

The Vampire 127

Chapter 127 127: Breaking Free

Wisps of ghostly energy flowed from Hauke's horn as the spectral Frost Walkers returned to their 'bodies', as much as the morbidly twisted red ice sculptures could be considered a 'body.' The walls shook and ice cracked off the walls and ceiling of the cavern, crashing to the ground and shattering into countless shards.

Ashlynn clutched Heila's unconscious figure close to her chest, turning her back to shelter the diminutive servant from flying shards of broken ice. For a moment, she stared at the ceiling above, afraid that the cavern itself might collapse as the earth shook and ice fell.

Hauke's eyes began to tremble as the spirits of his ancestors released him from their control. For as long as he could remember, reverence and respect for his ancestors had been the bedrock of his life. Meeting their expectations and living a life worthy of joining the greatest honored ancestors was a goal for almost every young Frost Walker and Hauke had been no different.

Now, for the first time in his life, his stomach turned in revulsion at what these ancient ancestors had become and his heart raced in fear as the figure atop the monstrosity stared down at him. A crushing weight fell on him as all five pairs of eyes stared at him.

"Like us, join with us," the feminine voice said, her half formed body turning to face Hauke as she reached toward him with her only remaining hand. "Complete us."

"Hauke," Ashlynn said. "Get away from them!"

"Silence, Earth Child," the imperious Frost Walker atop the abomination said. Pointing with both one of its own arms and the giant mishappen limb of the abomination's arm, each of the Frost Walkers chanted in unison, speaking ancient Eldritch words that even Hauke didn't recognize.

Ice swirled on the floor, rushing to surround Ashlynn. In the blink of an eye, the shattered ice reformed into hands that gripped her ankles, locking her in place while more icy arms reached out from the wall, wrapping around her body and pinning both her and Heila in place. A bitter cold like thousands of pins and needles stabbing into her flesh radiated from each of the hands that held her in place.

"Save her," a dark and rumbling voice said from the Frost Walker who existed as only limbs and a head outside the incomplete giant. "Still useful later."

"Descendant," the gravely imperious voice said, echoing around the chamber. "Spill your blood on our ice. Release your flesh and join with us."

More energy flowed, this time a lurid blood red that swirled within the clear ice, moving from one crimson Frost Walker to the next, gathering energy and mass until a long, slender blade emerged from the giant's outstretched limb.

"Take the blade," the frail, elderly voice said, nearly giddy with excitement. "Meld your blood with ours."

"Lytle Bröþor, brave is. Help will," the childish voice called. "Fears not the pain. Courage has."

Closing her eyes, Ashlynn began to form a clear image in her mind, remembering everything Hauke had taught her about shaping ice as she gathered what little energy she had left.

"Blade. Shatter," she commanded, unleashing a burst of energy and shattering the blood red ice blade before Hauke could even contemplate using it. "Sacrificing yourself won't save me, Hauke," she said firmly, opening her emerald eyes and glaring at the looming abomination. "And you cannot harm us."

As soon as she spoke, a dark warmth spread through the room, like the Vale of Mists on a summer night, dimming the glowing crystals and plunging the cave into a world of dancing shadows.

The room shook and the icy behemoth pulled back from the entrance to the cavern. All five horns across the figure pulsed in different shades of icy light and the half formed heart within its chest tightened in terror when two midnight blue eyes appeared in the depths of the shadows.

"We're safe now," Ashlynn whispered to the sleeping Heila. "Mistress Nyrielle has come for us."

Sharp heels clicked on the stone floor, echoing off the cavern walls as Nyrielle's pale figure emerged from the darkness. Shadows clung to her dark dress and dripped from her sharpened, claw-like nails until she drew even with Ashlynn.

"You've suffered too much, my darling," Nyrielle said softly, the fear in her heart only fading away now that she saw her lover before her. The fear was quickly replaced by rage as she took in the numerous injuries scattered across Ashlynn's body. "Let me put an end to this, and then we will leave this place," she promised, tapping the icy hands that held Ashlynn and shattering them in an instant.

"Vampire," the feminine voice whispered. "True Vampire. Save us. Restore us!"

"No," the gravelly, imperious voice at the top of the monstrosity shouted. "Complete us! Make us one!"

"Save you?" Nyrielle said, stalking away from Ashlynn into the center of the room. "Compete you?"

Two thin red lines appeared on Nyrielle's alabaster back, followed a moment later by the sound of tearing flesh and twisting bones as two dark, feathered wings emerged from her body. With a single powerful beat of her raven-like wings, Nyrielle leaped into the air, flapping just enough to hover before the monstrous abomination.

"Perhaps if you'd treated my darling Ashlynn well," she said, her voice colder than the air in the cavern. "But you lost the right to beg when you moved against her."

"Vampire blood, useful is," the childish voice called out from the beast's chest. "Complete us, can!"

The cave shook and dark crimson energy mixed with icy blue energy until a lurid purple glow surrounded the Frost Walker Abomination. Each of five voices began to recite different incantations as they fixed their hate filled hungry stares on Nyrielle.

Wicked barbed spears of ice formed in the air around the abomination and ice flowed and twisted along its limbs, transforming the half formed hands into giant blades larger than any individual Frost Walker. Atop the monstrosity, the crimson Frost Walker reached toward the walls, summoning a strange iridescent metal trident from what had once been a display of treasured relics and pointing the weapon directly at Nyrielle.

"Today, we are free," the voices of all five Frost Walkers said in unison. "Today we bathe again in the blood of our enemies. Today, we rise!"

"No," Nyrielle said, a cruel grin forming on her crimson lips as her fangs elongated to wicked points. Darkness spread through her eyes leaving behind only glowing rings of midnight blue in dark orbs that shined like the night sky. Shadows spilled from her hands, twisting into the shape of a headsman's ax. Caressing the blade with the tip of her finger, crimson blood dripped along the weapon's edge until it glowed with bloody menace.

"Today," she said, spreading her dark feathered wings wide. "You finally die."