

Living Shadow 95

Chapter 95 The Far Seeing Eye

Damon stealthily perused the document while Lilith appeared engrossed in her work. His eyes scanned the pages carefully, and he had to consciously suppress the urge to gasp as the contents unraveled before him.

The plan for the mid-semester evaluation was unsettling in its simplicity.

The academy intended to expand the barrier that protected its grounds, pushing it deeper into the forest. This expansion would temporarily drive the monsters in that area further into the Evil Forest, creating a buffer zone.

As he read further, the document listed the catalog of monsters inhabiting the outskirts of the Evil Forest. Damon's chest tightened with every name: Wendigos, great spiders, dire wolves, iron honey badgers, and other murderous creatures he wouldn't dare encounter.

'Thank the goddess they aren't making first-years fight these things,' he thought grimly. 'Even with a full party, we'd die in droves.'

It became glaringly clear why this area was infamously called the Evil Forest.

Since the monsters would be displaced temporarily, the evaluation itself wouldn't involve direct combat with them. Instead, Damon focused on the details. The first years were tasked with gathering a limited number of points scattered throughout the designated zone.

However, the twist was cruel—points could be stolen by other students within the time limit.

'It's going to be bloody,' Damon concluded, his mind already calculating how this evaluation would devolve into chaos.

He scanned for any additional details. The draft, while comprehensive, was still pending approval. A few signatures, including the headmaster's, were missing, suggesting there was room for revisions.

Once he memorized the important parts, Damon carefully closed the document and resumed organizing the files, his expression neutral despite the storm in his mind.

His thoughts turned toward strategy. If the evaluation zone was accessible before the barrier expansion, he could scout it to gain an edge. The monsters might be driven out, but the flora itself could still pose significant risks.

Pulling out his notepad, Damon began scribbling ideas, tearing off pieces to keep in his pocket. Half an hour passed before he finished organizing the documents. With time on his side, he decided to work on a backup plan—one that involved misdirection.

He started writing a letter in Marcus's handwriting, crafting it carefully. If executed correctly, it could serve as a distraction or shift focus away from him.

Lilith, meanwhile, leaned on her desk, her left hand covering her eyes. Her posture was uncharacteristic of the ever-composed student council president.

Damon's gaze lingered on her. 'She's tired... probably forgot I was here,' he speculated.

But then, something didn't sit right. Why cover her left eye?

His unease deepened as he glanced at the notepad holding his forged message, which he intended to "accidentally" let fall from his pocket for her to discover.

Shifting his focus, Damon extended his Shadow Perception to probe the room. At first, he found nothing, the shadows undisturbed. Yet, the nagging feeling persisted.

He scanned again, this time narrowing his focus to the wall beside him.

And there it was.

A green eye stared through an invisible portal, its gaze fixed on him.

Damon suppressed the urge to react, keeping his face impassive while his mind worked frantically.

Keeping his cool, Damon leaned slightly back in his chair, his mind racing.

'She created a portal in her palm and was watching through it the entire time.'

The thought sent a chill down his spine. He'd encountered unconventional magic users before, but this? This was on another level.

'What a convoluted spell... Who even thinks of using magic like this?'

For a brief moment, Damon fought the overwhelming urge to lock eyes with the green orb peering through the invisible portal. But he resisted, keeping his expression calm, his hands busy with the notepad.

'She thinks she's clever, but she just made things easier for me.'

There was no longer a need to stage the bait by letting her "discover" it on her own. If Lilith had already spied on his notepad, all he had to do was play along and let her believe she had the upper hand.

'She must've seen what I wrote.'

Damon shifted his strategy. Mimicking Marcus's handwriting, he penned a forged letter, but this one wasn't addressed to Tobias. Instead, it appeared to be from the deceased Isaac, targeting another member of Marcus's group, Rein Ambridge. The letter outlined a clandestine meeting at a secluded location, complete with a specific date and time.

The brilliance of his plan lay in its simplicity—he wasn't planning to send the letter or act on it. It was bait, carefully designed for Lilith to intercept. And now, knowing she'd peeked prematurely, Damon could double down on the ruse.

Glancing at her briefly, Damon tore the page from his notepad, folding the pieces and slipping them into his pocket. Rising from his chair, he addressed her.

"Preside—uh, I mean, Lilith... I'm done here. Is there anything else, or may I leave? I've already missed most of my classes."

Lilith raised her head, offering a thin smile that hinted at a smug satisfaction.

"Of course. Why not? I'll call for you if I need anything."

Damon nodded politely, Croft flying onto his shoulder as he turned toward the door. Just as his hand reached the handle, Lilith's voice stopped him.

"You shouldn't keep trash in your pocket. Why don't you throw it away?"

Her words were casual, but her gaze was sharp as she gestured toward a small bin by the door, already half-filled with crumpled papers.

Damon froze, pretending to be nervous, a bead of sweat rolling down his temple.

'She must think she's got me.'

He swallowed hard, shaking his head with a feigned stammer.

"Yes... Presid—I mean, Lilith, sure. I'll throw it out when I leave."

Lilith tilted her head, her smile deepening. "Why not throw it here?"

Biting his lip, Damon hesitated. "I just didn't want to fill your bin with my trash..."

"It's all the same to me. Throw it away now."

Her stern tone left no room for negotiation, and Damon felt the pressure mounting.

"Yes, ma'am."

He stepped toward the bin, turning his back to her. Reaching into his pocket, he produced the torn pieces of paper. But instead of throwing them away, he slyly ripped a fresh page from his notepad, tearing it noisily before tossing it into the bin. Meanwhile, he clenched the original bait tightly in his hand.

Lilith, of course, was watching. From behind her desk and through the portal-eye perched in the ceiling, she observed his every move.

She smiled faintly, her expression triumphant. 'He thinks he's clever, but I've already seen the contents.'

Damon didn't linger. As soon as the paper hit the bin, he exited the office, briskly navigating past the bustling student council officers and into the hallway.

A sly grin crept onto his face.

'She thinks she's won. But once again, she's fallen for my trap. Hats off to Shadow Perception—always one step ahead.'

'I win this round Lilith and to think I got you with another bait and switch.'