



103 Cross Roads ¹¹

"When you say 'reaper,' do you mean someone who takes the souls of the dead?" Mallory's curiosity piqued; it was fascinating to think of Hadeon's purpose in such a context. ¹

Hadeon fixed his gaze on her, a playful glint in his eyes. "Did my attractiveness just register off the charts?" ³

"Because a death reaper is remarkably alluring," Mallory replied, rolling her eyes with feigned exasperation. Then, her expression shifted as she asked, "So, can you do it?" ³

"Steal souls? I wish! While my original purpose was indeed that, it has since evolved," Hadeon replied with a grin, excitement dancing in his eyes. "But that doesn't mean I lack connections with the current death reapers. I told you, I've got a few tricks up my clean, crisp sleeve, aside from just guns." ⁹

Mallory felt a swell of gratitude towards her grandmother for guiding her to awaken this pureblooded vampire. She couldn't help but see the multitude of benefits that came with him. Sunlight streamed through the stained glass

windows of the church, casting vibrant colours on the floor and transforming the space into a breathtaking kaleidoscope of light. 7

Her grandmother, Mallory thought, her heart filled with reverence. She glanced back at Hadeon, who was already fixed on her, his gaze intense and unwavering. 10

"Do you think they would know where my grandmother is?" Mallory asked, a mix of anxiety and hope bubbling in her chest.

"It's possible," Hadeon replied, noting the way her eyes lit up at the prospect. He could sense her loneliness and the deep longing she felt for her grandmother. "But don't get your hopes up. Some souls are accessible, while others remain far beyond reach."

Mallory nodded quickly, a smile flickering across her face, but she felt Hadeon's gaze linger on her. She then watched as he turned away, letting out a weary sigh. 9

"Is everything alright?" she asked, concern threading through her voice. 3

"It's difficult to say at the moment. However, why don't we investigate your stalker ghoul?" Hadeon suggested, rising to his feet and striding towards

the church's imposing entrance.

As Mallory and Hadeon left the town, she noticed how people instinctively stepped aside, their lips sealed, while some observed them from a distance. She pondered whether they recognised Hadeon or simply sensed the intimidating aura that surrounded him.

Walking in silence, curiosity got the better of Mallory. "How does one communicate with a reaper?" she inquired.

"There are both straightforward and intricate methods: some involving certain spells and precise summoning techniques," Hadeon explained as they treaded down the deserted road. "We'll be using the crossroads." 3

They came to a halt at the centre of three intersecting paths. Mallory surveyed her surroundings with cautious eyes before watching Hadeon kneel on the ground. He began to etch something into the earth, murmuring, "Hm, we are in need of fresh bones and blood." 7

"Bones too?" Mallory asked, a flicker of unease crossing her face. While she was willing to donate some of her blood to summon the reaper, the thought of sacrificing her bones made her

hesitate.

Her eyes widened as she watched Hadeon pull a knife from his pocket, the blade glinting ominously in the light. He turned to her, a determined look on his face. "I guess there's no other way."

Mallory stiffened, a chill running down her spine at the implication that he might take one of her bones. But instead, Hadeon pressed his own arm forward, cutting into his forearm without a moment's hesitation. 8

"Please, don't," Mallory urged, placing her hand over his to halt him from sacrificing his arm. Her heart raced at the sight of his readiness to inflict pain on himself for her sake. "There must be another way to do this." She couldn't reconcile the idea of using someone else's suffering for her benefit. 3

"Trust me, princess. It's better for me to do this than for you," Hadeon replied, his expression surprisingly calm. "The sooner we deal with the ghoul, the sooner you can be assured of your safety." 8

In the blink of an eye, Hadeon yanked the bone connecting his elbow to his wrist, the sickening



crack echoing through the air as he tossed it to the ground. Mallory felt her breath catch in her throat, her eyes wide with shock as they darted from the severed bone to the pureblooded vampire, who began to chant an incantation. 9

H—How could anyone pull a bone out of their body like that?! Mallory was left speechless as she watched Hadeon continue to mutter the incantation. 8

With a swift motion, Hadeon reached for his cigar and placed it between his lips. He produced his lighter, flicking the flame to ignite the end. After taking a few deep drags, he tossed the cigar into the circle he had drawn on the ground. Mallory's eyes were fixed on his arm, where blood was steadily pooling on the ground, intensifying her anxiety with each passing second. 1

"Cunning of you to use your bone as a sacrifice," Mallory heard someone's voice and her eyes snapped up to look at the flames that had engulfed the circle, which had now extinguished, revealing a figure standing at the centre. "If it was someone else, I would have taken their soul for the audacity of trickery," the death reaper muttered. 5

It was a death reaper in dark robes. Mallory could feel the air around them turn colder. The creature had a hood over his face, which made it hard to see how he looked. The voice sounded as if it belonged to a male. 2

"Good evening, Wrath. Long time no see," Hadeon greeted with a bright voice, unaffected by the dull response of the death reaper. 28

"What do you want, Hades? Someone's soul needs to be tortured?" The death reaper asked in a dull voice before his head slightly moved in the direction of where Mallory stood and he asked, "Or sacrifice her soul?" 4

Mallory stood cautiously, her posture betraying the fact that she was no stranger to dealing with death. Hadeon, missing one arm, was a testament to the dangers that lurked in their world. Determined to hold her ground, she declared, "No one is a sacrifice." 4

"A ghoul from the realm of the dead attacked her today," Hadeon replied flatly. "I highly doubt it was just looking for a little entertainment, considering it drew blood." His tone was matter-of-fact. "I need you to find out who wants her dead."

"Perhaps it's simply her time," the death reaper interjected, glancing over at the woman standing beside the pureblooded vampire. "Ghouls are drawn to those who are dying." 5

"Wait," he said suddenly, reaching into his tattered cloak to retrieve a worn, ancient book. His bony fingers flipped through the brittle pages with an eerie rhythm, an unsettling hum escaping his lips. "According to this," he continued, his voice flat, "she was supposed to be dead a month ago." 16

Mallory felt her breath catch at the reaper's revelation. "Dead? You mean...she was meant to die in the execution?" 1

"What does it say now?" Hadeon pressed.

The reaper continued to thumb through the pages, murmuring to himself. After a moment, his expression remained unmoved as he replied, "There's no record of her current fate." 2

Mallory's heart raced, a flicker of hope igniting. "You mean I'll never die?" she asked, a hint of relief colouring her voice—but it was fleeting, extinguished by Hadeon's words.


"No information regarding a person's death means that death could be lurking just around




the corner," Hadeon remarked, his gaze cold. "It also signifies that one doesn't possess a soul in the afterlife." 26

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 Hi Ash, I have been struggling finding the tome to read; so caught up today via the audio version her...

 Does that mean Mallory's life is always in danger? She can 'die' any time. Come to think of it, she has ...



This chapter is burning hot with discussion!



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