



99 Inside the trunk ¹⁴

Mallory entered the room, absorbing the expansive space adorned with rich wooden walls. In the centre stood a grand four-poster bed, its imposing structure inviting and elegant. On the opposite side, a luxurious bathtub nestled beneath large windows, which were elegantly draped with flowing curtains, creating a serene ambiance. ¹

"I will have the refreshments delivered to your room immediately, Lord Hadeon. Please ring the bell if you require anything," the butler said, offering a deep bow first to the pureblooded vampire and then to Mallory.

As Mallory turned around at the sound of a soft thud, she saw another servant placing two trunks on the floor.

Once the servant departed, Mallory frowned and said, "Hadeon, these aren't our trunks," because theirs had been ruined by the carriage's fall over the cliff.

"They are indeed ours. It would be quite improper to wear the same clothes every day, especially with our impending visit to the royal

castle," Hadeon replied, stepping into the room and casually dropping his coat onto the stand. 9

"When did you manage that?" Mallory asked, moving towards the trunk and opening one of its lids.

"You should know that I'm a very efficient man and I can handle multiple tasks simultaneously," Hadeon said, relishing his own praise. As he noticed her pulling out a dress, he added, "Rest assured, they are all your size and will suit you beautifully. The tailor was quick on his feet when I mentioned your preferences and what would complement you." 9

Mallory examined the beige and blue design of the dress before her fingers brushed against something else. With a curious tug, she pulled out a delicate and almost frail nightgown made of white fabric, which had lace tied on the shoulders and lace on the front instead of any hooks or buttons. 12

"Wha—What is this?" Mallory stammered, desperately trying to maintain her composure. Just the sight of the scandalous nightgown sent heat rushing to her cheeks, leaving her feeling as if she might spontaneously combust at any moment. 9

"It's a nightgown. Surely, as a lady, you're already familiar with such things," Hadeon chided lightly, clicking his tongue. "Perhaps it's the colour that worries you, making you fear it might get dirty." 11

Mallory clenched her teeth in frustration and tossed the nightgown at him, but Hadeon caught it effortlessly, not breaking a sweat. She glared, saying, "Why don't you wear yourself!" 9

Mallory noticed Hadeon sporting a playful, contemplative expression, and she gritted her teeth in irritation. Was he actually imagining it?! With a mischievous grin, he remarked, "If I wear what you desire, will you wear what I want in return? It only seems fair, after all." 10

GA-AH! This infuriating vampire was driving her up the wall! At that moment, she considered either tossing him out the window or throwing herself out instead. Deep breaths, Mallory, she reminded herself, battling the flurry of emotions coursing through her.

"Lord Hadeon Van Doren," Mallory said, softening her tone while forcing a smile that could slice through steel. "You shouldn't be buying... intimate articles for a woman. It's just not something a man should do. There are certain etiquettes that everyone, including you,

needs to adhere to." 7

"I don't think that rule applies when it comes to my wifey," Hadeon replied, feigning solemnity as a playful glint sparkled in his eyes. "Besides, they're lovely, and I wanted to spare you the embarrassment of asking the tailor or any assistant for such items. Am I not the most considerate person you know?" 8

"I wish you were a little less considerate," Mallory muttered under her breath, standing up and walking out of the room.

Mallory stepped out, leaving Hadeon behind in the room, and wandered through the sprawling corridors of the mansion, which resembled a magnificent castle. Below ground, two additional floors served as a dungeon for holding criminals, adding to the imposing atmosphere.

As she moved through the halls, she noticed servants busy at work, adorning the railings and walls not with flowers but with intricately carved pumpkins and playful skeletons. Maids replaced the candles in the chandeliers, pausing to offer her subtle bows, which she returned with a polite nod.

"That must be her with paper thin hair, horse



hair." Mallory overheard a woman's voice drifting from just beyond the corridor she had crossed. Turning her head, she caught sight of a tall, wavy-haired redhead with sharp features, her expression dripping with disdain. 5

The woman beside her scoffed loudly, "I honestly expected him to pick better, but clearly, his taste has taken a nosedive." This dark-blond woman, with her bold red lips and piercing red eyes, looked at Mallory. 7

"I must agree with you," the wavy-haired vampiress chimed in, a smirk spreading across her face. "I suppose that's what happens when you sleep for so long that your brain goes a little... dysfunctional." 7

"You should tell that to him," Mallory deadpanned, refusing to shy away from the conversation that was obviously aimed at her. 3

"Are you speaking to me?" The redheaded vampiress raised her eyebrows in disbelief, as if she couldn't fathom that a mere human would have the audacity to address her directly. 1

Mallory donned an innocent expression and replied sweetly, "Oh, I was actually talking to the ghosts. Or perhaps soon-to-be ghost, if that's



even possible." 5

The vampiress's eyes narrowed, and she began, "You little—"

"Clarissicia," the blonde woman interjected, placing a hand on her friend's arm. "It's best not to get involved with things that won't last. Especially when one looks like that. It is a pity." 1

"I think the real pity lies in being blessed with beauty but having a tongue as sour as yours," Mallory shot back, refusing to cower before the vampiresses. She continued, "And as for lasting, it isn't just humans who die—vampires meet their end as well." 6

The blonde woman rolled her eyes, pulling her friend along and stalking away, clearly annoyed by the exchange.

Mallory was even more annoyed; she had been minding her own business, only to be insulted by those vampiresses.

"You seem lively, Lady Mallory," came a voice from behind her. Mallory turned to see a familiar face.

"Lady Rose," she greeted, offering a polite bow to the woman, who was also an acquaintance of

Hadeon. Standing by Lady Rose's side was her trusted butler, Wallace, who bowed slightly in acknowledgment. 2

"I must say that I am rather pleased to find you here in Delcrow's mansion," Lady Rose said with a soft smile as she gracefully approached to stand next to Mallory. She glanced around, seemingly searching for someone, prompting Mallory to say,

"Hadeon is in his room." 1

Hadeon. Lady Rose smiled. "I see. Hadeon used to frequently attend these balls and soirees, but then he stopped, almost as if he had lost all interest. That was also when he decided to take his extended nap. It looks like it is going to be a wonderful, yet interesting gathering, isn't it?" 7

"I guess so," Mallory replied, having not forgotten the words spoken by the blonde woman. Pursing her lips, she asked, "Do you know who those two vampiresses were, Lady Rose?"

The vampiress then said, "If you're curious about the animosity, I believe it stems from Lady Reagan, the blonde vampiress. You see, once upon a time, Hadeon and Reagan..." 18

