

Chapter Fifty-Three

Yrene storms into the Torre, agitated after discovering her and Chaol's room ransacked, sensing their investigation into ancient secrets has drawn dangerous attention. Clutching a mysterious scroll and a locket from Chaol, she confronts Hafiza, the Healer on High, in her workshop. Their conversation quickly shifts from playful teasing about Yrene's romantic involvement with Chaol to the gravity of their discoveries. Yrene reveals their theory that the healers of the Torre may have been strategically placed to combat the Valg, a demonic force threatening their world, hinting at a deeper, hidden history.

Hafiza's demeanor shifts from amusement to alarm as Yrene explains the scope of the threat—demons amassing on their continent, far beyond human adversaries. Yrene presents the scroll, hoping Hafiza can decipher its cryptic language, but the Healer on High admits she cannot read it. However, Hafiza recalls a locked cabinet containing ancient tomes marked with similar symbols, long deemed too dangerous for human eyes. The revelation suggests the scroll and these forbidden texts may hold critical knowledge worth killing to suppress.

Yrene presses Hafiza to consider sending the scroll and locked books to Aelin Galathynius, who can read the mysterious Wyrddmarks. Hafiza hesitates, weighing the risks of unleashing such knowledge against the urgency of the looming threat. The chapter underscores the tension between preserving dangerous secrets and acting to prevent catastrophe, as Yrene argues time is running out. Hafiza's internal conflict mirrors the broader stakes: the healers' legacy may be pivotal in the coming war.

The chapter closes with Hafiza retreating into thought, leaving Yrene anxious for a decision. The encounter highlights the Torre's hidden role in a larger conflict, blending personal stakes with epic consequences. Yrene's determination to uncover the truth clashes with Hafiza's caution, setting the stage for a pivotal choice that could alter

their world's fate. The narrative weaves together mystery, romance, and impending doom, deepening the intrigue around the healers' origins and their potential weapon against the Valg.

