ShadowBound 16

Chapter 16: Welcome To The School Of Magic: 2

As Elsie and Liam stepped down from the carriage, the academy's grounds were alive with activity. Students moved in groups, talking and laughing, while some hurried towards their classes.

Liam kept his gaze forward, his expression neutral, but he couldn't help scanning the surroundings—everything from the well-kept lawns to the intricate statues scattered around the school gave the place a refined atmosphere.

As they approached the large double doors that led into the school's main hallway, a man stood waiting for them, dressed neatly in the academy's uniform.

"Good morning, Ms. Elsie," the man greeted, bowing his head slightly.

"Good morning, Mr. Ganic," Elsie replied with a bright smile.

Mr. Ganic then turned to Liam, his eyes sizing him up briefly. "And you must be Liam," he said with a warm tone, though there was a subtle sharpness in his gaze.

Liam simply nodded, his expression unreadable. "Yes, I am."

"I've heard quite a bit about you," Mr. Ganic continued, clearly expecting some reaction.

Liam gave none, his face as stoic as ever. He remained silent, offering nothing in response.

Undeterred, Mr. Ganic smiled and gestured toward the school. "I'll be the one helping you around today."

Before Liam could respond, Elsie piped up, her tone slightly defensive. "I thought I was going to show Liam around!"

"You will, Elsie," Mr. Ganic assured her, still smiling, "but the principal asked me to accompany you both. A more... senior presence was requested."

Elsie huffed slightly but said nothing more, though Liam noticed her displeasure in the way she crossed her arms.

"Now then, shall we?" Mr. Ganic said, gesturing toward the door as they began to walk through the entrance.

As they made their way down the hall, Liam's eyes roamed the surroundings. The walls were adorned with ancient-looking tapestries, and small stone statues were placed at intervals, each depicting different magical symbols and figures. The air inside was cool, and the quiet hum of students filling the corridors set a tranquil but focused atmosphere.

Though outwardly calm, Liam's mind was a whirl of thoughts. 'For this man to know my name so easily... it's odd. He claims to have heard about me, but I've only been conscious for a day.

The only explanation is that Elsie talked to her father about me before I woke up, and Dr. Dain must have acted quickly to get the principal involved. That's the only thing that makes sense.'

Liam's lips curled into a faint smirk as he realized how smoothly things were falling into place. I have to admit, Elsie might've made this process a lot easier for me. Learning magic was my plan anyway... and now, I'm already here.

Eventually, they reached a tall wooden door with intricate carvings of magical runes across it. Mr. Ganic stopped in front of it and turned toward them.

"This is your first class for the day, Liam. You'll be joining Elsie here," Mr. Ganic explained. "I'd tell you what to expect, but I'll leave that to your personal tour guide." He smiled, glancing at Elsie.

Elsie beamed and turned to Liam. "It's going to be great, I promise! You'll love the class. Plus, we get to sit together."

Liam glanced at her, nodding slightly. "Looking forward to it," he said quietly, though his mind was still focused on the mysteries that lay ahead.

Mr. Ganic gave a small bow. "If you need anything, don't hesitate to ask." With that, he turned and left them, his footsteps fading down the corridor.

Elsie nudged Liam playfully. "Ready to meet the rest of the class? You might be the new student, but I think you'll fit in just fine."

Liam let out a soft breath, his eyes steady as he looked at the door. "Let's get this started."

With that, they both stepped forward, pushing open the door and entering the classroom together.

As the door creaked open and Liam stepped inside with Elsie by his side, the quiet hum of the classroom instantly ceased. Every pair of eyes turned toward them, curiosity evident on the students' faces.

The room was large, filled with polished wooden desks neatly aligned. Sunlight streamed in through tall, arched windows, casting a warm glow on the room's polished stone floor.

At the front of the class stood a woman—strikingly beautiful and poised. Her long, flowing black hair cascaded down her back like a waterfall, with a few silver strands framing her elegant face.

Her deep violet eyes gleamed with intelligence, and her lips curled into a welcoming but knowing smile. She wore a fitted, dark purple gown that clung to her figure, flowing gracefully as she moved.

The way she carried herself, with a mixture of authority and sensuality, captivated the room. She looked mature, confident, and possessed an undeniable air of mystery.

"Ah, welcome," she said, her voice soft but commanding, drawing everyone's attention. "You must be Liam."

Her gaze lingered on him for a moment longer than usual, her eyes assessing him in a way that made him feel as though she could see right through him. Liam, maintaining his usual calm demeanor, nodded.

"I am Professor Valeria Amara," she introduced herself, her tone dripping with charm. "And I will be your instructor for today."

The students murmured quietly to themselves, clearly intrigued by Liam's arrival. Elsie gave him an encouraging nudge, and Professor Valeria's smile widened as she gestured toward the front of the class.

"Why don't you introduce yourself to everyone, Liam?"

Liam glanced at Elsie, who gave him a nod, before stepping forward. He faced the room with his usual collected expression, though he could feel the weight of their gazes.

"My name is Liam," he began, his voice steady but low. "I've come to learn about magic and improve myself."

It was a simple introduction, but there was something about his presence that made the class hang onto every word. Professor Valeria gave an approving nod.

"Well then, Liam," she said, her eyes glimmering with interest, "you've come to the right place. For now, just follow along with today's lesson. Elsie can help explain things later."

Liam moved to sit beside Elsie, who offered him a reassuring smile. The class slowly returned to its usual rhythm as Professor Valeria turned back to the chalkboard, lifting a slender finger to trace arcane symbols in the air.

"Today," she began, her voice carrying a weight of authority, "we'll be discussing something fundamental but essential to the study of magic—Resonance."

At the mention of the word, Liam's interest piqued. He leaned forward slightly, his red eyes narrowing in focus.

"Resonance," Valeria continued, "is the harmony between a mage's internal myst and the natural myst that surrounds them. It's the foundation of any effective magic casting. Without mastering resonance, your spells will always be weaker, unstable, and prone to failure."

She paused, allowing the students to absorb her words. "For example, even the most powerful mage cannot create a fireball if they fail to resonate with the fire myst in the air. To truly cast magic, you must first align yourself with the nature around you."

Liam's mind raced as he absorbed this new information. So magic isn't just about raw power—it's about connection.

Professor Valeria continued, her movements graceful as she demonstrated a practical example. She held up her hand, and without any grand gestures, a glowing orb of light appeared in her palm, pulsing softly.

"This," she said, "is a simple light spell. But if you can resonate perfectly, even simple spells can become incredibly efficient." She gestured with her hand, and the orb transformed, splitting into several smaller lights that danced around the room before vanishing into nothing.

The class was mesmerized, and so was Liam. The idea of resonance intrigued him. It wasn't just about forcing your will upon the world but synchronizing with it, using the natural myst around him to enhance his own.

"Now," Professor Valeria said, her gaze falling on Liam, "resonance is something that takes time and practice. You can't rush it. But once you grasp it, the possibilities are endless."

Liam couldn't help but feel a surge of curiosity. So, it's not just about overpowering your opponent with raw strength... there's finesse involved. Maybe that's what I've been missing in some of my techniques.

Elsie leaned over and whispered, "See? I told you the classes would be interesting!"

Liam smirked slightly, still focused on Professor Valeria's words.

As the class continued, Professor Valeria guided the students through simple exercises to help them feel the myst around them.

Liam, though new to the concept, could already sense the faint vibrations of energy in the air, a subtle pulse that felt almost like a heartbeat. He knew, without a doubt, that mastering resonance would be key to unlocking even more of his potential.

And as the lesson carried on, he couldn't shake the feeling that this was only the beginning of something far greater.

After the lesson concluded, Elsie eagerly tugged at Liam's sleeve.

"Come on, Liam! Let's head to the cafeteria. You must be starving after that class," she said with a bright smile.

Liam, still deep in thought about the resonance concept, nodded and followed her out of the classroom. As they made their way through the school's halls, the sound of laughter and chattering students filled the air.

The school grounds were vast, with well-manicured lawns, tall oak trees, and small gardens scattered around, giving it a lively yet peaceful atmosphere.

As they approached the cafeteria, the large double doors swung open, revealing a spacious room filled with long wooden tables and the mouth-watering smell of freshly prepared food. Students were scattered all around, some already eating while others gathered in groups, chatting animatedly.

"This is where everyone hangs out during lunch," Elsie explained as they joined the line to grab food. "And I'll introduce you to some of my friends. They're excited to meet you!"

Liam simply nodded, still taking in his surroundings. The sheer size of the cafeteria and the bustling energy were new to him, given his more solitary lifestyle in the past.

Once they grabbed their trays, loaded with various fruits, bread, and hot meals, Elsie led him to a large table near the windows. There, a group of students waved at her with enthusiasm.

"Liam, these are my friends," Elsie said, gesturing to the group as they sat down.

A tall girl with short blonde hair and sharp green eyes immediately smiled at Liam. "Hey! I'm Kaela. Elsie talks about you a lot. You're quite the mystery."

Beside her sat a quieter girl with long, dark hair and glasses, who gave a shy wave. "I'm Myra," she said softly.

Two boys sat across from them—one with short, spiky brown hair and a mischievous grin. "I'm Drey. Heard you're new here. Welcome to the chaos!" he said, leaning back in his chair.

Next to him, a more serious-looking boy with neatly combed black hair nodded politely. "Rivan. It's good to have you with us."

There were two other girls at the table, who introduced themselves as Serah and Tali, both of them as cheerful and talkative as Elsie.

Liam greeted each of them with a simple nod, observing the group. They all seemed friendly, and their energy was infectious. Elsie was right---she had surrounded herself with people who clearly cared about her and enjoyed her company.

"So, Liam," Kaela began as she took a bite of her food, "Elsie says you're good at magic. What kind of stuff do you specialize in?"

Liam hesitated for a moment before replying, "I'm still learning, but I'm focused on improving my skills with myst and dark magic."

"Ooh, dark magic," Drey said, eyes lighting up with excitement. "That's pretty rare! You're not going to summon any creepy spirits in the cafeteria, are you?"

Liam gave him a small, almost imperceptible smirk. "I have not mastered that yet but if I was to able, I wouldn't unless I have to."

The table erupted in laughter, and even Liam found himself feeling slightly more at ease.

As they ate, the group chatted about their classes, upcoming events at the school, and general gossip.

Elsie occasionally leaned over to Liam to explain who people were or give him more context about the things her friends were talking about.

It was all new to him---the casual camaraderie, the light-hearted teasing. It reminded him of the life he had before everything had changed.

After finishing their meals, Elsie nudged him gently. "So, what do you think? My friends aren't too bad, right?"

"They're fine," Liam replied, glancing at the group. They were clearly close, and despite their curiosity about him, they were kind.

"Just fine?" Elsie teased, raising an eyebrow. "I think they're great."

Liam didn't argue. He was still adjusting to this new environment, but he could see why Elsie had such a positive energy about her. She had built a circle of people who were genuinely supportive, and in some small way, Liam felt a bit of comfort being included in it, at least that's how he made it look.

As they stood to leave, Kaela called out, "Don't be a stranger, Liam! You're one of us now."

Liam gave a short nod in response, his mind drifting back to the real reason he was here.