

42 Monkey's fashion 16

Mallory followed Hadeon, watching him glide through the street like a ghost because of how long his coat was. Her eyes fleeted over the shop signs, wondering if they concealed hidden themed shops. 1

"Was that guy we met back there a night creature?" Mallory whispered so that the humans walking past them didn't hear her.

"Humans sporting red eyes are as rare as a vegetarian werewolf," Hadeon stated with a smirk. There were werewolves?! Mallory turned alarmed. "This place is central to non-human beings. You'll find this place primarily caters to vampires. Which is why half of this place is filled with vampires, while the rest are humans." 6

Mallory edged closer to Hadeon, hoping to avoid being mistaken for a tasty treat. But instead of maintaining a safe distance, she accidentally bumped into him, earning a disapproving look from the pureblooded vampire. 5

"Are your eyes falling you? Or are you just trying to cosy up to me for warmth?" He raised an eyebrow, and said, "Careful now, monkey. People

might start to talk. We wouldn't want any rumours spreading about our 'special' relationship." 20

Said the man who claimed that she wanted to touch his abs! Mallory squinted her eyes at him. Taking a step away from him, she asked, 2

"What's on your shopping list next, Master Hades? Someone's soul or bones?" 9

Hadeon's lips curled into a sly smile. "I'm fully stocked in those. Perhaps another time," he remarked, his gaze dropping to Mallory's hay-made footwear. "But I must say, your choice in footwear is... unique. It might just put the shoemakers out of business." 5

Mallory adjusted her dress, trying to conceal her makeshift shoes. "The one you tore was the only pair left," she retorted.

With a teasing expression, Hadeon quipped, "And here I thought being a lady came with a shoe collection. Even Barnby has more shoes than you. What happened to the rest of them? Surely, you must have had more than one pair in your pretty little mansion." 11

Mallory sighed. "It probably went up in flames," she muttered. Feeling Hadeon's stare, she

elaborated, "The night I was going to wake you up, Hattie and I were planning to leave for the south. So we packed everything I would need, which was later confiscated when we were caught." 2

"Bless your grandmother's soul. Maybe we should pay a little visit to Reavermoure," Hadeon suggested with a thoughtful expression. 8

"With our posters on the town's walls?" Mallory asked. The last visit there had left her in shock. Each step outside the castle felt like tempting fate, as if someone might recognise her as the murderer.

"Oh, dear Mal, I'm nowhere to be found on the poster. Thanks to the donkey, it's Gideon and Mallory Winchester gracing the walls of infamy. But fear not, even if they do recall me, and they likely will. I am quite an unforgettable person, after all. It should all be fine. Who doesn't love to stock blood for winter," Hadeon explained casually, glancing back the way they had come. 6

What was he, a bear, to hibernate and stock food supplies before winter? Mallory retorted in her mind.

"Monkey, why don't you go look at the shops. I



will be back in a jiffy," Hadeon murmured, just as a crow cawed overhead. With many crows hanging around the town, she wasn't sure if the crow was Cawlin or not. 6

As Hadeon strolled away, disappearing from view as quickly as a shadow, Mallory muttered to herself, "When is it ever wise to leave a human surrounded by vampires?" She couldn't distinguish between vampires and humans, because something told her that not everyone had red eyes at first glance, just like Hadeon. 3

As she walked cautiously along the footpath, her gaze wandered over the shop windows. Mannequins adorned in elegant dresses and gowns caught her eye. Jewels and gems sparkled even in the absence of sunlight.

"Perhaps I should seek out a shoe shop. After all, he tore them, so he might as well foot the bill," Mallory muttered to herself, her discomfort evident in her delicate steps. 3

Continuing her stroll, Mallory stumbled upon a confectionery and bakery shop. Intriguing treats filled the display, tempting her with their allure. However, a nagging doubt crept into her mind—what if the ingredients weren't for humans, but tailored to suit vampires' taste? 7



Pressing forward, Mallory finally reached the shoe shop she sought. Beautiful shoes adorned the window display, each pair more captivating than the last. She debated whether to wait for Hadeon, but as she turned away, her gaze met that of the smiling, creepy man who had stared at her outside Sable Stitches. 15

Mallory made a sharp U-turn and stepped into the shop, above which the sign read 'Velvetvein Footwear.' 1

As Mallory walked past the door, the bell attached tinkled, announcing her entrance. Rows of shoes lined the racks, enticing her further into the shop. But before she could take another step, a man with a monocle appeared before her, blocking her path. "What are you looking for?" he questioned, his tone dripping with disdain. 1

"Shoes," Mallory replied, attempting to move past him, but he extended his hand to halt her.

"I meant this isn't a place for someone like you," he sneered, scanning her up and down with a critical eye. 7

"And who exactly do you think I am when you say 'someone'?" Mallory retorted, irritation creeping into her voice. 1



"Someone we don't cater to. Now, how about you turn around and leave? We've just cleaned the floors," the man huffed dismissively. "All these hay sticks. I can't believe they enter Marrowmere when they can't afford something so basic," he commented to his assistant. 4

"You don't have to be rude. I am leaving and have no interest in your shop," Mallory stated firmly, recognising the pointlessness of engaging with such a character. With a graceful turn, she exited the shop. But as she stepped outside, her heart sank at the sight of the creepy man. She had hoped he had left. 1

The man had blond hair, combed to the back, and red eyes, and wore a smug expression. Great. Where are you, Master Hades?! 1

"You look like you've lost your way, love. Need a hand?" the creepy man chimed in. 8

"I'm quite familiar with the area. My master's just over there, waiting for me," Mallory replied politely, attempting to sidestep the vampire.

But the vampire moved to block her path, and Mallory internally screamed. What was with people not letting her pass through?! She wondered if anyone would notice if she just

shouted for help or if they'd all just carry on with their shopping. 1

"How about I hire you? I will pay you lavishly and keep you in better condition than that man you were with," the vampire took one step closer to her.

"Actually, I am practising my beggar look. It is in fashion and very effective in keeping people away," Mallory gave a tight smile. She despised these arrogant vampires! 21

His pupils eyes dilated, and he placed his hand on Mallory's, before saying, "Follow me into the carriage." But when Mallory stared at him, he murmured, "It didn't work?" 16

Suddenly, a sinister silhouette swallowed the vampire standing before Mallory. The person to whom the shadow belonged spoke, 1

"Step away for a moment, and you have already collected strays." The vampire turned to find Hadeon towering over him as he grinned. When the pureblooded vampire saw the lowly vampire's hand on Mallory, he questioned, "Having a death wish, are we?" 17

