

Living Shadow 159

Chapter 159 Bandits

The more he looked at it, the more Damon couldn't help but sigh. The system really didn't want to let him become powerful too easily... Had he not suffered enough for power?

The skill in question was this.

[Skill: Parkour]

[Description:]

"Flight is not always defeat—sometimes, it is the art of movement itself. To run, to leap, to flow like water through obstacles is to master the rhythm of escape and pursuit. Running away is a skill—do so with grace."

[Effect:]

The user moves with exceptional agility and fluidity, effortlessly navigating terrain with swift reflexes and precise footwork. Climbing, vaulting, and maneuvering through obstacles become second nature.

[Type:]

Passive.

[Cooldown:]

0 seconds.

Damon wondered if the system was mocking Makia for not trying to run... though how could he have escaped when Lilith had sealed the entire space?

The skill was good, all things considered. It was a skill he needed—even with this, he wouldn't have to worry as much about mastering the omnidirectional gear.

Which was why he felt so despondent. He had risked his life to learn how to swing around, and now the system just handed him a skill that made all motor movements easy? He let go of the magic artifact in his hand, staring blankly as it slowly fell onto his shadow.

The moment it touched the dark mass, his shadow rippled and devoured it.

[You have gained +5 Mana, +10 HP.]

Damon blinked.

Huh...

He looked down. The dagger had disappeared. His body quivered. That dagger was a magical artifact... one he had taken from Makia. He had planned to find a way to sell it for some cold, hard zeni.

He had already been thinking about how to spend the money—buying something nice for his sister, maybe even getting her some extra gifts.

Then, realization hit him.

"M... my... my money..."

He clutched his head.

"Ahh—no! No, not again! Give it back, you bastard! My money!"

His shadow zipped behind Lilith, who seemed momentarily stunned by his outburst.

"What... is it?" she asked, eyeing him warily.

Damon glared at her.

"Hand over that bastard! He took my money! He ate my money! That dagger could have been worth a few hundred thousand—maybe even a million zeni after appraisal!"

He pointed a trembling finger at the shadow, his voice practically shaking.

"And he—he ate it!"

Lilith blinked, watching him with mild amusement. She hadn't expected him to fuss over zeni of all things.

She glanced at the shadow, which remained behind her, utterly devoid of remorse. If anything, it seemed... pleased with itself.

She sighed.

"I... I didn't take you for someone who—"

"Someone who what? Loves money?" Damon shot her a glare.

"Woman, shut up. If you tell me money can't buy happiness, I swear, I'm gonna throw up. That's the lie rich people tell poor people. I've never seen a rich man cry or starve—only poor people do that."

Lilith blinked at his sudden outburst, but he wasn't finished.

"So yes, I want my money back."

He raised his hand, activating Shadow Control, forcing his shadow to his side.

"You got away with it with the magic crystal... Not today."

The ambient shadows around him stirred, converging into the shape of a whip. His shadow put its hands together as if begging for mercy, but Damon didn't hesitate. He lashed down—

And immediately felt a sharp sting on his own backside.

"Agh—!" He gasped, flinching.

His eyes widened.

'No way... Shadow Control can hurt shadows... or wait—is it just my shadow?

He shifted uncomfortably.

'I can feel pain if my shadow is hurt...'

His gaze flickered to Lilith, who stood watching, her shadow motionless at her feet. A thought crossed his mind. Slowly, he manipulated the surrounding shadows, shaping another whip and striking at the bottom of her shadow.

No reaction.

She merely observed the spectacle, her expression unreadable. But then, realization dawned in her eyes.

"You're really bold, Damon," she said, a smirk tugging at her lips. "I admire your guts."

He coughed awkwardly, straightening.

"Ahem... It seems my power went out of control for a moment. Cough."

Lilith's smile turned cold.

"It better have."

She placed a hand on her waist.

"Well, what did you gain from devouring the dagger?"

"A little mana and some HP."

"HP?" she repeated.

He nodded. "It's my vitality—short for health points."

'Hmmm... I need to be careful. My shadow taking damage affects me. There's no physical wound, but I still felt the pain...'

He bit his lip, though the loss of money hurt far more than any physical pain.

His shadow clenched its fists, opening its mouth as if hurling silent insults at him.

"Fine, fine. Sorry, you win. It's just the zeni..." Damon grumbled feeling a sting in his heart...

Lilith sighed.

"Why are you worried about such a small amount of money when there's an entire warehouse full of smuggled materials?"

She glanced around at the blood-soaked surroundings, the thick scent of death and something fishy hanging in the air.

"That fairy mentioned a crate of magic crystals. You can use that to boost your mana."

Damon followed her gaze. The place was a mess, but she was right—they had gained far more than expected tonight.

"We can take the excess and add it to our funds for future operations," she continued.

"Although... we need a base. Hmmm..."

She fell into thought, and Damon understood her concerns. He had gained 105 attribute points in total—from devouring and leveling up.

They searched the crates, eventually finding the stash of magic crystals along with other ores. Damon experimentally fed some of the ores to his shadow, but nothing happened. It only cared for magic crystals.

Not all ores were edible, apparently.

Then, they found something far more interesting—a chest full of zeni, containing 12 million in total.

The moment Damon saw the pile of cash, he put on his best puppy-dog eyes. He was practically on the verge of going feral before Lilith, with an exasperated sigh, finally let him keep all of it.

As for the magic crystals...

Damon was almost drooling at the thought of selling them, but Lilith reminded him that he couldn't—for two reasons.

One, they were contraband stolen from smugglers.

Two, he needed them. They could boost his mana and serve as emergency energy for his shadow using the Sacrifice skill.

The crystals were of low purity, meaning most people wouldn't be able to absorb them directly. Only monster mana cores were stable enough for direct absorption, and even then, most of the energy would be lost.

But that wasn't a problem for Damon.

His shadow devoured them all, and his mana skyrocketed to 1,384. Each crystal only provided 5 mana, but with enough of them, the numbers added up quickly.

As for his other stats, he decided to distribute them later.

Lilith waved her hand, and the rest of the ores and his 12 million zeni vanished into a spatial pocket she created.

"We'll decide where to keep them later," she said.

With that, she unsealed the space, and they stepped out of the pawn shop.

As they did, a thought struck Damon.

"Hey... are we bandits?"

Lilith smiled. "We stole from thieves. That makes us—"

"Yeah, we're still bandits."

She chuckled at his words.

"We start small," she murmured. "One day, we'll be a great force in this world... together."