



90 Corner of the library ¹⁰

There was a continuous rustle in the library as the guards searched, their footsteps echoing through the vast space. They skimmed through the racks, peering into the shadows cast by the walls and the towering shelves, their lanterns casting flickering light that danced across the rows of books. ¹

Mallory's eyes widened at the gentle pressure of Hadeon's finger on her lips. ⁴

Under the moonlight, his silhouette showcased a duality of shadows that the vampire possessed. The challenging aspect was the one brought to Mallory's attention by the sudden illumination. She pondered whether it was the wine that had left her feeling lightheaded or if it was the theatrical performances that had awakened her senses, causing her to take notice of his attractive appearance. His captivating golden eyes gazed down at her with such intensity that it left her breathless. ¹⁴

"Did you find anything yet?!" one of the guards called from the other side of the library.

"Nothing so far!" responded the other guard,



moving closer to where Mallory and Hadeon were hidden. "It's obvious someone broke in—the doors are a mess."

"I don't get why every magistrate insists we keep an eye on this place," the first guard muttered, his voice echoing softly. "It's just a useless shack filled with rundown books." 5

On the other hand, Hadeon stared at a worried Mallory, as panic grew in her sterling blue eyes. He slowly moved his finger away from her pink lips.

When Mallory heard the footsteps growing louder, worry gnawed at her. Bloodshed in the library seemed inevitable if the guard came any closer. She quickly whispered to Hadeon, "Let's get out through the window!"

Hadeon gave her a pointed look and replied, "Stay quiet." 2

But as the footsteps drew nearer, her anxiety peaked. Just as she was about to move, her lips parted in a breath of panic. Hadeon leaned forward, covering his lips with hers. The kiss was gentle yet firm, sealing her words in a silence of shock. Her eyes grew wide, caught in the intensity of the moment, as his kiss



commanded a quiet she hadn't anticipated. 52

Flustered, Mallory instinctively attempted to push Hadeon away, her hand pressing against his chest, but he remained steadfast. Instead, his lips pressed, capturing every unspoken murmur of hers. Her hand, which at first aimed to establish a sense of separation, curled into his shirt, crumpling the fabric.

"Huh, it is dark here. There's no window on this one," the guard commented as he reached the aisle where they stood.

The guard was here! Alarm bells rang in Mallory's head, but nothing was as alarming as Hadeon's arm curling around her waist, his grip tightening to pull her close. Her cheeks flushed with a rosy hue, and her thoughts were a chaotic mixture of disorientation and shyness. 6

But as the guard's footsteps drew nearer, Mallory's mind jumped back to the immediate danger. They were going to get caught! Wait, why 'caught'? It wasn't like the guard was her father, brother, or uncle to object to the kiss. She objected to the kiss! The guard was going to find out any second now! 11

As if sensing her panic, Hadeon deepened the



kiss, his lips coaxing hers into a response that sent shivers down her spine. 22

"....!"

The guard's footsteps grew louder, yet Mallory's attention remained captivated by the sensation of Hadeon's lips on hers and the unexpected gentleness in his touch, a side of him she hadn't expected. When his fangs grazed her lips, Mallory's lips parted in shock, giving Hadeon the perfect opportunity to slip his tongue into her mouth and deepen the kiss. Her heart pounded louder and faster, with a bolt of electricity running down her body, and the world outside seemed to blur. 19

"Don't suppose anyone is here! We'll have it reported so the doors can be fixed. Let's leave," said the other guard, his voice fading into the distance. The footsteps of the guards gradually diminished, their quiet echo leaving the library.

Mallory stayed motionless, her lips tingling from the unexpected kiss. She sensed Hadeon's grasp gradually weakening, his arm gently releasing its hold on her waist. The abrupt stillness that followed the guard's departure seemed to amplify as the wings of the pureblooded vampire vanished, allowing the section they were in to be



bathed in moonlight once again.

Recovering from the embarrassment, Mallory took a step away from Hadeon, her heart still pounding in her chest. She threw her fist across his jaw. Hadeon didn't bother to dodge, his head snapping slightly to the side but his eyes never leaving hers. 13

"Y-You stole my first kiss!" Mallory accused him, her cheeks burning brightly. 15

There was a certain intensity in the way Hadeon gazed at her, a glimmer in his eyes that sent a chill down Mallory's back. His stare was piercing, almost predatory, as he raised his hand to his lips. With a deliberate and sultry gesture, he slowly ran his thumb from the corner of his mouth to his bottom lip before slipping it into his mouth. 10

This was enough to make Mallory feel as though she were about to burst into flames. He remarked, 2

"It's going to be a memorable first kiss, then, isn't it? How fortunate you are to have found someone who knows how to do it." 13

"It was utterly unnecessary!" Mallory's trembling hands mirrored the relentless thumping of her



heart and in a remote corner of her mind, she knew that he could hear her erratic breath.

Hadeon's expression was calm and he replied, "It seemed to be the only way to get you to stay quiet in the moment and it worked beautifully. I wasn't in the mood to paint the library red. Besides," he paused, grabbing all her attention and saying, "It would be a lie if I said I didn't enjoy the little kiss." 24

This pureblooded vampire was infuriating! Thought Mallory in her mind and she glared at him. She turned around and began to walk away from the aisle.

"Where are you going?" Hadeon asked in a playful tone.

Somewhere far away, where I don't have to be reminded that you were pressed against me in the corner of the library, Mallory thought, her mind still reeling from the kiss. She responded, "To take a breath of fresh air and then search for the book." 1

"Mhm," Hadeon hummed in response, watching the wide-eyed woman disappear around the corner of the rack.

Mallory wasted no time in leaving the library,



making sure that the guards had indeed departed. Once she was away from Hadeon's piercing stare, she gently touched her flushed cheeks. She was still shocked by the fact that he had kissed her! Her legs grew weak, and she sank to the floor, sitting on her heels with her head buried between her knees as the memory of the kiss played over and over in her thoughts. 8

Pull yourself, Mal! Mallory said to herself. 1

Hearing footsteps approach, Mallory braced herself for more teasing from Hadeon about sitting on the ground. But when she lifted her head, she saw a pair of shabby shoes, far from the clean black ones Hadeon wore. Her gaze travelled upward, meeting the eyes of unfamiliar men. 20