

Chapter Twenty-Nine

Nesta struggles with physical exhaustion and emotional turmoil as she ascends the stairs of the House of Wind, haunted by recurring nightmares of her father's death and her failures during the war. The absence of Cassian and Azriel at dinner leaves her feeling isolated, reinforcing her belief that she is unwanted. Despite her efforts to push others away, she acknowledges her loneliness and the consequences of her past behavior. The House of Wind subtly supports her, offering water and a cooling breeze, but when it presents bones and stones for scrying, Nesta refuses, fearing a repeat of the trauma she endured when the Cauldron took her sister, Elain.

Meanwhile, at the river house, Amren, Rhys, Cassian, and others discuss the urgency of locating the Dread Trove. Amren insists Nesta must begin scrying immediately, while Cassian defends her need for time to overcome her fears. Rhys suggests involving Elain as a last resort, but Azriel opposes this, citing the Trove's inherent darkness. Cassian argues that Nesta will act to protect Elain but emphasizes the need for patience. The tension highlights the group's differing perspectives on how to handle Nesta's trauma and the looming threat of the Trove.

Nesta's internal conflict is palpable as she grapples with guilt over her perceived failures and the weight of her unresolved grief. The House's silent companionship offers minor comfort, but her refusal to scry reflects her deep-seated fear of revisiting past horrors. The chapter underscores her isolation and the emotional barriers she has erected, even as she yearns for connection. Her physical exertion on the stairs mirrors her internal struggle, symbolizing her arduous journey toward healing and self-acceptance.

The debate among the Night Court's leaders reveals the broader stakes of Nesta's personal battle. Amren's impatience contrasts with Cassian's protective stance, while Rhys and Azriel weigh the risks of involving Elain. The chapter sets the stage for

Nesta's eventual confrontation with her fears, as the group's deadline forces her to choose between facing her trauma or allowing others to take on the danger. The interplay of personal and collective urgency drives the narrative forward, leaving Nesta's next steps uncertain.

