

Chapter Fifty-Nine

The chapter opens with Nesta waking in Cassian's arms, savoring the warmth and contentment of their intimate connection. Their morning begins with tender caresses that quickly escalate into passionate lovemaking, unhurried and thorough. As dawn breaks, they share a quiet moment, with Nesta tracing the contours of Cassian's body, murmuring a soft "good morning." However, their tranquility is abruptly interrupted when Cassian realizes he's late for an annual snowball fight with Rhys and Azriel, a centuries-old tradition he takes seriously. Despite Nesta's amused disbelief at the idea of fearsome warriors engaging in such a playful rivalry, Cassian rushes off, leaving her without even a farewell kiss.

Three days pass without word from Cassian, leaving Nesta restless and consumed by longing. Azriel replaces him in training, remaining distant and offering no updates beyond a vague "soon." Nesta's physical and emotional need for Cassian becomes overwhelming, driving her to seek solace in self-pleasure, though it leaves her unsatisfied. Her thoughts spiral as she questions the intensity of her attachment, wondering if it's normal to feel so consumed by another person. Meanwhile, she throws herself into Valkyrie training, using the grueling sprints to distract from her inner turmoil.

Seeking companionship, Nesta invites Emerie and Gwyn to spend the night at the House of Wind for a "read-in." The trio settles into the private library, where Emerie teasingly remarks on Nesta's obvious distress over Cassian's absence, attributing it to his prowess in bed. Nesta deflects with humor, though her memories of their intimacy betray her feelings. The lighthearted banter is interrupted by Gwyn's arrival, her cautious demeanor contrasting with the cozy atmosphere Nesta has arranged. The House has prepared cots and blankets, creating a makeshift sleepover space for the three women.

As the chapter closes, the focus shifts to the budding camaraderie among Nesta, Emerie, and Gwyn. Their shared evening hints at deeper bonds forming, offering Nesta a respite from her preoccupation with Cassian. Yet, beneath the surface, her longing for him lingers, underscoring the chapter's exploration of love, desire, and the struggle to balance personal growth with emotional vulnerability. The juxtaposition of playful moments and Nesta's inner turmoil highlights her complex journey toward self-acceptance and connection.

