

CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

The chapter opens with a reflection on the dangers associated with controlling a powerful signet, emphasizing that both the inability to manifest one and the reckless use of it pose significant risks to riders and those around them. This sets a tone of caution and highlights the importance of mastery over magical abilities within the military hierarchy. The narrative then shifts to a tense morning where the protagonist, hurriedly preparing for an urgent formation, grapples with the reality of an impending attack. The urgency underscores the deteriorating security in the quadrant, and the protagonist's concern for fallen comrades underscores the stakes of this conflict.

As the scene progresses, the protagonist quickly dresses in her formal uniform, aware of her limited time before deployment. Her interaction with Xaden reveals a deep connection, with him offering protective warmth in the form of his flight jacket. Their exchange is charged with emotion, hinting at the looming separation as Xaden is expected to be sent on a dangerous mission. Their brief but intense moment underscores the personal toll of the ongoing war, contrasting their feelings against the backdrop of military duty and imminent danger.

The chapter also captures the chaos and adrenaline of the war college environment. The protagonist slips away from her room unnoticed, blending into the crowd of riders heading to formation. She observes her peers, including Rhiannon and Liam, and engages in lighthearted banter that masks underlying tension. The discovery that she is wearing Xaden's flight jacket sparks playful teasing among her friends, which momentarily distracts from the seriousness of the situation. The camaraderie and layered interactions reveal the complex emotional landscape of the characters amidst the chaos.

Finally, the chapter culminates with the revelation that the morning's gathering is part of a larger, orchestrated event—War Games. The protagonist's shock and Rhiannon's

teasing highlight the unpredictable nature of their training and the deceptive calm before more intense battles. The chapter ends with a sense of foreboding, as the characters brace for the upcoming challenge while managing personal conflicts and relationships. The mix of humor, tension, and camaraderie paints a vivid picture of life within the war college during a period of crisis.



CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

The chapter opens with a historical account of gryphon attacks, highlighting their first recorded incident near Resson in 1 AU. This event marked the beginning of a prolonged conflict over territorial control, especially around vulnerable border regions like the trading post. The ongoing struggle reflects the broader theme of territorial disputes driven by power and strategic advantage. The narrative situates these conflicts within a larger historical context, emphasizing the persistent threat posed by gryphons and the importance of border defenses in the ongoing war. This background sets the stage for understanding the strategic significance of the locations and the persistent danger faced by those defending these borders.

The story then shifts to a detailed depiction of a flight into Athebyne, illustrating the physical and emotional toll of aerial travel for the characters. As they traverse the Cliffs of Dralor and surrounding mountains, the narrative captures the breathtaking scenery and the inherent dangers of flying in such treacherous terrain. The characters' interactions reveal their familiarity with flying and the physical exhaustion that accompanies long hours in the saddle. The scene also introduces the characters' relationships, particularly the bond between the narrator and the dragons, Tairn and Andarna, as well as their comrades. It underscores the importance of teamwork and the reliance on dragon companions for survival and strategic movement.

The chapter explores the shift beyond the protective wards, emphasizing the change in magical dynamics and communication. The absence of wards causes magic to become more unpredictable, complicating command and coordination within the squad. This sense of unease is compounded by the strange, foreboding atmosphere as they approach Athebyne, hinting at potential threats and unseen dangers awaiting them. The characters' heightened alertness and cautious behavior reflect the unpredictable nature of the upcoming confrontation. Their careful preparations and the

sense of foreboding set a tense tone for what lies ahead, emphasizing the stakes of their mission.

In the final section, personal tensions and emotional vulnerabilities surface amid the group's physical exhaustion. The narrator reflects on the physical toll of the journey and her mental state, marked by anxiety and love for Xaden. Conversations reveal concerns about safety, responsibilities, and the unpredictability of the War Games, where a significant portion of first-years typically do not survive. The chapter concludes with a tense but intimate moment of connection between the narrator and Xaden, illustrating the complex blend of love, duty, and professionalism. This emotional undercurrent adds depth to their characters, highlighting the human side of the military and strategic challenges faced by the squad.

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 venin, 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.



CHAPTER THIRTY-SIX

In this chapter, the tension escalates as Xaden and his team observe a mysterious threat in the valley beyond the cliffs. The atmosphere is thick with unease, with Tairn sensing that something is stronger and more sinister than usual. The group's concern deepens when Liam reports seeing figures that resemble the feared venin—corrupted beings with red veins and red eyes—indicating a dangerous enemy potentially linked to dark magic. The chapter emphasizes the uncertainty and danger lurking below, while the characters grapple with the ominous possibility that their enemies are more powerful and corrupt than they initially believed.

The narrative reveals a crucial strategic dilemma: the team receives a coded message that tests their loyalty and command. They are faced with a stark choice—either abandon the village of their enemies or forsake their command and the upcoming War Games at Eltuval. If they choose to leave, the trading post of Resson and its inhabitants will be destroyed by venin forces. The tension is heightened by the ambiguity of the threat, with Liam describing the venin as grotesque and dangerous, and the team understanding that their actions could have deadly consequences for innocent civilians caught in the conflict.

As the team debates their options, the scene shifts to an imminent attack: gryphons have landed near them, and explosions ripple through the valley, indicating active combat and chaos in Resson. The characters are faced with a moral and tactical dilemma—whether to rush into the danger and try to save the civilians or to follow command instructions and retreat. Xaden's leadership is tested as he weighs the risk of death against the moral imperative to protect the innocent, emphasizing the gravity of their situation and the harsh realities of warfare. The chapter underscores the tension between duty, loyalty, and the unpredictable chaos of battle.

The chapter concludes with a focus on strategy and the characters' resolve. Despite the overwhelming odds—fewer in number, with the threat of venom and wyvern legends hanging over them—they consider their resources and the potential to fight back. The characters acknowledge their air superiority and the weapons they possess, but also recognize the peril posed by the venom and the dangerous terrain. The narrative highlights their resilience and the difficult choices they face, setting the stage for a confrontation that could determine not only their fate but also the broader outcome of their campaign. The chapter leaves the reader on edge, contemplating the cost of loyalty and the chaos of war.



Summaryer

CHAPTER THIRTY-SEVEN

The chapter opens with a mythic reference to a celestial conflict, emphasizing the tragic cost paid by the third brother who commanded the sky's greatest power to defeat his jealous sibling. This allegory sets a tone of high stakes and formidable power struggles that resonate throughout the narrative. The scene quickly shifts to a tense, action-packed confrontation in the skies, where the protagonist, mounted on Tairn, faces a deadly **venin**—an enemy who has previously killed Soleil. The vivid description of the venin's veins and her aggressive stance underscores the peril and intensity of the battle, highlighting the protagonist's immediate need to adapt and survive amid chaos.

As the fight unfolds, the protagonist recognizes the increasing danger posed by the venin's agility and cunning. Despite her own injuries and the loss of her dagger, she fights to stay alive, fighting off the venin's relentless assault. The scene reveals her resourcefulness and determination, drawing on her training and the support of her dragon, Tairn. The protagonist's awareness of her limitations and her resolve to protect her dragon and herself are central themes, emphasizing her growth as a fighter in a world fraught with deadly adversaries. The confrontation becomes a test of both combat skills and mental resilience, with the tension mounting as the venin's speed and brutality threaten to overwhelm her.

The narrative takes a darker turn as the venin's weaponry and tactics reveal a deeper, more sinister layer—she is a student of a dark sage, hinting at a larger, more dangerous enemy lurking behind the immediate threat. The protagonist's realization that her opponent is not only skilled but also educated in dark magic adds complexity to the conflict. The scene shifts into a display of strategic combat, with Xaden's shadow magic providing a crucial advantage by plunging the battlefield into darkness. This shift allows the protagonist to leverage her own light power, turning the tide of

the fight momentarily and executing a decisive strike that mortally wounds the venom.

In the aftermath, the chapter captures the toll of battle—both physical and emotional. The protagonist's victory is bittersweet, marked by her own injuries and the realization of the deadly force she has faced. She manages to declare the venom's death amid her fading strength, emphasizing her resilience and the high cost of victory. As she stumbles toward safety, the chapter underscores the ongoing threat and the fragile line between life and death in this perilous world. The closing moments hint at the lingering pain and the need for recovery, setting the stage for future challenges and deepening the narrative's tension.



Summaryer

CHAPTER THIRTY-EIGHT

The chapter opens with a grim reflection on the nature of poison and medicine, emphasizing that in unfamiliar situations, it is better to try every possible antidote, even if it results in death, as it provides valuable learning. This sets a tone of desperation and urgency, highlighting the peril faced by the characters in a lethal confrontation. The narrative quickly immerses the reader in a chaotic battle scene where the protagonist, Violet, is falling uncontrollably amidst destruction, her senses overwhelmed by pain, disconnection from her powers, and the chaos around her. The urgency to save her becomes palpable as her allies scramble to respond to her critical condition.

As Violet's consciousness wavers, her body is described as being caught in a moment of intense suffering, with her allies desperately trying to diagnose her condition. There is speculation that her symptoms may be caused by magic rather than poison, as her blood turns black—a sign of something far more sinister and mysterious. Xaden, deeply concerned, pleads with her to fight the paralysis and poison affecting her, revealing the depth of their emotional bond and the stakes involved. The scene underscores the dire physical state she is in and the urgency to get her medical help, with her allies debating the best course of action amid the ongoing battle.

The narrative then shifts to Violet's limited awareness of her surroundings, where she is unable to communicate or move, trapped in a state of agony and helplessness. Her mind is filled with fear and despair, contemplating her impending death and the possibility that her injuries are fatal. Despite her inability to speak or act, her mind remains painfully aware of the presence and concern of those around her, particularly Xaden, who is determined to save her at all costs. The chapter emphasizes the physical and emotional toll of her wounds, as well as the peril of failing to reach medical aid in time.

In the closing scenes, Violet's consciousness fades again into an uncertain limbo, with her contemplating her own mortality and the potential loss of Xaden if she dies. The narrative concludes with her feeling the wind and the wings of her rescuers as they fly over the cliffs of Dralor, symbolizing both danger and hope. Despite the agonizing pain and the threat of death from the poison, her resolve to survive for Xaden's sake endures. The chapter ends on a note of tension and anticipation, with the characters racing against time to save Violet's life amidst the ongoing chaos.



CHAPTER THIRTY-NINE

The chapter begins with a stark declaration of cowardice, setting a tone of intense emotional conflict. The protagonist, Xaden, reflects on the recent trauma and the toll it has taken on him and those around him. The narrative emphasizes the tension between hope and despair, especially as Violet remains unconscious after three days of critical illness. Her fragile state underscores the vulnerability that has overtaken her, contrasting sharply with her usual strength and resilience. The scene captures the quiet desperation of watching someone you love fight for survival, with Xaden grappling with guilt and helplessness amid the uncertainty of her condition.

Xaden's thoughts reveal a deep sense of regret and self-reproach, particularly over decisions made during their perilous mission. He blames himself for Liam's death, believing that his failure to protect his foster brother has compounded the tragedy. His internal monologue exposes the weight of responsibility he carries, haunted by the consequences of past choices and the realization that he might have diverted suffering if he had acted differently. The chapter explores themes of guilt, remorse, and the devastating impact of perceived failure in moments of crisis, illustrating the complex emotional landscape of a soldier burdened by loss.

The narrative then shifts to the critical importance of the bond between the characters, especially the connection with Tairn, the dragon. Despite the inability to communicate fully, the bond remains intact, providing a fragile thread of hope that Violet's life persists. The dragon's presence symbolizes both shame and reassurance, as the characters' intertwined fates hinge on the strength of their connection. The chapter underscores the significance of trust and loyalty amid chaos, even as the characters grapple with feelings of shame and regret for past mistakes and the dangerous circumstances they face.

In the final moments, a glimmer of hope emerges as Violet awakens. Her eyes open, and her consciousness returns, filling Xaden with a mixture of relief and disbelief. The scene is charged with emotion as he checks her condition, relieved to see her alive and seemingly recovering. Her smile, whether genuine or a trick of light, sparks a cautious optimism. The chapter concludes with a tender yet tense exchange, highlighting the fragile recovery and the ongoing emotional and physical toll on both characters. It leaves the reader contemplating the delicate balance between life and death, and the unbreakable bond forged through suffering and hope.



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