

Chapter Eleven_Branthor

In Chapter Eleven, Branthor grapples with his conflicting emotions regarding Teal and the prospect of extending her stay in Mossdale. Initially, he insists that he won't sign the marriage contract, acknowledging that he relishes his freedom. Despite seeing her joy, he feels a deep sense of dread about her extended stay. As they walk through the village, he admires Teal's beauty and innocence, noting the way she interacts with the townspeople and the natural charm of her appearance.

Their stroll takes a turn when they are invited for tea by Sava and Varna, female grendels who have moved to Mossdale seeking some familial connection. Branthor finds himself embarrassed by their prying questions about his relationship with Teal, notably the implication that she might have been affected by similar experiences to a past visitor, Holly. This causes Teal to turn pale with embarrassment and leaves Branthor feeling overwhelmed.

He quickly decides to leave the tea visit and redirect Teal's focus onto the orchards, her excitement evident as she professes eagerness to see his "happy place." Branthor is acutely aware of how his choice to let her stay is complicating his life, yet he can't shake the feeling of peace when she is near. The day unfolds with a leisurely walk through the apple orchard, which culminates in Teal resting her head on Branthor's arm and falling asleep. This moment ignites unfamiliar feelings within him—an undeniable intimacy that disturbs his previous resolve.

As Branthor observes her serene face, he realizes he has become emotionally invested, feeling a heartbeat rhythm unlike any he has known before. Ultimately, he contemplates the unexpected depth of his feelings stirred by Teal, leaving him in a state of acceptance concerning the inexplicable peace she brings into his life.