

Chapter Five_Teal

In Chapter Five, titled "Teal," the protagonist finds herself in an embarrassing situation at a gathering where everyone is watching her, concealed inside a birthday cake. She silently wishes that Branthor, her intended husband, would acknowledge her as his bride while feeling out of place in this vibrant setting. As he approaches her, his deep green eyes scan her form, revealing he is equally disconcerted by the situation. He offers her his hand, and with some relief, she takes it, expressing her desire to escape the cake without ruining it.

Branthor lifts her effortlessly, highlighting the difference in their sizes, reinforcing her feelings of awkwardness and fascination. He stands much taller than her, a grendel with striking features, including long dark hair and expressive green eyes. Teal wrestles with her perception of beauty in him—he represents a more than imposing figure, strong and undeniably handsome.

Their conversation is laden with pauses as they navigate the unfamiliarity of their new relationship. Branthor's attempts to make her comfortable lead to moments of hilarity, particularly as he chooses a seat for her that is too high. As they settle in, Teal begins to acclimatize to her new surroundings, and as a wave of fellowship washes over her, she is introduced to other women, including Nova and Maren, who ease her integration into this diverse family.

The lively chatter around the table allows Teal to relax as she observes the camaraderie, rich with feminism and acceptance. This sense of community is novel to her, igniting both desire and fear about her place among them and with Branthor. Teal wants their connection to flourish, yearning for acceptance and an affirmation of her belonging.

Amidst the laughs and the delightful food, Teal notices Branthor's quiet demeanor—his preoccupied expressions leave her feeling an underlying tension about their marriage, highlighted by her memory of the marriage contract signed by his brother, Kairos. The chapter paints a vivid picture of Teal's journey towards belonging within a new family while grappling with the tentative nature of her union with Branthor .