

36. Hero

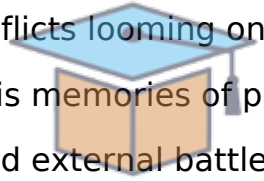
The chapter opens with a reflection on Dalinar's past, set twenty-four years earlier, revealing his struggles and the domestic scene in his household. Dalinar is dealing with a malfunctioning fireplace, symbolizing perhaps his ongoing battles and imperfections. Despite the hardships, there is a warmth in his family life, especially in his relationship with Evi, who is pregnant. The scene emphasizes a moment of quiet intimacy, contrasting Dalinar's external conflicts with his internal longing for peace and stability amidst a turbulent world. His observations of flamespren and their playful, almost sentient dance evoke a mystical element intertwined with his contemplations on the nature of spren and emotion.

Throughout the chapter, Dalinar's internal dialogue and conversations with Evi reveal his philosophical musings about the nature of the spren, emotions, and the divine. Evi's gentle encouragement to enjoy life and accept what the One has granted contrasts with Dalinar's tendency to brood over his responsibilities and past conflicts. Their dialogue explores themes of transformation, faith, and the mystical aspects of their world, with Dalinar pondering whether spren embody the emotions they represent—anger, glory, or fire—raising questions about the essence of these spirits and their connection to human experience. Evi's calm demeanor and her advice to seek peace through self-awareness highlight her role as a grounding influence in Dalinar's turbulent mind.

Dalinar's reflections also touch on his personal limitations and societal expectations, especially concerning his aging and the diminishing importance of duels as a form of honor or strength. His concern about how others perceive his vitality and purpose underscores his internal struggle with identity and legacy. The conversation about the divine and the mystical, including references to the Nightwatcher and the Old Magic, indicates ongoing tensions between traditional beliefs and the more mystical, perhaps

forbidden, knowledge that lurks beneath the surface of their society. Evi's mention of traveling to the Valley to meet the One or the divine avatar hints at deeper spiritual pursuits and the potential dangers of delving into old magic.

The chapter concludes with Dalinar's interaction with his brother Gavilar, who arrives dressed regally, symbolizing his status and authority. The scene underscores the contrast between Dalinar's internal doubts and Gavilar's commanding presence as a king. Gavilar's mention of Rathalas and the ongoing political or military concerns points to larger conflicts looming on the horizon. Dalinar's disdain for superficial appearances and his memories of past victories, like those in the Rift, contextualize his ongoing internal and external battles. The chapter ends with a sense of anticipation, hinting at future challenges while emphasizing the complex interplay between personal faith, honor, and political power.



Summary