

23. Binding Wounds

Kaladin tends to a young boy named Adin, who dreams of becoming a Windrunner to "float down steps" and playfully stick friends to walls. The boy's admiration for the Radiants, particularly a Herdazian Windrunner, brings a moment of levity. Kaladin, now wearing a surgeon's white apron, advises the boy to rest his injured ankle and reflects on his father's medical wisdom. The scene highlights Kaladin's transition from warrior to healer, a role that feels both familiar and strangely comforting despite his lingering doubts about his place in the world.

As he treats patients in the clinic, Kaladin contemplates his emotional state. Unlike the exhausting demands of being a Windrunner, medical work—though busy—lacks the crushing immediacy of battle. He acknowledges he isn't sad, a small but significant improvement. The chapter subtly contrasts the weight of leadership in war with the quieter, more manageable stresses of healing, suggesting Kaladin may be finding a fragile equilibrium in this new role.

His next patient, an older man named Mil, suffers from chronic headaches. With Hawin absent, Syl—Kaladin's spren—surprisingly assists by reading medical texts, albeit with humorous difficulty. Kaladin diagnoses Mil and offers practical advice, recognizing the value of simply validating a patient's pain. The interaction underscores Kaladin's skill as a surgeon and his growing appreciation for the small but meaningful impact of his work.

The chapter closes with Kaladin and Syl sharing a lighthearted moment as she reveals she recently learned to read. Their banter contrasts with the heavier themes of the chapter, offering a glimpse of Kaladin's tentative steps toward contentment. The narrative weaves together his past as a soldier, his present as a healer, and the quiet hope that he might yet find peace in this unexpected path.