

Chapter Sixty

In this chapter, Chaol and Yrene rush through the bustling streets of Antica with a sense of urgent purpose. Their focus is on joining Aelin's army and securing support from the khaganate, emphasizing the importance of this alliance for their war efforts. As they ascend the Torre, Chaol's determination is evident in his willingness to confront any obstacle, even risking a confrontation with the khagan. Their shared goal is to gather crucial knowledge, represented by Hafiza and her books, which could prove to be a more powerful weapon than swords. This determination highlights their strategic mindset and the high stakes of their mission.

Amidst their climb, Yrene's thoughts are tinged with bittersweet nostalgia. She reflects on the fleeting nature of her time at the Torre, the simple joys of shared moments, and the hope of leaving this place behind with Chaol. Her feelings of love and connection deepen as she considers the possibility of departing soon, with the comforting thought that she will take a part of this place with her. Their bond is palpable, and their interactions reveal a mixture of affection, resolve, and the burden of impending separation, adding emotional depth to their mission.

Upon reaching Hafiza's office, Yrene and Chaol quickly realize something is amiss. Hafiza's absence is suspicious, especially since her office is empty and the bookcase remains locked. Their suspicion grows when they discover Hafiza's iron key missing, which suggests she deliberately concealed her departure or was taken against her will. The absence of forced entry or signs of violence complicates the situation, hinting that Hafiza may have anticipated danger or was involved in something clandestine. The chapter underscores the urgency of the situation and the need for swift action to uncover Hafiza's whereabouts.

The chapter culminates with a frantic search across the Torre as Yrene and Chaol piece together the clues. They find Hafiza's key hidden beneath her door, confirming her

deliberate disappearance. The sense of foreboding intensifies as they realize something serious is unfolding, prompting them to alert the guard and organize a search. Time becomes a critical factor, as they understand that Hafiza's disappearance could signal an imminent threat or a larger conspiracy. The chapter ends with a tense atmosphere, emphasizing the urgency and danger that now loom over their mission and the entire castle.

