

## Living Shadow 177

### Chapter 177 Deeply Personal

Damon distributed his stats, feeling the weight of his newfound power settle over him. Each first-class advancement granted 15 attribute points per person, bringing his total to 115 points.

His updated status screen displayed the results:

[HP: 60/60]

[Mana: 14,084/14,084]

[Strength: 119] +40

[Agility: 57] +30

[Speed: 100] +40

[Endurance: 35] +5

[Class: —]

[Shadow: 500]

[Shadow Hunger Levels: 0%]

[Shadow Level: 5]

[Condition: Shadow is Full]

[Attributes: Umbra]

[Skills:]

[5x] [Remorseless] [Shadow Perception] [Water Celebration] [Sacrifice] [Shadow Control] [Parkour]  
[Shadow Armor] [Beholder's Gaze]

[Locked]

Speed and strength—those were the two stats he needed to boost the most, especially against someone like Back-to-Back.

But the most important gains were the skills he had obtained. His mana had surged to an overwhelming 14,084, so much that excess energy leaked from his body.

Among his new skills, the one that stood out the most was Shadow Armor, which he had gained upon leveling up. The other—Beholder's Gaze—had been acquired from devouring an enemy.

He opened the first skill.

[Skill: Shadow Armor]

[Description:]

"The night does not fear the blade, nor does the shadow flinch at the strike. Cloaked in darkness, the umbral weaves its own defense—armor not of steel, but of silence and dread."

[Effect:]

The user is enveloped in an armor of shadows that absorbs impact and dissipates damage. The armor shifts and reforms, reinforcing weak points and reducing the force of incoming attacks. It thrives in darkness, growing stronger in the absence of light.

[Type:] Active

[Cooldown:] 0 seconds

Finally, a defensive skill.

Damon activated it immediately.

The instant he did, his shadow energy drained, and the darkness around him stirred. His Shadow Control skill responded instinctively, guiding the inky tendrils to wrap around his form.

The darkness rose, folding over him in layers until it became a solid mass of armor.

It wasn't just armor.

It was a second skin.

Damon moved, flexing his fingers. The shadows adhered perfectly to his body, molding to his every motion as if they had always been meant to be there. It felt natural.

It didn't restrict him like normal armor—there was no weight, no resistance.

Yet, he knew it was stronger than steel.

A thought formed in his mind, and the armor shifted.

Dark, jagged spiked gauntlets extended over his hands.

He turned to a crate, drew back his fist, and swung.

The crate exploded into splinters on impact.

Lilith watched him with mild amusement, but Back-to-Back continued to convulse, still suffering from the poisons.

Damon examined the skill further.

It had no cooldown, meaning he could keep it active indefinitely. However, it had two weaknesses—

One, It relied on shadows to manifest. In an environment without shadows, summoning the armor would be difficult.

Two, It consumed shadow energy to repair itself. If he took too much damage, he'd have to spend more shadow energy to keep it intact.

Three wasn't a downside it was simple, the armor took on whatever form he imagined it to be as long as it was armor.

For now, though, it was perfect.

Damon deactivated the skill, and the armor dissolved, melting back into the surrounding darkness.

The description had been right—someone clad in shifting shadows would be terrifying to behold. Yet, through Shadow Perception, Damon noticed something even more interesting.

The armor didn't just look like black steel.

It was alive.

Its movements were almost sentient, shifting unnaturally, adapting, breathing.

And unlike normal armor—he could see through it.

Damon turned his attention to his newly acquired skill.

That was when he noticed something strange.

Whenever he leveled up, the system used the word "awakened" when describing his new skills from a level up.

But when he devoured someone and took their flesh, the system used "acquired skill."

A subtle difference in wording.

But Damon didn't miss it.

Now, he was curious.

He opened the next skill.

[Skill: Beholder's Gaze]

[Description:]

A skill inspired by the ancient duelists of Norrath, the frost continent, who believed that true mastery lay not in brute strength but in perceiving and seizing the perfect moment. By attuning themselves to the rhythm of combat, they bent the tide of battle with nothing but instinct and precision.

[Effect:]

When slipping past an incoming attack by the thinnest margin, the world slows for but a fleeting moment—three seconds stretched longer. In this brief window, your movements remain unshackled, while your opponent lags behind, ensnared in the distortion of time. Whether to strike, retreat, or reposition is yours alone to decide, as the battle bends to your gaze.

[Type:]

Passive

[Cooldown:]

3 seconds

This skill was different from [5x].

For the first time, the system referenced another continent—Norrath.

Damon's gaze darkened as he recalled the frost continent in the far north, a land harsh and unforgiving. Only the strong thrived there. Its people were as unyielding as the frozen wastelands they called home.

To possess a skill from such warriors meant something.

And this skill—Beholder's Gaze—was practically unstoppable.

It had no real cooldown.

Or rather, the skill's effect duration and cooldown were the same.

This meant that as long as he continuously dodged attacks within the required margin, he could activate it over and over. There would be no gaps—his perception of time would distort endlessly.

However, there was a small flaw.

It was reliant on his enemy.

To trigger it, Damon had to dodge within the thinnest possible margin—a near miss. It wouldn't activate if he dodged too early or too easily. And it didn't stop time, only slowed it.

But to his enemies...

It would look like something else entirely.

From their perspective, his speed would suddenly explode.

To them, Damon wouldn't be dodging—he'd be moving faster than they could react.

His eyes flickered toward Back-to-Back, still convulsing from the poison.

With this skill, Damon would be able to kill him.

Easily.

He knew Back-to-Back's fighting style.

He knew how he attacked.

How he reacted.

How he thought.

With his existing skills, his opponent's weakened state, and this new power...

Damon would win.

He would finally step out of Back-to-Back's shadow.

And he would make him pay for all the times he had wronged him.

This wasn't just a fight.

This was personal.