

Chapter 20: Feyre

The chapter opens with Feyre and Nesta facing each other across a threshold, the tension palpable as snow clings to Nesta's hair. Despite the festive atmosphere inside, Nesta hesitates, her cold demeanor mirroring the winter night. Feyre attempts to bridge the gap by offering to take her coat, while Elain intervenes with a cheerful invitation to join by the fire. Nesta's wary gaze lingers on Feyre before she finally steps inside, marking a fragile moment of connection between the sisters.

Inside the sitting room, the group's forced conversation highlights their unease around Nesta. Cassian's relaxed posture contrasts with his watchful attention as Nesta enters, while Amren's blunt remark about Nesta's appearance sparks a brief but tense exchange. Nesta's subtle smile at Amren's earrings momentarily diffuses the tension, revealing a glimmer of her former self. The absence of gifts for Nesta underscores her strained relationship with the group, though Elain's quick thinking presents her with a box of novels, a gesture that elicits a stiff but genuine thanks.

The chapter shifts focus to the group's Solstice celebrations, with Mor gifting Azriel embroidered towels and Cassian receiving red silk undershorts, lightening the mood. Feyre observes these interactions from the doorway, torn between her concern for Nesta and the need to maintain the festive spirit. Rhysand's deliberate change of topic to Summer Court celebrations provides a temporary distraction, while Feyre distributes her own thoughtful gifts, including a puzzle carrier for Amren and a gardening cloak for Elain, showcasing her attention to their individual preferences.

The chapter closes with Feyre preparing to present paintings to Cassian, Azriel, and Mor, hinting at deeper connections and unspoken emotions. Nesta's presence lingers in the background, her isolation and tentative steps toward reconciliation remaining a central theme. The juxtaposition of festive joy and underlying tension captures the complexity of family dynamics, leaving the reader with a sense of both hope and

unresolved conflict as the Solstice gathering continues.

