

Chapter Eighteen_Teal

In Chapter Eighteen titled "Teal," the story unfolds as Branthor struggles with his injuries, having been shot multiple times by Teal's brothers. Despite his heavy frame, he attempts to reassure Teal that he can manage as they navigate the wilderness together. Teal expresses concern over his wounds, realizing he is coated in blood but is in disbelief at his resilience. As they slowly make their way toward Mossdale, Teal attempts to shift the blame for their predicament away from Branthor, defending her decision to leave her family for a moment of peace.

Their conversation deepens as Branthor questions why Teal never spoke about her brothers' cruelty, prompting her to reveal her embarrassment and the oppressive nature of the Peacemakers, the authority her family holds. Teal explains that once bound in marriage, a bride's family relinquishes claim to her, which is significant in their current situation. The bond between Branthor and Teal evolves as he apologizes for his earlier decisions. In a light-hearted exchange, she calls him her "idiot," and although Branthor expresses guilt, Teal reassures him, reflecting on their connection.

As they reach a critical point, Branthor insists Teal fetch help while he rests, acknowledging his vulnerability. Before she leaves, he solemnly declares she is his mate, vowing to sign the marriage contract upon reaching Mossdale. Their parting moment is tender, marred by Branthor's discomfort from his injuries. Teal rushes toward the village, reflecting on her past as she recalls the pain inflicted by her brothers, but focusing instead on securing help for Branthor.

Teal arrives at Orion's house, seeking immediate assistance for Branthor. She finds solace in Maren's embrace and informs them of Branthor's dire condition. Without hesitation, Orion and his brothers leap into action, and Teal finally feels supported, noting the exhaustion in her own body. As they race back to Branthor, her new friends promise care and support, solidifying a newfound sisterhood in her life filled with hardship. This chapter illustrates themes of loyalty, the significance of chosen family, and the struggles of overcoming the scars of the past.