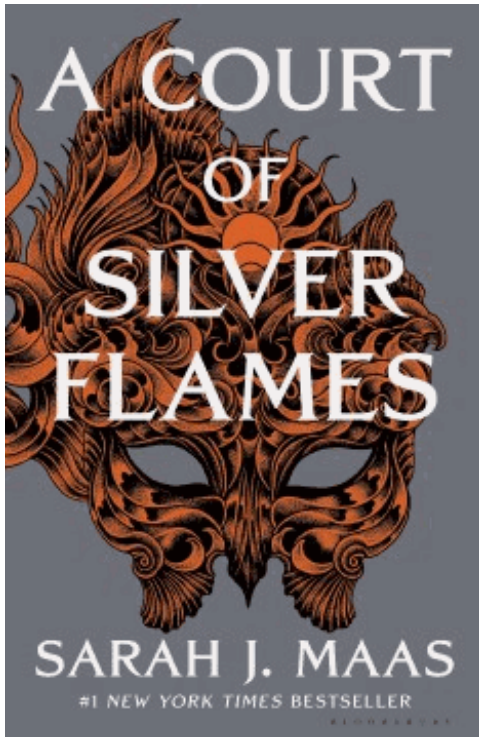


# A COURT OF SILVER FLAMES



*Young Adult*

**By Sarah J. Maas**

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## Summary of Concerns:

This book contains obscene sexual activities; explicit sexual nudity; excessive/frequent profanity; and graphic violence.

## CONTENT WARNING

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**4** /5

**Not For Minors**  
BookLooks Review Rating

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10	<p>He took the invitation to survey her: long bare legs, an elegant sweep of hips, tapered waist—too damn thin—and full, inviting breasts that were at odds with the new, sharp angles of her body.</p> <p>On any other female, those magnificent breasts might have been enough cause for him to begin courting her the moment he met her.</p>
12	<p>She ransacked her wine-soaked memory as she returned to the bedroom, dodging piles of books and lumps of clothing, recalling heated glances at the tavern, the wet, hot meeting of their mouths, the sweat coating her as she rode him until pleasure and drink sent her into blessed oblivion, but not his name.</p>
13	<p>She chucked the white shirt at him. “You can use the front door now.”</p> <p>He slung the shirt over his head. “I—Is he still—” His gaze kept snagging on her breasts, peaked against the chill morning; her bare skin. The apex of her thighs.</p>
15	<p>Nothing could stop the awful power from beginning to rise, rise, rise in her. Nothing beyond the music at those taverns, the card games with strangers, the endless bottles of wine, and the sex that made her feel nothing—but offered a moment of release amid the roaring inside her. Nesta finished washing away the sweat and other remnants of last night. The sex hadn’t been bad—she’d had better, but also much worse. Even immortality wasn’t enough time for some males to master the art of the bedroom.</p> <p>So she’d taught herself what she liked. She’d obtained a monthly contraceptive tea from her local apothecary, and then she’d brought that first male here. He had no idea that her maidenhead had been intact until he’d spied the smeared blood on the sheets. His face had tightened with distaste—then a glimmer of fear that she might report an unsatisfactory first bedding to her sister.</p>
17	<p>“I’d hoped you at least changed the sheets between visitors, but apparently that doesn’t bother you.”</p> <p>Nesta tied the laces on the first shoe. “What business is it of yours?”</p> <p>He shrugged, though the tightness on his face didn’t reflect such nonchalance. “If I can smell a few different males in here, then surely your companions can, too.”</p>
22	<p>“Though I bet it’s hard to look good,” Amren went on, “when you’re out until the darkest hours of the night, drinking yourself stupid and fucking anything that comes your way.”</p>
43	<p>He and his brothers had put a good deal of distance between the stupid youths they’d been—fucking any female who showed interest, often in the same room as each other—and the males they were now.</p>
63	<p>Nesta kept perfectly still in her chair, keenly aware of every movement in the fighting leathers she’d donned. She’d forgotten how it felt to wear pants—the nakedness of having her thighs and ass on display.</p>
68	<p>But fuck—when had he last had a satisfying roll in the sheets? Certainly not since the war. Maybe since before Feyre had freed them all from Amarantha’s grip. Cauldron boil him, it had been the month before Amarantha had fallen, hadn’t it? With that female he’d met at Rita’s. In an alley outside the pleasure hall. Against a brick wall. Quick and dirty and over within minutes, neither he nor the female wanting anything more than swift release.</p> <p>That had been more than two years ago. It had been his hand ever since.</p> <p>He should have scratched that particular itch before deciding that living in the House with</p>

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	Nesta was a good idea. She was hurting and adrift and the last thing she needed was him panting after her. Grabbing her arm like an animal, unable to stop himself from drawing near.
69	He made a point not to look beneath her neck. At the body left on display. She needed to gain back the weight she'd lost, and pack on some muscle, but ... those fucking leathers.
102	<p>He had no idea how it had happened: how he'd gone from mocking Nesta to taunting her with his own bedroom habits. Then imagining her hand wrapped around him, pumping him, until he was a heartbeat away from exploding out of his chair and leaping into the skies.</p> <p>He knew Az had been well aware of the shift in his scent. How his skin had become too tight at the way she said his name, his cock an insistent ache rubbing against the buttons of his pants.</p> <p>...The thought of that one hand led him back to her hand, squeezing him rough and hard, just the way he liked it—</p>
130	At twenty-one, he'd still been drinking and brawling and fucking, unconcerned with anything and anybody except his ambition to be the most skilled of Illyrian warriors since Enalius himself.
134	There was nowhere for her to plant that beautiful ass here.
137	<p>No matter that Cassian without a shirt bordered on obscene, even with the collection of scars peppering his golden-brown skin.</p> <p>...Muscles on his damned ribs. She didn't know people could have them there. And those ones that flowed into his pants, like a golden arrow pointing to exactly what she wanted-</p>
157	Considering the filthy things he'd done in his bedroom, his bathroom—fuck, in so many of the rooms here—the idea of the House watching him ... Cauldron boil him alive.
182	<p>Cassian surveyed her. Gazed into her eyes and breathed, "Beautiful."</p> <p>He didn't halt the hand she laid on his muscled chest. Or when she pushed against that chest, backing him to the wall, his wings splaying on impact.</p> <p>...Her backed arched slightly at the way he said her name, the way he bit out the second syllable. Like he was imagining clamping his teeth down on other parts of her. But only her hand bridged their bodies. On her hand, now bunching up his shirt, his thundering heartbeat pulsing beneath it.</p> <p>...The urge to press her body into his, to feel his warmth and hardness grinding into her, nearly overrode every rational thought.</p> <p>...Her knees nearly wobbled at the desire blazing in them. Liquid, unrelenting desire, all fixed upon her.</p> <p>She couldn't get a breath down as she drowned in that stare. As low, sensitive parts of her tightened and began throbbing, her breasts becoming heavy and aching. His nostrils flared, scenting that, too.</p>
184	<p>It was hard to sleep well when he'd been so aroused he'd had to pleasure himself not once but three times just to calm the hell down enough to close his eyes. But he awoke before dawn aching for her, her scent still in his nose, and another release had barely taken the edge off.</p> <p>He'd told her exactly what he planned to do last night, but meeting Nesta's stare over the breakfast table the next morning was more uncomfortable than he'd anticipated.</p> <p>...To break the silence, Cassian asked, "What are you reading?"</p> <p>Color stained Nesta's pale cheeks. And he could have sworn it took an effort of will for her to meet his eyes, too. "A romance."</p> <p>"I gathered that. What's this one about?"</p> <p>She dropped her gaze quickly. But the blush remained.</p>

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	<p>He knew it had nothing to do with the novel.            But she lifted her eyes to him again, spine stiffening. Like she was working hard as hell to make herself meet his stare. Her fingers clenched her fork. And when he looked at them, she pulled her hand under the table.            As if it were blazing with proof.            His blood heated as he realized the blush, her embarrassment ... He made himself take deep, steadying breaths. They had to train together for the next two hours. Being at attention wasn't only unhelpful, but inappropriate in the training ring.            It didn't make him stop picturing it: that hand between her legs, her body as aching for release as his had been. The way she'd probably bitten her lip, just as he had, to keep from crying out. His cock grew hard, pushing at his pants to the point of pain.            Cassian shifted in his seat, trying to free up any space for himself. It only succeeded in making the hard seam rub against his cock, the friction enough to make him grit his teeth.            ...He had to get out of this room. Had to sort his shit out before he went upstairs. The heat between them didn't belong in the training ring. Where the fuck was Az when he needed him? Cassian had played buffer for Mor for years—where the fuck was she when he needed her? But he couldn't rise from his chair. If he did, Nesta would see precisely how she'd affected him. That is, if she hadn't already scented it—and understood the shift in his smell. And if she looked at the bulge in his pants with that heat she'd had in her eyes last night, the heat he'd come to just picturing her, he might very well make a fool of himself.            It was a risk he was willing to take. Had to take, before he laid her flat on the table and removed their clothing piece by piece.</p>
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187	<p>Their eyes met, and there was only clear, determined calm—and a challenge. “We’ll do the warm-up, and then we’re moving into some core work.”            She gaped. Her ... core?            “Abdominals,” he clarified, and pink washed across his face. He cleared his throat. “Filthy mind.” He flicked her cheek. “Too much smut.”</p>
189	<p>She tried not to wonder if that panting was how he'd sounded last night when he'd pleased himself.</p>

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202	Nesta knew she herself had looked like that at one point, even if Elain's breasts had always been smaller.
204	Elain, surprisingly, held her ground. "I wasn't drinking myself into oblivion and—and doing those other things." "Fucking strangers?"
216	<p>For a heartbeat, there was only the warmth of Cassian's mouth, the press of his body, the stiffness in his every trembling muscle as Nesta slanted her lips over his, rising onto her toes. She'd kissed him with her eyes open, so she could see precisely how his own widened. Nesta pulled away a moment later and found his eyes still wide, his breathing harsh. She laughed softly, making to unhook her fingers from his jacket and strut down the hall. She only got as far as lowering her right hand before he surged forward to kiss her back. The force of that kiss knocked them toward the wall, the stone slamming into her shoulders as all of him lined up against all of her, a hand sliding into her hair while the other gripped her hip. The moment Nesta hit that wall, the moment Cassian enveloped her, it destroyed any illusion of restraint. She opened her mouth, and his tongue swept in, the kiss punishing and savage. And the taste of him, like snow-kissed wind and crackling embers—</p> <p>She moaned, unable to help herself.</p> <p>It seemed that sound was his undoing, for the fingers in her hair dug into her scalp, angling her head so he could better taste her, claim her.</p> <p>Her hands roved over his muscled chest, desperate for any skin, anything to touch as their tongues met and parted, as he licked the roof of her mouth, as he slid his tongue over her teeth.</p> <p>She met him stroke for stroke, and all sense of self went flying from her. She plunged her fingers into his hair, and it was as soft as she'd imagined, the strands like silk against her skin. Every hateful thought eddied from her mind. She gave herself to the distraction, welcomed it with open arms, let the kiss burn through all of it. There was only his mouth and his tongue and his teeth, licking and tasting and biting; there was only the strength of his body, pressing against hers, but not nearly close enough—</p> <p>He slid his hands around her, grasping her ass, and lifted her into the air. She wrapped her legs around his middle, and moaned again as he pressed himself between her thighs.</p> <p>She needed this temporary reprieve from her mind, that thing burning deep inside her, the memories that hounded her. She needed this. Needed him.</p> <p>Cassian ground into her, and groaned into her mouth at the first push of his hips. She arched her back at that deep-throated sound, baring her neck to him. He seized on it, dragging his mouth from hers.</p> <p>His tongue traced a line up the column of her neck, dragging heat in its wake, and reached that spot just below her ear that had her clenching, had her whimpering. He let out a laugh against her skin. "Like that?" he murmured, and licked it again.</p> <p>Her breasts ached, and she moved against him, seeking any contact with his chest, any bit of friction. But Cassian buried his face against her neck, teeth clamping down lightly atop her fluttering pulse. The slight hurt set her panting; the scrape of his tongue over the spot had her eyes rolling back in her head.</p> <p>He pulled his head from her neck, though. And Nesta had never been laid so bare as she was while he ground his hips into her again and watched her writhe.</p> <p>A dark smile graced his mouth. "So responsive," he purred in a voice she'd never heard but knew she'd crawl to hear again. He drove his hips between hers, a lazy, thorough push of the</p>

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	<p>hardness of him into the throbbing ache of her. She scrambled to regain any sense of control, of sanity—found herself wanting to hand it all over to him, to let him touch and touch and touch her, lick and suckle and fill her—</p> <p>Cassian growled, as if he read that in her stare, and kissed her again.</p> <p>Their tongues tangled, their bodies pressed so tightly she could feel his heartbeat against her chest. He tasted her thoroughly, withdrew, and tasted her again. Like he was learning every place in her mouth.</p> <p>She had to feel his skin. Had to feel the hardness pushing into her with her hands, her mouth, her body. She'd go mad if she didn't, go mad if she couldn't get these clothes off, go mad if he stopped kissing her—</p> <p>Nesta wedged her hand between their bodies, seeking him out. Cassian groaned again, long and low, as her hand cupped him through the leather of his pants. The breath stole out of her. The sheer size of him—</p> <p>Her mouth watered. She was aching, so wet that every stitch of the seam down the center of her pants was torture.</p> <p>His kiss turned deeper, wilder, and she grappled with the laces and buttons of his pants. There were so many she didn't know where to find the ones to undo them, her fingertips ripping at every loop, nearly clawing to get him free.</p> <p>Cassian's panting caressed her skin as he nipped at her bottom lip, her ear, her jaw. Her own staccato breathing echoed it, fire roaring in her blood, and he captured her mouth again, moaning into her as she gave up on the laces and buttons and laid her hand flat against him. He bucked as she rubbed the heel of her palm down his length, marveling at each inch.</p> <p>He tore his mouth from hers. "If you keep doing that, I'll—"</p> <p>Nesta did it again, dragging the heel of her palm upward, toward the tip she knew pressed against his lower abdomen. His hips arced toward her, and he tilted back his head, exposing the strong column of his throat. She learned the shape of him through his pants, and pressed her hand harder, working him. He gritted his teeth, chest heaving like a bellows, and the sight of him coming undone had her leaning forward. Had her clamping her teeth onto his neck. Just as she rubbed him again, harder and rougher.</p> <p>He hissed. With her name on his lips, his hips thrust into her hand with a strength that made her core throb to the point of pain, imagining that force, that size and heat, buried deep in her. Another punishing rub of her palm, a scrape of teeth at his neck, and Cassian erupted.</p> <p>His wings tucked in tight as he came, and each spurt of his cock shuddered through his pants, echoing along her hand as she stroked and stroked him.</p> <p>When Cassian had stilled, when he was shaking—only then did Nesta remove her face from his neck. His hazel eyes were wide enough that the whites shone around them. A blush stained his golden cheeks, so enticing that she nearly leaned forward to lick that, too.</p>
220	<p>He'd come in his pants after a few touches from Nesta, soaking himself like was no better than he'd been in his youth.</p> <p>But the moment she had kissed him in the hall, he'd lost all semblance of sanity. He'd turned into something just short of an animal, licking and biting at her neck, unable to think clearly beyond the base instinct to claim.</p> <p>The taste of her had been like fire and steel and a winter sunrise. That had just been her mouth, her neck. If he got his tongue between her legs...He shifted in his seat.</p> <p>...But he'd come hard enough to see stars, and only then realized she had not. That he'd embarrassed himself, that he'd left her unsatisfied, and if it was the only taste of her he'd ever get, he'd monumentally fucked it all to hell.</p>



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222	Every glance, every scent of him, every touch while he carried her down to the river house grated along her skin, threatening to bring her back to last night, when she'd been starved for any taste of him.
232	"Then go off on adventures," Nesta said. "Go drink and fuck strangers. But stay away from the Cauldron."
243	<p>His scent drifted to her, darker, muskier than usual. She'd bet all the money she didn't have that it was the scent of his arousal.</p> <p>It set her pulse hammering, careening so far off the path of sanity that she scrambled after its vanishing leash. To let him affect her so easily, so greatly—unacceptable.</p> <p>She didn't dare look below his waist, not as she shaped her lips into a cool smile. "Here for more?"</p> <p>"I'm here to settle the debt between us."</p> <p>His words were guttural. Her toes curled beneath the blanket.</p> <p>But her voice remained surprisingly calm. "What debt?"</p> <p>"The one I owe you for last night."</p> <p>He spoke as if there was no room in him for teasing, for humor. His eyes drifted lower than her face, noting the hammering of her pulse. "We have unfinished business."</p> <p>She grappled for anything to guard against him. "Male pride is a thing of wonder." When he didn't respond, she threw another wall his way: "Why are you even here? You made it clear enough that last night was a mistake."</p> <p>He was having none of it. "I never said that." His attention remained fixed on her hammering pulse.</p> <p>"You didn't need to. I saw it in your eyes."</p> <p>His gaze snapped to hers. "The only mistake was that I came before I could taste you."</p> <p>Nesta knew he didn't mean her mouth. Or her skin.</p> <p>Cassian went on, "The only mistake was that you ran off before I could get on my knees."</p> <p>Breathing became difficult. "Won't your friends tell you this is a mistake?" She gestured to the air between them.</p> <p>"My friends have nothing to do with this. With what I want from you."</p> <p>He said it with such intent that her breasts pebbled. His eyes dipped again, and when he saw her nipples hard against the silk of her nightgown ...</p> <p>His entire being seemed to focus on it. On her. All five hundred years of being a trained warrior, an apex predator. All of it, narrowing on her.</p> <p>His appraisal enveloped her like a rush of wind, of fire. "What about training?" she breathed.</p> <p>"This stays out of training." His eyes had turned wholly dark.</p> <p>Her skin tightened, becoming almost painful as she went molten and throbbing between her legs.</p> <p>"Nesta."</p> <p>A note of pleading had entered his voice. He was trembling—the door behind him rattling with the force of his deteriorating self-control.</p> <p>She looked then. Below his waist. At what strained against his pants.</p> <p>Her head emptied out, and there was only him and her and the space between them.</p> <p>Cassian let out a growl, the sound a plea as well.</p> <p>She made herself say, "This stays out of training—and everything else. This is just sex."</p> <p>Something shifted in his expression, but he said, "Just sex."</p> <p>This was sure to be a mistake, sure to be something she paid for, suffered for. But she couldn't</p>

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	<p>bring herself to deny him. Deny herself. Just for tonight, she'd allow it. So Nesta met his eyes again, took in every trembling, restrained inch, and said, "Yes." Cassian lunged for her, a beast freed of its cage, and she barely had time to twist toward the edge of the bed before his lips were on hers, devouring and claiming. Deep purring sounds vibrated from his chest through her fingers as she clawed off his jacket, his shirt, ripping through the fabric. He tore his lips from hers only long enough to pull his shirt away, the fabric snaring on his wings before falling to the floor. Then he was on her again, climbing onto the bed, and she spread her legs for him, letting his body fall into the cradle between her thighs. She couldn't stop her moan as he drove his hips into hers, the leather of his pants sliding against her. He plunged his tongue into her mouth, the kiss like a brand, one hand sliding up her bare thigh, tugging her nightgown with it. When he reached her hip and still had found no underwear, he hissed. Looked to where he pressed his hardness against her and realized that only the leather of his pants separated him from her wetness. She was shaking, and not from fear, as he took a trembling hand and slid her nightgown higher. Pulled it up to her navel and then stared at her, bare and gleaming, pressed against the bulge in his pants. His chest heaved, and she waited for that brutal, demanding touch, but he only leaned down and pressed a kiss to her throat. Tender, coaxing. Cassian pressed another to her shoulder, and she shivered. Shivered more as he dragged his tongue over the spot. He kissed the hollow of her throat. Licked it. He slipped the straps of her nightgown down her arms. Kissed her collarbones. With each kiss, he pulled down the neck of her nightgown further. Until his breath warmed her bare breasts. Cassian let out a sound from the back of his throat, from his gut. Like some sort of starved, tormented creature. He stared at her breasts, and she couldn't breathe under that burning gaze. Couldn't breathe as his head dipped and he wrapped his lips around her nipple. Nesta arced off the bed, a breathless sound rupturing from her. Cassian only repeated the movement on her other breast. And then raked his teeth across the sensitive peak before clamping down lightly. She moaned then, tipping her head back, thrusting her chest up toward him in silent plea. Cassian let out that dark laugh and returned to her other breast, teeth grazing, teasing, biting. She strained her hands toward him, toward where he'd gone still between her legs. She needed him—now. In her hand or her body, she didn't care. But Cassian only pulled away. Pulled up, and knelt before her. Surveyed her spread beneath him, her nightgown a bunch of silk around her middle, everything else bared to him. His own feast to devour. "I owe you a debt," he said in that guttural voice that made her writhe. He watched her hips undulate, and braced his large, powerful hands on either thigh. He waited for her to signal that she understood what he intended. What she'd dreamed of for so long, in the darkest hours of the night. In a choked whisper, she said, "Yes." Cassian gave her a feral, purely male smile. And then his hands tightened on her bare thighs, spreading them wider. His head lowered, and all she could see was his dark hair, gilded by the lamps, and his exquisite wings, rising above them both. He didn't waste time with gentle touches and tastes. Parting her with one hand, he dragged his tongue clear up her center. The world fractured, re-formed, and fractured again. He cursed against her wetness, and he reached down with his other hand to adjust himself in his pants.</p>



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	<p>He licked her again, lingering at the spot atop the apex of her legs. Sucking it into his mouth, teeth nipping, before he withdrew.</p> <p>She arched, unable to stop the moan breaking from her throat.</p> <p>Cassian's tongue ran downward in an unhurried sweep, and he pressed a hand to her abdomen, stilling her, as he slid his tongue straight into her core. It curled into her, driving deeper than she'd expected, and she couldn't think, couldn't do anything but luxuriate in it, in him—</p> <p>"You taste," he growled against her, making his way up again toward the bundle of nerves in short, teasing licks, "even more delicious than I dreamed."</p> <p>Nesta whimpered, and he flicked his tongue there. Her whimper turned to a cry, and he laughed against her and flicked his tongue again.</p> <p>Release became a shimmering veil, just beyond her grasp but drifting closer.</p> <p>"So wet," he breathed, and licked at her entrance, as if determined to consume every drop of her. "Are you always this wet for me, Nesta?"</p> <p>She wouldn't allow him the satisfaction of the truth. But she couldn't think of a lie, not with his tongue pumping in and out of her, coaxing her toward but still denying her the pressure and relentless pounding she so badly needed.</p> <p>Cassian snickered, as if he knew the answer anyway. He licked her, his silken hair brushing over her belly, and looked up to meet her gaze.</p> <p>As their eyes locked, he slid a finger into her.</p> <p>She cried out, and he trailed a hand from her thigh to hold her open again as he licked at that spot while his finger pumped in and out of her in a teasingly slow rhythm.</p> <p>More—she wanted more. She undulated her hips against him, hard enough to drive his finger deeper.</p> <p>"Greedy," he murmured onto her, and withdrew his finger nearly to its tip. Only to add a second finger as he plunged back in.</p> <p>Nesta let go entirely then. Let go of sanity and any pride as he filled her with those two fingers. He sucked and nibbled, and release gathered around her like an iridescent mist.</p> <p>Cassian growled again, given over to whatever need drove him, and the reverberations of the sound echoed into places of her that had never been touched. In and out his fingers slid, stretching and filling, all while he tasted and savored.</p> <p>Nesta rode his hand, his face, grinding into him with abandon.</p> <p>"Holy gods." Cassian's teeth grazed against her. "Nesta."</p> <p>The sound of her name on his lips against her most sensitive place sent her mind scattering into eternity.</p> <p>She bowed off the bed with the force of her climax, and he became ravenous, fingers pumping and pumping, tongue and lips moving against her, like he'd devour her pleasure whole. He didn't stop until she'd collapsed against the mattress, until she was limp and reeling and trying to piece her mind back together.</p> <p>The slide of his fingers out of her left her empty and aching, the removal of his tongue and mouth from between her legs like a cold kiss.</p> <p>Cassian was panting, still hard as he rose up and stared at her.</p> <p>She couldn't move—couldn't remember how to move. No one had ever done that to her. Made her feel like that.</p> <p>It had knocked the breath from her, the thoroughness of her pleasure. Like the world could be remade in the force of what had erupted from her.</p>

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248	Nesta reached for the cock she was dying to feel, to taste, but he backed off the bed. Cassian grabbed his shirt and aimed for the door. "We're even now."
249	<p>Watching Nesta climax had been as close to a religious experience as Cassian had ever had. It had rocked him to his very core, and only pure will and pride had kept him from spilling in his pants again. Only pure will and pride had made him back off the bed when she'd reached for him. Only pure will and pride had made him leave the room, when all he'd wanted was to plunge his cock into that sweet, tight warmth and ride her until they were both screaming. He couldn't get her perfect taste out of his mouth. Not as he washed for bed. Not as he pumped himself dry, soaking his sheets. Not as he ate breakfast. Couldn't stop feeling the clamp of her around his fingers, like a burning, silken fist. He'd washed his hands a dozen times by the time he faced Nesta in the training ring, and he could still smell her there, could still feel her, taste her.</p> <p>Cassian banished the thought from his mind. Along with the knowledge that Nesta might have felt good on his fingers, on his tongue, but it would be nothing compared to how she'd feel on his cock. She'd been tight enough that he knew it'd be paradise and madness—his undoing. And she'd been so drenched for him that he knew he'd do deplorable things to be allowed to taste that wetness again.</p>
250	And maybe it was the fact that it had been two years since he'd had any sort of sex, but he couldn't remember the last time he'd been so ridden by his own base need.
252	Nesta crossed her arms, face so neutral he wondered for moment if he'd dreamed some wild fantasy last night of his head between her legs.
256	Nesta had made herself focus during the lesson, but as soon as she'd left them in the training ring, filthy thoughts had poured in, leaving her half-distracted while she'd walked to the library. The thought of Cassian pumping into her mouth while Azriel pounded into her from behind, the two of them working her in tandem-
279	Nesta blocked out the memory of his head between her thighs, his tongue at her entrance, sliding into her.
288	<p>So Nesta braced her hands on the arms of his chair as she brushed a kiss to his neck. Cassian's breath caught. But she pressed another kiss to the soft, warm skin of his neck, just beneath his ear. Another, lower now, closer to the collar of his dark shirt. He trembled, and she kissed the hard knot in the center of his throat. Licked it. Cassian shifted in his chair, groaning softly. His hand rose to clasp her hip, as if he'd push her away, but she removed him. "Let me," she said against his neck. "Please."</p> <p>He swallowed, and that hard knot moved against her mouth. But he didn't stop her, and so Nesta kissed him again, moving to the other side of his neck. Reaching that spot just beneath his ear as she laid a hand on his chest and felt his heartbeat hammering into her palm. She didn't kiss his mouth. She didn't want that distraction. Not as she slid between him and the table and dropped to her knees.</p> <p>His eyes went wide. "Nesta."</p> <p>She reached for the top of his pants, the bulge already pressing through. "Please," she said again, and met his stare. From where she knelt between Cassian's legs, he towered over her, but the edge in his eyes softened almost imperceptibly before he nodded. He reached to help her with the buttons and stays, but she lightly laid a hand atop his.</p> <p>Her fingers were steady, sure, as she unfastened his pants. Her head wholly clear. The muscles in his thighs shifted against her as she pulled him free and nearly gasped. His cock was enormous. Beautiful, and hard, and absolutely enormous. Her mouth dried out,</p>

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	<p>every plan she'd had requiring sudden reassessment. There was no way he'd fit entirely in her mouth. Perhaps no way he'd even fit in her body.</p> <p>But she sure as hell wanted to try.</p> <p>Her fingers shook a little as she stroked them down the thick, long shaft. The skin was so soft—softer than silk or velvet. And he was hard as steel beneath. He shuddered, and she lifted her eyes to find his gaze fixed on her hand.</p> <p>“How do you like it?” she asked, her voice breathy as hot need washed through her. She wrapped her hand around his cock—her fingers barely able to reach around him completely. “Gentle?” She made a feather-soft pass over him, squeezing lightly.</p> <p>Cassian shook his head, as if beyond words.</p> <p>She stroked him again, slightly harder. “Like this?”</p> <p>His chest heaved, his teeth shining as he gritted them. But he shook his head.</p> <p>Nesta smiled, and when she pumped him a third time, she squeezed hard, letting her nails graze the sensitive underside of his shaft.</p> <p>His hips arced off the chair, and she pinned a hand to them. “I see,” she murmured, and did it again. Harder still, twisting her fist as she reached the round head.</p> <p>He tried to arch into her hand, but she pinned him again with that other hand.</p> <p>“And this?” she purred, head lowering. “Do you like this?”</p> <p>Nesta licked across his broad head, tongue sliding into the small slit across its tip.</p> <p>She licked up the small bead of moisture already gathered there. Everything in her body turned molten; a surge of wetness slicked between her thighs as the taste of him filled her mouth, salt and something more, something vital.</p> <p>“Oh, gods,” Cassian panted. And the words, the groan they were borne on, were so delicious that Nesta sucked his tip into her mouth and grazed her tongue along its underside.</p> <p>He leaned his head back against the chair, hissing.</p> <p>She licked up his shaft in one long motion. Rubbed her thighs together as she tasted him, felt all that hot, proud steel against her mouth. She licked down the other side, coating him, making it easier for herself as she put her mouth around him again and slid him between her lips.</p> <p>He filled her almost immediately, and she glanced down to discover there was enough of him still exposed that she needed to add her hand. “Nesta,” he pleaded, and she made another pass at him, pulling him out nearly all the way before swallowing him again, letting her throat relax, desperate for as much of him in her mouth as could fit.</p> <p>Cassian's hand speared into her hair, gripping, and she realized he was holding himself back. Didn't want to ram himself into her, hurt her, displease her.</p> <p>And that wouldn't do. Not at all.</p> <p>She wanted him undone, wanted him grabbing her head and fucking her mouth as hard as he wished.</p> <p>So when Nesta took him into her mouth again, hand working in unison, she dragged her teeth. Lightly enough to hurt—just a bit.</p> <p>Cassian bucked, and she let him, swallowing him down greedily, squeezing him with her hand enough to tell him she wanted this, wanted him to let himself go. She withdrew her lips to the tip of him, rolling her tongue around him, and gazed at him from under her lashes.</p> <p>His eyes were on her, wide and glazed with lust.</p> <p>And when Cassian met her stare, beheld her looking up at him—</p> <p>He unleashed himself.</p> <p>He couldn't take it. It was torture, a special kind of torture, to have Nesta kneeling before him</p>

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	<p>with his cock in her mouth and hand and not be able to roar with pleasure. But then she stared at him through her lashes, and the sight of her with his cock between her lips snapped something.</p> <p>He didn't care that they were in the dining room, that a wall of windows and doors lined half the space and anyone flying by might see.</p> <p>Cassian slid his other hand into her hair, fingers twining into her braided coronet, and he thrust up into her mouth.</p> <p>She took him deep, and moaned so loudly it reverberated along his cock and straight into his balls. They tightened further, and release gathered in his spine, a scorching knot that had him arcing into her mouth again. He was utterly at her mercy.</p> <p>Nesta moaned once more, a soft encouragement, and Cassian needed nothing else. Gripping her hair, her scalp, holding her in place, he thrust his hips. She met him with each stroke, mouth and hand working in unison, until the slick heat of her, the teeth that sometimes grazed him, teased him, the tightness of her fist—they were unbearable, were all he cared about.</p> <p>Cassian fucked her mouth, and her moaning had him deciding he'd fuck the rest of her, too. Strip those pants off her and drive into her so hard she'd be screaming his name to the ceiling. He made to pull out, but Nesta refused to move. He growled, his fingers clamping on her head to still her. "I want to be inside you," he managed to say, his voice like gravel.</p> <p>But Nesta looked up at him again from under her lashes, and he watched his length disappear into her mouth. His tip bumped against the back of her throat. Oh, gods. He clenched his teeth. "I want to finish inside you." Nesta only huffed a laugh, and sucked him down so deep that he couldn't stop it. Couldn't stop the release as she slid her other hand into his pants and cupped his balls, squeezing softly. Cassian came with a roar that shook the glasses on the table, arcing up into her as he spilled himself down her throat.</p> <p>She weathered it, weathered him, and when he'd stopped shuddering, she smoothly, gracefully, slid her mouth off him.</p> <p>Nesta held his stare while she swallowed. Swallowed down every ounce of what he'd spilled into her mouth. And then her lips curved upward, a queen triumphant.</p> <p>Cassian panted, not caring that his cock was still out, slick and leaking, only that she was mere inches away and he was going to return this particular favor she'd given him.</p> <p>Nesta rose to her feet, eyes flicking to his cock. The heat in her gaze threatened to burn him, and the scent of her arousal wrapped itself around him and dug its claws in deep.</p> <p>"Take off your pants," he growled.</p> <p>Nesta's smile only grew, pure feline amusement.</p> <p>He'd fuck her on this table. Right now. He didn't care about anything else, about the common space they were in or Eris or Briallyn or Koschei or the Dread Trove. He needed to be inside her, to feel that hot tightness around him and claim her as she had claimed him.</p> <p>Nesta's fingers slid to the buttons and laces of her pants, and he shook as he watched them free the top button—</p> <p>Steps scuffed down the hall. A warning. From someone who knew how to remain silent.</p> <p>Cassian stiffened, then shoved his aching cock into his pants. Nesta heard the sound and moved a few feet away, refastening that top button.</p>
293	<p>"You let her suck your cock in the middle of the dining room. At a table I'm currently using to eat my dinner. I'd say that entitles me to an opinion."</p>
295	<p>The taste of him lingered in her mouth, as if he'd branded himself onto her tongue. She'd lain awake in bed last night thinking of every stroke, every sound he'd made, still feeling</p>

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	<p>the press of his fingers into her head as he'd thrust into her mouth. The memory alone had made her slide a hand between her legs, and she'd needed to find release twice before her body calmed enough to sleep.</p>
298	<p>He'd refused to think of what she'd done to him in the dining room while they'd been training, especially with Gwyn there, but seeing Nesta's tentative smile as she'd shoved the tea and spices into a bag had him suppressing the urge to push her against the wall and kiss her. ...If she had, it implied some level of caring about his well-being, didn't it? And pity. Fuck, if she'd sucked him because she pitied him—No. It hadn't been that. He'd seen the desire in her eyes, felt the softness of her mouth on his neck in those initial touches. It had been comfort, given in the only way she knew how.</p>
306	<p>As Rhys soared above the House's wards, just before he winnowed to Windhaven, he said to Cassian, I don't know what the fuck the two of you have been doing in this House, but it reeks of sex.</p>
337	<p>"I'm taking my cues from you. You seemed to have no interest in me after ..." He nodded to the table between them, the floor where she'd knelt between his legs. "I didn't hurt you, did I?" Nesta let out a rough laugh. "No, you didn't hurt me." She reached across the table, tracing a finger down his arm before meeting his eyes. "I loved it when you fucked my mouth, Cassian." His eyes darkened. She rose, and he went wholly still as she rounded the table and came to a stop beside his chair. "Do you want to fuck me on this table?" she asked softly, running a hand over the smooth surface. He shuddered, as if he imagined that touch on his skin. "Yes," he said, voice guttural. "On this table, on this chair, on every surface in the House." "I don't think the House would appreciate such filthy behavior. Even if it's a romance reader as well." "I ... What?" His breath had turned uneven. She leaned in to press a kiss against his torn mouth. It wasn't a loving gesture. Wasn't even a sweet one. It was a challenge and a wicked taunt to forget their fear and pain and come tangle with her. "I have no interest in bedding a male who looks like he's been in a tavern brawl," she said onto his lips. "We can dim the lights." Nesta chuckled. Desire had fogged his eyes, and she knew if she looked down, she'd see the evidence of how affected he was. But she wouldn't give herself that temptation. He'd be her reward—but only after she'd accomplished the scrying. Her lips curved. "When you're healed and looking pretty again," she said, pulling away, "then I'll let you fuck me wherever you please in this House." Cassian's hands dug into the arms of his chair, as if restraining himself from leaping upon her. But his mouth parted in a savage grin. "Deal."</p>
343	<p>"Let go of the stones and bones, and then you and I can play," Cassian said, letting her sense his heat and need, forcing himself to remember that taunting kiss at dinner and her promise to let him fuck her wherever he wished in the House; what it had done to him, how much he'd ached. He let it all blaze in his eyes, let the scent of his arousal wrap around her. Everyone tensed as he leaned in, head dipping, and kissed her. ...Nipped at her bottom lip until he felt it drop a fraction. He slid his tongue into that opening, and found the inside of her mouth, usually so soft and warm, crusted with hoarfrost. ...So Cassian sent his heat into it, fusing their mouths together, his free hand bracing her hip as his Siphons nipped at her hand once more. Her mouth opened wider, and he slid his tongue over every inch- over her frozen teeth, over</p>

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	<p>the roof of her mouth. Warming, softening, freezing.            Her tongue lifted to meet his in a single stroke that cracked the ice in her mouth.            He slanted his mouth over her, tugging her against his chest, and tasted her as he'd wanted to taste her the other night, deep and thorough and claiming. Her tongue again brushed against his, and then her body was warming, and Cassian pulled back enough to say against her lips, "Let go, Nesta."            He drove his mouth into hers again, daring her to unleash that cold fire upon him.</p>
365	<p>When he had disarmed her, her lungs were burning again, and she felt that thin male body pushing her into the bottom once more as he shoved his mouth to hers.            She gagged, but opened for him, letting him fill her mouth with another life-giving breath that had nothing to do with kindness. His tongue wriggled like a worm against hers, and his spindly, too-large hands ran down her breasts, her waist, and when she gagged again, fighting against her sob, his laugh puffed through her lips.            He pulled away, rows of teeth ripping at her mouth as he did, and she shook when he lingered, stroking at her hair.</p>
384	<p>When he had disarmed her, her lungs were burning again, and she felt that thin male body pushing her into the bottom once more as he shoved his mouth to hers.            She gagged, but opened for him, letting him fill her mouth with another life-giving breath that had nothing to do with kindness. His tongue wriggled like a worm against hers, and his spindly, too-large hands ran down her breasts, her waist, and when she gagged again, fighting against her sob, his laugh puffed through her lips.            He pulled away, rows of teeth ripping at her mouth as he did, and she shook when he lingered, stroking at her hair.</p>
385	<p>She smiled, watching his gaze drop with every piece of her revealed. Another step upward had her sex bared to him. "It did not make me happy." She reached the floor of the room.            Through what Nesta knew was five hundred years of will, Cassian lifted his focus to her face as she walked to him, water dripping off her body. "You want to do this?" he breathed.            "Yes." She stopped a foot away, her wet hair draped along her torso, and stared up into his face. His eyes burned like hazel stars. Nesta gave him a smile that was pure Fae. "Just sex."            The words seemed to spark something, because Cassian blinked. "Right. Just sex." He didn't say it as lightly as she did. And still didn't reach for her.            So she said, "There can be nothing more than sex, Cassian."            His jaw tightened, and he seemed to struggle with some internal battle before he said darkly, "Then I'll take whatever you offer me." He leaned in, his body still not touching hers, and said against her ear, "And I'll take you however you wish me to."            Her toes curled on the stones, her hair dripping. "And if I wish to take you?"            He smiled against her ear. "Then I'll beg you to ride me into oblivion."            She went molten, and from the way his wings tucked in, she knew he could scent the wetness building between her thighs.            Cassian gently pulled her wet hair from her breasts. Her breathing came in sharp pants as he traced the tip of a finger around her nipple. Then did it again.            Words eluded her. She couldn't remember any of them, couldn't remember anything except that one finger, circling her nipple, her entire body throbbing with need.            Cassian flicked her nipple, a hard, sharp bite that made her whimper.            Desperate for more of him, for all of him, Nesta said, "Do what you want."            He circled her nipple again, a predator playing with its dinner. "That doesn't sound very</p>



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	<p>exciting, do what you want.” He clamped her nipple between his thumb and forefinger, the demand in it enough that she looked up at his face. He was the portrait of male arrogance, a warrior poised to conquer, and she nearly climaxed at the sight of it. His eyes darkened. “The way you sometimes look at me makes me think such filthy things, Nesta.”</p> <p>“Do them. Do all of them.”</p> <p>He pinched her nipple just short of drawing pain, and she arched into the touch, a silent plea for more, for him to unleash himself. “We don’t have time in one night for all the things I want to do to you, with you. Every place I want to touch and fill you.”</p> <p>She rubbed her thighs together, desperate for any friction. “Then do your best.”</p> <p>Cassian laughed darkly, but his other hand came up to her untouched breast, circling as well. She watched his light brown fingers play against her pale skin, watched him touch her like he wanted to map every inch of her body and had all the time in the world to do it. Below his waist, she could just make out his hardness.</p> <p>“Do you want to suck me again?” he whispered against her ear. “Do you want me down your throat again?”</p> <p>Nesta let out a confirming whimper.</p> <p>“Did you still taste me days later?”</p> <p>She couldn’t answer, couldn’t reveal the truth.</p> <p>His fingers clamped on her nipples, drawing just enough pain that she went wholly wet. “Did you?”</p> <p>“Yes. I tasted you for days.” The words tumbled out, and with them, clarity and hunger sharpened her focus. Ripped her from that needy daze. “I’ve thought about your cock in my mouth every night since, while I had my hand between my legs.”</p> <p>He growled, and she skimmed a hand against his hardness, squeezing. She lifted her head and met his darkened stare, baring her teeth. “I thought about your head between my legs, too,” she said, heart thundering, “and how your tongue slid into me.” She squeezed him again.</p> <p>Cassian groaned, and his thumbs caressed her too-sensitive nipples.</p> <p>Nesta put her other hand on his chest, backing him toward the bed, and he went willingly, letting her set the pace, the location. “I promised that you could fuck me wherever you wanted in the House,” she said, her voice a deep, rolling purr that she barely recognized. The backs of his thighs hit the bed, and he halted her, one hand dropping to her waist to steady them. “But this isn’t the House.” His breathing rasped around them as she smiled up at his drawn, taut features. “So I think that means we’ll fuck wherever I want.”</p> <p>Cassian grinned, and the hand at her waist swept down to cup her bare ass. He squeezed one cheek. “As long as I still get to fuck you in the House.”</p> <p>She met his savage grin. “Good.”</p> <p>His hand drifted further south, between her legs, feeling her from behind. His fingers brushed against the wetness pooled there, and he swore, drawing his hand back, holding it between them. Her wetness gleamed on his two fingers, and his eyes glittered with predatory intent as he lifted them to his mouth and licked them, one by one.</p> <p>Her body ached, clamping around emptiness, desperate for something to fill it. For him to fill it. She stroked her fingers down the length of his cock, still trapped within his pants. And as she made a second pass, he slanted his mouth over hers.</p> <p>It was a grazing, taunting kiss.</p> <p>She bit his lower lip. And then he was grabbing her to him, crushing their bodies together, both hands now gripping her ass as he pressed her against his length. Their open mouths clashed and met, and she tasted herself on his tongue, her fingers grappling in his silken hair, dragging</p>

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	<p>against his scalp.</p> <p>Cassian twisted, flipping them, and then she was lying flat against the mattress as he stood before her.</p> <p>He tore his mouth away as he propped her legs on the bed, folding them at the knees. As he tugged her to the mattress's edge, so that her sex was on display for him.</p> <p>He knelt, wings rising above him, and dragged his tongue clean up her center.</p> <p>Nesta moaned at the same moment he did, and he let her writhe, as if he knew it'd torment her more to undulate, but to have nothing to fill her, not until he wished it. He gave her another savoring lick, lingering at the apex of her thighs, sucking the bundle of nerves into his mouth, nipping with his teeth, before he began again.</p> <p>Again. Again.</p> <p>He was devouring her, melting her body like a piece of chocolate on his tongue.</p> <p>She couldn't endure it, and she clasped her own breast, desperate for more touch, more sensation. He looked up from between her legs and marked her hand kneading her breast. Marked it and smiled, his teeth flashing white against the flushed gleam of her. "Do you like seeing me kneel before you?" he asked, the words rumbling into her very core. He dipped his tongue into her. "You taste like you do."</p> <p>Nesta arched, thrusting herself further onto his tongue, but Cassian only laughed against her and denied her what she wished. He gave her another slow, slow lick from base to top, and as he reached that bundle of nerves, he slid two fingers into her.</p> <p>Two, not one, because he seemed to know she was already waiting for him, that she wanted him unbound and rough and wild. She bowed off the bed, and he thrust his fingers in again, his breathing uneven as he said, "How do you want it?"</p> <p>He pumped his hand into her again, wringing out her reply. "Hard," she gasped.</p> <p>"Thank the Mother," he swore, and she heard metal clicking and leather whispering, and then his tongue caressed her again, past that bundle of nerves, up her stomach, to her breasts, until he was over her.</p> <p>Cassian moved her further onto the bed. She didn't care that her legs fell open for him, only cared that he was now naked, and all that rippling muscle and golden skin gleamed above her. He lowered himself to the cradle of her thighs, and his eyes were so wide she could see the whites around them. He opened his mouth, but she didn't want to hear the words, didn't want to know whatever he'd been about to say. She framed his face in her hands and kissed him savagely, her tongue scraping over his teeth as she ground their mouths together.</p> <p>The broad tip of his cock nudged at her entrance, slipping in the slickness there, and he reached down to guide himself in.</p> <p>At Cassian's first prod into her body, fire erupted within her. She panted into his mouth, nipping at his bottom lip as he eased himself in. Just an inch.</p> <p>He halted. He was large enough that the stretching was edged in sweetest pain—large enough that she wondered if she'd be able to fit all of him. He trembled, holding himself barely inside her, as if he were now wondering the same.</p> <p>His hesitation, his care, melted some ice-cold shard within her. And made her snap free of any restraint.</p> <p>Nesta gripped his ass, muscles flexing beneath her fingertips, and hauled him into her. Only another inch. Only another inch, because Cassian braced his arms against the bed, hips pulling against her hold. "I'll hurt you."</p> <p>"I don't care." She ran her tongue over his jaw.</p> <p>"I do," he ground out, body straining as she attempted to pull him into her. "Nesta."</p>

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	<p>Her fingers dug in again, her very blood and bones crying out for more of him, but he refused to move.</p> <p>“Nesta. Look at me.”</p> <p>Fighting the roaring of her body, she obeyed. Heat blazed in his eyes, and something more than that. “Look at me,” Cassian breathed.</p> <p>Gods spare her, but she did. She couldn’t take her gaze off him. Found herself free-falling into his darkened eyes, his beautiful face.</p> <p>His hips flexed, and he slid in another inch—then retreated nearly to her edge.</p> <p>Their breathing synced, and Nesta stilled beneath him, a feeling of utter calm, utter fullness spreading through her as his hips moved again, and he pushed back in, a little farther this time. Cassian held her gaze through each small thrust, each retreat. He stretched her, filling her inch by inch, and Nesta knew he’d been right to go slow for this first joining.</p> <p>Retreating and advancing, Cassian filled her. They said nothing, only shared breath, their eyes wide as they gazed at each other.</p> <p>He pulled outward again, the movement long enough this time that she knew he was nearly all the way in. He halted, his cock barely inside her, and studied her face. A conquering warrior-god. He had called her Lady Death, and he was her sword.</p> <p>Cassian leaned down to kiss her. And as his tongue slid into her mouth, he thrust home in a mighty, final push.</p> <p>Nesta moaned as he slammed to the hilt, and the full impact of him hit her, stretched her, and she couldn’t breathe fast enough. Cassian withdrew again, and slammed back into her, propelling their bodies farther onto the bed.</p> <p>He groaned this time, and the sound was her undoing. She wrapped her legs around his back, careful of his wings, and lifted her hips to meet his. He sank even deeper, and she dug her nails into his shoulders.</p> <p>Gods—nothing had ever felt so good, so full, so burning with pleasure. Nothing had ever felt like this, nothing.</p> <p>Cassian set the pace, smooth and deep, and for a moment, it was all Nesta could do to match him stroke for stroke. For a moment, she looked between their bodies to where his cock plunged into her, so thick and long and gleaming with her that she tightened around him, her release already building.</p> <p>He felt her inner muscles squeeze him harder and growled, “Fuck, Nesta.”</p> <p>And she liked seeing him undone enough that she did it again, clenching on him just as he seated himself fully. He arched into it, fingers digging into the bed. “Fuck,” he repeated.</p> <p>It wasn’t enough, though. Wasn’t close to enough. She wanted Cassian roaring, wanted him so lost that he couldn’t remember his own name.</p> <p>Nesta halted him with a hand on his chest. Just one hand, and he stopped, utterly at her command. If she wanted it to end here, it would.</p> <p>It softened her enough that she couldn’t quite keep the tremor out of her voice as she said, “I want you deeper.”</p> <p>Cassian panted, eyes wild, as she crawled out of his arms. As she turned onto her stomach and lifted her backside for him, offering herself.</p> <p>He made a low sound of need. She arched her hips higher, inviting him to take, to feast. His restraint shattered. He was on her in an instant, lifting her hips higher as he sheathed himself in a single thrust. Nesta screamed then, a sound of such pleasure she knew it echoed off the mountains, feeling him hit the deepest spot of her.</p> <p>Cassian pounded into her, a hand moving from her hip to her hair, tugging her head back,</p>

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	<p>baring her throat. She gave herself over to it, to him, and the lack of control was heady, so pleasurable that she could barely stand it. He thrust harder, so deep with this angle that she might have been screaming again, might have been sobbing.</p> <p>His other hand drifted between her legs, his cock pounding into her, her hair gripped like reins in one hand, her pleasure in his other. She was utterly at his mercy, and he knew it—he was snarling with desire, slamming home so hard his balls slapped against her.</p> <p>The silken touch had her erupting.</p> <p>Her climax crashed upon her, out of her, her inner muscles clenching him tight.</p> <p>Cassian roared, the sound echoing through the room, and he became utterly wild as release found him and he spilled into her with such force that his seed ran down her thighs.</p> <p>And then his weight fell upon her back, and only an arm that he threw out to brace them kept them from collapsing.</p> <p>Reeling, Nesta could only breathe, breathe, breathe.</p> <p>Cassian lay buried in her, and it felt so good, so right, that she wanted him always this deep in her, his seed spilling down her legs, forever.</p> <p>“Oh, gods,” he whispered against her spine, over the tattoo inked along it. “That was ...”</p> <p>“I know,” she panted. “I know.”</p> <p>It was as much as she’d confess. As much as she’d let herself admit.</p> <p>Too good. It had felt too good, and nothing and no one would ever compare to it.</p> <p>He said, voice shaking, “I’ve made a mess of you.”</p> <p>She buried her face in the blanket. “I like it.”</p> <p>Cassian went still, but he gently extracted himself from her in a long, long pull. He dragged his seed with him, and another rush of it tickled down her thighs, dripping on the blanket, as he pulled out fully. She didn’t move. Couldn’t move. Didn’t want to move.</p> <p>She felt him kneeling behind her, staring at the ass she still held upward, the view it presented.</p> <p>“I shouldn’t enjoy seeing that so much,” he growled.</p> <p>Her breasts tightened. But she asked coyly, “Seeing what?”</p> <p>“You. Covered in me. That beautiful sex of yours.”</p> <p>She blushed and lowered her body to the mattress. “No one has ever called it beautiful.”</p>
393	When he lifted his head, he threw her a wicked smile. “Just sex, right?”
399	Something to do with her only wanting sex, something to do with the sex being the best damn sex he'd ever had, and how it had left him in veritable pieces.
401	Every thought of sex, of how good it had felt, eddied from her head as she lifted the blade before her.
405	<p>He hadn't sought her out last night...</p> <p>...The sex had been that good...</p>
426	No longer did it hang off her. She’d packed on enough weight that the bodice was again formfitting, and those lush breasts swelled gracefully above the scooped neckline.
432	<p>As if the House had noted her dislike for fires and heated it another way.</p> <p>...She said before he’d reached the archway, “Was it not good for you?”</p> <p>Cassian turned slowly. “What?”</p> <p>A flush stained her cheeks as she lifted her chin. “Was the sex not good for you?”</p> <p>He swallowed. “Why would you ask that?”</p> <p>Nesta’s throat bobbed. She was ... Fuck, was she really that unsure of him? “You left quickly. And didn’t seek me out again.”</p> <p>...“How could I be so selfish—to demand more sex from you when you’re so invested in</p>

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	<p>training?"</p> <p>"It's not a demand if both sides want it," she said. "And I just worried you ... didn't enjoy it as much as I did."</p> <p>"You think I haven't sought you out because I didn't enjoy myself?" When she said nothing, he braced his hands on either side of her and leaned in to whisper in her ear, breathing in her scent, "I enjoyed myself too much. I've thought about it for days and days." She shivered, and he smiled against the soft shell of her ear. He loved this—seeing that icy exterior crumble, seeing how he affected her. "Have you been touching yourself at night, thinking about it like I do?"</p> <p>Nesta's chin dipped in the barest of nods, and from the corner of his eye, he spied a flash of her teeth as she bit her bottom lip. "Have those sweet little fingers felt as good as mine?" Her breathing hitched, but she wouldn't answer. He knew she didn't want to give him the satisfaction. He nipped at her earlobe, drawing a gasp from her. "Well?"</p> <p>"I don't know," she whispered. "I'd have to see again."</p> <p>"Hmm." Cassian lowered his mouth, pressing a kiss beneath her ear. His cock hardened, already aching against his pants. "Shall we do a little side-by-side comparison?"</p> <p>She whimpered, and he crawled onto the bed, straddling her legs. His blood pounded through every inch of him, in time to the pulse in his cock, and he pulled away from her neck to find her eyes bright with desire.</p> <p>The world quieted, and she stared and stared at him as he slowly pulled the blankets down to her waist. Her nightgown was rucked up her thighs, and he ran a hand over one of them, thumb stroking the sleek muscles building there. "Why don't you show me how you touch yourself, Nesta? And then I'll remind you how I touch you." He bared his teeth in a wicked grin. "You can tell me what feels better."</p> <p>Her chest heaved, her pebbled breasts peeking through the nightgown. His mouth watered, body trembling with the restraint needed to keep from putting his mouth over them. She seemed to read every line of his body, his desire. Her eyes glinted with molten fire. "While I ... touch myself, you are forbidden to touch me." A feral smile. "And forbidden to touch yourself."</p> <p>His skin heated, stretching too tight over his bones. "All right."</p> <p>Cassian waited for her to nestle into the pillows, but she grabbed the hem of her nightgown to pull it over herself, bunching it into a ball before chucking it to the floor.</p> <p>Every thought eddied from his mind as she half-reclined there, utterly naked, those beautiful breasts peaked and waiting for him, her silken flesh near-glowing. And between her legs ... She drew her knees up slightly, spreading them. Baring herself.</p> <p>Cassian made a low, pained sound. Her pink sex gleamed—its heady, seductive scent beckoning. He needed to taste it, to feel her on his tongue, on his cock—</p> <p>"No touching," Nesta purred, because his hand had been drifting toward his cock, desperate for any sort of relief from the sight of her open and bare, the faelights gilding her.</p> <p>His breath rasped in his throat—and then vanished entirely as Nesta slid two delicate fingers down her body. They stopped atop that bundle of nerves, circling slowly.</p> <p>Her breathing turned uneven, but she watched him observe her as she made another circle, and then moved lower. A slow, torturous slide down her center before her wrist curved, and she dipped her fingers into herself.</p> <p>Cassian groaned, hips bucking a bit where he knelt, and she cut him a reprimanding look. He stilled, unable to think about anything other than her two fingers as she slid them into herself again, and moaned. They emerged shining with her wetness, and he might have been panting</p>

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	<p>as she plunged them into herself a third time, deep and slow.</p> <p>“This,” she breathed, her fingers beginning a slow, steady pump, “is what I do when I think of you every night.”</p> <p>If she so much as touched him, he’d come. But he growled, “Do it harder.”</p> <p>She shivered as if his words were a physical touch, and obeyed. They both groaned this time, and he found himself saying, “Please.”</p> <p>He didn’t know what it meant—only that he needed to touch her. Nesta smiled at him with feline amusement. “Not yet.”</p> <p>She drove her hand between her legs again. “I imagine you taking me, over and over again. Rough, like we did before.” He couldn’t breathe, couldn’t do anything but stare at her hand, her pleasure-hazed face. “I imagine you less patient than you were the first time, just thrusting into me, all the way.” She echoed her words with a swift plunge of her fingers.</p> <p>“I don’t want to hurt you,” he got out, praying to the Mother and the Cauldron to maintain his sanity.</p> <p>“You won’t hurt me.” Her other hand teased that bundle of nerves. “I want you unleashed.”</p> <p>Cassian made a low noise of need.</p> <p>She huffed a wicked laugh. “Do you want to watch me come? Or do you want to taste it?”</p> <p>“Taste.” He’d beg on hot coals for one lick of her.</p> <p>She spread her legs wider. “Then have at me, Cassian.”</p> <p>His name on her lips was his undoing. He gripped her thighs and spread them wide, and then his mouth was on her, licking her from base to apex in a long, luxurious slide.</p> <p>She moaned, louder than the first time, and he only grabbed her legs again, hooking them over his shoulders as he buried his face against her.</p> <p>There was nothing gentle in it, nothing teasing. He feasted with tongue and lips and teeth, and every taste of her made the roaring in his blood rise like a mighty wave within him. Nesta ground against him, toes tickling his wings so much he had to pause for a moment to keep from coming at that mere touch. He’d teach her wingplay later. Because he wanted her to touch his wings, to learn where to stroke while he fucked her so that he’d come hard enough to see stars, to learn what places to stroke even while he wasn’t fucking her so he’d come in her hand, her mouth.</p> <p>He slid his tongue into her core, release already building under his skin, in his spine. Too soon—he didn’t want to go too soon.</p> <p>He made himself take a breath. Made himself pull back, pull away. The sight of her on the pillows, naked and open for him, nearly made him come.</p> <p>But he removed his shirt. His pants.</p> <p>Only when he was naked, kneeling between her legs, his cock jutting forward, did he say, “Do you want my fingers, my tongue, or my cock, Nesta?” He fisted the last item for her, pumping himself in a slow, nearly painful squeeze. She watched, eyes widening, as if remembering the size of him inside her.</p> <p>“What of a side-by-side comparison?” she managed to say, but the haughtiness wasn’t in her eyes, not as he pumped himself again, savoring how it made her breath catch.</p> <p>“Whatever you want. Whatever you need from me.” He knew those were a fool’s words, knew he offered up too much.</p> <p>But she only looked at his cock. “I want that. Now.”</p> <p>He muttered a prayer of thanks to the Mother and lay over her, bracing himself on his arms.</p> <p>“Put me inside you.”</p> <p>When Nesta’s hand wrapped around him, he arched, gritting his teeth. She smiled at that, and</p>



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	<p>pumped him as hard as he'd pumped himself, just this side of pain. Then she fitted him to her drenched entrance.</p> <p>He didn't wait this time. Didn't go tenderly, not when she'd told him she wanted it otherwise. Cassian plunged into her, driving right to the hilt.</p> <p>Nesta let out a sound somewhere between a moan and a scream, and he found himself echoing it as all her silken, blazing heat gripped him. She was so perfectly, mind-meltingly tight. As if she'd been made for him, and he'd been made for her.</p> <p>Cassian drew out in a long slide, and thrust back, seating himself fully. Her fingernails dug into his shoulders, the pain of it secondary, the pain of it a pleasure as she marked him.</p> <p>He withdrew again, lowering his head to watch his cock slide out of her, gleaming with her wetness—and then enter her anew. Every inch into that tight, blazing core of her was paradise and torment, and he needed more, needed to be deeper, needed to crawl so far inside her that there would be no disentangling them.</p> <p>Her nails sliced through his skin, and the tang of his blood filled the air. He just leaned down to kiss her. She parted for him instantly, and he let her taste herself on his tongue, moving his own in time to his thrusts.</p> <p>Nesta wrapped her lips around his tongue and sucked on it as she had his cock, and any sane thought faded away. Gathering her to him, Cassian knelt, her legs locking around his waist as he thrust up and up and up into her. She tipped her head back, baring her throat, and he bit down on the center of it, hard enough to leave a mark.</p> <p>Nesta moved on his cock, and he drove deeper into her. Scraped his teeth over her neck.</p> <p>She let go of his shoulder to cup her breast, and he nearly climaxed as he found her lifting it up toward him in silent command.</p> <p>Cassian licked her nipple, and she ground onto him, those delicate inner muscles clenching tight. "Fuck," he said around her breast. She laughed breathily and did it again.</p> <p>Then there was only his tongue and teeth at her breast, the near-savage pounding of his cock into her tight warmth, the rhythm of her hips as she met him for each stroke, as if trying to work him even deeper. He dragged his mouth from her breast to bite her neck, her shoulder, sealing their bodies together, fusing them into one being as he thrust deeper still, harder still. And then her fingers found his wings. The touch wasn't slicing, but gentle—such a gentle, tentative, wondrous stroke that he roared.</p> <p>Release barreled into him, and he rammed up into her in such a mighty thrust that she screamed, climaxing with him. She clamped around him, pulsing and milking, and he bucked, frenzied, reduced to this need to be in her, to spill into her, to spill as much of himself as he could.</p> <p>Nesta rode him until he'd stopped spurting, until her pleasure had her draped over his chest, an arm still outstretched toward his wing.</p> <p>They clung to each other, and he tried to piece himself back together, to remember what the fuck his name was and where they were.</p> <p>But there was only her. Only this female in his arms.</p> <p>And the only name he could remember was hers.</p> <p>Nesta couldn't move.</p> <p>Wrapped around Cassian where he knelt in the center of the bed, his hands still digging into her ass to hold her in place, his cock buried deeply inside her, she didn't want to move. She'd never been this way with anyone, where one look from her lover brought her a heartbeat away from release; one look from him and she was taking off her clothes and pleasuring herself in front of him.</p>

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	<p>She didn't have it in herself to be embarrassed. Not when it had felt so good, so right. He was trembling, his wings twitching as his cock at last finished spending itself. She told herself she shouldn't enjoy it so much—seeing him undone, feeling his seed inside her, leaking out of her. And the fact that she did had her climbing away at last, moaning softly as she slid off his cock.</p> <p>She knelt before him, nearly knee to knee. "I still need more."</p> <p>Cassian's head lifted, eyes flashing. "I know."</p> <p>She couldn't breathe under that stare, that beautiful face. "How can I need you again so soon?" It wasn't a coy, courtier's question—it was voiced out of sheer desperation. Because she did need more. She needed him back inside her, needed his weight, his mouth and teeth on her. She had no explanation for it, that rising, unquenchable thirst.</p> <p>His eyes flickered. "I've needed you from the moment I first met you. And now that I get to have you, I don't want to stop."</p> <p>"Yes," she breathed, about as much of the truth as she'd admit. "Yes."</p> <p>They stared at each other for a long minute, for eternity. And then, to her shock and delight, Cassian hardened before her eyes. "Do you see what you do to me?" he asked. "Do you see what happens every time I look at you, all fucking day?"</p> <p>She smirked. "I vaguely recall you boasting weeks ago that I would be the one to crawl into your bed. It seems like you did the crawling."</p> <p>His lips twitched upward. "It would seem so." Her heart thundered as he held her stare. "Get on your hands and knees," he ordered, his voice so low she could barely understand him. But her blood heated, and an ache that had nothing to do with how hard he'd just taken her began to build between her legs once more.</p> <p>So Nesta did as he bade, baring herself, still wet and gleaming with both of their releases. He snarled in satisfaction. "Beautiful." She whimpered a bit—because beneath the praise, pure lust simmered. He growled, "Put your hands on the headboard."</p> <p>Her breath began sawing out of her again, but she obeyed, already thrumming with need. Cassian rose behind her, gripping her hips. He knocked a knee against each of her own, spreading her legs wider. Callused fingertips brushed down the length of her spine, over the tattoo there, the ink binding them.</p> <p>He leaned to whisper in her ear, "Hold on tight."</p>
441	<p>The understanding had been there, though: just sex, but they needn't wait so long again. Sleep had been elusive as he'd thought of what they'd done, what he'd done to her. The second time had been even rougher than the first, and she'd taken everything he'd thrown at her, met his demanding pace and depth, and had held that headboard until her body had collapsed with pleasure. Gods, sex with Nesta was like ...</p> <p>He didn't let himself dwell on comparisons as he sat in Rhys's office next to Amren and Azriel, facing their High Lord across his desk. Those thoughts had not done him any favors last night. Or this morning, when he woke hard and aching, and realized that the scent of her was all over him.</p> <p>He knew his friends smelled it.</p>
445	<p>"I'd be careful when you're fucking her," Amren added, lips curling in a sneer. "Who knows what she might transform you into when her emotions are high?"</p>
463	<p>Nesta endured all of a minute until she'd needed to touch him, and had pivoted, letting him continue devouring her while she'd stretched down his body and taken him into her mouth. She'd never done that- feasted and been feasted upon- and he'd come on her tongue just</p>

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	<p>before she'd come on his. They'd waited only a short time, panting in silence on her bed, before she climbed over him, stroking him with her hand, then her mouth, and when he was ready, she'd sunk onto him, taking in each marvelous, thick inch. With him stretching and filling her so deliciously, she'd climaxed swiftly. He'd chased her pleasure with his own, gripping her hips and bucking into her, hitting that perfect spot and sending her climaxing again. She'd been slightly, pleasantly sore this morning, and he'd winked at her across the breakfast table, as if aware of how tender certain areas were while sitting.</p>
481	<p>Amren smiled, as if she knew that, too. "You can train as hard as you want, fuck Cassian as often as you want, but it isn't going to fix what's broken if you don't start reflecting."</p>
514	<p>Cassian, however, approached Gwyn's handiwork and ran the white silk between two fingers. Nesta couldn't stop her blush.</p> <p>He'd done that by the lake: after he'd fucked her with his fingers, he'd held her gaze while he rubbed them together, testing the slide of her wetness against his skin the same way he was touching that ribbon. From the way his hazel eyes darkened, she knew he was recalling the same.</p>
516	<p>Not as they finished training for the day, and certainly not when she dragged Cassian down the stairs, straight to his bedroom, need bellowing in her veins.</p> <p>Cassian apparently felt the same, as he'd scarcely spoken these last few minutes, his eyes blazing bright. They only made it as far as his desk against the wall before she'd grabbed him—right as he'd pushed her down onto the wooden surface and stripped off her pants.</p> <p>Bent over the desk, her bottom half entirely exposed, Nesta ground her aching nipples into the wood surface, savoring the brutal crush. Her jacket, her shirt, her boots—all stayed on. In fact, her pants were only pushed down to her ankles, restricting her movement further. Leaving her utterly at his mercy.</p> <p>And as his cock at last sank deep into her, the two of them groaned. He stood behind her, one hand braced on the desk, the other clenching her hip as he pulled out nearly to the tip, then pushed back in slowly. Nesta writhed.</p> <p>"I could fuck you for days," he said against her sweaty neck. She moaned into a pile of papers. "I'm fucking soaked with you," he growled, and the hand at her hip slid around to tease the apex of her thighs.</p> <p>At the first taunting stroke, she breathed, "Cassian."</p> <p>He pounded into her at a steady, deep pace. The liquid slide of his cock into her sounded obscenely through his otherwise silent bedroom. His balls brushed against her, tickling her with each powerful thrust. "Harder." She wanted him imprinted on her very bones. "Harder."</p> <p>"Fuck," he exploded on a breath, and pulled back from where he'd braced himself. "Hold on to the desk," he ordered, and Nesta stretched to grip the edges just as his hands landed on her hips. His thighs pushed into her own, spreading her further—as wide as she could go—and he gave no warning before his hands tightened and he unleashed himself.</p> <p>Exquisite, punishing thrusts slammed so deep he hit her innermost wall, and her eyes rolled back into her head at the sheer bliss of it. He became savage, unrelenting. She might have been sobbing at the pleasure, the sheer size of him, so large there would never be any getting used to it. Every unrelenting push had her inching against the desk, the wood and papers teasing her breasts, and she nearly wept at that, too.</p> <p>Cassian's fingers dug into her hips so hard Nesta knew she'd bruise, loved that she'd bruise. He shifted his stance, and his cock plunged even deeper, rubbing against that spot, and the sounds that came from her weren't human or Fae, but something far more primal.</p>

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	<p>“Fuck, yes,” he snarled at her abandon. “That’s it, Nesta.” He accentuated each word with a savage thrust. “Do I feel good to you?”</p> <p>She whimpered her confirmation, then managed to say, “I like it when you ride me hard. Every time I move and my body is sore ...” She had to fight for words. For control. “I think of you. Of your cock.”</p> <p>“Good. I want my cock to be the only thing you think about.” His pace faltered as he licked up the column of her neck. She could hear the taunting smile in his words as he whispered, “Because your pretty little cunt is the only thing I think about.”</p> <p>At the words, his foul language, her toes curled. But she wouldn’t let him win this one, not when this had somehow become a competition for who could make the other come first, so she whispered, “I love being so covered in your seed that it leaks out of me for ages afterward. I love feeling it slide down my thighs and knowing you left your mark in me.”</p> <p>“Fuck,” he blew out, his pounding wild now, so unchecked only her hold on the desk kept her feet on the ground. “Fuck!”</p> <p>Cassian came with a roar, and at the first pulse of his cock spurting deep into her, she climaxed, screaming loud enough that he clamped a hand over her mouth. She bit down on his fingers, and he kept moving in her, spilling himself over and over. Until his seed was again running down her thighs, until he slid his fingers through a stream of it and brought it up to that spot at the apex of her sex. “You have no idea what you just started,” he whispered in her ear, smearing his wetness there, rubbing into her sensitive flesh with idle circles.</p> <p>Nesta didn’t reply as his fingers flicked against her, and she came again.</p>
518	<p>SShe took Cassian to her bed every night and sometimes during the day, though they never slept in each other’s rooms. Not once. They fucked, they savaged each other, and then they parted.</p>
520	<p>I drank day and night and I ...” She didn’t want to say the word to Gwyn—fucked—so she said, “I took strangers to my bed. To punish myself, to drown myself.”</p>
548	<p>The vision shifted, and they writhed on a great black bed, the golden skin of Lanthy’s back shining as he moved inside her. Such pleasure- she had never known such pleasure with anyone. Only he could fuck her like this, driving so deep, her body warm and supple and wet for him, and soon, soon his seed would take root in her womb and the child she would bear him would rule entire universes-</p> <p>...Her body was not his to touch, to fill with life. And she had known pleasure richer than what he’d shown her.</p>
568	<p>Even with Cassian fucking her on every surface of the House, sometimes until the early hours of the morning, the exhaustion, the purple bruises under her eyes, had vanished.</p> <p>She told herself it didn’t matter that he never stayed in her bed afterward to hold her. She wondered when he’d grow tired of it—of her. Surely he’d get bored and move on. Even if he feasted on her each night as if he were starving. Gripped her thighs in his powerful hands and licked and suckled at her until she writhed. Sometimes she straddled his face, hands clenching the headboard, and rode his tongue until she came on it. Sometimes it was her tongue on him, around him, and she swallowed down every drop he spilled into her mouth. Sometimes he spilled on her chest, her stomach, her back, and she came at the first splash of him on her skin. She couldn’t imagine tiring of him. Having him over and over only made her need grow.</p>
578	<p>A month of being in Nesta’s bed—or at least fucking her in it. The Cauldron knew she hadn’t ever asked him to stay after he pulled out of her.</p>
606	<p>“I am not with you,” she snapped. “I am fucking you.”</p>

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607	<p>So he stopped trying to speak, and closed the distance between them. Slid a hand into her hair, the other going around her waist and tugging her against him. He said nothing as he dipped his head, mouth brushing the tears sliding along one of her cheeks. Then the other.</p> <p>She closed her eyes, letting herself savor his lips on her over-hot skin, the way his breath caressed her cheek. Each gentle kiss echoed those words she'd seen in his eyes.</p> <p>Cassian pulled back, and remained that way long enough that she opened her eyes again to find his face inches from her own. "You're not going to marry Eris," he said roughly.</p> <p>"No," she breathed.</p> <p>His eyes blazed. "There will be no one else. For either of us."</p> <p>"Yes," she whispered.</p> <p>"Ever," he promised.</p> <p>Nesta laid a hand on his muscled chest, letting the thunderous beating of the heart beneath echo into her palm. Let it travel down her arm, into her own chest, her own heart. "Ever," she swore.</p> <p>It was all he needed. All she needed.</p> <p>Cassian's mouth met hers, and the world ceased to exist.</p> <p>The kiss was punishing and exalting, thorough and frenzied, a claiming and a yielding. She had no words for it. She flung her arms around him, pressing as close as she could get, meeting his tongue stroke for stroke.</p> <p>He growled and nudged her back toward the bed, his mouth devouring and tasting and saying everything she couldn't yet voice, but one day, maybe soon, she could. For him, she'd fight to find the courage to say it.</p> <p>The backs of her legs hit the mattress, and he broke their kiss to attend to their clothes.</p> <p>She expected tearing and rending. But he gently removed her dress, fingers trembling as they unhooked each button down the back of her gown. Her own trembled as she removed his shirt.</p> <p>Then they were naked, and staring at each other again with those unspoken words in their eyes, and she let him lay her upon the bed. Let him climb atop her.</p> <p>There was nothing rough or wild about what followed.</p> <p>She didn't want his head between her legs. Didn't even want his fingers. When he slid one down the center of her, she let him feel that she was ready and then took his hand, interlacing their fingers as her other wrapped around his cock and guided him toward her.</p> <p>He nudged at her entrance, and then halted. His eyes met hers.</p> <p>And then Cassian kissed her deeply as he slid home.</p> <p>She gasped. Not at the fullness of having him inside her—but at that thing in her chest. The thing that thundered and beat wildly as he looked at her again, slid out nearly to the tip, and thrust back in.</p> <p>On that second thrust, the thing in her chest—her heart ... On that second thrust, it yielded entirely to him.</p> <p>On his third, he kissed her again.</p> <p>On the fourth, Nesta twined her arms around his head and neck and held him there as she kissed and kissed and kissed him.</p> <p>On the fifth, the walls of that inner fortress of ancient iron came down. Cassian pulled away, as if sensing it, and his eyes flared as they met her own.</p> <p>But he kept moving in her, making love to her thoroughly, unhurriedly. So Nesta let all that lay beyond those iron walls unspool toward him. Thread after thread of pure golden light flowed into him, and he met it with his own. Where those threads wove together, life glowed like</p>

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	<p>starfire, and she had never seen anything more beautiful, felt anything more beautiful. She was crying, and she didn't know why—only that she never wanted it to end, this binding between them, the feeling of him moving so deep in her that she wanted him imprinted beneath her skin. His tears dripped onto her face, and she reached up to brush them away. He leaned his head into her hand, nuzzling her palm.</p> <p>“Say it,” Cassian whispered against her skin.</p> <p>She knew what he meant. Somehow, she knew what he meant.</p> <p>Nesta waited until he'd thrust again, driving as deep into her as he'd ever gone, and whispered, “You're mine.”</p> <p>He groaned, thrusting hard.</p> <p>She whispered, “And I am yours.” Those golden threads between their very souls shone with the words, as if they formed a harp strummed by a heavenly hand.</p> <p>For it was music between their souls. Always had been. And his voice was her favorite melody. “Nesta.” She heard the plea in her name. He was close, and wanted her to go with him. Wanted to tumble into ecstasy together. It was important to him, for some reason, that for this joining, this moment, they went as one.</p> <p>Cassian lowered his head to her breast, teeth clamping around her nipple as his tongue flicked against it.</p> <p>It was all Nesta needed to spur her toward climax. She moaned, and he did it again, timing his tongue to the hard thrust of his cock. Again, again.</p> <p>The golden threads shimmered and sang, and she couldn't take it, the music between their souls, the feel of his body on her and in her, and—</p> <p>Release blasted through her, obliterating every last bit of that inner wall, razing mountains and forests, wiping the world clean with light and pleasure, stars crashing down from the heavens in a never-ending rain.</p> <p>Cassian roared as he came, and the sound was the summons of a hunt, a symphony, a single clear horn playing as dawn broke over the world.</p> <p>There was only this moment, this thing shared between them, and it lasted for an eternity. Time was of no consequence. Time had always stood still around him, around them.</p> <p>He spilled and spilled himself into her, longer than ever before, as if he'd been holding himself back all the times before now, as if he had let his own inner wall come crumbling down.</p> <p>Forever, forever, forever.</p> <p>The word was echoed in their every breath, every pounding of their hearts, so in sync that they seemed to beat as one.</p> <p>Then silence fell, exquisite and serene, and Cassian remained buried in her, staring down at her with wonder and joy in his face.</p> <p>Nesta reached up to kiss him.</p> <p>One kiss led to another and another, and hunger rose like the tide within her, between them. And then Cassian was moving in her again, faster and harder, and time ceased to exist once more.</p> <p>Hours later, days and weeks and months and millennia later, when they were both finally spent, when their souls had cleaved together entirely, Cassian pulled out of her and collapsed against the bed.</p> <p>Nesta could hardly remember words. But she found them when she whispered into the darkness, “Stay with me.”</p> <p>A shudder rocked through him, but he only smiled as he tucked her into his side.</p> <p>And warm and safe and home at last in Cassian's arms, Nesta slept.</p>



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611	<p>Nesta reached up to kiss him.            One kiss led to another and another, and hunger rose like the tide within her, between them. And then Cassian was moving in her again, faster and harder, and time ceased to exist once more.            ...Cassian pulled out of her and collapsed against the bed.</p>
612	<p>Caressing soon turned to more fervent touching, and as the dawn broke, they tangled again, their lovemaking thorough and unhurried.</p>
613	<p>Cassian reached the door, throwing her a wicked grin. "Did I mention we take a steam in the birchin attached to the cabin afterward?"            From that wicked grin, she knew he meant completely naked. Nesta sat up, hair sliding over her breasts. His eyes dipped lower, a muscle pounding in his neck. For a heartbeat she hoped he'd lunge for her again. Indeed, his nostrils flared, scenting the need that boiled in her just at the sight of his gaze roving freely over her body, the way every part of him tensed.            ...Without so much as a farewell kiss, he vanished.</p>
614	<p>Her entire body ached with need, setting her teeth on edge. Three days without him might as well have been three months. She'd become desperate enough for him that her hand now slid between her legs in the bath, in bed, even during lunch in her room. But release left her empty, as if her body knew it needed him in her, filling her.</p>
628	<p>With Cassian.            They alternated bedrooms, sleeping wherever was closest to their lovemaking. Or fucking. There was a difference, she'd realized. Lovemaking usually happened late at night or first thing in the morning, when he was lazy and thorough and smiling. Fucking usually happened at lunch or random times, against a wall or bent over a desk or straddling his lap, impaling herself on him again and again. Sometimes it started off as fucking and became the tender, intense thing she called lovemaking. Sometimes the lovemaking dissolved into frantic fucking. She could never tell what would happen, which was part of why she could never get enough.</p>
641	<p>"It was because I woke up the next morning and all I wanted to do was fuck you for a week straight. And I knew what that meant, what had happened, even though you didn't, and I didn't want to scare you. You weren't ready for the truth—not yet."</p>
653	<p>Knew what it meant when his stare dipped to her nightgown, her breasts peaked against the frigid cold, her bare legs.</p>
697	<p>Finally Nesta said, "I was sent to the House of Wind because I had become such a wretch, drinking and fucking everything in sight. My ... family couldn't stand it. For more than a year, I abused their kindness and generosity, and I did it because ..."</p>
746	<p>"I didn't realize Illyrians were in the habit of fucking their sisters."</p>
748	<p>Even a glance at the sky revealed no sign of Cassian, who had been keeping Nesta up until dawn with his lovemaking and had become utterly obnoxious about calling her mate any chance he got, except at their continuing morning training with the priestesses.</p>

<b>Profanity</b>	<b>Count</b>
Ass	35
Bitch	5
Cock	50
Cunt	2
Fuck	127
Piss	12
Prick	4
Shit	46