

28 Popular phrases 7

After a deep tree-gazing session that almost made Mallory look like one of the statues in the garden, Mallory returned back to the manor's grand entrance with Wallace. There, they found Hadeon and Lady Rose engaged in what appeared to be a deep conversation. 1

Hadeon's attention shifted from Lady Rose to Mallory, his gaze piercing as he asked, "Enjoyed your little exploration?" and he caught her guarded expression. His golden eyes then fell on the vampiress' servant, his eyes narrowing in suspicion. 3

"It was merely a guided tour of the manor, Lord Hadeon," Wallace explained quickly, and he came to stand beside his ladyship. 4

Mallory gave a nod and then turned to the vampiress, "You have a beautiful garden, Lady Rose." Hadeon could learn a thing or two about actual gardening, she thought to herself. 15

Lady Rose's eyes sparkled with amusement as she replied, "I'm delighted to hear it. Perhaps Hades can bring you here more often."

"We won't be visiting people who don't care

about others' coffins," Hadeon clicked his tongue. 3

Lady Rose couldn't hide her scowl, and she retorted, "Well, I would have noticed your coffin's relocation if you hadn't been so melodramatic about your beauty sleep. You threatened to rip Wallace's heart out!" 8

A grin cracked on Hadeon's lips, as if enjoying her reaction, and Mallory realised this was how he got his kicks and laughs.

"Until next time," Hadeon said with a disarming smile that somehow managed to send shivers down the spines of everyone present. "We've got quite a busy schedule back at the castle—some delightful punishments to administer. Isn't that so, Mal—o—ry?" His elongation of her name made Mallory stiffen. 14

She had momentarily forgotten Hadeon's warning from that morning as they'd departed the castle. Her offense was trivial: failing to greet him. Wasn't it a little too petty even for him?! 10

"Maybe Lady Rose would like to catch up with you?" As she glanced towards Lady Rose, hoping for some support, the vampiress merely said,

"I think we are done for the day. I look forward



to our next encounter, Mallory. Do take care of yourself."

No! Mallory's mind shouted, hoping to avoid the punishment, but it seemed like an inevitable case. Sighing in resignation, she offered a polite bow, "Lady Rose." 5

"I will ask my men for what you want to find and see if they get their hands on anything," Lady Rose informed Hadeon, who gave her a nod.

When Mallory and Hadeon turned, Mallory heard Lady Rose order Wallace, "Burn the carriage and send the horses to the east."

Soon Mallory got on the carriage with Hadeon and they left. The ride on the way back was quiet, with Mallory's heart racing quickly, and she stared right ahead of her, not once looking at the pureblooded vampire sitting next to her. Only the Devil knew what Hadeon had planned for her punishment, she thought in her mind. The sky grumbled, and her heart shuddered.

Once they arrived at Van Doren's Castle, Mallory jumped on the ground as if the carriage were on fire and bolted inside the castle without turning behind. She grabbed the cigar case and sneaked into her room before locking the door shut and

placing a chair below the doorknob. 18

Mallory sought a moment's solace, withdrawing a cigar and lighting it by the crackling fireplace.

As she took the fourth drag, she caught sight of a shadow looming behind her. She turned, and there he was—Hadeon, standing far closer than she had anticipated. The sudden appearance caused her to inhale too sharply, and she choked on the smoke, coughing violently as it escaped in unruly puffs. 14

"My, my, what a handful you are," Hadeon murmured, the expression on his face stern. Stepping closer, his hand reached out to pat the top of her head. "Breathe in, breathe out," he instructed her. 9

Tears stung Mallory's eyes as she followed his instructions, her coughing slowly subsiding. With a slight smirk, Hadeon plucked the cigar from between her fingers, chiding, "Seems you're playing with fire you can't handle. Allow me to show you how it is done properly."

W—wait, that was her cigar! Her face turned red.

Mallory saw Hadeon elegantly bring the same cigar she had just used to his lips, taking a slow, deliberate inhale. He held the smoke, his gaze

aloft, then exhaled a perfect ring with a slight tilt of his head. 19

"I was managing just fine," Mallory grumbled. How did he even come inside? She remembered—she had locked the...window! She had forgotten his ability to turn into a bat.

"Is that so?" Hadeon's voice dripped with false doubt, his golden eyes locking onto hers with an amused glint as he extended the cigar back to her. "Prove it, then."

"I think I'll pass," Mallory retorted, her eyes squinting suspiciously. This sly vampire knew exactly what he was doing! 6

"Declining the cigar is one thing," Hadeon's tone shifted, his amusement morphing into something more pointed, "but evading your punishment is non-negotiable." 7

"I thought the first two slip-ups were forgiven before being punished, Master Hades. I can also make up for the lack of greetings now. Allow me to make amends— Good morning, Master Hades. And while we're at it, good evening too," Mallory's smile faltered when she noticed him continue to smile. 14

"Yet you omitted to inquire about my night's



rest, or the possibility of nightmares," Hadeon tasked, feigning sorrow. "You see now?" 10

Mallory shook her head before cautiously replying, "I presumed your nights were always blissful," especially after he tortured people to his heart's content! Surely he went to bed with a wide smile! 2

"Also," his voice drawled, as his eyes subtly narrowed, "What is with 'first two slip ups'? Are we preparing to skip protocols a second time, hm?"

"It's just a common phrase, Master Hades, a rather popular one among humans," Mallory replied with a nervous laugh.

"How strange, we have a phrase too," Hadeon leaned in, his smile never fading, "Follow the master, or face twice the disaster. Quite poetic, don't you think?" 17

