

# Chapter Fifty-Seven

The chapter opens with the chaotic return of the group to the Eridun aerie, where tensions run high. Falkan, barely alive in his spider form, causes panic among the ruks until Houlun intervenes. Sartaq, despite his injuries, embraces Kadara and Borte, the latter covered in blood but triumphant. Yeran reveals that Borte convinced him to join her dangerous mission, showcasing their complex, teasing relationship. The dynamics between characters—especially Borte's defiance and Houlun's simmering anger—highlight the clan's rigid hierarchies and personal loyalties.

As the group settles, emotional reunions unfold. Nesryn stays close to the unconscious Falkan, distrusting the ruks' restraint. Borte and Yeran exchange sharp banter, hinting at deeper affection beneath their rivalry. When Sartaq nearly collapses, Nesryn catches him, and their mutual embrace reveals unspoken feelings. Their tender moment is interrupted as Falkan shifts back to human form, battered but alive. Sartaq comforts a tearful Nesryn, their bond solidified by shared trauma and survival.

Two days later, the Council of Clans gathers at dawn. Nesryn and Sartaq, now rested and bandaged, stand together before the assembled hearth-mothers and captains. Falkan, though injured, watches intently as Sartaq warns of the kharankui's resurgence and a darker threat looming. Nesryn steps forward, her voice steady as she reveals their discoveries in the Pass of Dagul. She speaks of a demonic army in the north, urging unity across all lands to avert doom. The weight of her words silences the hall.

The chapter culminates with Nesryn unveiling the full history of Erawan and Maev, though the details are left ominously unfinished. The gravity of her message—calling for unprecedented alliance against a supernatural enemy—hangs over the clan leaders. Sartaq's subtle touch reassures her, symbolizing their shared resolve. The chapter ends on a cliffhanger, setting the stage for a pivotal confrontation and the challenges of uniting fractured peoples against a common, existential threat.