

2. Severed Cords

The chapter opens with Kaladin, a Surgebinder, engaging in combat with a new variety of Fused, formidable enemies with unique abilities. As he flares with Stormlight, his spren companion Syl transforms into a silvery spear, forcing back the encroaching singers. Kaladin avoids looking at his father, anticipating disappointment, while refugees scatter in panic. The Fused, a hulking figure, smiles at Kaladin, setting the stage for a tense confrontation. Syl's telepathic banter adds a layer of urgency as Kaladin assesses the unfamiliar foe, noting its ugliness and unknown capabilities.

Kaladin reflects on the increasing diversity of Fused appearing on the battlefield, each with distinct powers akin to the Radiants. He recalls Jasnah's theory of ten varieties, countered by Dalinar's insistence on nine. This encounter marks the seventh type Kaladin has faced. Attempting to draw the Fused away from civilians, he uses his Lashing ability to maneuver through the air, but the dense fog limits his mobility. Syl warns him to be cautious, hinting at the unpredictability of the new Fused's powers, foreshadowing the danger ahead.

The battle takes a dramatic turn when the Fused collapses into a streak of red-violet light, reforming instantly in front of Kaladin. The creature grabs him by the throat and slams him to the ground, demonstrating terrifying strength. Despite Kaladin's Stormlight-enhanced resilience, the Fused's grip is unyielding. Syl shifts forms to adapt, but the Fused's relentless assault—repeatedly stabbing Kaladin's neck to sever his spine—leaves him paralyzed and struggling to heal. The Fused's precision suggests experience fighting Surgebinders, pushing Kaladin to the brink as his Stormlight depletes rapidly.

In a desperate move, Kaladin exploits a brief moment of mobility between stabs to headbutt the Fused, disrupting its grip. The chapter ends on a cliffhanger as Kaladin, vision swimming, feels the Fused cling to his coat. The intense combat highlights

Kaladin's resilience and tactical ingenuity, even as he faces overwhelming odds. Syl's frantic concern underscores the gravity of the situation, leaving readers eager to see how Kaladin will overcome this life-threatening encounter.

