

20. Cords to Bind

The chapter opens with a reflection on the importance of caution when dealing with dangerous elements, drawing a parallel to the use of spices and the pain of lessons learned through hardship. The quote from **Oathbringer** emphasizes the painful yet necessary process of growth and understanding. This sets the tone for a narrative centered on survival, learning, and the complex emotions tied to freedom and captivity. The author explores how pain and caution serve as guides in life, highlighting the importance of experience in shaping resilience and wisdom amidst adversity.

Kaladin's practical approach to injury and survival is demonstrated through his careful treatment of Khen's wound. He emphasizes cleanliness and infection prevention, reflecting his practical knowledge and leadership. As the characters tend to their wounds and gather resources, the scene shifts to their makeshift camp, where resourcefulness is evident—using metal buckets for boiling water and crafting tools from available materials. This setting underscores their struggle to adapt and survive in the wilderness after fleeing captivity, emphasizing their resilience despite limited resources.

The narrative deepens with a dialogue between Kaladin and Sah, a parshman who resents the authority Kaladin exerts. Sah's frustration with their situation and feelings of lost autonomy are palpable. He questions the legitimacy of Kaladin's leadership, expressing anger about the return to a hierarchy that resembles slavery. Kaladin's silent response reflects his understanding of their shared pain and the complexities of leadership in a fractured world. Their exchange reveals underlying tensions—between trust, authority, and the desire for true freedom—highlighting the emotional toll of their escape and the uncertain future ahead.

In the concluding part, Syl's warning of an impending highstorm introduces an external threat, forcing Kaladin to confront the reality of their precarious situation. His internal

struggle surfaces as he grapples with the possibility of inevitable conflict and war, recognizing that the parshmen's desire for freedom may lead to violence. Kaladin's reflection on the nature of war, freedom, and the consequences of past injustices underscores the chapter's core themes: the moral ambiguity of rebellion, the costs of survival, and the difficult path toward true liberation. The chapter leaves readers contemplating the balance between peace and conflict in a fractured world.

