

Beauty and the Immortal: It started with a dig Chapter 12 - Hadeon Van Doren's Castle

Chapter 12: Hadeon Van Doren's Castle

By sunrise, Mallory, who had slept against the wall in the hall, looked nothing less than a ghost of the eerie castle. After Hadeon disappeared from her sight last night, tossing the two men out of the window, she had hesitated to look for a room to sleep in.

Thuk! Thuk! Thuk!

Mallory heard the sound coming from outside. Standing up, she peered out the window and spotted Barnby gardening over his master's latest kill. He was now trying to find a good spot to place the new plant in his hand.

"This can't be real..." Mallory whispered in disbelief.

She quickly left the place, walking through the castle and arriving at a corridor where several paintings hung on the walls, their surfaces covered by layers of dust. Curious, she took out her handkerchief and began to wipe one of them, but she was able to get only the lower half.

Unable to reach the top, she grumbled, "I am too short for this."

Fetching a stool from one of the rooms, she placed it in front of the half-cleaned painting and climbed on it. After cleaning most of the surface of the portrait, her eyes fell on Hadeon, who sat on a lush looking chair and looked the same as now. There was also Barnby with a few more people in the frame wearing similar clothes.

"They must be the previous servants. Rest in peace," Mallory prayed with a solemn face, moving her hand before her.

Stepping down, she dragged the stool to the next portrait and cleaned it next, wanting to see Hadeon's family. But as she moved from portrait to portrait, all she found was Hadeon Van Doren and his smug expression on them.

"If self-admiration had a name," Mallory poked his nose on the portrait. As if wanting to erase it, she profusely wiped his face.

"Planning to wipe out the paintings from the portraits?"

Mallory heard Hadeon's velvet voice behind her, startling her as she hadn't heard him walking in the corridor.

As she turned, her foot slipped. She wobbled and was about to fall when Hadeon caught her. She felt every beat of her heart while feeling very aware of his arms carrying her. His golden eyes stared at her.

Mallory was about to thank him when Hadeon parted his lips and observed loudly, "You smell like a swamp."

Her expression turned from grateful to a glare, and she demanded, "Put me down! Right now!" wriggling like a cat.

"Very well then," Hadeon complied politely.

Mallory winced at the collision of her bottom with the ground. She shot him a sour look, while Hadeon wore an innocent expression and countered,

"What? You said you wanted to be put down," but the mirth in his eyes revealed his action to be intentional.

Mallory pushed herself before straightening up and scowling at him. *I am going to drop you just like this in the coffin one day!*

"Is my faithful servant glaring at me?" Hadeon taunted, his face holding mock upset, "Looks like last night's orientation was not helpful. Especially after the simple live demonstration."

"..." Only this man would think throwing people out of the window was orientation!

"Hm?" Hadeon's voice drawled, as if waiting for her response.

With great effort, Mallory fixed her expression and flashed him a fake smile, "Of course not, Master Hadeon. I was merely appreciating your magnificent morning self."

Hadeon's smile widened like a predator spotting its amusing prey, and he stated, "Why wouldn't you? You are privileged to work under me. It is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Though, I must say, flattery suits you well."

Mallory's smile faltered as she tried to keep it intact.

"You know, I told you to address me as Master Hades. A little rebellious, are we?" Hadeon's eyes subtly narrowed at her. "Not that I mind. It will be more exciting trying to tame you."

"You make it sound like I am some monkey, Master Hades," Mallory managed, knowing that if Hadeon wanted, he could end her existence in a blink of an eye.

"Monkey. M for Mallory and M for Monkey! How cute!" Hadeon looked extremely pleased by it.

I did not just do that, Mallory said to herself. Who would even give such a nickname?!

"I think I am ready to fly out of the window," Mallory muttered, unsure if she would stay sane in this man's company.

"Aw, don't be like that, monkey. We have so much to do, and I haven't even started. Besides, there are other exciting ways to die," he responded in mirth.

Looking to change the subject, Mallory's eyes shifted to the portraits and she asked, "Master Hades, are the family portraits hung on the other side of the castle?" She had been curious to see how his family looked.

Hadeon's demeanour turned serious, the corridor carrying a silence, and he replied, "No. They were never there because they are all dead."

"I am sorry for asking," she offered softly, feeling bad for touching the subject.

Hadeon turned to look at his portrait with his back facing her before he said, "They would be here if I didn't kill them."

And silence fell again, as Mallory was left speechless. How did one respond to it?

"Sometimes... family does things that you end up taking extreme steps," Hadeon's voice had gone lower. He continued, "I regretted it later, which is why I thought it was better for me to stay in the coffin."

His words made Mallory wonder what his family might have done for him to kill them. She couldn't help but feel bad for him.

"Anyways. You can use the room on the first right. Once you've finished, make your way to the front of the castle," Hadeon ordered, ready to leave the corridor.

"But I don't have clothes to change into," Mallory reminded him, "I should go to my hou—"

"You should find some in the cupboard," Hadeon remarked and he left.

Mallory made her way to the room, while thinking about Hadeon.

Entering the room, she shut the door before walking to the small bathtub and wondering if the water plumbing was still working. After turning and tapping on the faucet a few times, she heard the gurgling of water. Soon, water began to fall into the bathtub.

Mallory spent several minutes cleaning herself. Once she had done so, she walked to the cupboard and found two dresses inside. When she wore one of them, one side of the sleeves kept sliding off her shoulder, and it didn't help that both dresses were of the same size.

Arriving at the front of the castle, Mallory found the carriage, and next to it stood Barnby. She looked around as she made her way towards the vehicle and inquired, "Where is Lord Hadeon?"

"He went to the forest, Lady Mallory. He should return soon," Barnby replied swiftly.

Mallory then asked, "Barnby, did you serve Lord Hadeon's parents?"

Barnby answered, "Master Hadeon doesn't have parents."

"I know. I heard they were killed," Mallory responded, and Barnby's eyes moved to look at her.

"Kill? That's not possible, miss. Lord Hadeon cannot have parents."

What did he mean by that? His words didn't make any sense. But what she did realise was that the evil man had spun a tale of woe in front of her for his kicks?! She heard footsteps approach them, and her eyes met Hadeon's amused eyes.

"You said you killed your family...!" Mallory looked at him with disbelief. To think she was sympathizing with him earlier!

"What a delightfully naive soul you have." Hadeon's eyes shone with wickedness, and he chuckled. His eyes then fell on her dress, and he questioned, "Did you shrink?"

Mallory resisted the urge to roll her eyes and replied, "The dress is big. I feel like I am floating in it like a ghost. May I ask whose dress I am wearing?"

"Some dead woman's dress I can't seem to remember. Memory can be such a fickle thing, especially when it concerns useless details."

"Right..." Mallory said it in a wry voice and saw him climb inside the carriage.

"Here," Hadeon called, throwing something her way.

Mallory caught a scrumptious apple in her hand. She could finally eat!

"Figured you might want to eat something," Hadeon remarked, who now sat inside the carriage with a sly grin. "It is an apple tree that has been cultivated from the very best of our compost. Nothing enriches the soil quite like the dead."