

The Vampire 43

Chapter 43 43: Let Him

Sir Kaefin wasn't a small man, in fact, it would be a miracle he could still fit into his armor if anyone ever required it of him. His dark hair hung in greasy ringlets and his breath smelled strongly of last night's wine when he forced himself up against Ashlynn, pinning her to the wall outside Owain's chambers.

The plate of bread and butter that she'd brought with her clattered to the floor, knocked from her hands with a sweep of Sir Kaefin's powerful arm.

"Pretty little thing to be peeping on your lord and his lady aren't you," Kaefin said, his gaze roaming over Ashlynn's generous curves. Thick, sausage-like fingers traced along her jaw as he turned her head to meet her gaze, his deep-set eyes staring into hers from inches away.

"But you don't have to listen when there's a big strong knight right here," he added, pressing his body up against hers. "I can teach you to make those sounds yourself."

"Y-your lordship," Ashlynn stammered, her face twisting in disgust. More than anything, she wanted to unleash every bit of her new strength, to slap his face and shove him away from her. Doing so in the hallway, however, would only bring more trouble so she forced herself to put on a frightened act and hoped he mistook her disgust as fear. "I-I was just bringing a small breakfast to her ladyship. I promised..."

"Do you think I'm an idiot?" Sir Kaefin spat, slapping Ashlynn's face with the back of a meaty hand. "I saw you standing there listening for more than long enough to knock and leave the loaf," he hissed, keeping his voice low enough to avoid disturbing Owain.

Kaefin was well aware of how much his lord enjoyed his morning fun and he had no desire to draw down his lord's ire for interrupting it over a serving wench.

"Come with me," he said, snatching Ashlynn's wrist, dragging her down the long corridor, and glaring at the other servants in the hall to mind their own business.

Ashlynn's cheek burned with the force of the slap but she allowed herself to be pulled along, stumbling after Sir Kaefin while her mind worked furiously on a plan to deal with the man. Two other servants they passed on the way both averted their eyes, hurrying out of their way as if they were afraid that they'd be captured along with her.

If it had been Sir Broll who captured her, or even the older Sir Cathal, she'd have been much less certain of her ability to fight back. Both men were not only physically larger than her and likely just as strong, but were well-trained in multiple forms of combat.

Sir Kaefin, however, despite his bulk, spent more time hunkered over a writing desk than he did training to fight. He'd been Owain's loyal toad for so long that his flesh had gone soft and he'd forgotten what it was like to be in any kind of fight. Only his title and vaunted position kept him from having to face the consequences of his brutish actions over the years.

That title, however, meant nothing to Ashlynn. Stripped of its protection, she felt like he was a mangy dog, dragging her back to his den and unaware that he'd caught a mountain lion rather than a harmless kitten.

Moments later, Kaefin flung her into his bed chamber, slamming the heavy door shut as she crashed into his comfortable feather bed. Ashlynn's eyes darted around the room as she fell, taking in everything from the desk littered with scrolls and papers to the jug of wine on the nightstand and the heavy cloak thrown carelessly over a chair.

In that split second, Ashlynn's mind raced. She could fight back now, use her strength to overpower Kaefin, and flee. But if she did, she'd almost certainly have to flee the villa immediately after with only the information she'd gathered so far.

No, she realized, this was likely the only opportunity she would get. She'd intended to find a way to get Kaefin alone to question him, she'd just hoped to be more subtle about it, like she'd been with Samira. Since this had happened, however, she'd have to work with what she had.

With a deep breath, she made her decision. She'd let him think he had the upper hand, for now. Several thoughts flickered through her mind as she considered what she had to work with, quickly forming a plan to deal with the aggressive steward.

"Please, your lordship," Ashlynn begged, keeping her eyes wide and putting on an act of being afraid. She backed up on the bed as fast as she could scramble until her shoulders bumped up against the heavy oak headboard.

"I didn't mean to do anything wrong. I just, I heard his lordship and her ladyship and they were, um they, and I didn't want to," she stammered. Her face heated in rage when she recalled the things she'd heard but she was certain that Kaefin took it as embarrassment instead.

"So you heard Lord Owain's morning fun," Kaefin said, loosening the leather belt at his waist. "And you imagined yourself getting in on the action, didn't you, you dirty little trollop? Well," he said, licking his lips and leering at her. "I can give you a taste of what it's like."

"But first," he said, cracking the leather belt in his hands. "Spying on your lord demands a punishment. Ten lashes should be enough," he added, snapping the belt again.

"No, please," Ashlynn pleaded, scrambling into a corner of the bed next to the nightstand. "I'm still pure. Don't touch me!"

Kaefin's heart raced, a wide grin forming on his thin lips as he savored the sight of the woman trembling in fear. This, to him, was the best part. The sight of her panic and fear was almost more exciting than the moment when he'd ravished them.

Other knights might boast of their exploits on the battlefield, but Kaefin had never wanted the kind of glory that came from putting his life in danger. He lived for the thrill of the hunt, whether he was in the forest with his hunters and dogs chasing a stag or here in a bedroom hunting a frightened girl.

"I'll touch who I want, wench," he said, snatching at her skirts and dragging her toward him, already imagining the rewards of another successful hunt.