

Beauty and the Immortal: It started with a dig

Chapter 25 - A view to die for

"What do I do?!"

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Mallory cried out in distress, as she witnessed the coachman's clumsy scramble back to the carriage. She wanted to claw her eyes out because of the amount of bad luck she had been bestowed with lately.

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"Considering how Royce was always inflating his importance to the king, I'd say you've escalated from petty murderer to grand executioner rather impressively," Hadeon observed, his morbid joke only increasing the dread in Mallory's mind. He said thoughtfully, "What an ambitious woman. I wonder what comes after posters on the walls."

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Mallory glanced at Royce's dead body, who looked like he had been crucified on the tree and her eyes fell on the dead man's coachman, who had begun to move in the carriage. In a near panic, she turned back to Hadeon. "Master Hades, please help me!"

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"I seem to have missed a spot to file," Hadeon hummed, inspecting his nails with disinterest. As if sensing Mallory's gaze on him, he turned to look at her, "Hm?"

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"I cannot die!" Mallory blurted out desperately. "We need to stop that man before he gets away! Please!" Her eyes were wide.

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"You sure?" Hadeon asked her, "I mean—"

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"Yes!" Mallory answered Hadeon, and saw him turn to look at the carriage, which moved farther and farther away from them. In a blink of an eye, he transformed into a bat and shot to where the carriage was.

The coachman, fumbling with the reins, pushed the horses as fast as they could go. But his escape was cut short by a sudden interruption. Hadeon reappeared, by simply sliding into the seat next to him like a graceful cat.

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"Off to somewhere forbidden, are we?" Hadeon asked, settling next to the coachman with a sinister ease. He offered a half-smile, chilling in its detachment. "Seems like you're booking a one-way trip to a retirement in Hell."

The coachman's hands trembled as they reached for a wooden stake concealed beside his seat. His movements were hasty, driven by fear, as he aimed it at Hadeon. But Hadeon caught his wrist.

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"I was going to give you the benefits of your retirement plan, but it seems you aren't interested in it," Hadeon murmured calmly, before effortlessly twisting the coachman's arm, and the man began to scream.

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Mallory watched from afar, as if Hadeon and the coachman were having a chit chat, until the coachman fell to the ground and did not stand up again. The carriage turned and rolled back to where she stood, her mouth agape.

Mallory's voice trembled, a mixture of shock and disbelief coating her words. "D—Did you kill the coachman?" her eyes wide as they fixed on the lifeless form lying disturbingly still. "I only meant for us to stop him, not... not end him!"

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"Well, isn't that confusing. Because in my book, stop in this case is kill. Consider it a preemptive measure to silence potential nuisances before they become headaches." Hadeon then sighed, "Here I am, saving my loyal servant—truly, my greatness knows no bounds. Someone should really erect a statue in my honour," he sighed, a self-satisfied smile playing on his lips. "Now, let's head back for that promised cup of blood tea."

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Always be specific when dealing with the devil or his minions! Mallory shouted in her mind. She knew he was speaking facts, but the thought of killing didn't sit well with her.

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Hadeon, who was observing her, offered, "If it makes you feel any better, I asked you, and the coachman has lived far beyond the age of a human. I am sure he would appreciate us ending his miserable life. Otherwise, why else would he be serving a man like Royce, tch. Hop on."

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"What about them?" Mallory inquired, gesturing towards the lifeless bodies of Royce and the coachman.

Hadeon cast a glance towards where Royce and the coachman lay, then sarcastically said, "I hardly think they're in any state to join us for the journey, unless you aim to be a ventriloquist and turn them into puppets. Though, now that I think about it, a puppet show could be rather entertaining."

16

Mallory's frown deepened, and she clarified, "I meant that we can't just leave them here." She remembered all too well the last time Hadeon had left a body behind. The dead man in the tavern had sparked a manhunt, with people now searching for this 'beast' and showing up at Hadeon's very doorstep.

Hadeon paused, considering her words. He glanced back at the bodies, and then murmured, "Very well. Let's ensure no tales are told this time."

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Jumping on the ground, he made his way to where Royce was and it was also when Mallory realised how the vampire's body had changed. His skin had turned ashen, as if he had been sucked out dry. He pulled Royce from the tree, his movements efficient and he threw the man inside the carriage. The coachman followed suit, handled with the same detachment.

"Do you know how to drive a carriage?" Hadeon's voice cut through the eerie silence, startling Mallory slightly. When she nodded, he replied, "Good," before climbing inside the carriage and shutting the door.

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Taking the coachman's seat, Mallory gripped the reins, her hands clammy as she manoeuvred the carriage forward. She needed to dip in holy water after committing one sin after another. When they were going to pass a flowing river using a bridge, she heard the gentle murmur of the river below and then heard Hadeon's firm voice.

"Stop here."

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Mallory brought the horses to a sharp stop at the centre of the bridge. She watched Hadeon step out of the carriage and effortlessly dispose of the bodies, his movements swift and precise, flinging them into the river below.

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Mallory watched Hadeon's dark hair delicately sway in the direction of the wind, while she stared at his side profile. As strange as he was, it was brief moments like these, that the pureblooded vampire intimidated her. He turned to look at her and calmly asked,

"Isn't the view breathtaking? It's to die for."

19

Quite literally here, Mallory thought to herself. She then heard him remark, "Death is inevitable. Especially for humans."

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"I am aware," Mallory responded, staring back at him. "Which is why we try to make the most of our lives." She had things to do before she died, she couldn't die yet. She then ventured, "May I ask something?"

Hadeon simply tilted his head in response, his golden eyes steadily watching her. She then asked,

"For King Maximilian to have and want control over pureblooded vampires, is he more powerful than you?"

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Her question drew a faint grin from Hadeon. His eyes twinkled with mirth as he playfully countered, "What do you suppose?"

13