

35. The Strength of a Soldier

Adolin finds solace in reconnecting with Shallan after their encounter with the starspren, appreciating Ua’pam’s suggestion for alone time. Despite their bond, he reflects on their differing strengths—Shallan excels in deception and artistry, while politics should be his domain as a former heir to the throne. As he prepares for their journey, Adolin loads Gallant, his Ryshadium, musing on the simplicity of a horse’s life compared to human complexities. His thoughts shift to strategy, recalling Arshqqam’s advice to appeal to honor when negotiating with the honorspren, though he struggles to formulate a concrete plan.

The group sets out, with Adolin leading and Godeke scouting ahead despite their depleted Stormlight reserves. Adolin’s initial calm fades as he grapples with the pressure of diplomacy, nearly snapping at Felt, a reliable scout. Felt reports that the mysterious Tukari, who had been trailing them, have abruptly turned southward. Adolin questions their motives, sensing something off about their behavior. Climbing an obsidian outcrop to observe, he remains uneasy, unable to shake the feeling that the Tukari’s departure is suspicious, even as they visibly retreat.

Adolin’s suspicion deepens as he realizes the Tukari may have been observing rather than pursuing them. He orders Felt to keep watch during their break, though the group’s immediate threat seems to dissipate. Meanwhile, Veil—one of Shallan’s personas—checks the communication cube, using a trick learned from Tyn to detect tampering. Finding it undisturbed, she contemplates using it as bait to expose the spy among them. Her focus on the mission contrasts with Adolin’s diplomatic anxieties, highlighting their shared tension.

The chapter underscores Adolin’s internal conflict between his warrior instincts and diplomatic responsibilities, as well as the group’s vulnerability in Shadesmar. His care for Maya, a deadeye spren, reflects his empathy, while Veil’s vigilance underscores the

lurking threat of betrayal. The shifting dynamics—between Adolin and Shallan, the Tukari’s odd behavior, and Veil’s spy hunt—create a sense of unease, setting the stage for impending challenges in their quest to win the honorspren’s alliance.

