

58. Burdens

The chapter opens with a reflection on burdens and self-sacrifice, highlighting a Stoneward's internal conflict about whether their lifelong willingness to sacrifice is truly noble or perhaps a form of cowardice. This introspection sets a contemplative tone, emphasizing the emotional and psychological weight carried by those sworn to serve. The narrative then shifts to Dalinar's perspective as he observes the landscape from Urithiru, grappling with the difficulty of visualizing their altitude and the mysteries of the mountain range. His curiosity about the environment underscores his desire for concrete understanding amidst the uncertainties of their situation and the divine visions that continue to trouble him.

Dalinar's internal dialogue reveals his deep concern about Odium, the dark god, and the unsettling interactions he experienced during a vision. While the Stormfather seems confident, Dalinar remains troubled by the reality of his encounter, especially the feeling that Odium's presence was tangible and menacing. Navani and Jasnah's curiosity about his vision contrasts with his own cautious approach, leading to a discussion about the nature of divine interactions and the potential risks involved. Dalinar's fears about exposing others to Odium's influence cause them to suspend the use of visions, though he remains haunted by the possibility that Odium can touch the world in ways beyond their understanding.

The narrative then describes a strategic visit to the control platform of the Oathgates, which are crucial for transportation across their world. The scene highlights the technological and mystical intricacies of these gateways, with Navani and her team working carefully on the mechanisms. The successful activation of a gate to Thaylen City signifies progress, and the characters' relief and excitement are palpable. Kaladin and Shallan's arrival signifies the importance of these developments, with Kaladin's pragmatic approach contrasting with Shallan's eagerness. Dalinar's leadership is

reinforced as he plans further operations, emphasizing the significance of these gateways in their ongoing struggle and mobility.

Finally, Dalinar discusses strategic military and political matters with Kaladin, including the upcoming highstorm and the importance of maintaining control over Kholinar.

Dalinar's decision to grant Kaladin land along the river reflects a recognition of his leadership and the burdens he bears. The conversation underscores the theme of duty and sacrifice, illustrating that burdens are an intrinsic part of leadership and service.

Dalinar's advice to Kaladin about managing his new responsibilities encapsulates the chapter's core message: that burdens can be a source of strength when accepted with resolve, and that true leadership involves making difficult choices for the greater good.

