

Chapter 14: Part Two - Fourteen: The Last Bourn

The chapter opens with Linden and her companions struggling to survive a treacherous river journey. The muddy, chaotic water sickens Linden, while the cold saps her strength and tempts her to surrender. Despite the harsh conditions, the First, a Giant, supports both Linden and Covenant, though her wound causes Linden significant pain. Linden uses her healing abilities to numb the First's injury, focusing on this task to distract herself from the relentless cold and the storm's fury. The group endures the ordeal until evening, when they finally reach the riverbank, exhausted and battered by the elements.

Upon landing, the group's physical and emotional states are laid bare. Covenant, pale and cold, insists on building a fire, while Sunder, grief-stricken, tends to Hollian with heartbreaking care. Pitchwife manages to ignite a small fire, providing minimal warmth, and offers diamondraught, a potent liquor, to revive the group. Covenant attempts to console Sunder, but the Graveler remains inconsolable, lost in his sorrow. The scene underscores the group's collective weariness and the emotional toll of their journey, with each character grappling with their own pain and guilt.

The arrival of Vain and Findail introduces a moment of supernatural intervention. Vain appears damaged, his arm withered and his body marred by wounds. Findail, an Elohim, confronts Vain with a mix of disdain and fear, yet heals his arm in a display of extraordinary power. This act stuns the group, revealing Findail's capabilities and hinting at the Elohim's potential to heal the Earth. Linden is particularly struck by the implications of Findail's power, questioning whether the group should relinquish their quest to the Elohim. However, Findail's refusal to aid Sunder highlights his reluctance to intervene further.

The chapter closes with the group settling into a tense, somber night. Pitchwife prepares a meager meal as the fire dwindles, while Linden, Covenant, and the others huddle together for warmth. The events of the day—the river’s brutality, Sunder’s grief, and Findail’s enigmatic actions—leave the characters emotionally and physically drained. Linden’s reflections on Findail’s power linger, adding a layer of doubt about their mission. The chapter captures a moment of respite amid ongoing struggle, emphasizing the group’s resilience and the uncertain path ahead.

