

Chapter 17

In Chapter 17, the protagonist is woken by a nightmare, only to be thrust into a reality far more harrowing. Hearing screams and shouts, she rushes to investigate, finding Tamlin carrying a severely injured faerie into their manor. This faerie, distinguished by his blue skin and gangly limbs, suffers from grievous wounds where his wings once were, now brutally severed. The discovery prompts a desperate attempt to save him, led by Tamlin, with Lucien assisting, amidst the chaos and bloodshed.

The faerie reveals he is from the Summer Court, hinting at the actions of a powerful, malevolent figure who has taken his wings—an act symbolizing profound loss and cruelty. As Tamlin tries to tend to the faerie's wounds with magic that seems insufficient for the task, the protagonist steps in to assist, driven by an impulse of mercy or perhaps an instinctive need to soothe the unimaginable pain. Despite their efforts, it becomes tragically clear that the faerie's life is slipping away; his wounds too severe to overcome.

In his final moments, the protagonist offers comfort, holding his hand, trying to offer assurances she knows to be hollow. She witnesses his last breath, feeling the weight of a promise she couldn't keep. After his passing, the interaction shifts towards Tamlin, who expresses gratitude for her actions, questioning why she, who has shown disdain towards faeries, would demonstrate such compassion. She replies, revealing a depth of empathy and regret for past actions, emphasizing a universal desire not to face death alone, and acknowledging the value of presence and comfort in the final moments of life. This chapter, blending elements of fantasy with poignant reflections on mortality and compassion, delves into the themes of empathy, regret, and the complex interplay between enemies brought together by shared humanity in the face of suffering and loss.