

# Chapter Ten\_Teal

In Chapter Ten, titled "Teal," the protagonist finds herself in a confounding situation at Nova's house. While initially brought to borrow clothes, it becomes clear that this was also a gathering with Nova's friends, Holly and Maren. The atmosphere in the kitchen is friendly and familial as the girls push for details about the previous night with Branthor. Teal explains that they slept apart because Branthor refuses to sign the marriage contract, even convincing her that he would send her to the Temple if not for Nova's intervention.

Maren dismisses Teal's concerns, suggesting Branthor won't go through with it. The girls rally support for Teal, asserting that Branthor is infatuated with her despite her skepticism. Holly and Maren share playful anecdotes, suggesting that unconventional actions, like climbing a partner, could ignite passion. This quirky advice amuses Teal, sparking her imagination about physical moves to gain Branthor's affection.

As they discuss, Nova leads the way into her impressive walk-in closet filled with clothes, revealing new potential for Teal's wardrobe. The camaraderie deepens as Nova insists on giving her outfits that she believes Teal will love, promising that their friendship means sharing is essential. Despite initial hesitation about wearing something so revealing, Teal tries on a short, floral dress, which elicits excited reactions from the other women, who encourage her to wear it to captivate Branthor.

Upon Branthor's arrival, his reaction to Teal in the dress is immediate and profound, as he seems momentarily lost for words. The chapter balances playful banter with the seriousness of Teal's predicament, portraying her inner conflict regarding her relationship with Branthor. Teal longs for affection but ends up questioning the likelihood of their union, revealing her uncertainty about the future as she heads outside with him, pondering whether she truly has any influence over his feelings or if her time may already be running out.