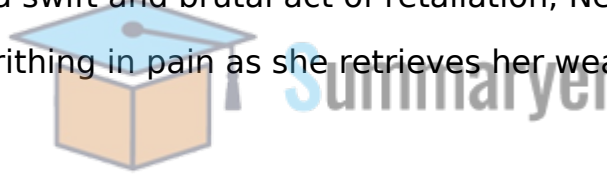


Chapter Sixty-Six

Nesta confronts an Illyrian warrior who threatens her with a bow and arrow, demanding her weapons. Despite the danger, she remains defiant, questioning him about another female's whereabouts. His taunting confirmation about Emerie's fate ignites her fury. In a swift and brutal act of retaliation, Nesta disarms and incapacitates him, leaving him writhing in pain as she retrieves her weapons and sets off to find her friend.



Following the warrior's trail, Nesta reaches a river where a group of Illyrian males are gathered. She overhears their conversation, which reveals Emerie escaped by jumping into the river but may not survive the rapids. Though Nesta is tempted to kill the males for their cruelty, her priority is finding Emerie. She stealthily follows the riverbank, her determination unwavering despite the perilous terrain and freezing conditions.

Nesta spots Emerie unconscious and trapped on a fallen tree near a waterfall, her body battered and barely alive. Realizing the urgency, Nesta strips off her clothes, braces against the icy water, and leaps in to rescue her friend. Fighting the numbing cold, she navigates the treacherous rocks and currents, finally reaching Emerie and dragging her to safety. The physical toll is immense, but Nesta's focus remains on saving her friend.

With Emerie barely breathing and injured, Nesta knows they must cross the river to find shelter and warmth. Despite her own exhaustion and the limited resources, she resolves to protect Emerie at all costs. The chapter ends with Nesta's unwavering determination to survive and ensure her friend's safety, highlighting her fierce loyalty and resilience in the face of overwhelming odds.