



## 93 Shelter under the leaves <sup>22</sup>

Suddenly, Hadeon burst out laughing, the sound echoing through the deserted library with a sinister edge. Mallory stared at him, anxiety beginning to fill her mind. <sup>1</sup>

"Oh, dear. Isn't that troublesome now?" Hadeon murmured as his laughter died away, his eyes locking onto Mallory's with a chilling intensity.

He's going to kill me! Mallory thought, her heart racing. She stammered, "I—I have no plans to kill anyone. I have no reason to kill," and she tried to scoot away from him. <sup>13</sup>

She didn't know why she would ever attempt to kill Hadeon and rid the world of him. No one in their right mind would try to face him, as it was a guaranteed death. Did that mean it was either her or him? The thought weighed heavily on her mind. But the prophecy could be a riddle, couldn't it? <sup>6</sup>

"Are you saying that if you had a reason, you wouldn't mind getting your hands dirty?" Hadeon questioned, his gaze piercing. <sup>6</sup>

When the prophecy was mentioned, Mallory believed it was about the royal family, not the



vampires directly. Hadeon leaned towards her, his presence close and intense. As she tried to move away, her hand slipped on the dusty ground, and she nearly hit her head on the rack's edge. In a swift, gentle motion, Hadeon's hand shot forward, cradling her head and protecting it from the collision. 14

For a brief moment, Mallory's heart stumbled in her ribcage, and her eyes widened. Hadeon was too close, his golden eyes swirling between gold and red, emanating an intimidating aura. Then she heard him remark, his now red eyes piercing into her stunned blue ones,

"I told you before, didn't I, doll? Your luck has changed for the better since you met me." 15

"Luck in killing people?" Mallory asked cautiously.

A wide, sinister smile spread across Hadeon's lips, revealing his sharp canines. He replied, "I don't know about that, but you have the luck of staying alive and not being killed by my very hands. Because if it were anyone else who read the prophecy, I would have ripped them apart and set them on fire." 9

So he wasn't going to kill her? Mallory





wondered, her heart pounding. Using her hands for support, she sat up properly. As Hadeon withdrew his hand, he couldn't resist trailing his fingers through the softness of her blonde hair, a dark glint of satisfaction in his eyes. 9

"How do you change it?" Mallory asked, trying to divert the conversation. Handling Hadeon alone was challenging enough. She had no interest in dealing with other night creatures. "Do you believe in it?" she asked, her voice a whisper against the silence around them.

"There are some dumb prophecies that the witches make, but then there's also one that's fallen from heaven," Hadeon said, leisurely pulling a cigar from his case and lighting it. "Most of the time, when people try to avoid the path mentioned, their actions only lead them right back to what's written in the book. The more one struggles or tries to keep the bearer away, the worse it gets. I find it quite exciting," he chuckled, taking a drag from the cigar. 4

Mallory didn't know how to phrase her thoughts without provoking the vampire next to her. She stared at him, noticing how his body had relaxed. Catching her stare, he questioned, "What?" 2

"The last line... doesn't it bother you?" Was he



ready to die? Mallory doubted it, and his red eyes continued to stare at her as if they could reach her soul.

"On the contrary, I am quite interested in knowing how you will kill me." One corner of Hadeon's lips curled in a challenge, but Mallory had no intention of doing it. 10

"I won't." Mallory's voice was firm.

"Even if I steal another kiss?" Hadeon asked, noticing the blood rushing from her slender neck up to her face. 10

Mallory's jaw clenched before her lips parted to speak, but he beat her to it. "Perhaps it is because of the kiss that you still breathe." 14

Unable to look at him, her gaze shifted to the book of prophecy, searching for more information, but there was nothing beyond what she had read. "If a vampire finds out, things could go bad... Will the book burn?" she asked.

"Not even in the fiery pits of hell," Hadeon replied. Just then, a couple of bats flew through the window high on the upper side of the library. He turned to look in their direction, his eyes focused intently on them. 7





"If you burned the book now, you'd see it turn to ash, but it would reappear elsewhere, like an apparition in the next person's hands," he said, turning back to meet her gaze. "It's better to bury it than to carry it around." 5

"So the forest?" Mallory asked, knowing that graveyards weren't safe. She had disturbed a grave by digging it out once before. 4

Soon, Mallory found herself in the heart of a nearby forest, holding a shovel as she dug next to a tree while Hadeon watched. After placing the book inside the hole, she covered it back with soil, levelling the ground and placing a stone on top to mark the spot.

When Mallory returned to where Hadeon stood, she saw him laying his coat on the ground. "What are you doing?" she asked, eyebrows furrowed.

"Making a nice place for me to sleep. Midnight has struck, and I thought it would be lovely to get some shut-eye," Hadeon replied, lowering himself and lying on his long and wide coat. 5

Mallory agreed to rest, feeling tired despite not having done the work of flying or dealing with the attacking vampires. Without a coat, she chose to lean against the tree. As minutes



passed, the temperature dropped, and she drew her knees closer to her chest, hugging them for warmth as she tried to sleep. 5

Instead of finding peace, she had a nightmare of vampires catching her, pouring oil on her, and preparing to flick a matchstick. 1

"...!" Mallory woke with a start, feeling something touch the back of her arm. She opened her eyes to see Hadeon crouched right before her. He was too close to her breathing space.

"Hadeon... What do you want?" She asked, her voice shaky.

"You." The sleep that had snugly wrapped around Mallory vanished instantly, leaving her wide awake at Hadeon's response. 18


A gentle breeze rustled through the trees, softly ruffling the leaves as Mallory shook her head, unsure if she had heard Hadeon correctly or if he was teasing her again. She glanced at the spot where he had been lying, noticing that his coat was now draped over her.

"I meant to say you were trembling in your sleep," Hadeon explained. "I thought you could use it more than me." 6



Mallory, feeling the chill, was in no position to refuse. She murmured, "Thank you."

When Hadeon smiled, the corners of his eyes crinkled, and his lips widened. He took a seat next to her, leaning his back against the tree. He had surprised her by offering his coat. Though her mind was filled with worries about the future, her thoughts drifted back to the time in the library, and her heart skipped a beat. She heard him remark,

"Stop thinking naughty things and get back to sleep." 

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