

Chapter 32

The chapter opens with the protagonist surveying the wreckage of a violent attack in the entry hall of a manor, noting bloodstains and shattered debris. She methodically analyzes the scene, concluding that the intruders surrounded the house and forced their way in. Despite the destruction, the absence of bodies gives her hope that Tamlin and Lucien are still alive. Her anxiety is palpable as she traces their possible movements, finding signs they were taken rather than killed.

While investigating further, the protagonist hides when she hears approaching footsteps, only to discover the intruder is Alis, a familiar figure. Alis is shocked to see her, insisting she shouldn't have returned. The protagonist demands answers about Tamlin's fate, and Alis reveals he and Lucien were taken alive by Amarantha, the High Queen of Prythian, who plans to break Tamlin for failing to shatter a curse. The protagonist is horrified, realizing she was unaware of the curse's existence.

Alis explains Amarantha's rise to power, describing her as a deceptive emissary from Hybern who charmed the High Lords over decades. Initially posing as a peacemaker, Amarantha eventually revealed her true ambitions, seizing control and establishing herself as High Queen. The protagonist recalls information from the Suriel about a faerie king's resentment of the Treaty, hinting at Amarantha's connection to broader political machinations.

The chapter ends with Alis gathering supplies while recounting Amarantha's history, emphasizing her cunning and the threat she poses. The protagonist grapples with the revelation of Tamlin's captivity and the looming danger of Amarantha's court Under the Mountain. The tension builds as she resolves to confront the truth and take action, setting the stage for a high-stakes rescue mission.