

88. Voices

The chapter opens with a reflection on Gavilar's aging and the toll his responsibilities have taken on him, highlighting Dalinar's observant stance from the shadows of the king's den. Dalinar perceives Gavilar as worn and in need of renewal, perhaps through a hunt or some other activity to restore his vitality. The scene underscores Dalinar's role as a quiet sentinel, watching the political machinations unfold while grappling with his own internal struggles. The atmosphere is tense, filled with unspoken pain and the weight of leadership, setting a somber tone that emphasizes the emotional and physical costs of power and responsibility.

Dalinar's internal monologue reveals the deep scars inflicted by recent events, particularly the destruction of the Rift and the loss of his wife, Evi. Sadeas's manipulation of the narrative to blame Dalinar for the city's destruction adds to his feelings of guilt and isolation. Gavilar's cautious attitude toward Dalinar's potential violence underscores the danger he perceives in Dalinar's strength. Dalinar's aversion to fire—linked to traumatic memories—symbolizes his struggle to confront his past and the destructive impulses that threaten to consume him, illustrating his internal conflict and sense of helplessness.

The narrative shifts to Dalinar's interactions with his son, Adolin, revealing a complex relationship marked by pride, concern, and a growing sense of distance. Adolin's youthful enthusiasm and desire to prove himself in combat contrast with Dalinar's internal turmoil. Dalinar's sternness and attempt to maintain discipline reflect his desire to instill strength and honor in his son, even as he battles his own emotional wounds. The scene underscores the generational divide and the lingering impact of loss, with Dalinar's memories of happier times conflicting with his current despair.

In the closing scenes, Dalinar's desperation drives him to seek solace outside the palace's formal settings, leading him to the Beggars' Porch in the palace's depths.

Here, he encounters the suffering of the less fortunate, symbolizing his own feelings of helplessness and moral conflict. His interactions with the beggars and the religious statues reinforce themes of guilt, duty, and the search for redemption. Dalinar's internal struggle with his past, his role as a leader, and his desire for peace and clarity are woven throughout the chapter, illustrating a man torn between his responsibilities and his inner demons.

