

Chapter Three

The chapter opens with Nesryn in a state of shock, retreating into solitude after receiving devastating news. Chaol, unable to comfort her due to his own physical limitations, reflects on their shared grief and the weight of their recent losses. The lavish palace suite they've been given contrasts sharply with their inner turmoil, as Chaol observes the serene garden outside his room. His thoughts drift to Dorian, clinging to the hope that his friend escaped the attack on their city, though uncertainty gnaws at him.

Chaol's frustration mounts as he contemplates the lack of information about Aelin and the potential consequences for their mission. His determination to extract answers from Prince Arghun underscores his desperation for clarity. The arrival of Prince Kashin interrupts his brooding, bringing a direct and unguarded demeanor rare among the royal family. Kashin's invitation to dine with the khagan's household hints at deeper political tensions, as he openly suspects foreign infiltration following his sister Tumelun's mysterious death.

The prince's grief and skepticism about Tumelun's alleged suicide reveal his close bond with her and his refusal to accept the official narrative. Chaol, though sympathetic, probes cautiously, recognizing the potential implications of foul play. Kashin's conviction that his sister would never take her own life suggests a hidden threat within the palace, possibly linked to Perrington or other foreign powers. The chapter builds tension around the unanswered questions surrounding Tumelun's death and the broader political instability.

As the conversation continues, Kashin's distrust of court intrigue and his brother Arghun's assurances highlight the fractured dynamics within the royal family. Chaol, navigating his own physical and emotional struggles, finds an unexpected ally in Kashin, whose straightforwardness contrasts with the usual courtly deception. The

chapter ends with lingering unease, as both men grapple with loss, suspicion, and the looming threat of unseen enemies within the palace walls.

