

ShadowBound 109

Chapter 109: At The East Colosseum

The East Colosseum, a forgotten corner of the academy, lay ahead. Smaller than even Galen's personal training grounds, it was a space barely acknowledged by the students or staff.

The authorities didn't seem to care about it, making it an ideal spot for anything off the radar. Liam had stumbled upon it during one of his solitary walks, noting its emptiness and the distinct lack of scrutiny around it. Today, it would serve its purpose.

Liam walked ahead with his hands casually tucked into his pockets, his steady pace leading the way. Behind him, Chris and his lackeys followed, their hushed conversation barely audible over their footsteps.

"Hey, Chris?" Logan leaned forward slightly, keeping his voice low.

"What?" Chris snapped, his eyes narrowing in irritation.

"I don't trust this guy," Logan muttered, his gaze darting toward Liam. "Where do you think he's taking us?"

"Yeah, it feels like a trap," Lucian added, his unease evident.

Chris rolled his eyes, his patience thinning. "What are you two whining about? If he tries something stupid—which I highly doubt—I'll just fry him with lightning. End of story." His gaze hardened as he focused on Liam, who strode confidently ahead.

Chris's voice dropped, taking on a sinister edge. "Besides, what could he possibly do against us? You're a water element user, and Lucian here has earth at his command. Combine that with my lightning, and he doesn't stand a chance."

Logan smirked faintly at Chris's confidence, but Lucian still appeared unconvinced. "Even so, he's too calm. It's unsettling. Like he's got something planned."

Chris let out a dry chuckle. "Let him plan all he wants. When this is over, he'll regret ever thinking he could match up to me."

As they neared the colosseum, the atmosphere grew quieter, the hum of academy life fading behind them. The dilapidated arena loomed ahead, its worn pillars and cracked stone walls bathed in the late afternoon light.

Liam finally stopped at the entrance, his calm demeanor unchanged as he turned to face them. "We're here," he said simply, gesturing toward the shadowed interior of the colosseum.

Chris crossed his arms, his smirk widening. "This is it? A rundown colosseum? How fitting for someone like you to choose a place that's as insignificant as you are."

Liam didn't react to the insult, instead stepping aside to let them enter first. "After you," he said, his voice laced with a quiet confidence that made Logan and Lucian hesitate.

Chris scoffed, pushing past Liam. "Fine. Let's see what you've got, trash."

Logan and Lucian exchanged a wary glance before following their leader into the colosseum. Liam calmly followed from behind as the three boys enter the colosseum.

Chris stood at the center of the colosseum, arms crossed and his usual arrogant smirk plastered on his face. "So, how do you want this to go?" he asked, his tone dripping with mockery.

As Liam entered, his calm gaze swept the area. He quickly noticed that Lucian and Logan had split from Chris. Lucian had taken position at the sealed entrance behind Liam, his earth manipulation creating a solid wall of stone to block any escape. At the far exit, Logan loomed casually, leaning against the archway, a faint smirk on his face. Explore hidden tales at empire

Liam's hands remained in his pockets as he glanced over his shoulder at Lucian's handiwork. Then, with a flick of his gaze, he surveyed Logan before returning his attention to Chris.

"I don't think there's a need to block the exits," Liam said evenly, his tone devoid of worry. "Trust me, I don't plan on running."

Chris scoffed, the sound echoing in the quiet arena. "That's good to hear. But honestly, I couldn't care less. We're going to beat you into the ground and, if we feel generous, drag your sorry body to the infirmary afterward."

Liam met Chris's gaze, his expression unmoving. "Alright then," he said. "But before we begin, why don't you hear me out? You did ask how I wanted this to go."

Chris tilted his head, his dark grin widening. "You really don't get it, do you? A lowly piece of trash like you doesn't have the right to make choices here. That question was pure sarcasm. But..." He shrugged with mock consideration. "Since you're asking so nicely, I might as well humor you."

"Fair enough." Liam's calm voice carried across the colosseum. "If this is going to happen, then why don't you show me the decency of coming at me one at a time?"

Chris stared at him for a moment before breaking into laughter. It started as a chuckle and quickly escalated into a full-blown cackle. "You've got guts calling this a fight." He wiped a tear from his eye, his laughter tapering into a sly grin. "This isn't a fight—it's a beating. But you know what? I like your idea. We'll take turns. Each of us will get a piece of you."

Liam's expression didn't falter. His fingers moved to his cuffs, rolling up the sleeves of his academy uniform with quiet precision. 'That was easier than expected. If I'm right, the first one will be Lucian.'

Chris turned to Lucian, his grin growing darker. "Lucian, why don't you start us off? Show this trash how things are done."

Lucian cracked his knuckles. "With pleasure," he said, his deep voice laced with menace. He stepped away from the entrance, leaving the sealed stone wall as he strode toward Liam.

Liam turned slowly to face Lucian, his movements deliberate, his calm gaze locking onto Lucian's.

"I'm glad I got to go first. I have a score to settle with you," Lucian growled, his eyes narrowing as memories of their encounter in the library flashed in his mind—Liam's cold threat to sever his hand still fresh in his memory. His fists clenched tightly, veins bulging as his anger simmered just below the surface.

Liam remained impassive, his gaze steady as he analyzed the situation. 'Looks like he's already fuming from last time. Well, that works for me. I don't have the energy for an actual fight right now—still low on food, and this isn't worth wasting what I have left. But myst? That I can spare.'

Liam's eyes flicked over Lucian. He was taller, broader, and visibly stronger—a physical powerhouse. On the surface, the odds seemed stacked against Liam, but he didn't need strength to handle this. Fighting wasn't the goal here; it never was.

"Looks like you're still pissed about our last encounter," Liam said, his tone calm, almost dismissive, as he rolled his shoulders.

"You bet I am," Lucian snapped, his voice low and dangerous. "And I'm going to show you exactly what happens when you mess with an earth manipulator."

A dark chuckle escaped Lucian's lips as he slammed a foot down onto the ground. The stone beneath them trembled as jagged spikes erupted around him, sending tiny shards flying. He wasn't holding back, his myst flaring wildly as the arena seemed to respond to his anger.

But Liam didn't flinch. Instead, he casually stepped aside, avoiding the spikes without so much as a shift in expression. His hands stayed in his pockets, his movements almost lazy.

"Impressive," Liam remarked dryly. "But tell me, Lucian, does brute force ever really solve anything? Or is this just your way of overcompensating?"

Lucian's eyes widened briefly before narrowing in fury. "Keep talking, trash. See how far that gets you."

'He's predictable,' Liam mused silently. Lucian's myst control was powerful, but his emotions dictated his actions—a flaw Liam could exploit.

"Alright then," Liam said, finally pulling his hands out of his pockets. He began to walk toward Lucian slowly.

"You want to settle this? Go ahead. Show me your best shot. Prove to everyone here that raw strength is all you have."

Lucian snarled, raising both hands as the ground beneath Liam began to quake. But Liam's posture didn't change—he simply stood there, his calm demeanor unshaken, waiting for Lucian to make his move.

Lucian smirked, mistaking Liam's calm for fear. "You've got guts standing there, I'll give you that. But guts won't save you."

He stomped both feet into the ground, and the earth beneath him roared to life. Thick, jagged pillars shot up from the ground, hurtling toward Liam like the maw of a hungry beast.

Dust and debris filled the air, and Logan's mocking laughter echoed faintly in the background.

"Too slow," Liam muttered under his breath. With a swift step to the side, he slipped through a narrow gap between the rising pillars, his movements fluid and precise. His body weaved through the chaotic assault as though he were gliding on air, the debris barely brushing against him.

Lucian's smirk faltered, confusion flashing in his eyes. "What the—?"

"Was that it?" Liam asked, his voice calm, almost bored. He stood just a few feet away, not a scratch on him.

"I thought you had something to prove. How pathetic of you to think you can call yourself an earth manipulator or even a student of this academy."