

ShadowBound 170

Chapter 170: Liam And Lucian Vs The Malgath

Liam and Lucian burst into a sprint toward the Malgath, but before they could close the distance, two Skivoks launched themselves from the canopy above, their claws gleaming as they dove in for the kill.

Just as the creatures were mere inches from tearing into Liam and Lucian, two arrows whistled through the air. Robin's first arrow pierced the shoulder of one Skivok, spinning it mid-air, while the second drove through the leg of the other, sending it crashing to the ground.

The Skivoks hit the forest floor hard, writhing in pain, but recovered quickly. Their soulless eyes turned toward Edith, Karla, and Robin with a guttural snarl.

"Seems like they can handle those things. No need for us to worry, then. Let's take this bastard down," Lucian said, his gauntlets glowing as small stones rose from the earth and launched themselves at the Malgath.

At the same time, Liam activated flame boost, propelling himself forward like a comet, his daggers blazing with flames that carved through the smoke of Lucian's attack.

The Malgath stood unmoving, as the earthen projectiles collided with its body, creating an explosive impact that sent dust and debris swirling in the air. Liam surged through the cloud of dust, driving a high knee toward the creature's chest. The force of his strike echoed through the battlefield, but it was like hitting solid granite.

Liam twisted mid-air, slashing downward with his flaming daggers, but the only response was the shower of sparks as his blades skidded across the Malgath's impenetrable hide. Realizing the futility of his assault, Liam backflipped away, landing in a crouch a safe distance from the demon.

Lucian arrived beside him moments later, his expression tense. "Looks like its skin is as tough as the Titanborne's," he muttered, his eyes narrowing at the Malgath, now grinning with sharp, predatory teeth.

"Yeah," Liam said evenly, rising to his feet. "And its core area is even tougher."

"So how are we gonna kill this thing? Gonna try that explosion of yours again?" Lucian asked, glancing at Liam's daggers.

Liam shook his head. "No. If I do, we might all get caught in the blast. Last time, the Titanborne's size contained the explosion mostly within its body. This thing's smaller—more compact, but way stronger."

Lucian frowned, clenching his fists. "I see. What if we drag it away from here? Give it some space?"

"That could work," Liam admitted, his gaze locked on the Malgath, "but it'll take nearly all my myst to pull off something like that."

Lucian smirked, flexing his gauntlets as the earth trembled beneath his feet. "Interesting. Then I guess we're stuck facing it head-on. Still, it doesn't have eyes. We can use that."

"It doesn't need eyes to see," Liam countered, twirling his daggers with a cold precision. "And its intelligence is way beyond those lesser Horrors. But none of that changes a thing. We're taking it down."

"Good. I was hoping you'd say that," Lucian replied, his voice laced with excitement. Earthen spears materialized around him, sharp and deadly, as the ground cracked beneath his feet.

The Malgath tilted its head slightly, the grin widening as if it could hear their every word. The air grew heavier, an oppressive dread pressing down on them.

Liam and Lucian launched themselves at the Malgath with synchronized ferocity, their movements fluid and precise. Lucian was the first to engage, summoning jagged spears of earth from the ground and hurling them in rapid succession. The projectiles whistled through the air, aiming for the Malgath's glowing veins.

At the same time, Liam darted in from the side, his Flame Boost blazing brighter as he twisted his body mid-leap, striking with his dual daggers in a series of rapid, slashing arcs.

The Malgath remained rooted to the spot, its massive form absorbing every attack without flinching. Sparks erupted as Liam's daggers scraped against its hide, leaving only faint scorch marks. Lucian's earthen spears shattered against its body.

Lucian didn't relent, leaping into the air and slamming his gauntlets together. The ground beneath the Malgath erupted, jagged columns of rock shooting upward to crush it from below.

Liam, undeterred, used the explosion from Lucian's attack as cover. He lunged through the debris cloud, spinning mid-air to deliver a flaming roundhouse kick aimed at the Malgath's neck. The flames trailed behind his strike like a comet's tail, the force of the attack powerful enough to create a shockwave. But the Malgath raised an arm at the last moment, blocking the strike effortlessly. The sheer impact sent a ripple of displaced air through the forest.

The boys didn't let up, shifting their tactics seamlessly. Liam dropped low, sliding between the Malgath's legs, aiming precise slashes at the joints in its knees, while Lucian circled to the left, his gauntlets summoning large boulders that he hurled one after another with devastating speed.

The Malgath, however, was far from a mindless beast. Its movements were deliberate, its stance unyielding. It allowed the boys to push it further into the forest, away from the others, all the while assessing their techniques. Its glowing veins brightened slightly, as if the creature was amused.

Liam saw an opening—a slight shift in the Malgath's stance left its neck exposed. He darted forward, Flame Boost surging as he closed the distance in a blur. His daggers gleamed, the edges crackling with flames as he prepared a cross-slash aimed directly at the creature's neck.

But just as his blades were about to connect, the Malgath tilted its head back and let out a guttural roar. The sound reverberated like a shockwave, but it wasn't just sound—it was power. White flames erupted from the glowing veins along its body, bursting outward in a blinding wave of destructive force.

The blast struck Liam mid-air, the heat scorching even through his myst shield. He was sent hurtling backward, crashing through trees as if they were paper, before slamming into the ground. Lucian wasn't spared either; the force of the flames smashed him into a boulder, shattering it on impact. The forest was left in chaos, trees smoldering and the ground charred where the flames had touched.

Liam groaned as he pushed himself up, his vision swimming. His flames flickered weakly around him, but he forced himself to activate Flame Boost again. This time, the flames at his feet propelled him forward faster than before. The wind howled in his ears as he moved, his daggers poised for another strike.

The Malgath turned toward him, its soulless grin widening as its glowing veins pulsed. Liam closed the distance in seconds, feinting a strike to the creature's chest before twisting his body at the last moment to aim for its neck again. The Malgath anticipated the move, raising its clawed arm in a sweeping arc to intercept.

Liam ducked under the strike with a hair's breadth to spare, planting his hands on the ground and flipping backward to avoid a follow-up attack. The Malgath's claws slashed through the space where he had just been, carving deep grooves into the earth.

Lucian rejoined the fight, summoning a massive earthen wall behind the Malgath to trap it. He clapped his gauntlets together, the wall crumbling into a storm of rock shards that converged on the creature like a barrage of bullets. The Malgath spun, its movements deceptively fast for its size, and released another burst of white flames. The shards melted mid-air, the heat turning them into harmless wisps of steam.

The boys regrouped, standing a few meters apart with the Malgath. Its intelligence was unmistakable now—it wasn't just enduring their attacks, it was studying them, dissecting their tactics as well. The faint, pulsing glow of its veins seemed to mock their efforts.

Liam's grip tightened around his daggers, his knuckles whitening as frustration bubbled beneath his composed exterior. His usually calm mind was now a storm of irritation.

'Why can't I land a proper attack on this thing? I know I can take it down... so why the hell does it feel like I'm the one being toyed with?'

Lucian's voice cut through his thoughts. "This thing's playing with us," he muttered, his gauntlets shifting as jagged shards of earth floated into the air.

"Yeah, and it's almost vexing," Liam replied coldly, his eyes narrowing. "I want you to attack with sharper projectiles, faster. We're pushing this bastard further into the forest."

Lucian blinked, then frowned. "Alright... wait," his voice slowed, realization dawning. "You don't mean..."

"I do," Liam interrupted. He exhaled slowly, the glow in his crimson eyes intensifying as a faint trail of myst coiled around his form. "I'm using the explosion attack again."

Lucian hesitated. "You know the risks, right? Last time—"

"I know," Liam said sharply, cutting him off. He shifted his stance, twirling his daggers as if to shake off his doubts. "But it's the only way to end this." His gaze locked on the Malgath. "Just keep it distracted long enough for me to charge up."

Lucian let out a resigned sigh, cracking his neck as the earth beneath him began to tremble. "Fine. But you are not going to be the hero this time."