

ShadowBound 173

Chapter 173: Aftermath

The Dark Knight Academy, the grand observation dome.

"Wow, that was something. Even more suicidal than what he did with the Titanborne. Hehe." Magnus said, grinning ear to ear as he munched on popcorn, his eyes glued to the magical screens showing the aftermath of Liam's battle.

"Yeah, and he's set half the forest ablaze too. Honestly, I'm impressed he didn't set himself full on fire in the process. And you were right, Magpie, he did figure out his little problem and fix it." Mystica added, her tone light and teasing as she leaned back in her chair.

"Of course I was right! When am I ever wrong?" Magnus shot back with a smug grin, tilting the bowl of popcorn to pour the crumbs into his mouth. Half of them missed, landing on his lap.

Mystica raised an eyebrow, her lips curling into a smirk. "Do you really want me to answer that question, sweetie?"

"Yep," Magnus said confidently, brushing the popcorn crumbs onto the floor without a care. "I mean, between the three of us, I'm the one who believed the kid would figure it out. So, conclusion? I'm never wrong. Period."

"Can you shut it?" Galen finally spoke, his voice low and annoyed, his eyes still closed as if trying to block out Magnus's existence.

Magnus grinned wider. "Ohh, sorry, Gally. Didn't mean to interrupt your beauty rest." He crunched his popcorn obnoxiously loud, dragging out each chew just to get on Galen's nerves.

Galen let out a long, exasperated sigh as he stood up, clearly deciding that his peace of mind was more important than whatever chaos Magnus was brewing. "I'm leaving. Mystica, you should probably deal with the kids before daybreak. They look like they've been through hell, and I'm not interested in hearing the Headmaster rant about how we let this happen."

Magnus gasped dramatically, clutching his chest like Galen had just delivered a mortal blow. "Gally, you wound me! You're just going to leave me here? What about our bond, our friendship?!"

Galen didn't even look back. "Nope."

"Wow," Mystica said, her tone dripping with mock pity. "Leaving us to handle the mess you specifically said we should let happen. Tsk, tsk, tsk. That's not very knightly of you, sweetie."

"What do you mean us?" Magnus piped up, his face scrunched in exaggerated confusion as he stood, clutching his half-empty popcorn bowl. "I'm not cleaning up anything. You've got this, Mystica. I believe in you."

"Don't you dare—" Mystica started, pointing a finger at him, but Magnus was already skipping toward the door behind Galen.

"Enjoy your night, Mystica! Byeee! And muah!" Magnus blew her a loud, obnoxious kiss before laughing to himself as he followed Galen.

Mystica glared at the door as it shut behind the two of them. "You bastards," she muttered, though there was a flicker of amusement in her voice.

Letting out a soft sigh, she leaned back in her chair, draping herself lazily across it. "Well, looks like it's just me cleaning up the mess. Again. Those bald-headed idiots," she muttered with a smile, shaking her head.

Finally standing up, she stretched her arms over her head, her dark hair cascading like a curtain down her back. Turning to the glowing magical screens, she gave one last glance at the aftermath of Liam's fight.

"Alright, time to go."

And with that, Mystica disappeared from the observation dome.

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Upon appearing in Vlardia, Mystica surveyed the scene with a playful smirk, her eyes flickering as she took in the chaos. "Oh, Liam, darling, you've really outdone yourself this time. Setting a whole forest on fire to kill one demon? Reckless. Very you." She hovered in the air for a moment, lazily spinning a strand of her dark hair around her finger. "Well, let's clean up your little mess, shall we? You owe me for this, sweetie."

Her first stop was the unconscious Edith, sprawled out on the ground and pale from the Skivok's poison. "Tsk, ts. Poison? Really? That's so... pedestrian." Mystica crouched beside her, glowing light pooling in her hands. "Don't worry, darling, I'll fix you right up. But not too much. Can't have anyone getting suspicious about my magical handiwork, now can we?" With a flick of her wrist, she purged the poison from Edith's body and healed her wounds, leaving just enough fatigue to make it look like a natural recovery.

She moved to Karla and Robin next, healing their injuries with a delicate touch. "Poor little warriors," Mystica cooed mockingly, her tone dripping with false sympathy. "All beaten up and helpless. Where's that fiery resolve now, hmm?" She smirked as she finished, ensuring their strength remained depleted. "There we go. Good as... well, good enough."

Floating through the forest, Mystica found Lucian embedded in a massive boulder, his uniform scorched and cracked. She couldn't help but chuckle as she hovered over him. "Slammed into a rock, huh? And they call me dramatic." She waved her hand, light magic weaving through his body to heal his worst injuries. "You're welcome, sweetheart," she said teasingly, before teleporting him unceremoniously near the cave where the others were. "Let's see if anyone notices how conveniently close you landed."

Next, she arrived at the part of the forest that Liam had set ablaze. Mystica hovered over the devastation, her lips curling into a wicked grin. "Oh, the destruction! The drama! You really know how to make an impression, Liam." She raised her hands, water and ice magic surging out to extinguish the flames with a hiss. Steam rose around her as she worked, her voice echoing through the forest.

"Don't worry, I'll make it mostly pretty again. Gotta leave a little evidence of your heroics, after all." With a flourish, she used nature magic to regrow parts of the forest, intentionally leaving charred scars here and there. "A little chaos is good for the aesthetic," she said with a mischievous smirk.

Finally, Mystica teleported to the crater where Liam lay, battered and broken from his battle with the Malgath. She landed lightly beside him, her gown swaying as she crouched down to inspect his burned and blistered arm. "Oh, Liam, darling," she said softly, though her tone was laced with mockery. "You look absolutely terrible. What would you do without me?"

With a wave of her hand, light magic poured into his arm, healing the worst of the damage. She intentionally left some of the burn scars behind, her lips quirking into a sly smile. "Can't have you looking too perfect now, can we? Scars are very rugged, don't you think?"

Mystica stood up, brushing her hands together as if dusting off invisible dirt. "There. That should keep you alive long enough to stumble back into another disaster." With a snap of her fingers, she teleported him back to the cave, leaving him lying beside the others.

She glanced around the forest one last time, her gaze lingering on the remnants of the battle. "All cleaned up. Well, mostly. I'm not a miracle worker, after all," she said with a playful chuckle before vanishing into thin air.