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Mallory stood her ground, disbelief written all over her face. "You must be kidding." 1

Hadeon's expression remained grave as he shook his head. "I am afraid I am not. Time is of the essence if we're to catch that useless creature in the forest. I was going to ask the villagers for assistance, but you generously volunteered." 9

"When did I agree to that?" Mallory's eyebrows furrowed, questioning Hadeon's reality. 5

Hadeon flashed her a wide grin. "Why, when you proclaimed that trouble would fear at the mere sight of me," he replied, his tone dripping with amusement. 5

"You were going to suck them dry!" Mallory said it in a hushed tone.

"You know I have to drink from somewhere, and it isn't like the monkey is offering to step up for the task. And I don't need to really suck them dry. You want me dead?!" Hadeon gasped, placing his hand on his chest. "Why would you want that, monkey? Why?" 18

"Master Hades, may I return to the carriage?"

Mallory asked him politely with a smile.

"Sure, after we're finished here. What became of that noble-hearted woman?" Hadeon raised one of his eyebrows, and his words made her grit her teeth. "Running now because your tail is catching fire?" 7

"If I die, don't bury me next to your coffin,"

Mallory muttered, as she walked right into the forest. 9

"Aw, come now. I've already picked out the side where you'll be able to rest comfortably," Hadeon remarked, trailing a few steps behind her.

"Talking about the same, the earlier rejection was a little strong." 11

"I don't know what you are talking about,"

Mallory retorted without looking back at him.

She noticed how the forest was mostly dark except for some places where the moonlight fell.

Not to mention, it was eerily quiet. 4

"You know exactly what I am talking about. You looked offended when they said you might be my woman. Are you trying to tell me I don't make the cut to be your partner?" Hadeon demanded, his eyes on her. 20



Mallory knew this pureblooded vampire liked to poke and provoke, which would only end up to his advantage. She contemplated ignoring him, but then she said, "Can you please not let people think that something is going on, when nothing is going on between us." 3

"Waiting for Prince Charming to keep a clean reputation? Prince Charmings are trash," Hadeon remarked in a nonchalant tone. "Besides, who doesn't love a good dose of drama?" 11

"Everyone loves drama until they're the ones in the spotlight," Mallory replied, her footsteps careful on the ground. 1

"Well, I do," Hadeon's voice reached Mallory's ears, and she could practically feel the smirk in his tone without even turning to look at him. 4

Mallory took a deep breath before exhaling the air and wondering if the vampire was truly here, as Hadeon thought. She then asked him,

"Master Hades, doesn't it make you uncomfortable when the villagers badmouth your kind?"

Not receiving a response, she turned and noticed Hadeon wasn't there. She was all alone, left in the silence of the forest. She wondered

where he went suddenly and clutched her hands before releasing them. But that didn't ease the tension as she continued to walk. 7

Two minutes passed before Mallory wondered if she should turn back and return to the village. Hadeon was nowhere in sight, and the eeriness of the forest with the owl hooting was beginning to make her heart race in anxiety. 5

When she heard a rustling in the bushes, her heart leapt into her throat, and she immediately started to run.

"Shit!" Mallory cursed, because as she ran, she could hear the rustling following her, and she was sure it was no rabbit or squirrel following her!

Leaves scrunched beneath her shoes continuously, and as she made her way past a tree, one of the branches with thorns grabbed her dress skirt. She pulled her skirt roughly, which caused the weak and old fabric to tear. 4

A growl suddenly was heard ahead of her, which made Mallory stop in her tracks. Suddenly, a vampire jumped before her, and she took a couple of steps away from the creature, who smiled at her.



"A juicy dinner that looks like a ripened one," the vampire licked his lips as he eyed Mallory. "You must be extremely foolish." 9

"Actually, I am short on luck lately," Mallory replied, feeling her mouth go dry when the vampire smiled, baring his fangs. With Hadeon not in sight, she tried to divert the vampire by asking,

"Did you turn the villagers into vampires?"

"I did. I wanted them to prepare my meal, but I can smell the whiff of vampires' corpses," the vampire murmured. 2

She saw the vampire move towards her as he disappeared from his earlier spot. But then suddenly he was tackled before rolling on the ground. The vampire growled in annoyance and threatened,

"How dare you interrupt my meal?"

Hadeon came to stand before Mallory, and he remarked, "My apologies, but this one is reserved for me. I should get her a little collar with the reservation name. An excellent idea, don't you think?" 14

The vampire growled and retorted, "You don't

know who you are dealing with! I will rip you into pieces!" 5

The random vampire fixed his gloves with arrogance, and Mallory couldn't see it clearly, but were there inscriptions on the back of his gloves? The next second, he was right in front of Hadeon and threw a punch right across the latter's jaw. 3

"Is that all you got? You must be made out of paper," Hadeon taunted as he raised his head to meet the vampire's eyes, who looked irked. "You must have a weak master who turned you. Pathetic," the look in his eyes turned to disgust.

"Fucker!" The vampire turned furious, and came right at Hadeon. His hand punched one of the trees that the pureblooded vampire dodged, leaving a hole in the bark of the tree, before it fell to the ground with a loud thud. "I will rip your insides!"

"Self affirmations are important, but you should know where you stand, tch," Hadeon clicked his tongue.

Mallory observed Hadeon's relentless taunting of the vampire, not just through his words but also his actions. It was as if he were toying with the

creature, deliberately humiliating the person. 2

In the blink of an eye, Hadeon seized the vampire's hands, effortlessly tearing through the gloves with his sharp nails. With a swift motion, he twisted the vampire's hand and forced it to the ground, showcasing his dominance over the weaker creature.

"Time for the important question. Who turned you?" Hadeon demanded with an unsettling calmness as the vampire struggled to rise.

"Judging by your fancy gloves, I'd wager it was some fancy individual who turned you. So, spill the name now."

The vampire's attempt at escaping was futile, and he finally said through gritted teeth, "If you kill me, he isn't going to be happy!"

"Don't fret over it. I'll be sure to send him a bouquet of blood and a book on 'Vampire Parenting 101,'" Hadeon retorted with a twisted grin, adding more pressure to the vampire's already twisted arm. 9

"Master Erebus!" the vampire answered with a growl. "He is a pureblooded vampire!" 10

Mallory watched Hadeon stare at the vampire, before turning his body around, who then

laughed in Hadeon's face, "Scared, aren't you? He will hunt you!"

Hadeon chuckled at the vampire's threat, his amusement tinged with a dark intensity as his eyes shifted to a sinister shade of red. In the blink of an eye, his free hand shot forward, plunging into the vampire's chest. With a swift motion, he tore out the creature's heart and casually tossed it to the ground. Licking his bloody fingers, he remarked,

"I love it when people try to scare me. What a laughable thing to say to a monster." 11

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