

Chapter 28: Part Two - 10. Troubled Sanctuary

Linden Avery enters Revelstone, the ancient fortress of the Land, burdened by exhaustion and the encroaching blindness caused by Kevin's Dirt. Though familiar with the forehall from past struggles, she now finds it dark and disorienting, contrasting with the acute senses of the Haruchai Masters. The Staff of Law in her hands offers some solace, sustaining her fading percipience. As the gates close against the pursuing Demondim horde, she fears the impending threat of the Illearth Stone and the Keep's vulnerability due to the Masters' rejection of Earthpower and lore.

Amid the crowded forehall, Linden assesses her companions' injuries. Stave and Bhapa require immediate healing, while Mahrtiir and Pahni tend to their Ranyhyn. The Masters, though wounded, have suffered fewer losses than expected. Linden, reluctant to dismount from Hyn, summons fire from the Staff to illuminate the hall, revealing the toll of the battle. She reflects on the sacrifices made—dozens of Haruchai dead—and feels overwhelmed by the bloodshed. Despite her fatigue, she focuses on healing Stave, Bhapa, and the Ranyhyn, her actions met with silent reverence from the gathered crowd.

A Master named Handir, the Voice of the Masters, approaches Linden, acknowledging her as the Chosen and welcoming her to Revelstone. However, Linden, pushed to her limits, responds with frustration, demanding light to dispel the oppressive darkness. Mahrtiir echoes her plea, invoking her status as Ringthane. Eventually, torches are lit, casting flickering shadows across the hall. Linden's thoughts drift to the Masters' dwindling numbers and their ability to defend Revelstone against the Demondim, while Liand watches her with concern.

The chapter underscores Linden's internal and external struggles—her exhaustion, her defiance of the Masters, and her determination to protect her companions despite their precarious situation. The tension between her and the Haruchai lingers, as does her fear of their intentions toward Anele and herself. The flickering torchlight symbolizes the uncertain future of Revelstone and the Land, with Linden poised at the center of the looming conflict.

