

# Chapter One

Cassian, a battle-hardened warrior, hesitates outside Nesta's dilapidated apartment in Velaris, conflicted by his mission to fetch her for Feyre. Despite his combat experience, he finds himself unnerved by the prospect of facing Nesta, who lives in a rundown building despite having better options. The tension is palpable as he knocks, bracing himself for her reaction, his body instinctively falling into a defensive stance. The door opens to reveal Nesta, disheveled and hostile, her appearance reflecting a year of evident struggle and self-destruction.

Nesta's sharp demeanor and worn appearance immediately set the tone for their strained interaction. She questions Cassian's presence, her suspicion and defiance clear as she resists his request to accompany him. The dynamic between them is charged, with Cassian toeing the line between irritation and restraint, aware that his task requires diplomacy. Nesta's refusal to conform or show vulnerability underscores her isolation, even from her own sister, Feyre, the High Lady of the Night Court.

The chapter delves into the fractured relationship between Nesta and those around her, particularly Cassian. Their exchanges are laced with unresolved tension, hinting at past conflicts and unspoken grievances. Cassian's internal monologue reveals his frustration and concern, while Nesta's cold detachment suggests deep-seated pain. The brief mention of their last encounter at a party highlights her withdrawal from social circles and the ripple effects of her behavior on others, like Amren.

As Cassian relays Feyre's summons, Nesta's skepticism and anger flare, especially when she realizes she's expected to prepare for the meeting. The chapter ends on a cliffhanger, with Nesta's explosive reaction implied but not yet fully revealed. The scene encapsulates the themes of estrangement, pride, and the struggle for connection, setting the stage for further confrontation and potential resolution in the narrative.