

ShadowBound 130

Chapter 130: Weaponry Training: Magnus Yaer

Magnus, still perched lazily at the edge of the platform, finished the last bite of his cookie with the enthusiasm of someone savoring the last joy in life. His head tilted back slightly, and he closed his eyes in an exaggerated show of culinary satisfaction.

As he stood up, he stretched dramatically, his joints cracking audibly. Then, in his booming voice, he asked the most pressing question on his mind:

"Alright, who here has another cookie? Don't be stingy now; your instructor's gotta stay fueled if you want me in top teaching shape."

The students collectively groaned, many rolling their eyes. One brave soul—Luke—raised his hand hesitantly.

"I have a granola bar?" Luke offered weakly.

Magnus turned to him, his eyes narrowing. "Granola bar? What am I, a squirrel? Keep your rabbit food, Spiky. I asked for a cookie, not a dirt clump."

Luke slumped back, muttering, "It's healthy..."

"Healthy?" Magnus scoffed, dramatically clutching his chest. "Boy, I didn't get these manly muscles by eating kale and sadness! Cookies are the foundation of greatness!" He struck a mock heroic pose, sending a ripple of chuckles through the students.

Once his theatrics died down, Magnus scanned the group, and his eyes landed on Liam for the first time. He froze mid-pose, his expression shifting to one of exaggerated disbelief.

"Wait a second," Magnus said, pointing dramatically at Liam. "Who the hell are you?"

Dylan leaned toward Liam and whispered, "Welcome to that part of the Magnus experience."

Liam sighed. "Liam Hunter, sir. I've been out for a few days."

Magnus groaned, dragging a hand down his face. "Of course. Of course! New kid means I've gotta repeat myself. The tragedy of my life!" He slumped against the platform railing, gazing skyward as if calling on the gods for strength. "Does anyone here have the willpower and moral fortitude to save me from this fate by teaching Mr. Absentee the basics we covered in the last three days?"

Dylan's hand shot up. "Oh! Me, me!"

Magnus waved him off immediately. "Not you, Blondie. You couldn't teach a fish how to swim without turning it into a stand-up routine."

The class erupted in laughter as Dylan feigned offense, clutching his chest like he'd been mortally wounded. "I am a comedic genius, thank you very much."

Magnus ignored him and scanned the students again before pointing at Charlotte and Maxwell Samson, the tenth-ranked student. "You two. You're decent at not tripping over your own feet and can actually swing a weapon without looking like drunk chickens. Congratulations, you've been volunteered!"

Charlotte smirked, tossing her hair over her shoulder as she sauntered toward Liam. "Anything for my stoic boyfriend."

"Not your boyfriend," Liam muttered under his breath, but Charlotte ignored him.

Maxwell, a stocky boy with sharp features and a quiet demeanor, just nodded and moved toward Liam, clearly used to Magnus's antics.

"Good. Handle that, and maybe, just maybe, I won't drop dead from repeating myself today," Magnus said with an exaggerated sigh of relief.

He then clapped his hands together, signaling the end of his little drama. "Alright, rest of you sorry excuses for warriors, grab your weapons! Time for pairing duels!"

The students scattered to the racks of wooden weapons, each picking out their preferred choice. Liam noticed the variety: long staffs, swords, daggers, clawed gauntlets, escrima sticks, and more. Each one looked painfully underwhelming compared to the real thing, but he knew the purpose.

As Liam picked up a pair of wooden daggers, Dylan leaned over with a mischievous grin. "Think about it, buddy. Wooden weapons mean no fatalities, but..."

"But what?" Liam asked, bracing himself.

"But the bruises? Oh, they're real." Dylan cackled as he picked up a staff, twirling it dramatically.

Meanwhile, Magnus watched from his platform, biting into another cookie that he'd mysteriously procured. "Alright, let's see who actually learned something these past three days—or who's just here to get whacked like piñatas at a six-year-old's birthday party!"

Charlotte practically draped herself over Liam's side, her fingers lightly brushing his arm as she leaned in closer than necessary. Her voice was a low, playful purr. "So, Bae, ready to let me show you a few moves?"

Liam sighed inwardly, maintaining his stoic expression. "I think I'll survive with Maxwell's help."

Maxwell stood nearby, unfazed by Charlotte's antics. His calm demeanor and sharp gaze made him an ideal instructor. "Alright, Liam, let's focus. Forget her for now." He shot Charlotte a brief look. "This is about the basics of precision and adaptability."

As Max began to explain, Liam tuned out Charlotte's sultry hums and exaggerated sighs, locking onto Max's instructions.

"First things first," Max said, holding up a wooden sword, "a weapon isn't just an extension of your arm—it's an extension of your intent. Whether it's a sword, a dagger, or even a staff, you control the

flow of a fight through how you wield it. Precision is key. A sloppy swing won't just leave you open; it'll waste your energy."

Liam watched as Max demonstrated, his movements deliberate. A single strike, swift and clean, sliced through the air.

"It's not about how hard you swing," Max continued, "it's about where and when. Aim for joints, weak points, or places your opponent can't guard quickly. Think ahead—be two moves faster than your opponent's reaction."

Liam nodded, mimicking the movements with his wooden daggers. The advice resonated with him. 'Precision and intent. This isn't new—it's the foundation of how I've fought creatures in the forest. But he's right. I've always adapted in the moment, not planned my attacks like this.'

Max wasn't done. "Footwork is just as important. If your stance is off, you'll lose balance. If your movements are too predictable, you'll lose control. Watch your opponent's feet and shoulders—they'll tell you where the next attack is coming from."

Liam adjusted his stance as Max demonstrated. The tips Max shared weren't groundbreaking, but the way he broke them down made them click. Liam found himself filing the information away, mentally rehearsing scenarios where this knowledge would give him an edge.

Charlotte, however, seemed bored. "Ugh, Max, you're making it sound like we're writing a textbook. Where's the fun? The excitement?" She leaned closer to Liam, her smirk widening. "Wouldn't you rather feel how it's done, Bae?"

Liam ignored her again, focusing on Max. "What about adapting to different weapons?" he asked.

"Good question," Max replied. "It's about understanding the weapon's purpose. A sword is for slicing and stabbing, sure, but it's also for controlling space. A dagger? Speed and precision. A staff? Reach and crowd control. Every weapon has its strengths and weaknesses—you adapt your style to fit those, not the other way around."

Liam nodded. 'So it's like fighting with a plan in mind instead of just reacting. Makes sense.'

As Max continued, Liam couldn't help but notice the fluidity in the way Max moved. His body was tough and agile, clearly honed for combat. It reminded Liam of himself—both of them shared a similar physique built for speed and endurance rather than brute strength.

Max took a step back, gesturing for Liam to try a few moves. "Now, show me. Precision first. Don't swing to hit—swing to connect."

Liam mimicked the strikes Max had demonstrated, each movement calculated and smooth. As he practiced, Charlotte, who had been silently observing for a few moments, finally stepped in with a mischievous grin.

"Alright, boys, enough of this snooze-fest. Let's spice things up. Liam, how about a quick spar with me?"

Liam turned to her, raising an eyebrow. Charlotte held up her wooden claws, flexing her fingers dramatically. "C'mon, Bae. You can't learn everything from just watching and listening. Sometimes you've got to get hands-on."

Max chuckled softly, stepping aside. "Your call, Liam. But fair warning—she's fast."

Liam sighed, twirling his daggers with ease. "Fine. Let's see what you've got."

Charlotte grinned, her eyes lighting up with playful excitement. "Oh, don't worry, Bae. You'll feel what I've got."

Liam mentally prepared himself, already expecting a whirlwind of seductive antics mixed with genuine skill. 'I hope this ends quickly.'