



72 Disapproval of the maid? 12

Mallory stood before the mirror in her room, staring at herself while questioning her ability. She tried to do it by herself, but she felt nothing nor did she move to another place. 1

"Lady Mallory?" Hattie peeked her head into her room.

"Come inside, Hattie," Mallory instructed her, turning to look at the door where her maid stood.

"I was wondering if you would like to have a drink," Hattie inquired. 5

"Thank you, Hattie, but that won't be required right now. I will be leaving soon with Hadeon to meet a witch," Mallory informed the young woman, whose eyes slightly widened. 4

"Oh! Can you give me two minutes? I have a little work left and I will be ready to leave with you!" Hattie informed her, and this brought a smile to Mallory's lips. 10

Mallory placed her hand on Hattie's arm and said, "You don't have to accompany me. You can stay in the castle and help the others. I will be



back soon."

She then stepped out of the room, followed closely by her maid. As they descended the stairs, one of her shoes slipped, and she tumbled down until she reached the bottom. 14

"Milady!" Hattie exclaimed in fright, rushing to her side. Mallory sat up, wincing in pain.

"I'm fine," Mallory assured her, feeling a dull ache in her muscles. When she inspected her shoe, she frowned upon noticing greasy oil on the sole. Where did that come from? She turned to look above the stairs, noticing a line of oil that dripped from two stair-steps. 7

"Did you finish oiling the windows at the top?" Barnby's voice echoed from the opposite side, accompanied by the maid, Ivy. 14

"It was done fifteen minutes ago. I finished oiling everywhere that was needed," Ivy replied to the coachman-turned-butler of the castle.

Mallory and Ivy's eyes met, holding each other's gaze for a brief, tense moment. Barnby noticed Mallory on the ground, his eyes widening in surprise. "Lady Mallory, what are you doing there?"



"I thought I should take a closer look at the carpet," Mallory replied, breaking her gaze from Ivy and meeting Barnby's eyes. Hattie, now standing behind her, helped her to her feet. 3

Barnby wasn't entirely convinced, but he nodded and informed her, "Lord Hadeon awaits you at the carriage." 4

Hadeon was always prompt and on time, Mallory thought to herself. She murmured, "Thank you, Barnby."

The man offered her a bow, as did the maid next to him, before they left the corridor. Once they were out of sight, Hattie quickly asked in a whisper, "Milady, do you think she was the one who spilled the oil on the stairs?" 11

Mallory pursed her lips and replied, "It must have been a mistake she didn't pay attention to." But Ivy didn't seem like someone who made mistakes. None of Hadeon's old staff did. She then said, "Make sure it's cleaned so no one else falls." 3

"Will you be alright for the ride?" Hattie asked, worried. 3

"I'll be fine. Don't worry about me," Mallory assured her and made her way outside the castle



to the waiting carriage. Her body ached, and her elbow burned. Seeing Hadeon sitting in the coachman's seat, she asked, "Are we going without Barnby?"

"I thought it had been a while since I drove the carriage, so I decided to give Barnby some time off. It will also give him a chance to look after the castle. Come sit next to me." 7

Mallory gathered the front of her dress to place her foot on the step when she was suddenly greeted by Hadeon's outstretched hand. Her blue eyes moved from his hand to meet his golden ones, where he wore a charming smile. She placed her smaller hand in his, which was big enough to envelop hers, and he swiftly pulled her up. 2

The tug was quick, bringing Mallory right next to Hadeon, and she felt her heart leap for a second. Her vision blurred slightly before she realised how close she was sitting next to him. When she went to adjust her seat, she noticed he hadn't let go of her hand. 11

"Hadeon? I'm up here now," Mallory murmured, giving him a suspicious look. "...you can let go of my hand." 5



"Once I hold a hand, I don't let go," Hadeon said with such a serious expression that it made her heart shudder. "Especially one that is bleeding." 13

"Huh?" Mallory asked, and Hadeon turned her hand so she could see her elbow, scraped and showing hints of blood.

Hadeon remarked, "There was no need to fall inside the castle when I'm out here." 11

Mallory sent a small glare his way and tried to pull her hand away, but his grip only tightened. She asked politely, "Can you let go of my hand?"

But Hadeon wasn't one to listen. His other hand came to touch the scraped skin on her elbow and she hissed. With a pensive look on his handsome face, he questioned, "What happened inside?" 8

"I slipped and fell. There was oil on the stairs," Mallory replied to him, noticing him stare at her. 6

"You think someone did it on purpose? Who do you bet on? Should I pick on the new maid?" Hadeon said in a nonchalant tone. "Or is it someone else?" 9

Mallory shook her head, not wanting to jump to conclusions. "It was spilled by mistake," she



replied. She then asked, "This person we are visiting, who is it?" 9

"Her name is Morwenna. An old witch and she's going to be excited to see me," Hadeon replied, finally letting go of her hand and taking hold of the reins. They left the castle, making their way through the forest. 10

As they travelled, Mallory's eyes drifted to Hadeon, noticing his hair was short once again. He quickly caught her staring, and she looked away, a slight flush creeping up her cheeks.

"Feel free to stare as much as you want. I was made so no one could look away," Hadeon remarked, a grin spreading across his lips. 17

Mallory was about to shake her head when a thought struck her. Hadeon... Ivy... Since Hadeon started calling her 'wifey' Ivy had been acting stranger than usual. Did the vampiress have feelings for Hadeon? 22

The carriage travelled through a town before entering a forest, moving to the heart, which turned the place darker. Mallory heard the caws of the crows, that were hidden behind the branches and leaves.

They arrived at a small, weathered house, and



Hadeon pulled the carriage to a halt. As they dismounted, Mallory asked, "How do you know this witch?"

"There's no need to worry about my relationship with the witch, wifey. She's quite ugly and not to my taste," Hadeon joked with a chuckle. Then, more seriously, he added, "I was hunting witches when I found her. She was one of the fairly decent ones and gifted me Cawlin. Or more like created him using my blood, which is why he is loyal to no one but me." 8

As they took two steps forward, four spikes suddenly flew in their direction. Mallory watched in horror as the sharp edges aimed straight for them, as if to behead them. In the blink of an eye, Hadeon yanked her out of the way. The spikes struck the ground, embedding themselves deeply. 7

"Looks like your brain is rusting to aim at nothing," Hadeon remarked in a mocking tone, while he smiled.

"You have some nerve to call me ugly, bloodsucker," came a woman's voice from above, and when Mallory looked up, she noticed a beautiful woman standing on a tree. The woman then jumped to the ground, her eyes falling on



the human standing next to the pureblooded vampire. "You brought me a sacrifice." 10

"Actually, this is my sacrifice," Hadeon corrected the witch, not wanting any confusion. "Mallory Winchester. One your sister last raised," and the witch's eyebrows were subtly raised. 6

"Elisa had the habit of raising strays once you went to the coffin. Nothing new about it," Morwenna replied, pulling the spikes from the ground and Mallory saw the ground emit fumes. "Whatever you are here for, I have nothing to offer. It would be best to leave."

Hadeon clicked his tongue and stated, "It seems like you have forgotten the debt, Morry. You say, I do. Isn't that how it goes?" 2

"Bastard," Morwenna insulted the pureblooded vampire, who only raised his hands as if she were stating the obvious.

"I thought you were acquaintances," Mallory muttered to Hadeon, but the witch had caught on to it and the latter huffed. 4

"Hadeon once saved my life, and now I am bound to serve him. Just like how he made me create a talking crow," Morwenna said through gritted teeth. "You finished half of my potions!"



Mallory turned to give Hadeon a look, as he had so generously called it a 'gift' earlier. He returned it with a charming smile. He turned to the witch and said, "This time the job is very simple. We are looking for a dead person." 3

Morwenna stared hard at Hadeon and then asked, "A spirit?"

"I doubt you will find the spirit, considering it might have reached heaven. We are interested in the skeleton," Hadeon said in a cheerful voice. He then added, "Of course there are other things, but we will get to that later."

Morwenna turned on her heel and disappeared inside the house. Mallory then turned to Hadeon and questioned, "How do we know she is going to tell the truth?" 1

"Oh, she will," Hadeon said in confidence.

"Because the woman is in love. With me." 30