

Chapter 276: What Makes Us

Shine

Current-DayEvergreen Peaks, Present Day Evergreen Peaks

The surroundings darken as rain clouds gathered. Caleb's words pierce Savannah's heart, shattering her self-worth as the weight of responsibility for the deaths settles on her.

Landon, though new to the place, senses Savannah's guilt and attempts to clarify that it's ~~the place~~Evergreen Peaks itself, not just the forest, that bears the blame.

Each incline, rocky ~~terrain~~path, ~~with and patch of~~ damp soil, exhausts Nicole as she trails behind ~~them~~. Sweat beads on ~~the her~~ face, with ~~her~~ vision blurring, and her heart plunging ~~down~~ to a dangerous low.

"How far is the road?" ~~Nicole she~~ asks, pausing to sit down, breathing heavily.

"It's a couple of hours away. Are you okay?" Landon inquires, his gaze fixed on their unwell friend.

"I have something to tell you," Nicole says, her face pale as she sits in the dirt. "I'm sick."

"What do you mean you're sick? Do you hear buzzing?" Savannah asks. "I won't let anything happen to you. I can't stand losing all these people. Everything is because of me."

"No, I'm not here because of you. I loved Martha, ~~and~~ ~~the~~ whole town did, but I truly loved her. After she

Formatted: Heading 1, Space After: 0 pt, Border: Top: (No border), Bottom: (No border), Left: (No border), Right: (No border), Between : (No border)

Formatted: Space Before: 0 pt, After: 0 pt

Formatted: Indent: First line: 0.5", Space Before: 0 pt, After: 0 pt

disappeared, I tried to contact her but couldn't find her spirit. Until she started coming into my dreams, with broken messages. She couldn't stay long, but she asked me to protect you. I didn't get it initially; how could I protect a stranger? Then, signs started to show on the flyer. But I get it now; the pact has been more than isn't just about being your friends. You have a gift like me, and you've pushed it away in your through-grief through and booze. But I was here to help you through it. You are the answer. I don't get how Martha is involved, but maybe she's sending a message from the other side. The pact is about fighting the spiritual fight together. I had to protect you."

"Nicole, but why risk your life for me, Nicole?"

"I am terminally sick. I don't know when it could happen, but at any point, I have a rare heart condition. My heart could stop at any moment. I don't know when. Maybe that's why my medium gift is strong; because I'm always borderline close to death. The spirits warned me I'd die here. However, in one of her messages, Martha said there was a reason; I needed to come. but I would die here because there is for a purpose. Maybe I can help all these unsettled spirits. Maybe I can fight evil."

"It doesn't mean your time is anytime soon; don't think like that. We are all going to get home. I will carry you out of here; we-I have to. I can't lose you. Please. You mean so much; you have the most beautiful outlook on life."

"Savannah, I knew this from the start. I'm not doing well with all the exhaustion and death, and I feel my body failing. Landon is here now, and I think-I will just slow you down."

Savannah, holding Nicole's hand, starts to weep.

"I'm not going to make it; at least I'll go out trying to do something positive. There is a divine meaning to it all. The forest isn't all bad as we've seen-saw with the singing willow tree."

Nicole starts-to-coughs, her breath becoming soft and slow.

"I didn't get time to teach you about your gift, but I hope you learned something from me. to eEnjoy life. Stop living-with

Commented [LC1]: I'm not sure what this means

blaming yourself. Try my philosophy: Don't take everything ~~of yourself~~so seriously. Try to have fun ~~sly~~; every moment of my fun. I used humor to ease the wound. ~~try~~ I even ~~tried so much~~, ~~really~~-it became who I was. ~~Always-Being forever~~ on the cusp of death made me grateful for my life and brought me closer to the other side. Count your blessings, and love yourself because you will get out of here and have a long life. I know you don't want to leave me here, but this place is the only place I need to be. I'm at peace with my circumstances. ~~as-much-as-you-love-people-in your-life-y~~You must focus on letting ~~everything it go—your regrets~~. -Martha, ~~your-regrets~~, me, and ~~the~~ others. I want you to have my hematite crystal; it offers protection from bad spirits." ~~With shaky hands~~, ~~s~~She ~~weakly-hands~~gives it to Savannah.

"We aren't leaving you here, Nicole," Landon firmly states.

~~She h~~Hold~~sing~~ her heart. ~~;~~ "Things will happen the way they happen, because the universe has a plan," Nicole attempts to say ~~the-her~~ mantra but can't finish it. ~~as h~~Her breathing slows. ~~Nicole-She~~ closes her eyes. ~~so-as~~ not to open them again. ~~Then h~~Her breathing stops, and nature goes silent.

Savannah screams and tries to perform CPR. ~~but-nothing happens~~. After fifteen minutes of trying to revive Nicole, nothing happen~~ed~~. Tears flow~~ed down-from~~ both of their eyes, and a horn ~~went-goes~~ off in the distance.

"Savannah, we need to go. We have to get you out of here."

Savannah throws her bomber jacket over Nicole's face and places Martha's amethyst necklace over her heart.

~~Savannah,She is-sits~~ on the forest ~~ground-floor~~, crying, unable to get up, and ~~she~~ won't let go of Nicole's hand. ~~;~~ Landon picks her up and carries her out of sight.

Savannah ~~has~~ lost what could have been a close friend and the best bus buddy she ~~had~~ ever had. The pact ~~fell-has fallen~~ apart. Savannah ~~has~~ failed her. ~~thinking-about-how~~ Nicole ~~was only here because of Savannah; she~~ died here ~~only-because of~~

Formatted: Indent: First line: 0.5", Space Before: 0 pt, After: 0 pt

~~Savannah to be here because of Savannah.~~ Why would Martha do that and ask Nicole to ~~do that, to risk give~~ her life?

~~They Leaving leave~~ Nicole to rest, ~~along with~~ all the memories of her ~~being~~ fearless, nonchalant, ~~altruistic a~~-free spirit. ~~She was and altruistic, being~~ such a wonderful human being, hiding this secret condition. In the heart of all this tragedy, Nicole held it together; she made it look easy. Only because she ~~was~~ used to the feeling ~~of that she might die dying~~ at any moment. Nicole was eccentric and didn't care what others thought, dressing up daily and embracing her identity because ~~she knew~~ life would be short. Her ~~philosophy,~~ outlook is what made her shine brightly, ~~because she knew it could be fleeting.~~ Nicole ~~had was~~ indeed ~~been~~ one of the most amazing people Savannah ~~had~~ ever met.

This place has taken everything from her, ~~and a~~ All that is left is ~~Landon,~~ the love of her life, ~~Landon.~~ She prays ~~for that~~ Caleb ~~to will~~ get out safely and for the rest to find closure in the afterlife.

Out of Savannah and Landon's sight, the woods wrap Nicole in vines, ~~the ground~~ swallowing her ~~into the ground.~~ ~~It starts to pump aglows~~ purple and pink ~~glow,~~ creating roots from the vines resembling a heart, a pumping heart. The ground moves in the rhythm of a heartbeat, the ~~golden~~ light ~~and pink stardust~~ of her aura shining underneath the soil, ~~with a golden light and pink stardust.~~ ~~The m~~ Mystical forest elements start their magic on Nicole.

Formatted: Indent: First line: 0.5", Space Before: 0 pt

Formatted: Indent: First line: 0.5", Border: Top: (No border), Bottom: (No border), Left: (No border), Right: (No border), Between : (No border)

Formatted: Indent: First line: 0.5", Space Before: 0 pt

|

