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Hadeon's gaze lingered on Mallory's serene face as she slept soundly before him. Her features were relaxed, and her pink lips were slightly parted in the rhythm of her calm breathing. As she lay on her side, the curve of her neck was exposed, drawing his vampire instincts to the surface. 1

"What a tempting canvas to mark it red," he whispered, his voice low. The choker necklace he had designed for her wrapped itself around her delicate neck. 11

In his long, often tumultuous life, Hadeon had indulged in the countless pleasures of the living world—women, sex, death, and the rich weave of human experience had all been his command. Yet, over time, these indulgences had lost their charm. And he decided to sleep in the coffin until the serphant's descendant would one day open his coffin lid. 12

"Lord Hadeon, Lady Mallory's lineage is absent from the Scrolls," Barnby had reported with a hint of perplexity.

"How intriguing," Hadeon had responded, a



playful smirk curling his lips. The Scrolls were ancient, chronicling beings from both earthly realms and the world beyond the living. "She must be an angel." 17

"Really, milord?" Barnby inquired, his voice echoing with a mixture of doubt and curiosity. 1

"Of course not, Barnby. It was merely a joke," Hadeon laughed, his gaze wandering over the shadowed landscape before turning back to spy on the conversation unfolding below. "Were she an angel, we'd surely see a guardian angel hovering nearby." 20

Hadeon's thoughts were interrupted when he heard a slight creak from the wooden flooring, and he murmured, "Surely, it isn't my shadow who decided to come and look for me." It was because he didn't have one.

The soft creak resonated from just outside the room, and soon after, a distinct flapping noise by the window caused him to sit upright. His keen eyes fell on Cawlin, his trusted crow, perched on a branch just beyond the glass. 5

"See anything interesting?" he asked, his voice carrying command.

"Milord, intruders in the inn! Three intruders!"



Cawlin squawked in response, its head tilted to look below it and then looking back up at his lord. 9

As Hadeon's tongue flicked hungrily across his sharp fangs, a wicked gleam sparkled in his eyes. He straightened, his posture one of predatory grace, and remarked slyly,

"It seems like dinner has presented itself. Who am I to decline such an offering, especially when served so willingly on a platter?" 11

He made his way towards the door and turned the knob. But before he could step out of the room, he paused to turn and look over his shoulder, where the woman slept soundly. He finally entered the corridor before quietly closing the door behind him. 10

The lanterns had long since burned out, casting the hallway into shadows that melded with his dark form. His footsteps were quiet against the floor, like a ghost gliding, and when he finally appeared on the floor below, he noticed the first intruder. 1

Hadeon's elegant features twisted into a mask of disdain as he sighed deeply, the sound echoing slightly in the quiet hall. "How disappointing," he



voiced his displeasure

It was a lowly vampire. 8

"Where do you think you are going?" The lowly vampire demanded with low laughter as he quickly blocked Hadeon's path, his eyes pitch black. "You are going to be my meal." 13

"Ahhhh! Help me!" Hadeon responded in a low voice while flailing his hands as if he were helpless. But then a dark chuckle escaped from his lips, and his fearful face turned into a dark expression. "You should say that line," he said with a smile. 11

The intruding vampire, evidently unaware of Hadeon's true nature and mistaking him for a mere human, held his ground with misplaced arrogance. His gaze narrowed as he declared,

"If you knew who I am, you would be quivering now." 3

"I have an ultra thick skin, figuratively and literally, to quiver over anything. Also, I don't think there is anything to be proud of about a bunch of rats scouring for any possible piece of garbage," Hadeon murmured in a calm voice. 4

The vampire was hungry and attacked Hadeon



with his mouth wide open and fangs in view, ready to drink his blood. But the pureblooded vampire was faster, and the moment the vampire came near, he raised his hand with a bored expression and flicked the person's fangs to have him choke on his own fangs. 17

"Shh, stay quiet. There are people who are sleeping here," Hadeon placed his finger against his lips with a smile. "Besides, the monkey is sleeping too. My bad, I meant my wife," he said, still in character. 14

"How dare you defang me! Jac—" The vampire couldn't speak anymore, as Hadeon had thrown a wooden stick to pass through the lowly vampire's mouth and stick itself into the back of his throat. 2

"I see that you aren't a good listener. Perhaps we should stick the stick into your ears to make sure they are functioning," Hadeon murmured, and he broke a chair's arm before running it through the vampire's chest. The vampire quickly turned ashen. 2

Hadeon heard the wooden flooring creak above him, while he saw another person appear before him.



"What the fuck?!" The vampire cursed with wide eyes, which were quick to turn angry. "I will finish you first and drink your blood slowly!" 6

"Even if I were edible to you, you wouldn't be worthy of even a single drop of my blood," the pureblooded vampire stated, and he cracked his knuckles. When the other vampire came at him, his hand clutched the man's neck, picking him up in the air, before slamming him against the hard ground.

The second intruder looked startled, not knowing how a human could possess such strength, and he tried to injure him by digging his fingernails into Hadeon's hands before moving to his face. Blood began to drizzle down the pureblooded vampire's face.

"Do you think you can scar my face? Humans turned vampires are dumber than when they were humans. It's like you lose most of your brain cells," Hadeon taunted, and within the next second, he pushed his fingers into the lowly vampire's chest.

At the same time, Barnby pushed open the door, and it was enough for Hadeon to squash the vampire's heart before sliding the body out of the inn. He ordered, "Clean this up."



Barnby quietly bowed and got to work. In the meantime, Hadeon paid attention to the sounds of the inn and heard a pair of feet that moved in the direction of the room.

The third intruder, driven by a peculiar scent in the air, followed it with growing hunger, finally stopping before the door behind which Mallory slept. His mouth watered as he turned the doorknob, entering to find her sleeping soundly on the ground. 5

"What is this smell? Smells so unique," the lowly vampire murmured, stepping closer, his fangs gleaming in the dim light. Just as he reached out towards her, an unseen force yanked him backward with brutal strength, sending him crashing through the corridor window and into the night. 10

"Who the fuck did that?!" the vampire snarled, quickly scrambling to his feet, rage and confusion twisting his features.

"It was me, myself, and I," came the calm, sardonic reply. Hadeon leaped gracefully to the ground, landing with the silent elegance of a cat. His eyes, cold and amused, fixed on the bewildered vampire. 6



Hadeon noticed that all these vampires didn't transform well, because if they did, they would have red eyes and not black ones. They were close to getting corrupted.

"You are not a human!" the vampire exclaimed with furrowed eyebrows as he tried to figure out the person standing before him. He took a quick look at the man, before his eyes widened and he said, "Hadeon Van Doren." 5

"Ding! Ding! Ding! Now, how about you answer my question," Hadeon remarked in a playful manner. "Tell me, did you play eeny, meeny, miny, moe before choosing that room? A little too coincidental for you to pick it when there were plenty of other humans nearby." 5

The vampire had turned paler and was finding it hard to process the pureblooded vampire's words while he stood before him. He had heard of *the* Hadeon Van Doren after turning into a vampire, but not expecting him to cross paths with him like this.

"T—The room?" the vampire asked.

"Mhm, the room where the woman was sleeping on the ground," Hadeon said with a bright smile.

"It's the—the smell. It was different," the lowly



vampire replied. "Like something forbidden." 14

Hadeon's head tilted slightly, intrigued. He hadn't noticed anything unusual about Mallory's scent. As he pondered this new information, the vampire pleaded, "Forgive me, Lord Hadeon! Had I known you claimed this territory, I would never have dared intrude." 3

Hadeon sighed, his hand slipping behind his back to draw one of his new weapons. "I might have let you live, but you've become a nuisance I'd rather not tolerate. So," he said, aiming the gun at the trembling vampire, "if it offers you any comfort, know you are the first to be graced by this gun." 6

The vampire's eyes shot wide with terror, and he spun to flee. But Hadeon's aim was precise. As he pulled the trigger, the bullet found its mark. The vampire's form burst into dust, scattering into the night air with the passing breeze, leaving Hadeon standing alone, the echo of the gunshot fading into the silence of the night. 2

Mallory, jolted awake by the gunshot, quickly realised Hadeon was not in the room. Rushing to the window, she spotted him below, gun in hand. What on earth was he doing out there at this ungodly hour?



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As if drawn by her intense gaze, Hadeon turned, his eyes twinkling mischievously as he flashed her a grin. Positioning himself directly beneath her window, he called up to her with a playful voice,

"Just performing a bit of midnight maintenance, my dear. Did it wake you? I just have the right lullaby for you that will put you right to sleep!"

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