

They shook their heads in unison.

The dreamer called out a name, and then screamed it again. The sound dulled against the brick and concrete. She started to run. She ran, and she ran, and she ran; but whenever she stopped to cry out the name, she returned to the same spot with the boy and the Watcher, and her mouth full of the bitter and the sweet of grief.



## EILA

“What do you mean, she wasn’t there?” I demanded.

My father shook his head and hung up his jacket. “She wasn’t there. It took some convincing to draw out anything from the airline manager, but I made enough of a fuss that they confirmed she never got on the plane.”

Rage filled me, but I couldn’t give in to it now. Marshall was standing in the hall, crestfallen. My mother’s face tightened, but I couldn’t tell if it was in concern or anger.

“There’s nothing for it, now,” Dad said.

I still held the pumpkin pie I’d been moving from the fridge to the counter; I returned to the kitchen with my mother close behind.

“Dinner is almost ready,” she said to me.

“Did she call? Did she let anyone know she’d bail?” I hissed.

My mother didn’t answer at first, and then said, “She hasn’t called all week. Not since last Wednesday.”

A small lump formed in my throat and fell into my stomach. *What if something happened?* My sister missed a lot of visits, but she kept a strict phone schedule to keep in touch with Marshall.

We sat down to a large feast that appeared enormous, given the empty seat at the table. After a long silence, staring at the food, I said, “It looks amazing, Mom. Thanks.” She gave a brief nod and a tight smile, and my father served each of us in turn. He asked me about my recent trip, but for several moments, I