

27. Playing Pretend

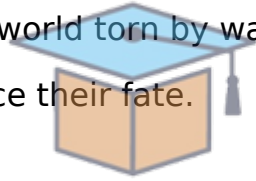
The chapter opens with Shallan observing the political tension within Urithiru, where leaders debate the strategic movements of the enemy and the threat posed to various kingdoms. Despite her presence at the meeting, she finds herself distracted by her surroundings and her own artistic pursuits, sketching the scene rather than participating in the discussion. Her discomfort with the political atmosphere and her desire for solitude are evident as she prefers the light and quiet of the upper levels, away from the watchful eyes of others. Pattern, her spren, inspects her drawings, revealing a mysterious, ancient spren linked to Odium, hinting at long-forgotten histories that still influence current events.

The narrative shifts to the ongoing military and diplomatic concerns, with Dalinar and other highprinces discussing enemy movements and the threat to key locations like Azir and the Oathgates. The enemy's strategic focus appears to be on gaining control of these critical gateways, with reports indicating enemy armies gathering in Marat and a mysterious blackout affecting major cities. The loss of spanreeds, essential for communication and navigation, raises fears of enemy interference, possibly locating and disabling these vital tools. Kaladin's safety is acknowledged, but uncertainty remains about the enemy's capabilities, fueling the urgency of the coalition's strategic planning.

As the meeting continues, the focus turns to internal tensions and the lingering effects of past conflicts. Shallan sketches various figures, including former and current leaders, as she contemplates the pattern of violence and impersonation by a spren mimicking previous attacks. Her observations suggest a deeper, possibly malicious influence behind the recent violence, hinting at an entity that is mimicking the violence from past days to sow chaos. The chapter underscores the fragile state of trust and the importance of understanding the enemy's methods, as well as the

lingering trauma inflicted by the ongoing desolation and violence.

The chapter concludes with a personal interaction between Shallan and a Thaylen merchant named Malata, who questions the current state of the Radiants and the possibility of rebuilding. Their conversation reflects the uncertainty and cautious hope for renewal, emphasizing that reliance on past strengths might be crucial in facing the present crisis. Shallan's reflections on the past and her cautious optimism highlight the tension between hope and despair, illustrating the complex emotions of the characters as they navigate a world torn by war, political strife, and ancient mysteries that continue to influence their fate.



Summaryer