

Living Shadow 149

Chapter 149 You Can See

Damon had no issues with the arrangement. He wasn't planning on feeding on the students in the academy anyway. Perhaps in the past, he would have killed innocents to satiate his shadow, but after meeting Carmen Vale and making his promise to Iris, he realized it was better to avoid taking the lives of unrelated people. The guilt, though manageable, was something he'd rather not pile onto his already complicated existence.

He glanced at Lilith, who sat calmly next to him. Her presence brought an odd sense of relief, now that everything was out in the open—or at least, the parts he had chosen to reveal. They both held secrets, things kept locked away, but that was to be expected. He trusted her intentions to a degree, but that didn't mean he wouldn't use her to his advantage. After all, she was likely thinking the same about him.

"I wasn't planning to..." Damon said, his tone measured.

Lilith nodded at his words, her piercing gaze unwavering. "I see. Then how do you plan to feed your shadow going forward?"

Damon went quiet for a moment, glancing at the distant trees as though they held the answer.

"I was going to hunt in Athor's Sanctuary..." he admitted finally.

Lilith tilted her head, her curiosity evident. "Have you tried eating monsters?"

He nodded.

"Yeah, but it doesn't do anything for the hunger. Although..." he paused, tapping his fingers lightly against the table,

"I can still get stronger from them."

She gave a thoughtful nod. "Alright then. I'll help you procure some food."

Damon's eyes narrowed as he looked at her.

"Some food? You're acting like you're buying meat from a butcher. These are actual human lives we're talking about."

Her expression didn't waver.

"You need their flesh to feed your shadow, don't you?"

He nodded reluctantly, the weight of his situation pressing heavily on his mind.

Lilith leaned forward slightly, her voice steady but probing.

"Tell me what you've learned about your power. Maybe I can help. We need to know all our options. I need you to get stronger as soon as possible."

Damon studied her for a moment, unsure of her exact motives but recognizing the urgency in her tone. She wasn't wrong. His power was growing, but the hunger was a problem he couldn't ignore. If he didn't figure out a sustainable way to feed his shadow, it wouldn't just weaken him—it could consume him entirely.

He exhaled, leaning back slightly as he began to speak. "It's not just about eating. The shadow... it's like a living thing. It's tied to me, but it has its own will. The more I feed it, the stronger we gets, but the hunger never goes away completely. It's like pouring water into a bottomless pit."

Lilith listened intently, her sharp eyes analyzing every word. "And what happens if you starve it?"

Damon's jaw tightened. "It grows restless. At first, it's just an itch in the back of my mind. But if it goes on too long, it starts to... take over."

She leaned back, crossing her arms thoughtfully.

"I see. Then we'll need to figure out a way to keep it satisfied without drawing unnecessary attention. Perhaps there's another solution we haven't considered yet."

Damon hesitated for a moment before deciding to share everything with Lilith. He didn't mention the system—at least, not yet—but he told her about everything else: his struggles with hesitation, denial, and the eventual acceptance of his newfound hunger. He detailed the moments where he faltered, the innocent man whose death weighed on him, and the way his shadow had taken over when he had refused to act.

Lilith listened in silence, her expression unreadable as Damon finished his recounting. When he was done, she tilted her head and gave him a wry smile.

"You were quite stupid in the beginning, weren't you?"

Damon narrowed his eyes, his tone defensive. "Excuse me?"

Lilith shook her head, the faintest hint of amusement in her gaze.

"You received a dangerous power with a strict time limit, and even with a day and a half, you didn't decide to feed until your shadow took control."

Damon glared at her, clenching his fists.

"What kind of normal person just decides it's okay to start murdering and eating people? Besides, I tried feeding it with regular meat—it didn't work. So what was I supposed to do? Start killing people because some creepy voice in my head said so?"

He paused, exhaling sharply as he leaned back.

"Actually... I probably would have. But seeing as I was the weakest in the academy, without some prep time and tricks, I would've been the one to die anyway."

Lilith smiled faintly.

"I suppose that's a feasible argument," she admitted, crossing her arms.

"Though you ignored the obvious because you hesitated. It took the death of one innocent man to finally make you act."

She stood up, brushing off her dress as she spoke. "No matter. I'll help you now."

Damon nodded, relieved but still uneasy. "Right... I think I got a new skill after all that."

Lilith raised an eyebrow, intrigued, but glanced at the rays of sunlight streaming through the room's window. She waved her hand, dispelling her spatial spell.

The distant hustle and bustle of students in the hallway filtered in, reminding him that it was already morning.

She looked back at him. "You should wash up. We can't sit here forever."

Damon nodded, pushing himself off the couch. "Right. I need to go back to my room."

Lilith shook her head. "No need. Your room is directly below mine, isn't it?"

Damon tilted his head in surprise. "Huh? Really? I had no idea."

'Talk about living next to the devil,' he thought, suppressing a smirk.

Lilith gestured to the door.

"You're still wearing your combat uniform, which might be a bit odd. I used healing potions to patch you up, but it'd be better if you change into your academy uniform. You can use my bath."

Damon raised an eyebrow. "And my uniform?"

Lilith closed one eye and waved her hand. With a faint shimmer of magic, a neatly folded uniform appeared in her palm.

"I'm glad that worked," she said with a satisfied smile. "Fails most of the time, though."

Damon couldn't help but smirk. "There's something you fail at?"

She nodded with mock humility. "I'm only human, after all."

She handed him the uniform. "Take a bath and change into this. Your gear is in the closet. You can grab it after you're done."

As Damon took the uniform, Lilith paused, her gaze sharp.

"And my advice? Only an insane person keeps cursed ore on their person."

Damon sighed. "That doesn't sound like advice. More like an observation."

"Just hurry. We don't have all morning—I am still the student council president, after all."

Damon stepped into her bath, grateful for the opportunity to clean up. As he showered, he couldn't help but focus on the new skill he'd gained after reaching level three. His pool of shadow energy had grown again, increasing from two hundred to three hundred. Though it wasn't full, the difference was noticeable.

Stepping out with damp hair and his new uniform, he reflected briefly on how Lilith had used healing potions on him without asking for payment. If the roles had been reversed, Damon would have demanded repayment with interest.

He walked to the closet and began equipping his usual gear—his omnidirectional gauntlets strapped to his wrists, daggers secured at his waist, and arrows tucked into his jacket. Emerging from the closet, he didn't see Lilith but could sense her moving deeper into her room.

Curiosity getting the better of him, Damon opened his system panel and began examining the specs of his new skill.

[Sacrifice]

'Let's see... Sacrifice... what does this do?' he thought to himself.

A voice interrupted his thoughts. "Hmm. Sacrifice... what's this?"

Damon froze, his eyes widening in shock. That hadn't been him—it had come from Lilith.

He turned slowly, finding her standing behind him, staring directly at the black-and-white system panel floating before him.

"You... you can see this?" Damon stammered, frozen in disbelief.