

Chapter Twenty-Two

Cassian and Azriel discuss Nesta's potential to locate the Dread Trove, with Cassian expressing concern for her safety while acknowledging her determination to protect her sister, Elain. Azriel suggests Nesta should attempt scrying to locate the Trove, but Cassian resists, knowing her volatile state and the trauma from her last scrying attempt, which resulted in Elain's abduction by the Cauldron. Their conversation reveals Cassian's admiration for Nesta's courage, even as he grapples with the risks she faces. The dynamic between the two warriors underscores their shared history and unspoken understanding of each other's roles and boundaries.

The chapter delves into the camaraderie and unspoken rules between Cassian, Azriel, and their inner circle, symbolized by their designated chairs in the sitting room. Cassian reflects on Nesta's lingering powers and the unresolved tension between them, particularly after their recent intimate encounter. Azriel's probing questions about Nesta's abilities hint at his own awareness of her potential, possibly gleaned from his shadows. The dialogue highlights Cassian's protective instincts and his struggle to balance his duty with his personal feelings for Nesta, who remains a wildcard in their mission.

The conversation shifts to Rhysand and Feyre's impending parenthood, with both Cassian and Azriel expressing joy at the prospect of becoming uncles. Cassian muses on the unpredictability of the High Lord's magic in choosing an heir, emphasizing that the child's inherent worth lies beyond power or lineage. Azriel's reserved response to questions about his own desire for children hints at his unresolved feelings for Mor, though Cassian notes a recent shift in their dynamic. The exchange reveals Cassian's longing for a family of his own, tied to the hope of finding a mate who would inspire the same devotion he witnesses in Rhys and Feyre.

Cassian's restlessness culminates in his decision to seek out Nesta, driven by a need to address the unresolved tension between them. His departure underscores his impulsive nature and determination to regain control, both emotionally and physically. The chapter ends with Nesta reading in bed, leaving their impending confrontation unresolved. The narrative weaves together themes of loyalty, love, and the complexities of personal relationships against the backdrop of their larger mission, setting the stage for further development in their intertwined fates.

