

ShadowBound 84

Chapter 84: Life Dangers

Liam didn't flinch. His gaze met Sheila's, steady and unyielding, as if the deadly shards of ice poised to pierce his neck were mere annoyances. His stoic demeanor only fueled Sheila's irritation.

"You should calm down, Princess," he said calmly, his voice low but firm. "I'm just a normal student just like you, and if you are wary of me, then you are just wasting your precious energy."

Sheila's grip faltered, her ice shards trembling slightly as uncertainty crept into her mind. His tone wasn't defensive, nor did it carry any malice. It was... resolute. Unapologetic.

"Better start speaking sense before I cut you head off." Sheila snapped, though there was a crack in her voice.

Mystica clapped her hands once, breaking the rising tension. "All right, that's enough theatrics," she said, stepping forward.

"Sheila, dear, if you're going to make threats, at least commit to them. But let me give you a little advice—if Liam was truly dangerous or if he was actually overwhelmingly strong, you'd already be dead."

Sheila froze at the words, her ice dissolving as her hand fell to her side. Mystica's grin widened. "Besides, it's adorable watching you try to intimidate him. He's like a stone wall, isn't he?"

Sheila's glare shifted from Mystica back to Liam, her icy gaze sharper than ever. "You seem awfully calm for someone who knows he's a dark magic user," she said, her tone dripping with disdain.

Mystica smirked, brushing off Sheila's venomous words with practiced ease. "Calm? Of course. There's no reason to be wary of Liam. He's just another student like you," she replied, a teasing edge to her voice.

"But I can understand your suspicion. It's not your fault, really. Your generation has been fed all those tales about dark magic users being monsters, haven't you? Never met one, yet you're ready to brand him a villain."

Sheila's jaw tightened, Mystica's words hitting uncomfortably close to home. Growing up in a royal household, she had been immersed in the cautionary tales.

After the supposed extinction of dark magic users, society had turned them into legends—no, villains. The narrative was clear: if demons hadn't appeared, dark magic users would have been humanity's greatest threat. Such teachings were especially hammered into the minds of nobles, like her, to ensure vigilance.

"Sorry, Mystica, but I was raised to believe dark magic users were meant to be eradicated. The demons only did us a favor by finishing the job. Seeing one alive, standing here like he belongs, is revolting," Sheila said coldly, her voice steady but laced with venom.

Liam remained impassive under her words, but Mystica's grin widened.

"Well, Princess, I hate to burst your bubble, but you don't have the right to kill him. Neither do I," Mystica said lightly, her playful tone at odds with the gravity of her statement.

Sheila's expression darkened further. "And what's that supposed to mean? Is he under some kind of protection?"

Liam's calm demeanor didn't shift, but his curiosity was piqued.

Mystica leaned forward, her gaze flickering between the two like a storyteller about to unveil a delicious secret. "Something like that," she said with a dramatic pause.

"You see, Liam's existence isn't exactly a secret. The Supremes are well aware that a dark magic user is alive and walking among us. Normally, the rules would demand immediate execution. But..." She trailed off, letting her words hang in the air like bait.

"But?" Sheila pressed, her tone sharp.

Mystica's grin turned downright mischievous. "Thanks to a certain someone's influence, Liam has been granted an unusual reprieve. The Supremes are keeping his identity as a dark magic user hidden—for now. But it won't last forever. Eventually, the truth will be leaked across all the zones. And when that happens..."

She gave a mockingly dramatic sigh. "Liam will likely become a wanted man, with every bounty hunter and mage eager to claim his life."

Sheila's eyes narrowed. "So he's just a ticking time bomb. That still doesn't explain why he's being protected."

"Ah, now we're getting to the fun part," Mystica said, her tone as light as if she were discussing the weather.

"Even when the day comes that his identity is revealed, I doubt anyone will dare to attack him openly. Not because of Liam's strength—which might certainly be intriguing in the nearfuture—but because of the person standing in his corner."

Liam's stoic mask didn't falter, but a spark of curiosity flickered in his mind. Who is this 'certain someone' Mystica keeps hinting at? The revelation was unexpected, and while he wasn't one to let emotions show, the implication gnawed at him.

His life was a web of dangers—demons, the Supremes, and most of all, that voice back in the void. It was as if his existence wasn't his own, a thought that fueled a quiet anger within him.

Sheila clicked her tongue in frustration, her icy glare returning to Liam. "Tsk. Looks like I don't get to eliminate you—yet. But don't get too comfortable. When your luck finally runs out, I'll be there to finish the job," she said venomously, retreating back to her previous position.

Liam remained unfazed, his voice low and calm as he responded, "I'll be waiting."

Mystica let out a delighted laugh, clapping her hands together with unrestrained glee. "Oh, this is just too much fun. I can already tell I'm going to enjoy teaching the two of you."

Her grin widened as she leaned back against her perch. "But let's get to the matter at hand. Today being our first official lesson, I actually have something specific planned for Liam. He's woefully behind in magical knowledge, so I'll need to dedicate at least a week to personally teaching him the basics."

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Sheila frowned, already sensing where this was going. "Which means..."

"Exactly," Mystica cut in with a sly smile. "You'll be training with Ariana and Dylan for a while."

Sheila's annoyance flared. "And what exactly am I supposed to learn from those two?"

Mystica chuckled, clearly amused by the princess's indignation. "Dylan? Well, he's... Dylan. Let's just say you might learn patience or at least tolerance," she teased.

"But Ariana? Now, she's another matter entirely. She's a mage, just like me—though, of course, a far inferior version at the moment," she added with a mischievous smirk.

'Like her?' Sheila thought, Mystica's words raising more questions than answers. Still, she dismissed the thought with a scoff. 'I don't even care. Let me just get away from this dark magic user already.'

"Fine. I'll get going, then," Sheila said sharply, turning to leave. Her icy demeanor didn't waver as she threw one final glare at Liam, disdain practically radiating from her.

"Bye, Princess!" Mystica called after her, waving cheerfully as Sheila disappeared into the distance.

Once Sheila was gone, Mystica turned back to Liam with her playful grin, "Now then, shall we begin?"