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Mallory felt her heart skip at Hadeon's response, the intensity of his gaze unflinching as he looked at her. A flush crept up her neck, settling warmly in her cheeks. Yet, as smoothly as words had passed between them, he turned his attention to those twirling on the dance floor, as if he hadn't just spoken the words that left her spellbound. 1

Realising she had been openly staring, Mallory quickly redirected her gaze to the dancers, giving her thoughts a chaotic whirl thanks to him.

"Lord Hadeon! How splendid to witness your striking presence at this year's Hallow!" A middle-aged couple approached, offering a deep, reverent bow.

"Will you be sitting out this year from the dance as well?" the woman inquired with a knowing look. Turning to Mallory, she continued, "Lord Hadeon seems to shy away from dancing. None have seen him escort a lady onto the floor. I was certain Reagan would change that, but it appears I was mistaken." 12

How curious, Mallory mused—not because

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Hadeon hadn't danced with the vampiress, but because she had assumed that, like his other refined pursuits, the pureblooded vampire would revel in music and dance.

"What can I say?" Hadeon chuckled, taking a leisurely sip from his drink. "The dance floor has never captured my interest. I find my skill is better suited to the finesse of target shooting." 13

"Oh, Lord Hadeon, I am sure it is a wonderful sight to behold," the man remarked with a laugh that shook his belly. "Excuse us." 1

Once the couple had drifted away, leaving a comfortable hush in their wake, Mallory couldn't resist turning to Hadeon. "What did you mean when you mentioned the fool in love?" she inquired with curiosity. 11

Hadeon responded with a languid ease, "What do you think?" 13

Why must he turn the question back on her? Mallory wondered, feeling her confidence waver. She replied cautiously, "I'm not sure if it's right," discreetly smoothing her palms against the sides of her gown to calm her nerves.

"I think you already do," Hadeon murmured, his voice low and probing. "Does it scare you?" He

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turned to face her more fully, giving a subtle tilt to his head. His golden eyes seemed to shift, as though a drop of crimson bled into the iris, casting a mesmerising, otherworldly glow. 7

Mallory's composure faltered, her mind spiralling into disorder. She hadn't expected to be confronted in such a manner. Hadeon, the first ever pureblooded vampire created...was in love with her? She felt goosebumps forming over her arms and she was glad for the full sleeves of the gown. 2

"So, why don't you like to dance? Slippery feet?" Mallory teased, her eyes darting around the room, avoiding his gaze. 6

Hadeon studied her with a keen interest, recognising her attempt to steer the conversation in a different direction. "A vampire rarely has slippery feet unless they're a bumbling idiot," he responded with a smirk.

"Perhaps it's one of the few skills you haven't mastered?" Mallory suggested. The haunting melody of violins and cellos intertwined beautifully, with a woman's voice adding a lyrical charm to the atmosphere. 3

With a swift snap of his fingers, Hadeon



summoned a servant, deftly placing his empty glass on the tray before claiming Mallory's drink as well. "I wasn't finished with that!" she protested. 6

He stood before her, extending his hand. "Why don't we put that theory to the test?" he suggested, his voice full of challenge and amusement. Her stomach fluttered, and despite her attempts to calm it, she found herself drawn to his confident smile. "Scared?" he asked, a spark of mischief dancing in his eyes. 3

"Never," she declared, slipping her hand into his with newfound courage. His eyes shimmered with delight as he led her onto the dance floor. 4

As they moved into position, she gave a light-hearted warning, "When I was learning to dance, I was told I had light feet."

As most of the couples had glided across the floor, they graciously stepped aside to make room for Mallory and Hadeon. Mallory offered quiet apologies for interrupting their dance, aware of the song already in progress. The dance floor was spacious enough to accommodate many pairs without feeling crowded, creating an intimate yet expansive feeling. Soft lights dimmed around the edges, casting a gentle glow

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that focused primarily on the dance floor. 2

As Mallory placed her hand on Hadeon's waist, he raised an eyebrow, teasingly. "Are you sure your teacher taught you well, Lady Mallory Winchester? If I'm not mistaken, I believe I should be leading." 13

Her cheeks flushed crimson at the misstep, and she quickly moved her hand to his shoulder. "I know that," she assured, flustered. There had been moments in the past, when she had helped her cousin, Colette, with dance sequences, often taking the lead in the practice sessions. 1

"I seem to be making you nervous. I wonder why that is," Hadeon mused, his voice laced with playful curiosity, as he placed a firm hand on her waist and gently drew her closer. 7

To disguise her deepening blush, she shot him a mock glare. "Let me see how well you dance, Lord Hadeon."

A subtle smirk tugged at one corner of Hadeon's lips, and he replied, "Gladly." 1

As it resumed, Mallory and Hadeon, clad in elegant shades of grey and silver, began to glide together, their movements fluid and mesmerising.

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Hadeon held Mallory's hand firmly, his other hand steady on her waist. They stepped forward and back in perfect sync with the rhythm, before gracefully shifting to the side. Their hands parted momentarily as they stood side by side, facing opposite directions in a playful twist of their dance, then turned back to rejoin in harmonious movement. 3

"How is it so far?" Hadeon inquired with a soft smile, his eyes meeting hers as they settled into the flow of the dance. The song came to an end as the music fell. 1

"I guess it is decent," Mallory replied with a genuine smile, appreciating the grace of their shared dance even though it had only begun. She added, "Not bad at all for an old vampire," before turning to leave the dance floor. 8

But before she could take her next step, Hadeon's hand gently clasped hers, halting her movement. She turned back to meet his red gaze. "Pardon me," he murmured with a hint of mischief, "but I am an ambitious man and decent simply won't suffice." With a single, smooth tug, he drew her back to him, which made her heart leap. 10

As the music that had paused briefly came to an

end, a hush fell over the room, drawing all eyes to the dance floor in anticipation.

The air in the room seemed to change as the new song began, its melody slow and seductive. The crowd faded into a soft blur, leaving just the two of them in the world. 1

Hadeon's hand slowly moved away from her wrist to place it on her palm while leisurely brushing her fingertips with his before holding it. He encircled her waist with one arm, drawing her closer until she could feel the gentle whisper of his breath against her skin. 4

And then they moved once again, but there was something very intimate about it this time. His hand moved from her waist to the small of her back, guiding her with a confidence that was both commanding and gentle. 5

As Hadeon took a step back, his intense gaze locked with Mallory's blue eyes, but she held her ground, undeterred by the fierceness in his look. With a graceful sweep, he twirled her outward, her silver gown swirling like liquid mercury, before he pulled her back towards him with a seamless motion. 8

A soft gasp escaped her lips as the warmth of his



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breath fanned across her neck, her back pressing intimately against his chest.

"Still decent?" Hadeon murmured as the tip of his nose brushed her skin and it was enough to make Mallory's heart tremble. He whispered to her, "I am going for the kill." 19

He released her into another graceful spin, his hand guiding her with confident precision. Mallory, mindful of her footing, matched his movements effortlessly, the music acting as a shared heartbeat to which they both danced.

As the music continued, Hadeon dipped Mallory low, his grip secure yet gentle, and as he brought her back up, their cheeks brushed momentarily, sending a shiver down her spine. 17

