

Chapter Sixty-Seven

The chapter opens with Yrene standing on the deck of a grand ship at dawn, preparing to leave Antica behind. She observes the city's minarets and the bustling harbor as the ship begins its voyage home. The early morning winds and the rising sun symbolize a transition, both physically and emotionally, for Yrene, who is leaving a place of significance. Her thoughts are tinged with a sense of farewell and anticipation, highlighting the emotional weight of departure after her time in Antica. The scene sets a tone of bittersweet reflection, emphasizing her connection to the city and the journey ahead.

Yrene's farewell is marked by a poignant encounter with Kashin, the prince. He approaches her with regret and a sense of longing, expressing his remorse for past words spoken on the steppes. Despite the pain, Kashin reveals his appreciation for their friendship and the bond they share. Their exchange underscores themes of reconciliation, loyalty, and the enduring nature of true friendship. Kashin's words about missing her and his hope to meet again convey a sense of hope amid the uncertainty of their futures, reinforcing the emotional depth of their relationship.

As Yrene prepares to depart, she reflects on the political upheaval surrounding Kashin's new role as heir and the broader implications for their homeland. She notices the peace in Kashin's eyes, contrasting with the chaos and debates among the royal siblings. Her thoughts drift to the unspoken agreements and potential future conflicts, hinting at the complexities of power and loyalty within their world. Despite the turmoil, Yrene feels a sense of gratitude and warmth for Kashin's kindness, affirming the importance of their connection amid the shifting political landscape.

The chapter concludes with Yrene watching Antica recede into the distance, holding onto her memories and the hope of future reunions. She contemplates the iconic Torre Cesme, a symbol of hope and stability, and wonders if she will see it again. As the ship

moves toward the horizon, she perceives the city's silhouette fading into the background, yet the tower remains a beacon of resilience. The scene ends with her silent farewell to Antica, as she braces herself for the challenges ahead across the Narrow Sea, symbolized by the impending conflict and war. Her resolve and emotional depth underscore her journey's significance beyond physical travel.

