

Chapter 5: Part One - Five: Landward

The chapter opens with the Giants hauling sleds across the icy wilderness, driven by urgency to distance themselves from their damaged ship, *Starfare's Gem*. Covenant, burdened by guilt and responsibility, watches as the vessel disappears behind them, finding solace in the defiant pennon flying atop its mast. Linden observes Covenant silently, aware of his inner turmoil but unable to voice her concerns amid the harsh conditions. The group presses westward, though Covenant worries about the unstable ice and the possibility of being forced northward, where unknown dangers may lurk.

As the journey continues, the physical toll on the companions becomes evident. The First leads the way, while Pitchwife struggles to keep pace, and Honninscrave and Mistweave demonstrate remarkable endurance. Vain and Findail, seemingly unaffected by the cold or fatigue, remain enigmatic figures. The barren ice plain stretches endlessly, the sun glaring mercilessly as Covenant endures the biting cold, jostled by the sled's movements. The harsh environment amplifies his sense of helplessness, as he reflects on his reliance on others and the sacrifices they've made for him.

The tension escalates when the First suddenly falls into a hidden fissure, nearly dragging Pitchwife down with her. Honninscrave and Mistweave react swiftly, rescuing the pair from the treacherous crack, which reveals the sea beneath the thinning ice. Pitchwife's relief is tinged with humor, but the incident underscores the peril of their path. The First proposes a detour northward, but Honninscrave argues against it, citing longer travel time and greater dangers. Despite reservations, the group decides to continue west, prioritizing speed over safety.

Linden, sensing Covenant's unease, quietly questions him about the northern peril, but he admits his ignorance, having never ventured that far north. The chapter closes with Covenant's growing dread of the unknown, both in the landscape and his own journey. The physical challenges of the ice mirror his internal struggles, as the group presses

on, bound by determination and the unspoken weight of their mission. The chapter highlights themes of resilience, camaraderie, and the ever-present threat of the unknown.

