

Chapter Seven

Chaol, confined to a wheelchair, waits until Nesryn leaves before summoning the servant Kadja to request information about the attack on Rifthold. He struggles with his inability to speak her language fluently but manages to convey his need for news about his homeland. Concerned about Nesryn bearing the burden of grim news alone, he tasks Kadja with gathering information from the docks. Despite knowing Kadja likely reports to the palace royals, Chaol dismisses the risk, prioritizing his people's fate over political caution. His frustration with his physical limitations surfaces as he wheels himself forward, determined to remain active despite his circumstances.

Chaol then meets Prince Arghun in his lavish chambers, where the prince's cold demeanor and focus on trivialities like his prized peacocks contrast sharply with Chaol's urgency. The prince's fluent use of Chaol's language and his evasive responses highlight the tension between them. Chaol, desperate for answers about Rifthold, confronts Arghun directly, but the prince claims he can reveal nothing due to the watchful eyes of the court. The meeting ends abruptly, leaving Chaol frustrated and powerless, his anger compounded by the humiliation of being escorted out by servants.

The chapter delves into Chaol's internal struggle as he grapples with his physical limitations and the political games of the khagan's court. His encounter with Arghun leaves him doubting whether the prince is lying, but the confirmation of Rifthold's sacking weighs heavily on him. The servants' pity and his own helplessness enrage him, underscoring his loss of autonomy. The chapter captures his growing desperation and isolation as he returns to his room, haunted by the unknown fate of his people and King Dorian.

As night falls, Nesryn's prolonged absence adds to Chaol's anxiety. Her failure to return for dinner leaves him unsettled, especially after Kadja's fruitless search for

news. The chapter ends with Chaol's worry mounting, emphasizing his emotional turmoil and the precariousness of his position in a foreign court. The unresolved tension and unanswered questions set the stage for further developments, highlighting Chaol's determination to uncover the truth despite the obstacles in his path.

