

Chapter 23: Part Two - 10. Struggles over Wild Magic

The chapter delves into Linden Avery's struggles with the implications of her presence in the Land and the mysteries surrounding wild magic. After a night of little sleep, Linden and the Giants discuss the Sandgorgons' actions and the nature of death between worlds. Linden admits she cannot fully explain how she, Jeremiah, and Roger transitioned to the Land, only that their existence there seems permanent until death. The conversation shifts to historical parallels, as Stave recounts the tale of Hile Troy, a man from Linden's world who became the Forestal Caer-Caveral, suggesting that Joan's wild magic might offer Linden a way to remain in the Land and save her son.

Stave's narrative provides hope but also underscores the uncertainty of their situation. The Giants acknowledge the complexity of interdimensional magic, though their immediate concern is the threat of Kastenessen and his skurj. Coldspray warns of the dangers ahead, emphasizing the urgency of reaching Andelain to secure High Lord Loric's krill, a potential key to countering Kastenessen's forces. The company faces not only external threats but also internal strife, as Longwrath's unpredictable violence demands constant vigilance. The Giants rally around Linden, recognizing that her possession of Covenant's white gold ring may be their only hope.

Linden reveals Covenant's ring, acknowledging her fraught relationship with its power. She admits her fear of wielding wild magic, citing its uncontrollable nature and her own inadequacy to harness it fully. Despite her past successes, she feels constrained by the antithesis between Law and wild magic, as well as her physical limitations. Her health-sense reinforces her vulnerability, leaving her uncertain of her ability to confront Joan or Kastenessen. The chapter highlights her internal conflict, torn between her responsibility to the Land and her fear of the ring's destructive potential.

The discussion culminates in a sober acknowledgment of the challenges ahead. Linden's companions, though supportive, recognize the precariousness of their mission. The Giants' leader, Coldspray, underscores the necessity of relying on wild magic despite its risks, as conventional means may not suffice against their foes. Linden's unresolved tension with Esmer and her lingering doubts about her right to wield the ring add layers of complexity to her journey. The chapter sets the stage for a desperate struggle, blending hope with existential dread as the company prepares to face Kastenessen's onslaught.