

The Vampire 24

Chapter 24 24: A Glimpse

Ashlynn trembled in Nyrielle's embrace, surrounded by vibrant green and midnight blue magical energy, every inch of her soft skin felt like it was being caressed by warm and cool breezes. It was as though she stood naked on the terrace even though she was still fully dressed.

"It's time to give your power shape," Nyrielle whispered, pulling Ashlynn's mind away from her pure physical awareness of their intermingling magical energies and bringing her back to the lesson.

"What do I do now," Ashlynn asked, her voice thick with desire as she struggled to regain her focus.

"Interlace your fingers in mine," Nyrielle said, spreading her hands wide over Ashlynn's body. "Draw all of that warmth into our hands," she said, bringing her fingers back together and trapping Ashlynn's delicate digits between her own.

"Use each breath you draw to gather a little bit more," Nyrielle suggested when Ashlynn seemed to struggle to direct the flow of energy. "Draw it all in first. Then tell it where to go."

Slowly, starting from the tips of her toes, Ashlynn began to pull back the energy she'd raised. Still envisioning a great tree, she imagined herself raking leaves from around the roots of the tree, gathering up the energy and pulling it toward the center of her being.

"That's it," Nyrielle breathed. Shifting her position, she slowly drew upward with the hand that had slipped beneath Ashlynn's skirt, following the flow of energy until all four of their hands rested just under the young witch's full bust.

"Now, grasp the energy you gathered there and bring it out with me."

Moving slowly, patiently so as to not disturb Ashlynn's delicate concentration, Nyrielle guided their hands out from under Ashlyn's blouse, bringing them to rest on either side of the crystal sphere she'd produced at the beginning of the lesson.

"Open your eyes," she whispered.

Ashlynn's lashes fluttered, her emerald eyes momentarily dazzled by the brilliant flickering green and blue glowing flames that swirled around her and Nyrielle's hands. Her breath caught in her throat as she saw, for the first time, the manifestation of the power that had haunted her like a curse since birth.

Far from being dark, wicked, or unholy as her parents and the Church had taught her, the gently flickering green flames were warm, soothing, and felt as natural to her as the cool spring air filling her lungs.

Even Nyrielle's darker, colder flames didn't feel the least bit wicked. Instead, the midnight blue flames felt like the cold stillness of a winter's night, full of potential slumbering beneath the snow.

"Your first spell is only three words," Nyrielle said. "Start with the anchor, the crystal sphere, then express your intent. Like this."

"Crystal. Blue. Radiance." With just those three words, the midnight blue energy that danced and intermingled with Ashlynn's energy withdrew, flowing from their interlaced fingers into the crystal until it began to glow brightly, casting a pale blue light over the terrace.

"Now it's your turn. Imagine what you want to happen and then make it happen."

With a deep breath to steady herself, Ashlynn took a moment to observe the glowing crystal and the light it cast, like a lantern with blue glass. That was what she wanted, something simple, practical, and most importantly, small enough to carry very little risk.

"Crystal. Green. Radiance," she intoned, imagining the crystal's light shifting from blue to green when her own energy entered it.

The power she'd gathered surged within her, dancing along her fingertips like sparks from a flame as the energy flowed into the crystal, bringing a soft, green glow to the terrace.

The next moment, however, the glow shifted, returning to blue, then green again as Nyrielle and Ashlynn's energies resumed their dance, flowing around each other within the crystal but never blending.

"Why is it doing that?" Ashlynn asked. "Did I do something wrong?"

"No, nothing wrong," Nyrielle said, pulling their hands back and wrapping their arms around Ashlynn's slender waist. "Our energies crave each other. They're bound by our pact, seeking each other, unable to harm or extinguish the other but also separate, unable to blend together."

Ashlynn blinked, carefully considering each of Nyrielle's words. Everything had flowed so smoothly and naturally when the vampire guided her energy to this point but somehow, seeing their energies locked in a dance that kept them apart weighed on her like the tragedy of an unfulfillable promise.

"Why can't they blend," Ashlyn asked, turning in Nyrielle's embrace to meet the vampire's midnight gaze. Their magic felt so close, so intimate that she wasn't sure when she asked whether she was really referring to their energies, or whether she meant something more. "What's keeping them apart?"

"There's a barrier between all things, my darling," Nyrielle said, taking a hand to gently caress Ashlynn's face, moving a lock of blond hair out of her way to gaze into the other woman's emerald eyes. "Most sorcerers are like this, able to cooperate but unable to truly combine their powers. This is already a very good result."

"You said most," Ashlynn said, turning to look back at their flickering, dancing magic. "But not us? Can't we do more because of our bond?"

"We can," Nyrielle said after hesitating for several moments. "But to do so requires piercing the veil that separates our energies. It's not enough to rely on the blood that we exchanged when we formed the pact. At least, not right now."

Ashlynn's eyes flickered over Nyrielle's impassive face, and for the first time, she didn't mind the mask. Nyrielle's voice was quiet, and restrained, and her face didn't show a trace of emotion, as if she didn't wish for her own desires to cloud Ashlynn's decision.

Standing in the other woman's embrace, she could feel a slight tremble along Nyrielle's arms, a twitch from a hand that longed to caress and return to the soft skin underneath her simple blouse. She could see the faintest hint of Nyrielle's fangs protruding from her soft, slightly parted lips.

"You fed last night," Ashlynn said, turning her head to rest it against Nyrielle's chest, listening to the vampire's steady heartbeat. "You'll be able to control yourself tonight," she continued softly. "It, it wouldn't be dangerous to me."

"Nothing would please me more than to savor your taste, my dear," Nyrielle whispered, gently stroking the other woman's hair and holding her head against her chest. "But do you want to see our combined magic so badly that you'd give me that taste?"

"I'm already yours, aren't I?" Ashlynn said, feeling the last of her lingering attachments to Owain crumble. It wasn't truly Owain that she was attached to. It was the idea, the dream of a future together that she grieved more than anything.

Even if it hadn't been the idyllic future where she helped him to rule and was instead the future where she raised a family of loving children, it had been a future she understood and could see herself in.

Ever since the moment she woke in the Vale of Mists, she'd struggled to imagine her future as Nyrielle's Seneschal. She didn't understand what it meant to be blood-bound to a vampire of her power or how her abilities as a witch figured into their delicate relationship.

Now, it wasn't their combined magic that she wanted a glimpse of. It was her own future that she wanted to see more clearly.

"I want to know," Ashlynn said, pulling her head back to look at Nyrielle. "I want to know what it's like to be really yours. To offer up my blood and power to you. To see a hint of what our future holds."

"I see," Nyrielle said, her impassive mask falling away to reveal a warm smile in the cool green and blue light of their magic. "Then I won't hold back."

Gently, Nyrielle's delicate fingers traced along Ashlynn's face, sliding lower to push her blonde hair away from her slender neck. The whites of Nyrielle's eyes darkened until they became twin midnight orbs, sparkling like the night sky and holding a ring of the deepest, richest midnight blue that Ashlyn had ever seen.

Those eyes enveloped her world as Nyrielle's mouth descended, her tongue gently tasting Ashlyn's tender flesh before her mouth opened wide and her fangs pierced deeply into the young witch's neck.