The Last Chapter

B Alan Bourgeois · Opening excerpt · 1 of 2

The television flickered with a cold, familiar fury.

"I told you we'd be back," the man barked from behind the podium. His smirk gleamed like a devil's dare. "And this time, we're not playing nice."

Alan sat on the edge of his couch in his modest Austin apartment, coffee gone cold in his hand. The leather on the couch cracked when he shifted his weight, a sound he usually ignored. Not tonight. Not while every fiber of his aging body vibrated with the same helpless rage he'd thought he'd buried for good. Rage that once fueled a dozen dystopian thrillers, packed indie bookstores, brought him applause at lectures and panel discussions. Rage that had once been useful. Productive. Even righteous.

But tonight, watching Roger Crumop raise a clenched fist to a roaring crowd of red-capped sycophants, Alan didn't feel righteous. He didn't feel useful.

He felt erased.

The familiar voice grated against him like a rusted knife. The slogans were sharper now, the threats more direct. "We're taking back the schools, the churches, and the media. This is our country—God's country!"

Alan whispered, "God help us."

Reading sample — continued

But in that moment, he wasn’t sure God was listening anymore.

The screen cut to footage of executive orders being signed with grand theatrics. Ban after ban. The reinstatement of the Department of Faith and Freedom. Mandatory “Faith & Flag” curriculum for all public schools. The reallocation of funds from libraries and arts programs to private security forces. The immediate arrest of three journalists, their names scrolling beneath the chyron as if they were casualties.

Alan’s knuckles whitened around the coffee mug. “It’s happening again,” he said aloud, to no one but the air. “And nothing I’ve written has stopped it.”

He turned toward his office. On the wall, his proudest achievement: a framed first edition of Divided We Fall, his sharpest, boldest, most prophetic novel. A chronicle of creeping tyranny and cultural collapse. A mirror held up to madness.

And yet—here they were.

Alan rose slowly, his knees stiff with age and disuse. He walked to the window and stared at the city outside. Neon signs flickered over silent sidewalks. Sirens wailed in the distance. And behind it all, a rising hum. A darkness that pulsed like a storm behind the clouds.