

ShadowBound 159

Chapter 159: Adventures Of Day Two

After the group finished their meal, they agreed to rest for an hour before heading out to explore Vlardia. The break passed quickly, and soon they were gathering their gear, ready to move.

"Alright," Edith began, standing near the cave entrance, her sword sheathed and shield resting against her leg. "Here's the plan. Moving together as a group is important for safety, but it will slow us down significantly. I propose we split into smaller groups based on our strongest members, Lucian and Liam. This way, we balance strength and efficiency."

Karla furrowed her brows, her nervousness apparent. "That makes sense, but splitting up could make us vulnerable. What if we run into something stronger than we can handle?" Stay connected through empire

Edith nodded thoughtfully, rubbing her chin. "That's a valid concern. We don't know the highest class of demons present here yet, and we can't afford to be reckless."

"We've already dealt with the Wolves," Lucian added. "They're part of the Feral class. Two of us with a solid strategy could handle one or two without much trouble."

"I agree," Karla said, though her voice wavered slightly. "But it's the higher classes that worry me. If we encounter a Titanborne or a Horror, things could go south fast. Titanbornes are literal giants. Even one of them would be a nightmare to face."

"And Horrors are just as bad," Edith agreed. "Unlike Ferals, they're intelligent, cunning even. My professor once told me they are capable of thinking like we humans, but their reason is low. They're not something you want to fight unprepared."

The group fell into a contemplative silence, the weight of the situation settling over them. Finally, Liam spoke up, his tone calm and steady.

"Whatever decision you make, we'll follow it. You're the leader, and there's no need to feel pressured about this." He leaned back against the cave wall, his eyes steady as they met Edith's.

'I need her to stay composed,' Liam thought to himself. 'If she starts second-guessing herself now, it'll only create chaos later—and that's the last thing I need.'

Robin, sitting a bit away from the group, fidgeted nervously with his quiver. "He's right. W-We trust you, Edith... whatever you decide."

Lucian shrugged, a small smirk tugging at his lips. "Same here. Captain's call."

Karla let out a long sigh before flashing Edith a supportive smile. "You've made the right choices so far. We're with you."

Edith blinked, momentarily stunned by their unwavering support. Their trust weighed heavily on her, but it also strengthened her resolve.

'They believe in me,' she thought. 'It's my responsibility to keep them safe. As long as we're in this realm, I'll make the decisions that protect us all.'

"Thanks, guys," she said, her voice steady. "I really appreciate your trust. It means a lot."

She straightened up, her tone firm as she laid out the final plan. "We'll move together to explore Vlardia, but we'll stick to two smaller groups that stay within sight of each other for safety. Lucian, you'll pair up with me. Liam, you'll go with Karla. Robin, I need you to stay airborne and keep watch for threats we might not see from the ground. Can you handle that?"

Robin hesitated, adjusting his quiver nervously before nodding. "Y-Yeah. I'll use my air magic to stay above and alert you if I see anything."

"Good. Then it's settled." Edith grabbed her shield and sword. "Let's move out."

The group followed suit, gathering their weapons before stepping out of the cave. Once outside, Lucian turned back and stretched out his hand. With a small surge of myst, the cave entrance shimmered before solidifying into a seamless rock wall, effectively concealing their shelter.

"Just in case," Lucian said, dusting his hands off.

As the group moved deeper into the forest, the dense foliage gradually gave way to a small, open clearing. Edith signaled for everyone to stop, the sound of crunching leaves beneath their boots filling the air.

"Alright," Edith said, her eyes scanning the area, "we'll split up here as planned. Stay within 100 meters of each other. Robin, use your Whisper spell to communicate with us if anything comes up. We'll need to stay in constant contact, especially if something unexpected happens."

Robin, hovering nervously in the air, adjusted his quiver. "Y-Yeah, I got it. Whisper will work fine. Just... keep an eye out, okay?" His voice wavered slightly as he hovered higher into the sky, looking back at the group.

"Don't worry, Robin," Karla reassured him, flashing a grin. "We'll be fine. Just keep an eye on the skies and let us know if something's off."

"Exactly," Edith added, her tone calm. "Lucian and I will head west. Liam, Karla, you two head east. And Robin, stay on top of things. If you see or hear anything unusual, just let us know."

The team nodded, and the two groups split. Edith and Lucian ventured west, while Liam and Karla headed east. Robin flew high above them, his nervous energy palpable despite his attempts to focus on the task at hand.

As the two groups moved, the forest seemed calm. The usual sounds of wildlife echoed through the trees—birds chirped, rabbits hopped in the underbrush, and the wind rustled through the leaves. It was a peaceful moment, allowing the group to relax, if only for a brief time.

"Everything seems clear so far," Karla commented, her voice a mix of enthusiasm and nervousness. "I mean, I haven't heard anything strange, and the wildlife seems calm, right?"

"Yeah, it's been quiet. Let's just be on alert." Liam said simply without sparing her a glance.

Karla nodded, her bright energy slightly tinged with worry. "I know! It's just... I haven't fought much, and I really hope nothing comes our way."

'Despite the fight with the Wolves, she is still afraid of all this. I don't blame her entirely.' Liam thought.

"Don't worry, we'll be fine. Just keep an eye out." He said.

Meanwhile, high above them, Robin floated in the sky, his eyes nervously scanning the horizon. The world seemed so much bigger from up here, but it also felt strangely empty. He tried to focus on the task at hand, but his thoughts kept drifting.

'Everything's fine,' Robin thought, gripping his bow tightly. 'It's just some quiet walking. We'll be okay. We've got the best fighters with us, right? So nothing can go wrong, right?'

But just as he began to calm himself, something felt off. The wind shifted. Robin squinted, his nerves heightening as he noticed something strange on the horizon.

The forest had grown unnervingly silent. No rustling animals, no chirping birds. It was as though the forest itself was holding its breath. His stomach tightened.

'Wait... What's that?'

Far below, he saw it before anyone else—a massive disturbance on the ground. The creatures of the forest, from rabbits to deer, were sprinting in the opposite direction, their eyes wide with fear.

'What the hell is that?'

Robin's breath caught in his throat as he finally saw it—a towering shape moving slowly through the trees. At first, it looked like a boulder, a massive stone out of place in the forest. But then it shifted, and Robin's blood ran cold.

It wasn't a boulder at all. It was a demon.

A Titanborne.

The demon's hulking form towered at least 45 feet high, its skin rough and craggy like stone, with two jagged, exposed lower canines jutting from its mouth. It swung a massive club in one hand, its slow, deliberate movements shaking the ground beneath it.

"Holy—" Robin gasped, his voice barely a whisper. His hands trembled as he reached for his Whisper spell. "Edith... Lucian... get out of there. It's a Titanborne!"

Far below, Edith and Lucian, who had been advancing cautiously, froze as they felt the tremors ripple through the ground. At first, it was subtle, just a slight quaking. But then, the force of the earthquake intensified, rattling the trees and causing the forest floor to shake. Edith's heart skipped a beat as she looked around, trying to sense what was happening.

"Lucian..." she muttered under her breath, the words tinged with disbelief. "That's not a natural tremor."

Lucian's eyes narrowed, his instinctively activated his gauntlets again. "No... it's a demon. And by the feel of it, that's not just any demon."

Edith glanced toward the source of the disturbance, her breath catching in her throat as she finally saw the Titanborne rise above the trees, its towering form casting a long shadow over them.

"That's a Titanborne," Edith whispered, more to herself than Lucian. "We need to get out of here, now."

Before she could turn to make a move, the Titanborne let out a low, guttural roar, its massive club slamming into the ground. The impact caused another violent tremor that nearly knocked Edith and Lucian off their feet. The ground cracked beneath them, debris flying as the creature advanced.

Meanwhile, Liam and Karla, still several hundred meters away, felt the ground shake violently. Karla's eyes widened in shock, her voice barely a whisper. "What the hell is that?"

Liam's expression darkened. "It's a Titanborne."

Without another word, they began sprinting toward the source of the quake, their pace quickening as they heard the thunderous roar of the demon in the distance.

Back above, Robin's voice trembled as he relayed the warning through Whisper. "Liam... Karla, get moving! The Titanborne is heading straight for Edith and Lucian! You have to hurry!"