

## **Beauty and the Immortal: It started with a dig**

### **Chapter 22 - Bathtime with Master Hades**

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14

Mallory's cheeks flared red, and she averted her gaze, scolding Hadeon with exasperation, "For goodness sake, put your shirt on! Do you have no sense of shame?!" She couldn't help but notice his trousers riding dangerously low on his hips.

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Her eyes! Where was the holy water when she needed to cleanse her vision?! Maybe she needed to splash acid in her brain.

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"Shame? I didn't know you took showers fully clothed. Normal people like to take them all off," Hadeon teased, enjoying Mallory's squirming discomfort when she squeezed her eyes shut.

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As Mallory heard his footsteps drawing nearer, she reluctantly opened her eyes, embarrassment written all over her face. She raised her hand in protest, demanding, "Stay right there!"

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"Your words say no, but your hand says otherwise," Hadeon shot back, a wicked grin spreading across his face as Mallory quickly retracted her hand. "You're quite the coy one, aren't you, little monkey?"

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"It's like I say day, and you hear night," Mallory muttered under her breath, silently praying for forgiveness for seeing an almost-naked man. "Have mercy, Master Hades!" she pleaded, half-tempted to curl up into a ball and play dead on the spot.

14

Hadeon loomed over her like a shadow that was eclipsing the sun. His golden eyes bore into hers, and his eyebrows quirked up in question, "Hm? I merely asked if my

loyal servant was going to assist with my bath, but it appears someone's taken a detour to the sinful land."

21

"Master Hades, you should understand, this isn't exactly within my job description," Mallory cautiously started, a soft gulp betraying her nerves as she instinctively backed away from Hadeon. When she had agreed to serve him, she had expected tasks like cleaning the castle or fetching his meals, not assisting in his bath. The very thought made her worry about her virtue. "I've never bathed a man before! It isn't what I normally do or enjoy!"

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"If it were normal, I would personally take you to church and have you rid of your sins," Hadeon stated in a nonchalant tone. "But as your master, you know there are always exceptions to the rules." He paused for a moment before adding, "And there's no need to worry about underperforming and dying by my hands. I am a tolerant man."

16

And I am free from the charges of murder, Mallory thought wryly in her mind.

"Start the bath now," Hadeon ordered, moving away from her and turning to walk towards the bath.

Mallory cautiously approached the bath, her fingers slightly trembling as she turned on the water. She couldn't bear to look at Hadeon, afraid of what her innocent eyes might see if he chose to remove the rest of his clothes.

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"Do vampires drown in water?" she asked hesitantly, hoping to distract herself from the impending awkwardness.

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To her relief, Hadeon didn't discard his trousers as he stepped into the bath, the water barely covering his ankles.

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"Unfortunately not," Hadeon replied, disappointment evident in his voice as if wanting some of them dead. "Their hearts cease to beat, eliminating the need for oxygen. But humans," Hadeon continued, his tone darkening slightly, "drown quietly and easily."

"Thank you for telling me that. I didn't know it," Mallory retorted with a touch of sarcasm, going not unnoticed by Hadeon.

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"Fret not, monkey. Now that you're under my leadership, I'll have you exercise your brain. Just like those brainy circus monkeys," Hadeon remarked, a hint of amusement in his voice as he settled into the bathtub, the water slowly enveloping half of his body.

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"I believe that's quite sufficient," Hadeon's voice sliced through the air as Mallory poured soap flakes from a jar into the bath. "Are you deliberately emptying the entire jar to provoke a reaction from me, or is it simply because you've mistaken this for a laundry time?" His eyes slightly narrowed as he stared at her.

17

Noticing Hadeon gesturing with a jerk of his head to come and stand behind him, Mallory placed the jar on the ground and walked around. She pulled the nearby stool while keeping a straight face and heard him say,

"Tie up my hair."

As Mallory searched for something to tie Hadeon's hair with, he called her, "Monkey." He used his fingers in come-hither motion. "Closer," he commanded in a low voice, sending a shiver down her spine.

3

How much closer? Surely, Hadeon wasn't planning to ask her to hop into the tub with him, was he? Cautiously, she approached. Her voice barely above a whisper, "Yes, Master Hades?"

"What are you looking for?" Hadeon's tone was serious, his gaze piercing.

"For something to secure your hair," Mallory replied, her eyes scanning the room for a suitable object, when she heard a low murmur from Hadeon.

"Why look around when it is right here?"

When Mallory turned back to meet his gaze, his eyes were on her neck, and his hand shot up at her. For a moment, her breath caught in her throat, fearing he was reaching for her neck. But in a swift motion, he pulled the hairstick from her platinum blonde locks, causing it to flow down her shoulders like a smooth waterfall.

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"You're already proving your worth," Hadeon remarked, twirling the hairstick between his fingers. "Carrying around this little thing for my use. Do you feel the satisfaction of serving your master well?"

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"I... my heart is crying with joy," Mallory replied sarcastically, taking the hairstick from him.

13

"Ahh, the pleasure of serving yours truly," Hadeon remarked with a sly grin. "You must have been quite the little saint in your past life to earn the honour of serving me in this one, monkey."

"I think so too..." Mallory answered as she stood up. She then muttered, "I probably ran a pickpocketing business or something." Her words broadened Hadeon's smile.

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As she approached him from behind, she gently grasped his thick mane in her hands. With a skillful manoeuvre, she effortlessly fastened his hair in place with the hair stick, ensuring it stayed dry.

In her haste to finish the task, Mallory came to the side of the bathtub and moved her hands in a lightning speed on Hadeon's arm, prompting him to stare at her. His eyes narrowed, and he couldn't resist a sarcastic jab, "Do you think I'm a floor waiting to be scrubbed?"

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Noticing Hadeon's reaction, Mallory slowed down her movements, but that only seemed to elicit another snarky comment from him. "Ah, now you're going for the seductive approach, I see," he remarked, a smirk playing on his lips.

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Gritting her teeth, Mallory retorted, "I've never bathed a fully grown man before, okay?"

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"But you have yourself, haven't you?" Hadeon raised his eyebrows and then said, "Well, lucky you. I will give you the needed crash course in bath time etiquette."

Mallory's eyes widened in horror and she stumbled backward, falling to the ground in a desperate attempt to keep her distance from him. "What?! NO!" she exclaimed.

"You wound me, monkey," Hadeon let out an exaggerated sigh. "I am trying to make you the number one servant of mine."

"I'd rather be the last servant on your list," Mallory retorted, shooting him a glare that held a hint of defiance.

Hadeon's expression turned pensive, his gaze distant, as if contemplating the weight of his words. "You don't mean that. You see, the last one tends to find themselves buried rather swiftly."

Suddenly, footsteps were heard, and a fellow male servant entered the room after three knocks. "Is everything alright, Lord Hadeon?" the servant asked with worry as he had heard Mallory shout.

"Monkey Mal is upset that she isn't the number one servant of mine yet, as she has lots to learn. Her devotion knows no bounds," Hadeon dramatically announced, one hand placed over his chest. "She even filled the bathtub with her tears over it."

Mallory glared at him. Fixing her expression, she got up from where she was and quickly spoke to the servant, "Master Hades would like someone experienced as yourself to help him bathe."

The servant began, "Oh, is that ri—"

Mallory bolted out of the room by walking past the servant like a whirlwind without waiting or turning, wanting to stay far away from the shameless vampire!

After some time, as Mallory approached the entrance of the castle, she noticed Hadeon engaged in conversation with someone. She quickly made her way over, not wanting to leave the person alone to play the vampire's twisted games.

"We should keep a prayer for him. I am sure his soul will rest in peace," Hadeon remarked, his expression dripping with false sympathy as he accepted a parchment from the man. "Would you like me to host it?" he offered, his voice laced with a blend of courtesy and sinister intent.

"Thank you for your kindness, but my family will do it. It would be nice if you could attend it," the man replied solemnly. "We don't know what kind of animal attacked him, but hopefully it gets caught soon. You should be careful too, milord."

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"Absolutely," Hadeon nodded, his smile unnervingly serene. Mallory's eyes flicked to the parchment, recognizing the name of the man Hadeon had killed in the Ghoulsville's tavern. "I'll be more than willing to assist you and the others," he continued, his voice filled with false sincerity. "Don't hesitate to reach out if you uncover anything of interest." His words hung in the air.

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With a polite bow, the person took his leave, leaving Mallory to confront Hadeon about his dark deeds.

"You killed that person in the tavern and you want to hold a prayer for him?" she asked him, baffled.

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"No, you did," Hadeon retorted matter-of-factly before breaking into a wicked grin, as they walked out of the castle. "It's not like anyone's going to pin his death on me, unless a chatty monkey decides to spill the beans. And besides, isn't it easier to frame someone who's already on the authorities' watch list for murder?" He chuckled darkly. "Now, let's not waste any more time. We have a lunch to attend, my dear."

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Mallory questioned Hadeon with a furrowed brow, "Do you not feel remorse for killing him?"

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Hadeon paused, adopting a contemplative expression as he tapped his finger on his chin. "Hm, let me think," he drawled. "Considering he was holding a stake at me, no. How could he think of hurting innocent ol' me? I was just there, patiently and politely waiting for my meal."

7

"What did you order to eat?" Mallory eyed Hadeon suspiciously.

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"Him, of course, you silly," Hadeon chuckled with amusement, while leaving Mallory dumbstruck.

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"All this talk about food is stirring my appetite. Shall we make our way to the Chevalier Manor for some blood tea? Unless, of course, you're feeling generous enough to offer your blood during our carriage ride," he added with a grin, revealing his gleaming fangs, much to Mallory's discomfort.

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