

Living Shadow 146

Chapter 146 Karma With The Divine

Lilith smiled, her expression dripping with amusement. Damon truly was a fascinating subject, so defiant even when the odds were clearly stacked against him. It all boiled down to her word against his, especially since she had meticulously erased any evidence of his involvement in Marcus' death.

But that was fine. Lilith always had her ways, and her clever junior, while impressive, still had much to learn about accepting defeat with grace.

"Funny you should say that," she said casually. "I do have evidence."

Damon paused, his eyes narrowing with suspicion.

"No, you don't," he replied firmly. "You would've destroyed any trace that could implicate me before dragging me into your little lair. If there's one thing I've learned from our... interactions, it's that you're meticulous. You leave nothing to chance."

Lilith's smile widened slightly, a glint of approval shining in her eyes.

"If you know that," she said softly, "then you should already realize you're trapped."

Damon's jaw tightened, but he nodded slowly.

"Then spring it," he challenged.

Lilith's gaze didn't waver.

"I could expose you at any moment," she admitted, "but we've already established that I won't. That doesn't mean you've won, though."

Her tone shifted, growing sharper, more calculated.

"All that nonsense about not giving a damn about anyone but yourself? It's just bravado."

Damon's expression hardened, his eyes narrowing further.

"What are you getting at?"

Lilith sneered, taking a slow step closer to him.

"I won't report you. And I won't turn you in—not because I can't, but because I have no intention of doing so... for now." She leaned in, her voice dropping to a low, dangerous whisper.

"But don't forget, Damon, you killed Carmen Vale. Should I tell his daughter that her beloved teacher was her father's murderer?"

Damon froze, his body going rigid.

"Proving it wouldn't even be difficult," Lilith continued, her tone like silk cutting through steel.

"All I'd have to do is trap you in a confined space until you lose control and turn into that monster you're so desperately trying to keep hidden. Evidence isn't necessary when the truth can be dragged out of you with just time and the right circumstances."

A muscle in Damon's jaw twitched as he clenched his teeth. He knew she wasn't bluffing. Lilith always meant every word she said.

"What do you want?" he finally asked, his voice low and strained.

Lilith's lips curved into a slow, victorious smile.

"See? That wasn't so hard, now, was it?"

Damon glared at her, resignation and frustration burning in his eyes. He already knew this new twist would complicate everything, but he also couldn't deny that her leverage was absolute. For now, all he could do was bide his time and figure out a way to turn this in his favor.

He let out a heavy sigh, fixing Lilith with a weary stare.

"You want something. Just spit it out. What is it?"

Lilith twirled a strand of her hair thoughtfully, as though she hadn't already planned her next move.

"Hmm, I want so many things," she said, her voice almost playful.

"The hard part is deciding which one to start with... without scaring you off, of course."

Damon's glare deepened.

"Trust me, there's nothing you can say that would scare me," he said flatly. "Not even if you told me you wanted to kill the Emperor."

Lilith chuckled softly, her amusement genuine.

"Is that so?" she said, her tone light but her eyes sharp. "Then I'm relieved. It's good to know you're so brave."

She leaned forward and whispered a few words into his ear. When Damon heard them, his eyes widened in shock. He blinked, his expression darkening as he slowly stood up, shirtless, and began walking toward the door.

Lilith watched him silently, her sharp gaze tracking his every movement. Just as his hand touched the doorknob, she teleported in front of him, stopping him in his tracks.

"Where do you think you're going?" she asked, her voice calm but laced with menace.

Damon gritted his teeth. "To turn myself in, you sick bitch."

Lilith's eyes narrowed, a dangerous glint flashing across her face.

"Calm down. It's not a big deal when you think about it."

"Not a big deal? Have you gone mad?" Damon's voice rose, anger flaring in his tone. He looked around the room as if searching for an escape.

"Of all things, you want to do that?"

Lilith waved her hand, and her magic severed the spatial connection of her dorm from the rest of the academy.

"Now, now," she said smoothly, "you can speak freely."

Damon glared at her, his voice dropping to a deadly whisper.

"You want to destroy the temple? Are you insane? That's ludicrous!"

Lilith tilted her head, unfazed by his reaction.

"Why not? You're already an enemy of the temple. They'd execute you without hesitation."

Damon's jaw clenched as he lowered his voice further.

"Yeah, allegedly. But you don't see me—or anyone else—saying they'd destroy the temple. Everyone who's tried since ancient times is dead."

He leaned closer, his tone grim.

"You ever heard of Ashcroft? The demon lord who almost conquered the known world? Wanna know how he died?"

Lilith sighed, growing impatient.

"That's a myth. And he wasn't destroyed by the temple."

Damon's eyes narrowed.

"He was destroyed by the goddess. And that's the same thing in my book."

Lilith's gaze hardened.

"Ashcroft didn't lose to the temple. He lost to the goddess. The goddess isn't synonymous with the temple. She's... well, she's a god. The temple? They're just mortals."

Damon looked at her as if she'd lost her mind. "Yeah, mortals whose power and influence spread all over the world. So no thanks."

Lilith's lips curled into a faint smile, her patience thinning.

"What do we have to be afraid of? Besides, with what you've done and the nature of your power, you're already an enemy in their eyes."

Damon nodded, his voice laced with sarcasm. "Thanks for reminding me. But I'm not trying to destroy them."

Lilith sighed, stepping closer.

"The temple isn't perfect. Sure, they have diviners, but they're not all-knowing. They haven't defeated the demon lords of Centros. They haven't banished the faith in the unknown god. And, frankly, the goddess doesn't give a damn about us—or them."

Damon raised an eyebrow. "And what does that have to do with me?"

Lilith scoffed, clearly unimpressed with his reluctance. "You don't want to fight them, but I don't need to convince you."

Her tone shifted, growing colder, more calculating. Damon's eyes narrowed, sensing the change. He didn't like the direction this was heading.

"We're not fighting them as we are now," Lilith continued.

"I'm not stupid. I know the reason you haven't even considered it is because you're worried about divination—that they'll see us coming and destroy us before we have a chance. But you have nothing to fear."

Damon frowned. "And why's that?"

Lilith's smile turned sharper, more confident.

"Because even if everyone else in this world can be divined by the temple, you and I are the exceptions."

Damon's confusion deepened. "What the hell are you talking about?"

Lilith's expression softened into something resembling amusement.

"After all, we exist in a place their divination cannot reach. Our fates can't be affected by ordinary means. We have our karma with the one who changed your shadow."

Damon stared at her, his confusion turning into suspicion. "What the hell are you on about?"

Lilith turned around slowly, her movements deliberate. She began to pull off her top, revealing her smooth, flawless back. She left her bra on, but even so, Damon felt a wave of heat rush through him.

"Uh... nice bra," he muttered awkwardly, unable to stop himself.

Lilith smirked over her shoulder. "That's not what I'm showing you."

As he watched, a mark began to appear on her back, slowly revealing itself like ink spreading across parchment. It was a crest Damon had seen before—only in books, as a great taboo.

Lilith's voice turned icy, her words heavy with meaning. "We have karma with the unknown god."