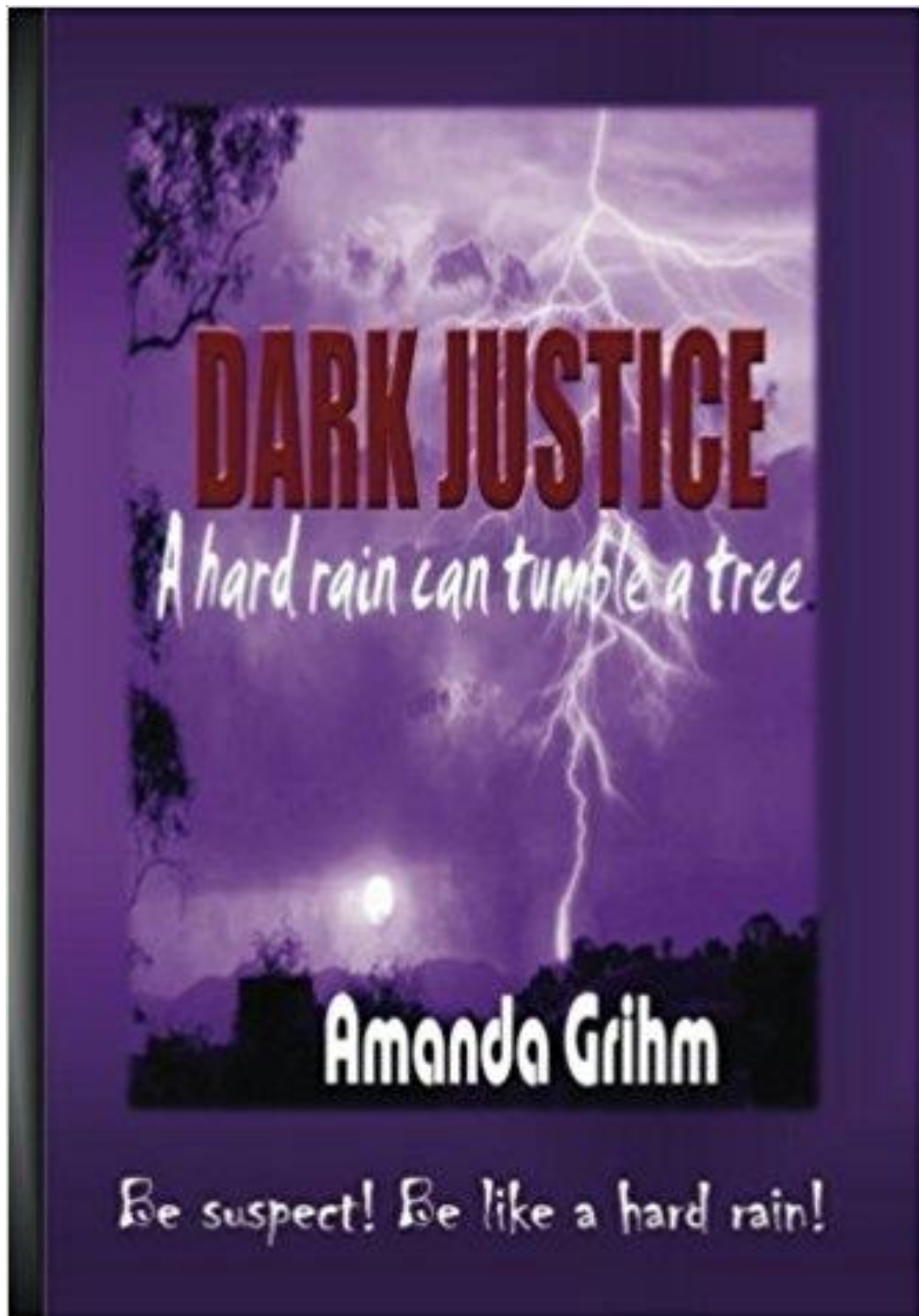




Dark Justice

Sample Chapters

Chapters One & Two

In southern soil lay the seeds of hatred and deceit. The trees that grow casts broad, dark shadows of despair. They cover the blood of many unsuspecting victims. Their roots grow shallow in red dirt, thinly veiled by green grass that covers the ground. The scene is seductive. It lures one into an illusion of tranquil beauty and confers a sense of harmony. A hard rain can tumble a tree. Don't be a victim.



Be suspect! Be like a hard rain!

CHAPTER ONE

Wisps of warm air carried a soft, alluring voice gently across my shoulder, up my neck and into my ear. "Where's yo' baby?" the voice asked as it traveled down into my eardrum and touched me like the light tickle of a feather. "Where's yo' baby?" the feathery light voice repeated?

"Where's my, where's my baby? I asked from a depth of sleep that would not release me.

I felt a slight pinch on the bridge of my nose and the slightest bit of pressure under my chin that prevented my mouth from opening. I shook my head and my mouth opened more suddenly than expected, taking a deep swallow of air into the farthestmost part of my lungs. Within seconds my breathing returned to normal. Still, sleep had not released me. Instead, a cloak of fear pervaded me.

Another faint voice whispered something 'bout my baby but this time the tone was harsh and sinister and it made me shake inside. Water poured out of the pores of my skin like unrelenting rain in a torrent storm until my bed was wet and cold. My body shook involuntarily. The shaking was extreme, hard, and violent.

Where's yo' baby???? Where IS my baby...was the stabbing and sobering thought that cut through my heart as I jerked awake.

Even though my eyes were open I could not see a thing. The room was black. I took a deep breath and slowly exhaled as I rose to sit upright in the middle of the bed. I heard it again...the light voice... "Where's yo baby?"

Oh, my God, where is my baby? With a prayer caught between my faith and my fear I closed my eyes and gently patted my right hand over to the edge of the bed. Bereft of hope, my fear-stricken, rigid body slumped like a time-enhanced withering flower. Paralyzed by the terror that pervaded me and

the guilt of my plausible neglect, I sat quietly listening for any sign of life from my newborn baby boy. I tried desperately to calm my heartbeat and breathing so that I could listen harder to the quiet timbre of the room. In one excruciating moment I thought I heard someone breathe next to me. When I turned my head to look I saw black silhouettes outlined like shadows near the curtain through the blackness of the night. Then I heard what sounded like deep breathing at the foot of the bed. In the next moment I was hearing it over by the door. I scooted to the edge of the bed and stood slowly.

Disparaging moans and cries filled the room. The cries were so foreign and distressing they sounded like a wounded animal. In a moment of clarity I realized the cries were my own. I knew they were my soul's expression and release from the torment that roiled inside of me. I opened my mouth to speak but unintelligible desperation lurched out in decibels so loud that it made the glass pitcher rumble and teeter on the edge of the dresser and the

thin glass plate on the nightstand rattle before it fell and shattered.

"Where's yo' baby?" the soft voice asked.

The voice was so light and evasive I wasn't sure I was actually hearing a voice at all. "Is someone here?" My words quivered as I spoke.

"Where's yo' baby?" The feathery light voice asked in an even lighter voice.

It's my conscious gnawing at me. My son is in his bedroom... where else? The temples on the sides of my head began to pulsate. I could hear the blood rush back and forth through the veins that ran from my eyes to my ears and down the back of my head. Every few seconds I felt the pounding of my heart against my chest wall. Something very light touched me on the back of my neck and I just about jumped out of my skin and lost my mind!

"What was that? Who's in here?" I cried through a fear that broke and choked every word that came out of my mouth.

Suddenly, a loud noise erupted by the door. A second later a noise erupted by the bed. The dresser was rattling as though someone were rocking it on its side. Next, the headboard of the bed started rattling and bumping against the wall. My arms flew straight up in the air and my legs started running in place. My legs tired quickly and I collapsed to the floor.

"The Lord is my shepherd, the Lord is my shepherd, the Lord is my shepherd," repeated in my mind.

Every nerve in my body twitched and jumped on edge. The nerves in my eyelids and lashes were spastic. The vision in my right eye was blurred and there was no sight in my left eye at all - only convoluted, cascading visions of light and darkness floating in and out of view.

As I lay there - on the floor - too scared to get up, the exposed skin on my back, butt, and legs burned on that icy, hot floor but a voice from deep within said "Get yo' ass up and find yo' baby."

CHAPTER TWO

I refused to accept the possibility that anything horrible could have happened to my baby and I convinced myself he was in his crib in the next room. I reached out to turn the light on when a hand grabbed mine and a man's strong arm wrapped around my waist and lifted me high into the air. The touch of human skin almost sent me into heart failure.

I screamed loud and long and I convulsed as my arms swung wildly.

A wicked, searing voice screeched out, "Shut up, bitch," and a woman's small hands gripped my mouth and the back of my head. There was an awful, putrid smell on her hands. They were sticky and smelled rotten. Her grip was so strong it felt like she was breaking my face. It felt like my jaws were going to crack open.

In the moment I found myself succumbing to my fear, a flash of my baby looking up at me, smiling and reaching for me

flashed across my mind. My heart overflowed with such a strong, warm, and loving sensation it gave me an unnatural surge of power. I broke the woman's grip from my face and I hit the man so hard with the back of my head that he released me, momentarily. He quickly grabbed me around my waist again. All the pain and fear that had been building up in me fused into a force of power that made me more determined than ever to find my baby.

These people had invaded our home and I had to protect my son at all costs. I grabbed the woman by the wrist and twisted it until I heard her hit the ground. Then I raised my leg and rigidly pointed the front part of my foot up until an unbearable pain ran from the bend of my foot up to my knee. At this point, the heel of my foot was my only and best weapon. In this position, I could feel the sharp, knife-like bone as it ate its way almost through to the soft pallet of my foot. I used it like a javelin spear. I kicked backward, swiftly, and delivered a devastating blow to his shin.

Just as quickly, I stomped hard onto the instep of his foot so that I could halt his movement. I was temporarily stunted by the man's loud, bellowing voice that rang out, bounced off the walls and filled the entire room.

"Biiitch!

The woman's witch-like scowl filled the room with sneers and laughter. A blinding white light flashed across my eyes, darted back and forth and in circles around me, feverishly illuminating different parts of the room. The light burned my eyes, instantaneously causing them to tear. The light followed the movement of my head and penetrated the lids of my closed eyes.

I stared at the red and blue veins of the pink inner lining of my eyelids. I tried to raise my hand to shield my face but two strong hands grabbed mine and pent my arms down at my sides. Every way I twisted and turned the light followed. After a few seconds the intensity of heat from the light lessened and I felt a

hard hit in the middle of my forehead. I came to, lying in the middle of the floor. Even though the lights were on, floating slithers of cycle- and star-shaped light and darkness moved in the space around me. After a little more than a few seconds, the slithers of light and darkness became full-scale flashes of light and darkness. Finally, the darkness surrendered to the light and I regained my sight.

I gasped with surprise to see that the two people in the room worked with me, side-by-side, and on a daily basis. It was my manager, Kenneth Deorty and his wife, Sue. Kenneth wobbled noisily over to the rocker that sat in the middle of the room.

"Why?" I cried.

Sue started to laugh. She was still relatively close to me so I grabbed her arm and twisted it, again. I had so much strength, hatred, and fear in my grip that I was able to take her, immediately, to the ground. Her mouth opened but no words came out.

Kenneth tapped his gun against the chair, pointed it at me, and motioned for me to let go of her arm. He sat with his back rigidly straight on the edge of the seat of the rocker, cleared his throat, and started warming his vocal chords like he was about to sing. "Me, me, me, meeeee-eeee." In the light feathery voice, he said, "Where's yo' baby?" He flopped back into the rocker and plastered a huge grin across his face.

At first he stared at me as though he was waiting for my approval. Then he began gawking at me like I was something he had never seen before. His eyes were wide and searching and the look on his face was puzzled - like he was getting his first glimpse at a real, live alien. He twisted his head from side-to-side almost touching ear to shoulder and looked at me as if he was trying to figure out which planet I had escaped.

Sue worked for me and I loathed her. She was the most lazy, sloppy, stupid and bizarre person I'd ever come across. She was my Systems Engineer. She didn't know what a system was, none-

the-less anything about engineering. I could have trained a zoo monkey to do a better job. Sue stammered to her feet. She wiped her hair out of her face and started grinning like a Cheshire cat. Her eyes were wild with excitement and her lips quivered with exhilaration - opening and closing, covering and uncovering her teeth. Out of the blue she ran toward me and stopped a few inches away. She backed away about a foot or so and then she began walking in circles around me. Without saying a word she jumped in close to me and started pushing me toward the window. Her behavior was so extreme and bizarre that my only reaction was to move wherever she was leading. When we were both standing at the window's sill she took two giant steps backward, turned, ran to my bed and started jumping up and down on it like an undisciplined child.

"Look now! Go head...look straight in front of you and you'll find the answer to all of your questions. You'll find what you been looking for."

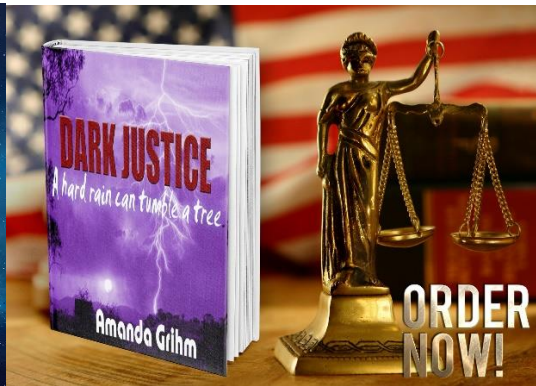
She fell backwards onto my bed and howled out laughter that sounded like a wild animal. I turned to look at her. She lay there lifted by her elbows with a look of unbridled anticipation in her eyes, "Go 'on...look in front of you. Yo' answer is right in front of you. Right dare! Just look stupid! You'll find the answer to yo' question."

Books by Amanda Grihm

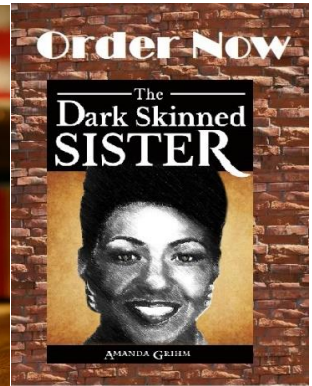
Fiction based on truth



The Wolf



Dark Justice



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