

Living Shadow 189

Chapter 189 Penrose

Lilith smiled thinly. It seemed Damon had finally found a worthy opponent. However, she needed to make sure things didn't get out of hand.

Yuka von Penrose belonged to the esteemed Penrose family—renowned swordsmen fiercely loyal to the imperial family. There was no doubt that Yuka had been trained rigorously from a young age, his skills honed to perfection as a scion of his lineage. Among the first years at the Imperial Academy, he was ranked third.

This year's Imperial Academy freshmen were exceptionally talented. The institution was improving, but that wasn't a concern—Aether Academy had its own prodigies. In both quantity and quality, Aether remained superior. Its Spartan training regimen wasn't for nothing; the academy was brutal in every sense, forging warriors through both physical and mental trials.

She couldn't help but think of the upcoming end-of-semester evaluation.

'Damon won't have it too easy this time...'

Yuka paid Lilith no mind. He walked up to Damon, stopping precisely a meter away.

"State your name."

Damon's black eyes were calm.

"I am Damon Grey of Aether Academy."

Yuka nodded.

"I see. I have not heard of you. Where do you rank?"

Damon thought for a moment. Should he reveal his former title or his current one? In the end, he chose the former.

"Naturally, you wouldn't have. I am Aether Academy's weakest student."

Lilith suppressed a smile as the crowd erupted in shock.

"The weakest student? No way!"

"But he just took down nineteen Imperial students!"

"If he's the weakest, then the students there must be on another level..."

"Their education system must be superior!"

Yuka narrowed his eyes. His opponent wore a blindfold yet had effortlessly defeated multiple students.

'Is he blind? No... that isn't the gait of someone without sight.'

"You lie," Yuka said coldly. "Someone as strong as you must surely be at least in the top ten."

Damon smirked.

"But you haven't heard of any Damon Grey in the top ten, have you? Your academy should have shared the names of those in the ranking, along with their magic attributes and skills, right?"

Yuka remained silent.

"Ever heard of a Damon Grey who uses wind magic?"

Lilith smirked. What a shameless lie—he was deliberately concealing his true attribute.

Damon continued, his voice steady.

"I'm a fist fighter. Someone like me would be well-known if I were in the top ten."

Yuka narrowed his eyes. That made sense. And yet, something about this man felt too dangerous to be unknown.

He placed his hand on his katana.

"Very well then, Damon Grey. I challenge you to a duel."

Damon shook his head.

"Not interested."

Yuka blinked, momentarily taken aback.

"I am challenging you to an honorable duel."

Damon sneered.

"Great. Another pompous idiot who thinks 'honor' means something."

He raised his hand.

"I don't give a damn about honor. Let's just fight."

Bang! Bang!

Two magic bullets shot forward, Damon's fingers still smoking from the release. Yuka barely dodged, but his shoulder was grazed.

His eyes sharpened as he gripped his katana, drawing it in a single, fluid motion.

'Darkness attribute magic, he lied.'

At that moment, Damon felt an instinctive warning—danger. The very space in front of him warped as if it had been sliced apart. He tilted his body to the side, just in time. A single strand of his hair was severed. The pavement behind him split open, a clean cut running through the stone.

Yuka's voice was calm, composed.

"Spatial Quick Draw."

Damon narrowed his eyes.

'Offensive spatial magic... what a dangerous attribute and skill combination.'

But Damon had Beholder's Gaze. Before Yuka could sheath his blade, Damon had already fired his omnidirectional gear, propelling himself forward at high speed.

As he closed in, he pulled out a dagger and slashed at Yuka's shoulder. The swordsman barely reacted in time, avoiding a deep wound but still suffering a minor cut. First blood was drawn.

Damon sensed danger and immediately stepped back.

Yuka, unfazed, reached for the second sword on his back and thrust forward. Damon had already calculated the attack and should have been out of range—except...

His instincts flared.

The sword passed through space unnaturally, appearing behind him. Through Shadow Perception, he detected something manifesting at his back.

He shifted his head just in time, barely dodging. But it wasn't over. A second thrust followed. Damon twisted, pulling out his second dagger.

Clang!

Steel met steel—even though there was a two-meter gap between them.

Damon realized he needed to close the distance; otherwise, he would be at a disadvantage, forced onto the defensive.

Their blades clashed, sparks flying as they tested each other's limits.

Yuka glared at him.

"You're fast... but after every dodge, you seem to get slightly faster. By a three-second margin. How? Is that a spell?"

Damon gripped his daggers tighter.

'He's sharp. He's already noticed the effects of Beholder's Gaze...'

Damon didn't have much time. His [5x] skill would wear off in five minutes, and he was already out of breath after fighting the others. Yuka wasn't just skilled—he was tricky, his spatial attribute making him a dangerous opponent. Damon didn't want to use his Shadow Armor skill, not against someone this fast, but that didn't mean his shadows were useless.

He activated Shadow Control and sprinted toward Yuka. The shadows beneath his sleeves flickered as teleporting sword strikes came at him. Damon dodged, weaving between the attacks, knowing Yuka was currently using only one sword. That meant his strikes could only come from one direction at a time.

Damon easily closed the distance—he couldn't allow Yuka to use Quick Draw again.

Yuka's violet eyes narrowed as he raised his sword to slash at Damon, but Damon's dagger arts were unorthodox. He did what no sane person would—he threw his right dagger into the air.

Yuka's eyes instinctively flicked up in surprise. It was only for a moment, but that was all Damon needed.

Another dagger was already flying toward Yuka's face.

Reacting fast, Yuka slashed it away.

His eyes glimmered.

You're open.

He swung down at Damon, expecting a decisive strike—only to find Damon had slowed down on purpose.

Damon's palm caught the sword mid-swing.

Clang

Yuka's eyes widened. His blade had struck something as hard as steel.

Damon's arms darkened, a solid gauntlet of shadow armor encasing them.

Before Yuka could react—

An armored fist smashed into his face.

Blood gushed from Yuka's nose as he staggered backward, his grip tightening around his sword.

"That was madness...!" he hissed.

Damon stepped forward, delivering another heavy punch to Yuka's gut, sending him reeling.

As Yuka recovered, he reached for his katana, preparing to draw it at point-blank range.

Damon sensed immediate danger.

But before either of them could continue—

"That's enough!!!"

A cold, unfamiliar feminine voice rang out.