

Chapter 25

In Chapter 25, Gregor and Ares face the grim reality of being tried for treason after refusing to kill the Bane. Ares reveals that their fate rests in the hands of a tribunal and Queen Nerissa, whose current state of mind is uncertain. Overwhelmed by the prospect of execution, Gregor grapples with guilt and despair, while Ares blames himself for bringing Gregor back to Regalia. The bat devises a desperate plan to take full responsibility, hoping to save Gregor, but Gregor refuses to let Ares sacrifice himself, insisting on sharing the consequences of their actions.

The tension escalates as Ares describes their potential execution: being thrown off a cliff, a method that horrifies Gregor due to his recurring nightmares of falling. Despite their dire situation, they attempt to eat the meager food provided, clinging to hope for an escape or a fair hearing. Gregor questions Ares about Nerissa's ability to spare them, learning of her troubled gift of foresight and her struggles with sanity. Their conversation is cut short when guards arrive to escort them to the tribunal, binding their hands and wings as if preparing for execution.

Upon entering the tribunal room, Gregor is shocked to see Howard and Andromeda also bound and accused of treason for abandoning their mission. Gregor feels responsible for their plight, but Howard insists he acted of his own free will. The formal setting, filled with hostile spectators, underscores the severity of their trial. Three judges take their seats, and the head judge inquires about Queen Nerissa's presence, hinting at her potential role in determining their fate.

The chapter ends on a cliffhanger as the tribunal awaits Nerissa's arrival, leaving Gregor and his allies in suspense. The stakes are unbearably high, with Gregor torn between his loyalty to Ares and his fear for his family. The Underlanders' harsh justice system and the uncertainty of Nerissa's decision create a palpable sense of dread, setting the stage for a pivotal moment in the story.