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As night descended upon Ghoulsville, the air crackled with anticipation, much like Mallory's nerves. Apart from the lanterns hanging in and outside the buildings, a bonfire was lit in the middle of the space, where Mallory stood away. 1

Suddenly, Hadeon's voice sliced through the air like a scythe, calling out to Mallory in his usual teasing tone.

"Mal monkey!" he exclaimed, causing Mallory to wince. "Did my monkey turn deaf?" he continued, his mischief evident in every word. "Or did that man catch your attention? Excuse me! You, there." 20

"Me?" questioned a man who was in Mallory's line of sight.

"No, nothing!" Mallory's eyes widened. She turned to send Hadeon a glare, only to be greeted by his wicked grin, and she demanded, "What do you think you are doing?!" 6

"Merely checking your hearing, but it seems to be working just fine," Hadeon sighed dramatically as if he were worried. He then advised her, "You should relax yourself and enjoy

the feast of death." 10

"People died here, Master Hades," Mallory pursed her lips, staring right into his brilliant golden eyes.

Hadeon's tone shifted from playful to philosophical as he spoke, "Death is just another stop on life's twisted journey, isn't it? Some end up in heaven, lounging on clouds, and some in hell, where you can smell your flesh melt to the bone."

Mallory muttered under her breath, "Thanks for the information I didn't ask." 6

"Rest assured, when your time comes, I'll personally ensure your journey is as smooth as a freshly buttered pancake. Of course, there are a few exceptions. Lucky me," he added with a grin. "Talking about deaths, you didn't seem surprised earlier."

"About what?" Mallory asked him with questioning eyes.

"The headless beauty," Hadeon reminded her with a curious look in his eyes. "I have known people to turn as green as a ghoul at such sights or better yet, faint."

After a second of silence, Mallory reminded him,
"My uncle and aunt died." 2

"I heard their throats were slit from the front,"
Hadeon remarked, making Mallory wonder how
he knew of the details while she stared at him.
"Why do you look surprised? I like knowing my
employee's background, especially when I am
hiring one. But my vampire spidey senses tell me
there's something more," he hummed, as he
stared at her. 10

Mallory looked away from him, staring into the
bonfire, before she said, "My parents. They died
in the fire."

Hadeon stared at her, then glanced at the fire,
noting her cautious distance from it. He then
remarked to her, "You are going to have a
difficult afterlife if you don't enjoy the flames.
Though I doubt most who leave the living do." 11

A frown appeared on Mallory's forehead, and she
turned to look at him. She asked, "What?"

Hadeon then nonchalantly switched the subject
by asking, "Do you know what's good for this
weather? A warm cup of blood tea."

"Why do you think I will end up in hell?" Mallory
questioned him, turning her body to him. 13



A whistle escaped from Hadeon's lips, from high to low, before he spoke, "Because, darling, you are destined there. It doesn't matter how many good deeds you do. A serphant who works for a pureblooded vampire is bound." 17

"Tell me you are joking," Mallory could already feel goosebumps forming on her arms.

"Hello, I am joking. How do you do?" Hadeon asked her in a serious tone. 17

"So all my ancestors and family are in Hell?" Mallory asked with a baffled expression on her face.

"Just one, who worked with me. Unless the others did some shady work like me. Aren't you lucky? You get to meet family," Hadeon commented with a bright voice.

"Nobody wants to meet their family in hell, especially when they know it means securing a one-way ticket there, forever." Mallory could feel the incoming headache. The more she spoke to him, the more worry she received. "This is not good," she muttered.

Hadeon suddenly patted her back, which made her stagger forward as he said, "I am sure you will come to see the bright side of it one day." 4



"Lord Hadeon," a village man interrupted their conversation as he approached them. "The food is ready."

Soon the food was served to the people of the village, the ones from the neighbouring ones as well as the travellers. Mallory sat with the few women whom she had earlier spoken to, while Hadeon was made to sit on a fancy chair with the village head.

"You haven't touched your food," one of the women noted while looking at Mallory. 2

Mallory found it hard to eat the food when she knew a special ingredient such as the 'Death Poke' had been added. But seeing how the women stared at her, she couldn't stall, and she took a bite. 3

"You must feel fortunate to be working with a distinguished man like Lord Hadeon. What a kind man he is to come have supper with us," said another woman, completely impressed, as she looked in the direction where Hadeon sat now. "He is so handsome. Now that he is back in the castle, he must be looking for someone...?" she asked curiously. 13

For someone to torture to pass time? Sure,



Mallory thought to herself. But unable to say it out loud, she only swayed her head. 1

Mallory's eyes then fell on Hadeon, who ate the food served, and he seemed unaffected, as he had earlier said to her. Her eyes then carefully moved to the other people, and it felt as if there was no vampire coming in for the scent of the food. 2

Maybe there was no vampire here, and whoever had killed had already left, Mallory thought to herself.

When she was done eating and was about to move where Hadeon was, a woman from behind loudly screamed, "AHHHH!!"

Next to the woman, a person with red eyes growled, but that wasn't all. Soon there were a couple more growls from different directions, and one that came right next to Mallory. 34

