

ShadowBound 205

Chapter 205: My Main Goal

As the bell rang, signaling the end of class and the day, students poured into the hallway from all departments, heading toward the dorms. The sun was beginning its descent, casting long shadows as the students walked in a quiet buzz.

Liam didn't spare a second glance at anyone, brushing past the students like a shadow himself. He didn't acknowledge the stares that some students threw his way or Charlotte's antics, her voice trailing behind him with that familiar teasing tone.

When he reached his room, he swung the door open and immediately unbuttoned his shirt, revealing the bruises along his abdomen. He exhaled, his gaze drifting down to the area where Seraphina's attack had left its mark. 'Despite not going all out,' he thought, 'she broke through my Myst shield and left me with this.'

He placed his hand over the bruise, using the Mend spell to heal his injury. But even as the pain receded, a nagging feeling lingered.

Without hesitation, he made his way to the bathroom. He needed a moment to clear his head. Not because he'd lost—losing to professionals was part of the deal. No, it was what Seraphina had said in class that troubled him.

He stood in front of the mirror, his eyes reflecting a distant look. The lesson had shaken him in a way that only the hardest truths could. He wasn't surprised by the brutality of the training, but the weight of her words hit deeper than expected. The idea that, eventually, he might have to kill another human—it was something he hadn't really considered.

He'd trained for years, and demons were the ones he focused on. They were the enemy. The ones who had taken his grandfather, destroyed his happy life, and forced him into the shadows of vengeance. But humans...?

Liam had never considered that. He might've grown cold, distant, and relentless toward demons, but never toward humans. He'd never taken a life, not one that had once been human.

Well, except Jamak... His thoughts faltered for a second. Jamak had once been human, true, and later was transformed into a beast, something Liam didn't know until he had actually 'won' that fight.

But still... Could he really take a human life?

That was a line he hadn't crossed, and a part of him feared what might happen if he ever did.

But...

Liam exhaled, his fingers pressing against the sink as he stared at his reflection. The thoughts clawed at the edges of his mind, but he refused to let them take root. He had come too far to be shaken by something like this.

Killing a person...

The weight of those words should have been heavier, but he wouldn't let it drag him down. It wasn't something he could decide on so easily, nor was it something he wanted to decide on. But letting that hesitation consume him? No. He wouldn't allow that.

He clenched his jaw, the memory of his grandfather flashing through his mind—his warmth, his laughter, and then... the blood. The pain. The monsters that tore his life apart.

His path had already been carved out in darkness the day his grandfather was taken from him. Everything he had done—every grueling night, every drop of sweat and blood, every time he pushed himself to the edge—it was all for them. The demons. The ones responsible.

That was his purpose.

Not protecting people. Not playing the hero. And definitely not wasting time debating morals that had no place in his world.

Whether he could take a human life or not, it didn't matter right now. He wouldn't let that question sink its claws into him. This course, this training—it was another step forward, another way to get stronger. He needed that strength if he was ever going to achieve what he set out to do.

His grip on the sink tightened.

'I won't let this thought swallow me whole.'

He had survived too much, fought through too much, to be stopped by uncertainty.

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The dim glow of enchanted lanterns cast a sultry ambiance across the opulent bar, a haven for the wealthy and powerful who sought respite from their carefully curated lives. The scent of spiced wine and exotic perfumes mingled in the air, mingling with the low hum of conversation and the occasional burst of laughter.

This was no ordinary tavern—it was a sanctuary of indulgence, where nobility and knights shed the weight of duty for an evening of pleasure. Here, deals were brokered over golden goblets, alliances strengthened in the hushed corners of velvet-clad booths. It was a place where status meant little for a night, replaced by the primal pursuit of desire and distraction. The rich came to forget their responsibilities, to relish in the company of willing men and women, and to lose themselves in the allure of extravagance.

Beyond the revelry, in a secluded private room, two women sat with glasses in hand. Mystica Moonstone, her dark gown clinging to her form like liquid night, swirled the amber liquid in her goblet, the faintest of smirks on her lips. Across from her, Seraphina reclined against plush cushions, her legs crossed, a knowing glint in her eyes as she took a slow sip of her wine.

"Well, well," Seraphina purred, setting her glass down with deliberate grace. "To what do I owe the pleasure of this rare invitation? I thought you were too busy to entertain little old me."

Mystica chuckled, shaking her head. "Oh, come now, Seraphina. We both know I don't invite just anyone for a drink. But I must admit, it's been too long. You haven't changed a bit."

Seraphina smirked. "Neither have you, dear. Still as mysterious as ever." She leaned forward, resting her chin on the back of her hand. "But I doubt you brought me here just to reminisce. You have something on your mind."

Mystica's smirk widened. With a casual flick of her fingers, she cast a Silent Spell across the room. A subtle pulse of myst rippled outward, sealing them in a bubble of absolute privacy. No stray ears would catch their words, and any attempt at magical eavesdropping would be met with immediate detection.

Seraphina's eyebrow arched. "Oh? This must be interesting."

Mystica reclined in her seat, amusement dancing in her violet eyes. "I know you're already indulging in your dirty little dream about my little shadow, Liam. So I figured you'd find out sooner or later."

Seraphina let out a low, throaty laugh, tilting her head. "Please, spare me the theatrics, Mystica." She leaned back, eyes half-lidded in amusement. "If this is about his dark magic, you should know I already sensed it."

Mystica blinked, genuinely surprised. "I expected you to figure it out eventually, but this quickly? I shouldn't be shocked—you've always been myst-sensitive."

Seraphina's lips curled into a slow, knowing smile. "My dear, you don't train killers without learning to sniff out the hidden daggers." She traced the rim of her glass, voice silky. "And Liam? That boy is a blade still being sharpened. His potential is... delicious."

Mystica exhaled, shaking her head with a wry grin. "One reason I want him in your course is to teach him how to erase both his dark myst and aura at will—without any detection."

Seraphina hummed in thought, swirling her drink. "Cloaking one's presence so completely... an advanced skill. But one that would suit him." She looked up, her eyes glinting with mischief. "No need to worry about that, love. I've already decided—I'm going to make Liam into a fine killing machine."

Mystica took a slow sip of her wine, her expression unreadable. "I had a feeling you'd say that."

Seraphina chuckled. "Of course. He's more talented than I expected. He has even made my feelings stir."

Mystica arched a brow. "You do have a thing for younger men."

Seraphina smirked. "And you don't?"

Mystica only chuckled in response, setting her glass down. "I won't deny that Liam has a way of drawing attention. He's reckless sometimes, but there's something about him... something rare that I want to find out."

Seraphina nodded. "Indeed. He reminds me of my best student—Percy Granger, my Zero."

Mystica smiled knowingly. "I expected you to say that. After all, the two do share a similar presence and style."

Seraphina's expression darkened slightly, her amusement shifting into something more contemplative. "There is a difference, though." She leaned forward, her voice softer, yet no less firm. "Liam hesitates. When it comes to delivering a clean, solid hit on a person, he holds back. Percy, on the other hand, has already ascended beyond such limitations."

Mystica exhaled, tilting her head. "Do you think Liam will be able to do the same?"

Seraphina smirked, a glint of something dangerous in her eyes. "Oh, I have no doubt. He may hesitate now, but if he truly wishes to walk this path, to become strong enough to reach whatever goal he has, he will have to cast away that hesitation. And I will make sure he does."

Mystica chuckled softly. "You're enjoying this, aren't you?"

Seraphina's lips curled into a slow, almost predatory smile. "Immensely."

The two women clinked their glasses together, the conversation shifting seamlessly.