

ShadowBound 113

Chapter 113: Off To The Party

"There's something that's been bothering me for a while now. If the people of this world hate dark magic users so much and would prefer them dead, then why aren't they wary of Primordials? After all, having affinities with all elements, including dark magic, means that learning it isn't something a Primordial can easily avoid, right?"

Mystica was silent for a moment, a mischievous smirk forming on her lips. "You've got sharp eyes and an even sharper mind, Liam. Always asking the right questions."

She leaned against an invisible barrier of her myst, her tone playful yet tinged with intrigue. "You're correct. Primordials are born with affinities for all elements, including darkness, which makes it almost inevitable for us to dabble in dark magic at some point. But here's the catch: we're forbidden from learning dark magic. The higher-ups—who, by the way, aren't Primordials themselves—decided that even though we don't have full mastery over any one element, dark magic is too dangerous. They claim it can corrupt us, twist our minds. So, they made it taboo."

Liam frowned slightly, processing her words. "I see. But when you showed Sheila and me that demonstration weeks ago, the one about how light and darkness need each other, it was obvious you've studied dark magic. That alone proves you didn't follow their rules."

Mystica's smirk widened. "You're absolutely right. Rules were never really my thing. When I was about your age—maybe even younger—my mentor was a dark magic user. She taught me a lot of what I know. That little tome I gave you? It used to belong to her."

Liam's gaze didn't waver. "What happened to her? Was she killed by the blood demons or hunted down by her own people?"

Mystica's playful tone softened, though her smirk remained. "Neither, my dear Liam. She simply disappeared one day, leaving nothing behind but her knowledge and that book."

Liam nodded thoughtfully. "I see. That answers my question, but I have one more."

"By all means," Mystica said, gesturing for him to continue.

"You once told me it's best to keep my dark magic hidden from others. But if my memory serves me right, I already revealed it during the enrollment trials to a group of students."

Mystica chuckled softly, her eyes sparkling with amusement. "Ah, yes, you did. But don't worry—I already took care of that."

Liam's brows furrowed. "Took care of it? How?"

"By erasing that part of their memories," she replied casually, as if it were the most normal thing in the world.

Liam's eyes widened slightly. "That's... possible?"

"Of course it is," Mystica said, her tone turning mischievous again. "It's a dark magic spell, actually. A rather handy one, don't you think? Anyway, those students have no recollection of you being a dark magic user. To them, it's as if nothing happened."

"What about Dylan, Ariana, Sheila and Asher? Did you erase their memories too?" Liam asked.

Mystica shook her head. "No, I left their memories intact. I trust them not to betray you. And besides, I thought you'd appreciate having people who know who you truly are."

'What a relief. It would've been a pain to try and hide my magic from them to.'

Liam considered her words before giving a small nod. "I see. Thank you."

Mystica's smirk softened into something almost genuine. "No need to thank me, Liam. Just don't make me regret putting my faith in you."

"Oh, by the way," Mystica said, her tone taking on a mock seriousness as she folded her arms. "I need a favor from you tonight, Liam. At the party we're attending, under no circumstances are you to use your magic. Understood?"

Liam raised a brow. "I haven't even agreed to go to the party."

Mystica smirked, her eyes glinting mischievously. "Oh, but you have. By asking me those questions and me graciously answering them, you've indirectly accepted my offer. Consider it a trade. Now, no more excuses. Get going."

Before Liam could respond, Mystica's form began to dissolve into thin air, her voice lingering like a playful whisper in the wind. "Don't keep your friends waiting."

Liam sighed, turning on his heel. 'She really does have a way of getting what she wants. I'll give her that.' He shook his head, heading toward the cave.

"This is why I hate anything fancy," Liam muttered under his breath, glaring at the pile of clothes strewn across his bed. He tugged at the collar of a half-buttoned shirt before ripping it off in frustration.

Liam had never been fond of parties or any sort of noble affair. During his time with the Silverharts, he'd often avoided them altogether, though Elsie occasionally dragged him along. Even then, he'd kept to the corners, silent and invisible. Now, the idea of dressing up for this event felt like an unnecessary chore.

A sharp knock on the door pulled him from his thoughts. He sighed, running a hand through his messy hair before heading to open it.

Standing there in the doorway was Dylan, striking a dramatic pose with one hand on his hip and the other brushing back his slicked blond hair. His outfit—a sharp black suit with a crisp white shirt and a sleek bow tie—was undeniably stylish, though Dylan's over-the-top attitude stole the spotlight.

"Ah, good evening, my fine sir!" Dylan declared with mock grandeur, flashing a grin. He gave a flamboyant spin before leaning against the doorframe. "How do you find my devastatingly charming attire this beautiful evening?"

Liam's expression remained flat. "You look fine."

"Fine? Fine?!" Dylan clutched his chest as if Liam's words had mortally wounded him. "Liam, my dear friend, you wound me! This is high fashion!" He stepped into the room with a dramatic flourish but stopped abruptly when he noticed Liam's current state.

"Wait a second..." Dylan squinted, then recoiled theatrically, jumping back as though Liam had sprouted horns. "Why in Heaven's name aren't you dressed yet?! We can't keep the ladies waiting!" His eyes widened, pointing at Liam, who stood there in nothing but black trousers and a bare chest.

Liam shrugged nonchalantly. "I'm having trouble finding what to wear. That's all."

Dylan smirked, a mischievous glint in his green eyes. "Heh, looks like Mr. Perfect isn't good at everything after all."

Without waiting for permission, Dylan pushed past Liam and strode into the room, heading straight for the wardrobe. He rifled through the contents with an air of authority, muttering to himself as he tossed aside shirts and jackets that didn't meet his standards.

After a few moments, he held up a sleek black suit with silver accents and a deep crimson tie. "Ah-ha! This—this right here is the one. Classic, understated, and just edgy enough to scream, 'I'm too cool for this party.' It's perfect for you."

Liam raised an eyebrow. "You put way too much thought into this."

"And you clearly put too little," Dylan shot back, thrusting the suit into Liam's hands. "Now get dressed, or I'll drag you there shirtless. Honestly, knowing you, the ladies might not mind."

Liam shook his head but took the suit, muttering, "You're insufferable."

"And you're welcome," Dylan replied with a wink, plopping down on Liam's bed and crossing his legs. "Hurry up. The girls are waiting, and I refuse to let you be the reason we're late. I have a reputation to uphold!"

Liam adjusted the crimson tie with a quiet sigh, his expression as stoic as ever. Dylan, meanwhile, was practically bouncing on his heels, clearly excited about the upcoming event. The two finally stepped out into the cool evening air to find the rest of their group.

In the open courtyard, two carriages awaited them, both radiating elegance. The first was sleek and shimmering silver, its body engraved with intricate patterns of vines and flowers that glowed faintly in the moonlight.

The second carriage was deep midnight blue with golden accents, its wheels polished to perfection. Both were drawn by majestic horses that seemed almost otherworldly, their coats shining unnaturally bright.

Standing near the midnight-blue carriage were Sheila and Ariana, both dressed to perfection.

Sheila wore a flowing ice-blue gown adorned with tiny silver crystals that sparkled like frost. The dress hugged her slender figure at the top before cascading down in soft, layered folds like a frozen waterfall.

Her long white hair was styled into an elegant braid that fell over one shoulder, and a delicate tiara of pearls and sapphires rested lightly on her head. She exuded a regal grace that matched her status as a princess.

Ariana, on the other hand, had opted for a deep emerald-green dress that accentuated her warm auburn hair and bright green eyes. The gown had a simple yet sophisticated design, with a fitted bodice and a long, smooth skirt that trailed slightly behind her.

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Tiny golden leaves were embroidered along the hem and neckline, adding a touch of natural beauty to her look. Her glasses gave her an intellectual charm, and her hair was loosely curled, framing her face perfectly.

Dylan froze for a moment, blinking as if he'd forgotten how to speak. Then, with an exaggerated bow, he said, "Ladies, you've both outdone yourselves tonight. Truly, I'm honored to bask in your radiance."

Ariana laughed softly, brushing a strand of hair behind her ear. "Thank you, Dylan. You clean up nicely yourself."

Sheila gave a small, amused smile. "I'll admit, you don't look half bad."

Dylan placed a hand on his heart. "Not half bad? I'll take that as the highest compliment."

Liam, meanwhile, gave a quiet nod of acknowledgment, his gaze shifting between the two before resting on the empty spot where Mystica was supposed to be. "Where's Mystica?"

As if summoned by his question, Mystica appeared seemingly out of nowhere, stepping gracefully into the moonlight.

Her dress was nothing short of breathtaking—a shimmering black gown that seemed to capture the very essence of the night sky. The fabric glittered like starlight, with faint purple undertones that shifted as she moved.

The gown hugged her figure in all the right places, with a high slit along one leg and an open back that added a daring edge to her elegance. Her long, dark hair was pinned up with intricate silver pins shaped like crescent moons, and her piercing purple eyes gleamed with mischief.

"Well, well, don't you all look stunning tonight?" Mystica said with a sly smile, her gaze settling on Liam. "And Liam, you clean up surprisingly well. Who knew you had it in you?"

Liam met her teasing tone with his usual calm. "I wouldn't have bothered if it wasn't mandatory."

Mystica chuckled, stepping closer. "Oh, don't be so grumpy. You'll thank me later. Maybe."

Dylan leaned toward Liam and whispered, "She looks even more stunning today don't you think."

"We both don't have the same eyes," Liam replied dryly.

Mystica clapped her hands, drawing everyone's attention. "All right, enough chit-chat. The first carriage is mine. You four will ride in the one behind me. Try not to burn it down, break anything, or start a war before we get there."

With that, Mystica strode toward the silver carriage, her gown trailing behind her like a shadow. She climbed in gracefully, leaving the group standing by the blue carriage.

"Well, you heard her," Sheila said, her voice light as she gestured toward their ride.

Dylan held the door open with a flourish. "Ladies first."

Sheila rolled her eyes but stepped in, followed by Ariana. Dylan gave Liam a grin before slipping inside himself, leaving Liam to enter last.

Once they were all seated, the carriage lurched forward, setting off toward the grand city of Grandeur, the horses' hooves echoing softly in the night.