

ShadowBound 72

Chapter 72: It Paid Off

Asher scoffed at Liam's words, clearly not interested in anything. Instead, he launched himself at Galen again, flames roaring around his blade, each step more fluid and precise than before.

His feet barely touched the ground as he moved, his blue flames casting an ethereal glow around him. But Galen only smirked, shifting effortlessly to dodge Asher's onslaught.

Asher's blade sliced through the air, each movement calculated, yet Galen weaved around every strike as if Asher's attacks were nothing more than a playful breeze.

He leaned back, side-stepped, and twisted just out of reach, his calm confidence radiating with each evasion.

"Getting desperate, Blue Flames?" Galen taunted as he dodged another wild swing. "I almost broke a sweat there."

Asher clenched his jaw, tightening his grip on his sword. "I'll wipe that smug grin off your face, just watch—"

Suddenly, before Asher could finish, Liam burst in from the side, his presence so abrupt that it jolted Asher.

Liam shoved him to the side without hesitation, his focus honed on Galen as he brought his dagger up. In one swift motion, he activated Inferno Edge, channeling a concentrated burst of flames along his weapon as he lunged toward Galen.

The move was so sudden, Galen's eyes widened for a fraction of a second before he pivoted back, narrowly avoiding Liam's heated strike.

"Impressive, Liam," Galen acknowledged, though his smirk remained. "But I didn't expect you to let your ego get in the way as well."

A growl escaped Asher's throat as he steadied himself, feeling the heat from Liam's flames lingering in the air.

Ignoring Liam's maneuver, he charged back in, blue flames flaring hotter than before, his eyes filled with frustration and determination.

They closed in on Galen together now, yet it was clear this was no coordinated effort. Every time Liam positioned himself to strike, Asher shoved him aside, fiercely determined to be the one to land a hit.

Liam retaliated in kind, matching Asher's intensity by muscling him out of the way, each of them driven by their own resolve.

It was chaos. Liam darted to Galen's left, dagger flashing with flames, but Asher swung in from the right, forcing Liam to adjust and shift aside.

Asher's blade blazed, cutting through the air with raw power, yet Liam refused to back down, his own dagger surging forward as he met Asher's pace, each of them stealing an opportunity only to be interrupted by the other. It was a battle of selfish ambition, two relentless forces fighting both their opponent and each other.

Galen's brow raised as he observed them. "What's this? You both look really pathetic right now" he said mockingly.

Both boys ignored him, their movements more intense, each dodge, swing, and thrust sharpened by the fierce rivalry between them.

With each shove and interruption, their rhythm grew more chaotic, harder to read. Galen found himself needing to recalibrate his reactions just slightly, his calm mask flickering with the smallest hint of intrigue.

'This is it,' Liam thought, catching Galen's brief hesitation. 'If I can't make Asher cooperate, then I'll use this mess to throw Galen off, even for a moment.'

Asher seemed to notice, too, and though he was fuming with anger, he wasn't ready to let the opportunity go to Liam either—this was his moment to shine.

He sidestepped into Liam's path, deliberately cutting off Liam's trajectory, only to feint at Galen and pull back, creating a split-second opening.

"I told you to get out of my way, wannabe!" Asher sneered, launching himself forward.

Liam smirked coldly, not missing a beat. "As you wish, buzz cut."

He swung his dagger low, forcing Galen to step back just as Asher drove forward with his flaming sword from the opposite side.

Galen's eyes flickered between them, reading their movements, his expression shifting to something more serious.

Even if they were still shoving each other, Liam's reckless strategy was beginning to take form, becoming unpredictable, even to someone as skilled as him.

"Well, now... this is getting interesting," Galen muttered under his breath, his gaze hardening as he prepared to respond.

As the battle raged on, each clash seemed to bring Asher and Liam a fraction closer to actually touching Galen.

Their relentless assault was beginning to pay off, with Galen's usual effortless dodges now requiring sharper movements. He readjusted his stance, a smirk tugging at his lips, and his eyes sparked with a rare interest.

"Alright," he muttered, almost to himself. "Let's see what you two can really handle."

Suddenly, Galen's presence seemed to intensify, his aura shifting as he unleashed a mere 3% of his true strength. The change was subtle yet powerful, like a sudden rise in atmospheric pressure.

It was as if the air itself had thickened, and both Liam and Asher could feel it—the undeniable weight of an opponent they weren't yet equipped to conquer.

Liam's gaze hardened, sensing the shift in Galen's stance. "Ready to work together?" He asked Asher while rolling his shoulder.

"Shut up, and just sit back and watch; I'll get this guy myself"

Asher lunged, his blue flames surging to life, each strike faster and more determined than before.

But just as he was about to land a hit, Liam blurred past him in a burst of speed, angling himself midair for a surprise strike from above.

'He will get me on this but, buzz cut can make the suicidal act' Liam thought as he was ready to strike.

Galen's eyes flickered up, catching Liam's dagger descending with the weight of his Inferno Edge.

But before Liam could even blink, Galen twisted, his foot shooting up in a brutal arc, connecting with Liam's side.

The impact was like a sledgehammer, and Liam barely registered the kick before he was launched across the training grounds, crashing into the colosseum wall with enough force to crack the stone.

In the same breath, Asher seized the moment, his sword flashing toward Galen's exposed side. But Galen reacted instantly, twisting with a grace that made the dodge look effortless.

His heel drove downward in a crushing stomp, catching Asher square in the chest and slamming him to the ground with bone-rattling force. Dust exploded into the air, swallowing them both in a shroud of debris.

As the dust settled, Galen straightened, his foot pressing down on Asher's chest. He was breathing evenly, almost as if he'd just gone for a casual walk rather than dodged and countered a flurry of attacks.

"You boys did good. But this is where it—" Galen began, his voice dripping with finality.

But then he noticed something odd—Asher, lying beneath his boot, was smirking.

"Told you I'd wipe that smug grin off your face," Asher rasped, his voice low but undeniably satisfied.

Galen's gaze traveled downward, and to his surprise, he saw Asher's hand resting lightly on his pants, fingers splayed as if grasping something unseen.

With a flicker of blue flame and a satisfied grin, Asher's touch ignited a controlled spark right on Galen's trousers.

The heat was sharp and sudden, enough to force Galen to leap back, his brow furrowing in surprise as he swatted the embers off his clothes.

"You... sneaky little—" Galen said, genuinely impressed, his lips curving into a wider smile.