter opens with Reagan receiving calls about dahlias, highlighting how the current morbid obsession with them due to the murders has shifted from tragedy to a trend.

Reagan reflects on a recent outing with Bryce, which provided a brief escape from the chaos. However, her moment of leisure is interrupted when a stranger with a leg cast makes her uncomfortable with his invasive remarks about her appearance. His unyielding gaze contrasts with Reagan's efforts to remain composed, showcasing the theme of intrusion into her personal life and mental space.

Soon after, her friend Min arrives—dressed for exercise and full of energy. Min is working on a piece for *The Atlantic* about the murders and recounts

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Chapter 22 Summary: 21

In Chapter 22 of "Dark Mode," we dive into Reagan's tense world as she navigates a threatening situation. After a long day at the garden center, she returns to find the disturbing signs of her previous stalker's resurfacing. The imagery is unsettling; the neglected gardens around her home almost seem to reflect her own sense of decay and turmoil. An ominous email arrives, cryptically taunting her with the words "times up whore," igniting her fears and forcing her to confront haunting memories of her past.

Reagan's internal struggle is palpable as she searches for solace while grappling with the shame of her situation. She debates reaching out for help but is afraid of troubling her friend, Bryce, who she ultimately decides to call. When he arrives, he senses something is very wrong, his concern evident as he tries to pull the truth from her. Reagan reveals her history with a man who stalked her, a chilling revelation that adds depth to her character as she battles the shadows of trauma.

Throughout their conversation, a theme of vulnerability emerges. Reagan feels exposed, conflicted about sharing her pain with Bryce, who steadily offers support. They share an intimate moment on her couch, where her fears intertwine with a sense of safety that Bryce provides. Although they enjoy a quiet dinner, the tension lingers as concerns grow about the identity of the person behind the unsettling email.

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The chapter highlights key developments in both characters. Reagan's journey from fear to the hesitant acknowledgment of her need for help emphasizes her resilience while illustrating the struggle victims face even when they have moved on physically. Meanwhile, Bryce's character is fleshed out as he switches from concern to a protective instinct, suggesting his deeper feelings for her and his desire to help.

As night settles in, Reagan's unresolved fears keep her awake, drawing a haunting parallel between her past traumas and the current threat she feels, capturing the theme of unresolved trauma that weaves throughout the narrative. The interactions between Reagan and Bryce not only deepen their relationship but also serve as a poignant reminder that healing often requires confronting both past and present demons.

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Chapter 23 Summary: 22

In Chapter 23 of "Dark Mode" by Ashley Kalagian-Blunt, we find Reagan waking up in the middle of the night, disoriented and anxious after a series of unsettling dreams. The atmosphere is tense as she hears strange noises in her apartment, which heightens her worry about her partner, Bryce. With a mix of fear and determination, she gets out of bed to investigate. Despite her instinctive dread, she discovers Bryce in the kitchen, where he's quietly finishing their dinner of duck curry. This scene underscores a moment of relief amidst the looming dread, showcasing their domestic life and connection, yet also hinting at the chaos swirling around them.

The next day, Reagan's sense of urgency escalates as she makes a detour to find a payphone, indicating her deep commitment to uncovering the truth about the Sydney Dahlia killer, whom she suspects is a police officer named Gordon Purdie. Her anxiety climaxes when she reaches out to share her theory, despite the danger it poses. Her hesitation and realization that she's divulging too much reflect her internal struggle and risk-taking character, capturing the tension of the moment. The chapter blends personal stakes with thriller elements, emphasizing themes of fear, protection, and the quest for truth as Reagan's actions propel her deeper into potential peril. Overall, the chapter is rich with suspense and character development, setting the stage for further conflicts and revelations.

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Chapter 24: 23

In Chapter 24 of "Dark Mode," we find Reagan at her vibrant café, Voodoo Lily, preparing for a special end-of-summer sale. She's pleasantly surprised when her boyfriend, Bryce, shows up early with coffee and croissants, showing how well he knows her favorite things. Their affectionate banter is sweet, hinting at their blossoming relationship, but Reagan feels a bit apprehensive about bringing Bryce to a barbecue she planned to attend later, imagining he might not want to be around kids.

When she checks in with her friend Min about bringing him, there's a moment of surprise from Min, who acknowledges how quickly Reagan has become serious about someone after a long time of being single. Her excitement quickly turns to acceptance, and she insists Reagan invite him along. Although Bryce is charming and easygoing, Reagan feels a flutter of anxiety as they discuss future possibilities, like having kids, reflecting both her joy and her fears about the relationship.

As the evening progresses, Reagan arrives at the barbecue and admires the

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Chapter 25 Summary: 24

In Chapter 25 of "Dark Mode," we follow Reagan as she navigates her feelings for Bryce. She initially drives to his apartment with optimism, clutching a container of healthy chicken soup, hoping to care for him as he deals with a cold. Despite being surrounded by the beauty of Balmoral's gardens, she's preoccupied with her anxious thoughts, anticipating his reaction when she arrives. Upon buzzing his apartment, she receives no answer, which amplifies her uncertainty about their relationship and his feelings toward her.

When Bryce finally answers, he's at the chemist, leading to a mix of relief and frustration for Reagan. She waits impatiently in her car, her thoughts swirling. Once he arrives, he looks good, but she senses something off. Their interaction is warm yet tinged with tension as they discuss his health. Bryce's fatigue and scratchy throat prompt Reagan to insist he might be contagious, making her hesitant to go upstairs. This detail signals her growing concern for him, but also reflects her protective nature regarding her own emotions.

The chapter encapsulates themes of care, vulnerability, and the complexity of relationships. Reagan's efforts to connect with Bryce through her thoughtful gesture intertwine with her insecurities, revealing her inner conflict about whether he truly values her presence. Their dialogue hints at

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deeper feelings yet to be fully explored, highlighting the delicate balance of hope and uncertainty in their evolving bond. This moment captures the intricate dance of closeness and distance that defines their connection, leaving readers captivated by their story.

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Chapter 26 Summary: 25

In Chapter 26 of "Dark Mode," we catch up with Reagan, who is having a bustling day at her plant shop Voodoo Lily. The first day of her end-of-summer sale has been a tremendous success, and she's excited about the potential for her business. However, her joy is interrupted when her friend Min calls with alarming news—a third murder has occurred, this time in Lindfield, and the victim bears a striking resemblance to Erin and Krystal, two women killed previously.

The weight of the news settles heavily on Reagan. Min stresses the importance of staying vigilant, but Reagan is torn; she's exhausted from the emotional toll that the previous murders have taken. Min urges her to help investigate, mentioning that the latest victim, a young woman named Willow Signato, may have had her hair dyed to resemble others the killer has targeted. This revelation horrifies Reagan, highlighting the brutality of the murderer.

As their conversation unfolds, Reagan becomes increasingly aware of how intertwined her life has become with these tragic events, but she struggles with the fear they invoke. Min argues that the investigative puzzle is fascinating, even if it involves facing darkness. Despite Reagan's reluctance, the insistence from Min persuades her to visit Coogee, where Willow had been staying before her death.

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When they arrive at the Coogee Budget Hostel, they encounter Kirk, an indifferent staff member who reveals his limited knowledge of Willow. In the midst of this, Min's presence draws excitement from two college students who are fans of her true-crime work, showcasing the contrasting responses to the stories of violence and loss. Their naive enthusiasm emphasizes the chilling nature of the crimes and how society consumes these narratives.

Throughout the chapter, themes of fear, the struggle for control, and the emotional burden of grappling with violence surface. Reagan experiences a deep conflict between her professional obligations and her personal need to protect her own life and family. As she interacts with the students and witnesses Min's rise as an author, Reagan reflects on the harsh reality of crime: its raw impact on individuals and families, and the way it can captivate or horrify society. The chapter ends with a sense of tension as Reagan, despite her reservations, prepares to dive deeper into this unsettling investigation, embodying the struggle of wanting to help while battling the shadows of fear that loom over her.

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Chapter 27: 26

In Chapter 27 of "Dark Mode," Reagan finds herself stuck in traffic while on her way to visit her mother, Cynthia. As she waits, she receives a call from her friend, Min, inviting her to dinner, but Reagan is focused on her mission today: to improve her relationship with her mother through gardening. Having spent her morning consumed by news of Willow's murder and reminiscing about her own family dynamics, she feels the weight of loneliness and her complicated feelings towards Cynthia.

Upon arriving at her mother's house, Reagan is met with a dismissive attitude from Cynthia, who has dressed up instead of preparing for their gardening session. The tension rises as Cynthia feigns illness to avoid engaging in labor, showing her unpredictable nature. While they attempt to plant some flowers, Cynthia's behavior frustrates Reagan, igniting memories of her tumultuous childhood and the need for maternal affection.

As they bicker, Terry, Cynthia's partner, interrupts, and the conversation turns awkwardly toward Reagan's private life. To her dismay, Cynthia insists

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Chapter 28 Summary: 27

In Chapter 28 of "Dark Mode," Reagan finds herself spiraling into a panic after an explosive video has been sent out to all her contacts, leading to the disintegration of her sense of self and her professional life. She is overwhelmed, fearing that her boyfriend, Bryce, will think she has cheated on him after seeing the footage of a woman who looks exactly like her. The chaos escalates as she drives aimlessly, reflecting on how her life could fall apart with just a click.

Her mental state deteriorates, compounded by her belief that the video must have originated from Gordon, a man tied to her troubled past. Fleeing her unsettling confrontation with Cynthia, a source of stress in her life, Reagan finds herself in a moment of distraction when nearly colliding with a child on a bike, which serves as a metaphor for her chaotic life. This near-miss causes her to crash into bins, heightening her sense of shame and panic.

Eventually, she returns home, where she is greeted by the barrage of phone calls and messages about the scandal she is embroiled in. When Bryce calls, Reagan struggles to find the words to explain, wanting to shield him from the awful truth. A tender moment ensues when Bryce arrives, offering comfort, but the gravity of the situation looms large. Despite her urge to hide from the consequences, Bryce suggests she confront the situation head-on, hinting at the difficult discussions that lie ahead.

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Themes of shame, identity, and the impact of digital life play prominently in this chapter. Reagan's emotional turmoil and the threat to her relationships encapsulate the fragility of her life, while the tension between her past and present underscores her struggle for control amidst chaos. As she grapples with the decision to reveal the truth to Bryce, the chapter leaves readers poised at a critical juncture, with questions about trust, acceptance, and redemption hanging in the air.

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Chapter 29 Summary: 28

In Chapter 29 of "Dark Mode" by Ashley Kalagian-Blunt, we find Reagan in a tumultuous moment grappling with the fallout from a malicious deepfake video that has been sent from her hacked email, creating chaos in her life. Bryce, her ally, tries to help her make sense of the situation. As Reagan explains how someone broke into her email and sent the disturbing video, she wrestles with feelings of shame and fear, especially after it was shared with her family. Bryce's calm presence is a grounding force, guiding her through the anxiety that grips her.

He rationalizes the nature of the deepfake, explaining its technicalities to reassure her that it isn't her in the video. Yet, the reality of the situation is devastating—someone has orchestrated this cruel attack, and the shadow of the potential perpetrator weighs heavily on her mind. As they discuss possible suspects, Reagan's thoughts drift to Terry, a character who had entered the scene briefly but lingers with an unsettling aura after the video's release. The theme of fear and paranoia crescendos as she considers that those she thought she knew might harbor secret intentions.

Comforted by Bryce's support, they attempt to steer away from the grim topic, sharing moments of lightness as they enjoy each other's company, but the looming threat of the hacker's identity remains a dark cloud over Reagan's enjoyment. The chapter explores themes of trust, the violation of

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privacy, and the psychological toll of cyber harassment, showing how Reagan's world shatters as both her personal and professional lives are impacted by this malicious act.

In a poignant moment, Reagan finds herself overwhelmed by incoming messages and emails in the aftermath, revealing the community's response to the hacking incident—ranging from outrage to toxic vitriol. The isolation she feels is palpable as she deletes messages and voicemails from people who misunderstand the situation, exacerbating her trauma. This offers a stark commentary on how quickly a digital crisis can escalate and affect one's relationships.

Ultimately, the chapter contrasts moments of intimacy and connection with the harsh realities of modern technology's darker side, leaving readers deeply invested in Reagan's journey as she confronts her fears and seeks a resolution amid the chaos. The evolving bond between Reagan and Bryce hints at a flicker of hope, a possible refuge from the storm, even as they prepare to face the unsettling challenges ahead.

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Chapter 30: 29

In Chapter 30 of "Dark Mode," Reagan wakes up early, grappling with the fallout from a damaging deepfake video that has circulated among her colleagues, creating an air of tension and uncertainty in her life. As she brews coffee, her partner Bryce is supportive yet has his own work commitments. He encourages her to reach out to Min, her friend, for help drafting an apology email, acknowledging the complexity of the situation.

Reagan's confrontation with the reality of the video weighs heavily on her, and once alone, she feels a rising panic about the ramifications. She meets Min at a café, where the severity of the situation becomes more evident. The conversation shifts from the deepfake to an even darker subject: footage of a crime scene where Reagan unknowingly ran past a murder scene weeks prior. Min reveals that the police are planning to release the footage, which could put Reagan in the spotlight as a potential witness, and she urges Reagan to go to the police.

The tension escalates as Reagan realizes the risk of being implicated further

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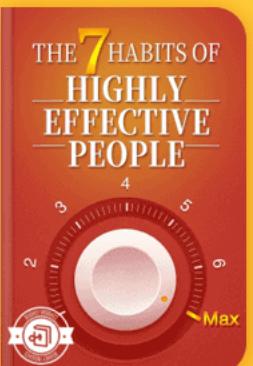
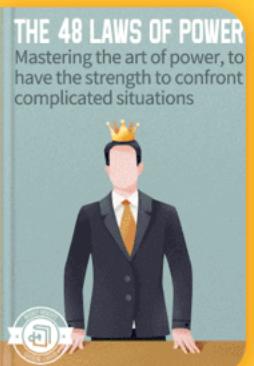
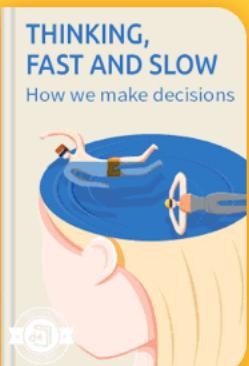
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Chapter 31 Summary: 30

In Chapter 31 of "Dark Mode," the tension between Reagan and her friend Min reaches a boiling point as they confront the unsettling reality surrounding Reagan's life. Min presses Reagan about troubling events, expressing frustration over discrepancies in Reagan's explanations about her failing garden center and the disturbing deepfake video that has surfaced. Min's concern intensifies as she connects the dots, revealing her belief that Reagan might be lying about her financial struggles and possibly using the video as a cover for wanting to escape her business.

As Min pushes for answers, Reagan wrestles with her truth. She is haunted by the recent discovery of a dead woman named Krystal and grapples with the psychological toll it has taken. Min's inquiry about her mental state sounds alarm bells in Reagan's head; she feels attacked but also sees a sliver of concern in Min's eyes. Amidst bright sunlight and sharp noises from the street, Reagan's emotional state spirals as she considers the implications of electronic invasions of privacy and the potential for someone close to her to have manipulated her life from the shadows.

Min, firm yet caring, insists that Reagan must go to the police, feeling the weight of suspicion that is creeping closer. Despite Reagan's resolve to resolve her issues independently—bank problems, hacking concerns—Min's insistence becomes overwhelming. When pushed into a corner, Reagan

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reluctantly agrees to talk to the police but only after a day, hoping to collect her thoughts, though Min argues that immediate action is preferable.

The chapter captures the essence of friendship under strain, highlighting trust, truth, and the burden of secrets. Reagan's struggle to manage her escalating troubles—both internal and external—paints a vivid picture of a woman on the edge, dealing with fear, paranoia, and the desperate need for control in a tumultuous situation. The chapter closes with Reagan feeling more isolated and tangled in a web of her own making, as the word "paranoid" becomes lodged in her thoughts, echoing the chaotic state of her mind and the perilous state of her life.

Aspect	Details
Chapter Title	Chapter 31
Main Characters	Reagan, Min
Conflict	Tension between Reagan and Min regarding Reagan's life and struggles.
Min's Concerns	Min believes Reagan is lying about her financial issues and the deepfake video.
Reagan's Struggles	Dealing with the discovery of a dead woman named Krystal and her emotional state.
Relationship Dynamics	A friendship under strain, highlighting issues of trust and truth.

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Aspect	Details
Min's Advice	Insists Reagan should go to the police due to increasing suspicion.
Reagan's Decision	Reluctantly agrees to talk to the police after a day to collect her thoughts.
Thematic Elements	Isolation, fear, paranoia, struggle for control.
Ending Note	Reagan feels increasingly tangled in her issues, with paranoia echoing her chaotic state of mind.

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Chapter 32 Summary: 31

In Chapter 32 of "Dark Mode," Reagan finds herself grappling with a series of stressful events that spiral out of her control. As she drives to the bank, her mind replays a recent argument, indicating her emotional turmoil. Upon arriving, instead of her usual wine, she decides on an intriguing gin to gift Bryce, who is helping her at the garden center later. However, her plans take a sudden turn when she discovers her bank accounts have been frozen due to reported illegal activity—a situation she insists must be a mistake.

Reagan's visit to the bank exposes her vulnerability; she feels increasingly desperate as she talks to Milena, the teller, who coldly informs her of the police's involvement. The rigidity of the bank's policies leaves Reagan frustrated and panicked, particularly as the other customers watch her struggle. When Milena dismisses her pleas for clarification and help, it pushes Reagan to a breaking point. Her frustration erupts into a physical response as she slaps the counter, only to be told to leave by security. Alone in her car afterward, she is overwhelmed by the heat and her own sweat, left to contemplate the ramifications of this new crisis.

This chapter highlights deep themes of isolation, helplessness, and the fragility of personal stability in a world that seems increasingly hostile. Reagan feels alienated, not even wanting to reach out to her mother for support, which underscores her loneliness. The mention of calling Min,

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knowing the repercussions, reflects her internal struggle and growing paranoia. Ultimately, Reagan's situation symbolizes a loss of control, not just over her finances, but over her life and relationships, setting the stage for her ongoing journey of self-discovery and the need to confront her troubles head-on.

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Chapter 33: 32

In Chapter 33 of "Dark Mode" by Ashley Kalagian-Blunt, Reagan finds herself in a tense and precarious situation. After posting a sign that says "Temporarily closed" on her shop window, she becomes increasingly anxious as she follows the news about a murder investigation involving a woman named Krystal Almeida. The footage of the investigation highlights a woman fleeing the scene around the time of the murder, and Reagan realizes that she might be implicated due to her appearance in the video, her face obscured by a cap.

As she waits for her friend Bryce to pick her up, Reagan's stress mounts. She becomes frantic when she discovers that she cannot reach him by phone; each attempt leads her to a disconnection message. This fuels her fears about potential police inquiries, especially involving Gordon Purdie, a cop she suspects might be targeting her. Frustrated and panicked, she leaves her garden center in search of Bryce, hoping he can help her escape the chaos that is spiraling around her.

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Chapter 34 Summary: 33

In Chapter 34 of "Dark Mode" by Ashley Kalagian-Blunt, Reagan is on edge, anxiously waiting outside Bryce's apartment, grappling with confusion and paranoia after he mysteriously goes missing. She desperately seeks confirmation of her time with Bryce, recalling the intimate details of his apartment, but finds herself confronting a stranger in a wheelchair who seems oblivious to Bryce's existence. Reacting to frustration, Reagan realizes she might be losing her grip on reality, as a nagging suspicion about Bryce's disappearance gnaws at her.

After leaving the building, anxiety turns to a momentary relief upon finding a gift bag hanging from her door. Inside, she discovers a white silk bra set accompanied by a note that chillingly reads, "your true love." The realization hits her: Bryce is back, yet he's also missing, leaving her to spiral into dark imaginings of how Gordon, a threatening figure in her life, might be involved. Fueled by fear and rage, she questions the safety of her relationship with Bryce and wonders if she should involve her friend Min, who has previously dismissed her concerns.

Just as the weight of the situation becomes overwhelming, she receives a chilling email from someone using her name—"I warned you." This pushes her over the edge. Consumed by fury, Reagan violently destroys her phone in a fit of rage. Feeling the effects of the day and the alcohol she consumed,

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she falls into a heavy sleep, anticipating turmoil that lurks around every corner.

The chapter paints a vivid picture of Reagan's escalating anxiety and desperation, highlighting themes of trust, the fragility of relationships, and the weight of external threats. As she struggles with her inner turmoil and the mysterious circumstances surrounding Bryce, the reader is left on edge, anticipating what the explosive events of the night will bring.

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Chapter 35 Summary: 34

In Chapter 35 of "Dark Mode" by Ashley Kalagian-Blunt, the story plunges into a chaotic and intense scene, waking Reagan in the early hours to a violent invasion by the police. It's a heart-pounding moment as she wakes up to shouts of "Police! Police!" and quickly finds herself in a precarious situation, barely clothed and confused. The police storm her apartment with guns drawn, and amid her panic, she is handcuffed and questioned about firearms, which she insists she doesn't have.

Amidst the chaos, Reagan's mind races as she wonders about her stalker, Gordon, and whether he could be behind the reports of gunfire in her building. Her terror grows as she realizes they are not just responding to noise complaints but are investigating something much larger, possibly connected to a recent murder case. The scene sets a tone of paranoia and dread, reflecting a core theme of the novel: the feeling of being hunted and the struggle for agency in a terrifying world.

After being taken to the police station, Reagan is subjected to an interrogation by Detective Lonski and Detective Ngo. The professional demeanor of both detectives contrasts sharply with Reagan's frazzled state, heightening the tension. They ask about her whereabouts on the day a body was found, and to her growing horror, they reveal surveillance footage of her at the scene. Their probing questions hint at deeper suspicions about her

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involvement, particularly as they connect her to several victims known as the Sydney Dahlia victims.

As she sits in the stark interrogation room, Reagan grapples with the mounting pressure. The detectives piece together her movements, her past behavior, and a recent erratic incident involving her driving. Each question digs deeper, leading her to wonder if Gordon is orchestrating this nightmare to trap her or whether she is genuinely becoming a suspect due to her peculiar interests in the victims. This sense of entrapment is palpable as the detectives present her with incriminating evidence, suggesting that her resemblance to the victims is no coincidence.

The chapter brilliantly captures Reagan's rising panic and confusion, showcasing her internal conflict and the terrifying possibility that she might be linked to a series of murders she knows nothing about. It encapsulates her desire to defend herself without implicating herself further while also highlighting the futility of her situation. The theme of perception versus reality looms large, as what might look like suspicious behavior could be the product of sheer coincidence or the machinations of a relentless stalker. The chapter leaves readers on edge, contemplating Reagan's fate as the detectives corner her, demanding she reveal the name of the person they believe is responsible for the horrific events surrounding her.

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Chapter 36: 35

In Chapter 36 of "Dark Mode," tension reaches a boiling point as Reagan is interrogated by detectives Lonski and Ngo regarding her possible connection to the gruesome Dahlia murders. Alone in a dim interrogation room, Reagan spirals into anxious thoughts about what being accused of such heinous crimes could mean for her future. The relentless pressure amplifies her fears of imprisonment and guilt, especially as she grapples with the implications of her connection to the case and her own haunting memories of a troubled past with cop Gordon Purdie, who had stalked her since she was a teenager.

As the cops bring forth crime scene photos of the victims, they challenge Reagan with recordings they've found, including one where she had anonymously suggested that Gordon might be involved in the killings. Unease mounts when the detectives reveal that they have tracked her voice back to a tip she had made, making her feel vulnerable and paranoid, suspecting that Gordon might be watching. The realization sets in that he has a hold over her, while other disturbing thoughts about Bryce—her boyfriend

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Chapter 37 Summary: 36

In Chapter 37 of "Dark Mode," Reagan, fresh from an interrogation with the police, experiences an intense mix of confusion and relief when she's unexpectedly released. Despite being labeled a person of interest in the ongoing Dahlia murder case, she's nonetheless free to roam the city, though her mind is still tangled in anxiety and doubt about her situation. The oppressive heat of the day contrasts sharply with the cold confines of the interrogation room, and she grapples with the immediate aftermath of the police's unexpected intrusion into her life.

Wandering aimlessly, Reagan stops for coffee but discovers her bank accounts have been frozen, leaving her with only cash to navigate the bustling city. Determined to uncover information about Bryce, who may be linked to the case, she contemplates the possibilities of where he might be, trying to trace his movements without much success. A fleeting encounter with two young onlookers causes her heart to race—could her situation already be making headlines? Seeking a distraction, she searches for information about the infamous "Big Sandwich," a place she believes Bryce might frequent.

As she engages in a series of harebrained yet hopeful attempts to track him down, she dons oversized sunglasses and a floppy hat as makeshift disguises while camping out in the queue of the sandwich shop. But as time ticks on,

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her resolve begins to wane. She's plagued by the weight of her spiraling life and the feeling that she's chasing shadows. However, amidst her frustration, fate intervenes when she spots a figure resembling Bryce walking down the street.

Motivated by a glimmer of hope, she follows him, her heart racing as she alternates between disbelief and resolve. Reagan battles against her thoughts, teetering on the edge of paranoia, questioning her own sanity. When she finally confirms it's Bryce, the chapter concludes on a cliffhanger, leaving readers eager to see how this unexpected encounter might unfold. Overall, themes of anxiety, identity, and desperation weave through Reagan's journey, capturing her struggle not only against external threats but her own turbulent psyche.

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Chapter 38 Summary: 37

In Chapter 38 of "Dark Mode," Reagan diligently tracks Bryce through Darlinghurst, grappling with a mix of emotions—anger, confusion, and desperation. She's upset that Bryce has been living his life as if nothing's wrong while she feels abandoned and betrayed by his absence and deceit. Watching him from a distance, Reagan wrestles with her decisions to confront him.

As she tailors her appearance to blend in, even cutting off her curls in frustration to reinvent herself, we see a significant transformation in her character. This act symbolizes her desire to break free from her past and the shadows of her identity, as she is desperate to uncover the truth about Bryce, whom she has allowed into her life.

After several tense moments of observing the apartment building, she finally spots Bryce in a well-dressed state, leading her to suspect he might be involved with someone else. Fueled by a mix of love and betrayal, Reagan's determination intensifies as she contemplates sneaking into his apartment to uncover his secrets—his true identity and potentially incriminating evidence against him.

In a bid to access Bryce's balcony, she awkwardly uses a rubbish bin to elevate herself, but her clumsiness results in a disastrous fall into a heap of

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trash. This moment highlights both her vulnerability and reckless determination. Even when faced with the unpleasantness of her surroundings, her steadfast focus on realizing her goal emphasizes her depth of feeling for Bryce and illustrates her struggle with the conflicting emotions of love and betrayal.

As she finally manages to gain entrance to the balcony, a sudden interruption occurs when a flashlight lights up her face, signaling danger and raising the stakes. The chapter leaves us hanging as Reagan's attempts to uncover Bryce's truth bring her face-to-face with potential consequences, encapsulating the themes of identity, trust, and the lengths one might go to seek the truth.

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Chapter 39: 38

In Chapter 39 of "Dark Mode" by Ashley Kalagian-Blunt, we find Reagan in a tense, suspenseful situation as she attempts to break into the apartment of her ex-boyfriend, whom she knows as Bryce but who has misled others to believe his name is Adam. After getting locked out while confronting him about a compromising sex tape, Reagan decides to retrieve evidence that could help her gain leverage over him. The chapter combines a gripping narrative with themes of betrayal, revenge, and the struggle for justice.

As she sneaks into the apartment through a bathroom window, we see Reagan's desperation evolve into a fierce determination. Her frantic thoughts reveal her emotional turmoil, especially as she processes the news of Gordon's death and reflects on her father. The ugly reality of Bryce's character becomes apparent to her as she digs through his belongings, searching for any personal documents that could help expose his true nature. In the process, she finds her precious monkey orchid, wilted and discarded, which further ignites her fury.

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Chapter 40 Summary: 39

In Chapter 40 of "Dark Mode," Reagan anxiously waits for her friend Min in the foyer of her apartment building, becoming increasingly frustrated by the wilted plants in the neighbor's garden. This moment reflects her internal turmoil, prompting her to step outside and water the plants, an action symbolizing her desire to nurture and control her chaotic environment. Min arrives, and the two friends quickly dive into an urgent conversation about Bryce, a mysterious figure in Reagan's life who has seemingly vanished and left her in distress.

As Reagan shares her harrowing experience with Bryce, she reveals that she believes he has been deceitful and possibly dangerous. She describes how she took his two laptops after attempting to contact him, convinced they hold crucial evidence of his true identity and actions against her. Min's surprise highlights the gravity of Reagan's situation, as she responds to the revelation with a mix of concern and practicality. The conversation captures Reagan's desperation; she feels that Bryce, who she suspects may not even be using his real name, poses a significant threat not only to her safety but to her financial stability as well.

Min suggests that they should consult the police about the laptops, but Reagan vehemently opposes this idea, fearing potential repercussions and delays. Instead, she urges Min to connect them with a hacker who could help

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uncover the truth within the laptops, showing her determination to regain control over her life. Tension mounts as Reagan wrestles with the moral implications of her actions; while she seeks justice, she risks further complications by bypassing legal channels.

The chapter is steeped in themes of trust, betrayal, and the quest for truth. As Min considers contacting a hacker, the reader senses the weight of their decision. The uncertainty and anxiety surrounding their choices create a palpable suspense, underscoring Reagan's urgent need to resolve her predicament while grappling with the potential fallout. The dynamic between Reagan and Min evolves, showcasing their friendship's resilience as they navigate this treacherous terrain together, all the while probing the ethical dilemmas that arise when seeking to expose hidden truths. The cliffhanger ending leaves readers eagerly anticipating the next steps in this gripping narrative.

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Chapter 41 Summary: 40

In Chapter 41 of "Dark Mode," Min and Reagan arrive at a grim apartment where they meet a mysterious young man named Gamo. The atmosphere is tense as they seek his help with two stolen laptops that contain crucial information regarding a troubling situation involving deepfake technology. Gamo's brusque demeanor suggests he isn't pleased to be roused from his evening, and Reagan feels a mix of apprehension and urgency, especially with the late hour hanging over them.

After Gamo takes the laptops, he quickly becomes absorbed in his work, underscoring the depth of his expertise but also creating an air of uncertainty for Reagan and Min. They sit uneasily on a lumpy sofa as they await results, the mundane setting amplified by the tense situation. Gamo's lack of a comforting assurance deepens Reagan's anxiety; she worries about the repercussions of their actions, especially concerning her work and the potential fallout from Bryce, the owner of the laptops.

As they wait, Gamo eventually reveals concerning information about a dark web forum linked to the person they've been looking for. The mood shifts dramatically when he shows them a post about "Target 09," a chilling record detailing a harasser's disturbing plans against Reagan. This post not only showcases the threat she faces but also unveils a troubling understanding of her life and identity, as the harasser is fascinated by her lack of online

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presence.

The chapter pivots sharply into themes of surveillance, the invasive nature of technology, and the vulnerability of individuals in the digital age. By presenting this dark web antagonist, the narrative dives deeper into the pervasive threats lurking online, leaving both Reagan and Min on edge as they confront the magnitude of the danger they're embroiled in. The urgency intensifies as they realize they are not just dealing with a technological issue but a very real and immediate peril that targets Reagan personally.

Key Aspect	Details
Characters Involved	Min, Reagan, Gamo
Setting	Grim apartment
Objective	Seek help regarding two stolen laptops containing important information about deepfake technology.
Gamo's Demeanor	Brusque, absorbed in work, creates uncertainty.
Reagan's Feelings	Apprehension, anxiety, fear of repercussions from Bryce.
Revealed Threat	Dark web forum post about "Target 09" detailing a harasser's plans against Reagan.
Themes	Surveillance, vulnerability in the digital age, pervasive online threats.
Urgency	Realization of immediate peril targeting Reagan personally.

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Chapter 42: 41

In Chapter 42 of "Dark Mode," Reagan finds herself reeling from shocking revelations about Bryce, a man she previously considered normal and attractive. The unveiling comes through a dark web post detailing Bryce's sinister manipulation and deep-seated misogyny toward women, particularly targeting Reagan, whom he refers to as "Target 09." As she and her friends Min and Gamo dig deeper, they uncover Bryce's methodical plans to psychologically torment Reagan, revealing a disconcerting level of surveillance and deceit.

Reagan's awakening to Bryce's true nature is visceral; she grapples with illness at the thought of his invasive actions, including secretly installing cameras in her home and broadcasting their intimate moments through this underground network. The community behind this dark web site proudly espouses harmful ideologies that dehumanize women, referring to them derogatorily as "foids." This realization evokes feelings of betrayal and anger within Reagan, who once felt infatuated with Bryce, now recalling how he preyed on her vulnerabilities.

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Interpretation

is first for me. How the book makes me feel, it's like it has to match my life. It's happening around me. That's where it comes from.

- Boots Riley

Chapter 43 Summary: 42

In Chapter 43 of "Dark Mode," the tension escalates as Min and Reagan face a critical juncture in their investigation. After piecing together evidence suggesting Bryce's involvement in a series of murders, Min and Reagan are on high alert, but doubts linger. Min emphasizes that while they have compelling leads, they lack concrete proof that links Bryce directly to the crimes. The dark web and its deceptive nature complicate their findings, especially with the chilling reality that Bryce's posts could vanish at any moment.

Their plan shifts into high gear as Reagan resolves to approach the police, aiming for transparency and hoping to clear her name. Min, however, is wary of the consequences of revealing their illegal acquisition of the laptops that contain incriminating evidence against Bryce. As they strategize on how to present the evidence without implicating themselves, the tension between their urgent desire for justice and their fear of the law's ramifications grows.

As dawn breaks, the scene shifts to a hotel room where the weight of their choices presses heavily. Reagan's disorientation reflects her chaotic mental state, battling feelings of helplessness and the eerie stillness outside. Min, practical yet visibly worn, reports back on the police's current stance; they won't act against Bryce immediately, stirring frustration in Reagan. The key piece of evidence, a photo, lacks metadata, casting doubt on its validity,

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while the recently deleted dark web site leaves them with little recourse.

Min's grim demeanor reveals her struggle to stay optimistic, and as they brainstorm next steps, it's clear they are at a crossroads. The chapter encapsulates themes of urgency, the fragility of truth in a digital age, and the toll that fear and uncertainty exact on the characters. As Reagan juggles her vulnerability and the looming threat of Bryce, Min's persistence and adjusting strategies hold the promise of deeper revelations yet to come. The bond between the two women strengthens amidst their shared trials, highlighting the power of friendship in the face of darkness.

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Chapter 44 Summary: 43

In Chapter 44 of "Dark Mode" by Ashley Kalagian-Blunt, Reagan faces the daunting prospect of going public with her traumatic experience involving Bryce. Min insists on getting pressure applied to the police to arrest him for not only his actions towards Reagan but also his potential role in the Sydney Dahlia murders. Initially, Reagan is resistant, feeling humiliated at the thought of sharing her story on national television. However, the urgency of the situation and her desire to help others like Krystal motivate her to reconsider.

Min has done her homework, reaching out to other victims and organizing an exclusive interview for Reagan at Channel 6. As the day unfolds, Reagan grapples with her shame and fear of further exposure. She reflects on her past, particularly how her identity as the only white person in her Korean village shaped her views on privacy and fame. The idea of sharing her experiences publicly fills her with dread, but the thought of Bryce getting away with his crimes ultimately spurs her on.

As she prepares for the interview, a stylist makes her over, and Reagan's anxiety builds. When it's time to talk to Oliver, the interviewer, she starts recounting how she met Bryce and the manipulative journey that followed. The questions become increasingly pointed, leading Reagan to confront the blame often placed on victims and the misogynistic culture that enables

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perpetrators like Bryce.

Under the hot studio lights, with the world watching, Reagan finds her voice. She passionately asserts that the responsibility for the abuse lies squarely with Bryce and not with her previous decisions. In a powerful moment of clarity, she identifies the wider implications of online misogyny and the toxic communities that foster such violence. As the interview wraps up, there's a tangible shift; Reagan has transitioned from a victim feeling powerless to a survivor reclaiming her narrative.

This chapter delves deep into themes of victimization, the courage to speak out, and the societal structures that perpetuate abuse, highlighting Reagan's journey from dread to empowerment. While the pressure to perform weighs heavy, Reagan's defiance against the shame imposed on her is a pivotal moment in her story.

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Chapter 45: 44

In Chapter 45 of "Dark Mode," we find Reagan reeling from a challenging day after an intense interview about her past experiences with violence and trauma. She retreats to a small bathroom at the garden center, struggling to wipe off the heavy makeup applied for the interview. Min, her supportive friend, comes to her aid with makeup wipes and reassures her about the interview's impact. As they navigate the aftermath of the interview, Reagan's emotions spill over, leading her to cry in Min's embrace, feeling both vulnerable and overwhelmed.

Once Reagan settles into the plush comfort of her hotel room, she reflects on the pervasive violence against women and how men like Gordon Purdie and Bryce have altered her life. Feeling a mix of numbness and exhaustion, she struggles to confront her family's reaction to her interview, especially her mother, Cynthia. A phone call with Terry, a family friend, reveals unexpected support and understanding from someone usually aligned with Cynthia. His offer to be there for her prompts a glimmer of hope in Reagan's troubled world.

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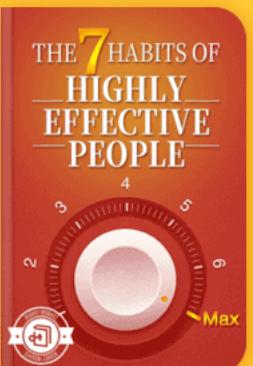
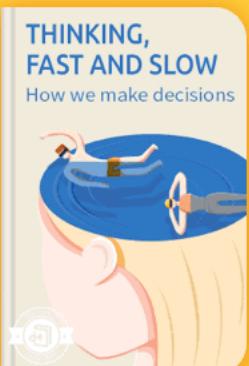
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Chapter 46 Summary: 45

In Chapter 46 of "Dark Mode," the story intensifies as Min picks up Reagan early on a Saturday morning to witness the arrest of Bryce, who has been revealed to have been living under the alias Elias Wiler. Following the recent airing of Reagan's emotional interview, the police have faced mounting pressure to investigate Bryce's laptops, which led to enough incriminating evidence for multiple charges against him. Although he attempted to escape by emptying his apartment and fleeing to a motel 600 kilometers away, his plans were thwarted by vigilant neighbors who photographed his car's license plate.

As Min parks awkwardly in a loading zone, the tension mounts. Reagan hesitates, unsure if facing Bryce is the right move, but Min insists, urging her to confront the reality of the situation. They reach the scene where a crowd has gathered, drawn by the media frenzy surrounding the arrest. As the police van arrives, officers begin to shuffle Bryce out, creating a chaotic moment filled with reporters' shouts demanding answers.

When Reagan finally sees Bryce, she's taken aback by his hollow demeanor, as if he's a shell of the man she once knew. He's wearing a shirt she recognizes from intimate moments shared between them, amplifying her sense of betrayal. In a tense exchange, Bryce taunts her about the emotional turmoil he caused, and in a moment of defiance, Reagan asserts that he's

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going to prison because of her actions. As he's pulled away, the chapter leaves readers with a poignant blend of anger, resolution, and the haunting fallout of their complicated relationship, underscoring themes of betrayal, resilience, and the impact of truth coming to light.

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Chapter 47 Summary: 46

In Chapter 46 of "Dark Mode," we find Reagan in a turbulent moment as she grapples with the aftermath of her connection to the ongoing investigation into the Dahlia murders. The weight of her circumstances looms over her, pushing her to make the drastic decision to leave town. She's packing up plants from her garden center, a place filled with memories and challenges, while Min, her supportive friend, tries to persuade her to stay. With her baby Dashiel strapped to her chest, Min follows Reagan, expressing her disbelief at Reagan's choice to run away despite the many offers of support pouring in from the public.

Reagan is shaken, feeling exposed and troubled by the attention she receives due to the recent events, especially after Bryce's arrest and the media frenzy around it. The fear of potential predators and the unsettling memories tied to the deepfake video of her only intensify her urge to flee. Min insists that Bryce is in jail and poses no threat, yet Reagan's need for a fresh start overrides her friend's reassurances. Despite Min's offers of support and companionship, including suggesting Reagan stay with her family, Reagan is determined to distance herself from her past.

As they load Reagan's car with plants, Min expresses frustration at Reagan's reluctance to accept help and suggests turning her experiences into something productive, like writing a book. Reagan feels the weight of the

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situation; it's not just about publicity but the trauma she endures that makes it hard for her to see any silver lining. Their conversation dances between hope and despair, illustrating the depth of their friendship amid Reagan's swirling fears.

Min attempts to give Reagan a token for her new beginning—simple black pearl earrings that symbolize hope and renewal. Despite her fatigue and the emotional toll of her choices, Reagan tries on the earrings, illustrating a rare moment of reflection amid chaos. In a poignant gesture, Reagan offers Min a vibrant potted Checkers dahlia, signifying not only friendship but also the resilience to bloom again after hardship. This exchange highlights the themes of transformation and support woven throughout their relationship, emphasizing that while Reagan feels lost, there is a glimmer of connection and care that persists even in dark times. As they say their goodbyes, the chapter closes with a bittersweet sense of uncertainty, highlighting both the fragility and strength of their bond as they navigate the difficult journey ahead.

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Chapter 48: 47

In Chapter 48 of "Dark Mode," Reagan is retreating to Terry and Cynthia's beach house, seeking solace after the chaotic events surrounding her life. The beach house, set away from the ocean but offering a sliver of a view, becomes her sanctuary as she attempts to gather her thoughts amid Cynthia's eclectic collection of knick-knacks. Reagan has a meaningful moment during her visit, connecting with nature and contemplating her fraught relationship with her mother, who isn't talking to her after a public fallout.

As Reagan settles in, she relishes the privacy and quiet, allowing her stress to diminish. However, the peace is shattered when she receives a phone call from Lonski, revealing shocking news: while they have evidence against Elias Wiler for fraud, they still lack a clear connection between him and the murders, notably the 'Dahlia killer' case. This uncertainty sends Reagan's anxiety spiraling back, and she begins to reconsider her safety in the isolated beach house, especially since only a few people know her whereabouts.

Against this backdrop, Reagan feels the pull of her responsibilities as she

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Chapter 49 Summary: 48

In Chapter 49 of "Dark Mode," Reagan finds herself in a terrifying predicament, awakening to a blindingly bright room where she's restrained by heavy straps, unable to move. Confusion sets in as she grapples with the pain from a head injury and a severe wound to her shoulder, which she realizes has been inflicted by Owen, a man she thought she knew. Initially hoping for help, she quickly understands that Owen is not there to assist her; he is her captor, revealing a shocking transformation from a seemingly normal family man to someone deeply connected to the sinister events surrounding the Sydney Dahlia murders.

As dread fills her, Owen's twisted mind reveals itself further. He speaks of his obsession with the famous Black Dahlia murder victim, Elizabeth Short, and eerily claims that Reagan resembles her, which has led him down a dark path. He admits to intending harm not just on her, but hints at having already hurt Min, Reagan's close friend. The tension escalates as Owen flaunts the surgical knife he plans to use on Reagan, intending to dispose of her body in a gruesome manner. The horror reaches its peak when a familiar voice cuts through the tension—it's Min. However, instead of relief, Reagan's hope is shattered with the realization that Min is complicit in Owen's plan, leaving her feeling utterly betrayed.

This chapter is rich with themes of betrayal, obsession, and the thin line

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between perception and reality. Reagan's struggle is not just a fight for survival but also a confrontation with the dark sides of people she once trusted. The gripping narrative captures her fear and determination against the backdrop of Owen's chilling revelations, ultimately leaving her teetering on the edge of despair as she faces an unimaginable fate.

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Chapter 50 Summary: 49

In Chapter 50 of "Dark Mode," Reagan faces an emotional and physical crisis as she grapples with the betrayal of her friend Min. Initially, Reagan's pain stems from a deep sense of betrayal—Min has aligned herself with the sadistic killer Owen, placing Reagan in imminent danger. The chapter portrays Reagan's internal struggles as she reflects on her past experiences of betrayal and the hurt inflicted by those she trusted, such as her childhood friend Brooke and her own mother, Cynthia.

As the tension escalates, Reagan finds herself strapped to a table, feeling a heavy darkness consume her. The vivid, painful memories of her past intertwine with her present peril, amplifying her despair. The chapter shifts dramatically as Reagan witnesses an alarming scene—Min appears to be in trouble, splayed on the ground, and Owen, filled with rage, looms over her. As Reagan's instincts kick in, she is jolted back to consciousness, ready to fight for her life against Owen.

In a moment of intense desperation, Reagan manages to grab a bloody knife and, despite the agonizing pain inflicted by Owen as he attempts to maintain control, she fights back fiercely. The raw violence of their confrontation underscores Reagan's resilience and determination to survive. The stakes are high, and her struggle against Owen becomes a battle not just for survival, but for agency and reclaiming her sense of self against a backdrop of

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betrayal.

As she recalls her mother's struggles with fear and loss, Reagan finds a poignant moment of forgiveness for both her mother and herself, recognizing the flaws in their past, which adds depth to her character development. This chapter captures themes of betrayal, resilience, and the complexities of forgiveness, painting a vivid picture of Reagan's fight against both external and internal demons. The chapter ends on a cliffhanger, with the knife descending towards her, leaving readers anxiously awaiting what fate has in store for Reagan.

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Chapter 51: 50

In Chapter 51 of "Dark Mode" by Ashley Kalagian-Blunt, the tension rises to an explosive climax as Reagan finds herself in a perilous situation. Reagan awakens to chaos, seeing Owen on the floor, injured and frantic, while Min stands over him, bloodied and fierce with a metal object in hand. Min's disheveled state and shock highlight the brutality of their encounter, revealing her determination even amidst her injuries. She manages to free Reagan's hands from the restraints of the table, though Reagan remains trapped in her own pain and confusion.

The frequency and intensity of their conversation reflect a pressing urgency as they piece together what is happening. Reagan learns that they are in Owen's mother's home in Croydon, a location steeped in personal history that adds to the emotional weight of the moment. Min's misguided attempt to help leads both women to grapple with their precarious relationship and the underlying tension surrounding Owen's abusive tendencies.

Things take a drastic turn when Owen, desperate and irrational, lashes out at

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Chapter 52 Summary: 51

In Chapter 52 of "Dark Mode," tension and emotional upheaval dominate as Reagan is discharged from the hospital, her wrist encased in a cast, and Lonski, an investigator, retrieves her. Lonski reveals unsettling developments in the case surrounding Owen, Reagan's acquaintance. They've discovered a collection of suspicious license plates traced back to Owen's deceased mother, linking him to various crime scenes. As they navigate through the bustling streets, the atmosphere is heavy with unease and a hint of camaraderie between Reagan and Lonski, showcasing Lonski's rare empathy for the situation.

Upon reaching a hotel where Min, Owen's fiancée, is staying, the stark reality hits hard. Min is visibly shaken, her appearance marred by injuries from the previous confrontation, and the weight of their lives intertwining with tragedy is palpable. The tension amplifies as they delve into discussions about Owen, whom Min once knew as a loving partner. Min grapples with disbelief and horror, trying to reconcile her memories with the monster he might have been. The mention of Owen's past and the implications of his secret life fuel their conversation, with disturbing revelations about his obsession with notorious murders adding layers of complexity.

Min's emotional turmoil is centered around guilt and helplessness; she reflects on their family life and the tragic fate of victims linked to Owen.

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Reagan, while attempting to provide support, is also haunted by her own experiences with Owen, creating an undercurrent of fear and vulnerability. The chapter captures the entwined lives of the characters against a backdrop of violence and secrecy, highlighting the themes of trust, the duality of appearances, and the struggle to make sense of chaos. As Reagan embraces Min in a moment of shared grief, the bond between them solidifies, emphasizing the importance of friendship and solidarity amidst overwhelming darkness. The chapter culminates in a shared sorrow and the relentless questioning of how well we truly know those closest to us, leaving readers deeply invested in their fates.

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