

Chapter Three_Teal

In Chapter Three titled "Teal," the protagonist reflects on her uneasy departure from her father's house, where he cruelly disowns her, labeling her a "whore" for seeking freedom. Despite the emotional turmoil wrought by her father's words, she resolves to leave with merely the clothes on her back. Her journey begins at the train station, where she grapples with anxiety and a lack of funds to buy a ticket to the Marriage Temple, which lies two cities away. The villagers of Fortitude discourage women from seeking matches with those deemed "monsters," leading to her isolation.

Determined to escape the city, Teal boards the train without a ticket, convincing herself that her desperate circumstances are not insurmountable. When approached by a conductor, she admits to having no money. Fortunately, an elderly woman sitting nearby offers to pay for her fare, expressing her own experience and reinforcing Teal's hope for happiness. The act of kindness from the woman mirrors her feelings for her deceased mother, strengthening Teal's resolve.

Upon her arrival at the Temple, Teal experiences a mixture of hunger and fear, as her future husband is expected the following day. The attentive servants provide her with care and an ointment for her bruises, symbols of her painful past. As she prepares to meet her future husband, anxiety surges; she worries about not being attractive enough and questions her future.

The next day brings unexpected developments. Instead of meeting her husband, Branthor, she is greeted by Holly and Kairos, her future sister-in-law and brother-in-law, who inform her of the arrangements made in her absence. The priest explains that Branthor is not present to sign the marriage contract, raising Teal's concerns about her future. The chapter culminates in a mix of hope and uncertainty as Teal contemplates the implications of not meeting her match and decides to keep the funds given to her, envisioning a new life away from her troubled past. Though apprehensive about the future, she clings to the belief that she will not return to Fortitude.