

26. Blackthorn Unleashed

The chapter begins with a flashback to twenty-nine years earlier, depicting Dalinar's spiritual and cultural practices amid a warcamp. He observes Evi performing her unique prayers with burning glyphs, highlighting her heretical beliefs and her divergence from traditional religious customs. Dalinar's simple prayer for strength reveals his pragmatic mindset, while Evi's words about the One and her heretical faith contrast with the orthodox Ardents' teachings. Their interaction underscores Dalinar's internal conflict regarding his faith and his relationship with Evi, emphasizing the tension between personal beliefs and societal expectations in their world.

As the narrative transitions to the present, Dalinar prepares for an upcoming battle, donning his Shardplate and mounting his horse amid the gathering army. The scene captures the scale of the conflict, with soldiers, cavalry, and archers readying for combat. Dalinar's thoughts reveal his focus on the strategic importance of this confrontation, not just as a military engagement but as a pivotal moment for the kingdom's future. The atmosphere is tense, filled with anticipation for the impending clash, symbolizing a critical turning point in the ongoing war and political struggles.

Dalinar's interaction with his brother Gavilar introduces political intrigue and military strategy. Gavilar's plans to eliminate Highprince Kalanor and solidify control through the death of Kalanor, a Shardbearer, highlight the ruthless tactics employed to consolidate power. Dalinar's disdain for certain leaders and his skepticism about their motives reflect his own moral code and desire for decisive action. Gavilar's confidence in his plans and his subtle manipulations reveal the complex political landscape, setting the stage for a confrontation that could dramatically alter the power dynamics within their realm.

The chapter concludes with Dalinar contemplating Gavilar's desire for him to bring Kalanor into battle to "unleash" him, symbolizing the need to provoke Kalanor into

action. Dalinar's internal suspicion about Gavilar's true intentions—whether they aim to control or destroy Kalanor—adds layers of complexity to their relationship. The narrative underscores the overarching theme of power, control, and the unpredictable nature of leadership within a war-torn society. Dalinar's resolve to act decisively reflects his role as the Blackthorn, poised to influence the course of events with strength and strategic insight.

