

Chapter Twenty

The chapter opens with Nesta feeling overwhelmed by her proximity to Cassian as they fly over Velaris, her emotions stirred by last night's intimate encounter. Her discomfort is compounded by her anxiety about the upcoming meeting, which she expects to be tense and judgmental, especially regarding her recent fight with Elain. Cassian's quiet demeanor and reassurance highlight her internal struggle, emphasizing her vulnerability and the emotional turmoil she faces as she prepares to confront her past and her perceived shortcomings within the close-knit community.

Upon entering the house, Nesta's attention shifts to a landscape painting of Ramiel, a sacred mountain linked to the Blood Rite, symbolizing the deeper connections and histories that underpin their world. Cassian's remark about Feyre's painting hints at hidden knowledge and shared histories among the characters. The house's silence and the absence of servants underscore a moment of introspection and tension, setting the tone for the serious discussions ahead. Nesta's focus on the painting reflects her subconscious processing of the significance of their collective history and the ongoing struggles they face.

The meeting in the study reveals a tense gathering of key characters—Rhysand, Feyre, Azriel, and Amren—discussing urgent political and magical threats. Azriel reports that Queen Briallyn seeks to regain her youth by attempting to find the Cauldron, a powerful and hidden object of immense magical significance. The alliance with Beron and the involvement of the death-lord Koschei reveal a complex web of alliances and betrayals. Azriel's insights also expose Briallyn's true intentions and her collaboration with Koschei, adding layers of danger to their situation and heightening the stakes for everyone involved.

The chapter concludes with revelations about the legendary objects of power created by the Cauldron—namely the Mask, the Harp, and the Crown—each possessing

formidable abilities, including raising the dead. These objects are remnants of ancient magic, long lost and highly coveted, and their existence hints at the potential for unprecedented power struggles. The ominous tone is reinforced by the mention of the Dread Trove, a collection of dangerous artifacts that surpass even those objects in malevolence, setting the stage for the intense conflicts and quests that lie ahead. The chapter emphasizes the gravity of their mission and the perilous forces converging around these ancient relics.

