

14. Squires Can't Capture

The chapter begins with Kaladin stealthily observing a group of Voidbringers, monstrous enemies from mythological origins, whom he expects to be dangerous and destructive. Instead, he finds them engaged in mundane activities like playing cards in the rain, which surprises him and challenges his preconceived notions of their brutality. The scene is set with Kaladin hiding near their camp, noting their simple living conditions, such as tarps and a single enclosed tent, and their seemingly relaxed demeanor, which contrasts sharply with their feared reputation. This moment prompts a reflection on the disparity between appearances and reality, especially regarding the enemy's true nature.

Kaladin's detailed observation reveals that the Voidbringers are more human-like than expected—they speak like common villagers, wear simple clothing, and have features that differ from the mythic monsters he anticipated. Their skin tones vary, and they display no overt signs of the terrifying traits associated with their kind. The dialogue between the male and female parshmen hints at their familiarity with games and social interactions, further humanizing them. Kaladin is struck by how much his assumptions about their ferocity might be misplaced, as they seem more like ordinary people caught in difficult circumstances rather than monsters intent on destruction.

The narrative then shifts to a moment of realization for Kaladin, as he contemplates the apparent disconnect between what he has been told about the Voidbringers and what he is witnessing. He begins to question his understanding of the ongoing conflict, pondering the absence of the expected destructive beasts and red-eyed monsters. This sense of confusion and doubt grows as he considers the possibility that his previous knowledge might have been incomplete or inaccurate, emphasizing a theme of misjudgment and the importance of seeing beyond surface appearances to understand the true nature of the enemy.

The chapter concludes with a sudden alarm, revealing that Kaladin's presence has been detected. As chaos erupts, the parshmen scramble with makeshift weapons, displaying fear rather than combat readiness. Kaladin, recognizing their lack of true combat skill and seeing their vulnerability, hesitates to attack. Instead, he chooses to surrender, signaling a shift in his perception of the enemy and highlighting the complex, nuanced reality behind the conflicts he faces. This moment underscores themes of empathy, the unpredictability of war, and the importance of understanding one's foes before rushing into violence.



Summaryer