

# Chapter 38

In Chapter 38, the protagonist endures a harrowing scene of forced labor, scrubbing the floors of a grand marble hallway under threat of brutal punishment. She is haunted by the dark ink on her arm and the watchful eye on her palm, symbols of her entrapment and the dangerous bargain she has made with Rhysand. Her physical exertion is intense, and she struggles against the seemingly impossible task of cleaning the filthy floors with inadequate water, feeling the weight of her helplessness and the threat of torture looming over her. The chapter vividly captures her mental and physical torment in this oppressive environment.

Amid her suffering, a moment of unexpected relief arrives when a female figure, the Lady of the Autumn Court, appears. She recognizes the protagonist and, in a gracious act, declares her debt paid for saving her son's life by giving her her name. This act of kindness contrasts sharply with the brutality of her captors. The protagonist, overwhelmed and grateful, kneels in respect, and in her relief, she momentarily forgets her injuries and the danger she faces. The encounter highlights a fleeting glimmer of hope and the complex nature of alliances in her perilous situation.

The narrative shifts to the following day, where the protagonist faces another cruel task: cleaning lentils from ash in a dark, windowless room. She is ordered to complete this impossible job before the return of her captor, with the threat of severe punishment. Despite her keen eyes and determination, she struggles to find all the lentils, her efforts fraught with frustration and exhaustion. Her resourcefulness is evident, but the oppressive environment and the unknown return time of her captor heighten her anxiety, leading her to prepare for a desperate confrontation.

The chapter culminates with a tense moment as she finally senses the presence of someone entering the room—Rhysand. Her instincts drive her to defend herself, gripping a poker and readying for a fight. The darkness and the familiar voice of

Rhysand indicate the continuation of her perilous situation, blending her resilience with the ongoing threat of her captors. This scene underscores her courage and the constant danger she faces, setting the stage for further tension and the complex dynamics of power, trust, and survival in her narrative.

