



Chapters 20 & 36, Decrypted

Please be advised that the following chapters contain spoilers. If you have not finished the story, I do not recommend proceeding. Read at your own risk.

CHAPTER 20

WELL, HELLO



The Rathbun boy who had convinced himself to be a man was nearby and impatient. He held a device that emitted a bothersome noise again and again, and it rose in frequency when he came closer.

Click, it said. *Click click*.

There was clatter in the room beside me, the smash of things and the scream of frustration.

He wanted to be a great man, but his temper would be his undoing. (I need not do anything but watch.) Rathbun men were not great; they did not understand what “great” meant.

Cyrus and the machine came closer. *Click click click*.

“I know you have it,” he said, followed by the high-pitched shatter of glass. “I know it’s here somewhere.”

He wanted to hurt his cousin, and not just because of me. Because of the little seer. Girls like her whetted appetites, sharpened teeth.

(I break teeth, sunder men and their appetites.)

“Just like I know you’re with *her* right now.”

Click click click click.

He was in the room with me, rooting through drawer after drawer. His disdain was palpable. His unworthiness, his arrogance, permeated the air. He was Alexander Rathbun’s heir, without a doubt.

Light filtered through the shelf as he opened the door and saw me.

“Well, *hello*.”

His smile was a wolf’s smile. (I devour wolves.)

He had no right to touch me, but he did so anyway. He did not earn the privilege to carry me, but he assumed so anyway. His little device wailed at my finding again and again, so I killed it. (Too many particles, and everything can be killed.)

“Good thing I have spares,” he said to himself as he climbed to his feet.

Cyrus tucked me under his arm and carried me away. I let him. (I didn’t like it, but I liked fun. I wanted to see what the little seer would do.) Still, he paused beside a plant that was rapidly dying from the force of me and vomited.

If he survived long enough in my presence, he would have wilted too; human bodies are weak. Greed, however, kills much faster than I care to.

CHAPTER 36

IT WAITS



In the ruins where Winona Bray left me, it is dark and quiet
and empty
like space.

Alone I wait
and wait
and wait

until someone new finds their way to me, and one day I may again
try to feast.

To conquer.

To destroy.

The little seer may have left me here, alone, but there is always
someone new.

THE END