

Living Shadow 110

Chapter 110 Deadly Training

Damon opened the system panel, half-expecting something new to appear—a change, an update, anything. His shadow energy was nearing 100, but beyond that, the interface remained frustratingly unchanged.

"Hmmm, I suppose it's locked..." he muttered.

He already figured as much. The system's locked mechanics were features he had yet to unlock. He recalled vague mentions of quests and challenges from when the system first activated, but none had ever come his way.

"Probably because my level is still too low," he reasoned.

Not that he was eager for quests. The system already demanded enough of him—like consuming others to grow stronger. The mere thought of the kind of quests it might generate made his stomach churn.

Damon sighed, flexing his mangled fingers. The numbness was his only reprieve from the agonizing pain.

"At least I've created my own unique spell..."

Still, calling it "perfected" was a stretch. The system's mastery mechanic had teased him with a brief glimpse—4% before disappearing. There was still a long road ahead, and he looked forward to unlocking the mastery feature to track his progress.

But there were more immediate concerns. Today's objective loomed over him like a shadow: killing Rein Ambridge. At least he wasn't doing it alone. Marcus Fayjoy, a now mad man disturbingly eager to help, was his pawn. Convincing Marcus had been alarmingly easy—after all, Marcus believed he was doing "God's work."

"That fool..." Damon shook his head.

Still, his training wasn't over yet. There was one final thing to attempt.

Walking toward the forest, Damon ignored the sharp pangs from his broken fingers. Remorseless activated, dulling the fear and steadying his nerves.

Taking a deep breath, he glanced at the contraption hidden beneath his sleeves—the omnidirectional gear. With practiced precision, Damon shot the arrowhead-like hooks into a tree, propelling himself upward. The thin wires, taut as steel, allowed him to swing freely. He maneuvered between trees with dizzying speed, each swing more controlled than the last.

Two days of trial and error had honed his movements, turning pain into a relentless teacher. But now, he wanted to test one of the more challenging maneuvers.

He aimed his hooks at the tallest tree, their tips biting deep into the bark. With a snap, the gear launched him skyward, propelling him above the canopy. Sunlight struck his face, the wind howled in his

ears, and for a fleeting moment, he was weightless, staring down at the endless expanse of forest below.

It was exhilarating.

Damon quickly fired the hooks back toward the trunks below, intending to yank himself downward with equal force.

"Uh-oh... damn it!"

His aim was off. The hooks missed their mark, embedding into the ground instead. The resulting force doubled his descent speed.

At this rate, he'd be a bloody smear on the forest floor.

Thinking fast, Damon released one hook and shot another toward a nearby tree. The sudden recoil yanked him sideways, the momentum smashing him into the trunk.

"Ahhh!"

The impact cracked the tree, sending splintered branches raining down. Damon tumbled through the canopy, each branch tearing at his flesh until he hit the ground with a sickening thud.

Pain exploded through his body. His left leg was shattered, the bone fragments protruding grotesquely. Blood seeped from countless gashes, pooling beneath him.

He gasped, his lungs refusing to fill properly.

"Hhh-hhh... hhuhh..."

For several agonizing minutes, Damon lay there, vision swimming and blood loss dragging him closer to unconsciousness. Somehow, he willed himself to move.

Crawling on his belly, he left a crimson trail in the dirt, his body screaming in protest. He had swung too far into the forest, and now survival seemed like an impossible feat. But Damon wasn't one to give up.

After what felt like hours, he reached the familiar clearing where he had left his pager. His vision blurred, his strength waning, but he flipped it open and pressed the pager..

"Leona..." he rasped, his voice barely audible.

Moments later, her panicked reply came through, promising help. Relief washed over him as he collapsed onto his back, staring at the blood-streaked sky above.

A faint smile tugged at his lips despite everything.

"I almost had it... maybe next time, I'll aim a little higher... so I don't miss the trunk."

Three minutes later, Leona Valefier came sprinting into the clearing, Sylvia Moonveil close behind her. Neither wasted time with words—Sylvia immediately began channeling her lunar-attribute magic. A soft glow enveloped Damon's mangled body as Sylvia worked to stop the bleeding, realigning his shattered bones with meticulous care.

Leona stood nearby, her fists clenched. Golden eyes burning with frustration, she watched Damon calmly stare at the bloodstreaked sky, muttering to himself about his next plans.

Her anger boiled over.

"What is wrong with you? I've told you again and again—stop this reckless, dangerous training!"

Damon chuckled, his lips curling into a faint smirk.

"You made it here on time, didn't you? What are friends for?"

Leona's eye twitched as she fought the urge to throttle him. She sighed heavily, trying to rein in her fury.

Sylvia, however, wasn't holding back. She shot Damon a scathing glare.

"We almost didn't make it! One mistake and you'd be dead!"

Damon nodded, entirely unbothered.

"It was a calculated risk. Besides, I had a healing potion on me. Just in case."

Both women froze. Then, in unison, their glares intensified.

"Then why didn't you drink it?" Leona demanded, her voice rising.

Damon shrugged, his expression nonchalant.

"A waste of money. Why drink an expensive potion when I have a free healer? I'd rather die."

Leona's entire body stiffened, her golden eyes twitching with barely suppressed rage.

"You... you...! I don't... it's just a damn potion!"

Sylvia nodded, equally furious.

"What if we'd been late? It's just a potion, Damon!"

Damon shook his head, undeterred by their outrage.

"No. It's an expensive potion. Not all of us have endless money to throw around. Some of us actually work for it."

He sat up with a wince, glancing at Sylvia's unfinished healing.

"Now, enough with the nagging. I'd like to go to a proper healer and get fixed up."

Leona's jaw dropped, her fury momentarily leaving her speechless. Sylvia groaned, her hands glowing as she finished closing his wounds.

"You're impossible, Damon," Sylvia muttered under her breath, though her tone betrayed a hint of reluctant amusement.

Leona crossed her arms, glaring daggers at him.

"You better pray I don't throw you out of a tree next time."

Damon laughed softly, brushing dirt off his tattered clothes.

"I'd really like that, as long as you're willing to pay a hefty sum in compensation."