

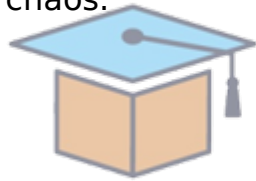
Chapter 8

In this chapter, Rowan Whitethorn is depicted as a relentless and exhausted figure, having flown tirelessly for two days without sustenance or rest. Despite his efforts to reach Rifthold, he arrives too late to prevent the city's fall into chaos, overwhelmed by witches and their wyverns. The destruction is extensive, with the witches having already shattered Aelin's glass wall, a strategic move by Erawan. Rowan's sense of hopelessness is tempered by a faint glimmer of hope, as he recognizes that some resistance remains, and he remains determined to find a way to influence the outcome amidst the destruction.

The narrative then shifts focus to Dorian Havilliard and Rowan's efforts to navigate the besieged castle. As they rush through the corridors, Dorian reveals a secret exit from his mother's chambers, which Rowan forcefully breaches, destroying furniture and artworks in his haste. They discover a hidden trapdoor behind a portrait, leading them into the castle's secret tunnels. Rowan's sharp senses and magic help them assess the danger and avoid enemies, while also listening to the screams of those dying above. Dorian's enhanced senses, a gift from his magic, highlight their urgency and the peril they face.

Deep beneath the castle, the two characters discuss Dorian's internal conflict and the importance of his survival. Rowan emphasizes that Dorian's life is more valuable to his people alive than dead, despite Dorian's desire to sacrifice himself. As they traverse the tunnels, Dorian reveals his mistrust of a certain figure—presumably the queen—and explains his reasons for caution. Their goal is to reach the castle sewers, where they hope to find an escape route. Rowan's strategic thinking and magical probing underscore the danger of their situation and the importance of their mission to prevent further catastrophe.

Finally, the scene shifts to the castle's sewers, where Rowan and Dorian observe the devastation wrought by the witches and wyverns. They notice signs of Aelin's presence and a bloodstained area, hinting at her violent confrontation with Archer Finn. The characters discover a deteriorated boat and an open waterway, which could serve as their escape. Rowan's calm yet commanding demeanor is evident as he instructs Dorian to lie down and cover himself with his cloak, preparing for a stealthy escape. The chapter ends with Rowan's determination to outwit their enemies and ensure their survival amidst the chaos.



Summaryer