

# Chapter 25

The chapter opens with Tamlin being called away to address the encroaching blight at the borders, leaving the protagonist anxious about his safety. Despite her growing attachment to him, she struggles with the brutal realities of the faerie courts, symbolized by the severed head she previously discovered. Lucien reassures her of Tamlin's well-being, but her unease lingers, compounded by the grotesque games played with mortal lives. The tension is momentarily overshadowed by the preparations for the Summer Solstice celebration, a stark contrast to the darkness creeping into the court.

The protagonist awakens to a festive atmosphere, with the estate adorned in ribbons and maypoles being erected. Alis informs her that the solstice celebration, once held at the Summer Court, will now take place here. The protagonist reflects on her mortal family, wondering if they still believe her to be visiting a distant aunt, and compares their humble village festivities to the grandeur of the faerie solstice. Tamlin's prolonged absence gnaws at her, though she distracts herself by painting the vibrant decorations, all while dreading the possibility of him participating in faerie rites akin to Fire Night.

Tamlin and Lucien finally return, unharmed and in high spirits, much to the protagonist's relief. Alis dresses her in an elegant gown and adorns her hair with a wildflower garland, highlighting her physical transformation since arriving in the faerie realm. Lucien teases her for looking "positively Fae," while Tamlin's quiet compliment stirs her emotions. Despite her efforts to remain composed, his presence and touch ignite a longing she struggles to conceal. The trio heads to the solstice celebration, where Tamlin explains the event's significance as a time of neutrality and unity among faeries.

The plateau is alive with music, dancing, and feasting, though the protagonist initially feels out of place among the gathered faeries. Tamlin's protective growl discourages lingering stares, allowing her to enjoy the festivities. She savors the food and contemplates painting the scene, captivated by the lanterns, ribbons, and ethereal dancers. As the sun sets, the celebration grows livelier, with bonfires lighting up the hills. Despite the joy around her, the protagonist's thoughts occasionally drift back to the blight and her precarious position in the faerie world, balancing wonder with underlying dread.



Summaryer