

26 Chevalier Manor 12

Mallory eyed Hadeon suspiciously. "Is this a trick question?" she asked, her voice tinged with unease. 1

With a serious glint in his eye, Hadeon cheekily replied as he approached Mallory, "Perhaps. There's only one right answer. Scoot over." She reluctantly moved aside, allowing him to climb up beside her. He took the reins with a confident grin. "Buckle up, disastrous monkey. We wouldn't want you tumbling out now, would we?" 9

As the horses surged forward, Mallory gripped the seat tightly, her heart racing and strands of hair loosening from her braided crown. They raced as if chased by hellhounds. Upon arriving at the Chevalier's manor, she dismounted the carriage, dizzy and unsettled, as though she'd battled through a storm with the wild ride she had experienced. 8

"You look like you have been possessed by a ghost and are in need of exorcism," Hadeon observed with amusement flickering in his eyes before he landed on the ground with elegance. "I should get a seance board if you were ever to turn into one. I will need a way to summon my

loyal servant." 19

Please don't! Mallory yelled in her mind. Despite her brief acquaintance with Hadeon, she had a feeling that this pureblooded vampire would call her at every possible second to annoy her even in the afterlife. Maybe she would need a seance board to call his sanity back. 14

"I think I'll walk next time," she murmured, following him inside the manor. 7

In the hallway, a servant bowed deeply. "Lord Hadeon, Madame is expecting you in the parlour," he announced, leading them through the opulent halls adorned with ancient portraits and rich tapestries. 1

Expecting? Mallory questioned. Did the woman know that Hadeon wasn't planning to go to the North? 8

The manor looked like any other one that Mallory had visited in the past, which hardly gave away that it was the dwelling of a blood sucking vampiress. The servant stopped before a double doored room and pushed them both wide open to reveal the vampiress lounging on a seat. 1

"The king will certainly throw a fit when he discovers one of his favourites is inexplicably



missing," Lady Rose remarked, offering a sly smile to him.

Hadeon chuckled at her words and remarked, "Fortunately, the crocodiles in the river are rather hungry this time of year. No body, no crime." He settled into a seat opposite the vampiress, his legs casually crossed. He turned to Mallory and said, "Sit, Mallory." 6

As she took her seat, Lady Rose's inquiry was sharp. "Mallory Winchester, is it?" 13

"Yes," she replied, attempting to mask her discomfort with politeness. The vampiress nodded before turning to look at Hadeon.

"Choosing a servant who has murder on her hands and posters on the walls of the town—classic Hades move," Lady Rose stated, her eyebrows arched in amusement. 1

Hadeon's smile was slow and sly. "You know I've always had a love for attention," he replied. Seeing Mallory tense up at the mention of murder, he leaned in and said, "Relax. There's no need to be self-conscious. Rose here has killed a fair number of people herself. In our circle, the bigger your kill count, the higher your nobility status," he chuckled darkly. 12

How was that going to make her feel better?! Though Mallory's life had never been sunny, she had never vouched for a killer. Now, with her own hands stained in blood, switching sides seemed like a breach of her own moral code! Her grandmother in heaven would be horrified if she knew about it. 3

"She's my star apprentice, a natural. Took out Royce with such skill—truly made me proud today," Hadeon declared, his grin broadening with each word. 21

"It was an accident!" Mallory protested, her eyes widening in horror at the unwanted praise.

"Look at her, playing the humble card. Adorable, isn't she? Almost as if she's taking modesty lessons from me," Hadeon dabbed the corner of his eye even though not a single tear was in sight. 22

Lady Rose looked more than amused at the sight before her, knowing the truth about Hadeon as she had known him for centuries. As the blood tea was served she watched as Hadeon presented it to the human. The glare Mallory tried to suppress while refusing the cup was comical. Barely hiding her mirth, stated, 10



"When you said you were going to sleep, I didn't expect you to sleep so long." 3

Hadeon, who sipped on the cup of tea, licked his lips. "The comfort of a snug coffin—what's not to love? It's rather like having front-row seats to the most tragic of plays, listening to the whispered confessions and woeful tales in the graveyard." He continued, "I would still be sleeping comfortably in my coffin bed if someone didn't decide to rudely wake me in the middle of a rainy night." 6

Mallory suddenly found the painting on the wall to be the most fascinating artwork she'd ever seen, her eyes darted away from Hadeon's accusing gaze. Pondering on his earlier words, she asked, *Did he hear what I told my parents at their graves, then?* 10

"I was hoping the living world would have improved, and what a pity it is that I wake up to hear that the humans own the purebloods?" Hadeon clicked his tongue in disdain.

"After the purebloods' powers were stripped, we didn't expect the royal family to get a hold of power from Hell that brings us to our knees. Though I wouldn't worry too much about it, as a child wields it. Only the ambitious ones have

bothered to get involved in the royal affairs, wanting control and power," Lady Rose mentioned it to him in a nonchalant tone.

"Meaning the weak ones are on the move. Though I am surprised that turned humans like Royce got recognition," Hadeon took another sip from his teacup. "Not that I care, as I have no interest in taking part in a child's play unless I design it myself. But I must say, Rose, I am hurt at your betrayal. Not coming to visit me right away."

"Unlike you, some of us like to blend in and not draw attention to ourselves, Hades," Lady Rose softly chuckled.

Mallory observed Lady Rose Chevalier's calm demeanour, but she couldn't shake the impression that, like her namesake's garden, thorns lay beneath the peaceful surface. The lady appeared to share a close relationship with Hadeon, and compared to him, she appeared to be the more composed of the two. However, Hadeon's casual mentions of her past deeds were a stark reminder of the darker layers hidden beneath that composed exterior. Mallory clung to a hopeful notion, perhaps trying to find some solace for herself in the thought—maybe,



just like her, Lady Rose's deadly encounters were nothing more than tragic accidents. 6

Wait a minute, Mallory said to herself. Was Lady Rose present last year during the first day of the season when she had slapped George? Her thoughts were interrupted by Lady Rose, who called upon her. 4

"Mallory. Would you like to take a look around the manor? I believe you have never been here before?"

Mallory sensed Lady Rose's desire for a private word with Hadeon and was all too eager to grant them their space. But just as she touched the door handle, ready to slip out, Hadeon's voice halted her. 4

"If anyone dares to bare their fangs at you, remind them your master specialises in dental extractions." 32

