

ShadowBound 99

Chapter 99: Execution Attempt

Sheila stood alone in the clearing, her arms crossed and her mind churning with dark possibilities. 'I don't have my sword right now, but that hardly matters,' she thought, a cold glint in her eyes. 'Ice, water, and light magic are more than enough to deal with him. I can make this quick.'

Her smirk faltered slightly as another thought crossed her mind. 'But what about the body? Mystica isn't stupid—she'll suspect me no matter what excuse I give. Ugh.' She rolled her eyes in frustration, pacing the clearing as she worked through the potential obstacles.

Then, like a spark in the darkness, inspiration struck. 'Wait. Her steps halted, and her smirk returned, sharper than before. What if it happens during a fight? If I make it look like an accident, I could frame it as self-defense. No one could blame me for defending myself against a dark magic user. But for that to work, I'll need to make it convincing. I have to show signs of a real battle.'

Sheila's fingers flexed as icy mist began to form around her hand, her confidence growing with each passing thought. 'Yes. That's it. A staged fight to rid the world of an abomination like him—and to ensure I walk away without suspicion.'

Her gaze drifted toward the path Liam had taken, the dense forest swallowing his retreating figure. Her smirk widened, her expression one of cold resolve. "Well then," she murmured, her voice as sharp as her intentions. "Let the execution of an abomination begin."

With that, Sheila stepped forward, her eyes alight with a deadly determination as she followed the path into the forest.

"This should do," Liam muttered, his voice low as he surveyed the small clearing around him. The sunlight filtered through the thick canopy above, casting fragmented rays that danced across the lush, green grass. The air was still, save for the soft rustle of leaves in the gentle breeze.

Liam stepped into the heart of the clearing, his sharp eyes scanning the surroundings one last time. Satisfied, he nodded to himself. "Perfect place to work on core expansion," he murmured.

He lowered himself to the ground, crossing his legs into a meditation pose. Resting his hands lightly on his knees, he closed his eyes, allowing his body to relax and his breathing to steady.

His mind began to focus inward, honing in on the steady pulse of myst within his core, like a quiet drumbeat deep in his chest.

The faint sound of birds chirping and the distant whisper of the forest faded into the background as Liam immersed himself in his inner world.

Liam took a deep breath, letting the forest's tranquil atmosphere guide him into a deeper state of focus. Within his mind, he visualized his core—a luminous, swirling sphere of dark myst nestled at the center of his being. The energy pulsed steadily, like a heartbeat, resonating with his breaths.

He began the process of core expansion, carefully coaxing the edges of his core to stretch outward. It was a meticulous task, like trying to stretch an unyielding fabric without tearing it.

Each pulse of myst grew broader, filling his body with a subtle, tingling warmth. Beads of sweat formed on his brow as he maintained precise control, ensuring the expansion was smooth and balanced.

The effort required razor-sharp concentration. Any misstep, and the process could cause a backlash—a surge of unstable myst that could damage his core.

But Liam had no intention of failing. With each passing moment, he could feel his core adjusting, expanding slightly, its capacity for myst increasing ever so subtly.

Just as he was starting to find a rhythm, a voice broke through the serenity, sharp and unmistakably familiar.

"I've finally found you," Sheila said, her tone carrying both triumph and disdain.

Liam's eyes snapped open, his focus shattered. The energy he'd been carefully controlling settled back into his core as he looked up, meeting her fierce gaze.

"Already following Mystica's advice, huh?" Sheila's voice rang out with mockery, her arms crossed as she stood at the edge of the clearing. "Well, that's just a waste of your time—"

Before she could finish, Liam's gaze snapped to her, unyielding. His intense stare cut through her words like a blade, silencing her mid-sentence.

"Hey," Liam said, his voice calm but commanding, "I won't ask you twice. Fuck off."

Sheila blinked, caught off guard for the briefest moment, before her lips curled into a smirk. "Pfft. Haha. How cute," she said, her tone dripping with disdain.

"You think just because you managed to intimidate me with... whatever that was last time, I'd be scared of you now?" She leaned forward slightly, her gaze fierce and mocking. "Think again, you lowly trash."

For a moment, Liam didn't respond. The silence between them was tense, broken only by the rustle of leaves in the wind. Finally, he let out a sigh and rose to his feet, his movements slow and deliberate.

"Alright then, Princess," he said, his tone indifferent as he slipped his hands into his pockets. "You can have this place all to yourself." He turned to leave, his steps measured. "But don't interrupt my training again."

He'd barely taken a few steps when Sheila's expression darkened, a sinister smirk spreading across her face. "I don't think you understand why I'm here," she called out, her voice laced with malice. "But don't worry—I'll do you the honor of explaining."

Liam didn't bother turning back, his stride unbroken, as if her words were beneath his notice. But then, he felt it—a sudden, bone-chilling surge of energy aimed directly at him. His instincts flared, warning him of the danger, and in a split second, he moved.

Diving to the side, Liam rolled across the ground, digging his hands into the dirt to halt his momentum. As he rose, his sharp gaze locked onto Sheila. She stood at the center of the clearing, her right arm outstretched, frost curling around her fingers.

A massive block of jagged ice loomed where Liam had been standing moments before, its sheer size making it clear—if he hadn't dodged, he would've been crushed or frozen alive.

"You were quick enough to dodge," Sheila said, her voice cold and unyielding as her icy aura intensified. "But that won't happen next time."

Her eyes glinted with deadly intent, and Liam could feel it—her raw, unrestrained killing intent. The weight of it pressed down on him, but his initial shock faded quickly.

His expression hardened slightly, shifting into one of pure annoyance but barely noticeable. And one thing he was feeling the most was disgust. Why? That's simple.

This killing intent was nothing but a fake one.