

ShadowBound 18

Chapter 18: There Is More To This Than I Thought

A few days had passed since Liam started attending classes at Starfall. He had quickly settled into the school's routine, though he remained as quiet and reserved as ever.

The other students had noticed his presence, and rumors had begun to spread about the mysterious new boy who never seemed to speak unless spoken to.

Liam's time at Starfall had been largely uneventful so far, except for his constant observation of the other students.

He silently watched how they practiced magic, noting their strengths and weaknesses, all while honing his own abilities in private. Every lesson intrigued him, but he kept his thoughts to himself, preferring to process everything in silence.

In the classroom, Elsie often sat beside him, trying to draw him into conversation, but Liam's responses were short and vague. Despite that, she continued to be friendly, introducing him to more people and ensuring he was never completely left out of school activities.

As Liam and Elsie walked through the hallway, the quietness of the house was a stark contrast to the hustle and bustle of the school.

"So, any plans for the weekend?" Elsie asked, glancing sideways at Liam.

"Not really. I just want to go over some of the things I learned this week," Liam replied, his tone as calm and distant as always.

"You're always so focused," she said, smiling. "I was thinking of visiting the library, maybe get some new books. You could join me if you want."

Liam considered it for a moment before replying, "I might. Depends on how much I get done first."

They walked a few more steps in silence, comfortable in each other's presence, before they noticed Dain and Mila approaching from the other end of the hall.

"Oh, welcome back, you two," Dain greeted with a smile, stopping in front of them.

"Thanks, Dad," Elsie replied cheerfully. "School was great today."

Dain then turned his attention to Liam, studying him for a moment. "How's school going for you, Liam? Are you finding everything to your liking?"

Liam met Dain's gaze, his expression unchanged. "It's going well. The lessons are insightful, and I'm learning things I didn't expect."

"That's good to hear," Dain said with a nod. "Magic can be unpredictable, but with the right guidance, you'll find your path."

Liam simply nodded, appreciating Dain's advice but not saying much more.

"Well, I'm sure you've both had a long day. Why don't you two rest before dinner?" Dain suggested.

"Good idea," Elsie agreed, stretching her arms a bit. "I'll walk with you, Dad. I need to tell you about something funny that happened during class."

Dain smiled at his daughter. "I'm all ears."

As Elsie and Dain walked off together, chatting animatedly, Liam watched them for a moment before turning toward his own room. The halls were peaceful, a soft glow from the setting sun casting a warm light through the windows.

Walking in silence, Liam's thoughts were already shifting to the lessons he'd learned that week, particularly Ms. Valeria's intricate magic concepts that still echoed in his mind. He had a lot to think about and even more to practice.

Liam approached his room, the faint creak of the door filling the quiet hallway as he slipped inside and closed it behind him. The dim light of the setting sun cast a soft glow over the room.

He began to undress, pulling his shirt over his head, revealing a well-toned physique that had noticeably changed in just a few short days. The definition of his muscles stood out, a testament to the grueling training he'd undergone in the past weeks.

As he undressed, his mind wandered back to the concepts Ms. Valeria had taught in class.

"Without resonance, your magic is incomplete," Ms. Valeria's voice echoed in his head. "The myst around you must be in harmony with your internal myst, otherwise your spells will always lack their full potential."

Liam frowned slightly. Resonance. The word had intrigued him. Ms. Valeria had performed a simple light spell in class using resonance, and the difference was undeniable. But dark magic was another beast entirely.

How do I even begin to resonate with dark myst? Liam thought, the gears turning in his head.

Before he could ponder further, a knock on the door broke his train of thought.

"Come in," he called out.

The door opened slowly, revealing Mila standing in the doorway. Her eyes briefly flickered over Liam's physique, a hint of surprise crossing her face before she spoke.

"Hello, Liam. Dr. Dain asked me to show you a place in the house. Somewhere he thought might be of interest to you," she said, composing herself.

Liam raised an eyebrow, curious. "A place?"

"Yes," Mila nodded. "Something Dr. Dain wanted you to know about."

Liam quickly changed into more comfortable clothes before following Mila down the hallway. As they descended a dimly lit staircase, the atmosphere grew cooler, and the air felt denser.

They reached a heavy wooden door at the bottom. Mila pushed it open, revealing a large, spacious room with high ceilings.

"This," Mila gestured as they entered, "is a training room. You can practice your magic here, work on physical enhancements, and..." she paused for a moment, "...combat skills."

Liam scanned the room, noticing several training dummies, a few weapons mounted on the walls, and wide-open space perfect for training. He wasn't particularly surprised, but the size of the room was impressive.

"This place is spacious," he commented, walking further into the room.

"Yes. Dr. Dain's father was a knight, and he used to train here," Mila explained, her tone carrying a trace of nostalgia.

Liam's interest piqued. "Then why isn't Dr. Dain a knight?"

Mila hesitated for a moment before answering. "Dr. Dain wanted to follow in his father's footsteps, but after his father died fighting against the relentless demons, he abandoned that dream. He decided he would save knights rather than be one. That's why he became a doctor."

Liam absorbed the story, quietly respecting the weight behind Dain's decision. "I see."

Mila gave a small nod. "Well, I'll leave you to it. I'm sure you have some training to do here."

She turned to leave when Liam's voice stopped her. "Mila."

She turned back to face him.

"Do you know the technique called resonance?" Liam asked, his voice as steady as ever, though there was a subtle intensity in his question.

Mila's eyes widened slightly before a smile curved her lips. "Resonance? Of course. It's a fundamental technique for anyone serious about magic. Most mages learn it early on."

Liam's expression didn't change, but his interest was clearly piqued. "Could you explain it to me? I know you're busy, but I only need a few words."

Mila tilted her head thoughtfully. "Alright. Resonance is about aligning your internal myst with the external myst in the environment. When your energy harmonizes with the surrounding myst, your magic becomes more powerful and efficient. It's like... tuning an instrument. If you're out of sync, your spell will always be flat, incomplete."

Liam nodded, absorbing the information.

"To start," Mila continued, "you need to feel the flow of myst around you. Close your eyes, focus on the energy within you, then reach out with your senses. Once you can feel that external myst, try to synchronize your own with it. It's not something that happens instantly, but with practice, you'll learn to resonate with different types of myst."

Liam gave a small nod of understanding. "I see. Thank you."

Mila smiled again. "You'll get the hang of it. Don't rush. Resonance requires patience." With that, she gave a respectful nod and turned, leaving Liam alone in the spacious room.

As the door closed behind her, Liam stood in the center of the room, closing his eyes and steadying his breath. 'Feel the myst around me...' he repeated in his mind, his focus now entirely on mastering the technique of resonance.

He closed his eyes, blocking out everything but the energy inside him. He knew his myst was there...it always had been, coursing through him like a quiet, powerful river.

The challenge was in recognizing it, truly feeling it for what it was. With each controlled breath, he started to sense a faint pulse deep within himself, a dark and cool energy that responded to his focus. His dark myst. It felt cold, yet it held a hidden warmth, like embers buried deep under ash.

He let his awareness expand beyond his own myst. The room around him felt... still at first. But the longer he focused, the more he began to notice the subtle flickers of myst in the air.

It was faint, like a breeze stirring the edges of his perception. The ambient energy in the room was everywhere, just waiting to be drawn into harmony with his own.

Resonance... it's like tuning an instrument...

Slowly, carefully, Liam let his internal myst reach out. The connection was hesitant at first, like two unfamiliar forces trying to understand one another.

He felt the pull of the external myst resisting him for a moment, but he pushed on, focusing on the flow. It was like trying to sync two different rhythms, but as his concentration deepened, something clicked.

The external myst started to merge with his own, their pulses syncing. A shiver ran through his body as he felt the power flowing smoother than before.

His internal myst, once a singular, controlled force, now resonated with the energy around him, amplifying its presence. He could feel the difference instantly. His dark myst felt sharper, heavier, like the shadow of a looming storm.

Opening his eyes, Liam raised a hand and summoned a flicker of flames, trying to imbue it with dark magic.

The red and black danced on his palm, more intense than ever before. It was a small spell, but its potency had increased tenfold. He clenched his fist, extinguishing the flame, a small smirk forming on his lips.

This... this is what Ms. Valeria meant. Resonance.

But that was only the beginning. Liam's mind quickly moved beyond basic magic use. His thoughts raced to the one thing that had haunted him since his training with Draven—his shadow army.

If I can resonate with external myst... he thought, his eyes narrowing as he considered the possibilities. ...then could I resonate with the shadows I've extracted? Could I amplify them using this technique?

He closed his eyes again, this time focusing not on the ambient myst around him, but on the shadows stored within him...the fragments of the dead he had pulled into his own myst.

He could feel their presence, dormant but waiting. There were only a few shadows at the moment, the first ones he had managed to extract, but the potential was clear.

'If I can connect with their essence...' he mused, '...resonate with the myst that holds them together, I could strengthen them, make them more powerful than ever before.'

His mind whirled with possibilities. What if he could summon an army not just of ordinary shadows, but of beings empowered by resonance?

What if, by resonating with the myst of the forest or any environment he was in, he could transform his shadow army into an unstoppable force?

Liam's excitement was growing. The resonance technique was more than just a method of amplifying spells...it was a gateway to mastering his unique abilities on a whole new level.

He envisioned his future self, commanding a legion of shadows, each one in perfect harmony with his own myst, their strength amplified by the energy around them.

He opened his eyes again, a fire of determination burning within them.

"I need to practice more. If I can resonate with the myst of this room, I can start trying with my shadows. Once I master that, no one will be able to stop me."

Liam's lips curled into a faint smile, a rare display of emotion from him. The path to power was opening before him, and he had no intention of wasting it. The next step was clear: perfect resonance, and then... the shadows.