

Living Shadow 185

Chapter 185 Trouble Is My Middle Name

Damon left without telling Luna much. His sister seemed sad about Back-to-Back's death, and that was fine. She didn't need to know what had happened behind the scenes.

He had come to spend time with her and give her the pager so she could contact him whenever she wanted. That was enough.

After leaving, he made a brief stop to see Flora Estin, the healer who specialized in magic circuit cancer. She gave him an update on Luna's condition—she was stable. Not cured, but stable.

Although Flora was optimistic, she also voiced her concern.

"Can you keep up with the payments?"

It wasn't a question born from doubt, but from experience. Many noble families had abandoned their own when faced with magic circuit cancer—it was simply too expensive to keep someone alive when the costs never stopped rising.

Damon understood where she was coming from.

But he wasn't giving up.

He would just have to keep making money—a lot of it. No price was too high for his sister's life.

On the upside, Luna was getting better. Not fully healed, but well enough that she would soon be able to move around again. He could tell just by how energetic she had been earlier when teasing him.

As for a cure...

There was no doubt that magic circuit cancer could be cured. Assuming he could get his hands on some legendary elixir from a dungeon.

But that was like trying to leap into the heavens—highly unlikely.

And even if he did obtain one, the sheer number of people who would come after him to claim it... he could never keep it. He could never use it. Not with his meager power.

Even if he did manage to give it to Luna, some insane magi might still try to dissect her just to extract any trace of the elixir left in her body.

He sighed.

Money... it all comes down to money.

And beyond that—

Power.

That was all that mattered.

Leaning his head back against the carriage seat, he murmured to himself,

"I need more power..."

Lilith, sitting beside him, heard his whisper and sighed.

'He must be thinking about leveling up...'

The requirements for his next breakthrough were dire.

A Dark Spirit's Soul Fragment.

Easier said than done.

She gazed out of the carriage window. It was evening, and the city lights illuminated the streets in a golden glow.

Without warning, she reached over and tapped a button by her seat.

"Stop the carriage."

The vehicle came to a smooth halt.

Damon glanced at her with a frown.

"What is it?"

She shook her head, opening the carriage door.

"It's nothing. Let's go for a walk."

Damon raised an eyebrow but relented.

"Sure. Why not?"

Damon stepped down from the carriage as Lilith waved it away. This particular neighborhood wasn't far from their hotel. The busy road was filled with carriages, and the pedestrian path was lined with well-dressed individuals—imperial civil servants, high-class nobility, and the occasional students from the Imperial Academy.

At the center of the plaza stood a large statue of the goddess, surrounded by a grand fountain. The water shimmered under the soft glow of the night lights, making the entire scene appear almost ethereal.

Lilith smiled. "Shall we?"

Damon sighed as they approached the fountain. Without warning, she pulled his arm closer, her grip gentle. Despite the overwhelming gap in power between them, she looked breathtaking under the glow of the city lights.

Her gaze drifted toward the statue of the goddess, a distant expression in her eyes.

Damon sighed. "What's on your mind?"

She turned to him with a smile. "Clearly not as much as you do... Tell me yours, and I'll tell you mine. A fair deal, don't you think?"

Damon was curious. That look on her face—why did she wear such an expression while looking at the goddess?

He nodded. "Fine."

His voice grew quieter.

"It's just... ever since I killed my first person, I convinced myself my enemies were less than human. But after what Back-to-Back said... can I really keep thinking like that? I've just been wondering about it, that's all."

Lilith smiled.

"A reasonable thought. If you dehumanize your enemies and act like they are lesser, it makes it easier to live with their deaths... but that's just cowardice. Accept that they are human and kill them anyway."

Her gaze was steady.

"It's because they are human that you shouldn't forget. Carrying that weight is what separates you from those who are weak. And you, Damon Grey, are not weak."

Damon nodded slowly.

"That didn't really help," he admitted. "But I'll think about it. Now your turn."

Lilith sighed.

"I got my power from a temple of the goddess... or rather, a temple she shared with him. When I arrived there, I was desperate. I prayed to the goddess, offering everything... but she never answered me."

Her voice grew distant.

"But when I called upon him, he did."

Damon frowned slightly.

"I was born into a family that worshipped the goddess, but she always turned a deaf ear to the pleas of mortals," Lilith continued.

Damon glanced at the statue of the goddess. Every statue of her was different. That was because no one actually knew what she looked like. After all, she was a god.

"I see," he said. "At least someone answered."

She nodded. "He did. But that wasn't what I was thinking about."

She turned to him, her emerald eyes thoughtful.

"I find it strange... why is the Unknown God worshipped alongside the goddess in some ancient ruins? Even now, in some parts of the world, they are still worshipped together. The demons do both as well. What is their connection?"

Damon sighed. "Alright, let's go. I feel like this would take a while, and my legs hurt. I still have mana training to do."

Lilith smiled. "Sure."

As they walked down the road past the fountain, Damon suddenly frowned.

His shadow perception picked up a commotion nearby.

"Hehe, pin him down!"

"Please don't hurt my grandson...!"

An old woman's voice rang out, weak and desperate. She lay on the ground beside a broken basket of dried bread.

Four students in white uniforms with golden accents were holding down a poorly dressed boy, beating him mercilessly. One of them casually kicked the old woman aside.

"Shut up, hag."

Lilith furrowed her brows. "Imperial Academy students."

Damon shook his head, his gaze cold as he watched them exploit helpless commoners.

"Yes. And this has nothing to do with us."

Lilith said nothing, instead scanning the passing crowd. No one even glanced at the scene. The city's patrol squad simply walked by, unwilling to risk offending noble students for the sake of some lowly commoners.

She glanced at Damon.

"Your mana is out of control, right?"

Damon scowled at her. "So?"

She tilted her head toward the academy students.

"Wouldn't a good workout help with that?"

Damon narrowed his eyes. "Didn't you tell me to stay out of the way of Imperial Academy students?"

She smirked.

"Judging by where they're standing... they're in our way. And I can't interfere—since they're just first-years, after all. If only I had a first-year junior who enjoyed picking fights and hated nobles..."

Damon chuckled.

"Well... trouble is my middle name. If I have to mess up some rich snobs, then so be it."

He wasn't some hero. He didn't care about saving strangers. But as he watched the noble kick the old woman aside, something twisted in his gut.