

102 Time inside church ¹¹

Hadeon rang the bell and quickly commanded the butler to bring them a bowl full of salt. The butler didn't hesitate or question the unusual request; he simply fulfilled it and left. ¹

Mallory watched as Hadeon carefully poured the salt into the corners of the room. Once he finished, he stood back and said, "Now that the room is secured, let us take a walk, shall we?" The corners of his eyes crinkled.

"Is there a church nearby that I could visit?" Mallory inquired, feeling a pressing need to pray and seek God's protection. ⁷

"If it's confession you're after, I'm all ears," Hadeon replied with an enthusiastic tone, walking alongside her through the corridors. "I could even arrange for you to stand behind the wooden divider and experience the atmosphere of a confession box." ¹⁸

"Just praying should do," Mallory clarified, shaking her head at his quick solution. While there were certainly things weighing on her mind, she had no intention of confessing anything, especially not to Hadeon.

As Hadeon and Mallory descended the stairs, preparing to leave the mansion, she caught sight of the two vampiresses from earlier. Reagan's footsteps noticeably slowed upon seeing Hadeon, her gaze fixed on him with an almost desperate longing. It was clear she wanted to say something, but her expression fell when Hadeon walked past her without a glance, treating her as if she were nothing more than an ordinary wall. 14

Once outside the mansion, Mallory assumed they were heading for a leisurely walk in the garden. However, Hadeon led them through the gates, prompting her to inquire, "Where are we going?"

"Didn't you want to visit a church?" Hadeon asked, tilting his head with an inquisitive smile. "There's one just around the corner." 2

As they walked, Mallory's lips pursed before she spoke, "I think that person still has feelings for you, even after all these years." When he neither reacted nor responded, she continued, "Don't you think it is cruel to treat someone with such indifference when you were once close." 7

Did he go deaf? Mallory wondered, frowning. A breeze rustled the nearby leaves, tugging at strands of her carefully combed hair that she had

tucked into a ponytail.

"Hadeon...?"

"I heard you the first time. You shouldn't concern yourself with them," Hadeon replied in a nonchalant tone. "If you have that much free time to think about strangers, why not direct some of that attention to me? That would be sufficient," he added, turning to meet her gaze. 11

The woman's allure had diminished in Hadeon's eyes once she was no longer human, Mallory mused to herself. 3

"Did you have others before her? People you drank blood from?" Mallory asked, walking beside him.

"If I were drinking your blood, I would assume you were jealous, Mal doll," Hadeon teased, his lips curling into a mischievous smile that revealed his sharp canines. "There's no need to pity those who can't understand. I've always been clear about my intentions with Reagan—she was just a meal, nothing more, nothing less. She agreed to it at first, but then her mind began to rust. She became possessive and started acting like a jealous girlfriend, interfering and trying to insert herself into every part of my life." 10

"I see..." Mallory murmured. "Did she turn into a vampire later?"

"Mm. She thought it would catch my attention or what is that word," Hadeon murmured before laughing, "Guilt trip. Poor thing didn't know it doesn't work on me." 5

So that's what happened, thought Mallory. She couldn't help but wonder if there was anything that actually affected and pained him. Or he was just immune to it. She couldn't help but stare at him from the corner of her eyes. 6

Hadeon's eyes that were trained ahead of him, they snapped to look at her, meeting her curious blue eyes. He asked her, "Does she still bother you? I can have her removed—" 5

"No, she doesn't," Mallory replied quickly and she added, "Nothing I can't handle."

"How brave," Hadeon murmured with a slight smile. "Anything else you needed clarification with? Something you would like to know?" and Mallory shook her head.

Hadeon's 'just around the corner' took more than thirty minutes by foot until she heard the sound of the church bell. There was something undeniably peaceful about that sound, and it



began to ease the turmoil in Mallory's mind, bringing her a sense of calm as they drew closer. 2

Mallory walked past an elderly couple as she made her way to an empty pew, where she bent down to pray. Doubts filled her mind as she questioned what might have happened if she hadn't woken up in time. The thought caused her eyes to tighten in concern.

Hadeon chose not to accompany her. Instead, he stood back, observing her with a quiet intensity. At that moment, the woman of the elderly couple caught sight of him and asked, "Aren't you going to offer your prayers?"

A sly smile curled at the corners of his lips as he replied, "Do you really think he will forgive for the sins that have been committed?" 6

"He forgives everyone, my son," the woman answered gently. She then noticed where Hadeon was looking and turned to glance in Mallory's direction before leaving the church with her husband. 7

Hadeon let out a quiet chuckle before taking a deep breath, his gaze following Mallory as she turned and walked up the aisle, settling onto one of the benches. His sins were were elbow deep,



that people like him were destined for only one place—though in the past, he had never cared much about that fate. 9

While Mallory was lost in her thoughts, she heard footsteps approaching before Hadeon settled into the seat right next to her. After a moment of silence, he leaned closer and remarked, "Contrary to what humans believe, ghosts and ghouls have no sense of etiquette about where they can and cannot go. So if you ever encounter one, don't come seeking refuge here."

"Thanks for the heads-up," Mallory frowned, feeling as though she were being cornered by a dead creature. "I thought things like this had some sort of order."

Hadeon's lips twisted into a wry smile at the thought. "Order in hell? You must have some wonderfully naive dreams. Hell has never been orderly—perhaps it was when the devil ruled, but that was a long time ago." He paused for a moment before continuing, "Nobody knows where the devil has gone, and now other creatures control the realm of the dead." 7

Mallory couldn't help but think this might explain why it was so easy for a ghoul to come



after her. But never would she have guessed that the dead take bribes too! 2

"By the way, has anyone ever sent a ghoul after you?" Mallory inquired, her expression curious as she turned her body towards him.

"You underestimate my popularity, Miss Winchester. There isn't a creature that hasn't been fascinated by me, aside from my enemies," Hadeon replied with a casual shrug, as if it were an inevitable fact of life. 2

"Did you use salt then to avoid the ghoul?" Mallory asked, noticing a smile spreading across his face. "Ah, gun."

"The ghoul, it just had to meet me," Hadeon hummed, raising Mallory's interest. "You see, when the devil made me, he made me with an intention to take souls. Like a reaper. But I did end the one who sent the ghoul after me with my gun." 2

"Huh?" Mallory responded, needing a moment to process his words.

"How rude of me," Hadeon murmured before crossing his hand and saying, "May his soul rest in hell." 8

