

Living Shadow 97

Chapter 97 Laundry Pick-up

The War Halls, as usual, stood pristine—a testament to the wealth and power of its inhabitants. Lavish decor adorned every corner, the kind of luxury only afforded to the best and wealthiest students. These halls were not merely a place to reside; they symbolized the prestige and influence of their occupants.

The students of the War Halls were both powerful and influential, and such individuals required someone capable of managing their whims and excesses. That's where the Head Maid came in. She didn't just oversee the upkeep of the dormitory; she maintained order with an iron will. Even the most arrogant nobility dared not defy her authority.

"Perhaps because she's a noble herself," Damon thought, his lips curling into a small smirk.

The Head Maid ensured that everyone in the War Halls received equal treatment. Despite his status as a commoner, Damon had always been treated no differently than the rest. Her fairness was undeniable—under her care, every student was equal, regardless of birth.

And that was precisely why Damon had never crossed her. She wasn't someone you trifled with lightly.

"Nothing happens in the War Halls without her knowing," he mused, recalling the rumors whispered among the students.

Today, however, he planned to test that theory.

Crossing the grand double doors, Damon entered the War Halls, his steps light yet deliberate. The grand entrance led to a sprawling staircase that curved upward in a show of opulence. The halls were eerily quiet, save for the distant shuffle of maids. Their presence didn't concern him. His target was someone else entirely.

Ascending the stairs to the second floor, Damon navigated the corridors with precision, his shadow perception expanding and contracting as he moved. The bright, clean halls were lined with extravagant decorations—paintings, vases, and sculptures that probably cost more than an average person's annual income. He briefly considered how much he could make selling one of these treasures on the black market but dismissed the idea.

"Too much trouble."

Stopping in front of a door, he spread his shadow perception across the area, scanning for any signs of movement. The coast was clear. The door itself, however, posed a problem.

Doors in the War Halls were state-of-the-art, outfitted with magical security measures imported from the Magic Continent. They required an authorized fingerprint, a pager, a personal key, or one of the maids' key cards to unlock.

He'd considered stealing a key card from a maid but decided against it. The cards left records, and their absence would raise alarms.

"That's just gonna draw in the Head Maid," he muttered.

That left him with one other option. Dangerous? Yes. But necessary.

Damon made his way up to the next floor and stopped in front of another door. Unlike Marcus's, this one opened without resistance.

After all, it was his own room.

Damon approached the window of his room and unlatched it quietly, taking in the cool air of the evening. He spread his shadow perception across the surroundings, carefully checking for any signs of movement. The outside remained silent; no maids, no Head Maid, and no lingering students to interrupt his plan.

"Croft, stay here," he commanded softly.

The raven on his shoulder fluttered to his pillow, tilting its head as if it understood.

Damon reached for the mechanism strapped to his wrist: the omnidirectional gear. He secured it to the window frame and released the thin wires, lowering himself silently to the floor below. The sun's position worked in his favor, casting the area in deep shadows.

Luck was on his side today. Marcus's room was directly beneath his.

The window was locked, but for someone with a history like Damon's—a former street rat skilled in theft—it was a minor inconvenience. Pulling out his dagger, he slipped the blade between the frame and lock, coaxing it open with practiced ease.

The window slid soundlessly, and Damon stepped into the room, pulling the omnidirectional gear back to his wrist with a sharp zip.

"Damn, this thing works like a charm," he muttered, smirking.

Closing the window behind him, Damon moved to the bed. He wasn't here to steal; he had other plans. The maids had done an immaculate job, as always—the bed was perfectly made, not a crease in sight. Damon nodded in approval before glancing at his shadow.

"Keep an eye out," he murmured.

His fingers prodded the mattress and pillow, searching for the spot where Marcus most often laid his head. Once he found it, Damon lifted the luxurious king-sized bed with deliberate care. Reaching into his jacket, he retrieved a handful of hollow arrows.

Removing the shells that covered the cursed ore tips, he carefully placed them along the bed frame in a precise, orderly manner. The cursed ore was dangerous; prolonged exposure could wreak havoc on Marcus's mana flow and mental state. But Damon didn't care. This was payback.

After arranging the arrows, he retrieved the shells, slipping them back into his jacket. Lowering the mattress, he took his time smoothing it out to look as undisturbed as before.

Just as he was about to finish, his shadow darted toward him, alerting him to approaching danger.

"Dammit," he cursed under his breath, clicking his tongue.

A maid was heading straight for the room, and her steps had already reached the door.

With no time to spare, Damon slid under the bed, pressing himself flat against the floor.

The door creaked open, and a young blonde maid stepped inside, carrying an empty basket marked with a number.

'Laundry pick-up,' Damon realized grimly.

His heart sank as he remembered the hollow arrows still nestled in the bed frame. The cursed ore's subtly influence gnawing at his thoughts, amplifying his panic. He felt like a fool for putting himself in such a precarious position.

The maid moved toward the bed.

"Hmm. Something is wrong..."

Damon's breath caught in his throat. He could see her polished black shoes and the hem of her pristine white apron.

"This bed hasn't been made properly," she muttered. "Was I careless?"

Damon's blood ran cold as she adjusted the bedding. The cursed arrows were just inches above him, separated only by a thin piece of wood. The effects weren't strong because it usually took time...he did not want to be here any longer than he had to.

The maid sighed contentedly. "There, much better."

She turned away and disappeared into the bathroom, the sound of the door clicking shut echoing in the room. Damon didn't waste a second. He rolled out from under the bed, sweat dripping down his forehead, and bolted for the door.

Opening it gently, he slipped out, taking care not to make a sound. Once outside, he walked briskly down the hallway, his senses focused on the maid's presence behind him.

Just as he rounded a corner, he collided with something soft, the impact sending him sprawling to the floor.

"Ouch, what the hell—" Damon's words trailed off as he looked up, his face paling instantly.

'Head maid Matilda'