

ShadowBound 105

Chapter 105: Something Might Happen Soon

After soaking in the warm water for a few minutes, Mystica rose from her bath with an air of regal elegance. The soft glow of the chamber lights reflected off the droplets of water sliding down her smooth skin as she stepped out, her movements slow and deliberate.

Without hesitation, she walked to retrieve her robe, her confidence radiating as she made no effort to shield herself.

"So, I assume you boys came here for information, didn't you?" Mystica said, her tone playful yet knowing, as she picked up her robe and began to drape it over her shoulders.

Galen and Magnus, who had comfortably settled themselves in her chamber, looked up lazily. Galen sat poised in a high-backed chair, sipping wine from a crystal glass, his eyes flickering toward Mystica without a hint of embarrassment.

Meanwhile, Magnus sprawled across a plush couch, one arm slung over the side as he swirled his drink lazily.

"Yes," Galen replied, his tone calm but pointed. "Although I should mention I've been waiting for this information for over a week."

"And I already told you everything, didn't I?" Magnus cut in, his voice carrying a hint of mockery.

"By 'everything,' you mean giving me a vague recount of how you dealt with the Syncs, leaving out any substantial details," Galen said, his voice sharp with irritation.

Magnus grinned lazily, his eyes gleaming with mischief. "What can I say? Gotta keep the narrative exciting. Besides, why spoil all the best parts with boring specifics?"

Mystica chuckled softly as she tied her robe loosely around her waist, her playful tone drawing their attention. "Come now, boys. The goddess has graced you with her presence after a luxurious bath, and you can't even spare her a glance? How rude."

Her words carried a teasing lilt as she walked toward a polished counter, picking up an ornate bottle of wine. She poured herself a glass, the rich liquid swirling as it caught the dim light of the room. She sipped slowly, savoring the taste, before turning and walking to a nearby chair.

"As for your inquiry, Galen," Mystica began, lowering herself gracefully into the seat. She crossed her legs, the slit of her robe revealing just enough to leave an impression, while the top of the fabric fell open slightly, hinting at the curve of her breast. She leaned back, the picture of effortless allure, as she continued.

"I looked into the matter you asked about, and there are some inconsistencies in the details. Things that don't quite add up," she said, swirling her wine again before taking another measured sip.

Magnus raised an eyebrow, sitting up slightly. "Oh? Don't tell me there's a twist. I love a good twist."

Galen ignored Magnus, his eyes narrowing slightly as he focused on Mystica. "What kind of inconsistencies?"

Mystica's lips curled into a sly smile. "Patience, darling. Let's not rush things. After all, wouldn't it be more fun to savor the mystery?"

"Just get to the point. I don't have all night," Galen said, setting his glass of wine down with a light clink. His tone carried the weight of his usual impatience.

"Ah, always in a hurry, aren't you, mister no-time-to-waste?" Mystica replied, her smirk widening. She leaned forward slightly, her eyes glinting with mischief. "Fine, let's begin."

She swirled the wine in her glass thoughtfully before continuing. "Magnus mentioned his mission involved his team and the Tempest Kingdom knights battling against Advanced Horrors and Syncs—an unusual combination.

"Advanced Horrors are mindless brutes driven by instinct, while Syncs are cunning Gaia Demons known for their intelligence and pride. It's rare for them to collaborate. Even more unusual was the fact that the Syncs were noticeably weaker than they should've been, while the Advanced Horrors appeared unnaturally strong."

"So, what are you saying?" Galen asked, his gaze steady as he leaned forward slightly.

Mystica's tone shifted, taking on a more serious edge. "I'm saying the attack wasn't random. It felt like a calculated distraction—something meant to draw attention while something larger was set in motion elsewhere.

"Syncs don't engage in battles unless there's something to gain, and their strength fluctuating like that suggests manipulation. Syncs evolve by feeding on myst, and if they were weaker, it's possible they recently transferred their myst to empower those Horrors."

Magnus, who had been lounging, suddenly sat up straighter. "Now that you mention it, those Syncs were oddly passive during the fight. They weren't as aggressive as Syncs usually are. I thought it was just luck, but the Advanced Horrors were definitely stronger than usual. That's what gave us trouble."

"Exactly," Mystica confirmed with a nod. "The Syncs you fought may have been intentionally weakened. If they were transferring myst to empower the Horrors, it could've been to mask their true numbers or capabilities. A diversion. And while you were distracted with the battle, something else was likely happening."

Galen frowned, his fingers tapping lightly on the armrest of his chair. "A diversion for what? What's their endgame?"

Mystica took a slow sip of her wine before answering. "That's where things get troubling. Over the past three weeks, there have been over 100 reports of missing people in Gale city(Zone 8) and Grandeur City(Zone 12). No traces of myst, no signs of struggle—just people vanishing into thin air. The timing lines up too perfectly to be a coincidence. Whatever's happening, these disappearances might be connected to your mission."

Magnus rubbed the back of his neck, his brow furrowed. "If that's true, then someone's orchestrating this whole thing. Syncs don't work together like this unless there's a leader—a stronger force pulling the strings."

"Exactly," Mystica said, leaning back in her chair with a smirk. "Syncs aren't the top of the demon hierarchy. If there's a leader, they could be using these Syncs and Horrors to sow chaos or gather resources—like the people disappearing across the city."

"And if they're taking people," Galen interjected, his voice colder now, "it's for a reason. Rituals. Sacrifices. Food. There's no shortage of horrifying possibilities."

Mystica nodded gravely. "Indeed. And considering how meticulously they've covered their tracks, we're dealing with someone—or something—that knows exactly what it's doing. No ordinary Sync could pull this off. This is higher-level planning."

Galen stood up from his chair, his expression unreadable. "That's all I need to know for now. I'll leave the rest to you. Keep digging. I want to know who's behind this and what their next move is."

"Leaving already?" Mystica teased, her playful tone returning. "No fun tonight? Not even a little?"

"You've given me what I needed. There's no reason for me to stay," Galen replied flatly, his deadpan delivery cutting through her flirtation.

Magnus chuckled as he finished his wine. "You could at least try to pretend to enjoy yourself, Gal. She does go out of her way to spice things up."

Galen shot Magnus an animated cold look. "If you're so interested, why don't you stay and indulge her? Fulfill her 'desires' for the night."

Magnus stretched dramatically as he got up from the couch. "Tempting, but I'm wiped. I need a good nap, not... whatever this is."

Mystica scoffed, crossing her arms as she leaned back in her chair. "You two are absolutely no fun. Fine, go. I need some quality sleep anyway."

Without another word, Galen nodded and strode toward the door, Magnus following with a lazy grin. As they left, Mystica swirled the last of her wine, her smirk returning as she murmured to herself, "I do wish I could have some fun before sleeping though."

Meanwhile, Liam had just stepped out of the shower, the steam still clinging faintly to his skin as he dried off and settled into the chair at his desk.

Read new adventures at empire

Before him lay the book Mystica had given him earlier, its cover hinting at the knowledge contained within. He leaned back, staring at it for a moment, weighing his options.

'Should I just read through tonight and start practicing tomorrow?' he thought, running a hand through his damp hair. 'I mean, it's not like I'm exhausted.'

Deciding to give it a shot, Liam gently opened the book, flipping through the initial pages. The handwriting varied—some scrawled in hurried script, others written with a practiced elegance—indicating it was a compilation of notes from various mages.

He turned a few more pages before stopping at the title that caught his attention: Shadow Solidification—the very spell Mystica had recommended.

'So she already knew what was in this book,' Liam mused, his brow furrowing slightly. 'She did say it's simple to learn, but effective once mastered. Guess there's a reason she suggested starting here.'

Intrigued, he began reading the description. The spell revolved around using myst to solidify one's shadow into tangible forms.

From tools to weapons, or even temporary shields, the possibilities depended entirely on the caster's creativity and control.

A smirk tugged at Liam's lips. "This is... more interesting than I expected," he murmured to himself, his eyes glinting with newfound enthusiasm. "And it's all about imagination, huh? I think I can work with that."

The book delved deeper, emphasizing the importance of visualization. Every detail had to be clear in the caster's mind—texture, structure.

A single lapse in focus could destabilize the shadow. The complexity of the constructs grew with practice, but even the simplest attempts carried significant utility.

Liam leaned back in his chair, running a thumb thoughtfully over the page. The idea of turning his shadow into a versatile tool wasn't just practical—it was a skill that could complement his existing techniques perfectly.

"Looks like I'll be practicing tonight after all."