

ShadowBound 62

Chapter 62: Inferno Edge

"Looks like we're on our own. This is gonna be a piece of cake." Asher grinned as he watched Galen disappear from sight.

Liam, lost in thought, barely registered Asher's words. 'This technique sounds a lot like Crimson Breathing, except this time, instead of keeping the heat inside my body, I'm channeling it outward and through my weapon,' he thought as he studied the boulder in front of him. 'Shouldn't be too—'

"Hey, Wannabe!" Asher's voice cut through his thoughts. "I've been calling you! What, you're just gonna ignore me?"

Liam shot Asher a tired look. "I'm not in the mood for your jokes, Buzz Cut." He moved past him, his gaze fixed on the boulders.

"Huh? Who the hell do you think you are?" Asher snapped, clearly annoyed. "You're lucky we're training partners, or I'd have burned you to the ground by now," he muttered, rolling his eyes.

After a moment of exaggerated silence, Asher let out a sigh. "Well, since this technique needs a weapon, maybe we should go grab ours and come back."

"You can go ahead if you want, but I don't need to leave," Liam replied, his eyes still on the boulder.

Asher frowned, his expression a mix of confusion and irritation. "What, you think you can use your bare hands or something? Galen said it needs a weapon."

Liam glanced at him with a smirk. "If you want me to escort you to get your sword, just say so, Buzz Cut."

"What are you even saying?" Asher snapped, only to freeze as Liam summoned one of his daggers directly into his hand, as if from thin air.

"Wait... do you have spatial magic?" Asher asked, eyebrows shooting up in surprise.

"No, I don't. I have dark magic," Liam replied, his tone calm.

Asher blinked, processing the information. "Since when are there still dark magic users around?" he asked, surprised and intrigued.

"Couldn't tell you," Liam replied, deadpan.

Asher seemed to consider this for a second before his attention drifted back to Liam's weapon. "Hey, since you've got your daggers, why don't we share? Just let me use one."

Liam met Asher's gaze with a flat expression. "No."

The flicker of fake calmness vanished from Asher's face, replaced by a look of outrage. "I said, let's share it, goddammit!"

"And I said, I'd rather drop dead," Liam replied, unfazed, holding Asher's gaze without a hint of compromise.

They locked eyes, and after a tense moment, Asher finally huffed in defeat, realizing Liam wasn't going to budge.

"Fine, Wannabe," Asher muttered. "I'll just go get my better sword and come back to train." With a final glare, he turned on his heel and stomped off toward the armory.

With Asher gone, Liam found himself alone under the blazing sun. He exhaled slowly, feeling the heat pressing down on him as he summoned his second dagger, its shadowy form solidifying in his grip.

The new technique—Inferno Edge—was next, and despite Galen's lazy instructions, Liam knew he'd have to push his understanding further if he wanted to wield it effectively.

He let out a low breath and focused, allowing his myst to flow down into his hands, pooling warmth into the daggers.

His mind went back to Galen's instructions: focus, channel the heat out—not inward, as he would with Crimson Breathing, but outward, through his weapon.

'Focus, keep the heat steady,' he thought, glancing down at the daggers as he felt a flicker of warmth run through them. 'It's just an extension of me... like breathing, but I'm releasing it.'

With a swift step forward, Liam slashed at the air, and this time, a faint edge of fiery heat traced the blade's path, leaving a flickering afterimage in the sunlight.

He watched, a small smirk forming. It was something—nowhere near as powerful as Galen's demonstration, but at least it was visible.

Liam examined the boulder, remembering how Galen had effortlessly cut clean through it. He braced himself, letting his myst flare with renewed focus.

His next swing was sharper, stronger, with a bit more edge, but when the blade connected with the boulder, it barely grazed the surface, leaving only a faint mark.

'Alright... so it's not quite there,' he mused, watching as the heat fizzled. 'Still a far cry from Galen's level. But at least it's working.'

He rolled his shoulders and sighed, gazing up at the sun for a moment. 'This technique... I've got to learn how to push more heat without losing control.'

The memory of Galen's perfect, razor-thin blaze kept returning to his mind—a precision he'd need to match if he wanted to master Inferno Edge.

As he prepared for another attempt, he muttered to himself, "Just like breathing... let the heat flow." He took a deep breath, feeling the warmth start to channel again, focusing with every ounce of patience he had left.

After a while, the quiet of the colosseum was broken by footsteps as Asher finally returned, sword in hand.

He took one look at Liam and saw how faint trails of fiery heat followed his movements. His competitive spirit flared up instantly.

"Still poking the rock, huh?" Asher called out with a smirk as he watched Liam's boulder, noticing it was still smooth and unmarred. "At this rate, you're gonna need a century to break that thing."

Liam gave him a sidelong glance but kept his focus on his movements. "Just means I'm doing it the right way."

"Right way? More like the slow way." Asher shook his head, though a hint of admiration flickered in his eyes. Without wasting any more time, he planted his feet and began channeling his own myst, letting it surge down into his sword.

Unlike Liam, Asher had been trained to infuse heat—more like flames—into his weapon since he was a kid. But Inferno Edge required a finer touch, more precision.

'Alright, not a flame, just... heat,' he thought, keeping his myst gentle yet focused as he infused his blade. A faint blue shimmer flickered along its edge, but it faded too quickly. Asher clenched his jaw. "Damn, it's tougher than it looks..."

The two continued in silence, trying to master the subtleties of Inferno Edge, pushing themselves to bring the heat to their weapons without losing control.

The sun inched lower, casting warm orange hues across the colosseum floor as they trained, strikes echoing in the air until exhaustion crept into their movements.

Despite hours of effort, their boulders looked as intact as ever—a testament to how much they still had to learn.

Finally, as dusk began to settle, the boys took a breather, each silently cursing the solid boulders in front of them.

"Alright, I'm calling it," Asher panted, leaning against his sword. "Those rocks are laughing at us."

Liam gave a small smirk, wiping sweat from his brow. "At least we can agree on something."

Just as they began to catch their breath, the sound of footsteps echoed from the entrance of the colosseum.

They turned to see two figures approaching—a guy and a girl, both older and looking every bit the part of upperclassmen.

Their confident strides and relaxed expressions made it clear they were sizing up Liam and Asher.

The guy, tall with a mischievous smirk plastered on his face, tilted his head mockingly. "Well, well... if it isn't Galen's new little recruits. How adorable."