

44. The Bright Side

The chapter opens with Veil reflecting on the hidden nature of the information she seeks, acknowledging how easily such secrets can be concealed within vast, seemingly insignificant realms. She is depicted relaxing in a lively tavern tent, observing the bustling human activity around her, which contrasts with the daunting scale of the tower she contemplates. Veil's thoughts reveal her awareness of the importance of subtlety and discretion, emphasizing that espionage often requires operating beneath the surface of distractions and superficial interactions to uncover valuable intelligence.

The narrative then shifts to Veil's training session with her team, led by Ishnah, a seasoned spy. The focus is on developing observational skills and the art of gathering information quietly. Red, Gaz, and Vathah practice memorization and assessment techniques, such as describing their surroundings without direct observation. Ishnah stresses that espionage is less about violence and more about blending in, making oneself unremarkable so others will confide in them or forget their presence, highlighting the importance of perception and subtlety in intelligence work.

Veil's acute observational abilities come to the forefront as she meticulously notes the details of the tavern's occupants, including the bartender and patrons, demonstrating her skill in quick assessment and memory. She also notices a woman discreetly taking notes and deduces her role as an information gatherer, potentially linked to high-princes or political factions. This scene underscores how spies must be vigilant and interpret even the smallest clues, understanding that many individuals in the environment are engaged in similar covert activities, often blending into the crowd.

The chapter concludes with Ishnah imparting advanced memory techniques and tips for filtering relevant information amidst the chaos of social settings. She emphasizes listening for key words and tone, recognizing that effective espionage relies on the ability to focus and interpret conversations with precision. While some trainees

become overwhelmed by the complexity, Veil remains engaged, illustrating her dedication and the intricate mental discipline required for successful spying. This segment encapsulates the nuanced, meditative nature of intelligence gathering, rooted in patience, observation, and strategic thinking.

