

Living Shadow 168

Chapter 168 Nice Visual Trick

The war hall's dining area was busy in the morning. Damon had somehow overslept, and as for why... well, he had spent the whole night contemplating how best to apologize to Sylvia—running different scenarios in his head of her anger or, worse, her cold shoulder.

Somewhere along the line, he had dozed off, and when he came to, it was already morning. He rushed down, and luckily for him...

He wasn't late.

Sylvia was seated with everyone else, and as usual, they had saved him a seat.

Damon let out a small sigh of relief. Croft perched on his shoulder quietly, sleeping despite Damon's movements.

Glancing at his shadow for some much-needed support, he made his way toward the table with his usual impassive expression.

As he walked in, he heard the faint murmurs of some first-years in the distance but ignored them.

He pulled out the seat next to Sylvia and sat down.

His eyes swept across the table.

"Morning..."

He really hoped he didn't sound awkward with that poor excuse for a greeting, but Leona was there to save him—boisterous as always.

"Hi, Damon. You're late... Forget that—did you know Xander is close to first-class advancement?"

Damon chuckled. "I do. His aura is different. Evangeline too."

He tried hard not to look at Sylvia. He was hoping she would say something, but she didn't.

So, slowly, he turned to her.

"What about you, Sylvia? I haven't sensed any change in your aura..."

Sylvia gave him a brief glance before looking away.

"Hmm... I'm still a bit away, I think..."

Damon kept his expression unreadable.

'Just great. Talk about her aura. Really smart... Is she giving me the cold shoulder?'

His eyes drifted to the book next to her—Dungeons and Death Zones: Survival Probability Analysis.

"That's a pretty interesting book..."

She looked up slowly, then back at it.

"Oh, this... It's..."

She lowered her head as if coming to a realization, then shook it.

"It's nothing. You can have it if you like."

Damon could feel Evangeline's cold glare boring into him. At this point, they could all sense the awkwardness in the air. Normally, Sylvia would have already started telling him about the book.

'So she is giving me the cold shoulder...'

Normally, Xander would have thrown an insult or a rude remark, but he decided to refrain—especially since Evangeline looked like she was about to explode. She was glaring at Damon so coldly that if looks could kill, he'd be dead.

He scowled at her and thought, 'I'm trying my best, dammit.'

Naturally, while Damon was talking to Sylvia, the first-years continued whispering.

"Did you hear the news? Damon Grey is now part of the student council..."

"Yeah, heard he's in charge of discipline."

"Who? You mean the problem child?"

"Yeah, and I heard he's already terrorizing first-years. My buddy Falz is under house arrest because Grey caught him sneaking out to town yesterday..."

"Someone has to stand up to him..."

Damon could hear them, but he had bigger worries.

"Ah, right—Sylvia, you wouldn't believe it, but I actually got forced into the student council..."

Sylvia merely nodded without looking at him.

He forced a smile.

'Is this how men feel when they're trying to woo a woman who wants nothing to do with them...?'

"I'll be helping out Lilith Astranova going forward—"

"Congratulations."

Sylvia cut him off, her tone flat.

Damon forced down his irritation. She wasn't even giving him a chance to break the ice, much less apologize.

"I can't believe the worst person got picked."

Xander sneered.

"Of all people, our student council president chose you? The world must have gone mad."

Damon ignored him. He was more worried about Evangeline, whose aura was slowly flaring up—she was about to get aggressive.

Leona, on the other hand, didn't seem to care much.

"I think he deserves it. It's like having a crook catch other crooks."

Damon shot her a glare. "Who are you calling a crook?"

"You are."

Damon paused.

The voice didn't come from Leona. Or from any of his friends at the table.

It came from a student standing behind Leona.

Naturally, Damon had sensed him coming, but he didn't expect the boy to actually approach their table.

He had blonde hair and blue eyes, his bangs covering his forehead. He gritted his teeth, fists clenched—clearly trying to suppress his trembling. From the looks of it, he had gathered all his courage to come and pick a fight with Damon.

Damon shot him a cold glare, trying to recall his name.

"What do you want, Ranma?"

Ranma bit down on his lip, suppressing his nerves.

"You... you think because you're number one now, you can oppress all of us first-years?"

Damon looked at him, completely lost. He had no idea what this guy was talking about.

The others glanced between him and the trembling first-year but chose not to interfere. After all, Damon was the new number one—dealing with challenges was his business.

'This isn't good... I can't let any random nobody throw the gauntlet. I can't deal with this right now...'

Ranma's eyes were already shaking with fear.

"You attacked Falz. I'm here to avenge him!"

Damon finally understood. Falz—one of the first-years from town yesterday. Come to think of it, they were part of the same clique.

This was his first challenge since securing the number one spot. He had to enforce his position.

Fighting wasn't even an option. If they thought he wasn't undefeatable, more would come—even if he won this fight.

So, Damon decided to feed on their fears.

And luckily, he had just the skill for that.

He stood, his dark eyes cold with menace.

"You want to die? Fine... be my guest."

As soon as he spoke those words, the shadows in the room moved toward him—pools of liquid darkness creeping unnaturally. They gathered around Damon, dimming the morning sunlight in the large hall.

Students scrambled away in fear as the shadows twisted to his will.

Ranma paled, his body trembling.

What made it even more terrifying was that they couldn't sense a shred of mana from him.

Sylvia's gray eyes widened slightly, a flicker of interest sparking within them—but she slowly lowered her head.

Damon, surrounded by writhing pools of darkness, leveled a cold glare at Ranma.

"Scram."

His voice was quiet, but it carried a weight that made the other boy's breath hitch.

Ranma staggered back, tripping over himself as he scrambled away in fear—falling flat on his face before scurrying out of sight.

Damon let out a hidden sigh of relief.

His shadow-control skill had proven useful—even if it was just for show.

A nice visual trick.

Even if it was completely powerless.