

## **Living Shadow 61**

### Chapter 61 The Grudges Of Man Versus Bird

In his short life, Damon had learned a few harsh lessons, and they had served him well.

When you are weak, appear strong. When you are poor, act rich.

But the most important lesson was this: never get into a battle you couldn't win. Damon never gambled unless he had at least an 80% chance of succeeding. This situation was no different.

As he weighed what he stood to gain against what he could lose, the odds seemed to even out.

'With five hundred thousand, I can finally transfer Luna to a better medical facility. I can't lose.'

He clenched his fists under the table, hiding the intensity of his determination. He understood the stakes. Xander's demand for an apology if he lost seemed trivial compared to what Damon stood to gain.

'Nobles and their vain nonsense,' he thought bitterly, nearly sneering at the idea.

Victory was the only option. Damon was confident in his familiarity with the magic artillery, especially if he chose an attribute that worked in his favor. The odds of success were high.

He glanced downward, his shadow stretching faintly across the floor. While he couldn't see it with his blindfolded eyes, his [Shadow Perception] skill gave him a perfect vision of it, along with the rest of the room. Oddly, it felt as though the shadow was watching him back.

Across the table, Xander continued shooting icy glares his way. Damon's calm confidence seemed to grate on the aloof noble, whose pride wouldn't allow him to back down.

Pushing his chair back, Damon stood, brushing off his uniform.

"We've got Philosophy of Magic next," he said, turning to Leona. "I'm out."

Leona wrinkled her nose in disappointment.

"That sounds boring."

Sylvia tucked a stray lock of hair behind her ear as she stood.

"He's right. Let's go. We might be late if we don't hurry."

Evangeline nodded, her gaze thoughtful.

"Professor Chrome is teaching this class, right?"

The mention of Chrome seemed to pique Xander's interest. However, the others could tell Evangeline wasn't really asking a question.

"Yes," Sylvia answered. "He mostly teaches theory courses—History of the Demon Wars, Philosophy of Magic, Demonology, Dungeon Characteristics, Monster Ecology... things like that."

Xander nodded. "He is also a commoner."

Evangeline nodded again, her tone distracted.

"Right, I knew that."

Experience tales with empire

Damon saw the perfect opportunity to discredit Xander and couldn't resist taking a jab.

"Wow, you really impressed her there, lover boy."

Xander's glare turned sharp, his fists clenching.

"Speak one more time, and I'll—"

"That's enough," Sylvia interjected, her tone cutting through the brewing tension like a blade. "Let's just get to class."

Damon stood up, his expression as grim as ever, and Leona quickly followed, stepping to his side as if claiming her spot.

Evangeline and Sylvia, walking close together, also got up. Xander, heading to the same class, joined them, making their group look oddly cohesive—like a group of friends. Damon wished they would just leave him alone.

As they exited through the main entrance, Damon's senses heightened. His [Shadow Perception] caught the subtle movement of something swooping down at him. The direction and speed were clear in his mind.

With a swift motion, he waved his hand, smashing the attacker out of the air before it reached him. A loud caw followed as the raven crashed to the ground.

Damon smirked to himself.

'They almost caught me off guard. Good thing I have [Shadow Perception] now.'

The vendetta between Damon and the academy's ravens was long-standing. It had started when he captured a few to test his poisons. One had escaped, and ever since, the ravens seemed to hold a grudge against him. Naturally, Damon had turned this animosity into target practice, escalating their feud into a bizarre man-versus-bird rivalry.

Sylvia Moonveil hurried to the fallen raven, gently scooping it into her arms.

"You poor thing..." she said softly, her voice brimming with concern.

Damon observed her indifferently through his shadow perception.

'Can't believe these stupid birds still recognize me, even with a blindfold on.'

Evangeline glanced at him, her tone curious.

"I can't believe you sensed that raven coming. It didn't even make a sound."

Leona's golden eyes sparkled with pride.

"Hmm, of course. What else can you expect from my bestie?"

Xander sneered, his disdain evident.

"Your so-called bestie just smited a poor bird. That's nothing to be proud of."

Sylvia frowned as she examined the raven.

"It has a broken wing..." She glanced at Damon. "And I think it hates you."

Damon sneered, his face as gloomy as always.

"Really now? Had to use your elf powers to figure that out, huh? I could've told you that."

Sylvia narrowed her eyes at him.

"You really are a rude person, you know that?"

"I try not to be."

"Well, try harder."

Sylvia gently adjusted the raven's wing, her movements delicate.

"What did you do to them? Ravens are gentle birds. They don't make enemies unless they've been crossed, and they never forget."

Xander scoffed.

"I suppose people aren't the only ones who find you unsightly. Animals, too."

Damon ignored him, his voice calm but sharp.

"Just let me kill it. All grudges end with death."

Sylvia's glare could have frozen him on the spot.

"No. Have you been killing them? That would explain a lot..."

Crossing his arms, Damon replied nonchalantly,

"I didn't start this. They did. But I'll end it."

Actually he did but who was going to argue against him.

Sylvia trembled with visible anger but forced herself to stay calm.

"Why are you making animal cruelty sound like a war? You must have offended the ravens first."

Damon sighed, his patience wearing thin.

"Why does that matter? If they all die, then no more grudges."

Sylvia gritted her teeth but held herself back. She glanced at the raven in her hands, her expression softening.

"[Healing Moonlight]," she whispered.

A gentle, white glow enveloped the bird as Sylvia's lunar attribute magic worked its miracle. The raven stirred awake, its broken wing now healed. Sylvia smiled warmly as she cradled the bird, a serene sight that seemed almost divine.

But the tranquility shattered when the raven's gaze landed on Damon. Its feathers ruffled, and it let out a furious caw.

"Evil, evil, evil!"

"Killer, killer, killer!"

Xander smirked.

"Even the animals can see your true nature."

Damon kept his expression neutral, though inwardly he sighed.

'Right. Ravens can talk. I forgot that.'

Sylvia stood up, glaring at him.

"Apologize to the ravens."

Damon scoffed, crossing his arms.

"Why in the goddess's name would I apologize to a bunch of birds? He attacked me."

Through his shadows, he noted her sour expression and hesitated. For a moment, his blunt demeanor cracked as he reminded himself that Sylvia could be useful.

'If I want her help, I should at least try to stay in her good books.'

He sighed deeply.

"Fine... as you wish."

Leona giggled.

"Wow, I can't believe you made Damon agree so easily."

Damon's annoyance only deepened as he stepped closer to the raven in Sylvia's hands.

"I apologize to you for any grievances."

Sylvia smiled at the raven.

"Now, forgive him, mister raven."

The bird stared at her, then at Damon, before hopping onto his head with a triumphant caw.

"Get off me, you—" Damon raised his hand to swat it away, but Sylvia caught his wrist, her grip surprisingly firm.

Her grey eyes locked with his blindfolded eyes, a mischievous glint in them.

"I think this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship."

Damon clenched his teeth, barely restraining the urge to snap.

'Screw off,' he thought bitterly.