

Chapter Forty-Four

The chapter opens with Nesta, Gwyn, and Emerie training under Cassian's supervision, exhausted but determined. Their physical exertion contrasts with the intimate memories Nesta recalls from the previous night, where she and Cassian shared a passionate encounter. The tension between their private connection and their public roles as trainees is palpable, especially as Cassian teases them about their stamina while hinting at the day's challenging lesson: mastering the eight-pointed star sword technique.

Cassian's demeanor shifts when the topic of the Valkyries arises. Gwyn and Nesta are surprised to learn he fought alongside the legendary warriors in the past, revealing a deeper layer of his history. His emotional recounting of the Battle of Meinir Pass, where the Valkyries sacrificed themselves, adds gravity to the conversation. Nesta senses unresolved grief in Cassian, particularly when he hesitates to label his fallen comrades as mere "friends," sparking a flicker of jealousy in her despite the solemnity of the moment.

The training session takes a symbolic turn when Nesta jests about combining Illyrian and Valkyrie techniques—a remark that resonates unexpectedly, as if tapping into a larger destiny. Cassian, Azriel, and the others seem struck by the idea, hinting at a potential fusion of old and new traditions. Cassian agrees to explore Valkyrie methods further, with Gwyn offering to share research from Merrill's manuscript. The chapter closes with a sense of anticipation, as Cassian's enthusiasm for this new direction reignites the group's energy.

Later, at dinner with Feyre, Cassian discusses Nesta's Valkyrie-inspired journey, though the conversation is cut short. The chapter weaves together themes of legacy, sacrifice, and renewal, highlighting Nesta's growing identity as a leader and Cassian's role as both mentor and lover. The blend of personal and historical stakes sets the

stage for future developments in their training and relationships.

