

Living Shadow 195

Chapter 195 Leading On

Damon's conversation with Lady Margan continued as the carriage moved through the streets of the capital, past the grand gates, and onto the paved roads leading to Aether Academy.

Lilith sat opposite them, her sharp gaze locked on Damon as he effortlessly coaxed information from Lady Margan—all while showering her with endless flattery.

He made her feel like she was the most beautiful woman in the world, ensuring she remained disarmed and comfortable.

But beneath it all—his true intent was clear.

Lilith noticed the small slips in his words—intentional mistakes—subtle hints that Lady Margan was starting to pick up on.

The wretched bastard was baiting her, leading her into his rhythm, step by step.

And worse—she was falling for it.

Damon's smile never wavered as he spoke.

"That's right, the academy is always so competitive. In fact, many students die during the entrance exams, and the academy doesn't allow outside powers in, so you can't even bring your servants or knights."

He sighed dramatically, lowering his head.

"The academy is so elitist in nature..."

His voice softened as if weighed down by sadness.

"You wouldn't believe the horrible things students do just to avoid falling off the rankings in this Spartan academy... just like Marcus—"

Damon stopped himself.

For a fraction of a second, his eyes flickered toward Lilith—only to quickly glance away, sighing as if in relief.

Lady Margan caught it instantly.

A subtle moment, but it confirmed her suspicions.

There was something the academy was hiding from her about her son's death.

And this young man—

He knew something.

But he couldn't speak freely.

Not with Lilith Astranova sitting right next to him.

'I need to make him more comfortable. He's just a young man...' she thought, formulating a plan.

Lilith, however, threw Damon a glare.

She knew exactly what Lady Margan was thinking.

And she knew exactly what Damon was doing.

'Tch... this bastard.'

She narrowed her eyes, watching as Damon played his role perfectly.

The same old trick—making Lady Margan feel mature, intelligent, while playing the part of a naïve, love-sick fool who had a harmless crush on her.

Lady Margan didn't know what Lilith was thinking, but—

She had completely underestimated Damon Grey.

"Tell me, Damon... are you familiar with Tobias?"

Damon blinked, his expression shifting.

Slowly, he turned to Lilith, throwing her a shy glance, as if asking for permission to speak.

Lilith, watching him carefully, played along.

She gave a small nod.

Damon let out a soft sigh of relief, as though he were afraid of ruining something between them—

Which, to Lady Margan, was yet another clue.

"Hmm... I did know Tobias. We didn't really get along, but he was friends with Marcus..."

Lady Margan's lips curled slightly.

He had been cut off earlier—just before mentioning Marcus.

And now?

Now, it was clear.

This Marcus was important.

"Oh? Really? You weren't friends? That's a shame... Hmm, this Marcus boy must be just as well-mannered as you."

Damon smiled wryly.

"Ahh... he was a—"

He glanced at Lilith.

She shot him a cold, sharp glare.

To Lady Margan, it was obvious.

Lilith did not want him speaking further.

Damon's expression flashed with hesitation.

"Nothing. I don't know anything about Marcus... I mean, I didn't know Marcus."

He looked flustered, intimidated.

And Lady Margan seized the moment.

She had to separate him from Lilith.

So, she did something completely unladylike.

She moved from her seat, sliding across the carriage—forcing herself between Damon and Lilith.

Effectively cutting off Lilith's glares.

Damon's eyes widened.

'She must be more desperate than she seems...'

Lady Margan took his hand, pulling it close to her chest, smiling gently.

"Tell me more about your academy, Damon. I'm sure there are many fun stories..."

Damon blinked, scratching his head as he continued to casually recount tales of the academy to Lady Margan. However, he subtly steered the conversation—guiding her interest toward her son's friends.

And she took the bait.

"I mean, it was kinda funny... at first. But then, Lark suddenly disappeared. I thought he got in trouble, but Marcus—their ringleader—was acting... strange."

Damon lowered his head, his voice dropping into a thoughtful murmur.

"It was weird how he kept muttering to himself... I think Xander said he even heard him say..."

His brows furrowed, as if recalling a disturbing memory.

"I'll kill them all..."

"Damon."

Lilith's sharp voice cut through the carriage.

Her tone was low, firm, dangerous.

"You've said enough."

She turned to Lady Margan, her expression composed but tense.

"Apologies, my lady. My junior is young and naive... and has an ear for baseless rumors. Please pay him no mind."

She stood up, the carriage rocking slightly with the motion, and glared down at Damon.

"Be quiet."

Damon lowered his head, his posture shrinking under her cold, oppressive presence.

"I—I... I'm sorry. I didn't mean to cause trouble by talking about what Marcus—"

"Just be quiet."

Lady Margan watched the exchange, her expression darkening with a deepening frown.

"Lady Astranova, it's quite fine... I was merely listening to stories. You shouldn't have—"

Lilith cut her off, her voice clipped—tense.

"My lady, I am supposed to brief you on your meeting as well as your stay at the academy, so I hope you don't mind giving me a little bit of your time."

Her words were polite, but the underlying message was clear.

This conversation was over.

Damon turned his gaze to the passing scenery outside the carriage, concealing the satisfied smirk tugging at the corner of his lips.

His job was done.

The groundwork had been laid.

He had painted Marcus as the culprit, and from here, it wouldn't take much effort for Lady Margan to connect the dots.

After all—on the day Tobias died, Marcus's uniform jacket had been torn to shreds.

And who had torn it?

Damon.

He had worn that same jacket when he faced Tobias.

And the maid who did Marcus's laundry would remember it.

Even if she didn't, the academy had all the evidence needed.

The final nail in the coffin—

It was in Marcus's room.

That is... assuming the academy hadn't already found it.

Which Damon seriously doubted.

"I'm certain of it. They've gathered all the evidence."

And now, there was only one loose end left.

The person who saw Damon do it.

The one who had been pulling the strings from the shadows along side Damon.

Damon narrowed his eyes, his fingers subtly tapping against his leg.

It wasn't Evangeline or Sylvia. He would have sensed them.

Leona?

No—she would help him hide a body, but she wasn't that cunning.

Xander?

Unlikely. He would have reported Damon instead. After all, Tobias had been his friend.

Which meant...

The answer was obvious.

The only person powerful enough to bypass his shadow perception—

The only one who could move unseen.

'It's one of the professors...'