

Chapter 17

The chapter opens with the protagonist waking from a nightmare filled with haunting visions of the Suriel's bone-fingers and a faceless woman demanding their name. Disturbed and sweating, they hear shouts and screams from the front hall, compelling them to investigate. The screams evoke memories of past trauma, driving them to confront the source rather than hide. At the top of the staircase, they witness Tamlin rushing in with a wounded faerie slung over his shoulder, blood soaking his tunic.

The faerie, a Summer Court member, is grievously injured, his wings brutally ripped off. Tamlin orders the hall table cleared to tend to him, while Lucien reacts with visible horror, eventually fleeing the scene. The faerie's repeated cries of "She took my wings" underscore the brutality of an unnamed female antagonist, hinting at her dominance over another court. Tamlin's attempts to stem the bleeding are futile, and his admission that his magic can't heal major wounds adds to the tension.

As the protagonist assists by pinning the faerie down, they note his velvet-like skin and the sheer agony he endures. The faerie's golden-veined shimmer and desperate pleas humanize him, contrasting with the grim reality of his fate. Tamlin's quiet demeanor and the protagonist's empathy highlight the emotional weight of the scene. The faerie's weakening state and the pooling blood signal his impending death, a moment underscored by Tamlin's resigned expression.

In the final moments, the protagonist comforts the faerie, holding his hand and brushing hair from his face. Their whispered reassurance—"It will be all right"—rings hollow as the faerie's life ebbs away. The chapter closes with a sense of helplessness and dread, emphasizing the cruelty of the unseen "she" and the fragility of life in the faerie courts. The scene leaves lingering questions about the antagonist's identity and her broader role in the story's conflict.