

Living Shadow 64

Chapter 64 Dead And Devoured

Marcus's glare was sharp, his anger palpable as he faced Damon taking notice of the blindfold over his eyes.

"Grey, you bastard. I see you still know how to run your mouth."

Damon scoffed, crossing his arms with a nonchalant air.

"And I see you still haven't grown out of that subservient attitude. Just so you know, your lord and master Ravenscroft doesn't actually give a damn about you."

Marcus's eyes narrowed dangerously, but before he could respond, Xander raised a hand, cutting through the tension.

"Ignore him."

Xander's voice carried authority, though his annoyance with Damon was evident. "What's so important that you had to come all the way here when class is about to begin?"

As Marcus hesitated, Xander stole a quick glance at Evangeline. The subtle action didn't go unnoticed, and Marcus's lips pressed into a thin line as he seemed to grasp the unspoken meaning. After a moment, he bit his lip before speaking, his voice strained.

"It's Lark. He's been confirmed dead."

The air grew heavy. Damon suppressed a smile, his face remaining unreadable, but the others immediately turned their attention to Marcus.

Xander, who had been the leader of the group Marcus was part of, frowned deeply.

"How?" he asked, his voice tight. "How did he die? He was only missing, wasn't he?"

Marcus's eyes were red, his voice trembling as he struggled to suppress his tears.

"He was missing... but it turns out he went into the woods. A monster managed to get past the academy's barrier. It attacked him and dragged him beyond the barrier..."

Evangeline's gaze was sharp as she looked at Marcus.

"Beyond the barrier? That's impossible. The barrier wouldn't allow a monster to pass."

Sylvia nodded, her calm voice carrying a note of concern.

"She's right. That barrier was designed to selectively allow only members of the goddess races to pass. Demons and monsters can't cross it. And if they did, the wards would've triggered an alarm across the academy."

Leona, her eyes flickering with unease, leaned forward.

"What kind of monster could it have been?"

Marcus's voice cracked as he shook his head.

"We... don't know. The investigation only found deep claw marks and his pager. Nothing else..."

Damon's expression remained neutral, but his thoughts were as sharp as a blade.

'Hmph, so they've finally decided to stop hiding Lark's death. I wonder what story the academy fed his family... No matter. As long as no one finds out I killed him, I should be safe.'

Xander's calm demeanor was betrayed by the clenching of his fists. Through his shadow perception, Damon could sense the faint tremble in Xander's hands.

'He's holding it in,' Damon mused. 'Should I act concerned? Or indifferent?'

Xander took a deep breath, his voice measured but tinged with sadness.

"I see. We should send our condolences to his family. As for the monster... I'm sure the academy will hunt it down."

Damon frowned slightly at Xander's words.

'Of course, the academy won't sit idle. They still have their pride to uphold. Poor monsters beyond the barrier will be paying the price for this.'

Marcus sniffed, wiping at his eyes before speaking again, his voice breaking.

"And... it's Isaac. He's gone missing too."

Xander's eyes widened in shock.

"What?"

He shot to his feet, his chair scraping loudly against the floor.

"What do you mean he's gone missing?"

Damon's heart thudded for a brief moment, but his [Remorseless] skill activated instantly, dulling his emotions and clearing his mind.

'Hmm, did they uncover the misleading evidence I planted to frame Tobias Margan after I killed Isaac?'

Marcus's fists were trembling with suppressed frustration.

"I just don't know... This morning, Isaac was gone from his dorm room. It was taken over almost immediately by the student council president, Lilith Astranova. The thing is, no one saw him leave, and the last person with him was Tobias..."

Damon furrowed his brow as though in thought, but his mind churned with calculations.

'Lilith Astranova. Of course, she's onto me. Why else would she act so decisively? She's clearly trying to pounce on this situation. That's fine. I left plenty of evidence to ensure Isaac's death points to Tobias. The tear-soaked pillow I used to suffocate him should be damning enough.'

Sylvia's sharp gray eyes narrowed as she crossed her arms.

"What exactly are you implying?"

Marcus held his head in his hands, the stress clearly taking a toll on him.

"I don't know. It's just... the student council detained Tobias for questioning, and after that, the academy's professors got involved. Now he's under house arrest in his dorm room."

Marcus's fear was palpable, but Xander shook his head, his expression skeptical.

"That doesn't make sense. If he was the last person to see Isaac, questioning him is understandable. But house arrest? That's extreme."

Evangeline nodded, her voice tinged with worry.

"You're right. Unless... the academy suspects him of more than just knowing something. They must think he's involved."

Leona's gaze shifted to Damon, her expression questioning.

"Why would they think he's a suspect, Damon?"

Damon sighed dramatically, feigning exasperation.

'This stupid girl. I was trying to stay out of this.'

Turning to her, he responded calmly.

"It's because they suspect him, or they've found incriminating evidence. They're most likely trying to get a confession out of him."

Marcus's glare was fiery as he snapped, "Shut up! Tobias would never hurt Isaac!"

Damon raised a brow, his tone sharp.

"Right. And you all wouldn't try to kill someone and leave their body in a ravine, would you?"

The reminder of their past actions silenced Marcus. His lips pressed into a thin line, his rage subdued by guilt.

Xander's eyes darted between Marcus and Damon before he asked,

"Do they have any evidence against him?"

Marcus hesitated, his fists clenched as he lowered his head.

"They... They found Isaac's pager with a transaction receipt. It showed that he transferred all his money to Tobias's account. The room also had signs of a struggle. Two cups were found—one with traces of poison. The investigators believe Tobias drugged him... but his body was never found."

Damon suppressed the urge to grin, his inner thoughts cold and calculated.

'Good thing I tampered with more than just the pager. Adding traces of the paralyzing agent to the cup was a stroke of genius.'

Leona's eyes narrowed as she studied Damon.

"So, Tobias killed his friend?"

Damon shrugged nonchalantly.

"Who knows? That's for the investigation to decide."

Marcus's glare returned, tears glistening in his eyes.

"He didn't kill him! I can vouch for Tobias!"

Damon tilted his head slightly, a thin smile forming on his lips.

"But you weren't there, were you?"

Xander's fury broke through his usual calm demeanor.

"Shut up, commoner! We don't need your bitter remarks right now!"

Sylvia chimed in, her voice firm yet gentle.

"At least try to be sensitive, Damon."

The raven perched nearby suddenly cawed.

"Caw! Evil! Evil!"

Damon sighed, dismissing the bird's cry with a wave of his hand.

"Well, his body hasn't been found. Maybe he's still alive."

Sylvia's expression softened, and she nodded.

"That's the most thoughtful thing I've heard you say today."

Evangeline followed with a hopeful tone.

"Yes. It's possible he's still alive."

Xander nodded, his determination to remain optimistic evident.

Damon, however, sneered internally.

'Too bad. Isaac is dead and devoured. They won't even find a body. And this is just the beginning.'

The classroom murmurs grew quieter, and Damon's senses sharpened. Expanding his shadow perception, he swept the room and noted the faint silhouette of the professor's shadow as he entered.

The professor, an elderly man with a kind smile, clapped his hands to gather their attention.

"Let us begin. Take your seats, everyone."

Marcus reluctantly moved to a seat near Xander, his movements slow and heavy.

Damon sighed as he looked down at his shadow.

'Now... who do I take out next?'