

# Chapter 64

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Rhysand went still as death. Cassian snarled. Hanging between them, Azriel tried and failed to lift his head.

But I was staring at Tamlin—at that face I had loved and hated so deeply—as he halted a good twenty feet away from us.

He wore his bandolier of knives—Illyrian hunting-blades, I realized. His golden hair was cut shorter, his face more gaunt than I'd last seen it.

And his green eyes ... Wide as they scanned me from head to toe. Wide as they took in my fighting leathers, the Illyrian sword and knives, the way I stood within my group of friends—my family.

He'd been working with the King of Hybern. "No," I breathed.

But Tamlin dared one more step closer, staring at me as if I were a ghost. Lucien, metal eye whirring, stopped him with a hand on his shoulder.

"No," I said again, this time louder.

"What was the cost," Rhysand said softly from my side. I clawed and tore at the wall separating our minds; heaved and pulled against that fist stifling my magic.

Tamlin ignored him, looking at the king at last. "You have my word."

The king smiled.

I took a step toward Tamlin. "What have you done?"

The King of Hybern said from his throne, "We made a bargain. I give you over, and he agrees to let my forces enter Prythian through his territory. And then use it as a base as we remove that ridiculous wall."

I shook my head. Lucien refused to meet the pleading stare I threw his way.

"You're insane," Cassian hissed.

Tamlin held out a hand. "Feyre." An order—like I was no better than a summoned dog.

I made no movement. I had to get free; had to get that damn power free—

“You,” the king said, pointing a thick finger at me, “are a very difficult female to get ahold of. Of course, we’ve also agreed that you’ll work for me once you’ve been returned home to your husband, but ... Is it husband-to-be, or husband? I can’t remember.”

Lucien glanced between us all, face paling. “Tamlin,” he murmured.

But Tamlin didn’t lower the hand stretched toward me. “I’m taking you home.”

I backed up a step—toward where Rhysand still held Azriel with Cassian.

“There’s that other bit, too. The other thing I wanted,” the king went on. “Well, Jurian wanted. Two birds with one stone, really. The High Lord of Night dead—and to learn who his friends were. It drove Jurian quite mad, honestly, that you never revealed it during those fifty years. So now you know, Jurian. And now you can do what you please with them.”

Around me, my friends were tense—taut. Even Azriel was subtly moving a bloody, scarred hand closer to his blades. His blood pooled at the edge of my boots.

I said steadily, clearly, to Tamlin, “I’m not going anywhere with you.”

“You’ll say differently, my dear,” the king countered, “when I complete the final part of my bargain.”

Horror coiled in my gut.

The king jerked his chin at my left arm. “Break that bond between you two.”

“Please,” I whispered.

“How else is Tamlin to have his bride? He can’t very well have a wife who runs off to another male once a month.”

Rhys remained silent, though his grip tightened on Azriel. Observing—weighing, sorting through the lock on his power. The thought of that silence between our souls being permanent ...

My voice cracked as I said to Tamlin, still at the opposite end of the crude half circle we’d formed before the dais, “Don’t. Don’t let him. I told you—I told you that I was fine. That I left—”

“You weren’t well,” Tamlin snarled. “He used that bond to manipulate you. Why do you

think I was gone so often? I was looking for a way to get you free. And you left."

"I left because I was going to die in that house!"

The King of Hybern clicked his tongue. "Not what you expected, is it?"

Tamlin growled at him, but again held out his hand toward me. "Come home with me. Now."

"No."

"Feyre." An unflinching command.

Rhys was barely breathing—barely moving.

And I realized ... realized it was to keep his scent from becoming apparent. Our scent. Our mating bond.

Jurian's sword was already out—and he was looking at Mor as if he was going to kill her first. Azriel's blood-drained face twisted with rage as he noticed that stare. Cassian, still holding him upright, took them all in, assessing, readying himself to fight, to defend.

I stopped beating at the fist on my power. Stroked it gently—lovingly.

I am Fae and not-Fae, all and none, I told the spell that gripped me. You do not hold me. I am as you are—real and not, little more than gathered wisps of power. You do not hold me.

"I'll come with you," I said softly to Tamlin, to Lucien, shifting on his feet, "if you leave them alone. Let them go."

You do not hold me.

Tamlin's face contorted with wrath. "They're monsters. They're—" He didn't finish as he stalked across the floor to grab me. To drag me out of here, then no doubt winnow away.

You do not hold me.

The fist gripping my power relaxed. Vanished.

Tamlin lunged for me over the few feet that remained. So fast—too fast—

I became mist and shadow.

I winnowed beyond his reach. The king let out a low laugh as Tamlin stumbled.

And went sprawling as Rhysand's fist connected with his face.

Panting, I retreated right into Rhysand's arms as one looped around my waist, as Azriel's blood on him soaked into my back. Behind us, Mor leaped in to fill the space Rhys had vacated, slinging Azriel's arm over her shoulders.

But that wall of hideous stone remained in my mind, and still blocked Rhys's own power.

Tamlin rose, wiping the blood now trickling from his nose as he backed to where Lucien held his position with a hand on his sword.

But just as Tamlin neared his Emissary, he staggered a step. His face went white with rage.

And I knew Tamlin understood a moment before the king laughed. "I don't believe it. Your bride left you only to find her mate. The Mother has a warped sense of humor, it seems. And what a talent—tell me, girl: how did you unravel that spell?"

I ignored him. But the hatred in Tamlin's eyes made my knees buckle.

"I'm sorry," I said, and meant it.

Tamlin's eyes were on Rhysand, his face near-feral. "You," he snarled, the sound more animal than Fae. "What did you do to her?"

Behind us, the doors opened and soldiers poured in. Some looked like the Attor. Some looked worse. More and more, filling up the room, the exits, armor and weapons clanking.

Mor and Cassian, Azriel sagging and heavy-lidded between them, scanned each soldier and weapon, sizing up our best odds of escape. I left them to it as Rhys and I faced Tamlin.

"I'm not going with you," I spat at Tamlin. "And even if I did ... You spineless, stupid fool for selling us out to him! Do you know what he wants to do with that Cauldron?"

"Oh, I'm going to do many, many things with it," the king said.

And the Cauldron appeared again between us.

"Starting now."

Kill him kill him kill him

I could not tell if the voice was mine or the Cauldron's. I didn't care. I unleashed myself.

Talons and wings and shadows were instantly around me, surrounded by water and fire—

Then they vanished, stifled as that invisible hand gripped my power again, so hard I gasped.

