

Living Shadow 182

Chapter 182 Damon... What Happened To Your Eyes?

Her skin was pale—so pale it nearly matched the snowy white of her hair. Her gray eyes were distant as she sat on her bed, clad in a thin medical robe, a newspaper held tightly in her frail hands.

She was young, perhaps fourteen years old.

The newspaper was an update on the demons—even after an eight-year truce, they had not yet retreated completely.

Her fingers tightened around the pages.

Beside her, magic-tech machines hummed softly, their enchanted mechanisms keeping track of her condition. A thin tube connected her wrist to an elixir-infused drip, feeding her body the potions necessary for her survival.

She slowly raised her head, the golden light of the afternoon streaming in through the curtains.

This large, luxurious room was hers alone—the walls, the enchanted medical equipment, the soft sheets, all of it dedicated to her care. She ate good food, received the best treatment, and hadn't tasted stale bread in a long time.

But despite all of that... she missed her brother.

She wondered where he was, how he was doing, and more than anything... how he was getting the money for her treatment.

A deep pang of guilt twisted inside her chest.

She was always a burden.

Her brother had always been the one to carry her, to protect her, to ensure she survived—ever since their parents had died in the Demon Wars.

And now, as if fate itself wished to mock them, she had been cursed with an incurable disease—Magic Circuit Cancer.

She didn't remember how she had ended up in the Healing Institute or how her brother had managed to bring her here. All she remembered was him carrying her—from healer to healer, from one desperate attempt to the next.

When she had finally awoken, she was in a shared ward. Not long after, she had been moved to an executive suite, which must have cost thousands of zeni.

Her brother had supposedly gone to the Academy.

She smiled faintly at the thought.

He had finally used the golden ticket they had inherited.

Even so... she missed him.

She hadn't seen him for two whole months.

The one taking care of her in his absence was a kind healer—Flora Estin, a specialist in Magic Circuit Cancer.

'Damon... I hope you're alright. Goddess, please protect my brother...'

Her brother had changed too much since their parents had died.

With every passing year, he became more isolated, more distant. He trusted no one—and with good reason.

People had been cruel to them.

She would never forgive them.

Not for the way they hurt her brother.

But if she had to pinpoint the start of his change, it would be that day—the day he disappeared into the woods, a dead look in his eyes.

She had waited for hours.

She had been scared.

She had been worried.

But when he finally returned, his eyes were different.

That night, he had told her, "Stay by my side."

He had sworn to take them out of that village.

He had promised—come hell or high water—that he would protect her.

But deep down, she had always known one truth.

'While he was protecting me... who was protecting him?'

The answer was no one.

And so, he changed.

He no longer cared for morals.

He became just like the people he hated and despised.

He lied, he cheated, he stole.

He learned from them—and used their own tricks against them.

But even then...

He still protected her.

Damon and Luna had suffered.

She would never forget the original authors of their misery—even if her brother did.

'Demons...!!'

Her hands trembled as she squeezed the newspaper.

It was because of the Demon Wars.

Because their parents had died, the once-kind villagers had turned against them.

Because of demons, their own relatives had abused them.

Because of demons, her brother had to become a crook just to survive.

Knock. Knock. Knock.

Her head snapped up at the sound of the door.

Before she could speak, it slowly began to open.

And then—

Her heart leapt in her chest.

She barely had time to react—barely had time to rise from the bed before the drips attached to her wrist pulled her back.

"Ahh—stop! Don't exert yourself—!"

The young man who entered the room smiled as he walked toward her. Without hesitation, he wrapped his arms around her, pulling her into a gentle embrace, then pressed a soft kiss against her cheek.

"Hey there, Luna. Did you miss me?"

Tears welled up in her eyes before they spilled over, streaming down her cheeks.

She clung to him tightly, her small hands gripping his clothes as if afraid he would disappear.

It had only been two months—but to her, it felt like a thousand years.

These two siblings had only ever had each other in this world.

They had endured together.

They had persevered together.

They had suffered together.

They had starved together.

Damon stroked her hair gently, letting her cry as much as she needed.

When she finally pulled away, she wiped her tears, blinking up at him.

And that was when she noticed it.

He looked different.

He felt different, too.

The air around him was heavy, brimming with a mana presence that refused to be suppressed.

Luna had always been more attuned to mana than her brother. Even though he had always possessed potential, his mana had been far more subdued than hers.

But now?

It had grown immensely.

Even she could feel it.

His clothes were different, too.

He wore fine garments, the kind that nobles or high-ranking individual's would wear. They fit him well, accentuating the sharpness of his features.

He looked... handsome.

But none of that mattered.

Because what truly caught her attention—what shocked her the most—

Were his eyes.

Her brother's eyes had changed in two ways.

The color was the first.

His eyes had once been a gentle blue, as soft as the sky in summer. Later, after their parents' deaths, they had turned icy blue, reflecting the cold walls he had built around himself.

But now?

Now, they were black—a deep abyssal black, as if all light had been devoured by them.

And the second change?

It was the coldness.

His gaze, once unyielding yet filled with warmth, had now become void of emotion.

They were empty.

They were lifeless.

They were the eyes of death itself.

And yet—Luna felt no fear.

She didn't doubt that this was her brother.

He hadn't been replaced.

Only his eyes had changed.

And that didn't matter.

Even if he had turned into a troll, she would still love him.

But curiosity burned inside her.

Slowly, she raised her hand, placing it gently against his cheek.

Leaning in closer, she peered into his eyes, searching for something—anything that could explain this change.

Damon blinked, startled by her sudden action.

And then, softly, she asked—

"Damon... what happened to your eyes?"

His expression faltered, his eyes narrowing slightly as if caught off guard.

He seemed... surprised by her question.