

12. Negotiations

The chapter begins with a reflection on the grandeur and symbolism of Urithiru, a city built above the storms, exemplified by its towering glass windows. Dalinar, standing in an upper chamber, contemplates the Radiants' legacy and their defiance of worldly limitations. An internal dialogue reveals his idealization of the Radiants, contrasted with a voice that reminds him of their betrayals and human flaws. This internal conflict underscores Dalinar's struggle to reconcile his admiration for their nobility with the darker realities of their history, emphasizing themes of leadership, legacy, and the burdens of memory.

Dalinar prepares for diplomatic negotiations with the emperor of Makabak, represented through a formal, layered communication process involving a spanreed and detailed titles. As he and his team await responses, they strategize how to approach the Azish government, which is characterized by its complex bureaucratic and religious structure. The narrative highlights the political intricacies of Azir, with its layered clerics and the hybrid religious-political roles, illustrating the delicate balance Dalinar must navigate to foster alliances and influence regional power dynamics.

The diplomatic exchange reveals a subtle game of diplomacy, where politeness and formality mask underlying intentions. Dalinar extends an invitation to the Azish emperor to visit Urithiru, emphasizing the city's magnificence and the potential for future cooperation. However, the response from the Azish court is cautious and non-committal, expressing mourning for shared losses rather than engaging directly with Dalinar's proposal. The dialogue showcases the difficulty of diplomatic persuasion, with the Azish avoiding direct commitments and maintaining a reserved stance, reflecting their cultural tendency to avoid offense and their strategic patience.

Throughout the chapter, Dalinar's frustration grows as he perceives the diplomatic exchanges as evasive and insincere. His team recognizes the political nuances at play,

understanding that the Azish are skilled in subtlety and indirect communication. The narrative underscores the challenge of leadership in a fractured world, where alliances must be forged carefully amid mistrust and cultural differences. Dalinar's determination to unite the various factions remains central, even as he grapples with the complexities of diplomacy and the weight of history, illustrating the ongoing struggle to bring stability and unity to Roshar.

