

Chapter Thirty-Seven

In Chapter Thirty-Seven, Nesryn finds herself pressed for time as Falkan's recovery period limits their plans to explore the southern watchtower ruins. Despite her attempts to persuade Sartaq to venture without the shape-shifter, he remains cautious, prioritizing safety. Meanwhile, Sartaq takes the opportunity to introduce Nesryn to various clans and hearth-mothers in the northern and western regions, where she experiences a mix of warmth and aloofness from different leaders. These visits serve to deepen her understanding of the rukhin society and strengthen her bond with Sartaq, as he actively involves her in their customs and daily life.

Throughout their journey, Sartaq demonstrates a leadership style rooted in humility and shared effort, engaging in chores and tasks alongside Nesryn regardless of his rank. She is gradually unburdened from her past life in Rifthold, recalling her former world of marble floors, strict orders, and guarded routines. Instead, she immerses herself in mountain life, listening to stories around fires, learning about the rukhin's history, and participating in their traditions. This new environment offers her a sense of freedom and belonging she had not known before, transforming her perspective and emotional state.

During a communal gathering, Nesryn surprises everyone by offering to sing a song from her homeland rather than recount a story, revealing her vulnerability and desire to connect through her personal history. Her song, a tribute to her mother and her homeland of Adarlan, evokes a deep emotional response, bridging her past and present. The act of singing, a rare moment of sharing her inner self, highlights her growing trust in her new community and her willingness to embrace her identity beyond her previous life of duty and discipline.

The chapter culminates in Nesryn's heartfelt performance, with her voice resonating through the mountain hall amid the flickering firelight. The act of singing symbolizes

her acceptance of her new life and her connection to her roots. Sartaq's silent, serious demeanor during her performance underscores the significance of this moment for her, marking a turning point in her emotional journey. Through this act, Nesryn begins to reconcile her past with her present, finding strength in her heritage and a renewed sense of purpose within the mountain community.

