

19. Garnets

Navani Kholin, a scholar and leader, opens the chapter by advocating for transparency among the coalition of monarchs, urging Thaylenah to share their secret fabrial techniques for the greater good. Her plea underscores the escalating dangers their world faces and the need for collective knowledge. Meanwhile, Navani and her team, including the ardent Rushu, study a crystalline pillar in Urithiru, focusing on four garnets that resemble the suppression fabrial's design. Despite initial excitement, their research hits a dead end, leaving Navani frustrated but determined to uncover the pillar's secrets.

Rushu reveals a troubling discovery: the spren powering the suppression fabrial in Shadesmar is corrupted, akin to Renarin's enigmatic spren, Glys. This raises concerns about the spren's loyalty and whether it willingly aids the enemy. Navani argues that spren, like humans, have individual allegiances, though she privately questions Glys's nature. The discussion highlights the ethical dilemma of imprisoning sapient spren for fabrials, a practice condemned by an anonymous spanreed message accusing Navani of monstrous behavior. Navani ponders whether ancient fabrials, like the Oathgates, treated spren more humanely.

Navani redirects her team's efforts toward activating the garnet cluster in the pillar, theorizing it once protected Urithiru from the Fused. She also tasks Rushu with resetting the suppression fabrial to reverse its effects, potentially disabling the Fused's powers. As she contemplates the tower's vulnerabilities, Navani grows uneasy about the possibility of Masked Ones—Fused with Lightweaving abilities—infiltrating Urithiru undetected. She orders Rushu to assemble a team to devise protocols for identifying hidden enemies, emphasizing the need for vigilance against the Fused's unpredictable capabilities.

The chapter closes with Navani entering an ancient library room, once filled with Radiant messages encoded in gemstones. This space, now repurposed for ongoing research, symbolizes her relentless pursuit of knowledge amid mounting threats. Her reflections on the tower's defenses, the ethics of fabrial creation, and the enemy's cunning strategies underscore the chapter's themes of innovation, trust, and survival in a world teetering on the brink of chaos.

