

ShadowBound 35

Chapter 35: It's Almost Time

Three months flew by, and Liam's growth was nothing short of remarkable. In that time, he had fully mastered Crimson Overdrive, perfecting the technique to a level few could ever hope to reach.

What once were three distinct phases of Crimson Breathing were now seamlessly merged into one. Liam's entire body had adapted, allowing him to channel the power of each stage effortlessly through nothing but his breathing.

But this mastery hadn't come without struggle.

Liam had started slowly, initially able to maintain Crimson Overdrive for just an hour. He pushed his limits, gradually increasing the duration, and even forced himself to activate the technique while sleeping.

Repeatedly, he pushed his body through the pain and fatigue, his determination unwavering.

Soon, Liam could sustain Overdrive for an entire day, transitioning from his intense training sessions to school and even during sleep. Little by little, his body adapted to the extreme demands of the technique.

Now, Crimson Overdrive flowed through him continuously, a constant presence that he could wield for days on end without a second thought.

With this ultimate durability technique now fully integrated, Liam was ready to unlock the advanced skills he had been envisioning for the past six months.

Liam began by focusing on his Resonance technique. He had already mastered it, but with the power of Crimson Overdrive now coursing through him, it felt like an entirely different experience.

Resonance was no longer a technique he could use for short bursts; he could now maintain it indefinitely, feeling a deep connection to both his shadows and his surroundings.

Every flicker of myst in the air, every shift in energy—his senses had become razor-sharp. It was as if the world itself was an extension of his awareness, and he could harness that power effortlessly.

Next, Liam turned to the Veil of Flux. He had no trouble with the technique, but as his strength and magical prowess had grown, so too had his myst.

His presence had become more pronounced, a beacon of power that others could easily detect from a distance. This wasn't ideal. The last thing he wanted was to alert potential enemies or draw unnecessary attention.

More importantly, he wanted to conceal his true level of power, keeping his capabilities a mystery to those who might sense his myst.

With this in mind, Liam focused on perfecting the weakened state of the Veil of Flux. It wasn't enough to just dim his myst; he needed to control it with precision, making it appear so faint that even the most attuned myst-sensors wouldn't be able to gauge his strength accurately.

He trained relentlessly, honing his control over the ebb and flow of his myst until he could seamlessly shift into the weakened state without a trace of effort.

Thanks to Overdrive, Liam could now maintain the Veil of Flux for as long as needed, whether in its weakened or flux state.

The constant flow of energy from Overdrive made it second nature to keep the technique active, allowing him to move unnoticed or disguise his true power whenever he wanted.

With both Resonance and the Veil of Flux perfected, he had become a master of deception, able to manipulate not only his surroundings but also the perception of those around him.

Liam had picked up several new techniques over the last few months, but there was still one area that needed attention—his dark magic. The more his power grew, the more he realized how little he knew about the true depth of his abilities. What he needed most now was knowledge. And the library was his best source for that.

'With all my improvements, I need more understanding of dark magic. Especially how to use it for healing,' he thought as he made his way down the winding hallways to the library.

The familiar scent of old parchment and myst-imbued books greeted him as he pushed open the large wooden doors. His eyes immediately fell on the librarian, Ms. Lily, who stood out as usual with her auburn hair, vibrant against the dimly lit backdrop of the shelves.

"Hello, Ms. Lily," Liam greeted, his voice as calm and composed as ever.

Lily's face brightened at the sight of him, her usual teasing smile appearing. "Hey there, my little cutie... how are you doing?" she replied with her playful tone, as unashamed as always.

Liam had grown accustomed to her flirtatious remarks. His expression remained neutral as he responded, "I'm quite well, thank you. And yourself?"

"Well, I wasn't feeling too great this morning, but now that you're here... I'm feeling amazing!" Lily said, leaning into her words with a grin.

"I'm happy to hear that." His tone was steady, unaffected. "I actually need your help with something."

"Anything for you, sweetie," she chimed, batting her lashes.

Liam, unfazed, continued, "I'm looking for books on dark magic."

"Dark magic?" Lily's playful demeanor shifted, her brow furrowing in thought. "Well, there are books on dark magic, but... they're not here."

Liam's calm facade cracked slightly, curiosity sparking in his eyes. "Not here? Where are they, then?"

Lily sighed softly. "Most of the books on dark magic are kept in the Mage Academies. It's been that way for a while since... well, there haven't been any known dark magic users in years. They're believed to have been wiped out after the last magical conflict."

Liam nodded thoughtfully. "I see."

Lily, her tone softening, smiled at him. "You're really into this magic stuff, huh? Well, lucky for you, in a month you'll be done with this school and can move on to a Mage High Academy. You'll have access to all the knowledge you want."

Liam returned her smile, though his thoughts were elsewhere. "Yeah, that's true. Thank you for the information, Ms. Lily. I'll be heading out now."

"Anytime, darling," she cooed, watching as he walked out of the library, her smile lingering long after he left.

Once outside, Liam's mind raced with thoughts. 'Only one more month here before I move on to the Dark Knight Academy... but without any substantial knowledge of dark magic, I'm at a disadvantage.'

He walked through the hallways, deep in thought.

'A knight academy probably won't have much information on dark magic either... I'll have to make do with what I have and hope something comes up.'

The idea of not knowing his own magic's full potential gnawed at him, but he knew patience was key.

Then there was the matter of Aetherion—something he still had no real answers about.

Most people only knew about Transcendence, a common shift in magical power, but nothing more. It was frustrating, to say the least. The knowledge he needed wasn't available to anyone he had access to.

As Liam wandered back toward his classroom, his mind quickly went to the Silverhart family. His time with them was coming to a close. One more month, and he'd have to move on, leaving behind the comfort of their home. He was bothered by it.

His future was uncertain, but one thing was clear—he needed to prepare for the next step in his journey.