

Chapter 23: Part Two - 11. Kurash

Qwellinir

The chapter opens with Thomas Covenant awakening at dawn in a cave, where Clyme brings him treasure-berries to eat. As Covenant reflects on the fleeting nature of his renewed life, he grapples with the weight of his impending fate and his deep love for the Land and its people. He acknowledges the redemption he's found in this world and his desire to make amends to Linden Avery, whom he believes blames herself unjustly. Despite his physical pain and the looming threat of the Worm, Covenant resolves to face the day with determination, clinging to the hope of proving his worth.

Covenant tests his ability to wield Loric's krill, a powerful dagger, by freeing it from the stone floor with surprising ease. He wraps the blade to conceal its light and tucks it into his waistband, preparing for the journey ahead. The Humbled guide him out of the cave and onto the grassland, where their horses, including Covenant's temperamental mount, await. Though weakened, the horse shows renewed spirit, and Covenant prays it will endure the coming trials. The group sets off southward, with Covenant's impatience tempered by the need to conserve the horses' strength.

As they ride, the sky darkens ominously, foreshadowing impending disaster. Clyme notes the unnatural disruption of the weather, but Covenant responds by defiantly scattering treasure-berry seeds, a symbolic act of resistance against the Despiser. The terrain grows more treacherous as they approach the Shattered Hills, with springs providing occasional relief. Covenant's thoughts drift to Joan, whose torment he senses through the krill, yet he remains uncertain how to confront her or the larger threat of the Worm. The urgency of their mission weighs heavily on him as time slips away.

The chapter closes with the riders navigating the increasingly rugged landscape, forced to slow their pace as the terrain becomes obstructed. Covenant suspects they

are nearing the promontory of Foul's Creche, but his lack of a clear plan for confronting Joan or the Worm leaves him uneasy. The oppressive sky and the relentless advance of the Worm underscore the dire stakes of their journey, as Covenant steels himself for the challenges ahead, driven by love for the Land and a refusal to surrender to despair.

