

Chapter 18: Part Two - Eighteen: No Other Way

Thomas Covenant lies battered and broken on the floor of a cave, haunted by the murmurs of Cavewights and the weight of his failures. He reflects on his arrogance and the consequences of his violent past, contrasting himself with humble heroes like Berek and Mhoram. Joan, his ex-wife, has been taken from him, and he feels compelled to sacrifice himself to save her, though he questions his own worthiness. The chapter delves into his internal struggle with guilt and self-loathing, as he grapples with the belief that only he can defeat Lord Foul.

The cave's oppressive atmosphere is filled with the eerie chanting of Cavewights and the stench of ancient decay. Covenant notices a mound of bones, a grim testament to the creatures' violent history. Disoriented and weak, he realizes he is not in his own world but in the Land, where time is running out. His fear sharpens into clarity as he spots Linden, injured and vulnerable, her neck marked with dried blood. The sight of her ignites a deep grief, as he recognizes that both of them are nearing death.

Covenant's love for Linden and his remorse over failing her overwhelm him. He longs to comfort her, to show her she is not alone, but his physical weakness prevents him. A Cavewight kicks him back, mocking his helplessness, as the creatures continue their ominous chanting. Covenant's determination to protect Linden clashes with his exhaustion, leaving him trapped in a cycle of despair and resolve. The chapter underscores his isolation and the heavy burden of his role as the Land's reluctant savior.

Despite his physical and emotional agony, Covenant clings to a fragile hope. He acknowledges his flaws and the parallels between himself and Joan, both trapped by their inability to forgive themselves. The chapter ends with Covenant straining to

reach Linden, symbolizing his last grasp at redemption. The tension between surrender and defiance defines his character, as he prepares to face Lord Foul's fire, hoping to finally let go of his pain and failings.

