

85. Grieve Later

The chapter opens with a secretive and tense atmosphere, emphasizing the importance of silence and discretion in the midst of chaos. A character whispers a forewarning, hinting at a deeper knowledge of impending events, setting a tone of urgency and unseen danger. The narrative quickly shifts to Adolin, who suppresses his grief over Elhokar's death, recalling his father's battlefield lessons to "grieve later," highlighting the importance of resilience in the face of loss. This establishes the emotional gravity of the situation, where personal sorrow must be momentarily set aside to focus on survival and strategic response amidst the devastation.

As the battle intensifies, Adolin leads a retreat from the city, guiding Kaladin and others toward the Oathgate platform, where Azure's soldiers and surgeons are working tirelessly to aid the wounded. Despite their efforts, the scale of destruction is overwhelming, with tens of thousands of parshmen flooding through broken gates and walls, forming ominous formations for an impending assault. Adolin's realization that the city is lost underscores the gravity of the situation, prompting him to command a strategic retreat to Urithiru. His decisive leadership reflects the brutal necessity of abandoning the city to preserve the remaining forces and civilians, emphasizing themes of sacrifice and strategic foresight.

Inside the control building, the narrative introduces a critical complication involving the Oathgate device, which appears to be malfunctioning or compromised. Adolin's urgency is compounded by Shallan's discovery that the heart of the device was a trap, and that the Voidbringers intentionally left the area unguarded to lure them into a disaster. This revelation raises doubts about trusting the device or the spren Sja-anat, who warns of potential catastrophe if they attempt to activate it. Shallan's internal conflict and her interactions with Pattern highlight the tension between trust and suspicion, as she faces a dilemma that could determine the fate of their escape and

the broader battle against the Voidbringers.

The chapter concludes with a tense engagement between trust, deception, and survival. Shallan, uncertain of whom or what to trust, prepares to activate the Oathgate despite the warnings, symbolizing her internal struggle to reconcile her instincts with her responsibilities. Her conversation with Pattern and Sja-anat emphasizes themes of deception and the difficulty of discerning truth in a time of chaos. As she engages the device, the narrative leaves her with a haunting awareness of the risks involved, encapsulating the overarching tension between hope and despair, trust and treachery, in their fight for survival and the future of their world.

