

Living Shadow 30

Chapter 30 Small Slip Of The Tongue

Damon's heart pounded in his chest, but his face remained expressionless. He couldn't afford to let his eyes dart around in search of it—his shadow.

Instead, he looked deliberately to the side, causing the student council president to follow his gaze for a brief moment. That gave him just enough time to glance down. There it was, attached to his feet like it should be, perfectly normal.

He nearly sighed in relief.

'Thank the goddess it's here.'

He had feared his shadow might still be wandering elsewhere, refusing to settle. But there it was, mimicking his every move.

The student council president, Lilith Astranova, furrowed her brows slightly as if contemplating something. Damon didn't know why she was there, but his mind raced through countless possibilities—none of them good.

Especially if it was related to Lark Bonaire's death.

He bit the inside of his cheek to stay calm.

'She couldn't be here because of that. I'm overthinking something trivial,' he reassured himself, though his heartbeat refused to slow.

Putting on an awkward smile, he scratched the back of his head.

"Oh! Student council president, I didn't see you there."

Lilith smiled faintly, her tone carrying an edge of amusement.

"Hello... I must have startled you, judging by how frightened you look."

Damon chuckled nervously.

"Yes, you did. The forest, you know... wild animals and all. Can't ever be too cautious."

"Is that so?" she replied coolly.

She walked over to the weapons rack, her fingers brushing off the dust accumulating on its surface.

"These are academy equipment. Did you get the proper permissions before bringing them here?"

Damon laughed nervously, rubbing his neck.

"Well... I, uh... I didn't..."

Lilith sighed, her expression unreadable.

"I see. And your name is?"

Damon hesitated before answering.

"Damon... Damon Grey. I'm, uh, a first year."

Lilith's sharp green eyes flickered for a moment at his response.

"I see, Damon Grey."

Damon noticed the brief change in her expression.

"Do you happen to know me, student council president?"

Lilith smiled politely.

"No, I don't. It's nice to make your acquaintance, Damon Grey."

"Likewise," he replied, trying to sound natural.

She glanced at the training dummies and weapons scattered around.

"Well, I'll let this slide for now, but you should file the proper paperwork with the student council office. You can meet me there anytime—don't take too long, though, or I might change my mind."

Damon quickly nodded, relief creeping into his voice.

"Yes, I understand. Thank you for your consideration."

Lilith's eyes scanned the area as if searching for something amiss. Damon kept his expression neutral, but her gaze made his skin crawl. She wasn't done with him.

"Right, you still haven't answered my question from earlier," she said suddenly.

"Who were you planning to follow?"

Her voice was calm, almost gentle, but to Damon, it sounded like the voice of a demon. He felt the blood drain from his face.

"Oh, that? It's nothing much," he stammered, forcing a weak laugh.

"I've fallen behind on my classes, so I wanted to create a training schedule to catch up."

Lilith's thin smile made it clear she didn't believe him. But as Damon calmed down, he realized she wasn't here because of Lark. She didn't know.

"I see," she said, her voice steady.

"Very well, then. I shall depart. I'll be expecting the paperwork, Damon Grey."

She turned to leave, and Damon's body relaxed for the first time since she appeared. But then she stopped, glancing back over her shoulder.

"Do you know Lark Bonaire?"

The name hit Damon like a hammer to the chest, his heart pounding painfully in his ribcage.

"Yes, I knew him," he replied reflexively before he could stop himself.

Lilith's eyes flickered again at his response. She turned back to him fully, her gaze sharp.

"Oh, I see. So, you knew him," she said with a soft smile. "That's good. Can you tell me what you knew about him?"

Damon froze, struggling to maintain his composure.

Lilith's emerald eyes studied him intently.

'Awfully suspicious, Damon Grey. Speaking of Lark Bonaire in the past tense... this boy knows Lark is dead. Could he be...?'

Damon, oblivious to his slip-up and the thoughts brewing in Lilith's mind, nodded slowly. He was too preoccupied with his own fears—wondering if he had left behind any evidence in the forest, knowing the murder had been far from perfect.

Damon forced a polite smile, masking the unease creeping up his spine.

"Of course, madam president."

Lilith smiled back, her expression as poised as ever.

"I feel like you and I are going to be good friends, Damon... so please, call me Lilith."

A cold sweat formed on Damon's back. He swallowed hard.

"Yes... senior Lilith."

She tilted her head slightly, her sharp green eyes locking onto his.

"Just Lilith is fine, Damon," she said softly as she stepped closer.

Damon's instincts screamed at him to keep calm, but her proximity felt suffocating.

"So, you know Lark Bonaire?" she asked, her voice light yet probing. "What is he like?"

This time, she referred to Lark in the present tense, and Damon caught it. He straightened his posture, trying to sound nonchalant.

"Lark and I were classmates. We didn't really get along, and, honestly, I don't think he was a nice guy. So, I always tried to stay out of his way. That's the extent of my relationship with him."

Lilith nodded slowly, her gaze never leaving his face.

"And where did you last see him, Damon? Can you remember that?"

Feigning a thoughtful expression, Damon tapped his chin.

"I think it was at the cafeteria. I accidentally bumped into him, and Lark got a bit upset. Now that I think about it, that was the last time I saw him."

As the words left his mouth, Damon widened his eyes as though a realization had struck him.

"Wait... why are you asking all these questions? Is Lark in trouble? Did he do something...?" He let his voice rise slightly, a hint of fear slipping in.

"Did something happen to him?"

Lilith blinked at his reaction, momentarily taken aback.

'Hmmm... I can't tell if he's genuinely worried or lying. He's either an excellent actor or just channeling the fear he's feeling now.'

Shaking her head, she softened her tone.

"Oh, no. He's fine. There's no problem. Lark was just called back by his family for a personal matter."

Damon exhaled audibly, a look of relief washing over his face.

"Thank the goddess," he muttered.

"I thought something terrible had happened to him. We may not have gotten along, but it would've still bothered me if something had happened. You see, I never got to properly apologize for what happened at the cafeteria. I feel... so guilty."

Lilith observed him carefully, her expression neutral, though her thoughts swirled.

'My goddess, what a convincing performance. I can't tell if he's a masterful liar or just that honest. Damon Grey, the academy's weakest student, the one who got a golden ticket from Seras Blade... there's something about you I can't quite place.'

She shook her head inwardly, still unsure. Without any concrete evidence, Lark Bonaire's death remained officially attributed to a monster attack—something that couldn't possibly connect to a first-year like Damon.

After asking a few more routine questions, Lilith smiled lightly and took a step back.

"Well, Damon, thank you for your time. Don't forget to file that paperwork."

Damon nodded quickly, forcing a warm smile. "Of course. Have a great day, Lilith."

As she turned and walked away, Damon waved her off, his hand trembling slightly until she disappeared from view.

Lilith's expression darkened as she moved out of sight.

'I'll get to the bottom of this, Damon Grey. There's a darkness in your heart... I can feel it.'

As she walked away Damon's eyes grew colder.

'Hmmm I slipped up... however my words aren't anything conclusive.. next time I'll be ready for you Lilith Astranova.'