

28. Heresies

Navani, a prominent figure, engages in a tense communication via a spanreed—a magical device that allows distant written conversation. The mysterious correspondent accuses her of heresy for experimenting with fabrials, which trap spren (spiritual entities) to harness their power. The correspondent condemns these actions as cruel and unnatural, comparing it to imprisoning a storm. Navani remains composed, seeking to understand the theological objections while her team of scholars and engineers meticulously measures the spanreed's decay to determine the correspondent's location.

The engineers, led by the animated Falilar, use precise scales and instruments to gauge the distance of the spanreed's other end. Their initial measurements suggest the correspondent is alarmingly close—possibly within the same tower. Navani and her scribe, Kalami, speculate whether the correspondent is a singer (a non-human race) or someone posing as one. The correspondent's rhetoric frames Navani's experiments as a moral violation, insisting that spren must remain free and accusing humans of inherent violence.

Navani attempts to buy time by pretending to consult a theological advisor, while her team relocates to triangulate the correspondent's position. The group rushes to the plateau outside the tower, setting up the spanreed again for a second measurement. The correspondent, seemingly aware of their movements, questions their actions, revealing possible surveillance. Navani deflects, asking for clarification on the moral objections, but the correspondent grows impatient, threatening to withdraw if the suffering of the spren continues.

The chapter culminates in a race against time as Navani's team seeks to pinpoint the correspondent's location. The tension escalates with the implication of a spy within their midst, possibly the same person who planted the spanreed ruby. The

correspondent's silence after Navani's probing questions leaves the situation unresolved, heightening the mystery and stakes. The chapter underscores themes of ethical experimentation, theological conflict, and the blurred lines between technological advancement and moral responsibility.

