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"S—Stop doing that!" Mallory stammered, taking a couple of steps back. Her face flushed as she collided with one of the racks inside the library. Her cheeks flushed a deep pink, betraying her flustered state, and she asked, "You've been acting strange since we left the theatre... Is it that?" 1

"Is it what?" Hadeon inquired, tilting his head slightly, feigning obliviousness.

Mallory sensed a shift in his behaviour and words since they had left the theatre, unsure if the scenes there had affected him. He had done far more than her mind could process tonight, and his intense stare made her even more flustered. Without another word, she turned and walked away, heading towards the other racks in the library.

"Wise of you not to delve further into that question," Hadeon murmured, his gaze following the direction of her softly echoing footsteps. 17

When Mallory walked far enough that Hadeon's eyes couldn't follow, she stopped and leaned her back against a rack. Recollecting what had



transpired moments ago, her fingers brushed her lips, and her heart thrummed in her chest. 6

To occupy her mind, Mallory lit the spare lantern inside the library, its warm glow casting a soothing light, and began perusing the books on the shelves. The scent of aged paper and leather filled the air. More than forty minutes passed as she continued her search, trying to distract herself. Suddenly, a book fell from behind her. She turned around and picked it up, reading the title: *Rise of the Nightcreatures*. 12

Mallory opened the book and read the first page, dated to the year six hundred. She murmured, "So old." But then she remembered how Hadeon had mentioned he had been asleep for nearly the last seven centuries.

"Found something more interesting than the book I wrote?" Hadeon asked. Mallory noticed two books being pulled from the rack, revealing the pureblooded vampire standing on the other side. "Ah, the book by Mr. Long. So much talent, yet so little time. You know, because he was ripped apart." 9

"You knew him?" Mallory inquired, looking down at the book.



"Not personally, just by name. I was disappointed to hear of his death. The man loved to experiment and discovered that cobblestone, found at the bottom of the sea, can weaken a vampire's senses and abilities," Hadeon hummed thoughtfully. "It can even affect us original vampires." 10

"So there are things you aren't immune to," Mallory responded, noting that Hadeon wasn't completely invincible.

"You'd be surprised," Hadeon answered, his eyes locked on hers, making everything else fade into the background. 11

Mallory had never feared Hadeon before—not the first time they met, nor when he had killed people right in front of her. But now he was making her nervous, and she couldn't hold his gaze, which pierced right into hers.

Returning the book to its place, Mallory continued her search through the rest of the shelves. Seeing Hadeon here meant he had finished looking through the books in the front section, and this was the only area left.

Mallory pulled out a dusty, old-jacketed book. As she blew the dust away, the jacket slipped off



and fell to the floor, revealing a golden binding and cover.

"This is it..." she murmured. 6

The book emitted a subtle, enchanting glow, illuminating their surroundings with a magical aura. The wind around them began to increase, leaving the racks in the library to shake while the windows shook. After a few seconds, everything turned quiet. 4

"Looks like you were meant to find it," Hadeon hummed, coming to her side. 5

"What do you mean?" Mallory inquired, her gaze moving between the book and Hadeon, whose gaze had slightly narrowed.

"Because I cannot see it," Hadeon replied. Noticing Mallory's frown, he elaborated, "Some things unveil themselves to those who seek them with an idle heart. It's their way of hiding from those whose desires burn too brightly." 18

"But I was seeking it too," Mallory said, her heart thumping faster at the possibilities of what this book contained.

"Not out of malice. Usually a prophecy bearer cannot find it too, because the course of events



needs to run through else it can create an imbalance in the already existing imbalanced world that we live in," Hadeon explained to her with a hum and it was thought provoking. "Not to mention, a way to null the non-finding is if you are a person related to heaven." 12

Mallory's eyes widened at the theory and she murmured, "From heaven..." 16

"Isn't that an interesting turn of events," Hadeon hummed, his eyes glowing brightly. He then added, "Makes me want to keep you all to myself." 24

"Barbaric thoughts there, Lord Hadeon," Mallory murmured cautiously, aware that although Hadeon's words seemed lighthearted, they rarely were. 1

"No matter how much of a gentleman one appears to be, it is the primal nature of a vampire, Mallory Winchester," Hadeon stated with a sly grin. His eyes then looked at her hands and he enthusiastically said, "What are you waiting for? Come sit down and find your part in there." 1

Hadeon and Mallory sat on the ground, their backs against the wall, with the lantern placed



next to her. The soft light flickered. She read through the pages of the book, and after half an hour passed, her eyes stared at a section.

"How much of the prophecy has come true?" Mallory asked, a chill running down her spine.

"Almost always," Hadeon replied, noticing the ashen expression on her face. "What did you find? Read it out loud."

Mallory gripped on the book before reading out the middle part of the page—

"In the twilight of the bloodmoon, Mallory Winchester, the orphan child of human birth, and tainted by darkness, shall rise to end the curse placed upon the living realm. Through trials of betrayal and sacrifice, she will be offered the weapon." After a pause, she continued, "She alone will hold the key to ending the pureblooded vampires, forged by the devil himself, including...the very first of their kind." 64

