

# Chapter 32: Rhysand and Redemption

Chapter 32 begins with the protagonist returning to the estate, only to find it ravaged by destruction. The once-beautiful grounds are now in ruins, the signs of a fierce battle etched into the shattered walls and scorched earth. Though there are no bodies, the absence of Tamlin and Lucien sends a chill through her, leaving her grasping at the hope that they may still be alive. Each step through the wreckage is heavy with dread, her mind racing to piece together what might have happened in her absence.

In the midst of her search, she encounters Alis, whose initial shock at seeing her quickly shifts to a somber understanding. Alis confirms her worst fears: Tamlin and Lucien have been taken by Amarantha, the High Queen of Under the Mountain. The curse that has haunted Tamlin has reached its breaking point, and Amarantha's iron grip over Prythian has tightened. As Alis explains the depth of the situation, the protagonist listens intently, her heart sinking with each revelation about the power and cruelty of the enemy she must now face.

Through Alis's account, the history of Amarantha's rise to dominance unfolds. Once a general for the King of Hybern during the brutal war between humans and faeries, Amarantha became infamous for her ruthlessness and cunning. After the war, she charmed her way into the courts of Prythian, using her wits and charisma to manipulate and eventually overthrow the High Lords. By stealing their powers and sowing division among the faerie courts, she solidified her position as a tyrant feared by all.

The curse that binds Tamlin is revealed to be an act of vengeance—a cruel punishment for his refusal to become Amarantha's lover. Instead, she devised a twisted challenge for him: to find a human who despised faeries yet could fall in love with him, thereby breaking the curse. The weight of this revelation crashes down on the protagonist as she realizes her own role in the events that led to this moment. Her failure to see through the curse and act sooner now feels like a betrayal, not just to Tamlin but to the entire faerie realm.

Determined to make amends, the protagonist declares her intention to go Under the Mountain and confront Amarantha, despite Alis's warnings. Alis, though visibly reluctant, cannot help but admire the resolve in her voice and the determination in her eyes. "Because I must," the protagonist says simply. "Because I love him." For a fleeting moment, Alis softens, acknowledging the courage it takes to embark on such a dangerous journey.

Alis warns her of the peril that lies ahead, painting a grim picture of the trials she will face. "Amarantha is cruel beyond measure," she says, her tone heavy with sorrow. "The journey will test you in ways you cannot imagine." She urges the protagonist to be wary, to avoid making deals, and to guard her heart against the tricks and manipulations of the faeries who dwell in Amarantha's court. These words, though daunting, only strengthen the protagonist's resolve to confront the High Queen and free Tamlin, no matter the cost.

As the chapter unfolds, the protagonist's journey becomes more than just a mission to rescue Tamlin—it is a path of redemption and self-discovery. Her courage to face the darkness of Under the Mountain is driven not by the promise of glory but by love, by a desire to right the wrongs that have been done. The revelations about Amarantha's cruelty and the intricacies of the curse add layers of complexity to the story, setting the stage for an epic confrontation that will test the limits of her strength and resilience.

Chapter 32 is steeped in history, emotion, and the weight of impending conflict. It masterfully weaves together the protagonist's personal growth with the broader narrative of Prythian's struggle against tyranny. With each step toward her decision, the stakes grow higher, leaving readers both anxious and exhilarated for the challenges that lie ahead. This chapter serves as a turning point, setting the stage for a battle where love and courage will be pitted against insurmountable odds.