

Chapter 23: Twenty Three: Kiril

Threndor

The chapter opens with the discovery of the Second Ward, a radiant scroll that emits a pearly glow, evoking reverence from Prothall, Mhoram, and the company. Prothall handles the scroll with awe, while Covenant, though nauseated and uneasy, recognizes its significance. The Lords and warriors kneel in respect, but Covenant and the Bloodguard remain detached. Covenant's hope that the Ward's power could send him home is quickly dashed when Mhoram explains that mastering its lore would take generations, and attempting to use it prematurely could be perilous. The discovery brings both hope and risk, as the company is unprepared for its power.

Covenant presses the Lords about their decision to let the ur-viles escape, but Prothall and Mhoram emphasize their commitment to the Oath of Peace, avoiding unnecessary violence. Covenant's deeper concern—whether the Ward could return him to his world—is met with regret. Mhoram reveals that the Wards were designed to be unlocked in sequence, and using the Second Ward without mastering the First could lead to disaster. The Lords acknowledge the dual nature of their discovery: it offers potential salvation for the Land but also great danger, possibly even playing into Lord Foul's hands.

Prothall and Mhoram reflect on the weight of their responsibility, with Prothall finding renewed resolve despite the risks. The company rests briefly in the tunnel, though Covenant remains troubled, his hopes shattered. Prothall's calm demeanor contrasts with the tension felt by others, such as Lithe, who struggles with the oppressive underground environment. As they resume their journey, the atmosphere grows heavier, the air thick with the sounds of distant torment and the ominous boiling of a hidden molten lake.

The chapter concludes with the company descending deeper into Mount Thunder, surrounded by darkness and the unsettling noises of the Wightwarrens. The path leads them past a cavern illuminated by a seething orange lake of rocklight, symbolizing the growing peril of their quest. The weight of their mission and the loss of their fallen companions linger as they press onward, their silence reflecting both determination and dread. The chapter underscores the precarious balance between hope and despair as the company moves closer to the heart of the mountain's ancient evils.

