

Living Shadow 118

Chapter 118 Infanticide

Revenge was an ancient law. Damon knew it well. He had plenty of reasons to be vengeful, more than he cared to count. His entire village was a glaring example, filled with those who turned their backs on him. Then there were his so-called relatives who betrayed him for their own gain. And how could he forget the noble in Valerion who forced him to sell his father's house?

But Damon hadn't always harbored the concept of revenge in his heart. There was a time when survival had been his only priority. Back then, he would have surrendered to any injustice, carried no thought of vengeance, and simply endured.

That had only made people see him as weak, a pitiful figure to exploit. To escape that perception, he embraced the path of absolute payback. It was a harsh lesson learned from the unforgiving streets of Valerion, where weakness was a death sentence.

Perhaps that was why so many thought him recklessly foolish—or perhaps outright insane.

He dared to call the Boss of Quick Hand a bastard straight to his face when he refused to pay Damon his ten zeni fee for running an errand. He even had the audacity to refuse an extra bribe to the district sergeant. Somehow, despite his defiance, Damon was still alive, still standing, and still carrying every grudge as if it were carved into his bones.

"If someone crosses you, no matter how powerful they are, you must pay them back. Or they'll just keep doing it," he had once said.

Vengeance required patience too. Some grudges couldn't be settled immediately, no matter how strong the desire burned. But he would pay them back, all of them, in due time. Kindness could fade, fleeting and forgettable, but malice? How could anyone dare forget that?

Tonight was a night for vengeance. He couldn't kill the wendigo outright—it was far too strong—but that didn't mean he couldn't leave it a scarred memory to carry.

That was why Damon was crouched in a tree, gazing down at a small, half-buried cave surrounded by bones. The scattered remains of past meals were likely meant to ward off intruders. Deep claw marks etched into the entrance warned of the creature's fury.

Damon let his shadow perception stretch out, its sight creeping into the cave like a living mist. Sure enough, the wendigo was inside, nestled among its young—three creatures roughly the size of normal wolves, but with far deadlier auras.

'Those things will be hard to kill,' Damon thought, 'but I have the element of surprise.'

He had been perched there for two hours, patiently waiting. He knew it wouldn't be long before the mother wendigo ventured out in search of prey. Likely a nocturne stag, something large enough to feed her young.

Too bad her infants wouldn't be alive to eat anything.

Damon waited patiently. He was willing to ally with enemies if it meant achieving revenge—waiting two hours was nothing in comparison. His vengeance demanded patience, and so he remained still, his eyes fixed on the wendigo's cave. Soon enough, the creature emerged.

Its grotesque form stepped into the moonlight, sniffing the air cautiously. Its head jerked from side to side, eyes scanning for any sign of danger to its young.

Damon crouched lower, his body blending into the shadows of the forest floor. He was coated in the same mud that covered the surrounding trees, its rancid stench masking his presence. Even with Remorseless active, his heart pounded wildly in his chest. One wrong move and his revenge would be cut short—permanently.

The wendigo circled the area, scraping deep claw marks into nearby trees to reinforce its territorial claim. Then, satisfied, it ventured into the darkness of the woods in search of prey.

Damon exhaled softly, his shadow perception extending outward like tendrils of ink. He tracked the wendigo's movements, waiting until it moved beyond his two-kilometer range. Another five minutes passed before he dared to descend from the tree.

He spread his senses into the cave, confirming the presence of the three wolf-sized wendigo infants. Their soft, raspy breaths echoed faintly.

Silently, he crept inside, his steps precise and measured. He pulled out a paralyzing gas ball, letting a small amount of its vapor drift into the cave. Against full-grown monsters, it would have been worthless. But against infants, it would at least slow them down.

The darkness within the cave was impenetrable to most, but Damon's eyes adjusted with ease. He moved toward the first pup, a spell charged in his left hand. His dagger gleamed faintly in the dim light as he plunged it into the creature's eye. It let out a faint whimper before going still.

Damon left the dagger embedded in the first pup and swiftly drew his second blade. The next pup barely stirred before his blade slashed its throat, silencing it forever.

The third pup growled, its instincts rousing it despite the paralytic mist. Damon reacted instantly, unleashing the magic blast he had been preparing. The spell hit the creature squarely, snapping its neck and slamming it into the cave wall. It was alive but unconscious, barely clinging to life.

A faint chime echoed in his mind.

[You have slain Infant Evil Forest Wendigo.]

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Damon smirked, glancing at the notifications. The first two were dead. He approached the third, withdrawing a cursed arrow from his pack. He stabbed it into the unconscious wendigo's chest.

"There. That should keep you still while my shadow eats," he muttered.

Revenge wasn't satisfying unless the target knew who had dealt the blow. He needed the mother wendigo to see the aftermath of his work.

But first, he checked his system. His progress was slow—his soul count remained stuck at [4/5]. Killing monsters like the wendigo didn't seem to add to the tally.

"Ah... what a bummer," he sighed, shaking his head.

Pulling out his dagger, he decapitated the second wendigo's corpse. Then he turned to the wall, where his shadow stretched unnaturally, awaiting his command.

"Eat them," he ordered.

To his surprise, the shadow surged forward without hesitation, enveloping the carcasses in a swirling mass of darkness. It devoured them completely, leaving only the severed head behind.

[You have gained 3 attribute points.]

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Damon frowned.

"Is that it?" He had expected more—perhaps some indication that his shadow was finally sated. But no, the hunger remained the he same. His shadow only seemed to feed properly on humans, elves or other higher races.

"Three points... that's less than I get from killing a classmate," he muttered bitterly.

There was no time to waste. Damon kicked the last pup, waking it with a start. Its eyes flew open, and it released a deafening growl that echoed through the night.

"Good. Call your momma," Damon sneered.

He stabbed its head, ending its life instantly.

[You have slain Infant Evil Forest Wendigo.]

His shadow surged forward, devouring the last pup's body in moments.

[You have gained 3 attribute points.]

Satisfied, Damon grabbed the severed head, tying it to his waist. He bolted from the cave, darting into the forest just as a furious roar echoed in the distance. The mother wendigo had heard the call. She was coming.

