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As Mallory and Hadeon approached the entrance of the manor, a servant bowed respectfully.

"Welcome to the Lair. May I assist you with your coats?" 1

"No need," Hadeon replied in a dismissive tone without a glance at the servant. 3

Mallory trailed behind, her brows furrowing in thought. The exterior of the manor was painted a pristine white, but the inside was enveloped in a deep shade of blue. Was it a subtle representation of how vampires were? What appeared nice on the outside was dark on the inside. 5

And wait a second, Mallory thought to herself with a frown as she stared at the walls they walked through. It was the same colour as the dress she wore! She wondered if Hadeon had deliberately designed it this way. 17

Before Mallory could voice her curiosity to Hadeon, her gaze landed on a startling scene in one of the corridors. A vampire had sunk his fangs deep into a woman's neck while she appeared strangely docile. As if sensing them



there, the vampire's eyes opened, and he pulled away from her neck with his bloody lips, watching them, or more like watching the pureblooded vampire walk past him. 8

"I can't believe humans are willing," Mallory whispered when they were out of sight. 1

"You would be surprised with the number of people who want to serve vampires," Hadeon hummed, his eyes sharper than before as they looked ahead.

"Because of the immortality?" She asked, as if unable to grasp it, as she couldn't envision herself wanting something like that for herself. 6

"That, along with some other perks," Hadeon responded, which got her curious. "A lot of times, a vampire's bite can turn into an aphrodisiac. And who doesn't like getting high? One gets off blood and the other by pleasure." 18

"Then all vampires must be rolling in cash from all that venom business," Mallory muttered before she wondered if that is why the vampires she had met were living in high places.

Hadeon's lips curled from her words, and he stated, "Only the pureblooded vampires have that ability, while the other vampires lack it.

Original and the copies." 10

They soon arrived before a room, where Mallory could hear the room buzzing with conversations and laughter. Upon stepping inside, the room suddenly went quiet. The room was painted deep blue like the other parts of the manor Mallory had come across, but because of the fireplace and many candles lit in the closed room, it left a warm glow in there. 2

There were vampires... at least a dozen of them.

"Hades!" A woman's shrill voice startled Mallory. It was a vampiress with her brunette hair, who made her way to where they were with her figure hugging dress. "It is so good to see you here! How are you doing?" 7

"Looking for chaos," Hadeon replied with a smirk. 11

"Did you cut your hair? You look more attractive than before," another vampire praised.

"What can I say? Father added most of the bottle of attractiveness when making me, leaving barely anything for the rest," Hadeon sighed. 18

Did he just call the others ugly...? Mallory asked herself in stunned silence. 13

"Hadeon, it has been so long," another vampire stepped forward one after another. Mallory noticed how some were eager to talk to him, there were also some who sat in their seats or stood in their place, watching the pureblooded vampire.

Her eyes met Lady Rose's and she offered a bow to her, who gave her a smile. She was with her butler, who stood behind her where she was seated. She also caught sight of the tailor, River, and the thought of his meals made her internally sweat.

A vampire with long silver hair approached them, and the other vampires stepped aside to give them room. He said, "Welcome back to the lair, Hadeon. Everyone has been dying to meet you. It is all they can speak about since your return." 1

"Pity that I didn't know about it. Else, I would have brought them some homemade coffins," a sly smile appeared on Hadeon's lips. 3

"I have definitely missed you. I have already reserved you a seat next to mine," Orlo said, raising his hand towards one of the plush looking couches, and the vampires sat next to each other. "What would you like to drink?"

Vintage or fresh blood from the source?" 2

Mallory didn't need an explanation of what it meant, especially when some of the vampires or vampiresses were drinking blood from humans' wrists or necks. It was a whole buffet!

"I can share mine with you, Hades," said the woman who had earlier greeted Hadeon. "What's mine is yours. She's brand new." 8

Hadeon lazily glanced at the human seated on the ground, and he remarked, "I guess I will take the old wine from the cellar. I missed some of them when I was sleeping." 10

"I will be sure to gift you the finest one as a welcome gift," Orlo promised, turning to look at the servant in the room, who nodded and exited the place to fetch Hadeon his drink.

"Seems like Hadeon deems your taste to be inferior, eh, Willow?" Someone in the room teased, eliciting a scowl from the vampiress. "But seriously, I'm curious. I would have liked a bite and a taste to know what makes the blood best for him. I mean, he's gone as far as to collar her." 17

This comment made people turn to look at Mallory with curious expressions on their faces, as if he had never collared a person before. 9

Mallory couldn't shake the feeling that some of the vampires and vampiresses were eyeing her with a subtle gleam in their fangs.

Simultaneously, she observed some of the people who were with these night creatures, very few wore collars around them, while the rest of the necks were left bare as if they were free to be tasted. 2

"What a pity. I thought it was a choker necklace," a vampiress chuckled from the other side of the room. 7

Mallory, who had earlier cursed Hadeon, now couldn't help but be thankful that he wasn't letting people bite her. 9

"I heard you had a good sleep. Any dreams?" Orlo asked in a light tone while he drank blood from his glass.

"I turned into a priest," Hadeon responded with a wicked smile. He then said, "Your guests seem to have reduced." 2

"Most of them have moved to the north, while some have scattered in different lands," Orlo answered. "Were you looking for someone?"

"Not really, but a name came up recently. Erebus, heard of the name?" Hadeon questioned, cocking

his head. 2

Mallory noticed how the silver haired man looked slightly taken aback before saying, "He's the eighth pureblooded vampire made. He doesn't follow the code. You broke one of his fangs in the past." 10

"He must be insignificant for me not to remember him," Hadeon murmured. He then said, "I was wondering why the pureblooded vampires were turning humans and leaving them as corrupted vampires, but it seems it is non code followers. There were corrupted ones in Ghoulsville. I must have hurt his feelings." 5

So this was a pureblooded vampire who was trying to make things even with Hadeon, thought Mallory. Though she didn't know who this Erebus was, didn't the vampire know what kind of person Hadeon was? Things never evened with the man, instead, he evened people. 5

Suddenly, an echo of slap was heard, and Mallory turned to see a young woman on the floor with her hand on her cheek. Before her stood a vampiress, who looked more than furious before she scolded,

"Didn't I tell you to stop fucking fidgeting?! You dropped the blood on my expensive gown!" 2

The human looked scared and trembled. She whispered, "I—I am sorry, please forgive me!"

"I should give you beatings in public so that you learn a lesson," the vampiress stated, who was wearing a lilac gown. 1

Mallory's eyes widened as she watched the vampiress reach for something to strike her slave with. Unable to stay silent, she slipped away from Hadeon's side while he was engrossed in conversation with Orlo, and placed herself between the vampiress and her human slave. 21

"What do you think you're doing, you mongrel?" The vampiress spat, her eyes narrowed with contempt. 5

"She's already apologised and won't do it again," Mallory asserted, her brow furrowed with determination. 2

"It's quite amusing to see one slave speak for another," the vampiress sneered. "How dare you address me in such a manner?" 2

"Just because you've collared her doesn't give

you the right to mistreat her. She's a person. Forcing and abusing her is hardly ladylike behaviour," Mallory retorted, her tone laced with defiance, provoking the vampiress's anger. 8

The vampiress let out a mocking laugh, drawing the attention of those nearby. "She was sold to me, and I paid her family good money. I'll do as I please. Step aside," she snapped. 5

Before Mallory could say something more, the slave surprised her by saying, "P—please don't interfere. Lady Violet can do no wrong and does things for my benefit." 24

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