

Chapter Sixty-Two

The chapter opens with Chaol and Yrene confronting Princess Duva, who is possessed by a Valg demon in a vast underground necropolis. Duva taunts them for taking so long to discover her true nature, revealing her pregnancy as a shield against suspicion. Chaol quickly assesses their dire situation: a Valg-controlled princess, the captive Healer on High, and Yrene as potential targets. Duva coldly presents them with a cruel choice—forcing them to decide who among the three will survive, while tracing a knife over her womb in a menacing display.

Duva reveals her Valg-infested state and recounts how she manipulated events, including the murder of her sister Tumelun, whom she pushed off a balcony to silence her suspicions. She explains how the Valg's influence began with a hidden Wyrdstone ring gifted by Perrington, which Duva unknowingly accepted during her wedding. The princess mocks their ignorance, emphasizing how her gentle reputation made her the perfect vessel for the Valg's schemes. Yrene, horrified by the revelations, struggles to contain her rage as Duva relishes her cruelty.

The possessed princess unveils the Valg's broader agenda: targeting Yrene due to her rare healing powers, which pose a threat to the Dark King Erawan. Duva explains that Maeve, the Fae queen, hoarded healers to protect herself, while renegade Fae in the southern lands cultivated their own defenses. Yrene's arrival in the Torre marked her as a key player in this ancient conflict, prompting Erawan to send Duva to eliminate her. Chaol realizes the gravity of Yrene's role—she represents hope against the Valg's darkness, a truth that terrifies their enemies.

As tension mounts, Yrene demands to know Duva's ultimate goal, to which the Valg simply replies, "You." The chapter underscores the high stakes: Yrene's power could turn the tide against the Valg, but her presence has already brought devastation. Chaol recognizes the weight of their fight—not just for their survival, but for the future

of their world. The confrontation leaves Yrene grappling with guilt, while Chaol sees her as a beacon of hope amidst the encroaching darkness. The chapter ends with an unspoken resolve between them, setting the stage for a pivotal struggle.

