

ShadowBound 215

Chapter 215: You Are Strong, But Not Enough

A tense silence filled the room. Liam remained perfectly still, his foot pressing against Kaine's throat, while Kaine's steel-gray eyes bore into him, unreadable yet smoldering with suppressed fury.

Then—something changed.

Kaine exhaled slowly, the tension in his muscles loosening just enough to signal that he wasn't going to lash out. Not yet.

Liam narrowed his eyes, but before he could react, Kaine's lips curled into something that was neither a smirk nor a sneer—just a knowing, dangerous expression.

"You're arrogant, but have power to back that up." Kaine muttered, his voice eerily calm. "I'll give you that."

Liam didn't respond. His foot remained firmly in place.

"But tell me something, kid..." Kaine's hand twitched slightly against the ground, but not in an attempt to fight back. "You think this... means anything?" His voice was low, controlled, almost condescending. "You think that landing a few hits—getting a momentary advantage—puts you anywhere near my level?"

The room felt like it shrank.

And then—Liam felt it.

A pulse. A shift in the air.

It was subtle, but instinct screamed at him. In the same way a predator knows when a larger, deadlier beast is in its territory, Liam's entire body recognized what was happening before his mind even processed it.

The difference in power.

It was overwhelming.

Kaine wasn't angry. He wasn't humiliated. He wasn't even bothered.

He had let Liam have his moment.

And now, Liam could feel it—that chilling, unshakable certainty. If Kaine had wanted to, if he had truly cared to fight back, Liam wouldn't have lasted a second.

The realization was like ice crawling up his spine.

Kaine saw it in his eyes and let out a low chuckle.

"There it is," he murmured. "That moment when your instincts catch up to reality." His voice was almost amused, but there was no warmth in it. "I was waiting for that look."

Liam clenched his jaw, refusing to let his expression falter.

Kaine tilted his head slightly, his voice dropping into something almost too quiet. "I could have killed you. I should have killed you. But lucky for you..." His lips twitched, as if the very idea was entertaining. "I'm not in the mood to explain a student's sudden disappearance to the academy."

Liam felt his foot waver just slightly. Kaine caught it.

In a blink, Kaine's hand shot up—fast. Too fast.

Before Liam could react, Kaine's fingers barely brushed his ankle—but that was all it took.

A shockwave of myst pulsed outward from Kaine's touch, and an unseen force ripped Liam off of him. He barely had time to twist his body mid-air before he crashed onto the floor, rolling once before coming to a crouch.

Kaine stood.

He didn't even bother dusting himself off.

Liam was still poised, still burning with defiance—but now, they both knew the truth.

Kaine exhaled through his nose, the smallest trace of a smirk lingering. "Remember what I said, Hunter." He turned towards the door, voice flat. "Drop the course. You won't get another warning."

Liam remained silent. He wasn't backing down—but he wasn't foolish enough to speak again.

As Kaine stepped toward the door, he paused just before exiting. Without looking back, he added, "And keep your damn flames off my superior." Then, with a click, he was gone.

The room felt disturbingly empty.

Liam exhaled slowly, running a hand through his hair, his pulse still steady.

"That bastard... still had the nerve to bring that up." Liam let out a slow breath as he shifted from his crouch, dropping onto the cold floor. His mind was still racing, but a new realization crept in.

'I went too far.' His fingers curled slightly against the ground. 'That's twice now. Twice I've let Nyxie's aura slip out without even realizing it.'

His gaze drifted toward the cracks in the wall where Kaine had pinned him. The memory of that crushing force lingered in his muscles, but it wasn't the physical damage that unsettled him—it was the loss of control.

"I need to do better," he muttered under his breath. "I need to keep myself in check."

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Beyond Liam's dorm, Kaine stepped into the corridor, his expression unreadable. Without hesitation, he activated a stealth spell, his form vanishing from sight as he exited the building.

His footsteps were silent, his presence erased, but his thoughts churned.

'That kid... he's far more dangerous than I expected.' Kaine's brows furrowed as he recalled the raw, suffocating killing intent Liam had unleashed. And that aura—the moment it had washed over him, it was as if he had been staring into something inhuman.

Something monstrous.

'If he can release that kind of pressure without the enough power to back it up... what happens when he does have the power?'

The thought was unsettling. But then Kaine's expression darkened.

'Not that it matters. If he thinks he can ignore my warning, then fine. I'll just make sure his time here is hell.'

His lips curled in distaste.

'Getting closer to Seraphina... that was his first mistake.'

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Mystica and Ariana walked side by side through the academy's hallways, heading away from the Spatial Magic department. Ariana carried a stack of books in her arms, carefully adjusting them as they walked.

Mystica glanced at her with a small smile. "So, my little star, how are your studies going?"

Ariana beamed, shifting the books slightly. "They've been going well! Thanks to your extra lessons, I'm finally managing to balance all my courses properly."

"Is that so?" Mystica's voice held a trace of amusement.

"Mhm!"

"That's good to hear." Mystica's eyes glimmered with curiosity. "But tell me, I never expected you to take an interest in Alchemy. What made you change your mind?"

At that, Ariana froze mid-step. Her face turned bright red.

Crap.

She immediately remembered how Liam had casually convinced her that Alchemy would be a great addition to her studies. Not in an academic, persuasive way—no. It was the way he said it. The way his deep voice had carried just the right amount of confidence, making her feel like she couldn't possibly refuse.

She tried to form words—tried being the key word.

"Wha—um—I mean, uh, you see, it's... um... Ah—!"

Absolute gibberish.

Mystica raised an eyebrow, amused. "Oh? What was that? I didn't quite catch it."

Ariana tried again. "I—it's, uh—well, he—!"

And there it was. The fatal mistake.

"He?"

Mystica smirked. "You were about to say a name, weren't you?"

Ariana's face somehow got even redder. In a final attempt to salvage her dignity, she clamped her mouth shut and shook her head rapidly, looking both guilty and ridiculously adorable.

Mystica chuckled knowingly. "Liam, huh?"

Ariana nearly choked on air. "I—wait, no, I didn't say—!"

"You absolutely did." Mystica grinned, fully entertained. [Read exclusive adventures at](#)

Ariana, defeated, hid her face behind her books. Mystica had caught her red-handed.

They continued walking for a while, Ariana still dying of embarrassment while Mystica hummed in amusement.

Then, suddenly, Mystica slowed her pace before stopping completely.

Ariana noticed and turned to her. "Mystica?"

"Go on ahead," Mystica said casually. "I forgot something. I'll catch up soon."

Ariana blinked but nodded. "Alright, I'll wait for you in the study hall."

With that, she continued down the hallway, leaving Mystica behind.

As Ariana vanished from sight, Mystica let out a soft hum, her usual playful smile never fading. Without turning her head, her gaze shifted subtly toward a nearby pillar.

"You might as well step out," she mused, her tone light yet knowing. "I'm sure you have orders to follow, don't you?"