

Chapter 46

The chapter opens with a tense confrontation where instinctual violence surfaces; Aelin prepares to use her magic as a form of defense, highlighting the immediate danger and high stakes of the situation. Fenrys's aggressive leap at Manon is thwarted by Rowan's powerful magic, which forcefully sends him across the room, emphasizing the intensity of their conflict. Aelin's quick wit and fiery magic create a barrier of flames, revealing her resourcefulness and the dangerous environment they are trapped in. The scene underscores the chaos and imminent violence that define this moment, setting a tone of urgency and peril.

As the scene unfolds, a mysterious creature called the Erawan's Bloodhound manifests, revealing itself as a disguised or transformed Fenrys. Manon's chains are suddenly released, and the creature's true form is unveiled—pale, with a warped face, and a sinister smile. The Bloodhound's sinister intent becomes clear: it has infiltrated their ranks, killed a sailor to impersonate Fenrys, and gathered intelligence about their ship. Aelin's sharp instincts and sharp tongue confront the creature, exposing its deception and its underlying mutilation, which hints at dark magic and brutal experiments inflicted upon it by Erawan.

The Bloodhound's revelation that it was sent by Erawan to gather information and to threaten them intensifies the danger. It claims to have come for the Blackbeak heir but is more interested in the valuable treasures aboard the ship. The creature's hunger for power and its connection to Erawan's dark influence are palpable, especially as it reveals a connection to the mutilation of a former ally. Aelin's attempt to attack with fire is thwarted, and Rowan intervenes swiftly, highlighting the precarious balance of power and the necessity of strategic restraint amidst chaos.

In the climax, the Bloodhound taunts them with a leather strap, a symbol of past trauma and loss, and reveals itself as a remnant of Erawan's cruelty—an instrument of

mutilation and betrayal. Manon's instinctive rage erupts into a fierce attack, driven by her grief and fury over her lost Second and the mutilation of her kin. Dorian's cold, calculated intervention as he crushes the Bloodhound's hands exemplifies the ruthlessness required to survive. The chapter ends with a haunting revelation about the Bloodhound's final words, leaving lingering questions about loyalty, sacrifice, and the true cost of their fight against Erawan's dark forces.

