

36. The Price of Honor

The chapter opens with Radiant observing the distressed honorspren Notum, who is deeply troubled by an unprecedented attack on spren by humans. The scene highlights the cultural shock and confusion among the spren, as such violence contradicts their understanding of honor. Radiant and Adolin's group are recovering from the skirmish, with Adolin's soldiers keeping watch while Shallan's agents search the dead for clues. The absence of Stormlight complicates their situation, as Adolin's wound and Notum's weakened state could benefit from its healing properties. The attack leaves Notum questioning the motives behind the humans' actions, emphasizing the chapter's theme of honor's fragility.

Adolin insists on bringing the exiled Notum to Lasting Integrity despite the potential political repercussions, showcasing his commitment to protecting others. Notum warns that his presence may harm Adolin's standing, but Adolin remains resolute, prioritizing safety over diplomacy. Meanwhile, Radiant and her agents continue their investigation, with Beryl's visceral reaction to the corpses casting doubt on her potential involvement with the Ghostbloods. The group's dynamics are strained by the aftermath of the battle, blending tension with moments of camaraderie, such as Adolin's lighthearted remark about repairing his bloodied uniform.

Godeke, an Edgedancer, takes time to honor the fallen Tukari soldiers, reflecting her order's ethos of remembering even enemies. This contrasts with Adolin's pragmatic focus on survival, underscoring the differing perspectives within the group. Shallan and Adolin share a tender moment, where Adolin admits his struggle to find purpose, revealing his vulnerability beneath his confident exterior. Their conversation hints at deeper emotional currents, as Shallan resolves to revisit the topic later. The chapter balances action with introspection, exploring the characters' moral and emotional dilemmas.

As the group travels back to camp, they encounter the Cryptics and the Stump, signaling a return to their larger mission. Notum, recovering slightly, questions Adolin about Maya's unexpected aid in battle. Adolin's response—that Maya acted of her own will—hints at the evolving relationship between humans and spren. The chapter closes with a sense of cautious optimism, as the characters regroup and reflect on the day's events, leaving readers to ponder the broader implications of honor, loyalty, and identity in their world.

