

Chapter 14: Rhysand

The chapter opens with Rhysand reflecting on the slow reconstruction of Velaris, particularly along the Sidra River, where Hybern's forces caused the most destruction. The once-grand estates now lie in ruins, their gardens overgrown and boathouses partially submerged. Rhysand recalls his childhood memories of these homes, filled with parties and summer boat races, and laments their unexpected demise. The families who once lived there have no immediate plans to return, with some considering selling their properties rather than rebuilding.

Mor joins Rhysand for a walk through the snow-dusted ruins, marking a rare moment of solitude between them. Their relationship remains strained, with unspoken tensions lingering from the war and past traumas. Rhysand observes the emotional toll on Mor, particularly after her recent encounters with her father, Keir, and Eris. He acknowledges her pain but respects her autonomy, recognizing that some wounds are hers alone to address.

The conversation shifts to Keir's impending visit to Velaris, a prospect that fills Mor with dread. Rhysand reveals that Keir is likely to arrive in spring, and while he offers to shield Mor from the encounter, she refuses to hide. Rhysand reassures her of his support and mentions that Cassian and Azriel have been preparing extensive security measures. Despite the tension, their dialogue reveals a deep mutual trust and understanding.

The chapter concludes with a lighter moment as they discuss Solstice preparations and gifts, including Rhysand's mysterious present for Feyre. Mor's brief laughter and their shared banter provide a respite from the heavier themes, highlighting the enduring bond between them. The interplay of past trauma, present challenges, and fleeting moments of warmth encapsulates the complex dynamics of their relationship.