

## Living Shadow 143

### Chapter 143 Lost

It moved like a black blur, striking Lilith with ferocious speed. She barely reacted, her palm rising to meet the attack with a dull thud as the force collided against her.

She smiled.

"Your strength is at the first-class advancement... No wonder they all died against you."

Her voice carried an edge of mockery as she grabbed the shadow's dark claws and hurled it aside with a casual flick of her wrist.

"Although..." she added, her thin smile widening, "you aren't actually at the first-class advancement, are you?"

The shadow landed on all fours, its blackened form undulating like a liquid in motion. It seemed to learn quickly, its claws morphing into a single, elongated blade that gleamed with a sinister sheen. Without hesitation, it lunged again, the blade swiping at her with deadly precision.

Lilith's green eyes glimmered with intrigue.

"You can morph your physical form as well..."

She took a single step backward, vanishing and reappearing behind it in an instant. Yet, the shadow reacted unnaturally fast, its blade swinging backward with a fluid motion, nearly slashing her face.

"You either have excellent hearing, heightened mana sensitivity..." she mused, sidestepping as she analyzed her opponent,

"or you can perceive your surroundings without needing eyes."

With a sharp kick, she sent the shadow crashing into the nearby stone wall, the sound of impact reverberating through the old, abandoned training grounds.

"I'd wager it's the latter," she said, her smile sharpening.

The shadow rose again, undeterred. Within the dark mass, Damon struggled desperately to take control.

"Don't attack her! She's far too strong!" he shouted internally, his mind pounding against the shadow's dominance.

But the shadow didn't care.

It shed its bulky form, streamlining itself into a lean, agile frame. Damon's system suddenly activated.

[5x Speed Activated].

The shadow's speed multiplied, and it moved with such velocity that the very air around it rippled. Dust kicked up in chaotic waves as it dashed forward, its form now almost imperceptible.

Lilith's sharp gaze narrowed as she raised her hand, her fingers curling into a gesture of command.

[Inversion].

Space itself twisted. Up became down, and down became up, the entire room flipping in a dizzying distortion. The world seemed to collapse in on itself, reality folding into a strange and disorienting configuration.

Lilith smirked, expecting the shadow to falter, confused by the sudden shift in perspective. But she was wrong.

The shadow moved without hesitation. It never saw the world as others did. Its kaleidoscopic perception of reality rendered her manipulation meaningless. Faster than she could react, the shadow's blade slashed toward her with unrelenting momentum.

Lilith's expression shifted from smug confidence to fleeting surprise. At the last moment, she conjured a warped portal before her. The shadow vanished into it, reappearing across the room as space snapped back to normal.

She flicked her wrist, summoning a spinning disk of destructive spatial energy. It sliced through the air with a shrill hum, narrowly missing the shadow as it dodged. Still, a thin slice cut through its chest, exposing a glimmer of the human inside.

[HP: 20/50].

Damon groaned internally as pain flared through his body, the attack breaking through the shadow's defenses and wounding him directly.

Lilith appeared above the shadow without warning, her movements as precise as they were ruthless. She dropped down, slamming it into the ground with devastating force before teleporting away once more.

Inside the shadow, Damon struggled. He knew he couldn't wrest control from the ravenous shadow consuming him, but he had to do something.

"I just got 20 attribute points... Distribute them. Use them to win," he commanded himself.

His system interface glimmered, responding to his mental commands.

[HP: 20/50]

[Mana: 74/124]

[Strength: 29] [+20]

[Agility: 17]

[Speed: 175] [5x]

[Endurance: 10]

[Class: —]

[Shadow: 9]

[Shadow Hunger Levels: 91%]

[Shadow Level: 3]

[Condition: Shadow is Ravenous]

[Attributes: Umbra]

[Skills:]

[ 5x] [Remorseless] [Shadow Perception] [Water Celebration] [Sacrifice]

[Locked]

"I hate wasting this on strength," Damon muttered bitterly to himself, "but I need to survive."

Still, his shadow seemed beyond reason, its ravenous hunger driving it forward. It ignored Damon's internal pleas to flee, its obsidian body brimming with violent intent.

"Listen to me," Damon shouted mentally. "We can't beat her. Run, damn it!"

The shadow didn't listen. It only surged forward, its dark form pulsating with malevolent power as it prepared for yet another assault.

It charged at Lilith.

Damon's thoughts echoed desperately in his mind.

"If the new skill is for combat, try using that too..."

But his shadow didn't listen. Empowered by its newfound strength, it lunged forward with reckless abandon, swinging a massive fist at Lilith Astranova. She sidestepped the attack with ease, her movements as graceful as they were taunting.

"Hmmm," she mused, her tone dripping with amusement. "Did you get stronger... or is it just me?"

Lilith raised her hand, unleashing a devastating wave of spatial energy. The slicing attack collided with the shadow, cutting through it like paper before slamming into Damon himself.

"Dammit, you bastard... listen to me!" Damon snarled in frustration.

His shadow growled in response—not in pain, but in defiance. It seemed to revel in its independence, even as it bore the brunt of the attack.

Without hesitation, the shadow looked around, its gaze locking onto Marcus's cold corpse. Dropping to all fours, it sprinted toward the lifeless body with primal speed.

Lilith smirked, intrigued. "What are you planning to show me now?"

In mere moments, the shadow reached Marcus's corpse. With a single motion, it grabbed the body and opened its monstrous maw, devouring the remains in one grotesque gulp.

Lilith blinked, momentarily taken aback. "Well, that's... something."

A notification echoed in Damon's mind.

[You have gained 5 attribute points.]

[Your shadow is fed.]

Damon narrowed his eyes as he felt the surge of shadow energy course through him. Slowly but surely, he began to regain control of his body now that his shadow was satiated.

"All points to mana," he thought firmly.

[Your mana pool has increased by 5.]

He gritted his teeth. He needed one shot—just one shot.

"Use the magic bullet spell," he commanded himself, his determination unwavering.

As his shadow closed the distance, Damon conjured a magic bullet, pooling all his focus into the destructive spell. The plan was simple: unleash the bullet at close range and use the chaos to escape.

His shadow clashed with Lilith, its claws slicing through the air with violent intent. Lilith, exuding confidence, parried its strokes with ease. In the midst of the melee, Damon raised his hand, his magic bullet charged and ready.

With a sharp motion, the bullet of magical energy tore through the air, aimed straight for her head.

But instead of shock or panic, Lilith merely smiled.

"Ahh, there you are..."

With effortless grace, she tilted her head, dodging the bullet at the last possible moment. Before Damon could react, her mana-infused elbow slammed into him, the impact forcing his shadow to retreat.

The darkness receded, revealing Damon's battered human form. He fell to his knees, blood dripping from his mouth and pooling on the ground beneath him.

He smiled weakly, his vision blurring.

"I... I lost."

Those were the last words he spoke as the world faded into blackness.