

Chapter Seventeen

In Chapter Seventeen, Nesta begins to take proactive steps toward her physical and mental strengthening by proposing a training initiative within the House. She approaches Clotho with a plan to have her priestesses train in hand-to-hand combat and self-defense, supervised by Cassian. Despite initial doubts about participation, she offers to create a sign-up sheet to encourage interest, receiving Clotho's blessing. However, the sign-up remains empty, reflecting the challenges of initiating change and the slow process of building confidence and community around her efforts. Nesta's determination underscores her desire for empowerment and resilience.

Throughout the chapter, Nesta's rigorous physical training is depicted in detail, emphasizing her dedication and the toll it takes on her body. She consistently checks the sign-up sheet, which remains unfilled, highlighting her frustration and the difficulty of inspiring others to join her cause. Meanwhile, Cassian becomes her instructor, guiding her through basic combat techniques and strength-building exercises, such as lunges with weights and stair climbs. These scenes illustrate her struggle with exhaustion and her perseverance, symbolizing her effort to overcome her physical limitations and mental doubts.

The narrative also explores Nesta's emotional landscape, revealing her feelings of isolation and uncertainty. Despite her efforts, she questions whether reaching out will ever be reciprocated, as she observes the lack of interest from others. Her small acts of kindness, like leaving flowers or offering books, reflect her attempt to forge connections, even if they remain unacknowledged. This internal conflict emphasizes her desire for acceptance and her ongoing battle to believe in her own strength and ability to inspire change within her community.

In the final scenes, Nesta's training intensifies as she practices punches under Cassian's watchful eye. She learns the importance of proper technique, such as

correctly forming her fists and positioning her body, to avoid injury and maximize effectiveness. Cassian's mentorship highlights the importance of discipline, precision, and intelligence in combat, contrasting with Nesta's initial perception of brute force. The chapter concludes with her understanding that physical strength must be paired with knowledge and focus, symbolizing her broader journey toward self-empowerment and resilience.

