

ShadowBound 208

Chapter 208: Rising Issues 3

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The assassin's instincts flared.

Without hesitation, his figure blurred—a streak of darkness cutting across the dimly lit office.

SCHLK.

A clean, precise slash.

Aveline's demonic head was severed in an instant.

But he wasn't finished.

Before the decapitated body could even collapse, his second blade struck forward, piercing deep into the chest cavity.

CRACK.

He twisted the blade sharply, ensuring the demonic core was utterly shattered.

A gruesome silence followed.

Dark red and thick black blood seeped across the floor, the grotesque fusion of human and demon pooling beneath the lifeless body.

The assassin stood over the corpse, his voice barely above a whisper—

"For the Kingdom."

His expression remained unreadable as he watched the final traces of life fade from what was once Duchess Aveline Voreaux.

Yet, something lingered in his mind.

'How... is this possible?'

His sharp eyes studied the twisted corpse, its grotesque form still partially caught between human and demon.

This wasn't just a demon.

It was a Sync.

A Sync—the rarest, most dangerous type of demon second to the demon lords. A human corpse becoming a demon was unheard of, impossible even.

And yet... here she was.

The assassin remained still, his thoughts racing.

This was no ordinary traitor.

Something far darker was at play.

After a brief moment, he stretched out a gloved hand over the lifeless body.

Myst energy crackled in the air as a distortion formed above the corpse.

With a flick of his fingers, a Dimensional spell activated.

SHWOOM.

The body was swallowed whole, vanishing into the assassin's personal spatial storage.

His gaze flickered toward the ruined office—the shattered furniture, the bloodstained floor, the lingering aura of a battle fought in silence.

His mission was done.

Yet, the implications...

This could not be witnessed.

He exhaled quietly, adjusting his gloves before murmuring—

"The Queen must know."

With that, he stepped onto the edge of the window, casting one last glance over his shoulder.

The room stood in ruin.

Then—

He vanished.

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By sunrise, the entire Zone 9 was buzzing with the same grim news—

Duchess Aveline Voreaux was dead.

The whispers traveled through the streets of Veridn, stretching across the noble estates, merchant districts, and commoner settlements. It wasn't just some political shift—this was shocking. A noble of her stature, wiped out overnight?

But what truly cemented the fear in people's hearts was the cause of death.

A demon attack.

That's what every report claimed.

Servants who discovered the scene in the Voreaux estate described a nightmare—gore, shredded furniture, and blackened blood staining the floors. There was no body, no sign of struggle outside the office, no evidence of an assassin's blade. Just pure, savage destruction.

It was believable.

The Duchess had fought, and fought well. But in the end, the demon had devoured her whole, leaving nothing behind but the nightmarish scene.

The nobility of Zone 9 had mixed reactions.

Some were shaken—if a high-class noble wasn't safe from such attacks, who was? Others whispered suspicion, their minds spinning with conspiracy. And then there were those who saw this as an opportunity—a power vacuum had just opened.

By noon, the news had reached even the Tempest Kingdom's inner court.

And Queen Lucy Rature?

She was about to find out the truth.

Back in the Tempest Palace, the sun had fully risen, casting golden light over the Palace, its towering structures gleaming in the morning glow.

Inside, in the Queen's private chambers, Lucy Rature sat elegantly by her window, a cup of steaming tea in hand. She stirred it slowly, the soft clinking of the silver teaspoon the only sound in the otherwise silent room.

Her piercing green eyes remained fixed on the view before her—the vast palace courtyard, where guards patrolled in disciplined formations and nobles moved with purpose.

Then, without turning her gaze, she spoke.

"How did the mission go, Wyjin?"

At her words, a figure emerged from the shadows of the room, kneeling on one knee, head lowered, fist pressed firmly against the polished marble floor.

"Your Majesty," Wyjin greeted with utmost respect. "The mission was a success. The traitor has been executed."

Queen Lucy's movements remained measured as she finished stirring her tea. Setting the spoon aside, she lifted the cup to her lips, taking a slow sip.

"Good work," she said calmly. "Your dedication to the kingdom is noted and appreciated."

Wyjin lowered his head slightly in acknowledgment. "I am honored, Your Majesty."

Then, his tone shifted slightly—still composed, but graver.

"There is something else, Your Majesty."*****

Lucy's stirring motion ceased midair, her spoon resting just above the tea's surface.

She didn't tense, nor did her expression falter, but there was a slight pause—a momentary stillness.

Wyjin continued.

"After I executed Duchess Aveline, her body began transforming into a Sync-class demon—a Gaia demon."

Silence settled in the room, the weight of his words hanging heavy in the air.

The Queen finally set her teacup down with an unhurried motion, resting it gently on the table beside her.

Her green eyes, sharp and calculating, shifted toward Wyjin. "Did you retrieve the body before it disintegrated?"

"Yes, Your Majesty." Wyjin nodded. "I secured it in my Dimensional Storage."

Lucy was quiet for a moment before she spoke. "Good."

She then gave a firm command, her voice absolute. "This does not reach the public. Under no circumstances is this information to spread. The cause behind this phenomenon is unknown, and I will not have rumors disrupting the kingdom."

"Understood." Wyjin bowed his head.

After a brief pause, he then asked, "What would you have me do with the body, Your Majesty?"

Lucy's gaze flickered toward the window once more. "Store it for the time being."

Wyjin gave a slight nod of acknowledgment.

The Queen took another slow sip of her tea before adding, "One more thing. Bring me Landen."

Without hesitation, Wyjin pressed his fist to the floor once more. "As you command, Your Majesty."

And just like that, he vanished, disappearing into the shadows without a sound.

As Wyjin vanished into the shadows, the room fell into silence once more. But only for a moment.

Barely a minute had passed when another figure materialized, kneeling in the exact manner Wyjin had before—one knee to the ground, head lowered, and fist pressed against the polished marble floor.

The figure spoke with unwavering respect.

"Your Majesty, you summoned me."

Queen Lucy remained poised, her gaze still fixed on the golden horizon beyond her window. Without turning to face him, she spoke his name.

"Landen."

Landen remained in place, still as stone. "Of course, my Queen."

The Queen set down her teacup with a soft clink, then issued her command.

"I need you to deliver a message. Travel to Zone 12—to the Dark Knight Academy. Find Mystica Moonstone and inform her that I require her presence in my quarters at once."

Landen, without hesitation, acknowledged her words. "As you command."

With that, the Queen dismissed him, and in an instant, Landen vanished, disappearing like a phantom into the shadows.

Now alone once more, Queen Lucy exhaled softly, her fingers idly tracing the rim of her teacup.

Her sharp emerald eyes darkened as she mulled over the disturbing revelation.

"A human transforming into a demon after death... What is this anomaly stirring within my kingdom?"

Her voice was quiet, yet it carried a weight that could crush mountains.

For the first time in a long while, a shadow of uncertainty crept into the mind of the Queen.