

25. The Girl Who Looked Up

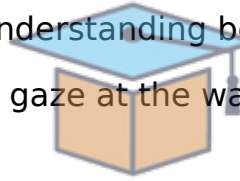
The chapter opens with a stark, haunting confession from an unnamed narrator, admitting to murders, including one involving someone who loved them dearly. This preface sets a tone of darkness and moral complexity that permeates the story. It hints at themes of guilt, remorse, and the weight of past actions, inviting readers to contemplate the deeper emotional and ethical layers within the narrative. The tone is introspective, emphasizing the gravity of the narrator's deeds and establishing a somber mood that contrasts with the vivid world of Roshar where the story unfolds. This opening underscores the chapter's exploration of human flaws and the burden of truth.

The narrative then shifts to Shallan exploring the ancient, abandoned city of Urithiru, depicted as a skeletal, cavernous structure beneath the surface. The imagery of veins and strata emphasizes the city's organic, almost alive, but decayed state, with corridors that have never seen sunlight. Despite the grandeur of the ruins, there is a pervasive sense of emptiness and darkness, symbolizing the lost knowledge and the futility of mankind's conquest over nature and time. Shallan's wandering through these silent halls reflects her desire to connect with history and understand the mysteries of the past, even as disappointment looms over her expectations of discovering advanced technology or significant artifacts.

As she ventures deeper into the city, Shallan encounters a large, theater-like chamber and perceives it as a space for storytelling and shared imagination. Her reflections on plays and stories reveal her longing for human connection and the comfort found in shared lies—stories that create meaning and unity amid chaos. Pattern's curiosity about these "lies" underscores a recurring theme of storytelling as a form of understanding others and oneself. This scene highlights the importance of narrative in shaping identity and offers a glimpse into Shallan's inner world, where imagination and

memory serve as anchors amid the unknown.

In the final part of the chapter, Shallan visualizes a childhood scene involving a girl with a scarf and a wall that symbolizes barriers and mysteries of the past. She constructs a vivid, symbolic tableau using her sketches and Stormlight, illustrating the contrast between innocence and the fears of the unknown. The wall represents both physical and metaphorical obstacles—barriers that protect yet imprison. Through her storytelling, Shallan emphasizes themes of curiosity, exploration, and the human tendency to seek understanding beyond what is visible. The chapter concludes with the girl's persistent gaze at the wall, embodying hope and wonder in the face of uncertainty.



Summary