

Chapter Twenty-Seven

The chapter opens with Nesta struggling to face Cassian after their intimate encounter the previous night, using Gwyn as a buffer during their morning training session. Their conversation shifts to the elusive Dread Trove, with Gwyn revealing that even Merrill's research has yielded little information about the ancient artifacts. Nesta reflects on the immensity of Fae history and Amren's age, though even Amren can't recall the Trove's last possessor. Gwyn suggests the search might be futile, but Nesta dismisses an alternative method involving bones and stones, hinting at her reluctance to confront painful memories.

As Gwyn departs after their lesson, Nesta and Cassian share a tense but charged moment, both acutely aware of their unresolved attraction. Nesta asks about Cassian's trip to Windhaven, and their exchange is laced with unspoken desire, with Nesta recalling their passionate encounter in vivid detail. Cassian mentions Gwyn's progress and the reluctance of other priestesses to join their training, prompting Nesta to admit she genuinely likes Gwyn—a rare admission of affection from her. The conversation highlights Nesta's growing connections and her subtle efforts to encourage others.

Nesta seizes the opportunity to ask Cassian for a favor: delivering a gift of spices, tea, and salt to Emerie, her friend in Windhaven. Cassian obliges, presenting the items to Emerie, who is visibly touched by the thoughtful gesture. He relays Nesta's invitation for Emerie to join their training, offering transportation if needed. Though Emerie hesitates due to her shop responsibilities, Cassian respects her decision, recognizing Nesta's kindness in both the gift and the invitation. The interaction underscores Nesta's evolving empathy and her desire to support those she cares about.

The chapter closes with Cassian reflecting on Nesta's unexpected generosity and the stark contrast between her guarded demeanor with the court and her ease with Gwyn and Emerie. Her actions reveal a softer, more compassionate side, surprising Cassian

and hinting at her gradual emotional growth. The chapter weaves together themes of connection, healing, and unspoken desire, setting the stage for deeper relationships and potential conflicts ahead.

