

Chapter Forty-Nine

In this chapter, Nesryn finds herself trapped by a mysterious spider-like creature who reveals the shocking truth about Maeve, the supposed Queen of the Fae. The spider claims Maeve is actually the Queen of the Valg, a dark and powerful race from another world. Nesryn, desperate to buy time as her companion Falkan attempts to free her, asks the spider to tell her the story of Maeve's origins. The spider agrees, framing it as a "gift" for Nesryn's boldness, and begins a tale of deception and conquest.

The spider recounts how Maeve originated from a dark, cold world ruled by three Valg kings—Orcus, Erawan, and another unnamed brother. Maeve, a queen of extraordinary power, married Orcus but grew restless. Using her abilities, she discovered a way to travel between worlds, eventually arriving in the Fae realm. She manipulated the minds of the Fae rulers, Mab and Mora, making them believe she was their long-lost sister. Over time, she erased all memory of her true identity, embedding herself as a permanent fixture in Fae history.

When the Valg kings pursued Maeve across worlds, she disguised herself as a Fae queen, using her knowledge of their strategies to wage war against them. She stole their magical keys, which allowed travel between worlds, and banished two of the kings, including Orcus. However, the third king, Erawan, escaped her grasp when the fire-king Brannon intervened, taking the keys without fully realizing Maeve's true nature. The spider hints that Maeve's dark power allowed her to manipulate even Brannon's perceptions.

The chapter ends with Nesryn piecing together the implications: Maeve is not Fae but a Valg queen who has deceived an entire civilization for centuries. The spider's tale underscores Maeve's cunning and the depth of her deception, leaving Nesryn—and the reader—to grapple with the revelation that one of the most powerful figures in their world is a hidden enemy. Meanwhile, Falkan's slow progress in freeing Nesryn adds

tension, as time runs out for her escape.

