

Living Shadow 71

Chapter 71 Scum With No Honor

From the glass observation deck, the class watched intently as Damon and Xander faced off. At first, they were stunned that Damon could even dodge the light magic attacks from the magic artillery.

"Why is he running around like that?" one student muttered.

"Isn't it obvious? He can't even use the weakest barrier spells," another sneered.

"Right, with a mana pool of only 30, he can't cast anything substantial," someone else chimed in.

"With all that running around, he'll tire himself out soon enough," added another voice, the tone dripping with disdain.

"I'm surprised he can dodge at all while wearing a blindfold," one student remarked, the skepticism in their voice clear.

The group continued their offhanded comments, mocking Damon's apparent disadvantage, until suddenly, Damon shifted his strategy.

He sprinted toward Xander, who stood protected by two layers of gravity barriers.

"What is he doing now?" someone asked, leaning closer to the glass.

To their collective surprise, Damon darted behind Xander, using the other boy as a shield. As the beams of light from the magic artillery increased in both frequency and intensity, Damon remained in Xander's shadow, positioning himself so that Xander had no choice but to absorb the attacks from one side.

Xander moved, trying to evade the barrage, but Damon matched his movements step for step, ensuring he stayed protected.

"That has to be cheating! He's blatantly taking advantage of Xander!" one student exclaimed.

"That scum has no honor," another hissed.

"Yeah, what a coward," someone else echoed, their disgust evident.

Sylvia, standing apart from the others, gently stroked the beak of the raven perched on her shoulder. Her piercing gaze remained fixed on the scene below.

"That's not cheating," she said, her voice calm but firm.

"He's still acting within the rules. As long as he doesn't attack Xander with his attribute or fists, everything is fair game."

The murmurs continued, but Evangeline, standing nearby, appeared more thoughtful. She rested her chin on her hand, watching Damon closely.

"I'm more impressed he can dodge light magic at all," she said softly.

"But he seems slower now. Back when he fought me, he was faster, and his skills seemed sharper."

Leona, her golden eyes locked on Damon, nodded in agreement.

"Yeah, he was stronger when he fought me too. But... hmm, it feels like he's holding back this time."

Evangeline nodded.

"Yes, it does seem that way. I imagine he doesn't want to show his full power."

Sylvia narrowed her eyes as she continued to study Damon.

'Is there a reason why he can't fight at full power? Is he holding back deliberately, or are there conditions to his strength?'

There was something about Damon Grey that unsettled her. His shadow, darker and deeper than any she had seen before, seemed almost alive, shrouding him in an aura of mystery.

She glanced at the raven perched on her shoulder, its beady eyes reflecting her curiosity.

'Damon Grey... who are you really?'

Inside the arena, Damon's forehead glistened with beads of sweat. The space around him was alive with movement, tens of small beams of light magic shooting at unpredictable angles.

'I need to boost my stats with [5x], but which one?' Damon's thoughts raced.

'Endurance will let me last longer... speed will let me move faster... agility will give me better maneuverability...'

As he deliberated, he felt the subtle shift in the arena through his [Shadow Perception]. The ground and walls were beginning to transform, their surfaces becoming smooth and reflective like mirrors.

'Ah, this isn't good...' His jaw tightened.

'The light will start bouncing off the walls—it'll be harder to dodge.'

Damon huffed a breath, determination etched on his face. At least he wasn't the only one tiring.

Xander Ravenscroft, his opponent, was drenched in sweat, his face twisted in irritation. He spun and shifted the two gravity barriers surrounding him, using them to block the relentless light attacks.

Damon's lips curled into a cold smile.

"Looks like you're having a hard time, lover boy. Your crush is about to watch you get humiliated."

Xander's eyes narrowed, his face a visage of barely contained rage.

"Damn you, commoner! Have you never fought a battle with honor?"

Damon sneered, his voice dripping with disdain.

"Honor doesn't belong on the battlefield. To me, life is war. And in war, I don't need honor."

Xander growled and rolled across the ground, using one of his barriers as a springboard. He launched himself into the air, raising his sword to deflect a beam of light. The attack redirected, bouncing off the mirror-like surface of the ground and shooting toward Damon.

Reacting instantly, Damon swung one of the glass-like daggers he carried, redirecting the light beam into another direction. The arena seemed alive, chaotic with the ricocheting beams of magic.

The light artillery suddenly stopped, leaving an eerie silence. Both combatants stood panting, adrenaline coursing through their veins.

A static crackle filled the air as the professor's voice echoed through the arena.

"The first phase has ended. The next phase is more dangerous. The attacks will be more lethal. You are free to forfeit now—death is a very real possibility."

Damon didn't react. Any unnecessary emotions were suppressed by his [Remorseless] skill, leaving his mind calm, analytical, and focused entirely on the fight. Even so, deep within, he acknowledged the danger.

'The [5x] skill only multiplies what I have left. If I exhaust myself now, there won't be anything to multiply.'

He checked his stats, his mind calculating his next move:

[HP: 50/50]

[Mana: 90/90]

[Strength: 9]

[Agility: 17] +5

[Speed: 35] +10

[Endurance: 10]

[Class: —]

[Shadow: 180]

[Shadow Hunger Levels: 3%]

[Shadow Level: 2]

[Condition: Shadow is Full]

[Attributes: Umbra]

[Skills:]

[5x] [Remorseless] [Shadow Perception]

[Locked]

He used his 15 attribute points, allocating ten to speed and five to agility. It pained him not to boost mana, but he knew his [5x] skill could compensate in a pinch. Maybe he could even buy mana crystals and feed them to his shadow later.

Power coursed through his body as his joints felt nimbler, his movements lighter. The sensation was warm, invigorating.

'This will do for now,' he thought.

Damon had already decided which stat to amplify with [5x]. That would be his trump card.

Professor Kael gave them a minute to catch their breath. Despite his cold demeanor, a flicker of worry crossed his face.

"Are you two ready?" the professor asked.

Xander raised his sword, summoning seven barriers that floated protectively around him. His movements were steady, his expression determined.

Damon, blindfolded but seeing through his shadows, furrowed his brows.

'This guy's good. No, he's amazing. To have the mana and skill to create so many barriers...'

His teeth clenched.

'I can't lose to someone like him. Never.'

Damon raised his sword to signal he was ready.

Xander scoffed. "Not going to create any barriers?"

Damon shook his head. He didn't know how to create barriers, and even if he did, he wouldn't need them.

"Against you, I don't need them," he replied coldly.

Before Xander could respond, a large beam of light shot out from the walls. It was faster than any previous attack, moving so quickly that Damon barely twisted his waist in time to dodge. The beam ricocheted off the walls, shattering one of Xander's barriers instantly.

Xander paled, his confidence shaken.

But he wasn't the only one stunned. Despite his calm demeanor, Damon's mind reeled.

'That could've killed me.'