

Best Book Club with Shanna and Jen Podcast
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A Court of Mist and Fury by Sarah J. Maas Book Review and Discussion - Part 1

Jen: Hello Everyone and welcome to the Best Book Club Podcast. I'm Jen

Shanna: And I'm Shanna

Jen: And today we are talking about the second book in the A Court of Thorns and Roses series by Sara J. Maas

Shanna: Yes, we will be discussing A Court of Mist and Fury.

Jen: I realized that we talked about A Court of Thorns and Roses a few weeks ago but we never actually found out anything about Sara J. Maas! And if I had done author research for that last episode, I would have noticed that I have been spelling her first name wrong all this time! It has an H. I'm sorry Sarah! So why don't we give a little author bio for restitution.

Shanna: Sarah J. Maas was born on March 5, 1986 in New York City. She graduated from Hamilton College in 2008 with a degree in creative writing and a minor in religious studies. She is the author of three series - Throne of Glass - which apparently she started writing when she was sixteen years old, A Court of Thorns and Roses and most recently the Crescent City Series. She now lives in Pennsylvania with her husband, son and dog.

Jen: She has a new YA book coming out this year that looks actually god awful called Catwoman.

Shanna: I probably won't be checking that one out...

Jen: Right? Did you look at the cover? I'm actually really confused.

Shanna: Ohhh it looks like she was hired by DC Comics to write a Catwoman book. That's ok then. I am not into the fandom so it isn't for me, but exciting I guess for those fans. As the kind of person who reads World of Warcraft novels, I can understand it.

Jen: Maybe it's just one of those things where the book cover is so so bad but the book is good. That wouldn't really be a surprise considering the covers of these books...

Shanna: True!

Shanna: We have done an episode on the first book in this series A Court of Thorns and Roses so if you haven't listened to that one yet, we recommend that you go do that.

Jen: As you know, as everyone knows, I loved this book so much. I was not 100,000% sure of the first one when I first read it but after reading this one, everything in the first book that I didn't like or that I wasn't really sure of was explained or expanded on in some way. It completely changed my enjoyment of the first book which I found to be so interesting and I think speaks to how good of a writer Maas is.

Shanna: I liked the first one a lot more than I thought I was going to for sure. Nothing about it made me angry, which, I don't know, I guess was a pretty big win. I shouldn't really be that surprised, I am a fantasy reader and a lot of my favourite books are fantasy. I guess I just haven't really been able to get the idea that these books are supposed to be YA all the way out of my head so it still felt surprising to me to have enjoyed them as much as I have. And like, these books are VERY NOT YA, so what's my problem?

Jen: NO. We talked all about this in our ACOTAR episode so I won't repeat myself. I highly recommend that you listen to that episode if you haven't. But yeah, these books are not YA and people need to stop calling them YA because...no.

Jen: I really loved the romantic relationship in this book. I can't think of another example where a relationship is shown as being completely equal or even close to. I loved that Feyre being a woman never diminished her abilities or made anyone question them. I also loved the exploration of consent in many different forms. Time and time again, the book didn't take the path I expected.

Shanna: I will take Rhysand all day every day over, what's his name even I have stopped loving him so hard I can't be bothered to give him memory space ... I didn't hate him in the last book, but now, pfft.

Jen: I didn't hate Tamlin in the first book either although almost everything I didn't like about the book revolved around him.

Jen: I'm giving this book five stars of love.

Shanna: I will also give it 5 stars. Well, maybe 4. I feel like this series will get retroactively star rated when I am done the whole thing.

Jen: OH YAY! I was SO unsure what you were going to think. After you had already started it, I was thinking about how much I loved this book and I'm just swooning away and then I realized that this book is highly highly filled with So. Much. Romance. And even though I know that you aren't a huge romance fan, it never crossed my mind that you wouldn't like this book. This is not a barely there romance. This is a "completely there romance".

Shanna: Yes it is definitely a completely there romance, but I don't hate it. I guess because it isn't following the annoying will they won't they drag it on forever never communicate crap that usually puts me off of romance it hasn't been bad. I suppose there is a little bit of that, but the reasons make sense at least. Maybe I am just more forgiving of not humans.

Jen: Okay, on that note from this point on, this episode will contain spoilers so if you haven't read these books yet, we recommend reading them and then come back for the discussion. Also, due to the sexiness of the story, there may be some sexiness in this podcast.

Shanna: To be fair though, there is always sexiness in this podcast ...

Jen: We are pretty sexy...

Jen: Disclaimer. I have read the third book in this series already which is called A Court of Wings and Ruin so I am going to try my best not to let any spoilers into this episode! This also happened to me when we recorded the episode on the first book. I had already read this book and it was so incredibly hard to separate them especially because my opinion of the first book changed so drastically after reading this one.

Shanna: And I have once again purposefully not started book three to act as spoiler control!

Jen: Unless of course you are relying on us to be your storytellers, we can do that too. We are going to try our best to go through the plot of this book, but it's a big book and it's a great book so I really just recommend reading them. For reals. Go read them.

Jen: Okay, I thought that this book was so completely different from the first one that I found it almost hard to believe they are a part of the same series.

Shanna: They totally have different feelings to them.

Jen: Okay so we talked a lot about how the first book in this series is a retelling of Beauty and the Beast. Well, within that research I read that this book is a retelling of the story of Hades and Persephone. This is where I accidentally spoiled myself for this book. I looked up what the story of Hades and Persephone was and read "Hades falls in love with Persephone and takes her against her will to the underworld where she eventually decides TO STAY" I was like WHHHHAAAAATTTT!?

Shanna: WHAAAAAAAT?! Thats cool. I really need to beef up my mythology knowledge.

Jen: Me too. I'm living learning about it all though. So, this probably won't surprise you, but it just never occurred to me that Feyre and Tamlin wouldn't be together. I wasn't like "oh, look

another male obviously he will be the new love interest” No nothing. So I was completely shocked and spoiled.

Shanna: Normally I would be so annoyed that this happened. But Tamlin was such a ... butt ... that eff that guy. And not in the sexy way.

Jen: Exactly. Tamlin is such a butt. But! I know what the fairytale retelling is for A Court of Wings and Ruin. Wanna know? I don't think it spoils anything

Shanna: Lol sure, I probably don't know it anyways.

Jen: You know it! It's Snow White! In the beginning she eats a poisoned apple, there are seven highlords instead of seven dwarfsand there was one other thing that Icannot remember. If it comes to me, I'll yell it out. Obviously this is a pretty loose retelling but I love it anyways.

Shanna: Oh I do know Snow White! That is fun!

Jen: Okay so, let's get into the plot of this book. It is a pretty big book - 624 pages to be exact- and a lot of stuff happens

Shanna: 23 hours on audio!

Shanna: In case you've forgotten, we ended the first book with Feyre being turned into High Fae after having her neck broken by Amarantha but then brought back to life by all the high lords as a thank you for saving them all. Then, she goes back to the Spring Court with Tamlin to live happily ever after.

Shanna: The End not.

Jen: The second book actually picks up about three months after the conclusion of Thorns and Roses and we quickly find out that Feyre isn't doing too great.

Shanna: No. No, she is doing quite poorly.

Jen: She is suffering from serious PTSD after everything she went through under the mountain. The torture and the pain and the fact that she killed two innocent faeries while their families screamed in the background haunts her relentlessly. She has nightmares, she is physically sick.

Shanna: Yes and I think that's fair. I mean, it gives her a human heart, and tells us she has maintained her humanity, so that's a good thing. Probably. I also like that it gives her character somewhere to build from. The prologue is one of her nightmares. She is in the middle of killing the three innocent faeries and when she gets to the last one, it's herself.

Jen: I just reread this part and it is so completely heartbreaking. The first line of the book is "Maybe I'd always been broken and dark inside". In her dream the line between her and Amarantha is blurred and when she sees that the last faerie is herself she describes it as seeing her own hated face.

Jen: Tamlin is also suffering from PTSD but his reactions are much more outwardly physical than Feyre's. He literally gets spooked and turns into his beast form.

Shanna: He turns into such a raging ass hole in this book I couldn't stand him.

Shanna: There is also the fact that she made a bargain with Rhysand that she would spend 2 weeks every month with him at the Night Court but he hasn't come to collect her, so that is always a looming threat. Feyre is quickly engaged to marry Tamlin and though she does love him, he starts to behave in some ways that are less cool than usual. He is fiercely protective of her and that protectiveness starts to move more towards being controlling.

Jen: Like I mentioned, Tamlin is also suffering, but because we don't get his perspective, we can only see that controlling behaviour which we did see a little bit of in the first book but in this one, after everything that happened under the mountain, it is amplified.

Jen: Feyre is understanding for a while and lets a lot of it go, but in doing so, she is unable to heal in the ways that she needs to. She ends up very isolated and Tamlin is pretty oblivious to what's going on with her and how she's feeling.

Shanna: I hated this. I guess it set Tamlin up as the bad guy really well and I didn't have ANY negative feelings about her leaving his ass asap. When she was describing being up and sick every single night and him just pretending she wasn't ... what a jerk. And that was just the start. Very not cool my dude.

Jen: Tamlin went from being the golden boy to a pile of poo very fast. It was very effective.

Shanna: He eventually becomes actually quite violent. There was a scene where Feyre tries to tell him how she's feeling. That she's drowning and he literally explodes with power, destroying everything and inadvertently physically hurting Feyre.

Jen: It was so not okay what happened, but I found myself really feeling so horrible for both of them. I am not team Tamlin but he really needed help there too and I don't think he knew how to deal with it or how to get help which is so common for men after traumatic events. They are expected to man up and get over it and move on, but a lot of the time, the pain comes out in other ways and that was so true here.

Shanna: Ahh yes that is true. I guess he's had a rough go, but you know, still.

Jen: Still, it's not okay to abuse someone just because you were abused. He needs to do some self work for sure.

Shanna: Right? Plus he's ... SO OLD. He really should know at least a little better no?

Jen: His views seem very antiquated and I don't think he is up to date enough to understand this yet. Get with the times Tamlin.

Jen: In almost every episode we do, there is one character that we completely leave out and I had a feeling that it would be lanthe so I made a note to mention her. lanthe is one of the twelve High Priestesses of Prythian and for some reason she is there "helping" Feyre plan the wedding. And by helping, I mean doing everything and not listening to anything Feyre says at all. I know, who cares right? But! lanthe will show up again later.

Shanna: Oh yeah 100% we would have forgotten her. Or well, I would have. She really didn't add much to the story for me either than I guess background on the priestesses. She sucks. Oh wait, no, no there's a bit with Rhysand ... it's all coming back to me. Anyways, I made a mental note to attempt to remember ... What's his face? Old metal eye. Clearly I am doing an excellent job ...

Jen: Lucian! I think I made a note to remember lanthe because there is a scene - which I think happens in the third book - that we will need to comment on. The books are already starting to meld together...

Shanna: Is it sexy? And by sexy I mean not sexy, but sex is part of it ... thus making the scene sex ... y. If it is then that's this book.

Jen: When their wedding day arrives, Feyre knows that she cannot go through with it. She doesn't think that she deserves happiness or life at all.

Shanna: Didn't we just read another book where someone didn't want to get married JUST before their wedding? Oh yeah in The Midnight Library. People, please, be SURE before you plan a wedding! Seriously, it's so much work and it's so expensive! I don't know why but this always makes me so mad. Don't marry someone you don't want to marry of course, but like, also don't waste your time on planning a wedding and stringing people along. Yikes. Ok, well, that was an aside, sorry. Continue.

Jen: No, I totally agree. Waiting until the last minute to back out is so annoying. You know WAY before then that you don't want to do it. But yes, Continue!
I literally opened up the book to try to find this scene and the first thing I see is someone congratulating her on the wedding which was to happen the next day and they say "A fitting end, eh?" and her thought is "A fitting end would have been me in a grave, burning in hell." I am just dying for her. The level of emotion and trauma that are conveyed in Feyre's thoughts is so striking. Like strikes me actually dead.

Shanna: I mean, not to harp too strongly on what a bother planning weddings are, but I am pretty sure by the end of the planning process I also had that exact same thought ...

Jen: Well I guess it's pretty lucky for her that no one even let her plan anything at all. No one listened to anything she wanted or didn't want. Lanthe just planned it and to hell with what the bride thinks. Lets litter the aisle with red rose petals even though you specifically asked for no red flowers because they remind you of the blood of the fairies you stabbed to death. It's fine right?

Shanna: Oh yeah, actually in her case it's not so bad. If anything take that Lanthe you controlling jerk.

Jen: Meanwhile, Feyre is screaming on the inside for someone to save her and right then Rhysand shows up to collect her as per their bargain. Everyone is pissed off because obviously he is a monster for choosing that exact moment to get her.

Shanna: I should pretend like I was mad here. But I wasn't. I wasn't even a little mad.

Jen: Not even a little mad.

Shanna: When she gets to the Night Court, she is expecting a more "under the mountain" feel because she knows that Amarantha modelled her court after it, but she finds that it's actually so beautiful. Apparently there are both The Court of Nightmares and The Court of Dreams that make up the Night Court. It's the Court of Nightmares that resembles Amarantha's court.

Jen: She was so afraid of the Night Court and rightly so. The thought of being in that environment again would be so triggering. Also, though Rhysand had started to open up to her while there and even helped her in the trials, he also lorded power over her and forced her to do really degrading things so he is not her favorite person.

Shanna: Fair.

Jen: She's obviously pissed that he brought her there and she doesn't trust him but all he wants is to teach her to read and how to control her mental shields. Despite not wanting to give in to him at all, she knows how important it is to learn because not being able to read almost got her killed under the mountain.

Shanna: Also come on Feyre, reading is cool.

Jen: Rhysand explains that their bond is like an open door to each other's mind. He is a daemati which means that he can infiltrate and control minds so he is able to do it with or without the bond. He wants her to train her mental shield to protect herself from other daemati.

Shanna: He also has so much insider information on her and her powers because of this. He doesn't abuse it, even though he could, but he does know what he's talking about and would have had a lot more hints about the rest of her power and how she's doing mentally because he has this power.

Jen: She is obviously not happy with this fact and she asks him how often he just goes rifling through her mind when her shields are down and he says, "When I can't tell if your nightmares are real threats or imagined."

Shanna: Feyre declines learning how to read or anything he offers. Rhysand also points out that she is exceptionally strong for a Fae and because she was resurrected and reborn by the combined powers of the seven high lords that she might have special powers and should probably train to build and control them.

Jen: Then we meet Rhysand's cousin Morrigan or, Mor, who Feyre describes as the most beautiful female she's ever seen. She's super friendly and wants to be Feyre's friend. She is in Rhysand's inner circle, his third and he describes her duties as those of a Queen in the mortal world, but we will see more of her later.

Shanna: The only problem I had with Mor, who I love and adore, was every time after she is introduced and the word MORE is used in the book. My brain would be like "Mor!" "More?" This was probably just a my brain problem.

Jen: Feyre does decide to let Rhysand teach her how to read in the end, but neither of them is making it easy on each other. Feyre fights every step of the way and Rhysand is a bit of a jerk, but I love him for it. He writes down different sentences and makes her read them and then practice writing them. They start out as "You look absolutely delicious today, Feyre" and then move on to "Rhysand is the most handsome highlord".

Shanna: This is absolutely how I would have done it too. Pretty sure Ben is gonna know how to spell "My mommy is so cool." and "Why does daddy smell like cheese?" before stuff like "Dogs have fur." or whatever the kids are reading about these days.

Jen: He's poking her, he wants to get a reaction from her. Tamlin has been hiding her away, not allowing her to reach any sort of potential and she's almost become complacent about it and Rhys is trying to stoke that fire under her again. It's incredibly irritating but also effective.

Shanna: Rhysand tells Feyre that a war is coming and at first she assumes that he and the night court plan on invading the human lands but it's actually Hybern. Remember Amarantha was one of his commanders. Just because Amarantha is dead, it doesn't mean that the battle is over and he wants to know if Tamlin and the spring court are going to fight on their side.

Jen: It's already becoming clear that although Rhysand is kind of a jerk, he is a jerk in a different way from Tamlin. He is teasing and annoying but he obviously respects Feyre and

what she can do. He wants to educate her, he includes her in things. He doesn't expect her to sit pretty for him.

Shanna: I very much prefer this kind of jerk.

Shanna: Feyre accidentally walks in on Mor and Rhysand talking about an attack on a temple in another town where almost all the priestesses were killed. When Feyre appears, although she is technically not on their side, they don't stop. They continue to talk about who it could have been and what it means.

Jen: Okay, I will admit that it is almost absurdly the opposite of Tamlin.

Shanna: Aggressively so yes.

Jen: There are times when I feel like they took Tamlin and the spring court and wrote the opposite story and that is what we end up with here, but I love it so much because this is what I wanted in the first book.

Shanna: It does feel a little weird to have gone through an entire first book setting up a love story just to be like, actually no, scrap that.

Jen: Anytime Feyre showed up, Tamlin and Lucian or Ianthe would immediately stop talking. They never gave her any information. They never gave her any choice to be educated about anything. I just really appreciated them seeing her worth and knowing too that she didn't need to be protected from everything.

Shanna: So so so much better. Also they're all so cute. I love them. I love them all.

Jen: At the end of the week, Feyre goes home and finds the house completely trashed.

Shanna: Ugh. I mean, it's a little late to start mentioning red flags, since at this point the whole damn place is pretty much wallpapered with them. But uh, RED FLAG.

Jen: Tamlin rushes to her and inspects her body for injuries though he knows that Rhysand has other ways that he could hurt her that wouldn't leave a mark.

Shanna: Hmm yeah. Like locking her in a room and refusing to let her out? Like that?

Shanna: She wants to go straight to bed, but Tamlin wants her to tell them everything that she saw at the Night Court and she tells him.

Jen: I swear Tamlin is almost a cliché of himself at this point.

Shanna: I would have gone to sleep out of spite. Eff that guy.

Jen: I was so mad that Feyre told everything though obviously she would since technically Rhys has pretty much abducted her and is holding her against her will and is supposed to be the bad guy. But come on, she was treated with so much more respect there and I would have liked to see her hold something back. But whatever it's fine.

Shanna: Ugh right? I also would have liked that. She doesn't have to think Rhys is a good guy to be able to recognise that Tamlin is being a bad guy.

Shanna: Here Feyre also reveals Rhysand's theory that she could have been given powers from all the high lords who saved her. She wonders if Tamlin and Lucian agree that it's possible and she wonders if she should train. Tamlin thinks that it's possible but training would draw too much attention. If the other lord knew that she had their power, they would kill her to get it back.

Jen: Okay, I could be missing something, but all the high lords came together to bring her back to life as a thank you for SAVING THEM ALL FROM AN ETERNITY OF SLAVERY TO AMARANTHA. Would they really be coming to kill her now because she accidentally ended up with a tiny kernel of their power? Really? And of course Tamlin's other reason for her not needing to train is "he can protect her" whatever Tamlin, wouldn't it be better if she could protect herself or even you especially if you are so worried about her spending all this time in the night court.

Shanna: Yeah his whole thing here stinks. First of all, why do they have to know? And yeah ummm, really? Ungrateful much high lords? I guess didn't Rhysand actually put the idea to do it in their heads? So maybe they wouldn't have done it on their own and they are all huge jerks. Also, you would think that if he could protect her he wouldn't do things like explode a room on her ... but you know ... what do I know?

Shanna: So now it's time for the tithe in the spring court. So basically all of Tamlin's subjects must pay "taxes" to continue living there.

Jen: It's very Outlander.

Shanna: I wouldn't know but I will trust you. That's a massive undertaking for a future version of me.

Jen: At one point during the tithe, a water wraith approaches and says that she can't pay the tithe. The lake has no fish, they have nothing to give. Tamlin just tells her that she has three days to pay or else and Feyre is really confused because they have SO much. They don't need anything and they definitely don't need to kill if they don't get it. Tamlin says that this is the way they have always done it and the way they will always do it and that he can't make exceptions for one or he will be expected to make exceptions for everyone. Feyre chases after the wraith and gives her some of her jewelry to sell and the wraith says that she and her sisters will not forget the kindness.

Shanna: I was stoked on this because you know it's gonna come back and it's gonna be awesome.

Jen: I absolutely love all of the lesser faeries in these books. They are SO cool and are one of my favorite additions to the story. This one was so creepy sounding. Grey skin, long black hair, black eyes, pointed teeth, gravely voice. LOVE IT.

Shanna: Hmm a bit Thetis ish. I like it. At this point in the podcast I am just assuming everyone is up to date on Achilles references ...

Jen: But also, come on Tamlin, just because your father and ancestors have done things one way for eternity, doesn't mean that you also have to be a crappy lord.

Shanna: Ugh yeah break the chain Tamlin, quit being a dink.

Shanna: Tamlin is obviously pissed that Feyre undermined him like that. Lucian tries to defend her for once and gets torn a new one by Tamlin and then for a moment, Feyre enters Lucian's mind and sees things out of his eyes and at the same time burns the wood of the table beneath her hands. Obviously she now knows that she definitely did end up with the other high lords power.

Jen: Tamlin and Lucien are completely clueless! Is she invisible? Does she even exist? I think she covered up her burn marks with a napkin or something, but someone had to notice eventually.

Shanna: I've been a little bitter about the lack of Lucian in the books. He seems like a great character and I want so much more from him. He has got to feature more in the upcoming books I am sure given how this one ends, but still I keep thinking we are finally going to get SOMETHING and then it's just a flash in the pan every time.

Jen: Yes don't worry, we definitely see more of Lucian in the future, but I agree that his character was a little underutilized for a lot of the series. Although, this book was already a million years long so there probably just wasn't very much room for him.

Jen: Tamlin is very apologetic for being a jerk about the tithe and he gets Feyre a gift which turns out to be a travelling paint kit.

Shanna: Booooo Tamlin!

Jen: Right? Oh, thanks Tamlin, I'm not allowed to leave the grounds to travel anywhere and I haven't painted in months but thank you for the travelling painting kit! What the heck. Tamlin, open your damn eyes!

Shanna: It's like he's trying to be the worst.

Jen: This is kind of the last straw for Feyre and she confronts him about how he is handling his own trauma. He obviously shuts her down and she says that she can't handle it and maybe he should marry someone who can and she tells him that she is drowning and this is where Tamlin loses it. We mentioned it earlier. He freaks out and explodes the room. This is how Tamlin deals with things. He fights, he destroys, Like I said, not cool, not okay.

Shanna: Toxic High Lord energy for sure.

Jen: Luckily Feyre unknowingly threw up a physical shield to protect herself, because that room was dust around her.

Jen: Tamlin was very apologetic though obviously that doesn't make any of it okay. And, Feyre lets it go and then they pretty just go straight to non stop doing it.

Shanna: Ahhh yes. There were portions of this book that I couldn't walk after ...

Jen: Feyre mentions that the sex for them is easy, it's everything else that's hard. Although, this is when their sex gets really hard to stomach. I giggled about it in the first book and in this one, my heart just breaks and it's awful. There is one line a little later that says "Protect Protect Protect - I could see the word in his eyes, feel it in every thrust he made into my body that night". When I read that, I wanted to be sick.

Shanna: Yeah, sex is great, but maybe definitely they needed to develop some healthier coping and bonding techniques.

Jen: Absolutely.

Shanna: For a little while he reduces the amounts of guards that Feyre has. He is "trying." He spends more and more time away from the manor but he won't tell Feyre where he's going or what he's doing. He keeps her completely in the dark, as usual, and she ends up spending a lot of time alone, sometimes going days without speaking to anyone at all. Feyre's mental and physical health are steadily declining - of course.

Shanna: The old isolation cure. Turns out it still doesn't work!

Jen: Yeah we are reading all about this in another book right now...it doesn't work. In fact, it makes things worse. Who knew?

Shanna: When Rhysand shows up again to take her back to the night court as per their agreement, he can see that she has lost weight and isn't doing well and suggests that Tamlin isn't taking care of her which he isn't.

Jen: When they get to the night court, Rhysand is obviously worried about Feyre. He tries to get her to tell him what happened because he felt a spike of fear through their bond when Tamlin lashed out at her but she maintains that it's none of his business.

Shanna: He looooooves her.

Jen: He wants to help her so badly. He wants to genuinely help her through her trauma.

Shanna: Feyre and Rhys sitting in a tree ...

Shanna: When Feyre returns home. Of course, Tamlin is pissed and he ups the amount of guards even higher.

Jen: So much for trying. It sure didn't last very long.

Shanna: Ugh I keep forgetting we have to keep going back to The Spring Court. We get back to Rhys and the night court and it's like my brain can relax and be happy about it. Tamlin sucks so badly in this one I just want to be past the part where she has to have anything to do with that jerk.

Jen: Yeah! I was so sick of going back to the spring court by now. Obviously it needed to happen but we knew where it was heading so let's just speed it up guys!

Shanna: She isn't let out of sight again and when Tamlin says he is leaving yet again, but wont give her any information, Feyre asks to go with him Then begs when he says no. Then demands it when he says no again. She tells him that if he doesn't take her with him, she will just follow him. He says "no you won't", puts up a shield around the house that she can't get through and leaves without looking back.

Jen: I guess in his mind he is protecting her but really he is just a controlling jerk and the fact that he doesn't even think about what it would mean for her and then he doesn't even look back...so infuriating.

Shanna: Yeah he's the actual worst.

Jen: She has a panic attack at the thought of being trapped there, like when she was under the mountain. She is completely distraught and broken. Her powers of ice and fire and wind wrap around her and she loses consciousness. She starts to come to in the arms of Mor who is taking her back to the night court.

Jen: I could tear up thinking about this. Mor just kept repeating to her "you're free, you're free"

Shanna: I love Mor. Alright we are going to take just a quick break from the discussion, just as things are getting exciting to hear from our friends over at the Uncited Podcast.

Jen: I totally love their podcast, for me it is a instalisten everytime a new episode is released. I like to think of them as like us, but...smarter and probably funnier because they seriously tickle my funny bone every time I listen.

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Jen: Okay! Here we go again. Feyre wakes up Rhysand is there beside her bed. He lets her know that she is free to come and go as she pleases. She can stay there forever if she wishes or she can go back to the Spring Court. The choice is entirely hers to make. When she first went to the night court, he offered her a job and has been trying to get her to accept and to work with them in their efforts against Hybern and she has repeatedly declined the offer. He offers it again and she doesn't accept but she doesn't decline. What she does say is that she's not going back to the spring court.

Shanna: Uhhh yeah I mean, the spring court can officially suck it.

Jen: I was like YES! This made me so happy. I feel like in most stories, the women never stand up for themselves, they never take care of their needs and they always go back. I was so happy that she hit her limit and even though she thinks that she still loves Tamlin, she knows what he did wasn't okay. I wish she had seen that her limit had actually been reached months ago, but she got there.

Shanna: Rhysand tells her to rest and that he will be away for a few days. Feyre can't stand the thought of being left alone with her thoughts for that long and asks him to take her with him. He tells her that if she comes with him there is no going back. She will never be able to speak of what she sees to anyone and she will have to lie forever if she returns to the spring court or people will die. She agrees and Rhysand says that they leave in ten minutes for Velaris - The City of Starlight. The best place in the whole series so far.

Jen: Again, super obvious, complete opposite of Tamlin and the Spring Court but I love it. I love that he gives her the information and then trusts her to make the decision for herself.

Shanna: They winnow away and Feyre finds herself in the foyer of a townhouse and though Amarantha destroyed everything during her reign, somehow there is a city outside. There is pounding at the door and Rhysand tells her that he and Mor are the only ones who can winnow into the house and only people that he and Feyre want can enter the house at all. She is safe. Then he tells her that she can meet the idiots outside now or she can go upstairs and rest and meet them later. She chooses later.

Jen: I love that he gave Feyre the power to allow people into the house. That's so nice. She is not a prisoner in any way and has just as much control as he does.

Shanna: It seems like an awful lot of trust considering how little they know each other and his position. Obviously this all becomes much more clear later but I remember thinking at the time "he sure is giving her all of the things". It's good but seemed maybe a little reckless as well considering everything else in the whole world. I guess the whole world does owe Feyre a pretty huge debt of gratitude though so maybe it does make sense.

Jen: Yes, at this point while I was still reading, I definitely questioned this decision, but it makes sense by the end. Rhys had quite a lot more information than we did at the time which I really liked.

Shanna: We find out that the people at the door are Rhysands inner circle which consists of Cassian and Azriel who are winged males and then Amren who at this point no one really knows what she is, but she is "made" like Feyre and then of course Mor. These faeries makeup Rhys's family.

Jen: When Feyre wakes up hours later, Rhysand takes her to see the city and explains that it's been kept secret for 5000 years. The reason that it wasn't destroyed like the rest of Prythian is that Amarantha couldn't touch it because she didn't know that it existed. Feyre asks why he didn't even think to open it up as a refuge for people but Rhys explains that when Amarantha came he had to make some very hard decisions very quickly and leaves it at that.

Shanna: I can understand the question but also she was so angry about it and it seemed so clear to me at least that all that would have done is destroyed the only place that was still safe and good in the world.

Jen: Yeah she has a weird thing where she doesn't like it that other people didn't suffer as she did. It comes up a few times where she is like "must be nice that you didn't have to go under the mountain". On one hand, I like that Feyre has flaws like this because otherwise she would be a little too perfect, but come on Feyre. But if she does want to play that game, she was under there for like a second compared to everyone else's 50 years. But pain is pain and can't really be compared. You just can't be mad at people for not being tortured is my whole point.

Shanna: They go all over the city and it's obvious that the people there really love Rhysand and they are all happy and free in a way that she hasn't really experienced, not even in the human land. Feyre ends up really mad and resentful of all the residents because they are living their lives and nothing has been taken from them. They didn't have to endure the trauma that the rest of the land did under the mountain. Rhys reminds her that his people are blameless and she calms down.

Jen: She is to go to dinner at the House of Wind which is his other home that sits on the top of a mountain peak. At this dinner she is meant to meet the inner circle because Rhys wants her to meet them before she decides whether or not this is somewhere she wants to stay. Rhys picks her up and flies with her to the house. On the way they open up to each other a little.

Rhys admits that he never thought that he would see this place again and talks of his mother. Feyre admits that she might have fallen in love with the first thing that showed her love and safety.

Shanna: Hmm yeah maybe. I mean, that's not exactly unreasonable though either is it? It's not great, but it's understandable. Everything and everyone up until that point in her life was awful.

Jen: Oh totally. Even I, having seen some red flags, was like woo! You're free of your crappy life. When really she was just trading it for a different crappy life.

Shanna: So now we officially meet the inner circle. Cassian and Azriel, like we said earlier are Illyrian which is a different race of faeries. They have wings, they are super powerful. They grew up with Rhysand and are basically brothers to him. Cassian is a bit more cheeky and light hearted and Azriel is the more quiet and serious one. He is also a shadowsinger which means that he is super stealthy and can hear and feel things that others can't.

Jen: And then we meet Amren who is Rhysand's second in command. She is described as being a tiny but fierce woman. No one really knows what she is. She appears to be high fae but it's obvious by the immense powers that thrums off of her and her eyes which are silver and swirl like smoke under glass.

Jen: I get the feeling that being in her presence just makes your skin prickle and your hair stand on end. But in a good way.

Shanna: I really didn't know what to think about her! I kind of still don't other than I trust her. I really want more deets on her and Rhys.

Jen: She is very mysterious for sure. I think we get more from her in the next book

Shanna: At this dinner we get to learn a little about some of their tragic backstories. They are all sad and brutal. Cassian and Azriel were both bastards. Cassian was thrown away to an Illyrian war camp with absolutely nothing - he had to fight for clothes and food - and Azriel was badly abused and neglected as a child before being dumped in a war camp where he then meets Cassian and Rhysand.

Jen: I don't think that any of this is super important to the plot but this part of the book really brought these characters to life and made me love them and feel for them a whole lot more than I would have. I love a tragic backstory.

Shanna: Love it! After spending time with all of them, Feyre agrees to work with them. Cassian offers to train her which she is hesitant about because Tamlin didn't think that it was a good idea but everyone in the night court seems to be in agreeance that being trained to at least be able to defend herself would be a good thing.

Jen: Obviously. Tamlin was such a big dumb brute.

Shanna: Obviously.

Jen: Apparently, they have found out that the king of Hybern has plans to resurrect Jurian who Amarantha killed and kept his soul imprisoned in bone and eye jewelry for the last fifty years. No one knows why or how he intends to do this. Feyre was obviously resurrected but to do it that same way, Hybern would need all seven high lords to agree which obviously won't be happening so he must have another way.

Shanna: So I totally made a Voldemort joke in the last episode about how goofy it was that they just threw his bones on a cauldron and it worked. Turns out I was actually pretty on the nose there.

Jen: Oh yeah! I remember giggling on the inside because I knew that you were pretty much right but I also didn't want to give it away.

Jen: Feyre questions Rhys about his decision to hide Velaris from the rest of the world and from Amarantha. She has already been upset about the fact that these people were saved when others were not. He explains that when Amarantha tricked them all and took their power, being the most powerful high lord, he was left with more power than the others. He was able to use it to control the mind of every night court citizen that she captured to forget the city and everyone that he cared about to protect them and he kept it up every day for fifty years. And he chose Velaris because it was already hidden from the world so that made it a little bit easier to keep up.

Shanna: This all seems super reasonable to me.

Jen: That night Feyre has a nightmare and Rhys wakes her up from it, calms her down, holds her hair back when she is sick. Unlike Tamlin who just ignored that there was anything wrong with Feyre at all, Rhys helps her and also admits that he has nightmares too.

Shanna: He's such a babe.

Jen: Tamlin who?

Shanna: The next day Rhysand takes her to the prison. They are to visit the Bone Carver who is a prisoner there and they are hoping that they will get answers as to how and why Hybern intends to resurrect Jurian. But when they arrive, Feyre finds out that the prison is under a mountain and she can't do it and Rhys takes her back home without a fight.

Shanna: Back at the house, Amren who in her original mysterious non faerie form, was a prisoner in the prison for so long that her being imprisoned there actually predates their written word - gives Feyre a necklace that she claims got her out of the prison. She tells Feyre that as

long as she has it they can't keep her there, she will be safe, but also if she keeps it, Amren will track her down. It turns out later that Amren made the whole thing up to give Feyre the confidence to do it.

Jen: The prison is so cool. I love the dark creepiness of it. Bone gates, guards that dwell within the rock of the walls and only come out to feed and deal with unruly prisoners. I also love that it's like an entity itself - it's the eighth court but doesn't have a high lord but it falls into Rhys's jurisdiction. Once he sentences someone there, they belong to the prison and the prison will never let them out. I love it.

Shanna: Me too.

When they arrive at the Bone Carver's cell, we found out that they appear to people differently/ Feyre may see something different from what Rhysand sees. Feyre sees a young boy with dark hair and blue eyes and Rhysand sees Jurian.

Jen: Why? I don't know.

Shanna: Ooooh you do know don't you!

Jen: No. I really don't remember haha.

Shanna: Rhys throws a bone towards him as an offering - it's the bone that Feyre used to kill the Middengard Wurm under the mountain. The Bone Carver is very interested in Feyre and asks her where she went when she died. The deal is a question for a question so if she answers it honestly, he will tell them what they want to know.

Jen: Feyre's answer surprised even Rhys. she says "I heard the crack when she broke my neck. - And then it was dark. A different sort of dark than this place. But there was a thread. A tether. And I yanked on it- and suddenly I could see. Not through my eyes- but his. And I knew I was dead, and this tiny scrap of spirit was all that was left of me, clinging to the thread of our bargain. I followed that bond back - to me. I knew that home was on the other end of it." Ugh god, knowing everything that I know now, these lines just mean so much more than they did when I first read them. As is the case with so much of this book. Of this series. I;m doing my best not to quote the entire book, but I love it so much.

Shanna: Their question for the Bone Carver is if there is no body, but just a scrap of bone, would there be a way to resurrect someone. The carver says that there is no way unless the soul is preserved and contained and only by the Cauldron which is said to be where all the magic originated from, where the world was born but at one time it fell into the wrong hands and bad things were done with it. So it was stolen back and hidden. No one really knows where it is though. The three feet of it were cut off to reduce its power and hidden in temples which explains why temples are being raided. He confirms that Hybern is the one who has the cauldron and the only way to stop it is with the book of breathings which was made from the

same molton ore as the cauldron. It was broken into two and one half was kept in the summer court and the other half given to the human queens as part of the treaty. If both halves of the book are reunited, they will be able to nullify the cauldron.

Jen: Yah yah yah yah. I loved the Bone Carver stuff. Especially in the audio - the voice was so creepy - she did a great little boy voice saying super creepy things - but all the cauldron stuff...didn't really care about it. Seemed a little far-fetched to me, but I'll take it.

Shanna: Mostly I just got annoyed having to remember that the stupid mortal queens exist.

Jen: Yeah the pretty much sucked to be honest.

Shanna: So now they need to find the two halves of the book but they don't want to tell anyone about it because they don't trust anyone. They have a theory that because Feyre has kernels of all the lords powers that she will be able to track things that belong to them. To test that theory they go to the Weaver's cottage and Feyre is to go in and try to find something that belongs to Rhys. She does it, but the Weaver senses her there and attacks.

Jen: I also really loved the Weaver! So creepy!

Shanna: Very Hansel and Gretley vibes here!

Jen: Yes! She is just sitting in her house weaving together what human hair or skin? with all her baubles around her. She sings a horrible song in a beautiful voice then when she sense Feyre she sees that beneath her beautiful black hair is a monster whose skin is grey and wrinkled and dry and instead of eyes she has ritting black pits and her lips were withered to nothing around a hole full of jagged stumps of teeth! So creepy and gross! I love it.

Shanna: Yeah she was really cool. The song she sings is a version of an old folk song that I recognized because I actually JUST heard another version of it in a game I played recently called "Her story" I was like heyyyyyyyy. There are lots of different versions of it but it's usually called "the twa sisters" in case you are at all interested in hearing more of it.

Jen: Feyre does escape from the Weaver but it wasn't easy and she is pissed at Rhys for doing that to her.

Shanna: Which seems fair really.

Jen: They send a message to the summer court and in the meantime travel to the human land. They need a safe place to stay while they try to contact the Queens. Even though it's been a year since she has been home, and obviously a lot has changed - like she's become a faerie - Feyre returns home in hopes that her sisters will help them. They aren't super stoked about it but eventually agree. They write to the Queens and then just have to wait for their response.

Shanna: I really liked this whole part with her sisters! I was glad to see they both still sucked in their own ways.

Jen: Yeah not a lot changed with them at all. In the meantime, Feyre is training her body, her mind, her powers. She is totally kicking ass and finding out that she can do everything which is pretty cool

Shanna: Then they hear from the Summer Court and are invited there. They don't know who they can trust so they are just going as guests and hoping to use Feyre's tracking powers to find the book. She really cozies up to Tarquin who is the high lord of the summer court in hopes that maybe he will just tell her where it is. He doesn't but she suspects that it is in a small building that is usually completely covered in water and is only visible when the tide is out. She asks a bunch of questions about it, which makes Tarquin wonder what she's after and then she controls his mind to make him forget that and think she is harmless. Naughty naughty Feyre.

Jen: It is a whole deal to get to that building and to get into it, but Amren and Feyre manage it and they get their half of the books of breathings. But the door slams shut and begins to fill with water. Luckily though, before they drown in there, the water wraiths who Feyre helped during the tithe in the spring court, rip open the door and free them as a thank you. Unfortunately, they aren't able to hide what they've done from the summer court any longer.

Shanna: Yessss there it is! I am not sure how water wraiths work obviously, and this seemed a bit far fetched and i dunno, plot perfect? But whatever, I am fine with it. Just keep swimming or something. This is not a story I feel especially passionate about poking holes in since it's more of a fun ride for now. The hole poking is for later.

Jen: Yes, there will be a lot of hole poking later....quite a lot.

Jen: I know we talked about how great the romance in this book is and you are probably wondering where the hell it is!? This book was such a slow burn of love. Throughout everything, we get little glimpses of a relationship blooming between Feyre and Rhys. I love that there is always a connection there, always a spark, but they don't just jump right in. They really build a relationship with each other. At this point, we have trust forming with just little hints of harmless jealousy here and there.

Shanna: Also neither of them forget that Tamlin exists. And even though he's a huge jerk who deserves to be broken up with, the fact that they don't just jump in to it is nice. Very considerate. Just because Tamlin sucks doesn't mean they have to.

Jen: Yes, exactly. I also like that their relationship wasn't the entire story. So much of the book is built up before we get there and I think that was really important..

Shanna: Ok! So we are about halfway through this book here. I know. HALF WAY. Like we said it's a LONG one. And we are going into plenty of detail, but this is what we do. So that's just how it's going to be.

Jen: I just feel like every single detail of the book matters and I just need to talk about it all!

Shanna: We are going to have to split this one into two parts because otherwise we will be here for the rest of our lives recording this episode and you will never get to hear it.

Jen: So, we will be back next week with part 2. This is where the book really starts to get juicy. Maybe that's too accurate and...gross but oh well.

Shanna: Lol omg yes that's exactly it .

Jen: Don't forget to subscribe to this podcast so that you don;t miss an episode, especially part 2 of this one and while you are there, why not rate and review us!

Shanna: You can also find us on social media at best_book club or send us an email at best_bookclub@outlook.com.

Jen: Don't forget about book club! We are reading A Thousand Ships by Natalie Haynes. We are so excited to talk to you all about it so read along with us - we will be posting discussion questions on our Instagram starting on May 19th so keep an eye out for that.

Shanna: Otherwise, we will see you next week!

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