

ShadowBound 55

Chapter 55: How Do Will Deal With The First Three

The classroom buzzed with chatter, students talking loudly as they settled in for the morning lesson.

The lively hum was the perfect cover for Asher and Liam, slumped at the back like a pair of zombies struggling to stay upright. Their eyes drooped, and it was clear they were mere seconds away from dozing off.

Dylan, who sat nearby, was the first to notice. With his trademark grin, he leaned closer to them.

"Whoa! You two look like you crawled out of a grave. What happened? Don't tell me you had fun without me."

Asher shot Dylan a tired glare, his voice low and annoyed. "Shut up for once, blondie."

Dylan chuckled, unfazed by the response. "For a guy who looks half-dead, you've still got plenty of bite. Impressive."

Liam, too exhausted to care, rubbed his eyes and leaned further into his chair, hoping the backrest would somehow hold his soul together. He had no energy for this back-and-forth banter.

Dylan kept poking, though, his grin widening. "Come on, spill it. What'd you guys do? Secret mission? Night duel? Or was it... something fun?" He wiggled his eyebrows suggestively.

Before Asher could fire back, a sudden puff of dark smoke filled the front of the room, accompanied by a soft breeze that scattered a few papers from desks.

When the smoke cleared, there stood Mystica.

"Good morning, my dear students," she said with a calm, playful tone, her purple eyes shimmering with mischief. "It's time to pick up where we left off yesterday."

Her presence instantly quieted the class, the students sitting up straight and giving her their attention.

Well, most of them—Liam and Asher were still slouched, trying their best not to collapse face-first onto their desks.

Mystica's gaze scanned the room, and when her eyes landed on the two boys, a sly knowing smirk spread across her face. "Oh my... seems like someone had a long night."

Liam groaned quietly, feeling her gaze pierce through him. Asher just rubbed his face, muttering under his breath, "We're so dead."

Mystica gave a soft, amused sigh. "Now, I could let you sleep... but then you'd miss my wonderful lesson, and that would be a shame."

With a small flick of her wrist, green myst swirled around her hand. She raised her arm toward Liam and Asher, the emerald glow wrapping around them like a soothing mist.

The entire class turned to stare at the two boys, curious to see what was happening.

Instantly, Liam and Asher felt warmth spread through their bodies, the fatigue washing away as if they'd just taken the best nap of their lives.

Their muscles loosened, and their senses sharpened, though not completely—just enough to stay awake.

The healing only lasted ten seconds before Mystica dropped her hand, her mischievous smile still intact. "There. That should keep you both upright... for now."

Asher stretched his arms with a groan, the tension easing from his joints. "Man, that actually feels nice..."

Liam looked alright and he was grateful but didn't say anything, already knowing that Mystica hadn't given them a full recovery on purpose. She'd healed just enough to keep them functioning.

"I could've fully healed you," Mystica said, her eyes twinkling with amusement, "but where's the fun in that? If you want the real deal, you'll have to earn it."

Asher rolled his eyes, though a small smirk tugged at his lips. "Of course..."

"Alright, everyone," Mystica clapped her hands lightly, drawing all eyes back to her. "Focus back on me."

The students straightened in their seats, shifting their attention as the playful atmosphere shifted into something more serious. Mystica's expression grew calm, but the glint of amusement in her eyes never fully disappeared.

"Good," she said, satisfied with their attention. "Today, we'll dive into how to take down each group of demons we discussed yesterday."

"Alright, let's begin," Mystica said, her voice smooth but firm. "We'll start with the first group of demons: Ferals."

She waved her hand, and a green mist swirled into the shape of a large, hulking beast with massive claws and gnashing teeth. "Ferals are brutal and intimidating. They're fast, aggressive, and very dangerous in close combat."

She pointed toward the misty beast's chest, where a glowing orb appeared. "However, as terrifying as they seem, they have a weakness—their core. It's the source of their life force, and without it, they crumble. The trick is locating it, since it's not always where you'd expect. Who can tell me the first thing you should do when fighting a Feral?"

A few hands shot up, including Dylan's. She gave him an approving nod.

"Stay out of reach of their claws?" Dylan asked with a grin.

"Correct!" Mystica smiled. "Engaging a Feral head-on without a plan is foolish. Keep your distance, assess their movements, and look for any signs of where the core might be. It could be embedded in the chest... or even in the throat. The key is patience."

She gave the class a moment to process before flicking her wrist again. The image of the Feral dissolved, replaced by a massive figure towering over the classroom—the mist forming into an enormous, armored demon with a thick, stone-like hide.

"Now, let's move on to the second group: Titanbornes. These giants have the greatest defense of the three groups. Their bodies are so durable that stabbing at their core directly is almost impossible. Does anyone know why?"

A student with glasses hesitantly raised her hand. Mystica gestured for her to speak.

"Because... their defense is too strong?"

"Precisely," Mystica said with a nod. "Titanbornes are built like walking fortresses. Their hide and bones are so dense that even powerful weapons struggle to pierce them. Now, here's the real challenge—how do you bring down something so big and tough?"

The students exchanged uncertain glances, clearly stumped. Mystica smirked, enjoying their confusion. "Come now, it's not as hopeless as it seems. Any guesses?"

"Trip them?" Dylan offered cheekily.

A ripple of laughter spread through the class, and even Mystica let out a soft chuckle. "Good thought, but tripping something that size isn't easy. However, you're not entirely wrong."

She stepped forward, folding her arms. "The strategy that knights developed is called Segment Collapse. Titanbornes might be indestructible from the outside, but their size works against them. By targeting their joints—like the knees or elbows—you can bring them crashing down to your level. Once they're on the ground, their movement becomes limited, and that's when you aim for the core. The key is to wear them down and force them to expose their weakness."

She paused, letting the image of the Titanborne fade from the air. "This method takes patience and teamwork. You won't be able to take one down alone, so you'll need to rely on your allies. Which reminds me..." Her gaze fell on Liam and Asher. "Perhaps that's a lesson you two will take to heart."

Liam still had his stoic expression, while Asher crossed his arms with a scoff. "I don't need teamwork to win," Asher muttered.

Mystica ignored the comment, though her smile deepened with amusement. "Moving on," she said, swirling the mist once more. This time, it formed into a writhing, grotesque figure, with limbs growing and shrinking randomly. Its face was twisted, and a dark, pulsing core floated in its chest.

"The third group: Horrors. These are perhaps the most annoying demons to deal with."

The students stared at the twisted image in silent discomfort, and Mystica didn't blame them. Horrors were unsettling creatures, after all.

"They have excellent regeneration. You can cut off their limbs, burn their bodies, and they'll just keep coming back. The core is still the main target... but sometimes even destroying that won't stop them."

One student raised a hand timidly. "How is that possible, Miss Mystica?"

"Good question," she said. "Some Horrors are stronger than others. With these advanced Horrors, simply striking the core isn't enough because they can partially regenerate it, or their heads can continue to control the body even if the core is damaged."

She waved her hand, and the mist demonstrated what she was explaining—a Horror's core was shattered, but its head kept moving, and the core slowly started to regenerate.

"So, what's the solution?" Mystica asked, raising an eyebrow. "How do you make sure a Horror stays dead?"

The class fell silent, no one daring to answer. Finally, Mystica revealed the answer with a smirk. "You need to destroy both the head and the core simultaneously. If you leave either intact, the Horror will just keep coming back. Cut off its head, smash the core—and do it fast."

Dylan leaned back in his chair, whistling softly. "That sounds... fun."

"It's not fun when they're chasing you through a forest at night," Mystica said with a sly grin. "Trust me."

The class chuckled nervously, and Mystica clapped her hands together, signaling the end of the demon overview.

"Now then, that's enough theory for now. Next, we'll discuss some strategies for engaging these creatures... but before we move on—any final questions?"

Dylan raised his hand with a grin. "Yeah, do Horrors ever get tired, or is that just me right now?"

The class erupted in laughter, and even Mystica shook her head with an amused sigh. "No, Dylan, Horrors don't get tired. But I'll make sure you're wide awake for today's training."

She flicked her hand, and a faint green spark shot from her fingertips toward Dylan, making his hair stand on end like static.

"Now," Mystica said with a mischievous smile, "let's focus, shall we?"