

# Chapter Seventeen\_Branthor

In Chapter Seventeen of Branthor, the narrative centers on the protagonist, who is gripped by worry after Teal goes missing. After searching at the homes of Nova, Holly, and Maren without success, panic sets in. He reflects on their earlier confrontation, recognizing his selfishness had pushed her away, making him feel guilty and helpless. Teal's last known direction is towards the mountains outside Mossdale, a dangerous choice for someone like her who seemed agitated and needed space.

As he searches, he begins to notice subtle clues indicating her passage—broken twigs and shoe imprints—leading him to the Thundering Caves. His dread amplifies when he finds signs of a struggle: flattened grass and larger footprints, which fills him with fear. The imprint of Teal's small shoe is unmistakable, hinting she had an encounter with two human males. It becomes clear that she might have been taken.

Branthor rushes toward the sound of voices and discovers the two men—uniformed Peacemakers—abusing Teal. Anger fuels his approach as they shoot at him, yet he is unfazed, driven by a protective instinct. As he confronts the men, they claim to be Teal's brothers, leaving him furious at their actions. Teal's desperate plea reveals the truth: they've always been abusive, and their claim of family is a facade.

Ultimately, Branthor releases his anger when Teal, still shaken but grateful, claims him as her true family. He confronts the brothers, warning them against returning, as he gains strength from her faith in him and their community. They escape, both humiliated and hurt, while Branthor and Teal share a tender moment, confessing their love amidst the turmoil. Despite Branthor's injuries from the confrontation, they share a tentative return towards safety, knowing that their bond has only deepened through this crisis.

Teal, now back in Branthor's presence, feels secure, and they begin to understand the strength of their connection, even in the face of danger .