

Living Shadow 142

Chapter 142 Hurt Feelings

"Hehehehe... hahahaha... behold the power of God... heheheh ha! God is with me..."

The deranged laughter echoed from an old, abandoned training room tucked away in a secluded corner of the academy.

Inside, a blue-haired young man knelt on the dusty floor, carving symbols into the ground and walls with his own blood. The markings were bizarre, intricate, and unmistakably heretical by temple standards. Despite this, he continued with manic enthusiasm, clutching a small, well-carved stone tightly in his trembling hand.

"God is coming... I will finally see God... hahahaha!" His voice grew louder, nearly unhinged as his laughter turned into shrill giggles.

The room's massive wooden doors creaked open suddenly, their age betraying a groaning protest at the disturbance. The boy froze, his carving halted mid-stroke.

A young man stepped into the room, his boots leaving faint imprints in the dust as he limped forward. The sharp scent of blood and smoke followed him, lingering in the stale air. His jacket was torn in several places, and faint traces of burns marred his skin. He looked half-insane, his gaze distant, yet behind the haze of exhaustion, there was an unsettling clarity in his eyes.

His stomach growled audibly, but he ignored it. His focus was entirely on the figure before him.

"Marcus..."

The blue-haired boy flinched at the sound of his name, his manic expression flickering briefly with fear. He fidgeted with the stone in his hand, gripping it tightly as his lips trembled.

But then, as if remembering something, Marcus straightened his back, his confidence returning.

"God! He's here! Destroy him now!" Marcus screamed, holding the stone aloft as if expecting divine wrath to descend upon his intruder.

Damon sighed heavily.

Without hesitation, he closed the distance between them, grabbed the stone, and twisted Marcus's wrist with ruthless precision. The boy let out a bloodcurdling scream as his hand gave way under the pressure. Damon pocketed the stone without a second glance and shoved Marcus backward, sending him sprawling to the floor.

"Marcus," Damon muttered, his tone as cold as the air in the room. "There is no God. Don't you know that?"

Marcus struggled to stand, clutching his broken wrist as tears pooled in his eyes.

"D-demon... liar... heretic! God is with me!" he shouted, his voice shaking as much as his body.

Damon crouched down to meet Marcus's gaze, his expression indifferent.

"It seems you've already gone too far," he murmured, almost to himself.

"Marcus, it was me. I was the one talking to you. All those 'monsters' you saw—your friends—they were never real."

Marcus froze, his crazed demeanor faltering as doubt crept into his features.

"None of them..." he whispered. "No... you lie. I saw their shadows..."

Damon shook his head, his voice steady and unrelenting.

"No, you saw my shadow, Marcus. Your friends—they all died hating you. The last one, he even begged me to make sure you suffered for what you did."

Tears streamed down Marcus's face as he shook his head in disbelief.

"You're lying! You're a demon! I was saving them!"

Damon smiled, a cruel, twisted grin that showed no remorse. He wanted Marcus to drown in his guilt before the end.

"You killed them all," Damon said, his voice low and venomous.

"And after this, your family—the Fayjoys—will take the brunt of the blame for their deaths. I'll make sure of it. After all, you left all of this behind. Those 'holy scriptures' you wrote? They'll seal your fate."

Marcus's shoulders trembled, his mind unraveling at the revelation.

"One final question before you die," Damon continued, his voice calm yet menacing.

"Rein Ambridge. What happened between you two that day?"

Marcus let out a deranged laugh, tears pouring freely down his cheeks.

"I will avenge them, demon... God is with me!"

He raised his trembling hand, summoning an icy blast of magic, but Damon was faster. He kicked Marcus back with brutal force, sending him sprawling once more. Grabbing him by the hair, Damon dragged Marcus's head down and slammed it into the ground with a sickening crack.

Blood pooled beneath Marcus's head, his vision dimming as Damon leaned closer, his voice cold and dripping with mockery.

"Now, isn't that a sight for sore eyes? Isn't this exactly what you did to me that day?"

Damon grabbed Marcus by the collar, hurling him aside like a rag doll. He dropped to his knees, clutching his stomach as a deep, feral growl escaped his throat. His body trembled, not from fear or pain, but from something far more dangerous.

His shadow stirred unnaturally beneath him.

[Shadow Hunger 90%]

[Your Shadow is Ravenous]

[All stats have been drastically amplified]

The words seared themselves into his mind as the world around him seemed to blur. His shadow began to writhe, rising up from the ground like a living entity. It crawled over his body, engulfing him

completely in inky blackness. His arms extended into long, jagged claws, and his mouth contorted into a grotesque grin, filled with glinting fangs that dripped with malice.

For the first time, his shadow spoke.

"Hungry..."

Marcus, still sprawled on the ground, turned to look at Damon. His deranged expression collapsed, replaced by a primal, unrestrained terror.

"Ahhh! Monster... demon...!"

In his panic, Marcus unleashed a barrage of ice shards, each one sharp enough to pierce steel. The freezing projectiles tore through the air toward Damon's shadowed form. But the shadow merely swatted them away like flies, its claws cutting through the magic with a low, guttural growl.

Then, with a blur of motion, it vanished.

Marcus didn't even see it coming. In the blink of an eye, the shadow was behind him, its claws gripping him tightly before slamming him into the bloodstained ground. Marcus gasped in pain, his blood pooling into the ritualistic marks he had carved earlier.

"No... no..." Marcus groaned, coughing up blood. His vision blurred as he staggered to his feet. With the last remnants of his strength, he summoned his magic.

[Ever Frost]

The air shifted violently. The temperature plummeted, frost forming on the ground as a freezing wave of destructive ice magic erupted outward. The shadowed Damon moved on all fours, evading the deadly attack with unnatural agility. The ground froze beneath its limbs, but it didn't matter—the ice barely grazed it.

Marcus, now desperate, screamed, "Die, fiend!"

But the ravenous shadow was done playing. Before Marcus could conjure another spell, it closed the distance in an instant. Its claws plunged into his stomach, warm blood gushing out as Marcus's body went limp. His pale face was a mask of horror as blood spilled from his lips.

The shadow slowly lifted him to eye level, its monstrous gaze boring into him. Marcus's life flickered like a candle in the wind. With his final breath, he whispered,

"Forgi...ve... me... my friends..."

His body went limp, his eyes losing their luster.

[You have slain Marcus Fayjoy]

[You have leveled up]

[You have gained 20 attribute points]

[You have awakened the skill Sacrifice]

The shadow opened its maw, ready to devour its fallen prey. But just as it leaned forward, a slow, deliberate sound cut through the tension.

Clap... clap... clap...

The sound of clapping echoed across the secluded area, accompanied by the steady rhythm of approaching footsteps.

Then, a voice—smooth, feminine, and laced with amusement—rang out.

"My goodness... well done. What a show. I was watching from a distance, and I must say, I'm thoroughly impressed."

The voice struck Damon like a lightning bolt. The fog of the shadow's hunger lifted slightly as he regained clarity. His heart began to race, cold dread washing over him. He knew that voice.

"Didn't anyone ever tell you not to ignore a lady's calls and messages? That really hurt my feelings."

Emerging from the darkness was none other than Lilith Astranova, her emerald eyes glinting with mischievous intent. Her presence was suffocating, her aura dominating the area with ease.

Before Damon could even formulate a coherent thought, his shadow reacted instinctively. It discarded Marcus's lifeless body like a broken doll and lunged at her, claws extended, ready to kill.