

## ShadowBound 107

### Chapter 107: Self Tutoring: A Mini Talk

Sheila hesitated, her fingers tightening around the edges of the book she carried. For a fleeting moment, retreat seemed like the safer option, but she pushed the thought aside. With quiet resolve, she stepped forward, her footsteps faint but deliberate in the tranquil library.

Reaching the table, she gently pulled out the chair, five space from Liam, and took a seat, her movements careful, almost tentative.

Liam's eyes flicked toward her briefly before returning to his tome. 'She looks calmer, more composed—closer to her usual self. But that fierce determination in her eyes... it's still missing,' he noted inwardly, his expression unreadable as he immersed himself in the text.

The two sat in near silence, each absorbed in their respective books. Or so it seemed.

From time to time, Sheila would glance up, her lips parting as though she meant to speak, only to hesitate and look back down. Her fingers fidgeted with the edge of the book, and her gaze darted nervously. It was clear something weighed on her mind, but she struggled to voice it.

Finally, after several failed attempts, she found her voice.

"Uh... L-Liam." Her words came out soft, hesitant, her tone unsure.

Liam heard her but didn't respond, his focus seemingly fixed on the pages of his book.

Sheila's shoulders tensed slightly, but she didn't press him. Instead, she let out a quiet breath, lowering her gaze to her book.

"I understand if you don't want to talk to me," she began, her voice barely above a whisper. "After all, all I've ever done is belittle you for being a dark magic user. I was... childish, clinging to the prejudices I was raised with. I should have had the decency to try to understand you before judging."

Her words wavered, but she continued, her eyes fixed on the table. "And honestly, I didn't just start acting like a fool when I learned you were a dark magic user. It started from the very first time we met. I felt disrespected, and instead of handling it like an adult, I let my pride get in the way."

She hesitated for a moment, then pushed on, her voice tinged with guilt. "And what's worse... I tried to kill you. I told myself I was doing it for the greater good—that ending the last dark magic user was my duty. But deep down, I knew that wasn't true. I had no right to make that decision. It was selfish, reckless, and cruel."

Sheila paused, stealing a glance at Liam. He hadn't moved or reacted, his face still calm and unreadable as he continued reading.

"What I'm trying to say is..." Her voice faltered, breaking slightly. "I've had time to reflect, and I know I was wrong. I'm sorry, Liam. For everything."

The words hung in the air, heavy with sincerity. Sheila waited, hoping for some acknowledgment, some response. But none came.

She lowered her gaze again, her expression a mixture of resignation and regret. "I understand if you don't accept my apology. I don't deserve your forgiveness anyway."

With that, she fell silent, her fingers gripping the book tightly as she stared down at its pages, her heart weighed down by the unresolved tension between them.

After about twenty minutes of silence, Liam finally closed his book, the soft thud breaking the stillness between them. He leaned back in his seat, pushing it slightly away from the table but not standing.

A faint sigh escaped his lips as he slid his hands into his pockets, his posture casual yet deliberate. His gaze wandered upward, fixing on the library's ceiling as he spoke, his tone calm, almost indifferent.

"You know, Princess," he began, his words cutting through the quiet, "everything you just said... it doesn't mean a thing to me. Not in the way you think it would."

Sheila's eyes snapped to him, her fingers clutching the edges of her book. She hadn't expected him to respond, but now that he had, her chest tightened with unease. Still, she knew she had no right to feel hurt.

"If we're being honest," Liam continued, his gaze still fixed on the ceiling, "anyone in your position, with your upbringing, would've done the same thing. Maybe worse. It's not exactly shocking, especially if they had the same mindset you did back then."

The calmness in his voice wasn't dismissive—it was unsettlingly matter-of-fact. Sheila felt a lump form in her throat but forced herself to stay composed, listening carefully.

"I'm not saying that makes it okay," Liam added, finally lowering his gaze to meet hers. His red eyes were unreadable, but there was no anger in them, only a quiet clarity.

"But people act on what they know, what they've been taught. You were playing the part of a 'righteous knight,' doing what you thought was right. So why should I waste my time holding a grudge over something so predictable?"

Sheila opened her mouth to respond but found herself at a loss for words.

Liam leaned forward slightly, resting his elbows on the table. His voice softened, but his words carried a sharp edge, clear and unwavering.

"Look, you said your piece, and I get it. You've reflected, you feel guilty, and you want to make amends. That's fine. But if you think you and I are ever going to have some kind of friendship... sorry, Princess, but you're mistaken."

The weight of his words lingered in the air, cutting through the silence. Sheila lowered her gaze to her lap, her fingers gripping the edges of her book tightly. She wasn't angry. She couldn't be. Everything Liam said rang with an undeniable truth she had to accept.

"Forgiveness isn't something you just ask for and get," Liam continued, his tone steady, almost indifferent. "It's earned. Through actions, not words. So, if you're serious about making things right, don't tell me—show me."

Sheila nodded, her voice barely a whisper. "You're right. I have no right to expect anything from you. But... I'll try. Even if it takes time."

Liam exhaled softly and stood, his chair scraping faintly against the floor. With a flick of his hand, the dark tome on the table dissolved into shadow, disappearing into his Void Storage. His expression was unreadable as he looked down at her.

"I think you're misunderstanding me, Sheila," he said calmly, his words carrying a weight that stung more than anger ever could.

"Maybe I didn't say it clearly enough. You and I? We're not going to see eye to eye because, frankly, nothing you do really matters to me."

His words hit like a cold wind, leaving Sheila momentarily stunned. As he turned, his steps deliberate and unhurried, his voice carried over his shoulder, slicing through the stillness like a blade.

"Oh, and one more thing," he added, pausing briefly at the end of the aisle. "You dropping that whole 'holier-than-thou' act? It's made you look mature... and pathetic, all at once. Find a balance between the two, because right now, both disgust me."

With that, Liam disappeared behind the rows of towering bookshelves, his dark figure swallowed by the shadows.

Sheila remained seated, her grip on her book tightening as her gaze stayed fixed on where he had vanished. The sting of his words lingered, cutting deeper than she had anticipated. But despite the harshness, there was no anger in her heart—only resolve.

She closed her eyes for a moment, taking a deep breath. "I wonder what he means by that," she murmured to herself. "But one thing for sure is that I'll prove it to him how sincere my apology is. Even if it takes a lifetime."

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As Liam stepped out of the library, the cool air outside greeted him, but it did little to ease the storm brewing in his mind. He paused, glancing up at the sky as his thoughts churned.

"What the hell was that back there?" he muttered under his breath, his jaw tightening. His own words replayed in his head: "Balance your personalities."

"Why would I even say that? What does that even mean?" he thought, his irritation growing. "I tell her nothing she does matters, then I throw in advice? That's exactly the kind of relationship I don't want. Hypocritical, inconsistent. Damn it."

Lost in his internal debate, Liam's stomach let out a loud growl, interrupting his thoughts. He blinked, a faint sigh escaping his lips.

"Guess brain power really does drain energy," he mused, rubbing the back of his neck. Deciding food was the next priority, he turned on his heel and headed for the cafeteria.

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As Liam made his way to the cafeteria, three figures emerged from the shadows of the corridor, stepping into the light where he had just stood.

"Well, boys," Chris drawled, his voice laced with venom and amusement, "don't you think it's about time we teach that little shadow rat some manners? I've waited far too long for this, and honestly? My hands are itching to light someone up."

"Been a while since we had a little fun, huh? Let's see if he can take a hit as well as he talks big." Logan, who was standing at Chris's left, said with dark smirk. While Lucian remained silent on the other side of Chris.

Chris stepped forward, his grin widening as his gaze followed the path Liam had taken.

"Let's get going, shall we?" he said, his tone dripping with sadistic anticipation. "Time to remind him that no matter how far he thinks he's come, he's still beneath us."