

Living Shadow 100

Chapter 100 He Can

"Hey, how long do you intend to make us do this? We've been walking all over town for two hours now," Damon grumbled, his irritation breaking through his usually guarded tone.

Lilith turned to him with a teasing smile.

"I'm a delicate lady, but you don't see me complaining about taking a little walk. Or is it that you just hate my company?"

Damon regarded her impassively.

'Actually, I do,' he thought but refrained from saying it aloud.

Instead, he replied dryly,

"I wouldn't compare someone who's reached the third-class advancement to someone like me, who's barely scraping by."

Lilith chuckled softly. She found his sarcasm amusing, though Damon's patience was wearing thin. The walking itself wasn't the issue—it was the constant mental strain of staying on guard around her.

They had arrived in Athor's Sanctuary two hours ago, and in that time, Lilith had patrolled the town diligently, helping anyone who appeared to be in need. Damon, however, had been roped into assisting her with various menial tasks, from carrying supplies to repairing a vendor's stall.

The townspeople seemed to think highly of her. Even adventurers, who were typically rough around the edges, treated her with a mix of respect and caution. It wasn't surprising—few would dare to cross someone at the third-class advancement.

Damon, however, found it all incredibly tiresome. Helping others for no personal gain felt like a pointless waste of energy.

"Why are we even doing this?" he finally asked, unable to hide his exasperation.

Lilith shook her head with a bemused expression.

"I suppose you wouldn't understand. We're being good Samaritans."

Damon frowned, unconvinced. He decided to be blunt.

"I hate to be rude, but you don't strike me as the type of woman who would do something that has no tangible benefit to her."

Lilith sighed, her smile turning faintly exasperated.

"You don't seem to hate being rude, but fine. Think of it this way—building a good reputation is a form of power. We call that influence."

Damon nodded slowly, though his skepticism was evident.

"I see. That's under the assumption that the so-called public doesn't stab you in the back. The only person you can truly trust is yourself."

Lilith's smile returned, a hint of amusement in her eyes.

"You're quite the pessimist. But you're not wrong. Still, I never said I trusted them. I'm only building potentially useful connections. Humans are not as one-dimensional as you think. Try to keep an open mind."

Damon sighed, his voice laced with reluctant agreement. "I see. I'll keep that in mind."

Lilith noticed his tone and tilted her head slightly. "You don't seem to believe me," she remarked, her voice light yet probing.

Damon remained silent, refusing to engage further.

They continued walking, eventually entering a quieter part of town—a secluded neighborhood with wide streets and modest homes. The air was still, and the absence of bustling activity made Damon uneasy.

"Where are we going, exactly?" he asked, scanning their surroundings. "You won't find any first-years in this boring part of town."

Lilith nodded. "We're not looking for first-years. I'm here to meet someone."

Damon's brows furrowed, but he said nothing. As they approached their destination, a sense of unease began to creep over him. The quiet atmosphere and the subtle shift in Lilith's demeanor made him instinctively more cautious.

'Who exactly is she meeting here?' he wondered, his guard rising as they neared their destination.

The house was all too familiar. Damon had been there just the night before.

This was the residence of the late Carmen Vale. Damon said nothing, keeping his expression impassive, his blindfold securely in place.

As they approached the house, Lilith stepped into the yard and knocked on the front door. Damon, meanwhile, extended his Shadow Perception, sensing the faint presence of a young girl moving toward them from inside.

His fists clenched instinctively. He was on guard, wondering what schemes Lilith might have in store for him.

The door opened, revealing Iris. Her eyes briefly flicked toward Damon before she quickly turned her attention to Lilith, her lips parting as though to speak. Damon gave a subtle shake of his head, stopping her in her tracks.

Iris closed her mouth and turned fully to Lilith.

"Hello. How may I help you, Student Council President?" she asked politely, her tone steady, though Damon could tell her control over her expression wasn't as strong as it needed to be.

Lilith smiled at Iris's reaction to seeing Damon. Though Lilith didn't look at him, she didn't need to; Iris's subtle glances gave her away.

"May we come in?"

Iris nodded. Already familiar with Lilith, she stepped aside to let them in.

Damon gritted his teeth, keeping his thoughts carefully guarded.

'I was planning to meet Iris myself, but this... Did she know I came here yesterday? Or is this just another trap?'

Iris glanced at him from the corner of her eye before speaking again.

"Allow me to make you some tea."

Lilith inclined her head graciously. "Thank you."

They moved to the living room. Lilith chose to sit beside Damon on the sofa, her presence immediately making him uncomfortable. Without a word, Damon stood and moved to another chair, putting a deliberate distance between them.

Lilith tilted her head at his reaction, her lips quirking into a teasing smile.

"What's this? Afraid of catching my cooties?"

Damon had expected such a remark. "No, not at all."

He gestured to Croft, the raven perched silently on his shoulder. "It's just that Croft can get aggressive if strangers sit too close."

The raven, hearing the blatant lie, let out an indignant caw. "Caw! Liar! Liar!"

Damon swiftly smacked the bird with just enough force to silence it. Croft quickly changed its tune. "Caw! Evil!"

Lilith laughed, clearly amused by the entire exchange. "It seems your familiar doesn't quite agree with you."

Damon sighed, his tone laced with feigned regret.

"I should have eaten him when I had the chance."

Lilith chuckled. "I highly doubt a raven would taste good."

Before Damon could respond, Iris returned, carrying a tray. She set it down gently before serving them tea. Damon poured himself a cup, his movements refined, almost automatic, as though he were used to such rituals. Experience tales at empire

Lilith observed him briefly, noting his manners but choosing not to comment. Instead, she turned her attention to Iris.

"I apologize for not coming earlier."

Iris shook her head, stealing quick glances at Damon as she responded. "It's fine."

Lilith nodded solemnly. "I didn't want to come until I had at least a lead on your father's death."

At the mention of her father, Iris bit her lip, her face contorting with pain.

Damon kept his expression neutral as he sipped his tea, though he could feel the tension in the room rising.

Lilith continued, her tone steady but serious. "I'm sorry, Iris, but I haven't made much progress. In fact, I can't help you at all."

Damon felt a wave of relief wash over him.

'Of course, she has nothing on his death,' he thought, almost letting out a sigh.

But then Lilith's gaze shifted to him, and his relief evaporated.

"But while I can't tell you who or what killed your father..." she said, pausing for dramatic effect.

"I know someone who can."

She gestured toward Damon.

"He can."

Damon, who had just started to relax, froze. The words hung in the air, registering slowly. His brows shot up, and before he could fully react, he choked on his tea, the hot liquid burning his throat as he sputtered in disbelief.