

Chapter 26

The chapter opens with Dorian's ongoing discomfort in Skull's Bay, where the relentless heat and humidity continue to wear on him, affecting his sleep and daily routine. Despite their repeated attempts to meet with Rolfe, the elusive leader remains indifferent, forcing Dorian to occupy his days with magic practice and physical training under Rowan's strict supervision. Dorian reflects on Aelin's resilience and love for the warrior's brutal environment, acknowledging their shared sadistic streak that bonds them. The oppressive climate and the unfulfilled hope of a meeting with Rolfe set a tense, restless tone that underscores Dorian's frustration and sense of helplessness.

Throughout the chapter, Dorian and Rowan gather intelligence about Rolfe's forces and the wider war effort. They observe the dwindling fleet and the strategic division of Erawan's ships across key locations, revealing a calculated plan to stretch Adarlan's defenses thin. The news from Rifthold paints a bleak picture of a city under witch control, with chaos and ruin spreading as the city's nobility flees. Rumors of strange soldiers and beasts arriving by sea heighten the sense of impending catastrophe, while the absence of concrete information about key figures like Aelin and her allies adds to the uncertainty. Dorian recognizes that the war's true scope and Erawan's plans are more complex and far-reaching than he previously understood.

As the days pass, Dorian and Rowan work tirelessly to piece together snippets of intelligence, analyzing secondhand reports and rumors from traders, sailors, and whores. Their focus is on tracking Erawan's fleet movements and the potential threat they pose to their homeland. Dorian's concern grows as he realizes the strategic deception behind the fleet's division, which could allow Erawan to launch a devastating attack. The tension mounts as they grapple with the possibility that Erawan's forces may soon be on the move, sailing around Eyllwe and heading toward Orynth, with the potential for widespread destruction looming on the horizon.

Eventually, Dorian's impatience reaches a breaking point, prompting him to take action. He expresses his desire to stop waiting for Rolfe's meeting and requests a messenger and paper to send crucial information. Rowan, aware of the stakes, agrees to facilitate this plan, and they orchestrate a covert operation to ensure their message reaches Rolfe. Their careful planning involves deception and subtle signals to avoid detection, knowing that Rolfe's spies are everywhere. The chapter culminates with Dorian and Rowan heading to Rolfe's office, prepared to deliver their urgent intelligence, fully aware that the outcome could significantly influence the course of the war and their future.



Summaryer