

## Apocalypse 327

### Chapter 327 Energies Under Control

Though he was powerless to help her with the internal battle, Duke's presence alone was a silent promise of protection. He was prepared to face any threat, no matter how great, to ensure that when Kisha finally emerged from this grueling struggle, she would do so with her newfound power fully realized.

When Kisha finally came to her senses, the first thing she noticed was the soft, golden light filtering through the curtains, casting a warm glow across the room. The once suffocating tension had lifted, replaced by a serene quiet that seemed to envelop everything.

She blinked, her vision slowly adjusting to the gentle morning light, and for a moment, she simply lay there, trying to gather her scattered thoughts.

The faint murmur of voices drifted in from outside, just barely audible through the window. It sounded peaceful, normal, almost mundane—such a stark contrast to the chaos that had ravaged her body only hours ago. A cool breeze slipped through a small gap in the window, brushing lightly against her skin like a soothing balm, reminding her that she was still grounded in the real world, still alive.

Her muscles ached, and every inch of her body felt like it had been through a storm, but the unbearable pain that had gripped her before was gone. In its place was a strange, deep calm, as though the two energies inside her had finally settled—reluctant allies in an uneasy truce. She exhaled slowly, feeling the tension drain from her limbs as her breathing returned to normal.

Kisha's gaze swept across the room, taking in her surroundings with a newfound clarity. Her eyes finally landed on Duke, seated nearby, his entire being radiating both relief and exhaustion. His rigid posture betrayed the intensity of the night, his broad shoulders tense, as if holding the weight of the world. His eyes—red-rimmed and glassy—were filled with an overwhelming mix of worry and fatigue.

The deep crimson veins crisscrossing the whites of his eyes told her everything: he hadn't slept, not even for a moment.

He had been watching over her, relentless and unwavering, every second filled with anxious vigilance. The way his chest rose and fell in ragged breaths signaled just how close he'd come to breaking down, yet his gaze never faltered, locked onto her with such intensity it almost hurt to see.

When their eyes finally met, Duke's lips parted, and he let out a long, trembling sigh of relief, as if he'd been holding his breath all night. She could see the faint glimmer of unshed tears, his emotional restraint barely holding. For a moment, his composure cracked, and Kisha could see just how much he'd suffered watching her fight this internal battle.

The exhaustion etched into his face wasn't just physical; it was emotional, the toll of seeing someone he cared for teetering on the edge.

"You're... okay," he whispered, his voice hoarse from the sleepless hours, the relief in those two words almost palpable.

Kisha's heart clenched as she realized how long she must have been out of it. Duke's weary state only confirmed what she feared—this wasn't a brief struggle. It had taken hours, possibly the entire night, for her to finally force the two battling energies within her to accept one another. What had once been a violent clash between spiritual energy and mana was now something entirely new.

She could feel it coursing through her veins—calm, steady, and unified. A fusion of the two, stronger and more stable than anything she'd felt before.

Her body, though still weak, felt lighter. The heat of the earlier battle had cooled, leaving a strange, serene energy in its place. She had done it. Somehow, in the chaos and desperation, she had survived the turmoil and emerged with something greater. A new power.

But as she looked at Duke, she realized the price they had both paid. The hours of tension, of waiting for a miracle, had drained him as much as they had her. He had stayed, protecting her in her most vulnerable state, and now she could see the toll it had taken on him.

"You didn't rest," she said softly, her voice barely a whisper. It wasn't a question—it was a statement of fact, and Duke simply shook his head in response, his lips quirking into a small, tired smile.

"I couldn't," he replied, his voice raw with emotion. "Not while you were like that."

At that moment, Kisha knew she owed him more than just her thanks. He had been her anchor through the storm, and now, despite his exhaustion, he was still here—watching over her with that same fierce intensity, as though nothing else in the world mattered more than her well-being.

Kisha moved closer to Duke, her heart heavy with gratitude and guilt. Without a word, she gently draped her arms around his neck, pulling him into an embrace that spoke of comfort and solace. She guided his head to rest on her shoulder, her fingers instinctively moving to stroke his hair in soft, calming motions.

The tension in Duke's body slowly began to unravel, his ragged, uneven breathing gradually settling into a calmer rhythm.

For the first time since the ordeal began, he allowed himself to relax, leaning into her touch. His guard was finally down, and the exhaustion he'd fought so hard to suppress finally took hold. Kisha could feel just how worn out he was, every inch of him heavy with fatigue. The strain of staying alert and ready to act for hours on end had clearly drained him, yet he hadn't faltered—not for a second.

Her fingers continued to gently run through his hair, each stroke meant to reassure him, to let him know he wasn't alone in this. The softness of his breathing against her neck was a stark reminder of the depth of his care, of how fiercely he had stood by her side, no matter how dire the situation had been.

Kisha's chest tightened with a flood of emotions. On one hand, she felt a deep pang of guilt. Duke had pushed himself to his absolute limit, and it was because of her. The thought of him sitting there all night, battling his own fears while she fought within herself, made her heart ache.

Yet, there was another emotion bubbling just beneath the surface—something warmer, something that made her feel safe and cherished.

Duke had stayed. He had watched over her, protected her, and even now, after everything, he was still here. His presence was like a beacon of strength, and knowing that he cared for her so deeply filled her with an indescribable warmth. Despite the chaos and the danger, there was a quiet happiness blooming inside her—because Duke treasured her, in ways she hadn't fully realized until now.

As she continued to hold him, Kisha whispered softly, "Thank you, Duke." The words were simple, but they carried the weight of everything she felt in that moment. Gratitude, affection, and an unspoken promise that she would never take his loyalty for granted.

Duke didn't respond with words. He didn't need to. The way he relaxed further into her embrace, his arms finally wrapping around her in return, said more than words ever could.

Soon after, Duke fell asleep, slumped awkwardly on the floor with his head resting against Kisha's shoulder. His posture was far from comfortable, but the exhaustion had clearly taken its toll. Despite his unusual position, he appeared to be deeply asleep, his breathing steady and slow.