

59. Bondsmith

The chapter opens with a poignant letter from a woman reflecting on her family, emphasizing her love for her husband, Kmakra, and their children, Molinar and Kmakra, whom she considers the true gems of her life. This personal note sets a tone of remembrance and longing, hinting at themes of memory, loss, and the importance of personal bonds amid a backdrop of cultural and spiritual significance. The letter's tone is intimate, contrasting with the chapter's broader exploration of the city and its religious sites, suggesting underlying personal stakes in the larger narrative.

As Dalinar and his companions visit the temple of Shalash, Fen provides historical context about the structure, describing its architecture, purpose, and the significance of its carvings. The temple, filled with burning glyphs and damaged statues, symbolizes a once-vibrant spiritual center now scarred by time and the storm's destruction. Dalinar's contemplative mood is tinged with discomfort, questioning whether prayers are still reaching their intended deities or if they are lost to a god who no longer exists. The scene underscores the enduring but fragile nature of faith and tradition amidst chaos.

The group's tour continues through the Royal Ward, where Dalinar observes the city's battered state, noting the destruction wrought by the Everstorm. Navani comments on the traditional practice of temple visits, meant to reinforce the throne's piety and authority, but Dalinar perceives underlying political motives and the superficiality of such rituals. Their exchange reveals Dalinar's internal conflict—his duty to uphold tradition versus his growing doubts about the religious and political institutions. The scene highlights the tension between heritage and the realities of a city ravaged by natural disasters and war.

Finally, the chapter shifts to a poignant scene inside a temple turned makeshift hospital, where wounded civilians lie suffering. Fen explains the improvisation

necessitated by the storm's devastation, and Dalinar's concern deepens as he witnesses the extent of the suffering. The appearance of Taravangian, pleading for aid and offering to activate the Oathgate, introduces a subplot of political and humanitarian urgency. Dalinar's resolve to seek help underscores his leadership role and the overarching theme of unity and compassion amid adversity, setting the stage for further alliances and interventions.

