

Chapter Twenty-Four

Cassian visits the library's high priestess, Clotho, who communicates through an enchanted pen. He reflects on her resilience and the sanctuary the library provides for traumatized females, drawing parallels to his mother's suffering. Clotho reveals her frustration with Nesta, who has been practicing combat moves in the library despite repeated warnings. Cassian is amused but agrees to address the issue, acknowledging Nesta's stubbornness while respecting the library's sacred role as a safe space.

The chapter delves into Nesta's relentless training, highlighting her determination to overcome her perceived weakness. Cassian observes her progress, noting how she internalizes the combat techniques with focused repetition. Her passion for the physicality of fighting is evident, as she finds a sense of alignment and purpose in the movements. Clotho's complaint underscores Nesta's defiance, but Cassian recognizes her drive as a reflection of her fierce independence.

As Cassian descends to confront Nesta, he reflects on Clotho's praise of his earned title as a lord, which deeply moves him. He finds Nesta in the stacks, practicing punches with precision, and critiques her form. Their exchange reveals her frustration with her past vulnerability and her resolve to never rely on others for protection again. Cassian's tone shifts from reprimand to admiration as he engages with her fiery determination.

The chapter ends with a charged interaction between Cassian and Nesta, blending tension with mutual respect. Her defiance of Clotho's rules mirrors her broader rejection of limitations, while Cassian's willingness to challenge her reflects their complex dynamic. The scene sets the stage for further development in their relationship, balancing conflict with an undercurrent of unspoken understanding and shared purpose.