

Chapter 34

The Attor, a demon of malice, dragged me through the Under the Mountain's caverns to the throne room, not bothering to disarm me, knowing my weapons were futile. As it pulled me along, I recited the names of those I held dear: Tamlin, Alis and her boys, my sisters, Lucien, trying to find a shred of strength in their memory. Despite my growing despair, a part of me couldn't help but marvel at the ancient stone chamber into which we entered, its pillars covered in carvings that told countless stories of Prythian. The room was filled with the High Fae, dancing and socializing amidst the intimidating atmosphere.

Thrown before Amarantha's throne, the High Queen of the Under the Mountain, I found her beauty cold, her charm unnerving. Her presence alone filled the air with dread, knowing she had captured Prythian effortlessly and inflicted unimaginable horrors upon its people. Beside her sat Tamlin, masked and silent, his warrior's demeanor untouched yet his spirit seemingly broken under Amarantha's curse.

Amarantha toyed with me, questioning the reason behind my intrusion. In desperation, I declared my intention to claim Tamlin, hoping against hope to break whatever curse had ensnared him. My words, however, only incited amusement and malign interest from Amarantha and the court. She reminded me of the slaughter she's capable of, showing me the mangled body of Clare Beddor, an innocent victim whose name I had once traded for my safety.

In a twisted proposal, Amarantha offered me a chance to save Tamlin and end his curse: complete three tasks of her choosing, or solve a riddle. Despite the ominous warning from Alis against such bargains, I had no choice. Failing meant death or worse, and I agreed to her terms, trying to secure as much fairness in the deal as I could manage.

Fear and determination mingled within me as I agreed to Amarantha's cruel game, not for glory or vengeance, but for love. Love for Tamlin, for the memories of those we've lost, and for the faint glimmer of hope that we could still defy the darkness that Amarantha represented. I girded myself for what was to come, knowing the challenges would be daunting and possibly insurmountable. Yet, in the face of such evil, the only choice was to fight, to strive for a sliver of light in the overwhelming darkness of Under the Mountain.