

ShadowBound 61

Chapter 61: A New Technique

A week had passed since training had begun, and the kids were showing impressive progress across each instructor's expectations.

Most of them were even enjoying their sessions—well, most of them, anyway. But the same couldn't be said for Asher and Liam.

Galen had the two sparring daily to perfect their long-range attacks, and Asher was growing tired of it. While Liam stayed quiet and followed Galen's direction, even he was starting to feel the monotony of their routine.

All the same, they had ridiculously improved their long-range attacks, and now it was beginning to feel like a second nature.

The two were now headed to their training ground—a mini colosseum—to continue their practice.

"Haah... can't believe I have to kick your ass again today. It's getting pretty boring, you know?" Asher muttered, annoyed yet still competitive, ready to go.

Liam ignored the comment, unaffected by Asher's usual attitude.

"Hey, wannabe!" Asher called out, striding slightly ahead of him. "Tell me something."

"What?" Liam responded, sounding completely unbothered.

"How are you so calm about this whole sparring-every-day thing? Aren't you bored? Don't you want to learn something new?"

Liam shrugged. "I think there's a reason behind it. Galen's our instructor; better to just trust his decisions rather than question them."

Asher scoffed, looking unimpressed. "You've been sounding way too wise lately."

Liam stayed silent, ignoring the jab as they approached the training ground.

When they reached the colosseum, they were met with the same things when they first trained with Galen—boulders—except this time, the boulders were taller and rectangular, standing upright like stone pillars.

Perched on top of one of them, Galen was resting with his head propped on one hand, watching them with a relaxed, half-amused expression.

"Well, you two are late," he called down.

"What're you doing up there, old man? Don't tell me we have to smash boulders again," Asher groaned, already feeling disappointed.

In response, Galen pushed himself off the boulder, dropping effortlessly to the ground and landing with perfect balance.

"That's exactly what you'll be doing. Got a problem with it?" he challenged, stepping closer to Asher with a daring look.

Asher stayed silent, sensing the intensity in Galen's gaze. Galen sighed in mock frustration.

"Congratulations—you're the first ones to make me adjust my free-time schedule," he said, running a hand through his white hair. "And for that, you're gonna pay."

Both Asher and Liam looked at him in confusion. Free-time schedule? What was he talking about?

"Free-time schedule? What does that even mean?" Asher asked.

Galen shot him a look. "Figure it out, genius. Thanks to you two progressing at a ridiculous pace, I had no choice but to add extra effort," he added, sounding theatrically annoyed.

"But don't worry," he continued, his voice shifting to a more serious tone. "Today, I'm gonna teach you a technique that should keep you busy until midterms." A mischievous smile crept onto his face.

Hearing this, Asher's eyes lit up with excitement. Finally, something new—no more endless sparring with the "wannabe," as he called Liam.

"Yes! Now that's more like it!" Asher exclaimed eagerly.

"Shut up, idiot." Galen's expression was deadpan, though a slight smirk betrayed his amusement.

"Now, listen up. This technique isn't complicated to learn, but how effective it becomes depends on how well each of you can use your individual strengths."

He took a step back, glancing between them. "It's best used with weapons, and, Liam, this'll be particularly beneficial for you, given your style. So take this seriously."

He turned to Asher. "And you, Asher. While it may not align perfectly with your fighting style since you mostly rely on your fists, it'll still complement your sword skills if you put in the effort."

Galen let out a long, lazy sigh as he looked between Liam and Asher, a mischievous glint still in his eye.

"Alright, listen up, because I'm only gonna say this once," he began, scratching the back of his head as if the whole explanation was a chore.

"Today's technique is called Inferno Edge. It's a way of blending your strikes with controlled bursts of fire, channeled directly through your weapon. The point isn't to look flashy—it's all about precision and impact."

He continued in a laid-back tone, letting his words sink in. "With Inferno Edge, you channel heat through your weapon in short, powerful flares. Done right, it'll amplify the cutting edge enough to slice through even the toughest defenses. You don't have to go overboard with it, either. Small bursts do the trick. You want a blade, not a torch."

Asher's eyes lit up with anticipation, while Liam remained quiet, absorbing the explanation.

Galen smirked, noticing Asher's eagerness. "And before you get any ideas, hotshot, let me make this clear: control is everything. You're not setting the whole place on fire. Overdo it, and you'll overheat, waste energy, maybe even mess up your weapon."

Asher gave a confident nod, though a competitive spark flickered in his eyes. Liam, meanwhile, had a more focused look, already thinking through how he might incorporate the technique into his fighting style.

Galen stretched his arms lazily. "Alright, watch carefully," he said, stepping up to one of the new, denser boulders. Unlike the ones from their previous training, these looked more like massive slabs of dark stone, clearly tougher and more challenging to break.

He unsheathed his weapon, holding it loosely in one hand. "So, this is how it's done. Short burst—then cut. Nothing fancy."

In one smooth motion, Galen's hand glowed with heat as he channeled a precise, intense wave of energy through his weapon. He swung, and the blade lit up with a controlled, fiery edge.

A sharp, heated flare erupted at the impact point, carving a deep groove right through the solid stone. As the energy dispersed, only the thin, smoldering cut mark remained—clean, efficient, and controlled.

Galen didn't even look back at them as he sheathed his weapon with a bored shrug. "There. That's what Inferno Edge should look like." He started walking away, not sparing them another glance. "Try not to burn each other's faces off."

With that, he waved a hand over his shoulder in a lazy goodbye and disappeared, leaving the boys alone with the boulders—and a challenge.