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Elend, the former king, organizes a volunteer force to address the city's housing crisis during the harsh winter. He instructs Demoux to relocate skaa families from inefficient noble mansions to more practical tenements designed for heating efficiency.

Emphasizing voluntary compliance, Elend prioritizes the well-being of the people over property rights, showcasing his continued leadership despite losing his official title. The scene highlights his pragmatic approach to governance and his enduring influence among the soldiers and citizens.

As the operation unfolds, Elend receives a report from Goradel, a former soldier who once aided him. Goradel confirms that many abandoned buildings have wooden structures, which can be repurposed for fuel. Elend sees an opportunity to expand his plan, leveraging the unexpected surge of volunteers to tackle the city's pressing needs. The interaction underscores Elend's ability to inspire loyalty and his strategic thinking in resource management during a crisis.

Elend reveals his broader plan to dismantle parts of the city for firewood, prioritizing survival over preservation. Demoux expresses concern about potential opposition from the new king, Penrod, but Elend remains confident that the urgency of the situation will prevent interference. His decisive stance reflects his commitment to the people's welfare, even at the cost of the city's infrastructure. The dialogue reinforces Elend's moral clarity and leadership in adversity.

The chapter concludes with Elend preparing to execute his ambitious project, demonstrating his adaptability and resolve. Despite no longer holding formal power, his authority persists through the trust of his followers. The narrative sets the stage for potential conflicts with the new regime while emphasizing Elend's unwavering dedication to his people. His actions symbolize a shift from traditional rulership to grassroots problem-solving in a fractured society.