

MY LIVING SHADOW SYSTEM DEVOURS TO MAKE ME STRONGER

Chapter 12 The Prophecy

Damon hurried through the academy's main building, mentally cursing the time he'd wasted reading over Professor Kael Blackthorn's letter. By the time he entered the History of the Demon Wars classroom, it was nearly full. Ironically, despite being the first to leave, he was now the last to arrive.

Relieved to find the professor absent, he slipped through the door and hugged the shadows along the wall, moving as quietly as possible to avoid drawing attention. The classroom's tiered seating allowed him to climb to his usual spot at the very back, safely distant from the nobles clustered toward the front.

As he settled in, he let out a breath, grateful no one had noticed him, especially after the spectacle from the last class. Glancing at his shadow, he whispered,

"Looks like we made it."

The faint light cast his shadow along the wall, gesturing back as if responding.

"Hmm... Are you asking if I like this class?" Damon murmured, a faint smile breaking his usually gloomy expression.

"I actually do. It's pure theory, so mana levels don't matter. Plus, the professor's a commoner like me, and he's... well, he seems like a nice guy. Never talked to him, but still."

His shadow moved faintly as if listening, and Damon felt his stomach grumble, distracting him.

'Could really use some food right about now...'

Almost on cue, the system notification appeared in his vision:

[Shadow: 49]

[Shadow Hunger Levels: 26%]

[Condition: Shadow is Hungry]

With a sigh, Damon noted the rise in shadow hunger.

"I'll feed you later," he whispered to his shadow, though it crossed its arms as if less than impressed with him.

Trying to ignore his own hunger, he shifted his attention back to the class. Below, he noticed Lark Bonaire sitting with Marcus Fayjoy and the others, all of them gathered around Xander Ravenscroft like loyal satellites.

Marcus shot occasional glances his way, his expression a mix of anger and apprehension, while Lark looked at him with cold fury, as if Damon had wronged him without fair retribution.

Damon met Lark's glare, his mind drifting back to the memory of being pushed down a ravine by that same group. The seething resentment made his blood boil. He wanted payback, and he wouldn't forget.

Xander, however, seemed oblivious—or maybe he simply didn't care. Damon's eyes narrowed, watching the boy who remained serene and unaffected by the tension around him.

The door swung open, and the professor finally entered.

Professor Chrome was a kind-looking old man, with a long white beard, glasses perched on his nose, and a pristine white robe accented with gold trim. His gentle presence radiated warmth, as if he were everyone's grandfather.

"Hooohoho, well, hello everyone! Settle down; class is about to begin,"

he greeted, his jovial tone melting the tension in the room like a warm breeze.

Damon found himself actually enjoying Professor Chrome's lecture. Despite his usual lack of regard for others, he had a rare respect for this particular teacher.

Professor Chrome was living proof that even commoners could rise to prominence—some said he'd even rejected a position at the imperial court to

teach here, choosing instead to guide the academy's next generation of fighters against the demon races.

The professor launched into the lesson, recounting centuries of the Demon Wars, detailing famous demon lords and the goddess-race heroes who had fought against them.

Damon found the topic intriguing, though he grew slightly irritated by the occasional propaganda about the goddess race's supposed superiority.

The academy's contradictions amused him; here they boasted of supremacy, while in other classes, they emphasized the sheer terror of demons' speed, strength, and lethality. Even a lesser demon—a being near the bottom of the hierarchy—could easily rip a human to shreds.

'Typical victor's history,' he thought.

'I'm sure the demons have their own stories, just as exaggerated.'

Professor Chrome continued, occasionally calling on students to answer questions, correcting them warmly if they missed the mark. Damon listened, feeling his stomach growl—a hollow, insistent reminder of his hunger.

He stifled a yawn, which must have caught the professor's attention despite his spot in the far back, alone in the shadows.

"Ahh, yes! The young man at the back," Professor Chrome called out cheerfully.

"Can you tell us what you know about the legendary demon lord Ashcroft?"

It took Damon a second to register. He blinked, realizing the professor's expectant gaze was on him. His shadow raised a hand as if nudging him to get up.

Damon rose, his expression as gloomy as ever. Though his hunger made it hard to focus, he recounted the familiar tale of Ashcroft, a name known across the world—a figure more myth than mere history.

"Ashcroft," he began, "is known as the Demon Lord of Domination. He's said to be the strongest demon lord that's ever existed. Long ago, the goddess races called Centros home; it was the heart of all things. But Ashcroft took it over in the name of the demon races."

He felt the attention of the entire class on him now as he continued.

"Ashcroft conquered Centros, renaming it the Demon Continent. His power and ambition made him a real threat, and he aimed to conquer all the known world. When he set foot on Soltheon, he devastated everything. It was only when he reached the temple of the goddess that he was finally stopped. In that temple, he spoke taboo words before her statue."

Damon's stomach growled, loud enough that he winced, but he kept going.

"They say that as he uttered those words, the statue glowed—and Ashcroft was erased from existence. The demon armies retreated after that. But it wasn't the end. The demons prayed to their god, and he gathered what remained of Ashcroft, leaving them with a prophecy.

'The Dominator shall return.'"

Taking a deep breath, Damon finished,

"To this day, the demons await Ashcroft's return. Of course, later historians have debunked this as just a fairytale, saying someone like Ashcroft could never have existed."

With that, Damon sat down, feeling the weight of everyone's stares, but he ignored them, his mind now preoccupied with his own gnawing hunger.

Professor Chrome, however, looked pleased, his eyes twinkling with interest.

"Well done, young man," he said warmly.

"And yes, many say it's just a myth—but myths, as we know, often hold grains of truth."

The professor's gaze lingered thoughtfully on Damon before he turned back to the board to continue the lesson.