

Living Shadow 194

Chapter 194 A Woman's Flaw

Lilith performed a small curtsy while looking at Lady Margan. Damon followed suit, though his actions were slightly less refined—his eyes stealing obvious glances at the noblewoman before him.

"It is a pleasure to meet you, my lady. I apologize for the small welcoming party."

Lady Margan regarded them both with a neutral expression, but Lilith continued.

"I am Lilith Astranova, Student Council President, and by my side is Damon Grey—the first-ranked freshman and Student Council Discipline Master."

Lady Margan's gaze shifted toward Damon.

Damon met her eyes briefly before his face flushed slightly, his composure slipping for just a moment.

"It's an honor to make your acquaintance, my lady. I... I... "

He stammered.

Lilith's brow twitched. That was unusual. Damon wasn't one to get flustered easily, but at least he was keeping his word about being on his best behavior.

Or so she thought.

Damon cleared his throat and pressed on, his gaze lingering on Lady Margan.

"I... I heard that Lady Margan was as beautiful as the finest magic pearls in the sea, but clearly... those were lies."

Lady Margan's expression hardened ever so slightly, but Damon wasn't finished.

"To compare your beauty to mere pearls is an insult to you, my lady."

Lilith's eye twitched. She stole a glance at Damon, keeping her composure intact.

'What is he doing?'

This was Damon Grey—the same insufferable bastard who had once pretended to be in love with her, letting a love confession slip so casually. Even she, who knew his nature well, couldn't tell if he was genuine or just faking it. His face was flushed, his words carried a shy sincerity...

'Ahhh, Damon, you liar! You said you would be on your best behavior!'

Why had she even believed him? This was the same man who prided himself on having no pride at all—or so he liked to emphasize.

Lady Margan's expression remained unreadable at first. Her gaze shifted from mild irritation to subtle surprise as Damon's words reached her. A small, almost imperceptible smile threatened to touch her lips.

It had been years since a young man had gushed over her like this.

She kept her expression neutral, but inwardly, she felt a nostalgic amusement. It reminded her of the days when she had been in her prime, back in her homeland, when knights and nobles alike would compete for her favor.

She studied Damon again.

He was handsome and well-dressed. His mannerisms and poise suggested he had been raised with noble decorum.

His black eyes—deep and unreadable—reminded her of the abyssal depths of the sea.

She could see why he was the first-ranked freshman. His mana... it was pouring out of him, leaking from his very pores. He had so much of it, and yet, he lacked proper control.

That meant he was close—on the verge of his first class advancement.

And the way he shyly looked at her...

He was at the height of his youth, a young man overflowing with potential.

The same age her deceased son would have been.

A faint smile played at her lips.

"Thank you for the compliment... but surely, I am already an old woman."

Damon's expression scrunched up, as if insulted. His voice rose, carrying an almost boyish indignation.

"No, you're not! You're very beautiful! Even prettier than Lilith! How can anyone lie to you like that?!"

Lilith's eye twitched violently.

'This bastard...'

Lady Margan's gaze flickered toward Lilith.

Lilith Astranova—young, stunning, and in the prime of her beauty. She had curves in all the right places, and even now, Margan's own knights couldn't help but steal glances at her.

Yet this young boy had brazenly declared her—an older woman—to be more beautiful than Lilith Astranova herself.

And right in front of her, no less.

Lady Margan knew Lilith was angry. She could feel it.

And yet...

Damon's eyes were only on her.

What woman wouldn't enjoy such validation? Especially when it came from a young, promising man—and in comparison to someone as breathtaking as Lilith Astranova?

A rare amusement flickered in her gaze.

A handsome young man with burning passion in his eyes, unafraid to speak such words to her—his honest admiration unmistakable.

She couldn't help but smile.

"Oh my... I am flattered."

Damon pushed his advantage.

He stepped closer, his words flowing like silken poetry. His voice carried an almost boyish sincerity as he praised Lady Margan.

Somehow, he even closed the distance enough to take her hand—lifting it gently, before pressing a delicate kiss to her knuckles.

Lady Margan, who had arrived weary and exhausted, now found herself full of smiles.

Lilith, watching all of this unfold, felt her eye twitching dangerously.

Damon had called Lady Margan the most beautiful woman he had ever seen so many times now, it was staggering.

And the worst part?

Lady Margan was enjoying it.

Lilith knew what Damon was up to.

And even so... even so!

She was still a woman!

How dare he compare her to an old widow?!

A widow whose only son was dead.

A son that Damon Grey himself had killed.

Lilith glared coldly.

"Lady Margan, shall we depart? We have your accommodations prepared on the academy's grounds. I shall brief you on the details along the way."

Her voice was composed, but the underlying chill was unmistakable.

She stepped forward, her gaze darkening as she saw Damon still holding Lady Margan's hand.

"Shall we depart, Damon?"

Her tone sharpened, but the infuriating man didn't even flinch.

If anything—he ignored her entirely.

Damon, still holding Lady Margan's hand, turned to her with a graceful bow, offering his arm.

"Shall we, my lady?"

Lady Margan let out a soft chuckle, amused by his antics.

"Oh my, such a gentleman."

And then—she locked arms with him.

Lilith's eye twitched violently.

The two walked towards the carriages, Damon escorting Lady Margan with a grace that belonged to a seasoned nobleman.

The knights, who had remained silent throughout this exchange, now exchanged glances—utterly baffled.

They could not comprehend this foolish young man.

To abandon a fresh rose—in her prime—only to pluck an old weed?

Madness.

Lilith followed behind them silently, her steps measured and controlled, though her temper flared dangerously beneath the surface.

Damon, oblivious to—or ignoring—her mood, continued speaking with Lady Margan.

He spoke of Soltheon—of its wonders, its history, his words flowing effortlessly, painting vivid pictures of the world.

But beneath it all—his true intent was clear.

He was subtly extracting information from her.

And his method was so smooth, so seamless, that even Lilith—who knew his tricks better than anyone—barely noticed.

She exhaled sharply, watching him lead Lady Margan like some doting prince.

'My goddess...' she thought, resisting the urge to rub her temples.

'He was supposed to be my supporting actor...'

But somehow—

Somehow, he had stolen the entire show.

She sighed, her frustration settling into a dangerous kind of acceptance.

'Fine then... I'll play along with him.'

This was his mess, after all.

And she would make him pay for every second of it.

'Even so...'

Her gaze darkened as she glared at Damon's too-satisfied expression.

'I am so going to make him regret calling that old hag prettier than me...'