

Chapter 3: Whispers of Faerie Magic

In Chapter 3, The cold bite of winter was unforgiving as Feyre and her sisters, Elain and Nesta, trudged through the snow-laden streets of their village, each step echoing the quiet desperation that had become a constant in their lives. The town, built of dull stone and weather-worn wood, bore the weight of harsh seasons and harder times, its people bundled against the wind, haggling for necessities they could barely afford. Today, the market teemed with rare energy, the usual stillness replaced with the sounds of bartering and the occasional cheer of a lucky sale, a fleeting distraction from the ever-present hunger gnawing at their bellies.

Clutching the bundled pelts she had worked tirelessly to prepare, Feyre led her sisters toward the stalls, hoping the earnings would stretch beyond mere survival to afford them a rare indulgence—perhaps a pinch of spice or even a bit of fresh meat. Their financial strain was evident in the way Elain longed for things they could never afford, and in the sharp contrast of Nesta’s hardened exterior, a protective shell carved from years of enduring hardship. The weight of their existence pressed against them as they wove through the market’s narrow paths, their worn boots barely keeping the snow at bay.

Their journey was momentarily interrupted by a chance encounter with a group of young women draped in pale robes, their eyes alight with fervor as they spread their message to those willing to listen. The Children of the Blessed, a sect that revered the High Fae as divine beings, moved among the villagers, offering promises of protection and sanctuary to any who would renounce their human lives and embrace servitude in the faerie courts. Feyre felt her stomach twist at the sight of them, their blind devotion a stark reminder of the divide between those who feared the fae and those who foolishly sought their favor.

Nesta, never one to bite her tongue, met the acolytes with open disdain, flashing the iron bracelet she always wore—a tangible symbol of resistance against faerie magic. Her voice was sharp, laced with anger, as she dismissed their beliefs as delusions, a stance Feyre silently agreed with. Though she, too, despised the fae for what they had taken from humans, she knew better than to draw their attention. The tension between the sisters and the acolytes lingered in the air before they finally parted ways, leaving behind the distant echoes of the Children’s impassioned pleas.

At the market, Feyre sought out the usual buyers, but it was a mercenary—a woman marked by scars and the presence of wealth beyond what a villager could attain—who caught her attention. The stranger examined the furs with a calculating gaze, her confidence radiating a kind of silent power that made Feyre wary yet intrigued. She paid a generous sum, more than Feyre had anticipated, and though the money provided relief, the woman’s words carried a warning: the dangers lurking in the woods were growing.

The mercenary spoke of things that sent a chill down Feyre’s spine, of creatures that did not belong in the mortal world, their presence a whisper of something darker creeping through the lands. Tales of the martax, monstrous beings with insatiable hunger, and the ever-growing threat of faerie magic, once kept at bay, now stretching its influence beyond Prythian’s borders. Though Feyre prided herself on her independence, the weight of the warning settled deep in her bones, a quiet alarm she could not shake.

With their pockets heavier than expected, the sisters made their way back through the snow, the earlier tension still lingering between them. Though Nesta’s sharp tongue remained unchanged and Elain’s hopeful gaze drifted toward frivolous things, Feyre could not stop herself from glancing toward the distant treeline, where shadows stretched long and ominous beneath the setting sun. The world was shifting, and though she did not yet understand how, she could feel it creeping closer with each passing day.