



## 95 What sunk in the water 3

Alarmed, Mallory's head snapped around to see the creature behind her, its hand reaching out. Before it could touch her or Hadeon, she grabbed a stick lying nearby to defend them. However, the moment the stick made contact with the creature, it disintegrated into ash, falling uselessly to the ground. 1

The creature gave a wide, sinister smile. She quickly apparated with Hadeon, keeping her distance from the creature. And then a hole appeared in its forehead. The gunshot echoed through the forest, reverberating off the trees. 8

"I would have loved to have tea with you, but something tells me we have different tastes," Hadeon stated as he sat upright and holstered his gun, leaving Mallory baffled. 8

"You're awake!" Mallory exclaimed, relieved, before she scowled. "Why did you act like you weren't?"

"Did I worry you, my dear?" Hadeon asked with a grin. "I searched for this creature and found nothing, despite the skeletons at the bottom. So I figured she was quite selective about her



meals. I knew you would dive in." 8

"You have too much confidence," she murmured.

"I do, don't I?" Hadeon hummed, acknowledging it with a wicked smile. "Besides, didn't I tell you there's nothing that can kill me? But you seem to be the exception with the recent change of events." 1

The book of prophecy, Mallory thought. A sudden stench filled the air, making her cover her nose. She turned to see the creature's body wilting and melting into the ground. "Do you know what this thing was?" she asked him.

"Never seen one like this before. It feels almost like River's relative," Hadeon said with a straight face, earning a look from Mallory. "The creature did mention eating your soul." 6

Hadeon walked over to the melted creature. Squatting next to it, he took a closer look before dipping his fingers into the goo and sniffing it. "Like a creature that has been dead for years. It rots." 12

Mallory had never thought she would encounter creatures ready to suck her soul into the river. From now on, she would have to be more cautious. She saw Hadeon stare at the river



before standing up and looking at the sky. "What is it?" she asked. 3

"Checking the direction in which the river flows. My ears caught news about a sea leading to a dark abyss, but no one has ever swum far enough to find out where it actually goes. Similar to this place, the bottom is covered in skeletons," Hadeon hummed, then turned to Mallory. "Apparently, the creature found you more appetising. Probably felt angel blood to be tastier." 2

"Lucky me, huh," Mallory replied with dry sarcasm. 3

She then found Hadeon staring at her, and she asked, "What?"

"Did you notice what you just did earlier?" Hadeon asked, a look of intrigue in his eyes. "Your ability is expanding." 9

That was true, Mallory thought. She had managed to move both of their positions earlier. She murmured, "Does this mean I can move things along with me?"

"I believe any movable object or person. Though considering it was only two steps away before, there should be plenty of room to move two





people," Hadeon said, his words bringing a smile to her face and easing her mind that she wasn't wasting her time. "But for it to happen now, the water must have something in it." 5

"Water?" Mallory asked, following his gaze to the flowing river. Her nose tickled and she sneezed, "Ach-choo!"

"Before anything, let's get some fresh clothes unless you prefer to dry under the sky," Hadeon suggested. They left the forest, heading towards the nearest town, which was on the way to Woville.

When they arrived at the town, Mallory's stomach growled and she couldn't wait to eat. She turned to Hadeon, who was already looking at the humans and she saw him run his tongue over one of his fangs. 3

"Look there! They are serving bread with soup!" Mallory pointed at a shop, where the steam could be seen coming from the pot. She could smell the scent of spice and everything nice. 2

They walked to the soup shop first, where a lean man with a curled moustache was serving outside. He eyed them up and down with disdain and asked, "Are you looking for directions?"



"No, we would like to order a bowl of soup and bread to go with it," Mallory answered politely.

The man pursed his lips, as if not knowing to continue to conversation or not. "I don't think you can afford it. But if you still need to know, that'll be ten shillings," he said, eyeing the soaked couple sceptically. 3

Hadeon reached for his money pouch, only to find it missing. Mallory had none on her either. He realised the pouch must have fallen into the river earlier. The pureblooded vampire proposed, "How about I pay you three times later?" 4

"No money, no food," the man replied firmly. "You think I don't know thieves like you? Trying to eat my food for free and not pay for it." 7

"That's a wild accusation, mister. There was no need to insult us," Mallory frowned.

"Wild are you two, looking like that early in the morning. I can only imagine you're either running from someone or eloped. And what's the strange smell," the man continued, his tone demeaning.

"Only if your behaviour was as good as the smell of the soup," Mallory murmured under her



breath, realising that talking to him was pointless. She turned to Hadeon and said, "Hadeon, we should—"

But Hadeon raised his hand for her to stop talking, a rather pleasant smile on his lips. He asked, "Did you call me a thief, peasant?" 14

"How dare you call me a peasant?! You are the ones with no money, coming here for free food," the shopkeeper rolled his eyes. "Shoo now. Keep moving," he waved his hand dismissively.

Hadeon's hand moved to the back, pulling out his shiny gun and pointing it at the man. He asked, "If not money, do you take bullets? It will pay for your vacation that way." 3

"Va—Va—Vacation?" The shopkeeper stammered, his eyes wide with fear at the sight of the enormous gun Hadeon held point-blank.

"A wonderful one. Regarding your destination, it could be somewhere fluffy in the garden or somewhere hot. Considering your delightful hospitality, I imagine you'll enjoy a warm bath that you'll feel in your soul," Hadeon grinned with enthusiasm. 3

"P—put away the gun! Or I—I will call the town g—guards and complain about your





misbehaviour," the shopkeeper warned, unaware that Hadeon didn't care about guards or a magistrate. 4

Hadeon pulled the cork of the gun with a calm expression. Mallory quickly said to the shopkeeper, "If I were you, I would apologise to him right this instant." 7

"I am not the one who didn't have money for food and pulled out a gun!" the shopkeeper hastily exclaimed.

"You were completely disrespectful and rude to us, even though we didn't buy any food from you," Mallory replied, pointing at the man, who couldn't take his eyes off the gun.

"There is no need for an apology, as it seems the man lacks manners," Hadeon said, his finger hovering over the trigger.

Mallory quickly caught Hadeon's free hand, her touch enough to distract the vampire. The unexpected warmth of her grip softened his stance, and his gaze shifted to their intertwined hands. 25

