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Mallory couldn't help but feel that something was amiss and she stepped out of the room, making her way towards the stairs. But she abruptly stopped upon meeting Hadeon at the beginning of the stairs, where they crashed against each other. 1

The sudden collision had Mallory almost misplaced her foot at the edge of the stairs and she would have fallen if it weren't for Hadeon who caught her with his hands firmly on her waist. Her heart almost slipped from her ribcage and she heard him breath, before saying, 6

"Careful there, my dear. Where are you rushing to?" Hadeon's voice was like velvet against the slight darkness. 8

With them so close, Mallory could smell Hadeon's woody scent which felt warm and comforting. It was when his nose feathered up the side of her neck that broke her thoughts and she quickly pulled away from him. She murmured an apology, 10

"Sorry," and then said, "I was going to come to you. Did something happen?" she asked, staring



into his eyes that glowed like fire in the fireplace. 3

Hadeon, who had taken a good whiff from Mallory failed to notice any peculiar scent that came from her like the corrupted vampire had mentioned. He had better senses than most of the vampires walking in the living world, which is why he found it rather puzzling. Noticing her stare at him, he cocked his head and replied, 6

"There were some thieves earlier and needed to be schooled. So I sent them to a little discipline place." 1

"Hell?" Mallory asked him, and her question brought a smile on Hadeon's lips.

"Yes," Hadeon replied in a nonchalant tone. He said, "One of them was very interested in meeting you, but I said you were sleeping and you had a long day to see people. So you can meet him when you go down there," he pointed his finger to the ground.

"I think I will pass," Mallory murmured, and trying to get a peek behind Hadeon, she finally turned and made her way back to their room with the pureblooded vampire trailing right behind her. She then paused, suddenly turning



towards him to only collide once again with him. 2

"If you want to smell me, all you have to do is ask. No need to look for excuses... wifey," Hadeon stated with a sly smile. 10

"My soul can't belong to hell, though," Mallory replied with her eyebrows furrowed. "You said serpents were bound to end up there, but I am not one of them anymore, ha!" 10

"Anything that helps you sleep better for the night," Hadeon remarked, making his way to the door and stepping inside. 2

Mallory quickly caught up to him and closed the door behind her. She asked him, "What did you mean by that?"

Hadeon hummed softly and then shrugged his shoulders, "I want my wife to sleep better?" 6

"It isn't funny anymore. Answer my question," Mallory pressed for an answer.

"So you are telling me it was fun before? How strange that I had the same feeling, our thoughts must be in sync!" Hadeon looked excited by the thought and Mallory's eyes subtly narrowed. 3

Deciding to go on the same path as him to find answers, Mallory gingerly said, "Alright. Let us



consider your way of thinking. Your wife, for just this night, wants to know why you think she's going to hell."

Hadeon chuckled at her feeble attempt, and he let her off the hook by explaining to her, "This world and the world beyond it have scrolls. These scrolls contain records of individuals' births and eventual deaths, written by Death's assistant."

"Death has an assistant? Wait, death is a person?" Mallory asked with an incredulous look. 4

Hadeon shrugged, "It is what it is. Anyway, so when I had Barnby check, you were nowhere on the scrolls. As if you were sneaked into this world without anyone's notice." 9

"Yet, you strongly feel I will end up in Hell...?" Mallory asked with a hint of doubt in her voice.

"Because Heaven is too meticulous to make such a mistake and they follow rules. Unlike us people from Hell," Hadeon hummed with a thoughtful expression. "The most important question is not how, but who hoodwinked the Death's assistant into not having you written." 13

Mallory's life had turned into a big question for



her, as she didn't know where to start. The only person she realised she could continue to rely on was the pureblooded vampire before her. 7

She stood there lost in thoughts when Hadeon remarked, "It isn't too late to ignore and unsee it. Just say the word and I shall erase it from your mind."

Mallory remembered the vampire she had met in Marrowmere, where the person had tried to put her under his spell, but it hadn't worked. She replied to him, "I didn't know that vampires could manipulate humans like that."

"There are a lot of things the creatures of the night are capable of," Hadeon responded with a smile. "All I have to do is compel you to forget the pain you have gone through until now. I will erase every single memory until you feel completely free. Consider it an offer of the night for my wife," he said cheekily.

"Offer?" Mallory asked him, her eyebrows slightly raised in question.

"I don't compel people to fix situations. I fix the person instead by ridding them of their mistakes and agony from this realm," Hadeon explained in a nonchalant tone.



It would be a lie if Mallory said the offer wasn't tempting. She would be free of the pain she carried with her every day. She then said,

"But the vampire before wasn't able to do it," Mallory pointed out to him, and she saw Hadeon smile.

"That's because you carry my cross with you," Hadeon's hand reached for the cross that was attached to the choker-like collar wrapped around Mallory's neck. She felt him hold the bottom of the cross. "Besides being attached to you now, it will protect you from other vampires trying to compel you." 8

Mallory felt him tug the cross closer to him when he wanted to take a better look at it, and it led to her craning her neck upwards to look at him.

"Master Hades—"

"On a second thought, let us keep things the way they have been so far," Hadeon remarked with a slight husk in his voice. His eyes then moved back to look at her. "Pain is what breaks and shapes a person. It would be cruel of me, to take it away from a young soul like yourself." 2

Mallory's breath shuddered, feeling she was too



close to Hadeon and she used both her hands to push him away from her. Her face felt slightly warm, and she turned away from him, before saying, "I will get back to sleep."

"You should sleep on the bed," Hadeon suggested, noticing how the temperature had dropped and the floor had turned cold.

"Where would you sleep, then?" Mallory asked, her eyes moving to the couch present in the room. 1

"Next to you, of course. Silly woman," came the blunt words from Hadeon. 8

Mallory feigned a laugh and turned back to him to say, "It better be a joke, Master Hades. Because it is a funny one."

But Hadeon wore a serious expression, and he replied, "You have a strange sense of humour, because that wasn't a joke." 3

"Master Hades, it is extremely improper for a man and wom—"

"We are a married couple, Mallory. It seems old age is catching up to you quickly." Hadeon shook his head with a sigh. 4

"Master Hades, we are *not* married!" Mallory



didn't know why Hadeon was the way he was.

"You—you don't even know the M of marriage!"

4

"Says the woman who couldn't secure a man until this evening," Hadeon remarked and Mallory gritted her teeth. "And if there's anyone who should be against it, it should be me. I am an original pureblooded vampire, Hadeon Van Doren. While you are the faithful servant."

1

"Which is why I am doing just fine on the ground," Mallory wasn't ready to share the bed with him!

He looked at her unblinkingly and then said with a smile, "Sleep on the bed. If you don't, I will drag you and put you there when you close your eyes."

"You are going to manhandle me?" Mallory gave him a look of disbelief.

4

"It is just a bunch of cotton stuffed cloth compared to the wooden flooring," Hadeon rolled his eyes, not knowing what the big deal was as he walked to one side of the bed and laid down in a comfortable position. "Anyways, we are going to your grandmother's house tomorrow. So get to sleep."

Mallory clenched her jaw, standing in the room



for a good one minute before telling herself that if Hadeon wanted to do something, he would have done it by now. She climbed onto the other side of the bed while putting a blanket over her. 6

Hadeon extinguished the candle with a dramatic puff, plunging the room into darkness save for the ghostly moonlight that slithered through the window. As the minutes ticked by, Mallory lay frozen, acutely aware of the somewhat scandalous predicament of sharing a bed with a man—or more accurately, a vampire. 7

"Did you turn into a worm?" Hadeon inquired, his voice laced with weary amusement as he sensed her rigid discomfort. 3

"I am having trouble sleeping," Mallory confessed, her words tinged with the awkwardness of lying mere inches from him on a not-so-spacious bed. 4

"Of course, how thoughtless of me," Hadeon remarked with a theatrical click of his tongue. He then began, "Once upon a time, in a kingdom that you can name anything, there was a vampire who lived with his stepbrothers, who were werewolves, and a stepfather. So one day, the vampire went to a ball and met this vampiress, after which he drop—" 16



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"Isn't that Cinderella's story?" Mallory interrupted, a faint smile appearing on her lips. 8

"Rubbish!" Hadeon dismissed with a flourish of his hand, which Mallory could barely make out. "This is an original masterpiece," he declared with mock displeasure. 16

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