

43 Changing sides! 6

Mallory could feel the air around them turning heavy, and she noticed how the random vampire tried to hold his ground even though Hadeon intimidated the person merely with his presence. 1

The vampire let go of Mallory's wrist and lied with a smile, "This slave looked like she was going to run, and I thought I should take her back to her rightful owner." 9

"Did she now? She has a record of that. How very kind of you! There are only a few who would do that," Hadeon responded, returning the vampire's smile with one of his own. He then turned and noticed the shoes behind the window. "It seems you have found the shop. What are you doing outside?" he turned to look at Mallory. 6

Mallory wasn't happy that the vampire lied, but she expected nothing less from vampires. She replied, "This shop isn't th—"

"I should get going," the vampire said, ready to leave now that the human he was targeting wasn't alone anymore.

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The vampire couldn't help but think how stupid this person was. Maybe if he stayed around, he would be able to get the human, thought the person. He then walked through the door for the bell on the door to ring. 8

Mallory, who entered the shop first, met up with the person who had chased her out of here a few minutes ago. The shop worker looked annoyed at seeing her and made his way from the other side of the room.

"The ambience here doesn't look up to par. We should go to another place for it," the vampire proposed.

Hadeon stepped into the shop, and the door shut behind him with a soft click. "You needn't concern yourself with that," he assured. "I have just the remedy."

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hand moved with lightning speed. In an instant, the pureblooded vampire's fingers were buried in the vampire's eyes, blood spilling forth, and he plucked the eyeballs out before he calmly remarked, 12

"You've got some nerve trying to compel my servant. Did you honestly believe I would turn a blind eye?" 22

"AHHH—!!" The vampire almost groaned in pain, with blood continuously dripping down his face.

Hadeon extracted a handkerchief from the vampire's pocket, meticulously wiping away the blood that stained his two fingers before casually discarding it onto the ground. He then turned to the shoe shop workers with his dark red eyes fixed on them and demanded, "Are you going to clean this dirt or should I...?" 3

The shopkeeper, who had earlier dismissed Mallory from the shop, was the first to nod. He motioned to his fellow worker to assist in moving the groaning vampire out of sight, into the nearby alley. Turning back to Hadeon, he asked, "Would you care for some fresh blood tea, sire?" 1

Seated upon a plush, ruby-red couch, one leg



elegantly crossed over the other, Hadeon questioned with disdain, "Does it appear as though I've come here for tea? Fetch the lady her correct shoe size." 1

"Lady?" The shopkeeper responded, glancing at the young woman with below the par clothes. 5

"Yes, lady. Anything wrong with that, boy?" Hadeon retorted, raising one of his arched eyebrows, causing the person to quickly shake his head in denial. 9

"M—Milady, please take a seat," the shopkeeper pleaded. "May I take the measurement of your feet?" 2

"No," Mallory responded, and this had the shopkeeper panic, feeling the pureblooded vampire's eyes move from him to the human. 5

"You don't want shoes, monkey? Planning to see how long before the straw shoes break?" Hadeon questioned with a head tilt. 6

Mallory had been subjected to the disdainful gaze of this very shopkeeper before. While she had no intention of running to Hadeon like a child to tattle, she certainly had no interest in purchasing shoes from this shop.





"It isn't that," Mallory muttered.

"Well, we certainly can't have you step on things again. Wouldn't want to turn the place into a buffet for passing vampires, now, would we?" Hadeon hummed before gesturing dismissively to the shopkeeper.

As the shopkeeper approached Mallory, she shot him a glare so intense that he froze in his tracks. Hadeon let out a low whistle and remarked loudly, "Hm? Did I miss the beginning of a thrilling drama?" He then sighed dramatically and added, "Seems the lady is a bit shy and prefers not to be graced by the touch of well, less-than-clean hands," before rising from his seat. 8

As Hadeon approached Mallory, she regarded him with wary eyes. Without missing a beat, he commanded the shopkeeper, "Fetch a chilled blood tea."

The shopkeeper sprinted away, leaving Mallory to observe as Hadeon dragged a wooden stool closer. Her voice tinged with uncertainty, she asked, "Master Hades...?"

"Someone needs to measure your feet. If you aren't allowing the lowly beings, then the task

falls upon me. Cannot have you dawdling around when we have lots to do. Pull up the hem of your skirt," Hadeon ordered in a nonchalant tone. 8

Mallory complied with his request, obediently presenting her straw shoes. As Hadeon's hand drew near, the straw shoes burst into flames, much to her astonishment. With a casual wave of his hand, Hadeon extinguished the fire and caused the charred remains of the straws to crumble to the ground. 7

"Now let us see how big the monkey's feet are," Hadeon murmured, gently picking one of her feet and measuring it with the scale that he had picked up in the room. 7

Mallory's breath was caught in her throat, utterly unprepared for the pureblooded vampire to stoop to such a menial task. But then again, Hadeon operated on his own whims, his actions governed solely by his unpredictable mood. Her heart leaped when his finger brushed against her sole. 4

Remembering something, Mallory said with a frown, "Master Hades, it has been nearly half an hour since George left." Knowing the man, she worried he was up to no good.

"He'll return precisely when needed," Hadeon reassured with a casual hum, his gaze lingering on the smooth surface of her sole, which had been hurt last night. Finding no side effects, a sly smile tugged at his lips as he declared, "Twenty-four centimetres." 12

Meanwhile, far away from the shoe shop, George had found himself in a predicament, desperately trying to reach Reavermoure with no willing rides in sight. To his dismay, the silver coin Hadeon had given him proved insufficient for the fare, much to his shock and frustration. 7

"Why in the world is the fare so expensive?!" George exclaimed in frustration, his patience wearing thin.

After some haggling with a market vendor, George managed to strike a deal using the silver coin to cover only half the distance. However, his luck took another sour turn when the vegetable cart he hitched a ride on departed from Marrowmere, only to suffer a broken wheel mere minutes later. Left stranded and increasingly agitated, George couldn't help but curse his misfortune. 3

"Fuck it! I'll just have to walk before that vampire catches up with me! The sooner I inform Father

about this, the sooner this nightmare will be over!" George muttered bitterly, setting off on foot while directing a final curse at the duplicitous market vendor who had swindled him. 3

George, barely having taken a few steps, found himself already fatigued, prompting him to pause and gingerly place a hand on his lower back for support. With a sigh, he pondered aloud, 2

"Which way is Reavermoure again? Must be this way," he asserted confidently, though in reality, it lay in the opposite direction. 3

He then started to walk again, and after five minutes, he caught sight of his father's men. Relief flooded through him. He knew his father would never cease his search. Waving frantically and jumping up and down, he called out, 1

"I'm here! George Kingsley, the count's son!" His voice carried across the distance, catching the attention of the men who swiftly leaped from their carriages. "You stupid vampire! I will stake you through your heart for making her throw knives at me and make me carry things!"

He then paused as he noticed the men running towards him. "I knew I would be missed... but



aren't they overdoing it with their affection?" Despite the outward display of affection, something felt slightly amiss to him. 10

His confusion turned to alarm as he caught sight of pitchforks and heard one of the men bellow, "Kill him and dispose of the body! The count won't miss him!" George's jaw dropped in disbelief. 10

George raised his trembling hand and attempted to reason with them. "I think you've got the wrong count's son... Wait! Father would—"

But his words fell on deaf ears as the men continued to advance, their intent clear in their steely gazes.

In panic, George suddenly turned on his heel and bolted through the fields, the sound of his pursuers' footsteps echoing behind him. Why was his father's anger directed at him? He couldn't comprehend the situation, but one thing was certain: he needed to escape. 3

Somehow, George managed to escape his pursuers momentarily, slipping back into the familiar surroundings of Marrowmere. Breathless and desperate, he scanned his surroundings, his voice echoing through the

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deserted streets. With his heart pounding, he demanded, 1

"Where is Hadeon?!" 22

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