

Chapter 16: Rhysand

The chapter opens with Cassian and Azriel settling into a small bedroom in Rhysand's townhouse for the Solstice celebrations. Cassian humorously defends bringing weapons as gifts, contrasting them with the jewelry females might bring, sparking playful banter among the brothers. The cramped accommodations highlight their lower priority in the household hierarchy, with Mor and Elain occupying better rooms. The conversation shifts to Lucien's potential arrival, with Cassian teasingly suggesting a wager, which Azriel declines on ethical grounds, referencing past bets about Cassian's injured wings.

Rhysand reflects on the earlier meeting with Illyrian commanders, where Devlon presented a training schedule for girls—a small victory amid ongoing tensions. Azriel and Rhysand withhold full details about brewing unrest in the Illyrian camps to spare Cassian stress during the holiday. The chapter underscores Cassian's strained relationship with his people, who still challenge his authority despite centuries of leadership. The brothers' camaraderie shines through their teasing, particularly about the child-sized beds, which Rhysand jokingly attributes to their "Illyrian baby" tendencies.

Pride swells in Rhysand as he recalls Feyre's progress in flying, a testament to her determination. The lighthearted mood continues with Cassian complaining about the House of Wind's boredom, prompting Rhysand to suggest he get his own place in Velaris. Cassian dismisses the idea, content with a simple room, though he mockingly laments Azriel's shadowy disappearances. The exchange reveals their deep bond and Cassian's preference for companionship over luxury.

Beneath the humor, undercurrents of unresolved conflict linger. Rhysand worries about a potential Illyrian revolt and its emotional toll on Cassian, who yearns for acceptance from his people. The chapter balances festive preparations with hints of future strife,

ending on a note of reluctant postponement—problems to address "after Solstice." The blend of brotherly dynamics, political tension, and seasonal cheer creates a rich, layered narrative.

