

CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE

The chapter begins with a vivid depiction of Fen Riorson's final moments during interrogation, where he descends into madness, falsely accusing the Navarre kingdom and its rulers of a vast conspiracy. His behavior becomes increasingly erratic, leading to a swift and merciful execution, emphasizing the tragic end of a man consumed by paranoia and madness. This scene sets a tone of political intrigue and the brutal consequences of dissent within the kingdom, illustrating the harsh realities faced by those accused of treason and the ruthless measures taken by the authorities to maintain control.

The narrative then shifts to a tense scene involving the protagonist and other characters observing a confrontation with gryphon riders. The riders, dressed differently from the black-clad enemies, reveal unsettling information about a recent village destruction by venom, mythical creatures believed to rarely appear in the west. The conversation exposes a dangerous threat advancing toward their borders, with the riders warning of imminent danger and urging preparedness. This revelation introduces a new layer of threat, blending myth and reality, and highlights the ongoing conflict that looms over the region.

Amidst the mounting tension, the characters grapple with betrayal and the complex alliances at play. Xaden's calm demeanor contrasts sharply with the shock and disbelief experienced by others, especially when it becomes clear that he is secretly working with the enemy. The scene underscores the peril of trusting appearances and the dangerous game of political and military deception. The discussion about ransom and the threat of violence emphasizes the stakes involved, revealing how personal and political motives intertwine within this intricate web of loyalty, betrayal, and survival.

As the chapter concludes, the gryphon riders depart, leaving behind a sense of foreboding. The protagonist feels isolated, aware of the betrayal and the dangerous

truths uncovered. The scene underscores the fragile alliances and the imminent threat posed by the venin horde, forcing the characters to brace for a confrontation that could determine the fate of their land. The chapter ends with a poignant reflection on the outsider status of the protagonist and the ominous reality that everyone is now aware of the brewing conflict, setting the stage for the battles to come.

