

## Living Shadow 126

### Chapter 126 Ungrateful Scum

Evangeline and Leona unleashed torrents of light and storm magic, shattering nearby trees and sending them crashing to the ground. Before the splintered trunks could settle, Xander activated his gravity magic, redirecting the falling trees toward the incoming wolf automata. The combination of their abilities created a chaotic barrage of debris and force.

'Tch, they're really showing off their magic aptitude,' Damon thought bitterly as he unleashed a dark arrow infused with shadow magic. The projectile streaked toward one of the weaker automata, piercing through its metallic body with ease.

Sylvia loosed a flurry of arrows in tandem, each one striking the metallic bodies of the wolves, but their retaliation came swiftly. Wind and fire erupted from the wolves, the blasts carving paths of destruction through the forest.

One of the wolves leaped over the fallen trees, aiming for the group. Before it could land, Leona swung her mace with precision, smashing its head mid-air and sending it tumbling into a tree. Xander followed up immediately, his sword imbued with gravity magic as he struck the creature's head. The automaton's mechanical eyes dimmed as its core shattered.

Damon's sharp gaze tracked the wolves closing in on them. He secured his bow to his back and drew a dagger. Sylvia mirrored his action, unsheathing her twin blades with practiced ease.

"Move toward the fallen trees!" Sylvia ordered sharply.

"Don't let them surround us! Xander, Leona—you two hold the front. Evangeline, cover the middle. Damon and I will handle anything that gets past you. Don't worry about your backs."

Damon dodged a large claw swipe with a roll, muttering to himself,

'Easy for you to say... damn it.'

His shadow hunger-enhanced stats allowed him to match their pace, though the effort was draining. As one of the wolves lunged, Damon thrust his dagger into its glowing red eye. The automaton collapsed, and his bracelet buzzed, signaling the points added to his score.

"This isn't sustainable..." Damon muttered, glancing at the battlefield. "I need a safer hunting spot."

Without hesitation, he activated his omnidirectional gear, launching a grappling line to the nearest tree. The mechanism yanked him into the branches, giving him a vantage point over the chaos below.

"They might have magic resistance, but this should work," he murmured, activating his [5x] skill. His mana surged, multiplying fivefold..

He raised his hand, forming a gun-like gesture with his fingers, and took aim at a wolf automaton's head.

[Magic Bullet]

A spark erupted from his fingertips, and a compressed projectile of magical energy fired at a blistering 1550 feet per second. The shot struck the automaton's head, bypassing its magic resistance with sheer velocity and concentrated force. Smoke trailed from Damon's fingers as the automaton fell, its core obliterated.

'Ouch...' he winced, feeling the recoil sting his fingers.

But there was no time to rest. Damon swung from branch to branch using his gear, firing off successive [Magic Bullet] spells. Smaller automata crumbled under the precision of his attacks, and his bracelet buzzed with every point gained. His fingers, however, grew increasingly red and sore from the strain.

When the last of the smaller automata had been destroyed, only four of the larger ones remained—unharmful save for one, which Leona had modestly damaged earlier.

Damon fired at the larger automata, but the bullets only left shallow dents in their reinforced bodies.

'Tch... Do I need to charge the [Magic Bullet] spell?'

The thought crossed his mind as he considered his options. Charging the spell would increase its power exponentially, but the recoil could cripple his fingers—or worse, blow them off entirely.

He gritted his teeth, weighing the risk.

Sylvia looked up at the trees where Damon was perched, firing off precision shots with his [Magic Bullet] spell. She narrowed her eyes in thought.

"We need to take them down one at a time. Divide and conquer," she declared firmly.

The others nodded in agreement, readying themselves for the fight. Evangeline's sword glowed brilliantly as it transformed into a blade of pure light, Leona's body was surrounded by crackling sparks of lightning, and Xander charged forward, gravity magic already enhancing his every step.

Damon's gaze flicked between the remaining automata. Thanks to the heightened focus from his Remorseless skill, he quickly locked onto the damaged automaton. Without hesitation, he activated his omnidirectional gear, pulling himself from the branches straight toward his target. As he descended, he unleashed a flurry of [Magic Bullet] spells, each shot landing with a satisfying thud against the automaton's metal body.

Though the attacks didn't pierce its armor, they succeeded in drawing its attention.

"Good," Damon muttered. "Come after me."

With the automaton now locked on him, Damon turned and began luring it deeper into the forest. Despite leading it away, he ensured he stayed within the range of his party. He had a clear reason: the time limit on his [5x] skill was nearing its end, and he needed to conserve mana for the next phase of his plan.

The wolf automaton snarled and fired a burst of wind magic. Damon barely managed to dodge as the blast tore through the underbrush. Wind magic left no visible traces, and his Shadow Perception ability failed to detect it. The only clue came from the subtle shifts in the trees and shrubs—a warning that often came too late.

He rolled through the dirt, dagger in hand, and cursed under his breath.

"Just a few meters more..."

Closing the distance, Damon skidded to a stop in front of a towering tree. He waved tauntingly at the automaton, its glowing red eyes narrowing as it charged.

"Come on..." Damon muttered, gripping his dagger tightly.

The automaton rushed at full speed, its metal body gleaming in the dim light of the forest. Damon waited until the last possible moment before swinging his dagger downward, slicing through a thin vine.

A massive log, rigged as a trap, came swinging down from above. The automaton had no time to react as the log smashed into its side, sending it tumbling to the ground with a metallic crash.

Without hesitation, Damon sprinted toward the fallen automaton and plunged his dagger into its glowing red eye. The automaton's body went limp, and a soft buzz emanated from his safety bracelet.

50 points added.

"Phew..." Damon dropped to his knees, breathing heavily. Sweat dripped from his forehead as he wiped his brow with the back of his hand.

"Good thing I set that up earlier..." His stomach growled audibly, and he glanced down at his twitching shadows.

"Yeah, yeah, hold on. Just a few more hours, and we'll eat."

He turned back to the automaton, muttering, "Too bad I can't eat this..."

Rising to his feet, Damon returned to where the others were finishing their battles. Xander had crippled his automaton by smashing its hind legs and raised his sword to deliver the finishing blow. Before he could strike, Damon raised his hand and fired a [Magic Bullet], shattering the automaton's head in one clean shot.

Xander spun around, glaring. "What the hell?! That was mine!"

Damon sneered. "You ungrateful scum. Is this how you thank me for helping you?"