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When Hadeon's hand had moved in an upward direction while still holding the end of the towel, Mallory quickly turned with her back facing him. 1

"I know you are my number one admirer, but barging in like that for a sneak peek? So eager," Hadeon clicked his tongue. 10

She heard something drop on the ground, and she gulped. Please, don't be naked! Mallory prayed while her eyes were tightly shut. Trying to find words, she said, "I—I didn't mean to come at such a time." 8

"Are you suggesting you regret not arriving when the towel dropped? You must be regretting it," Mallory heard him whisper next to her ear, and it was enough for her thoughts to scatter out of her head. "What a naughty woman." 19

Mallory shook her head and took a step away while also turning so that his words didn't fall on the shell of her ear. How would she know that he was going to take a bath now? What was the time again? 6

"Aren't you going to open your eyes, monkey?"

Hadeon taunted her teasingly. 2

"No, I think I am good!" Always, Mal, always knock! Remembering why she was here in the first place, she raised the collar that was in her hand. "What is this?!" 4

Hadeon's eyes fell on the black collar, and his lips curled. He asked her, "Did you not like the colour? Perhaps I should have asked what your favourite colour is." 4

"It isn't the colour! You got me—"

"I am standing here," Hadeon stated, and Mallory turned in the direction of his voice. He asked, "Is it the material? Did you want something in frills?" 10

Mallory would have thrown the collar at him, but she wasn't sure where to aim. She said through gritted teeth, "You got me a fucking collar! Do I look like a pet to you?!" 11

"Aren't you my monkey?" Hadeon asked in an oblivious tone.

Mallory retorted, "You should get George one too. Because he's your donkey." 14

"If you insist, we can find one that's less fancy," Hadeon remarked casually, while Mallory's hand

trembled with anger. 4

"I am not wearing it! You can wear it yourself!" only if she knew where he was exactly standing! She wanted to pry her eyes open and take a peek at him—not lecherously!

"Hmm, not my style," Hadeon stated, clicking his tongue disapprovingly. "I may be vain, but not enough to wear a collar. However, where we're headed, trust me, you'll want it." 10

Mallory heard his footsteps pad on the floor as he approached her. Her eyebrows furrowed, and she asked, "Why will I need a collar?" She knew they were visiting a place full of possible vampires, but what kind of place was it? 4

Suddenly, Mallory felt the collar she was holding being whisked out of her hold. She was scared to move her hand, not knowing where or what she would touch, and her cheeks turned red. 2

"Master Hades?" Mallory whispered in the quiet room.

"It's going to be filled with vampires. Once we get there, you'll understand why. But for now," Hadeon fastened the collar around her neck and secured it at the back, "let's put this on," and something clicked at the front of the collar.

Speaking in a low tone, he added, "The door is to your left. Get ready by one." 13

Mallory quickly turned her head, then her entire body, before swiftly making her way to the left and bolting out of the room without casting a glance back at Hadeon. By the time she reached her own room, her heart was pounding loudly in her chest, and her eyes were wide with shock. Approaching the mirror hanging on the wall, she stared at her reflection, taking in the black collar now clasped around her neck, with the cross belonging to the pureblooded vampire dangling from it. 7

"The cross looked better on the chain," Mallory muttered, not knowing what difference the collar made. When she went to unhook it, she couldn't find one, as if the hook had disappeared. 10

Closing the door behind her, Mallory took a bath as she had to get ready for the soiree that she was attending with Hadeon. And while she was immersed in the water, her thoughts drifted to the life she once had. As annoying as the vampire was, his antics had kept her mind occupied and it hadn't given her time to think.

But in times like these when she was alone, she

felt the loneliness seep into her mind. Her parents. Her grandmother. Her relatives... They felt like a dream. And what she would do, to see them again. Technically, it would be possible if she died, came the dull thought, and she dryly chuckled.

"Not yet," Mallory whispered. She had to punish Kaiser for his deeds. 6

Getting out of the bath, Mallory started to get ready. She pulled out a deep blue dress from the bigger box, and it had long sleeves with buttons at the front. The fabric had rose like petals made of velvet.

Not knowing what to do with her hair, she twisted and smashed it at the back, before pushing one pin after another into her hair. She muttered, "If someone bites me, I have pins to stitch up their lips." 9

"Mallory!" Ivy spoke at the door, and it made Mallory jump in her seat. 2

"Ivy, you are supposed to knock..." Mallory murmured, feeling her heart almost leap out like a frog. Hadeon and his servants were going to kill her one day.

Ivy looked puzzled and apologised, "I will be

more careful next time." When her eyes fell on Mallory's collar, her eyebrows rose. "Master bought you a collar! How wonderful!" 2

"Say, Ivy. Do you know this person called Orlo?"

The maid nodded before saying, "He is one of the pureblooded vampires, but not the same as Lord Hadeon. Not an original one. He's not really a friend, but not a foe either. I suppose you can call him neutral, who doesn't take sides."

"Sides?" Mallory questioned.

"Though vampires are always pitted against humans and vice versa, there is a higher need of power control within vampires," Ivy explained to her in a thoughtful tone. "You see, pureblooded vampires, if they are able to defeat the other, can consume the deceased vampire's abilities." 9

"Everyday I learn something new..." Mallory whispered, and before she could ask more, the maid urged her, 4

"Lord Hadeon is expecting you at the entrance. You should hurry!" Ivy said before waltzing out of there like a breeze.

As Mallory descended the stairs, her gaze fell upon a tall figure fixated on the grandfather

clock at the bottom. Curiosity piqued, she approached cautiously until the person turned around, startling her enough to nearly lose her footing. With a swift grasp of the railing, she steadied herself.

Before her stood Hadeon, in black trousers and shirt beneath a matching coat. However, it wasn't his attire that caught her off guard.

"Y—Your hair..." Mallory stammered. 3

Hadeon had drastically altered his appearance. His once-long locks now cropped short at the back, framing his chiselled jawline, while the front remained thick and dishevelled. It also highlighted his wicked golden eyes that now stared at her. 18

"When did you last hear of a servant make their master wait?" Hadeon demanded with a slight glare. "Are you listening?" 2

But Mallory's eyes were on his head, and she asked, "What happened to your hair...?"

"I was bored with the earlier one and thought it was time for a little change in style," Hadeon hummed, before adding, "It isn't like I cannot have them back." When she gave him a quizzical look, he ran his fingers through his short hair,

which turned long and her mouth fell open. 17

"How...?" Mallory exclaimed, bewildered by Hadeon's sudden transformation. Then, after a few seconds, his hair returned to its original length. 2

Hadeon dramatically sighed, "You underestimate my abilities, monkey." 1

When the pureblooded vampire began to walk towards the carriage, who knew that the devil would give such abilities, Mallory thought to herself.

Once they climbed inside the carriage, the vehicle left Van Doren's castle. Mallory couldn't help but stare at Hadeon's hair and how he looked so... different. She sneakily looked at him from the corner of her eyes, noticing the soft ruffle at the front of his head. He had a cheek resting against the back of his hand. The vampire was good looking, but now, there was a ruggedness in his demeanour. 4

After a while, Mallory turned to look outside the window. Staring at the mountains and the trees as the path turned thicker. Nearly after more than one hour, they finally arrived at a beautiful white mansion.

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"It is too bright," Mallory muttered, and this brought a chuckle from Hadeon.

"Some of us like things to be pure, something that we do not possess," Hadeon remarked, and he ran his tongue across one of his fangs. 2

As the carriage came to a halt, they climbed out of it, and Mallory noticed several carriages parked in the distance. Something told her they were the last ones to arrive, but Hadeon appeared unconcerned. 15

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