

ShadowBound 175

Chapter 175: Day Three: The Reason For Anger

Liam watched the two girls share their little reunion with his usual dry expression. Without waiting for the sentimental moment to end, he stepped forward, cutting in.

"You got poisoned?" he asked, his tone devoid of concern or surprise.

Edith glanced at him, slightly taken aback. "Well, yeah. When we were fighting the Skivoks, one of them cut me. But I'm fine now," she said with a shrug.

Liam's eyes narrowed slightly. "I see. Do you remember how you got healed?"

"Uh..." Edith paused, clearly confused. "I thought you did it. I mean, you healed yourself when you got cut during the fight. I figured you did the same for me."

"Sorry to disappoint, but it wasn't me," Liam replied flatly. "And for the record, I didn't heal myself. I just burned the poison out to stop it from spreading. My wound was still there. At least, it was... until now."

Lucian, who had been leaning casually against the cave wall, pushed off with a curious expression. "If it wasn't you, then who? The Skivoks don't exactly heal their victims for fun."

"I think the academy sent healers to take care of us while we were out. That's the only explanation that makes sense."

Karla grinned cheekily, stepping closer. "Well, that shatters my image of you. I actually thought you pulled some mysterious Liam trick to heal us all. Guess I looked up to you too much!"

"Y-yeah, me too," Edith added, her cheeks tinged with embarrassment.

Liam's brow furrowed slightly. He glanced between them with a confused expression, clearly trying to process their misplaced faith.

Lucian smirked, his tone as dry as ever. "What they mean is, we all thought you secretly healed us but didn't bother to mention it—because, you know, it's you."

Liam gave them a flat look. "Heal you? I don't use light or nature magic. What made you think I'd be the one patching you up? And even if I wanted to, I didn't have the strength to crawl all the way here, let alone heal anyone."

The girls exchanged sheepish glances, both letting out embarrassed chuckles.

Without another word, Liam turned away, heading toward the forest.

"Where are you going now?" Edith asked, her voice laced with curiosity.

Explore more at

Liam didn't even glance back. "To heal my arm," he said bluntly.

The group watched him go, his figure disappearing into the trees.

Edith frowned, glancing at the others. "Uh... did something happen to him? He sounds more annoyed than usual."

Robin stammered, scratching the back of his head. "B—Beats me. He's been like that ever since he woke up."

— —

As Liam reached the waterfall, the steady roar of cascading water drowned out the thoughts swirling in his head. He made his way to the pools at the base of the falls, the air damp and cool around him. Kneeling down, he scooped the cold water into his hands and splashed it onto his face.

'I need to calm down,' he thought, letting the water drip down his cheeks. 'I'm being too sensitive about this. It's my fault it happened, so instead of sulking like a kid, I better focus on finding a solution.'

Despite his best efforts, irritation still simmered under the surface. He knew exactly why he was so frustrated. It wasn't just losing one of his daggers—although that was bad enough. Those daggers weren't ordinary weapons to him. They were the only tangible reminders of his first mentor, Draven. To Liam, they were his legacy, a piece of the man who had shaped him into who he was today.

And now one was destroyed, while the other was chipped and barely functional. Liam clenched his fists, his jaw tightening as the memory of the fight with the Malgath replayed in his mind. It wasn't the demon that angered him—it was himself. His arrogance, his recklessness. He'd failed to protect what mattered to him, and the consequences of that failure stung far more than any wound.

He exhaled sharply, leaning forward to splash more water on his face, the coldness grounding him. He forced himself to push the anger aside, redirecting his thoughts to something more productive. 'The exams,' he reminded himself. 'This is our last day in Vlardia. I can't afford to waste time dwelling on this.'

After a few moments, Liam stood, peeling off his shirt. The damp air clung to his skin, and the sunlight streaming through the canopy illuminated the bruises along his right arm. He frowned, studying the discoloration before placing his left hand over the bruises.

Closing his eyes, he muttered an incantation under his breath. Myst gathered around his hand, glowing faintly as the Mend spell took effect. In seconds, the bruises vanished, his arm looking as if it had never been touched by the fight.

'That should do,' he thought, flexing his fingers to ensure everything was in order.

Satisfied, he turned his attention back to the pool. The water glimmered under the sunlight, and Liam decided to take a moment to clean himself up. He stepped closer to the edge, letting the tension of the last few days slowly wash away with each drop of water cascading over him.

After finishing at the waterfall, Liam made his way back to the cave. As he stepped into the cave, he found Edith and the others in the middle of a discussion.

"Oh, you're back," Edith said, noticing him. "Good timing. We were just talking about how we plan on surviving today. Since this is our last day for the test, we need to make it count."

"Okay," Liam replied calmly.

Edith exchanged a glance with Lucian before continuing, "Robin said he surveyed the forest early this morning. According to him, there are no demons in the area. Not even wild animals."

"Which means," Lucian continued, "we have a problem. We've run out of the fish we caught yesterday. If we don't find food, we'll be running on fumes by the time we leave this place."

Liam leaned against the cave wall, crossing his arms as he listened. "So, you're saying we need to either fish or hunt. If that's the case, prepare to walk further than last time. I checked the riverbank earlier, and there were no fish anywhere near it."

Edith frowned at this, pausing to consider his words. After a moment, she sighed, her shoulders slumping slightly. "That makes sense. The fight with the Malgath and the Skivoks last night must've scared off the wildlife. If they've migrated deeper into the forest, we'll have no choice but to venture into demon territory to find anything."

Robin, who had been quiet until now, spoke up nervously. "That's risky. If we go too far into demon territory, we could end up in another fight. And, let's be honest, none of us are in the best shape for another battle."

Lucian nodded, his expression serious. "He's right. But staying here and starving isn't exactly a better option."

Liam glanced at them, his expression unreadable. "If it's food we need, then we'll have to split up. Cover more ground, move faster. But if we're heading into demon territory, we'll need a solid plan. We can't afford to stumble into a fight unprepared."

"Split up?" Karla asked, her voice tinged with worry. "Wouldn't that make us easier targets if we run into anything?"

"Not if we stick to smaller groups," Liam countered. "Two groups. One focuses on hunting and scouting for food, the other secures the perimeter and keeps watch for anything approaching. We regroup two hours after the sun hits the highest point."

Edith considered his suggestion, her eyes narrowing in thought. "It's not a bad plan. If we're careful, we can cover enough ground without putting ourselves at too much risk. But who's going where?"

"I'll help scout for food," Liam said immediately. "If we head east, toward the thicker part of the forest, that's where the animals would've gone to avoid the demons."

"I'll go with you," Edith volunteered. "Robin, I'll need your bow and arrows again."

Robin hesitated before handing over his weapon, his hands fidgeting nervously. "Just... don't lose it, okay?"

Lucian took charge of the second group. "That leaves me, Karla, and Robin to hold the perimeter. I'll raise some walls with my magic to give us a safe zone and keep watch for anything that might wander too close."

Robin nodded, but Karla looked uncertain, her gaze lingering on Liam. "Are you sure you'll be okay out there? You're still recovering from last night."

"I'll be fine," Liam said, brushing off her concern. "Besides, it wasn't just me who fought last night. Edith's coming with me, and she's just as capable."

Edith clapped her hands, drawing everyone's attention. "Alright, then. It's settled. Liam and I will head east and be back before sunset. You three stay sharp—no unnecessary risks. If something comes near the perimeter, don't try to be heroes."

"Understood," Lucian replied firmly, taking on a commanding presence as he readied his group.

With that, the team split. Liam and Edith headed east into the dense forest while Lucian, Robin, and Karla remained at the perimeter, preparing for the long day ahead.