

Chapter Thirty-Six

Chaol's physical recovery progresses significantly in this chapter, with his leg muscles gradually regaining strength through daily training and Yrene's healing sessions. Though he still cannot stand, his mobility improves up to his knees, and his overall physique becomes more robust. Their routine settles into a comfortable rhythm, blending healing with self-defense lessons where Chaol teaches Yrene techniques for facing larger opponents. Despite the absence of further attacks, the shadow of the Valg threat lingers, and both remain vigilant while cautiously avoiding discussions of the distant war.

Yrene and Chaol navigate unspoken tensions, particularly regarding their hidden mission to uncover Valg-related secrets at the Aksara Oasis. Time weighs heavily on Chaol, whose thoughts often drift to his friends fighting in the war, driving him to push harder in his recovery. Yrene, too, feels the urgency, questioning whether she'll arrive in time to aid the conflict. Their healing sessions continue to confront the darkness within Chaol's wounds, but he endures the pain steadfastly, pausing only when Yrene's energy wanes.

The chapter takes a dramatic turn during a formal dinner with the royal family. Princess Hasar reveals that Nesryn and Sartaq will return the next day, unsettling Yrene, who realizes Chaol's loyalty to Nesryn may end their growing closeness. Though nothing romantic has transpired between them, Yrene feels a crushing sense of impending loss. Chaol subtly reassures her with a deliberate brush of his hand, leaving Hasar displeased at being kept unaware of their bond.

The chapter ends on a note of unresolved tension, with Yrene grappling with her emotions and the looming return of Nesryn. Hasar's manipulative demeanor adds to the unease, while Chaol's quiet support hints at deeper, unspoken feelings. The dynamics between the characters grow increasingly complex, setting the stage for

future confrontations and emotional reckonings.

