

# 71. A Sign of Humanity

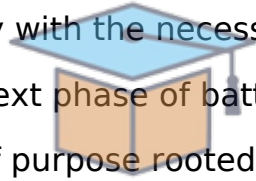
The chapter opens with a flashback to eleven years prior, detailing a military campaign led by Dalinar against Rathalas. Facing logistical challenges, Dalinar opts for a conventional approach, coordinating attacks from multiple directions. As he prepares for battle, he reflects on the environment, the campaign's strategic aspects, and his own internal struggles. The narrative emphasizes the tension between duty and personal feelings, illustrating Dalinar's sense of responsibility and the weight of leadership amidst the chaos of war. His thoughts reveal a man burdened by the demands of command and the sacrifices it entails, setting the tone for the chapter's exploration of morality and humanity in warfare.

Throughout the journey, Dalinar's interactions with his wife, Evi, reveal a complex emotional landscape. Evi, earnest and genuinely caring, prays for Dalinar's heart to soften, highlighting her concern for his moral compass amid the violence. Despite her composed exterior, her tears and heartfelt conversations expose her inner turmoil and love for him. Dalinar, torn between his duties as a leader and his personal feelings, struggles to reconcile the brutal realities of war with his desire for mercy and compassion. Their dialogue underscores the theme of inner conflict—balancing the harsh necessities of war with the human empathy that Evi embodies and hopes Dalinar will embrace.

As the scene shifts back to the present, Dalinar receives updates about the military situation—peaceful progress in securing a camp and the strategic positioning of forces. His internal frustration grows; he longs for the battle to begin and feels the weight of his responsibilities. Despite external calm, he is haunted by emotional unrest, especially regarding his relationship with Evi. His feelings of inadequacy and the desire for her admiration reveal a vulnerability not often associated with his role as a formidable leader. This internal tension underscores the chapter's exploration of the

human side of leadership—how personal doubts and emotional needs influence even the strongest of men.

The chapter culminates in Dalinar's decision to communicate directly with Evi, seeking clarity and connection amidst the chaos. Their conversation is intimate, revealing mutual concern and a shared desire for mercy. Evi pleads for Dalinar to hold back violence and show mercy, emphasizing the importance of compassion even in war. Dalinar, moved by her words, reflects on the moral dilemmas of his duty—balancing the need for victory with the necessity of humanity. The scene ends with Dalinar preparing for the next phase of battle, his resolve tempered by personal reflection and a renewed sense of purpose rooted in compassion and morality.



Summary