

## Living Shadow 60

### Chapter 60 You Won't Win

Xander Ravenscroft had never felt more insulted in his life, and the fact that it happened in front of Evangeline—his long-standing crush—only made it worse. Damon's calculated insult had been ruthless, delivered with precision and malice right before his audience.

Damon leaned back, watching Xander fume with a detached amusement.

'No matter how high and mighty he acts, he's still just a teenager. I'll never understand these foolish crushes.'

Xander's outburst had not gone unnoticed. The quiet hum of the dining hall turned into a murmur as students began to whisper and cast curious glances toward their table.

"Is Xander Ravenscroft really going to duel that guy?"

"Of course. If he has any honor, he'll demand satisfaction and fight."

"Wait, isn't that Damon Grey?"

"No way. You mean the guy who's last in the rankings?"

"That's him—the probationary student. Can you imagine? A nobody like him squaring off against Ravenscroft?"

Damon sighed, lifting his teacup again as the whispers grew louder.

'So much unnecessary attention. These noble idiots really think I'll fight just because some pompous moron asked for it? Honor can kiss my ass.'

Xander, on the other hand, was seething. His fists trembled, his knuckles white as he gritted his teeth.

"Your cheap insults mean nothing," Xander growled. "I challenge you to honorable combat!"

Damon didn't even look at him. He took a slow sip of tea before sneering.

"And I said, screw off."

The sharp dismissal hung in the air, silencing some of the murmurs. The tension between the two was palpable.

Evangeline and Sylvia, sitting at the table, were wide-eyed. The situation had escalated far beyond what they expected, and neither knew how to diffuse it. Still, they understood that this reaction wasn't uncommon for nobles like Xander.

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Sylvia leaned slightly toward Evangeline, whispering.

"It's not unusual for a noble to resort to a duel when they feel insulted, especially from a warrior house like Ravenscroft. They're... predictable that way."

Evangeline nodded faintly but kept her eyes on Damon, who seemed unbothered by the growing crowd and rising tension. The difference in demeanor between the two boys couldn't have been starker: Xander, fiery and indignant, and Damon, calm and utterly disinterested.

Leona, who had been quietly observing, smirked. Her golden eyes glinted with amusement as she leaned forward, clearly enjoying the spectacle.

She could barely contain her excitement, practically bouncing in her seat.

"Wow, Damon, you're going to fight him? I can't wait!"

Damon shook his head, his voice calm yet dismissive.

"I have no reason to play along with him. Just because someone asks for a fight doesn't mean I'll give it to them. Only idiots fight when they have nothing to gain."

Xander scoffed, his irritation bubbling over.

"Are you afraid? If you truly defeated Lady Brightwater, then you shouldn't fear fighting me."

Damon sighed, exasperated.

"I never claimed anything. I don't need to prove myself. Besides, she's the one who said I defeated her. Are you calling her a liar?"

Xander glanced at Evangeline, her expression neutral but thoughtful. Damon's words had undoubtedly discredited him in her eyes, and the realization stung.

"I would expect no less from low-born trash. You have no honor," Xander sneered.

Damon tilted his head slightly, a faint smirk playing on his lips.

"What good has honor ever done anyone?"

Xander's eyes narrowed, his pride bruised further.

Sylvia, who had been silently observing, sighed as she rubbed her temples.

"Both of you need to calm down. There's no need for this."

Damon shrugged.

"I am calm. You should tell that to lover boy over there. He really needs to cool off."

Xander's face flushed red with anger. Unable to contain himself, he grabbed Damon by the collar, pulling him closer.

Damon stayed perfectly still, his head tilting slightly as though bored. Even with the blindfold over his eyes, he could see everything through his shadow perception—Xander's trembling hands, the redness of his face, the frustration in his eyes.

Calmly, Damon spoke, his voice chillingly low.

"Hey. If you don't want to die, I suggest you let go. I have no interest in childish duels. But if it's a battle to the death you want, I can oblige. We can walk into the forest together—only one of us will come back."

His tone was flat, almost disinterested, but it carried an unmistakable weight. The room seemed to darken slightly, the shadows in the corners of the room subtly deepening. To everyone else, it was a suffocating wave of killing intent—cold and undeniable.

Leona, usually unfazed, shivered. Sylvia bit her lip, trying to suppress the unease that crept up her spine. Even Evangeline, poised as she was, couldn't hide the flicker of surprise in her expression.

This was no bluff. Damon's killing intent was the kind that only came from someone who had taken a life before—and done so willingly.

Xander, fueled by noble pride and unable to back down, kept his grip on Damon's collar. Damon, unimpressed, began to reach into his uniform jacket.

"That's enough," Sylvia interjected, standing up abruptly. Her voice was steady, but her gray eyes betrayed her unease.

"First-year students are not allowed to battle to the death—especially not over something so trivial."

Xander hesitated before letting go of Damon's collar, his pride still intact but visibly shaken.

Evangeline nodded in agreement.

"She's right. This is unbecoming."

Xander sighed, his frustration evident.

"Then how do you suggest we settle this?"

Sylvia folded her arms, her brow furrowing as she considered.

"We only have one theory-based class today. The rest are practical. Our last class is Professor Blackthorn's anti-magic combat training, right?"

Damon raised an eyebrow beneath his blindfold.

"So?"

Sylvia's gray eyes gleamed with an idea.

"You can compete there."

Evangeline shook her head.

"I highly doubt Professor Blackthorn would allow them to fight directly. Unless..."

Sylvia nodded, cutting her off.

"That's right. They wouldn't be fighting each other. Instead, they can take on the magic artillery. Whoever lasts the longest at a set difficulty wins."

The mention of the magic artillery made everyone pause. A relic from the magic continent, the artillery was originally designed for the Demon Wars but had since been repurposed as a training tool. It fired relentless barrages of magical attacks at the user, testing their speed, reflexes, and barriers.

Xander sat back down, crossing his arms.

"Very well then."

Damon scoffed.

"And why should I? I gain nothing from this."

Xander glared at him, but Leona raised her hand, grinning mischievously.

"I know! Xander pays you if he loses!"

Damon held his chin, pretending to ponder.

"Hmm, that works for me. Half a million zeni if I win."

Xander scoffed, his lip curling.

"You truly have no honor."

Damon sighed, leaning back casually.

"Since when has that ever mattered?"

Xander clenched his fists, his pride unwilling to let him back down.

"Very well. But if I win, you will offer me a public apology."

He glanced briefly at Evangeline, clearly hoping to impress her.

Damon turned his blindfolded face toward Xander, his voice carrying a confident edge.

"You won't win."