

Living Shadow 145

Chapter 145 Sore Loser

Lilith's gaze locked onto Damon with a cold menace, though her lips curled into a faint, teasing smile that only heightened the allure of her feminine form. Her presence was captivating, dangerous, and almost otherworldly.

"Do you like what you see?" she asked, her tone sultry and deliberate.

Damon quickly regained his composure. This wasn't his first time seeing a half-naked woman—or even a fully naked one. He'd seen firsthand the lewd depravity of Valerion's red-light districts, where temptation was on full display. But Lilith Astranova was in a league of her own. There was something about her that made it impossible not to look, and yet it was equally dangerous to do so.

In the end, he was still a pure teenage boy, and even he couldn't deny her allure.

"Why am I here?" he asked, forcing himself to focus on anything but her appearance.

Lilith's smile deepened, her expression a blend of amusement and mischief.

"Isn't it rude to return a question with a question?"

Damon scoffed, narrowing his eyes.

"Isn't it rude to drag someone into your bedchamber without their permission?"

Her laugh was soft, almost melodic, but her words carried an edge.

"You can stop leering at me now... unless, of course, you'd rather lose those eyes of yours."

Damon stiffened and awkwardly averted his gaze, turning to face the other side of the room. His movements were sharp, almost defensive.

Lilith let out a quiet sigh of relief the moment his back was turned, the confident facade briefly slipping as she went about getting dressed.

"If you peek," she warned, her voice dropping to a dangerous low,

"you'll wish I killed you instead."

Damon snorted, though he kept his back to her.

"There's nothing to see. I've got no reason to peek."

Even as he said it, the faint temptation crept into his mind—a small urge to use his shadow perception to sneak a glance. But he crushed the thought as quickly as it arose. He had bigger concerns than indulging in whatever late sexual awakening was trying to surface.

Still, the absence of his weapons gnawed at him. His bare chest and missing gear made him feel more exposed than his lack of a jacket or shirt ever could.

More unsettling was the behavior of his shadow. It blatantly ignored Lilith's threat, peeking at her through its fingers like a mischievous child while feigning modesty.

'This wretch...' Damon thought, glaring at the shadow.

His patience wore thin. "What do you want?"

Lilith didn't respond immediately. He could hear the faint rustle of clothing from her walk-in closet, where she was leisurely changing. She had definitely heard him but was clearly enjoying the power dynamic.

"Fine," Damon muttered, his frustration mounting. "At least tell me where you've hidden my gear."

He glanced down at his wrist, where his omnidirectional gear should have been. Its absence, along with his quiver of cursed arrows and his magisite daggers, left him feeling far more vulnerable than he liked.

Damon gritted his teeth.

'She's ignoring me, huh? Fine then.'

"This is your room, right?" he began, scanning the surroundings before smirking.

"Would explain the smell..."

From behind him, Lilith's footsteps echoed in the stillness. Her voice cut through with a sharp command.

"You can turn around now."

As he turned, she narrowed her eyes suspiciously.

"What do you mean by smell?"

Damon scoffed internally.

'That got her going.' He shook his head. "Nothing."

Her gaze darkened further. "Are you saying my room smells?"

Damon immediately sensed the danger in her tone. He knew he held the weaker position here and had no desire to antagonize her further.

"No, that's not what I meant," he said quickly, backtracking. "I mean, your room has a very nice fragrance. It kind of smells like... you."

Lilith raised an eyebrow, her lips curling into a faint smile.

"I see. So I smell bad, is that it?"

Damon sighed, trying to keep his irritation at bay.

"You know that's not what I meant. I actually kind of like this fragrance. It reminds me of the scent of flowers... Gardenia, to be exact."

Lilith tilted her head slightly, her smile becoming more pronounced.

"So, I smell like dirt?"

That did it. Damon's patience snapped as he narrowed his eyes, his voice dripping with mockery.

"Yes, you smell like garden manure."

Lilith's playful expression vanished, replaced by a frosty glare.

"Do I now?" Her tone turned sharp, carrying an unspoken threat.

"Maybe you've forgotten something, you reckless hothead. I have your life in my hands. I have the evidence, the proof of your crimes. I caught you red-handed."

Damon straightened, forcing a self-deprecating smile.

"Yet here I am," he countered. "I'm not behind bars, not being tortured by the Inquisition, and not standing trial. Pray tell, why is that?"

Lilith stepped closer, finally giving him the chance to get a good look at her. She was dressed impeccably in the academy uniform, the brooch pinned to her chest symbolizing her status as the student council president.

"You're confident. I like that," she said, her voice laced with amusement as she sat down next to him.

"But how do you know I haven't reported you?" She leaned closer, a knowing glint in her eyes.

"Oh, wait... your shadow must've told you that. It's been giving me hostile stares ever since I beat you."

Damon tensed, his mind racing for an escape route. He wasn't one to bow easily, even when cornered.

Lilith's smile widened as she continued.

"If I were you, I wouldn't be so confident. If you think I haven't reported you to the temple..."

She paused. The silence was deliberate, and it was enough to make Damon's heart nearly leap out of his chest.

"...then you'd be right," she finally said, her tone light and almost casual.

Relief washed over him—but it was fleeting as her next words cut deep.

"I have no intention of reporting you. Wouldn't that be a waste? When I have uses for you," she continued, her voice turning cold.

"I could report you. You'd be executed without a trial. Trust me, they'd skip the formalities for someone like you."

The first half of her statement gave Damon a momentary sense of relief. But the second half tightened the knot of unease in his stomach. Still, he forced himself to think, searching for a way out of this web.

Lilith leaned closer, her proximity making him feel more cornered than any threat could. She watched him with a smile that felt more predatory than amused.

"Right now, let me summarize your life from this moment forward. Your life is in my hands. I've taken an interest in the power you have... as well as its origins... more importantly the one who gave it to you"

Damon's eyes widened.

'The one who gave it to me?' he thought, his mind racing.

'Is she talking about my system? Or the shadow? No, those two things are connected... but what does she know about its origins?'

Lilith's smile deepened, as if she could see the thoughts scrambling in his head.

"Which means you have to be a good boy and listen to me, okay?"

Damon's lips curled into a smirk. He decided to take a risk.

"You haven't reported me yet," he said, his voice laced with defiance.

"If you had, back when I was killing Marcus, then we'd have a problem. But now..."

He leaned back slightly, his tone shifting to one of mocking confidence.

"The evidence is sparse at best. It's your word against mine. I don't have to do anything you say."