

## Chapter 3: Cassian

Cassian begins the chapter grappling with his frustration and simmering anger towards Devlon and his warriors, illustrating the tense atmosphere among the Illyrian fighters. Instead of engaging in immediate conflict, he chooses to wait for Rhys to leave before disappearing himself, revealing his strategic restraint. His preferred method of movement—flying—is highlighted, contrasting with Rhys's winnowing and Azriel's seemingly effortless ability to move unseen. Cassian's pride in his physicality and his wings underscores his warrior identity, and his deliberate display of strength emphasizes his readiness for battle while maintaining control over his emotions.

The narrative then shifts to Cassian's flight across the mountainous terrain of Illyria, emphasizing the brutal and dangerous environment they inhabit. The cold wind and snowy peaks evoke a sense of isolation and foreboding, hinting at the lurking dangers beneath the mountain's surface. Cassian's familiarity with the terrain and his instinctual navigation reflect his deep connection to his homeland. His thoughts reveal a layered understanding of the threats in these mountains, not only from the Illyrians but also from the ancient, hidden predators that stalk the wilderness, emphasizing the perilous nature of their environment and the constant vigilance required.

As Cassian approaches Ramiel, the sacred mountain, the chapter explores its significance as the spiritual and cultural heart of the Illyrian people and the Night Court. The mountain's ancient and watchful presence symbolizes strength, tradition, and the harshness of their world. The description of the Blood Rite—a brutal, year-round test for Illyrian warriors—underscores the harshness of their society, where strength and endurance are paramount. Cassian's memories of scaling Ramiel with Rhys and Azriel after their victory in the Rite serve as a reminder of their shared history and the ongoing importance of these rites in maintaining Illyrian identity and hierarchy.

The chapter concludes with reflections on the purpose of the Blood Rite and the underlying tensions within the Illyrian community. While some see it as a pointless bloodshed, others view it as a necessary outlet for their aggressive nature and internal conflicts. Rhys's perspective highlights the potential for the Rite to serve as a means of peace, if only temporarily, by channeling their violence into a structured challenge. Cassian's awareness of the fragile peace and the external threats facing their society underscores the importance of unity and tradition. The imagery of Ramiel, eternal and majestic, reinforces the enduring legacy and resilience of the Illyrian warriors and their culture.



Summaryer