

12. A Way to Help

The chapter opens with Kaladin's internal struggle as he arrives at Urithiru, burdened by his emotional turmoil. Despite being surrounded by his former Windrunner squires—now jovial and progressing in their Radiant journeys—Kaladin feels isolated and pained by his recent "relegation" from active duty. His attempts to mask his distress with a forced smile fail to convince his companions, particularly perceptive friends like Rock and Syl, who sense his true state. The contrast between the group's laughter and Kaladin's inner despair highlights his sense of displacement and loss.

Kaladin reflects on the changes within his circle: most of his former squires have advanced to higher Ideals, while others like Dabbid and Rlain remain in limbo. His friends, including Lopen and Skar, try to cheer him up with jokes and sparring invitations, but their efforts only deepen his anguish. Sigzil's tactful avoidance of work topics underscores how visibly affected Kaladin appears. Rock's deliberate distance and Syl's anxious hovering further emphasize Kaladin's struggle to maintain a facade of strength for their sake, even as he grapples with the idea of a "clean break" from his former life.

The group dynamics shift as they approach Urithiru, with squires dispersing into their own teams, leaving Kaladin increasingly alone. A fleeting moment of genuine amusement arises from Rock's banter with Kara, but it quickly fades. Kaladin's internal conflict intensifies as he questions whether he can fulfill Dalinar's request to lead the Windrunners from an administrative role rather than the battlefield. His prideful demeanor—offering dismissive nods to invitations—masks his longing for someone to insist he stay, but his companions, now preoccupied with their own lives, respectfully let him go.

The chapter closes with Kaladin retreating to his spartan quarters, a stark contrast to the bustling life of Urithiru. The emptiness of his highlord's chambers mirrors his

emotional void, underscoring his isolation despite his legendary status. His brief pride in maintaining composure in public collapses as he confronts the reality of his situation—a leader adrift, disconnected from the camaraderie that once defined him. The chapter poignantly captures Kaladin's struggle with identity, duty, and the weight of his perceived failures.

