

Chapter Twelve

Nesta arrives at the training ring atop the House of Wind, expecting to travel to Windhaven, but Cassian informs her that plans have changed due to Morrigan's absence and Rhysand and Feyre's busy schedules. The chapter highlights Nesta's internal struggle with pride and vulnerability, as she dreads appearing foolish in front of others, especially warriors who might mock her. Cassian, aware of her reluctance, adjusts the training location to a private setting, emphasizing his understanding of her personality and his determination to help her begin her training despite her resistance.

Cassian proposes a fae bargain to motivate Nesta: if she completes an hour of training, he will owe her a favor of her choosing. Nesta initially scoffs at the offer, questioning his negotiation skills, but her curiosity is piqued when he insists the terms are open-ended. The tension between them is palpable, with Cassian carefully masking his hope and Nesta scrutinizing his sincerity. Their exchange reveals underlying emotional stakes, as Cassian's vulnerability contrasts with Nesta's guarded demeanor.

The bargain is sealed with a handshake, triggering a surge of magical energy that leaves both startled. A new tattoo—an eight-pointed star—appears on Cassian's back, symbolizing the binding nature of their agreement. Nesta's reaction shifts from shock to distraction as she openly admires Cassian's physique, her pulse betraying her attraction. The moment underscores the unresolved tension between them, blending physical attraction with their complex emotional dynamic.

The chapter concludes with Cassian's silent acknowledgment of Nesta's gaze, choosing not to disrupt the moment. The scene captures the delicate balance between their professional training relationship and the unspoken romantic undercurrent. The bargain serves as a turning point, pushing Nesta toward growth while hinting at deeper connections and challenges ahead. The chapter effectively blends action, emotion, and world-building, setting the stage for future developments in their

relationship and Nesta's personal journey.

