

ShadowBound 235

Chapter 235: End Of Semester Exam 6

The battlefield settled into a tense hush, Liam and Asher standing amid the chaos, but the storm was far from passing.

"These demons make the Ferals look like house pets," Asher muttered, casually rolling his shoulders despite the carnage. "No wonder they're called Horrors."

Liam's gaze swept over the field littered with the broken bodies of their comrades. The holographic rain pelted down, washing streaks of red across twisted limbs and vacant eyes. Some corpses were mangled beyond recognition, blending into the mud and debris.

"They've torn through us faster than I expected," Liam said, voice low and even. His eyes never lingered on one body too long.

"Man, even knowing it's all just some holographic nightmare, it's hitting harder than it should," Asher admitted, tone quieter, the usual bravado dulled by the grim sights. "Feels like they're just setting us up to fail. Look at the numbers—no way most of them could stand against this wave."

"Yeah, but that's war," Liam replied bluntly, his eyes detached as always. "You don't get to stop and cry about it. Others are still fighting. That's where we're headed."

Without hesitation, Liam's gaze shifted back to the battlefield, to the few who remained locked in desperate combat. He didn't care much for the academy's twisted illusion or whether these students were dead or alive in reality—progress was all that mattered.

"It does feel real", Liam thought, a sharp breath hissing between his teeth. But something's... off. The wounds, the blood, the weight of these fights—it's not like the demons or creatures I've faced outside these walls.'

He clenched his fists, feeling the pull of exhaustion, the creeping fatigue scratching at the edges of his focus. 'Fatigue feels real enough, he mused grimly. But everything else? It's like watching a puppet show from behind glass.'

He exhaled slowly, shaking off the creeping dread. 'Let's finish this half-baked horror flick and get back to reality.'

"Yo," Asher cut in, nodding skyward. "Those freaky flying ones? They're giving me the chills. Especially those."

Liam followed his gaze to where bat-like shapes were weaving through the storm—Vyraxes, with Ravens trailing just behind, angling toward the city's perimeter.

"Damn it. They're heading for Dylan and Ariana's squad," Liam growled.

"Yeah, and their team's not exactly built for anti-air," Asher said, scanning for backup. His eyes landed on Chris, drenched in black gore and lightning-charged, cutting down Ferals and Horrors like they were practice targets. "He's living up to that number two spot," Asher murmured with a smirk.

Without wasting a second, Asher sprinted toward him. "Yo, Thunderbolt! Get those ugly bastards out of the sky before they wipe out Dylan's crew."

Chris didn't even turn fully, crackling with static. "First, don't call me that, jackass. Second, why should I care? Your friends, your problem. Third, I don't take orders from flame-boys."

Asher rolled his eyes, biting back the urge to incinerate him on the spot. "Listen, sparky, I'd love to fry you into a crisp right now, but there are bigger problems."

Chris scoffed. "Try me."

"Fine. You want to be seen as a better leader than Sheila, right?" Asher said with a sly grin. "Here's your shot. Make it count before she does."

Chris opened his mouth to retort, but paused. The words hit harder than expected, lodging right into his pride.

"Tch. Don't pull that leade—"

Before he could finish, a Vyraxe swooped in from the fog, claws like sickles, and snatched him clean off the ground mid-sentence.

"Welp. Didn't see that coming," Asher deadpanned, watching Chris flail as the monster carried him off.

Liam deadpanned as well. "Yeah."

Asher grinned. "Well, now he has to handle the air problem."

Chris hung mid-air, gritting his teeth as the Vyraxe that had snatched him soared higher, claws digging into his shoulder. The wind roared in his ears as the horror's leathery wings flapped against the storm, carrying him straight into a flock of circling horrors.

"Bad move," Chris snarled.

In a flash, lightning coiled up his arms like serpents. He grabbed the Vyraxe's claws with crackling hands, pumping enough volts through its body to make it seize mid-flight. Its screech split the sky, and then its charred corpse spiraled downward, leaving Chris freefalling into the chaos above.

Boom!

Electricity exploded from him like a storm given flesh. Chris spread his arms wide, riding a current of lightning that zipped him sideways through the air, just missing the talons of another Vyraxe.

A Ravorn lunged from above—talons poised to slice him in half—but Chris spun midair and launched a bolt spear right through its chest. The weapon burst through the horror, impaling it to another Ravorn behind it in a flash of violent blue light. Both creatures dropped like stones.

His breathing was sharp and deliberate, sweat mixing with the rain as he zipped upward through the airborne horrors like a human lightning bolt, constantly redirecting himself mid-air.

"You flying rats think you can outpace lightning?" Chris barked, eyes glowing pale green.

He raised both palms, crackling arcs forming spheres of electricity between them. A pair of Vyraxes dove from either side. Chris smirked.

Zap!

Twin bolts snapped out from his palms, catching the creatures by their wings and frying them instantly. Their twitching forms spiraled downward, crashing into the wasteland below.

But the real threat wasn't the scattered flocks—it was the pack of Ravorns gliding toward the city gates. Their wide wings beat like war drums, moving too fast and too low for him to easily intercept.

Chris narrowed his eyes. "You're not getting past me."

He redirected himself downward, riding a jagged bolt of lightning like a surfer on a wave. His boots slammed onto the back of a Vyraxe, crushing it mid-flight before leaping again—an aerial parkour fueled by thunder.

His hands flared with wild, uncontrolled voltage, veins glowing under his skin. Then he hurled himself straight toward the Ravorn swarm.

CRACK-BOOM!

Chris detonated in the heart of the Ravorn pack, becoming a living storm. Lightning ripped through the swarm, arcing from one creature to the next like dominoes. Several horrors convulsed, wings shredded midair as they were cooked from the inside out.

Yet, they didn't all fall.

One Ravorn dove at him from behind, claws aimed for his spine. Chris spun on instinct, summoning a compact storm shield—lightning forging a barrier at the last second. The claws clashed with the glowing disk, sparks raining like falling stars.

Without hesitation, Chris grabbed the Ravorn's face mid-swipe. "Ever wondered what lightning does to the brain?"

Zzzrrt!

He overloaded it, electricity bursting from its eyes and mouth, frying its insides before it dropped like dead weight.

Breathing heavily now, Chris surged higher, diving straight down at the remaining Ravorns. He formed a javelin of pure plasma and hurled it with pinpoint precision. The bolt ripped through three in a clean line, leaving them twitching and smoking.

Finally, with one last surge, Chris gathered energy around his entire body, his skin glowing like a stormcloud charged to burst. He crashed into the last Ravorn with a meteor dive, his fist piercing straight through its armored head and down its spine, splitting it midair.

The shattered pieces of the final creature rained down like blackened shards.

Hovering in the storm, Chris took a second to steady his breath, muscles burning, lightning still arcing faintly across his skin.

"Tch," he muttered with a smirk. "Sheila better have seen that."