

ShadowBound 92

Chapter 92: Primordials

"Actually, I have one more question for you," Liam said, turning back to Ariana, his calm gaze resting on her.

"Y—yes?" Ariana stammered, her cheeks still tinged with pink, unsure of what had sparked the strange fluttering she felt around him.

"Earlier today, Mystica said something that caught my attention," Liam began, his voice steady. "She mentioned that you're just like her. I didn't get the chance to ask her what she meant, but it's been on my mind."

"Oh, s—she said that?" Ariana replied, her voice laced with a mix of surprise and modest pride.

"Yes, she did. Can you explain what she meant?" Liam asked, his tone calm yet insistent.

Ariana took a deep breath, gathering her thoughts. "I believe Mystica was referring to the fact that we both belong to a rare group known as Primordials," she explained.

Liam's expression remained unreadable, but his mind raced. Primordials?

"Go on," he prompted, his curiosity now fully engaged.

"Primordials are individuals born with an extraordinary core capable of harmonizing with all elemental types of myst—light, darkness, fire, water, nature, lightning, space, and so on," Ariana began, her tone steady as she delved into the explanation. "This core isn't just vast; it's incredibly stable, allowing us to absorb and wield multiple elements without overwhelming ourselves."

She paused, watching for any sign of understanding in Liam's stoic expression before continuing.

"However, being able to harmonize with every element doesn't mean we can wield each one to its full potential. A mage or knight dedicated to a single element can master it completely, unlocking its

absolute power. In contrast, Primordials have a broader range but lack the same depth of mastery over individual elements."

Liam's eyes narrowed slightly, processing her words. "But there must be advantages to being a Primordial, right?" he asked.

"Yes, absolutely," Ariana replied, a faint smile touching her lips. "One of the greatest strengths of a Primordial is the ability to fuse different elements to create entirely new magical effects or techniques. This versatility is something no single-element wielder can replicate."

Liam gave a slight nod, intrigued. "And you're a Primordial too, like Mystica?"

Ariana hesitated, her gaze dropping briefly before she spoke. "Well... not exactly like her. Mystica and other Primordials were born with an affinity for all elements right from the start. I wasn't. When I was young, I could only harmonize with two elements. It wasn't until I turned ten that I unlocked two more. Even now, I'm still growing into my abilities. I'm not on the same level as Mystica or other legendary Primordials."

She glanced up at Liam, a hint of vulnerability in her green eyes. "Even so, I'm the only known Primordial of our generation. It's both a gift and a responsibility."

'Having such a gift is truly a blessing from the gods,' Liam mused, his thoughts swirling as he processed Ariana's explanation. 'To have an affinity with all magical elements—it sounds overwhelming, almost unstoppable. Yet, even such power has its limits.'

He narrowed his eyes slightly, his stoic mask unbroken as he considered her words. 'But what if... what if someone could break through those limits? What if a Primordial could wield every magical element to its fullest potential? She said it's impossible, yet something about her explanation feels... incomplete.'

Liam's thoughts turned toward Ariana, the anomalies in her story standing out like cracks in an otherwise flawless surface.

'If all Primordials are born with their affinities fully intact, and Ariana is the first of her kind in centuries to develop hers gradually... what if she isn't just an exception? What if she's the evolution of what it means to be a Primordial?'

His gut tightened as the pieces clicked together in his mind, forming a theory that felt both bold and uncertain.

Ariana might be more than just a Primordial. She could be the first to unlock the full, unrestrained power of every magical element—a true embodiment of harmony and mastery.

The thought lingered, both intriguing and unnerving. He wasn't entirely sure if his theory held water, but his instincts told him there was more to Ariana's story than even she realized.

Liam studied her in silence for a moment, his eyes unreadable. Finally, he gave a small nod. "Thank you for explaining," he said, his tone calm and measured.

"You're welcome," Ariana replied softly, a faint smile on her lips.

Suddenly, the dragon, who was lying on the ground beside her shifted, its massive snout nudging closer to Ariana. Its glowing eyes held a gentle glint, almost as if it were trying to console her.

"Huh? What are you doing?" Ariana asked, letting out a small, surprised giggle.

Liam watched the interaction for a moment, his face deadpan. Then, pointing at the dragon, he said, "Hey, you..." His voice dropped into an exaggerated menace. "...What are you still doing here? You're just wasting my Myst. Better get lost before you lose your privileges."

The dragon, usually obedient, surprised both of them by turning its massive head away with an air of annoyance, a soft puff of steam escaping its nostrils.

Ariana burst into laughter, the sound light and melodic. "Is it... sulking?" she managed between laughs.

Liam sighed, his expression softening ever so slightly. "You've got some nerve," he muttered, addressing the dragon. Then, more firmly, he added, "But I won't blame you today. Return."

At his final word, the dragon's form began to dissipate, its massive body dissolving into shadows that flowed back toward Liam, merging seamlessly with the darkness at his feet.

Ariana watched, her gaze lingering on him. 'He's different when he's with his shadow beasts, she thought, her lips curving into a small, thoughtful smile. Around others like Asher and Dylan, he's so quiet and composed. But here... it's like he's more at ease. Maybe he's just an animal person.'

Her musings were interrupted when Liam's calm voice broke the silence. "Ariana."

"Y-yes?" she stammered, her attention snapping back to him.

"Sorry to bother you, but I have a request," he said, his tone as stoic as ever.

"A... a request?" she echoed, her heart skipping a beat. Not a question? Her thoughts raced, and her pulse quickened.

"You don't have to agree if you don't want to," he added, his unreadable expression offering no clues about what he might say next.

"N-no, go ahead!" she said quickly, her voice pitching slightly higher. Then, under her breath, so soft she barely heard it herself, she murmured, "Besides, I'm actually enjoying spending time with you."

Liam either didn't hear her or chose to ignore it. His steady gaze met hers. "I want you to teach me the Sixth Myst Technique."