

ShadowBound 106

Chapter 106: Self Tutoring: Day One

Liam placed the book back on the desk and stood up, stretching his arms. The quiet of the night wrapped around him, the only sounds being the soft rustling of the curtains and the faint hum of myst in the air.

He positioned himself in the center of the room, allowing the flickering candlelight to cast a clear shadow on the wooden floor.

Focus on the basics. One step at a time.

He knelt slightly, bringing his hands together in a meditative stance, then closed his eyes. Drawing upon his myst, Liam visualized it flowing through his body, a steady current spreading to his fingertips and then pouring downward into the shadow cast by his form.

'Solidify... just like shaping clay,' he thought.

Your next chapter is on empire

The first attempt was faint—a mere ripple in his shadow. The black outline quivered briefly but dissipated before it could take any tangible form.

Liam frowned, his brow furrowing. "Alright, that was weak. Let's try again."

This time, he concentrated harder, imagining his shadow thickening, growing denser, becoming something real. He visualized the texture of it—smooth yet firm, like polished obsidian. The flicker returned, stronger this time, and the edges of his shadow began to shift unnaturally.

A grin crept across Liam's face as the shadow started to rise, just slightly, like liquid ink lifting off the ground. But then, the connection wavered, and the shadow collapsed back into its natural state.

"Close," Liam muttered, his fingers twitching. "I need more control."

He glanced at the book, flipping back to a section that emphasized visualization. It described a mental exercise: imagine an object you use daily, something familiar and detailed, and then replicate it using your shadow.

Liam smirked. "Alright, let's start simple."

He returned to his stance, this time picturing one of his daggers. Its weight, the feel of its hilt in his hand, the faint gleam of its edge. He poured this mental image into his myst, letting it seep into the shadow at his feet.

The darkness began to rise again, coalescing into a long, narrow shape. Slowly, the form took on definition, and before long, the outline of a dagger emerged. It wasn't perfect—the edges were jagged, and the surface shimmered unnaturally—but it was there.

Liam crouched, reaching out. His hand closed around the shadowy weapon, and to his astonishment, it felt solid. Cool, weightless, but unmistakably real.

A surge of satisfaction coursed through him as he held the shadow-dagger aloft, studying it in the flickering candlelight. "Not bad for a first try," he said with a grin.

But the moment was short-lived. The dagger dissolved back into shadows, the myst dispersing like smoke. Liam staggered slightly, the strain catching him off guard.

'So this takes a toll on stamina, huh?' He made a mental note. The more complex the shape, the more energy it's going to take.

He wiped a bead of sweat from his brow, glancing back at the book. "Alright, let's go again. This time, smoother and more stable."

For the rest of the night, the room was alive with flickering shadows and the soft hum of myst as Liam practiced, each attempt bringing him closer to mastering Shadow Solidification.

By the time the first rays of dawn filtered through the window, he stood amidst a collection of crude, shadowy constructs—a dagger, a small shield, and even a vague outline of a hand.

Exhausted but exhilarated, Liam leaned back against the wall, his chest rising and falling as he caught his breath.

"This... might just be better than I expected," he muttered, a tired but satisfied smile tugging at his lips.

He glanced at the faint remnants of his shadow constructs, now dissolving back into formless darkness. His mind, however, was still buzzing with possibilities.

'This spell burns through myst like wildfire,' he thought, his expression turning contemplative.

'But thanks to that Core Expansion training Mystica had me endure, I still have enough reserves to keep going. Still, if I've got anything important to handle today, I can't afford to run myself dry. Better to recharge now.'

Pushing himself off the wall, Liam dismissed the lingering solidified shadows with a flick of his hand. They unraveled into wisps of black energy before vanishing entirely.

He moved to the center of the room, settling himself on the cool floor. Crossing his legs, he closed his eyes, his breathing steadying as he prepared to perform Myst Recovery.

The day had begun smoothly. All four class sessions were complete, leaving the students with a break for lunch before the instructor-led training later in the day.

Dylan, ever the social one, had managed to convince Asher and Ariana to join him for lunch. His attempt to rope Liam into the plan, however, had fallen flat. Liam declined with little fanfare, his mind already elsewhere.

Dylan wisely chose not to bother Sheila, knowing she was still in her "reconstruction" state and likely in no mood for company.

As the trio headed off to the bustling dining hall, Liam made his way toward the library instead.

The moment he stepped inside, the air shifted to one of quiet focus. Students scattered throughout the room were engrossed in their studies, their whispers blending into the soft rustle of turning pages. Liam didn't linger to observe them. His purpose was clear as he navigated through the rows of towering bookshelves.

He moved with calm efficiency, weaving through the aisles until he arrived at a secluded spot—an open space with a long wooden table surrounded by chairs.

It was an unassuming corner of the library, but its remoteness and near-constant silence made it a perfect retreat. Few students ever ventured this far, making it ideal for his needs.

Sliding a chair back, Liam settled into the seat with ease. Without a word or motion, the black book from the previous night materialized on the table before him, its weightless arrival silent but deliberate.

Rather than lugging the book around in his arms like a traditional student, Liam had opted to store it using his Void Storage technique.

By anchoring the book within the shadowy folds of his myst, he ensured it was always within reach, free from the risk of misplacement or prying eyes.

Liam leaned back slightly in his chair, his fingers running over the edges of the dark tome as he mulled over Mystica's words from the previous day.

'Mystica mentioned she'd be busy with other matters for sometime,' he thought, his eyes narrowing. 'That likely means no lessons today. If that's the case, it's better to use this time wisely—read through this book, find anything useful, and practice when I can.'

He flipped open the cover, his gaze scanning the elegantly chaotic scrawl of the pages. His mind lingered on a thought that had crossed it earlier.

"Shadow Solidification," he mused. "If this spell lets me manipulate and solidify shadows, could it also apply to my shadow army? I mean, it's not far-fetched. Solid shadows, change form of beasts—it should work in theory. The spell's name alone hints at that possibility."

The idea brought a faint smirk to his lips as he traced a finger over the incantations etched onto the page. His shadow army had already proven invaluable in combat, but the ability to reshape or fortify them could give him a new edge.

"Well," he murmured under his breath, his voice barely audible over the library's ambient hush, "there's only one way to find out. But not here."

With that, he adjusted his focus, diving deeper into the intricate writings, his mind already envisioning the possibilities. The answers were buried somewhere within these pages, and Liam had every intention of unearthing them.

After nearly two hours of reading, Liam finally paused, his head spinning from the dense knowledge packed within the ancient tome. He leaned back in his chair, the wood creaking faintly under his weight as he tilted his head back to stare at the library's ornate ceiling.

"It's fascinating that Mystica entrusted me with this book," he mused, his thoughts drifting. "The techniques here—if I master even half of them, I might stand a chance against an Advanced Horror. But that last fight..."

He frowned, recalling the battle on the outskirts of Nystra. The creature had been relentless, its presence suffocating. "I barely survived. And honestly, I'm not even certain it was an Advanced Horror. That instinctive move—striking both the head and core simultaneously—was sheer desperation."

A soft sigh escaped his lips, breaking the stillness. "Doesn't matter now," he muttered under his breath. "If I keep learning and growing stronger here, there won't be a creature alive that can threaten me. It'll always be the other way around."

Liam brought his head down, his resolve renewed as his eyes returned to the book. But as he prepared to dive back into the cryptic writings, a faint shift in the air caught his attention.

A figure emerged from the aisle of books, her presence subtle. Sheila.

She froze for a moment upon seeing Liam seated at the very table she had planned to use. Her sapphire-blue eyes widened slightly in surprise.

Liam, on the other hand, barely reacted. His gaze flicked to her briefly, not saying a word, before returning to the tome in front of him.