

ShadowBound 245

Chapter 245: Discussion

Dark Knight Academy – Observation Dome

Headmaster Thion sat comfortably in the front row, a smirk tugging at his lips. Beside him, his assistant Gordon remained poised, while the other professors and instructors sat in silence, eyes fixed on the magical screens replaying the exam's events.

"Well, that was quite the spectacle," Thion mused, his voice carrying through the chamber. "Wouldn't you all agree, ladies and gentlemen?"

No one answered immediately. The room remained entranced by the scenes unfolding before them—every battle, every strategy, every moment of triumph and failure. The screens displayed it all: the coordinated attacks at the start, the chaos when the horrors arrived, Max and Charlotte's seamless teamwork, Dylan unleashing his Meteor Shower for the first time, raining steel upon the battlefield.

Sheila's leadership shone through as she led the charge against the horrors, proving why she was chosen as the leader. Another screen focused on Chris battling airborne horrors, moving with deadly precision. Then, there was Liam and Asher—holding their own against an overwhelming horde, their synchronized movements near-flawless.

But the most gripping footage was the fight against the Berserker Demon. Sheila, Chris, Asher, and Liam, despite their tactics, had been utterly outmatched. And yet, what held everyone's attention the most was the final battle—Liam and Asher, standing alone, battered and exhausted, yet still fighting with everything they had.

"I assume you're referring to the last fight, Headmaster?" Mystica's voice carried from the third row, a smirk playing on her lips.

"Of course, dear Mystica." Thion's smirk deepened. "Those two remind me of our very own Galen. Wouldn't you say so yourself, Galen?"

At the very back, in the last row, Galen Magna sat slouched, exuding his usual air of disinterest. His arms were crossed over his head, eyes shut as if he hadn't heard a single word. Magnus, seated beside him as always, glanced over but said nothing.

Galen didn't even stir. But the slight twitch at the corner of his lips betrayed him.

Magnus caught the faint twitch at the corner of Galen's lips and smirked. "Well, well, someone's a little interested," he teased, nudging Galen with his elbow.

Galen exhaled slowly, cracking open one crimson eye. "Interested?" he scoffed. "Please. Two guys fighting a Berserker Demon. What's so special about that?"

Magnus chuckled. "Oh, you know, just two half-dead guys taking on a monster capable of leveling an entire district of Grandeur City. Yeah, nothing special at all." He leaned back, stretching. "Sounds like just another Tuesday for you."

Galen didn't respond immediately. His gaze flickered to the screens still looping the battle—Liam and Asher, bloodied and exhausted, yet refusing to fall. They had fought like cornered beasts, driven by sheer will.

Mystica, seated a few rows ahead, turned to face them, her violet eyes glimmering with amusement. "Oh, come on now, Galen. I'm certain you taught them something in secret. I mean, those two couldn't have just shattered their limits on their own, right?"

Galen let out a dry chuckle. "You talk like they still train under me." He scoffed. "If anyone deserves credit for their breakthrough, it's Professor Vale." He smirked. "Not you, Seraphina—your uncle."

"I know that, Galen. No need for rudeness." Seraphina, also in the same row but few away, said with a smirk on her face.

In the second row, Professor Orin Vale gave a modest smile. "Thanks for the praise, Galen, but I wouldn't say I deserve that." His voice was calm, even. "The boys earned it themselves."

Thion's smirk deepened before settling into neutrality. "How interesting."

Beside him, Gordon leaned in slightly, his tone dripping with artificial cheer. "Headmaster, let's not forget that Prince Chris also performed exceptionally well in this exam. Shouldn't we discuss why he deserves to be the leader instead of vice?"

Thion barely spared him a glance. "Is that so? We'll discuss it later." His voice lowered. "Right now, there's something else I need to know."

He did not turn to look at her but Mystica could feel his piercing gaze. "Mystica, explain to me how Liam Hunter was stabbed through the heart and yet wasn't pulled from the simulation."

Mystica's expression remained smooth, unreadable. "Well, Headmaster, I'd love to provide an answer, but unfortunately, I wasn't in charge of the magical operations for this exam." Her voice was laced with faux innocence.

She tilted her head, eyes gliding toward Gordon, though he made sure not to turn but still felt her gaze. "Perhaps you should ask someone who was. No disrespect, of course."

Gordon's ever-present smile didn't falter, though an undeniable tension rippled through the air.

"Or," Mystica added playfully, "you could just ask the kid himself."

Thion considered her for a long moment before nodding. "I see. Then I shall do both." He rose from his seat, his gaze shifting downward from the viewing to the space below. There, the mages responsible for the simulation stood at attention.

"Summon the students. I believe they've rested long enough."

As the two mages began their incantations, Magnus slouched even further into his chair, looking comically more disinterested than even Galen. Lazily, he cast a Whisper Spell, his voice slipping directly into Mystica's ears.

"Hey, Moony," he drawled, "I don't know what that kid did to mess with the simulation, and honestly? I don't care." His tone was light, but there was a flicker of concern. "But do you think he can handle one of Thion's interrogations? That man may seem all calm and collected, but damn—he gives me the creeps."

Mystica smirked before casting her own Whisper Spell in return.

"Relax, Magpie," she purred, her voice dripping with mischief. "That kid isn't you. Thion's words and aura won't shake him into saying anything he shouldn't."

Her violet eyes gleamed.

"He'll know exactly what to do when the time comes."

Resting Room.

The students were still stuck in the resting room, itching to leave but having no clue how to actually do it.

"The hell are they waiting for? We've been here for, what, thirty minutes?" Chris grumbled from his bench, arms crossed like a kid who just got his candy stolen.

Sheila sighed, finally mustering enough energy to sass him. "You do realize some people have been waiting longer than you, right?"

Chris scoffed. "And how's that my problem? They're weak. That's why they're still here. If they were stronger, they wouldn't have been waiting this long." He shot a look at the other students, making some roll their eyes, others mutter curses, and a few just silently die inside.

"Tch, hard to believe this is the same arrogant idiot I fought alongside against the Berserker Demon," Asher muttered, shaking his head.

"You do realize you're not exactly in a position to call anyone arrogant, right?" Liam's voice, calm as ever, drifted from the corner where he sat, eyes still closed.

Dylan snickered. "Yeah, Ash, you're just as bad. Maybe worse."

"Shut up," Asher snapped at Dylan before glaring at Liam. "And you—since when do you even make comments?"

Liam barely moved. "Don't know. And by the way, that wasn't a comment. Just facts."

Asher clenched his fists. "Oh, I swear, if I wasn't half-dead, I'd torch you right now."

Sheila pinched the bridge of her nose. "You guys should shut up and focus on recovering your Myst."

"Oh right, I forgot, we have a spoiled princess leading us," Asher deadpanned.

Liam and Asher had only woken up five minutes ago, barely able to sit up. Moving was pure agony, but at least their friends had helped them out.

"I'm not spoiled," Sheila shot back. "And you obeyed my orders just fine."

Asher yawned. "Only because I was high on the thrill of battle."

Before anyone could throw another insult, a deep hum of blue Myst filled the room. And just like that, before they could even process what was happening—poof.

They were gone.