

ShadowBound 123

Chapter 123: Blood Attack: The Demon's Fate

Several Minutes Earlier

The city guard Liam had sent to escort Elena galloped into the courtyard of the Avancclare estate. His horse's hooves clattered against the cobblestone, stirring the guards stationed at the gates.

"State your purpose!" one of the estate guards barked, stepping forward with a hand on his sword hilt.

The city guard didn't slow down, his voice urgent. "Stand aside! Lady Elena is with me!"

At the mention of Elena's name, the estate guards exchanged glances before stepping aside, their tension giving way to concern as they noticed the young girl clinging tightly to the guard, her face pale and streaked with dirt.

"Open the gates immediately!" one of the guards ordered, and the massive iron gates creaked open, allowing the rider to rush through.

The grand ballroom was alive with soft music and the chatter of nobles when the city guard burst in, his presence silencing the room. His disheveled appearance and the dirt-covered Elena drew gasps from the crowd.

Elena slipped away from the city guard's side and stumbled forward, her wide, tear-filled eyes scanning the room. The moment she saw her mother, she cried out, "Mama!"

Mrs Avancclare's sister, who had been seated at a table worrying, immediately rose, her composure breaking as she rushed toward her daughter. The crowd parted like waves, whispers of shock and worry spreading among the nobles.

Elena flung herself into her mother's arms, sobbing uncontrollably. "Mama, I—I thought I wouldn't make it back," she choked out, her tiny frame trembling.

Mrs Avanciare's sister held her daughter tightly, smoothing her hair and murmuring soothing words. "You're safe now, my love. You're home. No one will harm you here."

Mrs. Avanciare, standing nearby, approached swiftly, her voice filled with concern. "Elena, where are the knights I sent after you? And where is Liam?"

Elena's sobs slowed, and she pulled back slightly, her voice trembling. "The knights were all killed. But we escaped... Liam and I. The forest—there were monsters, horrible monsters! He stayed behind to fight them so I could escape."

Gasps rippled through the room as the weight of her words sunk in.

As Elena tried to explain further, the soft murmur of the crowd was interrupted by the click of heels on polished marble. Mystica strolled through the gathered nobles with an air of casual elegance, a glass of crimson wine in her hand.

Her eyes scanned the room before settling on Elena.

"Where is Liam?" Mystica asked, her voice uncharacteristically serious, sending a chill through the room.

The city guard stepped forward, bowing slightly. "My lady, I bring a message from Liam himself." He repeated Liam's words with grave urgency: "The city is under attack by demons stronger than Advanced Horrors."

"The fight is currently happening on the eastern district, my lady." The city guard added.

Elena, clutching her mother's arm, added desperately, "He planned to hold them off... alone."

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Mystica's expression darkened, her jaw tightening. "That reckless brat," she muttered, more to herself than anyone else. Her sharp gaze swept the room. "Ariana. Sheila. Dylan. Come here."

The three quickly approached, their expressions mirroring Mystica's grim determination.

"Liam is holding off demons beyond his strength in the eastern district of the city" Mystica explained swiftly. "I don't know how long he can last. Sheila, Ariana—I need you to move around the district and treat any wounded you find. Since we don't know how many demons there are."

Ariana nodded, her hands trembling slightly. "Understood."

Sheila placed a reassuring hand on Ariana's shoulder before turning to Mystica. "We'll ensure the people are safe."

Mystica turned to Dylan, who was already flexing his fingers and summoning his bow. "And you," she said, grabbing his arm, "you're with me. We're going straight to Liam."

Dylan smirked despite the tension. "Anything for my queen."

Mystica ignored the comment, gripping his arm tightly as her eyes glowed with myst. "Hold on."

Present Time

The demon snarled, its fury mounting as it turned its attention toward Dylan. With blinding speed, it dashed toward the archer, its claws elongating into grotesque blades, ready to shred him to pieces.

But before it could get far, the ground beneath its feet erupted with thick, gnarled roots. Mystica's magic surged through the battlefield, and the roots twisted and coiled like serpents, ensnaring the demon's legs.

The creature roared in frustration, hacking at the roots with its claws. Each strike sent splinters flying, but the roots regenerated faster than it could sever them. For a split second, it was immobilized.

That was all the time Dylan needed. From his elevated position, he loosed another steel arrow. The projectile streaked through the air like a comet, gleaming with a sharp, metallic brilliance. It pierced the demon's shoulder with a sickening crunch, the force of the impact causing the creature to stagger back.

Black ichor gushed from the wound, sizzling as it hit the ground. The demon snarled, ripping the arrow from its body with a howl of pain.

"You insects dare challenge us?!" it bellowed, its voice echoing with fury and desperation.

Mystica tilted her head, her expression calm and utterly unimpressed. "Challenge you? Don't flatter yourself. This isn't a challenge—this is your execution."

She raised her hand, and the battlefield seemed to respond to her will. A cascade of elemental magic erupted around her. Shards of ice rained down like deadly spears, firestorms ignited in swirling torrents, and bolts of lightning crackled through the air.

The demon barely managed to dodge the first wave of attacks, each element tearing through the ground with destructive force. It lunged at Mystica, blood claws forming into serrated scythes. With a wild swing, it aimed to cleave her in half.

But Mystica didn't flinch. With a flick of her wrist, a wall of shimmering water surged up, blocking the attack. The demon's claws slashed through the barrier, but before it could advance, the water condensed into a spiraling vortex. It engulfed the demon's arm, freezing it solid in an instant.

The creature howled as its frozen limb shattered under its own strength. Before it could recover, Mystica was already on the offensive.

The ground beneath the demon erupted once more, this time with molten lava spewing upward. The fiery torrent scorched its body, leaving charred marks across its flesh. As the demon staggered, thick vines shot out, tipped with razor-sharp thorns. They wrapped around its torso, tightening like a vice.

Mystica's voice was cold, devoid of mercy. "You're nothing but a parasite, preying on the weak. Let me show you how insignificant you truly are."

The vines lifted the demon into the air, and with a sharp motion from Mystica, they slammed it into the ground with bone-crushing force. The impact created a crater, dust and debris flying everywhere.

The demon struggled to rise, its body battered and bleeding. For the first time, it felt something foreign, something it hadn't experienced in centuries—fear.

"You... you can't...!" it stammered, its dual-toned voice trembling.

"Oh, I can," Mystica said, her tone dripping with contempt.

She clasped her hands together, and a massive cyclone of wind and fire spiraled into existence around her. The fiery vortex roared with unrelenting fury as it bore down on the demon. It tried to flee, clawing at the ground, but the cyclone consumed it.

The demon's screams echoed across the battlefield as the inferno tore into its flesh. When the flames finally subsided, it was left kneeling, its once-imposing form reduced to a smoldering, broken shell.

Mystica stepped forward, her purple eyes glowing with an otherworldly intensity. She raised her hand, summoning a blade of pure light.

"Any last words?" she asked, her voice calm but laced with lethal intent.

Mystica didn't wait for an answer. With a swift motion, she plunged the blade of light into the demon's chest, piercing through its corrupted core. The demon let out a final, guttural scream as its body convulsed, tendrils of blood magic and shadow writhing wildly before disintegrating into ash.

The ground beneath them quaked, and a shockwave of energy erupted as the demon's essence was obliterated, leaving nothing but silence in its wake. The battlefield was now eerily still, the air heavy with the scent of burnt earth and scorched blood.

Mystica stood over the empty crater, her gaze hard and unrelenting. "Pathetic to the very end," she muttered, her voice carrying a mix of disdain and finality. She turned her back on the smoldering remains, walking toward Liam.

Kneeling beside him once more, she placed a hand gently on his chest. His breathing was faint but steady, his body still battered despite her healing magic.

Dylan leapt down from his perch, landing with a thud a few feet away, with a smirk on his face.

"Thy glorious queen hath made quick work of yon beast."