

55. Alone Together

The chapter opens with Rlain reflecting on his internal conflict and feelings of inadequacy, emphasizing his sense of being ill-equipped to assist others due to the turmoil within himself. Sitting alone on the Shattered Plains, he listens to the rhythms—subtle, tonal beats that he perceives as echoes of his lost people. These rhythms, though faint and imperfect, serve as a connection to his heritage and a source of solace. Rlain's awareness that humans might respond to these rhythms, despite their supposed deafness, highlights his longing for understanding and belonging, as he hopes that someday they might truly hear what he hears, easing his loneliness.

Rlain's musings deepen as he considers the destruction of his homeland, Stormseat, now turned into Narak by the humans. The ruins, once a sacred gathering place for his people, are now repurposed, symbolizing both loss and resilience. He mourns the disappearance of his entire race—the listeners—and recognizes that his parshman kin have either fallen or been transformed into something unrecognizable. As the last of his kind, Rlain bears the weight of extinction, feeling a profound sense of grief and isolation. His internal conflict is compounded by the awareness that his people's legacy is fading into history, leaving him as a solitary remnant.

Despite his solitude, Rlain is integrated into the human military and forms bonds with the Bridge Four crew. He admires their camaraderie and feels a mixture of affection and frustration—fond of them yet sometimes wishing he could distance himself due to fears about his own potential power. His unique physical form, marked by carapace armor and protrusions, sets him apart, and he is painfully aware of how others perceive him. The unspoken suspicion about his ability to wield Stormlight and the concern that it might turn him into a monster weigh heavily on him, influencing his interactions and self-perception.

The chapter concludes with scenes of active training and patrols among the bridge crew, highlighting the ongoing struggle to defend against Voidbringer raids. Rlain's thoughts shift to the military efforts and the strange pattern of the attacks, which seem deliberate and testing of their capabilities. The humans, including his friends, seek answers and reassurance, but Rlain feels the burden of understanding that they lack the context about the true nature of the Voidbringers and his own people. His internal reflections reveal a profound sense of alienation and the complex dynamics of trust, loyalty, and identity amidst the chaos of war.



Summaryer