

19. The Subtle Art of Diplomacy

The chapter opens with a reflection on a past event, set thirty-one years ago, where Dalinar recalls a feast amidst a stormy environment. The scene highlights the contrasting elements of opulence and chaos, with a lavish feast hall filled with political figures and a raging storm outside. Dalinar observes the grandeur of the gathering and the political tensions at play, emphasizing the importance of alliances and military strategy in their society. The setting reveals a world where diplomacy and power are intertwined, and the storm outside symbolizes the tumultuous nature of their political landscape.

Gavilar, a central figure, discusses military logistics and the strategic use of their resources, such as Soulcasters and high ground, to withstand sieges and storms. The conversation with the Westerner Toh provides insight into the technological and magical advantages of their kingdom, emphasizing the wealth and power contained within the Vorin kingdoms. The dialogue also touches on the legacy of historical figures like the Sunmaker, linking past achievements to present ambitions. Dalinar, meanwhile, observes the political maneuvering and the pomp surrounding Gavilar's regal demeanor, feeling somewhat disconnected from the celebration.

As the feast progresses, Dalinar's mood shifts from the politeness of the event to a more introspective state. He reflects on the changing nature of warfare and the loss of the simpler joys of battle, contrasting the current political focus with the earlier days of fighting and riding into combat. His discomfort is compounded by practical issues, such as the absence of a knife to eat his food, symbolizing his sense of being an outsider amid the formalities. The chapter underscores the tension between duty and personal desire, illustrating Dalinar's internal conflict within the political hierarchy.

The scene concludes with Dalinar stepping outside into the storm, seeking clarity amid the chaos. The highstorm's fury mirrors the turbulent political and personal struggles

he faces. His search for a missing knife and subsequent confrontation with armed men in a bunker reveal his ongoing responsibilities and the dangerous, unpredictable nature of his environment. This ending emphasizes the recurring theme of facing external chaos while grappling with internal conflicts, highlighting Dalinar's resilience and sense of duty in a world rife with political intrigue and natural fury.

