

Living Shadow 200

Chapter 200 Hurt Again

Damon leaned against the side of the street stand, watching Sylvia take a bite out of a freshly grilled kebab. The skewered meat, charred at the edges, glistened with oil and spices. She hummed in delight, pressing a hand to her cheek as she chewed.

"Hmmm... what is this meat?" she asked, licking a bit of sauce off her lips.

The street vendor, a scruffy-looking man with a nervous smile, hesitated. He had planned to tell her after she had eaten at least five, but Damon had already slipped him a few zeni to keep his mouth shut.

For the past few minutes, the white-haired elf girl had unknowingly devoured seven different kinds of skewers, savoring each bite without a second thought.

"The spice is unique," she mused, rolling the taste over her tongue. "I like it, but it could be spicier... This would do well with elven spices."

Damon nodded, a small smirk tugging at his lips.

"Those are elven spices... just the cheap kind," he said.

He held up a bottle of water and handed it to her.

"Here. You might want to wash it down with this."

Sylvia swallowed and took the bottle, downing its contents in one go. She wiped her mouth and smiled at him.

"What type of meat was that? I loved the flavor."

Damon cleared his throat.

"Ahem... well, actually, that's why I gave you the water first..."

Sylvia tilted her head in confusion but waited for him to continue.

"I'm sure you've read about them," he said. "Actually, I don't think you even need a book to know about them..."

Her brows furrowed.

"Them?"

"I mean, goblins are a common monster," he finally said.

Sylvia almost missed it. Almost.

But then, her grey eyes widened. The color drained from her face.

"G-Go... goblin... That was goblin meat...?"

Her entire body froze.

Her face turned a sickly blue as she shook her head in disbelief.

"Haha... no, you're teasing me, right? Right?"

Damon shook his head.

"I wish I was, but I'm not. That was goblin meat. In fact, not just any goblin—" He smirked. "—that was brown bugger goblin."

Sylvia's stomach lurched.

Damon continued, clearly enjoying her reaction.

"You know, the ones with horrible warts on their skin, tons of snot dripping from their noses..." He shuddered dramatically. "I mean, personally? I wouldn't eat their stuff. I heard green goblins are a staple in some places, while red-cap goblins are served hot but are harder to kill."

Sylvia clamped a hand over her mouth.

"You told me... the meat was gourmet..." she whispered, her voice trembling.

Damon smiled wickedly.

"It was. Brown bugger goblins are rare. Harder to find than green goblins. I heard they even eat their own faces and vomit—"

He leaned in slightly.

"Apparently, it adds to the flavor."

She turned completely blue.

"But... but you said it was gourmet," she repeated, her voice barely above a whisper.

Damon scoffed.

"'Gourmet' doesn't always mean delicious. It just means it's rare... and weirdos like you think it tastes good." He chuckled.

"My goddess, eating a brown bugger goblin... You elves are built different."

Sylvia trembled.

Still, she refused to believe he would subject her to something so... vile.

Desperate, she turned to the vendor.

The man let out a nervous chuckle, avoiding her gaze.

"Some people... have a taste for it," he said awkwardly.

Sylvia's body violently shuddered.

Damon signaled to the vendor, who—clearly anticipating this—quickly pulled out a bucket.

Damon shoved it in front of Sylvia.

She didn't need an explanation.

Her stomach twisted.

A second later, she violently retched into the bucket.

Damon slowly stroked her head.

"There, there... let it all out, kiddo," he murmured, barely suppressing his amusement.

He couldn't help but smile at the sight.

Just a few years ago, someone had pulled the same trick on me...

Back then, he had been the naive idiot. He still remembered the taste—gods, it had haunted him for weeks.

Now?

Now, it was karma.

He had been tricked by an elf before... and now he had done the exact same thing to an elf girl.

After a few miserable minutes, Sylvia threw up everything in her stomach.

She was too weak to stand, so Damon crouched down and scooped her onto his back.

"You are a horrible person..." she muttered, her voice hoarse. "You are unpleasant to be around..."

Damon grinned wickedly.

"Yeah, yeah, I know."

He adjusted her weight on his back.

"Now, where should we go next for our date—now that you have room in your stomach?"

Sylvia leaned against him, too drained to fight.

She knew Damon was rude enough to force her to stay on his back if she tried to get off. She didn't have the energy to create a scene in the middle of town.

More than anything... this was a new experience.

One she had never had before.

As the saying goes: Traveling a thousand miles is better than reading a thousand books.

Experience—true experience—was something she lacked.

Damon had shown her the worn-down parts of town. They had spent the past three hours jumping from one place to another.

She had been scammed—seven times.

And every single time, Damon let it happen.

They had gone to a tavern, where Damon asked if she had ever seen a bar fight.

She had shaken her head.

She had never been to a tavern before.

How could she have seen a fight?

So... she had stayed and he created one.

She watched it all happen.

And when the brawl broke out, she had slipped away with him.

She had fun.

He had shown her a whole new world.

They had even been chased by the Student Council.

She was exhausted, but she had fun.

Damon had called it a date—but not once, not once, had he been a gentleman.

He mocked her.

He teased her.

But he had also protected her.

As they reached the academy, Damon carefully snuck Sylvia past the hedge walls and into the dorms. She looked around awkwardly as he set her down, her face red with embarrassment.

"You... You did all that on purpose, didn't you?" she muttered, narrowing her eyes at him.

He shrugged. "Who knows?"

Sylvia smiled, a soft chuckle escaping her lips. "That was... a new experience. Thank you."

Damon shook his head. If someone had done all that to him, he would've been livid. Back-to-back had tricked him years ago, and now he had done the same to her. He almost felt bad—almost.

She looked away. "Ehm... Thanks, and good night."

Damon sighed as he watched her fidget awkwardly. She seemed to be almost back to her usual self. She really didn't know much about the outside world, and for some reason, he found her naivety endearing. Before he could stop himself, he voiced his thoughts.

"You really are a sheltered princess."

The moment the words left his mouth, all the mirth drained from Sylvia's eyes. She lowered her head, the mood shifting instantly.

"Ah... right. I... Good night," she mumbled before quickly turning and running up the stairs.

Damon blinked, raising his hand as if to stop her.

"Sylv—"

Before he could finish, something slammed into him, forcing him against the wall. His body tensed as a firm grip seized him, pinning him in place.

A cold, female voice followed.

"I know what you did."