

Chapter Fifty-Seven

Cassian reflects on his usual joy during Winter Solstice, a time filled with drinking, snowball fights, and camaraderie with his brothers. However, this year, the festivities fill him with bitterness and anger. The Court of Nightmares is adorned for the celebration, but Cassian's focus is on Nesta, who is set to dance with Eris—a prospect that fills him with jealousy and resentment. The tension is palpable as he stands in the throne room, surrounded by enemies, including Keir and Eris, whom he despises.

The throne room is lavishly decorated with black candles, evergreen garlands, and holly berries, but the atmosphere is far from festive. Rhysand and Feyre make a grand entrance, with Feyre's pregnancy on full display, eliciting gasps from the crowd. Rhysand exudes protective pride, while Feyre glows like a goddess. Meanwhile, Cassian observes the reactions of Keir and Eris, who are visibly unsettled. The event serves as a political statement, reinforcing the power and unity of the Night Court.

Nesta and Elain enter behind Rhysand and Feyre, dressed in Night Court black, symbolizing their place within the royal family. Elain appears subdued in the dark attire, but Nesta commands attention with her striking presence. Her dress, adorned with silver thread and sapphires, accentuates her confidence and beauty. Cassian is overwhelmed by her appearance but dares not look at her or Eris, knowing it would reveal their hidden tensions. The sisters' silent estrangement adds another layer of complexity to the scene.

The chapter culminates in a charged moment as Nesta stands poised and defiant, her feline smirk hinting at her unshakable resolve. Cassian struggles to maintain his composure, torn between desire and duty. The political stakes are high, with the Court of Nightmares watching every move. The tension between personal emotions and courtly obligations underscores the chapter, setting the stage for the impending dance and the unresolved conflicts simmering beneath the surface.