

# Chapter 12

The chapter opens with the protagonist confined to the house during a tense week, as a mysterious threat forces Tamlin and Lucien away on urgent duty. Isolated and under strict supervision, she reflects on her limited interactions and the presence of lanthe, who remains the sole visitor. The atmosphere is filled with a mixture of relief and underlying dread, as the absence of the usual courtly chatter leaves her feeling a haunting emptiness. To cope with her confinement, she immerses herself in books, seeking solace in stories about distant worlds and unfamiliar characters, which temporarily stave off despair and loneliness.

Upon Tamlin's return, a tense and secretive atmosphere persists, with lanthe delivering undisclosed news to Tamlin that is kept from the protagonist. As she observes the strained interactions, she notices subtle signs of her own emerging powers—claws that appear and vanish—signaling the onset of her magical abilities. Lucien, aware of her condition, discusses the inevitability of her powers manifesting regardless of training or circumstances and promises to seek answers from Tamlin. These moments reveal the growing tension around her abilities and the uncertainty about her future training and control over her powers.

Later, she overhears a heated argument among Tamlin, Lucien, and lanthe, revealing fears of her potential as a weapon and the dangerous political implications. lanthe warns of the high stakes involved, suggesting that other High Lords might see her as a threat or a tool for their own ambitions. The conversation hints at dark plans, including the possibility of using her for breeding or power accumulation, which horrifies her. Lucien counters these fears by emphasizing the strength of alliances among the courts, but lanthe's accusations and the mention of Rhysand's dangerous influence deepen her sense of vulnerability and foreboding.

As the chapter concludes, the protagonist senses the rising danger and the manipulative schemes at play. Tamlin's firm refusal to allow her to train underscores the oppressive control she faces, while the intense magic surges within the house suggest imminent conflict. Driven by a mixture of fear and resolve, she isolates herself by locking her door, determined to protect herself from the dark machinations and the potentially lethal consequences of her newfound powers. The chapter leaves her in a state of uncertainty, poised on the brink of confrontation and self-discovery.

