

86. That Others May Stand

The chapter opens with a reflection from a character who is contemplating their impending commitment to the Fourth Ideal and the armor that comes with it. They express doubt about their worthiness, questioning whether they truly want to help others, and reveal a sense of internal conflict. This introspective moment highlights the burden of the ideals and the pressure to live up to heroic standards, even when personal doubts and fears threaten to overwhelm. The character's internal dialogue sets a tone of vulnerability and the struggle to reconcile their sense of duty with feelings of inadequacy.

Dalinar Kholin, the chapter's central figure, stands solemnly on his balcony at Urithiru, observing the vast, empty landscape. His physical posture and mental state reflect deep inner turmoil. Despite efforts by others to convince him to rest, Dalinar is haunted by memories of past atrocities, particularly the cries of children and the horrors of war. His emotional restraint masks a profound pain rooted in guilt and grief over his role in violence and destruction, especially during the Rift conflict. His internal conflict underscores the heavy toll of leadership and the moral weight he bears.

The narrative delves into Dalinar's spiritual and moral crisis as he converses with the Stormfather, questioning the justice of his own actions. Dalinar's memories and feelings of guilt threaten to overwhelm him, and he grapples with the idea that his bond with the Stormfather might be a mistake. The Stormfather acknowledges his own dark past, hinting that even divine beings have committed acts of destruction. Dalinar's desire to ignore or forget these memories reveals his longing for redemption, yet he recognizes that confronting these truths is necessary for genuine growth and leadership.

In the final section, Dalinar joins others in a war council, where strategic concerns about the city of Kholinar dominate their discussions. The uncertainty of the battle's

outcome and the frustration of waiting for news weigh heavily on everyone. Dalinar's interaction with Taravangian explores themes of leadership responsibility, sacrifice, and moral ambiguity. Both men reflect on the sacrifices required of rulers—bearing guilt and making morally complex decisions—to ensure the survival of their people. The chapter concludes with a somber acknowledgment of the personal costs of leadership and the burden of justice, emphasizing that true strength often involves profound personal sacrifice.

