

Chapter 24: Twenty Four: The Calling of Lions

The chapter opens with the company under attack by Cavewights, their red eyes glowing with mindless determination as they advance through Lord Foul's mocking laughter. Quaan and the Bloodguard form a defensive ring around Lords Mhoram and Prothall, while Covenant struggles to lift the body of the fallen First Mark, Tuvor. Manethrall Lithe identifies an escape route, but Covenant resists leaving Tuvor behind, arguing that his death must be honored. Despite his protests, Bannor forces Covenant to retreat with the group as the Lords prepare to fight their way to Lithe's chosen tunnel.

As Prothall and Mhoram lead the charge, their fiery staffs intimidate the Cavewights, but a wedge of ur-viles, led by a powerful loremaster, intercepts them. The Lords barely hold their ground, their strength waning under the loremaster's relentless attacks. A brave warrior attempts to distract the ur-viles but is brutally struck down, his screams echoing as dark power consumes him. The Lords, exhausted and outmatched, are forced backward into the tunnel, their blue flames flickering weakly against the ur-viles' savage assault.

In a desperate move, Mhoram commands Covenant to raise his white gold ring, which momentarily stuns the ur-viles. Seizing the opportunity, the Lords create a fiery barrier to block the tunnel, buying the company precious time to flee. Mhoram warns that the barrier won't last, urging the group to run before the ur-viles break through. Lithe confidently guides them through the labyrinthine catacombs, her instincts leading them toward daylight. The company finds brief respite in the silence, relieved to escape Lord Foul's laughter and the immediate threat of slaughter.

However, as they delve deeper into the tunnels, the atmosphere grows increasingly ominous. The darkness seems to conceal unseen dangers, and the silence takes on a menacing quality. Despite Lithe's unwavering confidence, the company senses they are not yet safe. The chapter ends on a tense note, with the group's hope for escape tempered by the lurking perils of the catacombs, leaving their fate uncertain as they press onward.

