

Chapter Sixty

Chaol and Yrene rush through Antica's bustling streets, driven by a renewed sense of purpose after learning of Aelin's army. Chaol is determined to convince the khagan to join their cause, seeing it as a crucial opportunity to turn the tide of war. Despite the daunting odds, he resolves to make one final appeal, even if it means crawling before the ruler. Their immediate goal, however, is to seek out Hafiza, the Healer on High, and access the Torre's hidden knowledge, which they believe could be a more powerful weapon than any army.

As they ascend the Torre's endless stairs, their playful banter reveals their deep connection, with Yrene proudly claiming Chaol as her own. Yet, the reality of leaving Antica weighs on her, stirring bittersweet emotions about the life she'll leave behind. Chaol's reassuring touch reminds her that while she'll miss this place, their future together holds its own promise. Their lighthearted moment is cut short when they discover Hafiza's workroom empty, despite witnesses insisting she never left. Yrene's unease grows as she searches nearby rooms, finding no trace of the Healer on High.

Yrene's anxiety peaks when she finds Hafiza's iron key slipped under her own door—a deliberate act suggesting the Healer on High anticipated danger. Chaol, alert and armed, recognizes the urgency of the situation and insists on notifying the guards. Yrene battles panic, fearing her actions may have endangered Hafiza, but she forces herself to stay composed. Together, they race down the Torre, questioning everyone they meet, only to receive the same frustrating answer: Hafiza was last seen in her workroom, yet she has vanished without a trace.

Chaol's instincts tell him something sinister is unfolding, and Yrene's dread mirrors his suspicion. Despite organizing a search party, they know time is of the essence. The chapter ends on a tense note as they scour the Torre's vast complex, their hope dwindling with each unanswered query. The mystery of Hafiza's disappearance looms

large, hinting at darker forces at play and setting the stage for a perilous investigation.

