

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

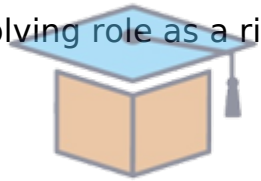
The chapter opens with a reflection on the sanctity of the Archives, emphasizing their irreplaceable nature compared to temples or other structures. The protagonist, Cadet Sorrengail, navigates the familiar tunnels of Basgiath, pushing a library cart towards the Archives, which serve as her sanctuary and place of work. The sensory details of the scent of parchment and ink evoke a deep sense of belonging and nostalgia, highlighting her long-standing connection to the Archives despite recent changes in her responsibilities. Her routine underscores the importance of knowledge and tradition within their society, framing the Archives as a vital cultural and historical repository.

Upon arriving at the Archives, Sorrengail exchanges greetings with a fellow scribe, Jesinia, which reveals her close bond with her friends despite the strict customs that restrict physical displays of affection. Their interaction conveys a sense of shared dedication to their work and mutual concern, especially regarding Sorrengail's recent assignment to the Riders Quadrant. She reassures Jesinia of her well-being, despite the physical and emotional toll of her new role, and shares her feelings of happiness about her bond with her dragon, Tairn. This moment illuminates the internal conflict between societal expectations and her personal fulfillment, as she navigates her identity as a rider and her love for her dragon.

The chapter also explores the theme of longing and nostalgia, as Sorrengail requests a specific folktale, "The Fables of the Barren," from Jesinia. She reminisces about her childhood, her father's stories, and her love for folklore that warns of the dangers associated with magic and dragon bonding. Her desire to find these stories reflects her curiosity about the history and risks of their powers, contrasting the romanticized tales with her understanding that dragons protect riders from losing their souls. This segment emphasizes her inner conflict and her quest for understanding her own place

within the intricate balance of power, tradition, and personal growth.

In the closing moments, Sorrengail observes other scribes and cadets, searching for familiar faces, especially her father's, which underscores her ongoing sense of connection and longing for her past. The chapter ends with a brief encounter with Professor Markham, hinting at the broader social and political landscape she is part of. Her composed exterior masks her deeper emotions and uncertainties, setting the stage for her continued journey of self-discovery amid the rigid structures of her society and her evolving role as a rider bonded with a dragon.



Summaryer