

65. Verdict

In this chapter, Dalinar navigates a tense diplomatic encounter outside the Azish control building near the Oathgate in Azimir. Frustrated by the restrictions and rules of the place, he reflects on his dislike for the bureaucracy and the complexities of the political landscape. The scene opens with Dalinar approaching a guarded room, where Azish soldiers and officials, including viziers and ardents, prepare to engage with him. His goal is to forge alliances or at least secure a meeting with the emperor, using subtle tactics rather than force, as he recognizes the importance of diplomacy in this high-stakes environment.

Dalinar's approach involves strategic use of language and cultural understanding. He presents written messages in Azish, which initially shock the officials, hinting at his effort to communicate beyond mere words. Using Stormlight and a connection of Spiritual Adhesion, Dalinar manages to subtly understand and speak the Azish language, demonstrating his adaptability and determination. His interactions with the soldiers, especially the young guard, reveal his skill in building rapport even in hostile settings, aiming to gather intelligence and influence the outcome of the negotiations.

The core of the chapter revolves around Dalinar's diplomatic strategy, which hinges on presenting a compelling argument through written communication. He offers an essay from Queen Fen advocating for the economic benefits of the Oathgates, emphasizing trade and political alliances. This move signifies his shift from traditional warfare to a more nuanced approach, leveraging written diplomacy to achieve his objectives. The Azish officials' reactions highlight the importance of cultural respect and intellectual persuasion in their political dealings, contrasting with Dalinar's usual martial approach.

In the final moments, Dalinar introduces additional documents, including a treatise from Navani, signaling his preparedness to negotiate on multiple fronts. His willingness to adapt and employ written diplomacy reflects his broader strategy to secure

alliances and influence in Azir. The chapter ends with the officials huddling to consider his proposals, illustrating the delicate balance of power, trust, and negotiation that Dalinar must master to realize his vision. This scene underscores the importance of intelligence, cultural sensitivity, and strategic communication in his efforts to unify and strengthen his position.

