

Living Shadow 117

Chapter 117 The Long Awaited Payback

Damon left the Wendigo behind after a long, tense stare-down. He wasn't in a rush to settle things now—patience had always been his greatest weapon. If he couldn't act without consequences, he would wait until he could.

This mindset had served him well countless times, like when he spoke his mind to professors who looked down on him. He knew they wouldn't dare commit acts of violence against a student.

'I can't respect people who show me none,' he thought as he trudged through the dense woods, his back still aching from the Wendigo's claws.

By the time Damon reached the academy, dawn was creeping over the horizon. But instead of heading to his dorm, he changed direction, walking toward a secluded spot on campus. He had arranged for Marcus to bring Rein Ambridge, then leave him drugged and ready, for Damon to kill.

The rendezvous point was a bench in a quiet part of the academy, not far from one of the entrances to the underground dungeons. Few people came here, making it an ideal spot for what he intended to do.

When Damon arrived, he spotted a red-haired young man sprawled on the ground, unconscious. He stopped, retreating into the cover of nearby trees, his stomach growling faintly. His eyes scanned the area.

Marcus was nowhere to be seen.

Damon's gaze flicked to the scorch marks on the pavement. Some sections of the ground were warped, as though superheated before cooling. He frowned.

"Did they fight?" he muttered, stepping cautiously closer. Then he shook his head.

"No, that's unlikely... There's no sign of ice magic or a real struggle."

Lowering himself to one knee, Damon inspected Rein's body. A wave of irritation surged through him.

"Damn it, Marcus... You better not have killed him."

If Rein was dead, Damon wouldn't be able to claim his soul. Eating his flesh would still nourish his shadow, but the loss of a soul's essence felt wasteful. He pressed two fingers to Rein's neck and let out a sigh of relief.

The young man was alive.

Damon's eyes hardened as he studied the unconscious figure. The scorch marks still puzzled him, but he dismissed the thought with a shrug.

"Fire attribute," he murmured. "Probably got drunk and fired off a few blasts."

His voice turned cold as his hand slid to Rein's neck. With a sharp, calculated motion, Damon twisted.

A sickening crack echoed through the silent clearing.

[You have slain Rein Ambridge.]

His shadow surged with hunger, devouring Rein's flesh in an instant. The body disappeared into the darkness, leaving nothing behind.

[You have gained 5 attribute points.]

[Your shadow is fed.]

Without hesitation, Damon allocated the points to mana, feeling a brief surge of power course through him.

He stood, scanning the area one last time before slipping away into the trees. This had been the easiest kill he'd ever made, all thanks to Marcus turning on his so-called friend.

Pulling out the sound stone, Damon activated it. "Marcus—"

Before he could continue, Marcus's voice interrupted him, manic and disjointed.

"Lord! Truly, you are amazing! You destroyed that evil creature with your divine power! Yes, let him burn—burn!"

Damon frowned, confused. "Marcus, what are you talking—"

Laughter erupted on the other end of the line, broken and incoherent. Marcus began muttering to himself, his words devolving into nonsense.

'His sanity is fraying faster than I thought,' Damon mused. He sighed, cutting off the connection.

'I just need him to hold it together until the mid-semester evaluation. That's when I'll deal with him.'

Rein Ambridge and Marcus's strange behavior could wait for another time. Damon was still injured, his body aching with every step.

"I'll have Sylvia heal me later," he muttered, "or I'll just head to the academy healers..."

With a weary sigh, he made his way back to his dorm, the weight of the night settling heavily on his shoulders.

The following week, Damon had eliminated two more of Marcus's friends, leaving Marcus himself as the final target.

The best part? Marcus was unwittingly helping him do it.

With Lilith Astranova under house arrest, Damon had free rein to execute his plans without interference. Though she occasionally tried to reach him via pager, he never answered.

Time had flown by. Over the course of the week, Damon claimed two more souls, feeding his shadow and carefully conserving his energy for the mid-semester evaluation, which was now only two days away. His plan was to let his shadow's hunger grow just enough to grant him a stats boost, but not so much that it reached 80% hunger, where control would become an issue.

During this time, Damon made significant progress with his magic. He finally mastered the Magic Blast spell, reducing its mana cost to a mere ten points. Additionally, he refined his self-created Magic Bullet spell, increasing its speed and accuracy.

The most drastic improvement, however, was his control over Shadow Perception. After countless hours of practice, he had finally mastered the ability to turn it on and off at will. Moreover, he could now integrate it seamlessly with his normal vision, merging perspectives without disorientation.

'Finally,' he thought, relieved to no longer need the blindfold that had become a staple of his training. Though he still carried it just in case, it was now a relic of his struggles, a reminder of how far he'd come.

Most of Damon's time was spent in the Evil Forest, laying traps, mapping out the terrain, and training Iris. Tonight, however, marked his final visit to the forest.

The past few days had been harrowing. He'd survived numerous brushes with death, often due to the forest's dangerous flora, though a few close calls with roaming monsters had tested his wits and reflexes.

But none of that compared to the Wendigo.

His grudge against the creature ran deep, festering with each passing day. Tonight, however, would be the night he settled things once and for all. The final Dragon's Breath trap was almost ready.

Damon wiped the sweat from his brow, his body covered in a thick layer of mud paste he'd crafted to mask his scent. The oppressive air of the forest clung to his skin, and the faint hum of unseen predators filled the air.

With a heavy exhale, he plunged his shovel into the earth one last time, finishing the final trap. He slung the tool across his back and pulled out his daggers, their edges gleaming faintly in the moonlight that filtered through the dense canopy.

It was time for payback.