

Chapter 10: The Shadows in the Woods

In Chapter 10, the dense forest pulsed with an eerie stillness, a silence so thick it muffled even the crunch of fallen leaves beneath their boots. Feyre and Lucien moved cautiously through the dim-lit path, their senses heightened as the temperature dropped, an unnatural chill creeping through the air. A whisper—soft and insidious—slithered through the trees, barely audible, yet undeniably there. It carried no words at first, only the unsettling sensation of being watched, as though unseen eyes pressed into them from the shadows. Lucien tensed beside her, his usual sarcasm replaced with grim focus, his hand drifting toward the hilt of his weapon.

Then, the whispering shifted, forming guttural murmurs that curled into Feyre's mind like smoke, urging her to look. A force unlike anything she had ever encountered coiled around them, a presence darker than night itself—the Bogge. She had heard of it in passing, a creature of nightmares, something fae and mortal alike feared. To see it was to invite doom, yet resisting the urge to look felt like trying to fight the pull of gravity. The air thickened, pressing against her chest, each breath laced with the bitter tang of decay. Her pulse thundered in her ears as the entity circled them, its whispers intensifying, promising horrors that made her skin crawl.

Lucien's voice cut through the tension, sharp and urgent. "Don't look at it. No matter what you hear, keep your eyes on me." His golden eye flared with warning, his body poised for a fight he knew they couldn't win. Feyre clenched her jaw, locking her gaze on the dirt at his feet, forcing herself to focus on the rhythmic cadence of her own breathing. The Bogge moved again, the whispering evolving into something almost melodic, laced with a sickly sweetness. It spoke of secrets and desires, weaving illusions that clawed at her mind, trying to lure her into a single, fatal glance.

Sweat dampened her palms, and her grip tightened on the knife at her belt, though she knew steel alone wouldn't save her. Time stretched unbearably as the Bogge continued its slow, circling dance, its presence weaving through the trees like a phantom. Then, as suddenly as it had arrived, the pressure lifted, the whispers retreating into the depths of the forest. Silence descended once more, the world resuming its breathless stillness. Only then did Feyre realize her nails had dug deep into her palms, leaving crescents of pain behind.

Lucien exhaled, his tension easing, but his expression remained shadowed. "It won't come after us now," he muttered, though there was little relief in his tone. "Not tonight, at least." The weight of what had just transpired pressed heavy on Feyre's shoulders, but she nodded, choosing to push aside the terror that still thrummed in her bones.

They made their way back to the manor in silence, the encounter lingering between them like an unspoken ghost. As they approached the estate's glowing windows, the warmth of firelight against the cool night should have been comforting. Instead, it only made the darkness beyond the trees feel deeper, its secrets still lurking just out of reach. Feyre barely had time to collect herself before they were ushered into the dining hall, where Tamlin's presence radiated tension as soon as he saw them.

Lucien wasted no time relaying what had happened, his voice clipped and measured. At the mention of the Bogge, Tamlin's grip on his goblet tightened, the glass shattering in his hand. Wine and blood mingled on the tablecloth, but he paid no heed, his emerald eyes burning with barely restrained fury. Feyre had seen him angry before, but this was different. This was a quiet, simmering rage—one that spoke of something deeply personal, something ancient.

With a single, fluid motion, Tamlin rose from his chair and strode out of the room, his form shifting slightly, the beast within him dangerously close to the surface. The air crackled with barely contained power, a

reminder that even within the safety of the manor, danger was never far away. Lucien sighed, shaking his head. "He's going hunting," he muttered, as if it were inevitable. "And he won't stop until that thing is dead."

The thought of Tamlin facing the Bogge alone sent an uneasy ripple through Feyre's chest. She had survived its presence only by keeping her eyes averted—how did one fight something they couldn't even look at? She glanced at Lucien, searching for reassurance, but he simply poured himself more wine, his expression unreadable. "If anyone can kill it, it's Tamlin," he said at last.

The weight of the day settled on her, exhaustion creeping into her limbs, yet sleep felt impossible. As she lay in bed hours later, the whispering still echoed in her ears, and the sensation of something watching from the woods never truly faded. The night had revealed an unsettling truth: no matter how beautiful this world appeared, it was laced with unseen horrors. And the most terrifying ones didn't need to be seen to be real.

This chapter masterfully intertwines suspense, mythology, and psychological horror, peeling back the fragile illusion of safety Feyre once clung to. It explores the chilling concept that some dangers do not require sight to instill terror—only the knowledge that they are there, waiting, unseen.