

Beauty and the Immortal: It started with a dig Chapter 6

- Awakened executioner

Chapter 6: Awakened executioner

28

Mallory's heart pounded along with the clouds that growled in the sky. When the lightning flashed once again, both women jumped in their places.

10

"This is not an artefact. It's a person..." Mallory shouted against the rain.

10

"Oh my goodness! We've unearthed a woman's final resting place!" Hattie responded, her words filled with worry, much like a hamster that had taken an unfortunate tumble.

17

However, Mallory's curiosity peaked. Grasping the lantern that Hattie had abandoned, she cast its glow upon the coffin's occupant. She stated, "This is not a woman."

There lay a man, as if he had just been laid to rest that very morning.

17

His clean, shaven face highlighted his strong jawline. His closed eyes rested below dark eyebrows that were slightly arched. Occasionally, his features would soften when the lightning failed to strike. His cheekbones were sculptures of subtlety, framing the noble straightness of his nose and the fullness of his lips.

15

His skin was turning paler from the drops of water that continuously fell on him, while his long, black hair lay soaked, a dark halo forming around his serene face.

16

"Milady!" Hattie called out to Mallory. "There's no other square headstone around. Perhaps what Lady Selia said was only stories."

The flicker of hope that had ignited earlier faded, leaving Mallory in darkness again. She understood that the odds were against her, yet she clung to a glimmer of hope for her survival. The so-called powerful object didn't exist... and her hand tightened in disappointment.

"You're probably right," Mallory conceded, letting out a sigh of exasperation.

She knew if her grandmother was watching her now, she might be laughing at her for pointlessly digging up a grave. Because that was how her grandmother was, peculiar at odd times. Gathering her thoughts, she said,

"We should restore the grave to its original state. You can take a break." Her arms ached from the relentless work, and she could only anticipate that the discomfort would intensify as time passed. "Here, take the lantern."

Passing the lantern to Hattie, Mallory went to pick up the lid of the coffin. Unbeknownst to her, blood from her earlier wound trickled and fell on the dead man's face.

28

"Forgive me for disturbing your sleep," Mallory whispered to the dead, before closing the coffin.

Climbing out of the dug ground, Mallory began pushing the mud back into the hollowed earth. It was much easier than digging and took less time. Unable to see her lady working alone, Hattie soon joined, helping to finish the task.

"I can feel every inch of my arms," Mallory said, massaging them one at a time.

"It is finally done, milady," Hattie huffed. Simultaneously, the rain finally came to a stop. As they walked, she noticed Mallory's arm and exclaimed, "Your arm is bleeding!"

4

Quickly, Hattie bandaged Mallory's arm with a handkerchief before they left the locked graveyard. But when they crossed the graveyard, Mallory stopped her maid from stepping forward.

3

Mallory stared far ahead of them. Adjacent to their carriage stood two additional carriages, accompanied by four guardsmen. And there was George Kingsley accompanying them. By now, even the maid had caught sight of them, and her peaceful expression fell off her face.

11

Before a word was spoken, George spotted them.

"She's there!" George raised his voice, angrily pointing his finger at them. "Catch her!"

7

"Hattie, hurry!" Mallory urged, abandoning the shovel and lantern before pulling her maid along.

Mallory and Hattie ran as quickly as possible on the slippery, damp ground. The men closely chased them, hot on their trail. As the women grew tired, it was only a matter of time before the men captured the maid and subsequently Mallory.

"Let go!" Mallory demanded, struggling to break free. Despite the guardsman's efforts to restrain her, she managed to deliver a forceful blow to his stomach with her knee.

5

"Omph!" The guardsman grunted, releasing her as pain shot through him.

Unfortunately, Mallory's luck took a turn for the worse when George forcefully grabbed her, twisting her wounded arm and pinning her against a tree. She let out a cry of suffering.

6

"What do you think you are doing?!" Mallory demanded, feeling pain shoot from her arm even more than before. She felt helpless.

"Capturing the killer of the Winchester family," George murmured, subtly shifting his position to stand closer behind her. He inhaled the scent of her damp hair. He then stated, "Mallory, you have violated the rules. Murdering Lord Wilfred and his wife, along with the servants. You pose a significant danger to Reavermoure, and the town's head has issued a direct order for your arrest."

8

"I'm innocent! It was Baron Kaiser, not me!" Mallory protested.

"Lady Mallory is innocent!" Hattie spoke up, only to be met with an angry glare from George.

"Assisting a criminal and aiding her escape—rest assured, your actions will not go unnoticed, servant," George threatened. He gestured to two guards, who forcefully removed the maid. He then told Mallory, "We discovered your carriage packed with belongings, indicating your intent to escape. Had you accepted my proposal, I could have assisted you... Maybe you've had a change of heart?"

14

Mallory clenched her jaw in response. Attempting to calm her mind, she simply nodded to George's satisfaction. She sensed his grip on her hand loosen, allowing her to turn and meet his eyes.

"I told you several days ago. Did I not? I am your only opportunity," George declared with a smug smile, each word oozing confidence.

"I know..." Mallory replied, her hands tightly clenched. "But I also told you."

3

A look of confusion crossed George's face, and just as he was about to ask about it, Mallory swiftly raised her hand and delivered a powerful punch to the man's face. She was certain she heard a crack.

26

"ARGGH!" George groaned loudly.

"I would never marry you. Not a worthless man like yourself!" Mallory glared at him.

4

"You wretched woman!" George, furious and seething, touched his bleeding nose.. With a sudden motion, he grasped her neck, causing her to collide forcefully with the tree. He watched her under his hold, licking his lips before saying,

"I've been lenient with you, wanted to extend kindness, and even prevented my father from punishing your family for the embarrassment you caused. But it seems you prefer a direct approach. I'll teach you a lesson before you die."

8

Mallory's face turned pale as she grasped the meaning behind his words. As he moved closer, she fiercely clawed at his face, causing him to let out another yelp.

George's fury reached its peak, and this time he was the one who raised his hand. With a single blow to her head, she fell unconscious and collapsed to the ground.

12

When Mallory regained consciousness, her head and body hurt immensely. She squinted her eyes, before pushing herself to sit upright. As she looked around, she noticed the rusted iron bars before her and the walls surrounding her on three sides.

Dungeon. She was in Reavermoure's dungeon.

3

Mallory's chest was filled with a sense of dread and anxiety. She hurriedly dashed to the front of her cell, gripping the iron bars tightly as she desperately called out for help.

"Is there anyone present?! Please! Hello?"

"Be quiet! Do you not realise that it is unacceptable to create a disturbance?" A guard reprimanded her from the end of the corridor, out of her line of sight.

"But it's a mistake that I am here!" Mallory didn't stop trying to clear up the confusion that was circulating. "I am innocent here! I didn't harm or cause harm to anyone—"

2

"Yes, you didn't kill anyone, and I didn't fuck a woman in here for not shutting up her mouth," the guard warned about the consequences of not remaining silent.

10

Mallory bit her lip in anger. No one was listening to her, and they were only jumping to conclusions! She was angry at Baron Kaiser, but George Kingsley... She was going to haunt him first when she turned into a ghost!

13

Her right hand still throbbed from the force of her punch to his face.

She hopefully tugged on the iron bars, hoping they would break away given their rather rusty appearance. A sigh escaped from her when they remained in their place. She glanced at the tiny window of the cell, only to find that daylight still lingered.

Where was Hattie?

Anxiety clouded Mallory's expression. She shouted out, "Hattie, are you here?!"

"You bitch! You don't close your damn mouth. I will sew it shut for you!" The guard let out a menacing growl, causing Mallory to swiftly move back from the iron bars.

6

She hoped Hattie was safe. If something happened to her maid, it would be all her fault. Had she not proposed to dig up the grave, they would have left Reavermoure by now. She closed her eyes, praying Hattie would be fine. "Please be alive," she prayed silently.

After what felt like hours, Mallory heard the guard's voice, "Mallory Winchester? She's here."

3

Was it Colette who had come for her? Her cousin must have finally understood that she hadn't killed anyone. Sh—

Her face dropped with disappointment upon realising it was Baron Kaiser. With an angry voice, she asked, "Here to witness my downfall?"

"I wish. However, I must depart for Wingston as my presence is required there, and the journey is quite lengthy," the baron responded in a composed and steady tone. "It has come to the town head's attention that you were the only person in the manor apart from the deceased at the time of their deaths. Kingsley made it effortless, though. He said you tried to rob your relatives' bodies."

"Did you find what you were looking for in my manor?" Mallory questioned, and the look in the man's eyes turned grave.

She couldn't fathom that just days ago, she had been envisioning a future with this person. This murderer.

"Unfortunately, no. What a disappointment it was," he said, appearing tired at the thought of it. Looking at her, he remarked, "You look rather dull. I will order that the guard provide you with better food. Everybody deserves a memorable last meal before their death."

11

She was going to die... The thought sank into Mallory's mind.

3

As she stared at the space in shock, the baron walked away from there without sparing her another word.

As the sky shifted its hues in the evening, Mallory found herself forcefully dragged from her cell, her wrists bound by cold chains. A guard led the way, with another following closely behind. As she stepped forward, her spirits plummeted, and tears welled in her eyes.

6

However, even in the face of death, Mallory was determined not to reveal any weaknesses in front of those who didn't deserve it. They walked through the passageways, where flickering torches illuminated the walls, and before long, the distant noises of the crowd reached her ears.

6

They finally emerged into the open, met with the angry outbursts and shouts of the townsfolk. The sky was a beautiful blue and peach, transitioning to the night. At least the view was favourable, though not the position she was in, Mallory thought to herself.

4

She suddenly experienced a harsh pull through the chain, which caused her to stumble and climb the scaffold.

"Punish her quickly! How dare she kill people!"

2

"Execute her already!!"

"She must be held accountable for her actions! May divine mercy elude you, you heartless woman!"

The townspeople had gathered with great anticipation around the scaffold to witness her execution. Some people even went as far as to fling spoiled fruits and vegetables at her. One landed squarely on her cheek, leaving a redness.

12

"QUIET!" The hangman's assistant shouted loudly to quieten the crowd.
"QUIET!"

It took a good few seconds before the people went silent. The hangman's assistant pulled the scroll that he was holding in his hands, before he read it out loud.

"MALLORY WINCHESTER IS HEREBY ACCUSED OF BEING RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEATHS OF LORD WILFRED WINCHESTER,

LADY DORIS WINCHESTER, AND THE SERVANTS WHO WORKED THERE. SHE WAS DETAINED WHILE ATTEMPTING TO FLEE FROM REAVERMOURE, WHICH SUGGESTS OF HER BEING GUILTY. MOREOVER. SHE WAS DISCOVERED WITH A SHOVEL BESIDE THEIR GRAVES."

The crowd surrounding the scaffold let out a collective gasp and murmur. They regarded Mallory with a mixture of shock and repulsion.

At the same time, a person's polished black shoes made their way towards the crowd.

23

On the scaffold, one of the guards unchained Mallory's hands, before she was pushed to kneel down before the wooden platform where her head would rest.

In her final moments, her eyes raked through the crowd to find her cousin, who wore an angry expression, and refused to look at her even though she was there. She eventually discovered Hattie, who was visibly upset. She was relieved to see her maid, knowing that she was safe. There also stood the town's head and George, watching her with the rest.

"AS A RESULT OF THE CRIMES SHE HAS COMMITTED, SHE WILL FACE EXECUTION!"

Following the hangman's assistant's statement, once again the crowd erupted in yelling and screaming. This was it, she pondered quietly. This was the essence of her existence, and it would end here.

"HEAD DOWN!" Mallory was commanded, and she let her head rest to the side with her face facing the executioner with an axe in his hand. "POSITION!"

4

Her heart pounded in her chest. She watched the executioner come stand next to her, taking his position, and upon the hangman's assistant's word, he raised the axe. This time, she closed her eyes tightly.

3

The crowd fell silent, holding their breath, and they heard the man declare, "EXECUTE!"

9

Mallory, who was anxiously awaiting her fate, was startled by a sudden, jarring noise beside her, causing her heart to leap. After a second, when she finally opened her eyes, she found herself looking at the executioner, who was now sprawled on the ground.

4

"What happened?? What's happening?"

"Did the executioner faint?!" Curiosity filled the air as onlookers strained to catch a glimpse.

Mallory lifted her head and observed a trail of blood staining the floor of the scaffold where the executioner was situated. He was dead.

5

The hangman's assistant's eyes grew wide as he exclaimed, "Blood..." His words swiftly circulated, and he then gazed at the gathering and questioned, "Who was it?! Who killed him?!"

Everyone exchanged glances until they caught a man standing at the back. One after another turned to look at the mysterious tall man. He stood with an air of sophistication, donning a sleek black coat over his black shirt. His ebony hair cascaded down his shoulders.

17

When Mallory noticed the man, her complexion grew pale. No... That was not possible, she said to herself.

15

A smirk played at the corner of the man's lips as he played with a pebble in his hand. He remarked, "It seems my aim hasn't lost its touch. Shame to interrupt the main event, but I do hate missing a good show."

62

