

## ***A Court of Thorns and Roses Recap***

**\*This recap contains spoilers and references to other ACOTAR/ToG/CC books– beware\***

### **Chapters 1-3: The Girl Who Killed Wolf**

We meet Feyre as she hunts in the snowy woods for food. She lives in a two-room cottage with her two older sisters, Nesta and Elain, and their father. They once lived in a manor with servants, but three years after their mother died, they were forced to leave the manor as the result of a bad investment by her father. Feyre notices the resentment Nesta harbors against their father (this Petty Queen™ even leaves his cane out of reach; absolute stone cold move). They've been living in the cottage for eight years now, the last five of which have been fairly destitute. Feyre's hunting is their main source of food. She's a Skinny Legend™ (from the whole starvation thing) with an ass that won't quit. On a winter's day hunt, she's about to shoot a deer when she spots an unusually large wolf. Definitely not suspicious! She shoots an iron-tipped ash arrow into its flank and a normal arrow into its eye to kill it (note: there are some theories out there that rely on the fact that Tamlin can shapeshift others so hard that they remain shifted after death). She skins the totally normal, run-of-the-mill wolf, and hikes the deer carcass back to her useless family.

When Feyre enters the cottage, Elain has the gaul and stupidity to ask "where did you get that". Nesta's snippy. A real one-two combo from the Archeron sisters that don't have main character energy yet. Feyre would like nothing more than for her two sisters to be married off so she can feed fewer mouths and buy some paint. Feyre is aiming so, so, painfully low in life (relatable). The cottage is peppered with the evidence of the last time Feyre bought paint: flowers along the walls and table, and the three dresser drawers the sisters share (flowers on Elain's drawer, flames on Nesta's, and the night sky on Feyre's). Feyre butchers and cooks the deer (can someone please HELP HER). Nesta does the bare minimum by chopping wood early next morning, but probably just to get on Feyre's good side when she has money to spend from selling the pelts. The three sisters head to town where they encounter some cultists from Children of the Blessed, who worship the High Fae.

The High Fae live on the other side of an invisible wall in Prythian. They were once the overlords of mortals with whose labor they built vast cities and civilizations. Many years ago (later math suggests five hundred), six mortal queens stood against the Fae and signed a treaty. This treaty divided the continent into the Northern territory of Prythian for the Fae and faeries, leaving the south for the mortals. The mortals in the south all know the Fae/faeries exist, but they believe them to be monstrous beings who eat mortals for breakfast. Feyre reflects on stories of the High Fae, remarking "one of the High Fae could turn your bones to dust from a hundred yards away" (Feyre, this is your man). Instances of faeries crossing the invisible wall and wreaking havoc have risen in the last fifty years (so since around the time Amarantha threw the worst masquerade party ever).

Feyre sells the deer and wolf pelts to a mercenary for more money than she'd dared hope. The mercenary is a "mountain of a woman" with dark, chin-length hair and very dark brown/black eyes. She's got scars everywhere, including some especially badass blackened veins on her lower leg. She tells Feyre to stay away from the wall and to go south if she can. Feyre gives Elain and Nesta some money and hurries off to literally roll in the hay with her fuck buddy Isaac Hale. Nesta teases her about it, but also, Nesta thinks she's in love with this dude Tomas, the second son of a woodcutter (that sounds like some medieval insult). Nesta is not in love with this man.

Feyre arrives back at the cottage and makes dinner. Just as she's about to broach the subject of Tomas being too poor to want to marry Nesta (ouch), a Beast™ bursts through the cottage door.

### **Chapters 4-6: Get In Loser, We're Going to Prythian**

Tamlin's beast form is roughly the size of a horse, with a feline body and wolfish head. He has elk-like antlers, long black claws, and huge yellow fangs. He has come to enact a part of the Treaty, whereby mortals who attack faeries unprovoked owe their lives to Prythian (sounds totally legit and legally airtight). He explains that

since Feyre killed the wolf faerie without cause, she can either come to live out her life in Prythian or be disemboweled. Feyre, though she may be illiterate, ain't stupid. She agrees to go with him. Nesta, protecting Elain with her body, says nothing. Elain weeps and mouths Feyre's name. It is Feyre's father who speaks up, first telling her to go, then begging her to be spared, then again urging her to go. He says that she was "always too good for here" like right in front of his other two kids Imao. Feyre tells Nesta she shouldn't marry Tomas because his dad is a wifebeater and the sons don't do anything about it. Feyre, at the behest of her father, exits the cottage with the Beast™.

A pale white mare awaits Feyre at the woods' edge. She hops on the fancy saddle, and they begin the journey across the wall, which Feyre thinks should take two days. We learn that not just this continent, but this whole world is divided North/South for Faeries/Mortals. Prythian is divided into sevenths and ruled by seven High Lords. She tries to ask The Beast™ his name and like wtf he is, but Feyre smells metallic air and passes tf out.

Feyre awakes in invisible bonds as they enter the Spring Court (though Feyre doesn't know this is the Spring Court). She is in awe of the beauty and warm weather, though she finds the utter silence unnerving. She considers running when The Beast™ bounds up the stairs ahead, but she is a starving human teenager and thinks better of it. She enters the alabaster stone estate and is guided to a room with a long table of food. Feyre is still under the silly human notion that 1) faeries cannot lie and 2) eating faerie food is signing your own death warrant. Despite literally starving to death, she refuses the food. The Beast™ shifts into his human form, and Feyre realizes he is a High Fae (lol girl just wait). He's got long golden hair, a strong jaw, and a golden emerald mask obscuring the top half of his face. We meet Lucien, another High Fae with long red hair, a fox mask, and a magical golden eye set into his scarred face. He is a courtier and emissary. The wolf's name was Andras, and Lucien clearly doesn't think Feyre is worth as much as Andras. Alis whisks Feyre to her room to get her washed up. Feyre hears some of the conversation as she leaves: Andras was sent beyond the wall, and Lucien thinks they should just "take a stand" against someone and also just kill Feyre rather than let her become a burden. Tamlin says no to the stand, and no to killing Feyre because "her life in that hovel was Hell enough" lol.

Feyre refuses the fancy dress Alis lays out for her after her bath, instead donning a slightly more sensible trouser-tunic combo. Alis warns her to keep her guard up and her mouth shut. She says others beside Lucien are going to be upset about Andras, but they shouldn't bother her if she keeps her head down. Alis encourages Feyre to be a dick to Lucien though because someone should give him a taste of his own medicine lol.

### **Chapters 7-11: Maybe He's Not Such A Heinous Beast After All**

Feyre returns to the dining room and again refuses to eat the food. Tamlin (she finally learns his name after Lucien says it) clumsily compliments her and serves her food (which he says is a great honor). Feyre is relieved to hear from Tamlin that she is not enslaved and that her family is "alive and well-cared for" but only if she remains on this side of the wall in Prythian. She finally eats, and Lucien teases her about why she seems to hate being in the company of two High Fae Hotties™ when human men are uggos. Lucien asks if she's in love with anyone (girl this is sus as hell), and she truthfully answers no. Feyre heads to bed and sets up a snare to alert her of intruders in the night.

Alis falls victim to the snare the next morning, and Feyre profusely apologizes. Feyre reflects on her plain human face in the mirror, revealing that she has her mother's nose but her father's "soft mouth" (literally what does this mean lol gross). Alis suggests Feyre take a turn about the garden. On her way out, she runs into Tamlin, who offers to take her on a tour of the estate. She refuses, but she gets some useful information from him. When asked why he sent Andras beyond the wall that day, Tamlin says there is a great blight in Prythian. Andras was sent to find a cure for this magical disturbance (HMMM). Tamlin asks if the tripwire was for him, seemingly offended. Feyre's walk in the gardens is largely uneventful, but she swears she hears giggling and sees a flash of light just as Alis calls her in for lunch.

At dinner, Feyre steals a steak knife and honestly believes neither of the High Fae sitting at the table with her notice (what can you expect from an illiterate teen). Lucien asks who old Feyre is, and we learn that she is

nineteen. Tamlin asks an interesting, pointed question, "Didn't... didn't your mother ever tell you anything about us?" This could be a general "didn't your mom ever tell you stories about the Fae" or it could mean Mama Archeron has some secret history here. (Indeed, when Feyre tells him that her mother died of Typhus when she was eight, Tamlin seems genuinely stricken, as though he knew Mama Archeron personally...? Idk this is probably a stretch, but it caught my eye this time.)

Anyway, the next day, Feyre resolves to spend some time buttering up Lucien so that maybe he'll speak on her behalf to Tamlin and get her out of Prythian. Tamlin again runs into her on her way out of the estate, offering again to show her around. Feyre says she'd rather be alone and bee-lines it to the stables, where Alis said Lucien might be this morning. Lucien invites her on patrol with him, hoping to see some of her hunting skills in action (he is patronizing her). Lucien pretty quickly cuts to the chase, guessing exactly why Feyre sought him out. He says there is truly no loophole, and she's really stuck here. Feyre gets a few zingers in, and even accidentally gets some info: she asks about the rest of the court, and Lucien is like "WHO TOLD YOU" which really gives away more than what Feyre was asking. He also mentions a "her" that he's afraid of knowing he's talking to Feyre about the masquerade ball. Feyre files those tidbits away for later. She also learns that Tamlin can not only shape-shift himself but others as well, though he limits this to just his sentries. Lucien confesses he has no special affinity. He mentions the Suriel (High Leader of the Tea Court).

They then encounter the Bogge, a monster that remains theoretical, begging you to look upon it, until you actually look at it, thus making it real. Lucien warns her not to react at all and to stare straight ahead. They go back to razzing each other after the Bogge retreats (wee-woo "prick" alert). They return to find Tamlin sitting at the table, and Feyre realizes the optics of her having refused his tour to be alone and then returning from a hunt with Lucien Imao. Tamlin looks peeved but then PISSED when Lucien mentions there was a Bogge on the grounds. He zoomies off all angry as Lucien explains that Tamlin is powerful enough to actually kill that thing. Feyre swoons internally. She returns to her room for the night and keeps watch for Tamlin's return from her window. She sees a man emerge from the hedges, only it isn't Tamlin. It's Papa Archeron (but girl, is it?).

Feyre is shocked and touched that her father would come for her. She packs some extra clothes and her stolen steak knife and climbs out the window. She's made it most of the way to the woods when Tamlin intercepts her. He points out that whatever she thinks is her father is some lesser faerie (a puca) that uses your inner desires to lure you away and eat you. Feyre feels stupid for every thinking her father would come for her (aw fuck that makes ACOWAR real fucking sad already). Feyre tells Tamlin of her promise to her mother to take care of her family. Tamlin tells her that her promise has been fulfilled, and she finally accepts that they really are being taken care of. Tamlin tells her that the "blight" has weakened the boundaries between courts and allowed the more dangerous faeries to wander into lands they normally do not occupy. After speaking to Lucien about Tamlin's responsibilities to keep the lands from being overrun with these faeries, Feyre begins to appreciate how isolating it must be to be Tamlin (aaaand so it begins).

After having a nightmare about killing Andras, Feyre wanders about the manor and makes a map, or makes the best map she can, being an illiterate teen. Tamlin returns in beast form, bloodied after killing the Bogge. Feyre offers to help bandage his hand, which has not already healed like the rest of his wounds. Their hands touch (ugh).

### **Chapters 12-13: Having Fun Isn't Hard When You've Got A Library Card**

The next morning, Feyre tries to eavesdrop on a conversation between Lucien and Tamlin. Lucien says there's not much time, and yet Tamlin is just sulking around his manor. Tamlin says he can't stomach it, not after what his father did to their lands. Lucien says for someone with a heart of stone (!! ) Tamlin sure is being a softie. They hear Feyre, and she covers by asking Lucien to go out for a ride. He declines, but offers Tamlin's time instead. Feyre admits she doesn't want to go hunting because she doesn't actually like it. She asks to see the study instead. Tamlin leads her to a giant ass library. Tamlin says that "the Bogge's bite was crafted to slow the healing of High Fae" (that language reminds me of the Asteri breeding programs in CC. Might not be anything, idk). Feyre spends the day in solitude trying to learn how to read and write so that she can send a letter to her

family to warn them of the blight that might spread. She comes back the next morning to study some more and takes a quick break to admire a large mural that tells the history of these lands. She sees female hands tipping a cauldron within an endless night sky to create the world. There is some ancient faerie language within the bubbling liquid (wyrdmarks?). She sees the bloody war that decimated the human population and the division of the lands into Northern Fae territory and Southern mortal territory. Prythian was luckier than other continents in that the mortals only took a small chunk of land. She sees a map of the seven Fae lands of Prythian (Spring, Summer, Winter, Autumn, Dawn, Day, and Night Courts) and realizes she is in the Spring Court. She notes the mountain in the center of Prythian from which it seems all was created, as though the liquid from the cauldron touched there first and flowed outward (this is where Under the Mountain is). She gets back to the faerie equivalent of *The Hungry Caterpillar*, only to be interrupted by Tamlin offering to help her. Feyre feels embarrassed, a feeling not helped by Tamlin calling her illiteracy a “shortcoming.” She bolts from the study in shame.

Feyre returns to the study later in the day, and reflects on how much information Tamlin, Lucien, and Alis seem to be keeping from her (lol she has no idea). She resolves to trap a Suriel and get some goddamned answers. She seeks out Lucien, who tells her where to find a Suriel (near young birch trees), how to trap it (freshly slaughtered chicken and a snare), and how to escape it (it won't cross running water). He lends her a nice hunting blade and says he'll be close by to hear any scream for help.

### **Chapters 14-15: An Afternoon At The Tea Court**

Feyre sets out to convene with the Tea Court. She plans a route to running water and sets her snare deep in the woods. After a while, the Suriel falls into the trap (wee-woo: watery bowel alert), and Feyre can begin her questioning. She asks if there is truly no way for her to return home, to which the Suriel replies she must stay here if she wants to keep herself and her family alive. She learns Tamlin is the High Lord of the Spring Court (duh). She learns the Suriel is “older than the High Lords... older than the bones of this world.” The Suriel tells her to “stay with the High Lord, human. That's all you can do. You will be safe. Do not interfere; do not go looking for answers after today, or you will be devoured by the shadow over Prythian. He will shield you from it, so stay close to him, and all will be righted.” (The Suriel might mean to stay with Rhys, or they might mean that by staying with Tamlin and falling in love with him, the curse will be broken). The Suriel also says “it is too late, human— for the High Lord, for you, perhaps for your realm as well...” The Suriel warns her of the King of Hybern who dispatched his nasty underlings to infiltrate other realms a hundred years ago. Fifty years ago, “one of his commanders betrayed him. The Deceiver. And—” They are interrupted by four hungry naga.

Feyre looses one arrow to free the Suriel as she screams to enlist Lucien's aid. She manages to kill one naga before fucking legging it toward her planned stream exit. The running water does not stop the naga. They eventually corner her, and she picks one more off before Tamlin in Beast Mode™ disembowels the remaining two. He seems genuinely concerned about her well-being (a LOW BAR), and they walk back to the manor together.

### **Chapters 16-19: There May Be Something There That Wasn't There Before**

Alis insists Feyre have a hot chocolate by the fire as she brushes out her clean wet hair. She scolds Feyre for trapping the Suriel (the kitchen staff obvi spilled the beans about the freshly slaughtered chickens Feyre requested). Feyre learns that Alis takes care of her murdered sister's children and that children of her kind are rare and slow-growing (they reach adulthood at 75, I can only imagine how long the awkward puberty phase lasts yikes). She tells Feyre that Lucien is a dummy for suggesting chickens when a brand new cloak is the true Suriel catnip.

At dinner, Lucien slyly apologizes for not getting to her fast enough. Feyre mentions the whole faeries can't lie thing, and the Boyz put her straight. Obviously, the faeries lied when they told the humans that long ago. Faeries aren't weak to iron, but they are susceptible to ash wood. Lucien excuses himself, and Tamlin asks Feyre why she was out in the woods. She confesses she was seeking the Suriel, leaving Lucien's part out of it. Tamlin is impressed she caught it. He asks her about that list of words she'd been keeping, reading off the first

few words, “unusual, queue, slaying (slayyyyre), conflagration,” thinking them to be a poem about murdering him lol. Feyre is embarrassed and makes to leave, but Tamlin remarks that her family are idiots for not seeing how much she loves them. For not seeing how much she sacrificed for them. Tamlin reveals that faeries fought on the side of the mortals in the War, that many of them stood against their own kind to protect the dignity and sovereignty of mortals. Tamlin was a child at the time of the War (ok so since the War was five hundred years ago- half of five hundred plus seven... yea Feyre is WAY too young for him lol). Tamlin also reveals that he glamourised her family’s memories so they think some rich aunt took Feyre in and gave them money. They will also instinctively flee south at the first sign of trouble. Feyre’s like “bruh my dad would never drag his ass up here for me” and Tamlin’s like “hmm I got the vibe he would” (it pains me to say that Tamlin is right). Feyre requests painting supplies, and Tamlin is eager to oblige. He says he’ll show her the gallery soon. Feyre swoons.

Feyre has disturbing dreams about Andras and a new scene of a pale woman with red fingernails slitting her throat while asking her name (this is totally random, and not foreshadowing at all). Feyre awakes to someone screaming irl, and she rushes downstairs to find Tamlin carrying a gravely wounded lesser faerie while Lucien clears the table. The faerie has blue skin and stumps where wings used to be before being sawed off. “She took my wings,” he keeps repeating, again referencing this mysterious woman. Lucien dips, unable to bear the sight, but Feyre holds the faerie’s hand and strokes his hair. Tamlin explains his weakened magic cannot heal such grave wounds anymore (I believe some have cited this as potential evidence for the theory that he helped Rhysand’s sister and/or mother escape as well, that he may have cut off their wings, healed them, but kept the wings as evidence they were dead). Tamlin eventually leads Feyre upstairs, long after the faerie actually died. He is touched but confused by her mercy. Feyre explains how sorry she feels about Andras, and that every living creature deserves to die with dignity. Tamlin insists that he alone go bury the faerie.

Feyre comes downstairs the next morning to find Lucien and Tamlin in the hall. Lucien immediately makes himself scarce, noted by Feyre. Tamlin says his High Lord Business was postponed and that he and Lucien would like to take Feyre to see something. They all hop on horses and head out to a picturesque glen. They sit atop a grassy knoll (do we know where Tamlin was November 22, 1963?) and Feyre lets loose a few jokes, much to the delight of the Boyz. Tamlin brings her to a pool filled with starlight. Tamlin explains Lucien’s backstory: Lucien is the youngest of seven brothers, the strongest of whom would become the next High Lord of the Autumn Court (all courts work this way; birth order doesn’t matter). His brothers were literally cutthroat about everything. Lucien didn’t give a shit about being High Lord, so he partied and traveled (making friends with Tamlin along the way). He also met a young lesser faerie and fell in love, sure the mating bond would snap in place (first mention of mating bond! Too bad Feyre doesn’t take the bait and ask). Lucien’s father made two of his brothers hold him down while this girl was executed in front of him. Lucien renounced his title and fled to the Spring Court. Three of his brothers pursued him, but Lucien killed one and Tamlin killed another, being a High Lord at this point and within his rights to kill trespassers. Tamlin named Lucien emissary to officially bring him into his Court.

Anyway, Feyre strips down and dives into the starlight pool. Tamlin follows, sending their situation in a decidedly steamy direction. Things don’t get *too* steamy though, as Feyre talks about her father lol. He was known as the Prince of Merchants, a title inherited from his father and so on. By the time the title passed to him, the family fortune was tied up in debt. Feyre’s father took a gamble that did not pay off, sending the creditors after their family assets. They moved into the cottage, and three years later, after all the money dried up, Feyre started hunting (aged fourteen).

On the ride back, Lucien falls behind to talk to Feyre privately, and he more directly apologizes for being late to aid her. He confesses he hesitated, but after Tamlin told him the Feyre loosed her first arrow to save the Suriel and not herself, he felt especially guilty. It seems Feyre has at last earned his respect. He tells her to keep the hunting knife.

Tamlin shows Feyre the gallery. She falls on weeps at the sight of the Fae paintings, and Tamlin's like "woah humans like art?" Feyre's paint supplies arrive, and she goes into a trance for several weeks (Feyre, some of us can enjoy just one paint and stop). She remembers the advice of the Suriel to stay with the High Lord, and stay with the High Lord she does.

A spring breeze from the south reminds her that spring must be coming to her family's village. She gets really in her feels about her family forgetting her and stops painting. After sulking at dinner, she strolls in the garden, only to run into Tamlin. He explains the rose garden was a mating gift from his father to his mother (gross- imagine walking through a physical location your dad made for your mom because they had raw sexual chemistry). Feyre's too in her feels to take the mate bait, so she confesses that she's sad and angry because neither her sisters nor her father really tried to stop Tamlin from taking her away. Tamlin kisses her hand and tells her not to feel guilty for doing anything that brings her joy. Her human joy fascinates him (lol I would have slapped him). He almost kisses her cheek, then withdraws, saying "one day, there will be answers for everything. But not until the time is right. Until it's safe." Feyre is too busy swooning to ask a single question about this incredibly cryptic admission.

The next day, Tamlin follows Feyre into the woods and is ensnared by one of her traps. He frees himself easily. There's more tension. Tamlin wrote her naughty limericks using the list of words she'd written out. Feyre is truly in such a dark place if she doesn't get the ick here. Finally, Feyre asks about the concept of mates. Tamlin explains that mates are equals, matches in every way. Not many High Fae find mates. Marriage is insignificant in the face of the mating bond. We learn that Tamlin's father was a horrible dude, as he and his other sons kept slaves. His mother wasn't cruel, but she also didn't speak out against Tamlin's father. Tamlin never had any interest in being High Lord, so he trained in combat. If his brothers had suspected he'd ever grow as powerful as he did, they would have killed him as a child. Tamlin's family was murdered by "the High Lord of an enemy court," and Tamlin was spared "for whatever reason or Cauldron-granted luck." Tamlin only mourned his mother. When Tamlin became High Lord, many of his father's courtiers defected because they thought him more beast than High Lord. Feyre compliments Tamlin's High Lordiness, which only seems to further deflate him.

They reach the edge of the woods where faeries are gathering wood for bonfires yet to be lit. Tamlin explains they are for Calanmai (YEEEE), or "Fire Night," which is to be held in two days (YEEEE). Feyre explains that humans don't celebrate holidays. Tamlin says Calanmai is a ceremony based around a ritual that creates a bunch of magic for the next year. The ritual is "very faerie" (code for "primal fuckery"). Tamlin warns her not to engage with any visiting faeries and forbids her from attending the ritual.

Tamlin stiffens (not like that, but in sense of danger) and tells Feyre to stay hidden. He and Lucien converse with an invisible creature who speaks on behalf of "her." She wonders why Tamlin hasn't given up yet. She could destroy this whole estate easily. She is letting loose monsters as reminders of what will happen if Tamlin breaks the terms of some agreement. Lucien tells the thing to leave and to stay out of "the cave," which is not a common road for filth. It mentions that Tamlin has a heart of stone (!!), but in the moment, Feyre again takes this as a figure of speech. The thing leaves, and we learn it was the Attor, "myth given flesh." Tamlin tells Feyre to head back to the house. She follows orders.

### **Chapters 20-21: When Feyre Met Rhysand**

Calanmai is nigh (YEEE). Drumbeats echo from deep in the forest, and "a string tied to [Feyre's] gut pulled" her toward the sound of those drums (seems like a mating bond thing to me). Tamlin notices Feyre teetering on the edge of leaving as he himself heads out to perform the Great Rite, and again commands her to lock herself in her room for the night.

Feyre's resolve to stay lasts only until ten o'clock, at which point she slinks out of her room, out of the manor, and into the woods beyond. She finds her way to the bonfires and cave. The cave is lined with furs and firelight. As she beholds the scene preceding the Rite, three faeries grab her. They have nearly separated her from the crowd entirely when (drumroll please) "strong hands- warm and broad" lift her to her feet. A "deep

sensual male voice” says “There you are. I’ve been looking for you.” (YEEEE) The faeries scatter, and Feyre looks up to find “the most beautiful man [she’d] ever seen.” (YEEEE)

The stranger is clearly High Fae. He’s got short raven-black hair and eyes so blue they are violet (move over Elizabeth Taylor). Feyre swoons. She makes a pathetic attempt at lying to explain her presence, and he sees right through it. He offers to escort her somewhere safer, but she declines. She blurts out that he’s obviously not from the Spring Court, and wonders then why he is here. He says “because all the monsters have been let out of their cages tonight, no matter what court they belong to. So I may roam wherever I wish until the dawn.” An International Man of Mystery™. He leaves, and Lucien soon spots Feyre. He spirits her back to the manor (probably winnowing) and explains more precisely what the Great Rite is. Tamlin will be possessed by a great magic tonight, becoming the Hunter. He will seek the Maiden, a female to bed. Their coupling will release magic, supplanted by the coupling of other ritual goers. Lucien explains that now that Feyre has been near the cave, Tamlin will scent her and get big mad when he can’t find her. He says that Feyre wouldn’t want to encounter Tamlin in this form, as he’ll be absolutely juiced with magic, not exactly a gentle lover. He also mentions that all other High Lords do this in their court each year, though it’s not clear it’s on the same night or different holidays in different courts (was Lucien lying here?).

Feyre dozes until the drums stop at around two o’clock. She heads down to the kitchen to eat, since she didn’t eat dinner, and encounters Tamlin, still at least a little possessed by magic. He’s got body paint smeared in unmentionable places. He pins her up against a wall and scolds her for teasing him— he indeed could scent her but couldn’t find her. The magic made him pick another, but he wanted her. Feyre swoons. He bites her neck (sexy?) and orders her to never disobey him again (sexy?).

### **Chapters 22-24: In Hindsight, Red Flags Everywhere**

Feyre doesn’t sleep very well, as her encounter with Tamlin left her... unsatisfied. Her neck is bruised where Tamlin bit her, and instead of hiding it, she keeps her tunic collar unbuttoned to display it prominently. She hopes seeing it will make Tamlin feel bad. (Ah, just the kind of mind games that start off every healthy relationship!) She trots down to breakfast, and Lucien immediately takes the bait, asking her where she got the bruise. Tamlin admits he bit her, but blames Feyre for not staying in her room. He’s playful about it, but like, what a dick. Feyre storms off and paints lil piggies eating shit, which cheers her up. Too bad she also forgives him lol. Tamlin gives her a bouquet of white roses to apologize at dinner. (Ah, we love that he already has something to apologize for this early on!)

The next evening, Feyre decides to wear the slinky dress offered the first night she arrived. As she enters the dining room, Lucien takes the hint and bolts. Feyre makes a comment about how far apart she and Tamlin are, and Tamlin shrinks the table. It seems to take quite the effort to do so, which worries Feyre. Tamlin says she looks pretty (god, the bar is in hell). Feyre takes him by the hand and leads him to her painting room, which she keeps locked. Feyre intends to show him just one painting, one of the glen with the pool of starlight. Tamlin recognizes the subject matter, and goes around the room naming the inspiration for the other paintings as well. He takes a shining to her rendering of the snowy woods outside her old cottage, saying it reminds him of the solemn, lonely duty he has to take care of his lands, blah blah blah. It reminds him that he’s not the only one who feels that way (duh, literally talk to any woman who is a caregiver Jesus CHRIST).

The next day, Lucien again makes himself scarce while Tamlin takes Feyre to another glen; no pools of starlight here, but nonetheless pretty. He offers to remove the glamour that dulls her human senses to the beauty and magic of Prythian— in exchange for a kiss (smooth move). He removes the glamour, and Feyre hears the orchestra of birdsong and the melody of the weeping willow. She even sees Tamlin without his glamour- being High Lord makes you a magical hottie. He puts his glamour back on (but not the glamour over the lands and other faeries). Feyre guesses what she thinks he looks like behind the mask. She’s suddenly sleepy, which seems to alarm Tamlin. Instead of taking her back to the house, he spoons her in the grass (10/10 classy guy, making a move on a magically unconscious human five hundred years younger than him).

Feyre awakes to find a stranger in her room, only to discover it's Alis sans glamour. Alis doesn't look like a plump High Fae woman, but rather a squat woman with tree bark for skin. Feyre notices tons of faeries around the house and gardens. She asks Tamlin at breakfast when these new faeries arrived only to discover they've been here the whole time. She's mortified thinking about her Kronk from Emperor's New Groove style tiptoe through the garden when she thought she saw her father— there must have been so many witnesses lol. Feyre asks if she encounters the Attor again, will she see it? Tamlin confirms she would. Feyre then asks why the Attor didn't see her, and Tamlin says he threw a glamour over her to keep her invisible. He advises her that if she should ever see anything nasty like the naga or Attor, she should pretend she can't see them (uhh seems like bad advice?). Feyre wants to help this whole blight thing but Tamlin clearly is a big strong man who doesn't need help.

The next morning, Feyre finds a High Fae head on a spike in the garden. It's been branded behind the ear with a mountain and three stars. Tamlin reveals this is the Night Court insignia. He says the High Lord of the Night Court is a sadistic asshole who would think it funny to prove he could slip past Spring Court defenses like this (not a good look for the Night Court). Feyre reminds herself of the Suriel's warning to stay with the High Lord and she'd be safe. Tamlin reflects on when the human slaves were released from his father's court and sent south. He says they were happy to leave this place (duh). Feyre tries to console his sad boy energy by saying he never made her feel like a prisoner (GIRL you set up a snare in your room the first few nights? Already with the revisionist history?).

### **Chapters 25: Tamlin, Wine, and "Perfect" Snogging**

Tamlin is called away after the head incident and actually spends the night away. Lucien assures Feyre he's fine, but she's worried all night. The next day is the Summer Solstice, and Feyre awakens to the sound of fiddles and merriment. We learn that Alis is a urisk. Feyre paints some ribbons or whatever to pass the time. Tamlin returns, but before Feyre can greet him, Alis whisks her away to dress her up in a chiffon dress and flower crown. Feyre remarks how she's filled out from a few months of eating food (code: she's got boobies and booty now). Tamlin likey.

Feyre is invited to the Solstice festivities, as they are more tame than the Rite. The three head down to the party, but Tamlin and Lucien split off. Feyre finds some food and sits in solitude until Lucien joins her. Her warns her not to drink the faerie wine, but she does (we also get a flashback to a few weeks prior when Lucien let Feyre eat berries that made her trip balls because he thought it was funny – this is Night Court level razzing in the Spring Court, which angered Tamlin). Feyre is immediately fucking wasted from the faerie wine. She's like white lady on the lawn at a Fleetwood Mac cover band concert level wasted. Lucien is the mom friend trying to keep her from doing something stupid. It sounds embarrassing, but Tamlin, playing the fiddle, admires her dancing (or the fact that she's intoxicated, who's to say). Tamlin does a fiddle solo before joining her in dance. Hours later, he takes her to a clearing where the will-o'-the-wisps celebrate the solstice themselves with ethereal music and twinkle butts. They dance some more, they finally kiss on the mouth (ugh), and then they head to an overlook to watch the sun rise. They kiss again. This is the happiest Feyre has ever been (yet).

### **Chapter 26: Amarantha's Whore Plays 4D Chess**

That happy bubble is about to ~burst~. Over late breakfast the next morning, Feyre and Tamlin banter in a way that makes Lucien ask the Cauldron to spare him (me too, Lucien). Lucien interrupts the moment to inform Tamlin that the blight (this word is spoken pointedly, but Feyre fails to pick up on that) has killed two dozen younglings in the Winter Court. It burned through the magic within them then tore apart their minds. Yikes. Suddenly, Tamlin's claws shoot out as the house grows deadly silent. He instructs Lucien to take Feyre to the curtains. Lucien pins her behind his back, and Feyre guesses he's glamouring her and further masking her presence with his own magic. The tall, dark, and handsome stranger from Calanmai strides into the room. Tamlin addresses him as Rhysand (YEEE). Feyre says she'd never paint him (wrong, honey). Rhysand (Lucien calls him Rhys) remarks that it's interesting Tamlin has spent fifty years holed up in this estate with "no attempts to save [him]self or [his] lands." He mentions "Under the Mountain." He also says it's a pity that Tamlin



is so resigned to his “fate.” Lucien also calls Rhys Amarantha’s whore, which he does not deny. Rhys says Lucien’s mother is in perpetual mourning over losing him. Feyre puts two and two together and realizes that Rhys is the High Lord of the Night Court. Rhys goes to leave, saying Amarantha is already preparing for Tamlin’s arrival, and that he will be happy to report Tamlin is already broken enough to reconsider her previous offer. Before he leaves, he does the math of three place settings and two people. He sees through Lucien’s glamour, and Lucien tries to play Feyre off as his betrothed. Rhys mentions Lucien’s “common lover,” prompting Lucien to spit on the ground in Rhys’s direction. Rhys pries the knife Feyre took from the table from her hands with “horrific gentleness.” He wonders out loud why she’s here, and Feyre’s confusion prompts him to ask Tamlin if she knows about something. Tamlin is pissed. Rhys uses his powers to read Feyre’s mind, saying some choice thoughts about Tamlin aloud. Rhys says, “if it’s any consolation, she would have been the one for you— and you might have gotten away with it. A bit late, though. She’s more stubborn than you are.” Rhys lets go of Feyre’s mind and remarks that Amarantha will enjoy breaking her and making Tamlin watch (a warning). Rhys makes Tamlin and Lucien beg on the floor for him not to inform Amarantha of her existence, but he doesn’t promise anything (absolute baller move). Before he leaves, Rhys asks Feyre her name, and she says it’s Clare Beddor, a friend of her sisters’ whom she’s never met. (The only mention of her to this point was that Clare told Nesta that Tomas was going to propose to Nesta.) Rhys says he’s looking forward to seeing the three of them Under the Mountain and winnows away.

### **Chapters 27-29: Hit It and Quit It**

Tamlin has the super healthy response of ordering Feyre and Lucien out of the dining room so he can scream and break shit for a few hours. He comes to Feyre’s room a few hours later and apologizes. He then says he’s sending Feyre home. She doesn’t take it well, wondering if it’s because she’s so thorny (ayyy like the title of the book). Tamlin explains there are people that want to hurt her because of what she is to him and that the thought of her falling into their hands makes him sick. Feyre asks if it’s forever, and Tamlin lies to make her feel better. Then, they play hide the salami. After sleeping for a few hours, they have a rematch. Tamlin tells her to get some sleep, as she’ll be starting her long journey home tomorrow at dawn. As Feyre falls asleep, Tamlin says “I love you, thorns and all” (ayy like the title of the book).

Alis dresses Feyre in some frilly human dress and gives her a kurt goodbye: “Make the most of your freedom.” Lucien has some very interesting words to say to Feyre, but she doesn’t really react to them in the moment. He says, “I thought you were smarter than this” and asks Tamlin “You’re not even going to give her a few more days?” Feyre is too in her feels as she bequeaths all her paintings to Tamlin, climbs in the carriage, and says goodbye. Tamlin again says “I love you” as the carriage starts to pull away, but Feyre is unable to say it back, fearing that her admitting it would make her a burden to him.

Feyre almost immediately falls into a magical sleep and wakes as the carriage pulls up to a grand estate she’s never seen before. Human servants help her out of the carriage as her sisters come out to greet her. They don’t recognize her at first, but Elain is elated to see her. Feyre notices that Nesta seems as changed as herself in comparison to all the other humans present. Elain has fully drunk the glamour Kool-aid, believing Feyre to have returned from nursing a now dead Aunt Ripleigh. It seems Tamlin sent a metric fuckton of gold for her family to sustain themselves, disguised as investors giving money to her father. Her once dissociated and despondent father is now clear-eyed and doting on Elain again. Feyre remembers the only command from the Suriel, to stay with the High Lord. Whoops.

Tamlin also packed Feyre’s carriage with another metric fuckton of raw jewels under the guise of inheriting Aunt Ripleigh’s fortune. Tamlin must have also sent a healer of some sort to help her father’s “ruined leg”. We get it, Tamlin’s love language is acts of service (and biting). Elain confesses that the social season this year was weird. People acted like the whole family had been ill for eight years and not languishing in poverty mere miles away. Elain also divulges that Nesta tried to visit Feyre, much to Feyre’s surprise. Nesta was gone a week and returned because she said her carriage had been busted. Elain notices the glow about Feyre (this

word had me absolutely shitting myself in the first read because I thought we were already hitting the pregger trope) and asks if she met anyone, but Feyre denies it.

Over the next few days, Feyre marvels at Elain's natural kindness and ease with which she stepped out of poverty and destitution. Feyre visits the old cottage and again remarks how strong Elain is for seeing that place as a place of hope and shelter (is this a strength or a complete divorce from reality lol).

### **Chapters 30-31: They're In A Beddor Place Now**

Feyre distributes small pouches of money to the poor part of town. On her way back, she passes Isaac, walking arm-in-arm with a woman. Feyre genuinely wishes them well, giving Isaac a broad smile as they pass.

Feyre's father is throwing a ball in her honor in two days' time, but Feyre is having trouble staying busy enough to keep the shadows at bay. Nesta finds her in the garden and gets right to the fucking point. Nesta says this isn't Feyre's home anymore, that she belongs in Prythian. Nesta confesses the glamour didn't work on her at all, so she had to endure months of her father and Elain gaslighting her, completely alone in her mourning. To remind herself that she wasn't crazy, she held onto a splinter of painted wood that Tamlin's claws had dug out of the table. She hired the mercenary from the market to take her to the wall a week after Feyre was taken. They made it to the wall but couldn't find a way through. Nesta stopped seeing Tomas because she realized he wouldn't have gone with her to Prythian, and she's only interested in a ride-or-die. Nesta asks Feyre to tell her everything, and Feyre does. When she's caught her up, Nesta asks Feyre to teach her how to paint.

After a painting lesson, Feyre and Nesta encounter Elain and their father in the hallway. Nesta confesses to Feyre that she often wants to ask their father if he remembers how he almost let them starve for years. Feyre reminds Nesta she didn't do much to help, and Nesta says she hated Feyre for how she was able to provide for the family, but she mainly hated their father for not fucking doing anything. She'd already hated him for letting their mother die. As Nesta saw it, their father had so much at his disposal to find a cure, but he let her waste away instead. Nesta notes that Feyre would have done anything for Tamlin, and Feyre agrees.

The ball is... fine. Feyre sticks by Nesta, who does a great job of scaring everyone off. Elain is the belle of the ball. The next morning, Feyre's father causally remarks he's going to buy the Beddor land. Feyre asks what happened to them, and Elain explains that their house burned down with them inside. Clare's body was never found though. The fire happened the day before Feyre came home. Feyre and Nesta realize this was the same day she told Rhysand Clare's name. Fuck. Feyre announces that something bad is happening in Prythian. This seems to awaken Elain and her father from the glamour. Feyre and Nesta head upstairs to pack. Nesta tells Feyre that they don't need her here and that she shouldn't look back (but in a "I release you from any responsibility you feel for us" way and not in a "I hate you" way). Feyre tells Nesta that iron is useless but not ash. Feyre says there's a better world out there for Nesta, who turns down the hypothetical future invitation to Prythian, as she doesn't think she'd like the faeries much (girl, you're gonna put your hands on the headboard for one but okay). Feyre thinks Nesta is a stone cold bitch (in a good way) who could literally do anything she set her mind to (correct).

Elain says she remembers everything and has packed some food and supplies for Feyre's journey. Maybe this isn't significant, but Elain says, "I would have liked to see the continent with you, Feyre" and Feyre replies, "Maybe someday." (Perhaps in a future book, they'll go there together?) Feyre takes off on a horse and does not say goodbye to her father.

Feyre arrives at the wall, and it takes two days to find the mossy stone marked gate to pass through. Feyre pulls up to the Spring Court to find the estate in shambles. The iron gates have been ripped apart, and the entire house is covered in broken glass and blood. Tamlin and Lucien are nowhere to be found.

### **Chapter 32-33: Go Ask Alis**

As Feyre creeps around the destroyed manor trying to piece together what happened, she runs into Alis. And finally, we get the Info Dump™. Amarantha took Tamlin, Lucien, and the rest of his court Under the Mountain (UtM). Amarantha was the highest general under the King of Hybern during the War. She was brutal toward

humans before the War, but her hatred intensified when her sister Clythia fell in love with the human warrior Jurian. Jurian used Clythia and ultimately betrayed and butchered her. Amarantha retaliated with a hatred as bright as a thousand fucking suns. After the Treaty, Amarantha executed her slaves rather than freeing them (what a peach). Around four hundred years later, she came to Prythian with Hybernian goods and words of peaceful cooperation. For fifty years, she lived in Prythian with no court allegiance, sucking up to the High Lords. Forty nine years ago, she threw a party where she used a potion from the King of Hybern's book to steal most of all the High Lords' power. With their strength diminished, she took Prythian and named herself as High Queen within days. She wishes to use Prythian as a launching point to destroy the mortal lands. She has built herself a palace UtM. Alis says that Feyre could have been the one to stop her, to which Feyre is confused as shit. Amarantha cursed Tamlin because they had something of a history. Amarantha lusted for Tamlin in the years since the War, but he knew of her brutal reputation and avoided ever being near her. He sent Lucien to her on his behalf to get her to cool her tits, but she ripped out Lucien's eye (tits were not cooled).

After that incident, she threw a masquerade ball UtM to bury the hatchet, insisting Tamlin and his court come in masks to honor his shape-shifting gifts. She then stole all the High Lords' powers but said that peace would be won if Tamlin were her lover. Tamlin refused and specifically said that he'd rather marry a human than her and that her own sister had preferred the company of a human to her. She was pretty pissed, but she gave Tamlin a chance to break the (extremely specific) curse on him. After seven times seven years (for those of us with access to a supercomputer, that's forty-nine), he would *have* to join her UtM unless he found a human girl willing to marry him. BUT, that girl had to kill one of his own men sent beyond the wall, unprovoked, before she could be brought to Prythian to be courted. Also her name had to start with an "F" and end in "eyre" (ok, I made that part up). The whole thing about a life debt in the Treaty was total bullshit. Tamlin had sent Andras out that day *hoping* for him to be killed. Feyre feels for Tamlin having to send out his own men to break the curse (bruh what about Andras but okay). Specifically, this human girl had to say "I love you" to his face and mean it for the curse to be broken. Amarantha even set up the mask thing to blind human girls to Fae hotness. She also magically forbade anyone from telling the human girl about the curse. The lies about the blight were the best they could do. In the early years, Tamlin sent his men out in droves beyond the wall, but they kept getting killed not by single human females. He called it off and stuck to defending his territory from Amarantha's pests she sent his way.

The other High Lords UtM didn't just sit there and take it- three of them hatched a plot that got them killed by Amarantha. The High Lords of Day, Summer, and Winter tried to enlist the Children of the Blessed to get messages out to other Fae on the continent, but Amarantha caught them and killed them, along with the three High Lords. The High Lords who are more sycophantic can come and go from UtM more freely.

Alis's sister and her mate were killed in the Summer court invasion. Alis took the boys and headed to Spring, where Tamlin agreed to shield the boys. Alis joined his staff days before the masquerade ball (talk about shit timing). Alis says it's been difficult to watch Tamlin wrestle with the curse. He was morally opposed to trying to break it because making this girl come back to Prythian only to use her to free himself was akin to slavery. This past winter, he fucking lost it and started sending out sentries again. Three days later, Feyre killed Andras. Alis berates Feyre for not breaking the curse (okay girl, she was a starving human torn from her family, what did you fucking expect?). Tamlin sent her away three days before the deadline (idiot!).

The King of Hybern has not retaliated or made any reaction to Amarantha's seizure of Prythian. The more nasty faeries like the Attor flocked to her and comprise the army she'll eventually use to kill the humans.

Feyre resolves to go UtM, even if she is a weak lil bb, because if there's a chance she can break the curse, Tamlin at his full power could handedly beat Amarantha. She asks Alis to take her there.

Alis leads her to a cave not far from the manor, and Feyre realizes this must be the cave that Tamlin told the Attor and his ilk to stop abusing. Alis says it's an ancient shortcut to UtM (how extraordinarily convenient lol). Alis tells her: don't drink the wine, don't make any deal unless your life depends on it, and don't trust anyone,

even Tamlin (spoiler alert: Feyre does all three). Feyre offers her family's home as refuge to Alis and her boys, should she need to flee.

Feyre does another Kronk montage through the cave and the hallway beyond that leads to UtM. She is immediately caught by the Attor, who drags her to the throne room to be laid before Amarantha herself.

### **Chapters 34-35: Tamlin Does a Great Impression of a Hot Dog | o - o |**

Feyre is brought to the cavernous throne room where there's spooky vibe music and awkward dancing (nothing gets a party going like trapping your guests under threat of death). Amarantha is not as pretty as Feyre thought (if Nesta were here, she would have said that shit out loud and Amarantha would have died of shock). She's got red hair and a "creamy neck" (what the fuck). She's wearing a finger bone around that creamy neck and an eye set into a ring on her finger. Feyre declares she is here to claim the one she loves, Tamlin. Amarantha is delighted to figure out that Tamlin let her torture Clare Beddor even though she wasn't the right human girl. Feyre sees Clare's mangled corpse mounted on the wall (and takes 1d12 psychic damage). Tamlin denies knowing Feyre with a tone devoid of emotion (wow, what a cunning plan). Amarantha obviously sees through this and is further delighted that Tamlin loves Feyre in return. Feyre realizes that it's Jurian's eye in the ring, and probably his finger bone too. Amarantha decides to have some fun with Feyre (wee-woo: watery bowel alert) and proposes a bargain: complete three tasks of her choosing and Tamlin is hers. Feyre adds some more conditions, that Tamlin's curse is broken, that his entire court may leave and remain free forever.

Amarantha agrees and adds a further boon: Feyre may solve a riddle and Tamlin will be freed instantaneously at any point. The tasks will take place at each full moon for three months. Feyre will remain in her cell or do "chores" in between each task. Tamlin widens his eyes at Feyre as if to say "don't do it," but Feyre agrees. The Attor et al. then beat the shit out of Feyre until she passes out.

Feyre wakes up in her cell to a badly broken nose and swollen face. She panics about the tasks to come but eventually falls asleep. She wakes again to the sound of someone entering her cell. It's Lucien! He berates her for coming, but heals her nose anyway. He got a little of his power back as part of the deal to entice Tamlin to come UtM. All the High Lords have been summoned UtM and must remain until Feyre's trials are over. Lucien fills in the gap Alis left about Amarantha and Jurian's showdown. Amarantha ignored the King of Hybern's orders to move her armies where they were needed- costing him the war- so that she could face off with Jurian's forces. They entered single combat, and she quickly overpowered him. She took Jurian back to her camp and spent weeks torturing him. Clythia had promised Jurian he'd never die, so Amarantha uses her magic to keep Jurian's soul tied to his eye and finger bone. Before Feyre gets any information about Tamlin, Lucien has to peace out to avoid detection from patrolling guards.

Some time later, Feyre is brought back to the throne room. Amarantha realized she doesn't know Feyre's name. Feyre refuses to tell her, so Amarantha beckons for Rhysand. She asks him if Feyre is the same girl he saw at the manor that day and why he had confirmed Clare was the girl saw, and he's like "idk sure but sorry, bestie, humans all look alike to me." Feyre knows Rhys is lying because he'd instantly recognized her from Calanmai when they met at the manor. Amarantha brings forth Lucien and has Rhys fuck with his mind. Lucien's brothers elbow their way to the front of the crowd to watch. Feyre finally gives up her name to spare Lucien. Amarantha then gives Feyre the riddle, and the Fae in the audience who immediately know the answer laugh (wow, it's almost like being hundreds of years old, literate, and not under immediate threat of death might give one an advantage in riddle solving). Feyre is sent back to her cell to ponder the riddle and her fate should she fail a task or solve the riddle incorrectly.

### **Chapter 36- The Alaskan Bull Middenguard Wyrms:**

Feyre is brought to a cavernous chamber with muddy floors. The riotous crowd of bloodthirsty faeries gathered within is eager to see her suffer and die. Amarantha and Tamlin are perched upon a floating wooden platform surrounded by the other six High Lords. Amarantha says she's learned some things about Feyre, including that she is a huntress. She's designed this task to appeal to Feyre's hunting instincts. The Attor flies Feyre into a sunken labyrinth of muddy passages. Distantly, a creature is released into the maze. Feyre doesn't have to

wait long before she beholds a giant worm with row after row of sharp teeth. She careens into the walls as she tries to outrun the wyrm and find a place to hide and think. She tries to squeeze herself into a too-small opening in the wall and only just frees herself in time for the wyrm to pass. She realizes it must be blind. As she's running through the passages, she accidentally falls into its den lined with countless bones. She's about to use the bones to make a ladder to climb out of the pit when she has an idea. She breaks the bones into sharp steaks and covers the ground of the pit with protruding spikes. She climbs out of the pit, rolls in mud/wyrm poo to mask her scent, and sets out to lure the wyrm. She cuts open her palm, and the plan is so effective, the wyrm comes crashing through the wall to munch. She's saved by Lucien's last minute warning. Feyre hurtles back through the labyrinth towards the booby-trapped pit, the wyrm hot on her tail. She jumps into the small spike-free space in the pit, absolutely wrecking her arm in the process. The wyrm is impaled and killed by her spikes. Yay! She climbs out of the pit, feeling defiant, and hurls a bone at Amarantha. Feyre looks closely at Tamlin, and maybe MAYBE picks up a hint of a hint of triumph on his face. Mans is dissociated as hell. Now splattered in mud, Amarantha is further displeased. It seems her court had placed bets that Feyre would only last a few minutes. All except for one person, who wagered she would win. Amarantha dismisses Feyre and calls over Rhysand, which is definitely not at all related to the single wager in Feyre's favor.

### **Chapter 37: Knees Weak, Arms Are Heavy; Tattoos On Her Body Already, Mom's Spaghetti**

Feyre is literally dying in her cell. A bone shard impaled her arm during her fall into the pit, and it's still protruding from her arm and festering. The filth she was coated in from the muddy labyrinth probably led to a nasty infection. She's burning up with a fever and no one, not even Lucien, has come to help her. She's delirious when Rhysand materializes in her cell. He taunts her and says Tamlin probably won't come see her because his every move is being watched. He says he's come to make a trade. He'll heal her arm if she spends two weeks with him in the Night Court every month after this whole task business is over. Feyre refuses, but Rhysand tells her Lucien probably won't come because he was punished with twenty lashes after his outburst at the wyrm hunt. Amarantha made Tamlin give the lashes. Feyre again refuses, but then accepts the reality that she is dying, and no one is coming to help. She haggles Rhys down to one week a month and accepts. Rhys then pretty roughly grabs her arm (he's been a bit grabby with her fucking festering wound, like chill dude), but Feyre wakes up after blacking out to find her fever gone, her body clean, and her head clear. She also finds her forearm covered in whorls of black inked flowers and a cat's eye upon her palm. Feyre is horrified, and Rhys wonders aloud if it's because of the actual tattoo or because of what Tamlin will think.

### **Chapters 38-39: Amarantha's Whore's Whore's Chores**

The guards give Feyre a bucket of dirty water and tell her to clean the dirty marble floor. If she doesn't get the floor spotless before supper, they say they are to give her a few turns on the spit. Panicked about the possibility of being roasted like a pig, Feyre scrubs and scrubs. The water is making the floor dirtier. The guards purposefully gave her an impossible task. A red-haired woman enters the corridor, immediately recognizable as the Lady of the Autumn Court, Lucien's mother. Feyre instinctively covers her left forearm to hide the tattoo. She thanks Feyre for giving up her name rather than let Lucien be tortured or killed and magically cleans the water in the bucket. Feyre has the floor clean when the guards return, so they begrudgingly take her back to her cell unharmed. The next day, they drag her to a bedroom and order her to remove all the lentils from the fireplace before the room's occupant returns. There's black silk sheets on the bed and no signs that the owner actually sleeps there. She toils for hours before who but Rhysand shows up (wee-woo: "Feyre, darling" alert). They banter about why Feyre was assigned to his room, about why Rhys lied about recognizing Clare, about why Rhys was allowed out at Fire Night (it seems he wasn't strictly allowed, but had his "own reasons" for being there, and it "cost" him). Feyre asks him how come he's still powerful as fuck if Amarantha took the High Lords' powers. Rhys is all like, you should see me at my full powers cuz this is nothing, bb. We learn all the High Lords have beast forms, and Rhys shows Feyre some of his (his bat-like wings and talons). Feyre asks for the answer to the riddle, but Rhys reveals that Amarantha forbade everyone from helping her with the riddle. For "having the balls to ask," Rhys snaps his fingers and cleans both her and

the fireplace. The guards come to fetch Feyre, and Rhys compels them to gut themselves if they dare touch her or give her another chore.

Rhys's threat was serious enough that the guards now bring Feyre hot meals in her cell instead of rotting food. After a few days, two shadowed High Fae females appear in Feyre's cell. Wordlessly, they bring her to a random room in the palace, bathe her, and paint her entire body. They give her a small strip of fabric to wear as a dress. Rhys appears and explains Feyre is to be his escort to a party. He says Feyre "looks just as [he] hoped [she] would." The body paint will allow him to tell if anyone else touched her (and allow Feyre to determine if anyone touched her the next morning).

Rhys brings her to the throne room, where there's a party goin' on (can you even imagine the rancid vibes of a party where most people have been magically compelled to be there under threat of death lol). Rhys and Feyre approach the dais where Tamlin sits, stony faced, with a white-knuckle grip on his throne. Rhys announces that Feyre traded a week every month for the rest of her life in exchange for healing after the first task. He says it almost defiantly to Amarantha, as though he fully expects her to win the tasks. Amarantha dismisses him. Rhys compels Feyre to drink wine even after she refuses, remembering Alis's first warning. The wine, as it turns out, makes Feyre black out completely.

Feyre awakes, vomits, and tries to go back to sleep while having the spins. After dinner, Lucien steals into her cell. He gives her a cloak, as the gossamer dress doesn't do much to counter the chill of the dungeon. Lucien tells Feyre she did some dancing last night at Rhys's behest, clearly a ploy to get a rise out of Tamlin. Feyre is relieved to hear Tamlin did not throw hands (or throw claws, rather). Feyre is at least comforted by the lack of smudged paint everywhere but her waist. Lucien scolds Feyre for making a deal with Rhysand when he was going to come heal her the second he could (aw, sweet boy, but also, don't blame the victim). It apparently meant a great deal to Lucien that Feyre gave up her name to spare him. Amarantha used magic to prevent Lucien from healing the lash wounds, so he only just healed enough to walk today. Feyre asks about whatever spell Tamlin is under to keep him quiet, but Lucien reveals there is no spell. Tamlin remains silent to avoid giving away to Amarantha what manner of Feyre's torment gets the biggest rise out of him (this is so, so, stupid. DO SOMETHING). Feyre thinks it's brave.

The body paint and parties continue for several nights. One night, Rhysand comes to fetch her, but closes the door instead of leading her to the gathering. Rhys tells Feyre that the second task is tomorrow— this could be her last night alive. He lowkey offers to arrange a meeting with Tamlin, but Feyre takes it as a taunt or another attempt to bargain. Rhys slams Tamlin for letting his court fall, and Feyre slams back that Rhys's court fell too. Something deep inside Feyre tells her that Rhys is deeply saddened by this comment, but she attributes it to the tattoo. Feyre tries to get more info about Amarantha's plans for the mortal world. Rhys does not answer her question. Feyre asks what Rhys wants with her besides taunting Tamlin, and Rhys says that taunting Tamlin is his "greatest pleasure." Through saving Feyre's life though, he's saving Tamlin's. He allows Feyre to ponder that as he leads her to the festivities.

Festivities is not the right word. When they arrive, Amarantha requires Rhys's mind fuckery services. A Summer Court lordling was caught trying to escape through the Spring Court tunnel. Amarantha instructs Rhys to read his mind and find out why and who else was involved. Rhys definitely covers for the High Lord of the Summer Court, who is looking scared and guilty af. Amarantha then commands Rhys to shatter the mind of this lone traitor. Rhys breaks his brain instead of his mind, killing him instantly, much to the chagrin of Amarantha. Rhys leads Feyre to the wine table as people in the crowd either call him "Amarantha's whore" or congratulate him for killing the traitor. Rhys joins Feyre in downing a glass of wine.

#### **Chapter 40: Waddup, I'm Feyre, I'm Nineteen, And I Never Fucking Learned How To Read**

Feyre is brought to another stone-hewn chamber for her second task. The floor begins to sink as she's lowered down into a smooth-walled pit. Feyre locks eyes with Tamlin, who of course, does his signature move of doing fuck all. Behind an iron grate, Lucien is chained to the floor. Amarantha is delighted to hear that Feyre cannot solve the riddle and says that today's task will be good practice. She declares the task to begin, and sweltering

iron grates begin to lower from the ceiling. There is a riddle etched into the wall and three numbered levers. Feyre fully panics as she realizes she cannot sound out the riddle fast enough before the grates will crush her and Lucien. Lucien knows he is at the mercy of an illiterate teen and is beside himself. She's nearing a full blown panic attack when she just decides to go with II because I is the loneliest number and she doesn't know what a threesome is. As she goes to pull II, a pain shoots through her left arm. She goes to pull II again but more pain. The cat's eye narrows. She tries I— pain again. She goes for III— no pain. She meets Rhys's gaze in the crowd wearing a mask of boredom. She pulls the third lever just in time. Lucien is relieved. Feyre again goes into a panic and begins to sob. Rhys's voice sounds in her head and instructs her to stop crying, stand up straight, and stare down Amarantha for ten full seconds. He tells her to turn on her heel and walk calmly from the room. She makes it back to her cell and weeps.

After hours of crying, Feyre is still panicking. She should have lost the task. She only won by cheating. She only ever wanted a quiet, simple life, but now everything is so complicated and scary. The walls start closing in.

Rhys materializes in her cell, physically pries her arms away from her face, and licks her tears away. This is unsettling enough to Feyre that she stops crying— Rhy's goal. He teases her. She commands him to keep her illiteracy a secret, and he seems to agree. He says she has the night off from arm candy duty tomorrow, but the next night, she's expected to be back in the saddle. "It took me a long while to realize that Rhysand, whether he knew it or not, had effectively kept me from shattering completely." (Oh girl, he knows.)

#### **Chapter 41: Where Were We? Ah Yes, in the Pit of Despair**

Feyre has lost all hope. She's well aware that Amarantha's third task will be the one to kill her. The nights of drinking faerie wine bleed together. One night, however, as the two shadowy Night Court handmaidens escort her to get dressed, they encounter the Attor speaking to another creature. From behind a tapestry of shadow, Feyre overhears that the new creature comes on behalf of the King of Hybern to tell Amarantha his forces are ready at last. The King is also displeased about Amarantha's bargain with "the girl" - a "fool's bargain." It tells the Attor to warn Amarantha that she is not to cost him another war while she tortures a random human. The King has ways of taking her power without needing a spell or potion. They leave, and the handmaidens continue escorting Feyre to get dressed. Feyre gets the feeling that they are spies as well as handmaidens.

Feyre loses herself to hopelessness. As she's sitting in her cell at her lowest, music drifts into her cell (suggested listening: "What Was I Made For?" by Billie Eilish). It's a beautiful but sorrowful melody that swells with hope. She envisions a sunset or sunrise breaking on a palace high above the clouds. She feels this palace is a place of peace, and the person she loves lies within. She takes the flashes of hope, binds together all the memories of Tamlin, her sisters, of feeling safe and happy, and reminds herself why she came UtM in the first place. It gives her something to cling to as she awaits the final task.

#### **Chapter 42: Tamlin's Gotta Have It**

The night before the final task, Feyre leans against a back wall at that night's party. She's impatient as she waits for Rhys to beckon her over, to drink the faerie wine and get her final night over with. As she waits, Tamlin finds his way to her side, grazes her fingers, and walks off. He inclines his head, and Feyre tries to maintain her chill as she follows him through a small door off the hall. Tamlin pounces as soon as she's inside, and they start going at it. Feyre feels that they both know she's going to die tomorrow, that this is their last chance to be together. Tamlin has coated his hands in paint and smudged Feyre's body paint considerably when Rhys interrupts their makeout sesh. Rhys instructs Tamlin to pull himself together, then magically removes the paint from Tamlin's hands, and sends him back outside. Tamlin says "I love you" and exits (Tamlin, you're in her DMs, but Rhys is sending her visions of hope and love in the face of death. You are not the same). Rhys scolds Feyre for making such a stupid fucking move, but he suddenly snaps his head to the door. He returns to Feyre and kisses her deeply (this made me uncomfortable, but everyone is so upset and traumatized, it's wild). Amarantha barges in, flanked by Tamlin (who has returned to looking like a constipated statue). Amarantha falls for Rhys's trap and believes that Feyre is a fickle-hearted human who's already exploring

options outside Tamlin. As they exit the room, Feyre notices that paint has appeared on Rhys's hands even though he hasn't touched her. The onlookers sneer as Rhys dismisses Feyre, and she heads back to her cell.

Rhys appears in her cell a few hours later. The mask of cold haughtiness he usually wears is gone. He looks tired. He confesses that this whole thing is such a mess— so much rides on tomorrow going perfectly. His remaining people depend on it, not to mention Feyre's life. Feyre asks why Amarantha chose him as her whore over the other High Lords. Rhys says it's because his father killed Tamlin's father and brothers, and she wants to punish the son of her friend's murderer (so it seems Amarantha was friends with Tamlin's father). Feyre also asks why Rhys allowed her to haggle for the time she spent with him each month in the bargain— she would have said yes to anything because her life literally depended on it. Rhys just says, "I know" and leaves her alone in her cell.

### **Chapter 43: Stabbed Through the Heart, and You're to Blame, Tamlin, You Give Love A Bad Name**

Feyre is escorted to the throne room for her final task. The crowd is subdued and respectful as she traverses the room toward the dais— no more betting and sneering. Amarantha asks if Feyre has any final words to Tamlin, and Feyre says "I love you." Tamlin doesn't react (this gives nothing away, as he's been acting like a mannequin with hemorrhoids for the last few months). Amarantha gives her one last chance to solve the riddle, Feyre remains silent, and Amarantha says it's a shame because "the answer is so lovely" (Feyre's gonna be kicking herself for that one later lol). Three hooded figures are brought in wearing nondescript clothing. Amarantha says the final task is to stab three innocents. The brutal irony of killing a faerie, falling in love with one, and then having to kill faeries to keep that love is not lost on Feyre. The guard offers a black silk pillow supporting an ash dagger to Feyre. Amarantha asks for the hood to be removed from the first faerie. The young-looking fae pleads with Feyre to spare him. Someone in the crowd is weeping. Feyre steels herself and plunges the ash dagger into his heart. She's traumatized. The next faerie is a sweet fae female. She breathes a prayer, seemingly requesting a quick and painless death as Feyre again wields an ash dagger. She's traumatized x 2. The hood from the final faeries lifts to reveal Tamlin's face. The Tamlin on the dais is revealed to be the Attor in disguise. She's traumatized x 3. Amarantha is pretty pleased with herself. Feyre calms down enough to use some logic and Alis's final warning— to *listen*. Amarantha wouldn't want her to kill the thing she wanted most, Tamlin. So it would reason that Feyre somehow *can't* kill Tamlin. Feyre has a brain blast and realizes she overheard two conversations where it was mentioned that Tamlin had a heart of stone. Feyre further realizes that she never heard Tamlin's heart beat when she was close to him. Perhaps this stone heart was a part of the magic Amarantha used to control the High Lords. (This really begs the question, how did the High Lords get it up without a functional circulatory system?) As Feyre turns her awestruck face to Tamlin, he looks triumphant. Feyre says, "I love you," and stabs him.

### **Chapter 44: What is Love? Baby Don't Hurt Me, No More**

The ash dagger rips through Tamlin's flesh and bone before encountering something hard. Feyre retracts the knife to find its end splintered. Tamlin is wounded pretty badly, but he'll live. Amarantha is furious, but she gleefully declares their bargain never specified a timeline for freeing Tamlin if she finished the tasks— she only said "instantaneously" with regards to solving the riddle. The crowd is displeased. Amarantha begins to torture Feyre, saying she'll be spared if she admits she doesn't love Tamlin. While Tamlin clutches his chest and watches Feyre get tortured, Rhys screams Feyre's name, grabbing an ash dagger and lunging for Amarantha. She blasts him back with her power, blasting him over and over again for his treachery. Feyre asks Amarantha to stop hurting Rhys, and their eyes meet. For a moment, "the bond between [them] [went] taut." Feyre sees herself through Rhys's eyes, then snaps back to her own body. Amarantha continues to torture Feyre, breaking her body all because she loves Tamlin, and she solves the riddle— the answer is "love." Tamlin gapes at Feyre as she feels Amarantha shatter her spine.

### **Chapter 45: Bondage**

Feyre feels far away but can see the scene in the throne room through someone else's eyes. She watches as Tamlin's curse breaks, and golden light erupts from him. He shifts into beast form, pins Amarantha against the



wall under Clare's decomposing body, shoves a sword from Lucien into her head, and tears out her throat with his teeth. Lucien, seeing Feyre's body, is stricken. Feyre realizes she's seeing through Rhysand's eyes. Tamlin shifts back and cradles Feyre's dead body to his chest as he cries. The High Lord of the Autumn Court comes forward, extends a hand, and lets a kernel of light drop into Feyre's chest. The other High Lords follow suit. Rhysand is the last to offer his magic, saying, "For what she gave, we'll bestow what our predecessors have granted to few before. This makes us even." Tamlin says "I love you" as he offers his magic into Feyre's chest.

#### **Chapter 46: \*Windows Restart Noise\***

Feyre surfaces from death back into a body that doesn't feel human— she feels weirdly stronger, but at least she doesn't feel any pain. She sees Amarantha's dead body. She then sees Tamlin's face for the first time (it's exactly as she dreamed, which is honestly kind of an insult. Like how mad do you have to be for a human to imagine how hot you are even as a High Lord). They stay to discuss plans and accept thank yous from the Spring Court and others until Tamlin finally realizes that his human girlfriend who just died and got brought back to life in a new immortal body *might* need a nap. They find a quiet bedroom and do the horizontal tango.

Feyre is awoken by a "thread deep inside" tugging at her middle. She instinctively finds Rhysand out on a balcony, where she gets her first glimpse of sunlight in months. Rhys says he just wanted to say goodbye before Tamlin whisks her away forever. Feyre reminds him of the bargain. She asks him why— why did he fight so hard to stop Amarantha from killing her? Rhys says that he wants to be able to tell his kids that he fought against Amarantha until the end. And also that he didn't want her to fight or to die alone. Rhys has his wings out, prompting Feyre to ask if he's going to fly home. He says it would take too long, but that he does enjoy flying. He doesn't tell people he enjoys flying because everything that he loves has a tendency of being taken from him. Feyre gets real with him about becoming immortal after being human and how she'll ever live with herself after killing those two faeries. Rhys says goodbye, but then looks at her, wide-eyed. He stumbles back and disappears into thin air before Feyre can even ask what's going on.

Feyre and Tamlin walk back through the ancient shortcut back to the Spring Court. Alis and her boys are playing in the grounds. Feyre is happy to be back (lol not for long, bestie).