The Runes of the Earth: The Last Chronicles of Thomas Covenant - Book One

A decade after *The Chronicles of Thomas Covenant*, Stephen R. Donaldson resurrects his iconic universe with *The Runes of the Earth*. **Linden Avery**, the former companion of Covenant, is now a grieving doctor haunted by the past—until her adopted son **Jeremiah** is abducted, and she is violently thrust back into the **Land**.

But this is not the Land she remembers. Ravaged by **Lord Foul's** machinations and the awakening **Worm of the World's End**, its very laws are unraveling. As Linden searches for Jeremiah, she must wield powers she barely understands—including Covenant's **white gold ring**—while confronting harrowing truths about her own capacity for despair and destruction.

Donaldson's return to the Land is both a reunion and a reinvention, blending metaphysical grandeur with intimate trauma.

Chapter 1: What Has Gone Before

Thomas Covenant, a once-happy novelist, sees his life unravel after being diagnosed with leprosy, which leads to the amputation of two fingers and the abandonment by his wife, Joan. His physical and emotional suffering is compounded by societal rejection and the loss of his creativity and potency. During episodes of unconsciousness, he is transported to a magical realm called the Land, where his ailments vanish, and he is

revered as a reincarnated hero, Berek Halfhand, due to his missing fingers and his white gold ring—a source of immense power. Covenant dismisses the Land as a hallucination, fearing that accepting its reality would undermine his survival instincts as a leper.

In the Land, Covenant's initial actions are marked by denial and cruelty, including the rape of a young girl named Lena. Despite this, the inhabitants refuse to judge him, believing him destined to either save or doom their world. The Land's beauty and the kindness of its people begin to affect him, even as he clings to his Unbelief. He learns of the Land's struggle against Lord Foul, a malevolent entity seeking to destroy the Arch of Time. The Lords of the Land, guardians of Earthpower, lack the strength to oppose Foul without Covenant's wild magic, but his refusal to acknowledge the Land's reality complicates their efforts.

Covenant's internal conflict deepens during subsequent visits to the Land. In *The Illearth War*, he discovers that years have passed, and Lord Foul has gained the powerful Illearth Stone, threatening the Land's survival. Covenant meets his daughter, Elena, born from his assault on Lena, now a troubled leader of the Lords. The presence of Hile Troy, another visitor from Covenant's world, challenges his Unbelief. Covenant's half-hearted attempts to aid the Lords—while still denying his role—lead to catastrophic consequences, including Elena's death and the loss of the Staff of Law, leaving Covenant guilt-ridden and despairing.

By *The Power That Preserves*, Covenant confronts the full repercussions of his choices. His daughter, now deceased, serves Lord Foul, and the Land teeters on the brink of destruction. Covenant's refusal to embrace his power has inadvertently aided the Despiser, leaving him nearly broken. The chapter underscores the central dilemma of Covenant's journey: his struggle to reconcile the Land's apparent reality with his need to survive in his own world, a conflict that carries profound consequences for both realms.

Chapter 2: Prologue - 1. Mother's Son

The chapter opens with Dr. Linden Avery, a psychiatrist, confronting Roger Covenant, the son of her late lover Thomas Covenant, in her office. Roger demands custody of his catatonic mother, Joan, arguing that as her son, he has the right and responsibility to care for her. Linden refuses, citing legal and ethical constraints, while internally grappling with her emotional ties to Thomas and Joan. Roger’s resemblance to his father stirs painful memories for Linden, yet his youthful arrogance and lack of his father’s depth frustrate her. His insistence feels manipulative, hinting at ulterior motives beyond familial concern.

Linden reflects on her past with Thomas Covenant, whose sacrifice to save Joan a decade ago profoundly shaped her life. She wears his wedding ring as a token of her enduring love and feels a moral obligation to protect Joan, despite her hopeless condition. Roger’s demand to take Joan away strikes Linden as absurd, given Joan’s fragile state and the lack of legal grounds for his request. She suspects Roger’s motives are selfish, possibly driven by a desire to emulate or replace his father rather than genuine care for his mother.

The tension escalates as Roger persists, oblivious to Linden’s professional and emotional boundaries. Linden finally asserts her authority, stating Joan will remain under her care unless Roger obtains a court order. Roger’s demeanor—a mix of narcissism and unresolved trauma—reminds Linden of the psychotics she has treated, deepening her unease. Yet, she also pities him, recognizing his ignorance and potential for suffering. His inability to understand the gravity of Joan’s condition or Linden’s commitment to her underscores his emotional immaturity.

The chapter concludes with Roger shifting tactics, asking to visit Joan and hinting at something he wants to show Linden. Though wary, Linden agrees, hoping the encounter will dissuade him from further demands. As they prepare to leave her office,

Linden steels herself for the emotional toll of witnessing Roger’s reaction to his mother’s condition. The scene sets the stage for deeper revelations about Roger’s true intentions and Linden’s unresolved grief over Thomas Covenant’s legacy.

Chapter 3: Prologue - 2. Gathering Defenses

The chapter opens with Dr. Linden Avery confronting Roger Covenant, the son of her patient Joan, after his visit triggers a violent episode in Joan. Roger’s calm demeanor and suggestion to let Joan taste her own blood unsettle Linden and the nurse, Amy Clint. Despite his claim that he alone can care for his mother, Linden refuses to release Joan, accusing Roger of unethical behavior. Their tense exchange reveals Roger’s manipulative nature and Linden’s determination to protect her patient, setting the stage for a deeper conflict.

Roger’s true motives become clearer when he demands his late father’s white gold ring, a powerful artifact from another world. Linden realizes he intends to use it for destructive purposes, possibly to free Lord Foul, an ancient enemy. She coldly informs Roger that the ring is hers, given to her by his father before his death. Roger’s insistence and cryptic remarks about “taking her place” hint at a larger, sinister plan, leaving Linden alarmed but resolved to oppose him.

After Roger leaves, Linden reflects on the danger he poses. She recognizes his ignorance of her own strength and history, but fears his next moves. Determined to stop him, she decides to gather information and allies. Her immediate priority is to safeguard Joan and her other responsibilities, but she understands the broader threat Roger represents. The chapter underscores Linden’s courage and strategic thinking as she prepares to confront him.

The chapter concludes with Linden taking action, reaching out to Bill Coty, the hospital’s security head, for assistance. Her call hints at her proactive approach and the escalating stakes. The narrative emphasizes Linden’s dual role as a protector of her patients and a defender against Roger’s dark ambitions, foreshadowing a larger struggle ahead. The tension between her practical duties and the supernatural threat adds depth to her character and the story’s unfolding conflict.

Chapter 4: Prologue - 3. In Spite of Her

Linden Avery, a doctor at Berenford Memorial Psychiatric Hospital, grapples with her anger and fear over Roger Covenant, whom she believes is dangerous despite Sheriff Lytton dismissing him as a "pleasant young man." She questions Roger's motives, particularly his desire for his father Thomas Covenant's white gold ring, which holds significance for its magical properties. Linden’s past experiences in the Land, a mystical world she once visited with Thomas, heighten her suspicions, though she acknowledges she might be overreacting. Her unresolved anger and concern for Joan, Roger’s mother, linger as she struggles to reconcile her instincts with the lack of concrete evidence.

In the staff lavatory, Linden reflects on her appearance and the toll of her past traumas, including her parents' deaths and her time in the Land. She notes how her face has aged, marked by stress and sorrow, yet she also recognizes the resilience love has given her. The chapter delves into her emotional turmoil as Roger’s arrival triggers memories of loss and mortality. Linden’s connection to her patients stems from her own suffering, but her immediate focus is on Roger’s potential threat. She questions whether her fears are justified, especially since no prophetic figure—like the ochre-clad old man who once foretold her journey—has appeared to warn her.

Linden recalls the old man’s past appearances, both to her and Thomas Covenant, as harbingers of their journeys to the Land. His absence now makes her doubt the severity of Roger’s intentions. She decides to believe the Land is safe unless the old man reappears, though she remains vigilant. After calling Megan and alerting her staff about Roger, Linden resolves to prioritize her son Jeremiah over any potential crisis in the Land. Her love for him outweighs her sense of duty to the mystical world, even if it means abandoning its defense.

Driving home, Linden scans her surroundings for signs of danger but finds none. Arriving at her house, she takes a moment to appreciate the community support that eases her daily life, allowing her to focus on Jeremiah. Her gratitude for these small comforts contrasts with her underlying anxiety, highlighting the tension between her responsibilities as a mother and her lingering connection to the Land. The chapter ends with her preparing to shift her attention to her son, setting aside her fears for the time being.

Chapter 5: Prologue - 4. Malice

The chapter opens with Linden Avery, the protagonist, reacting to the aftermath of a violent incident involving Roger Covenant, the son of her former patient Joan. Police sirens signal Sheriff Lytton's belated response to a call for help from Berenford Memorial Hospital. Linden, shaken, realizes Bill Coty, a volunteer protecting Joan, has been shot by Roger—a threat she previously underestimated. Fearing for her adopted son Jeremiah's safety, she calls Sandy Eastwall for help, then rushes upstairs to check on him. Despite her panic, Jeremiah appears unharmed, sleeping peacefully, though Linden remains unsettled by Roger's unpredictable violence.

As Sandy arrives, her unusual unease mirrors Linden's growing dread. Sandy explains she felt an inexplicable foreboding, as if sensing Linden's distress. Linden, avoiding detailed explanations, leaves Jeremiah in Sandy's care and heads to the hospital. The harsh, gritty wind outside seems almost unnatural, amplifying the tension. Linden battles the storm's force as she drives, her fear for Jeremiah mingling with guilt over Bill Coty's death. The weather's intensity mirrors the chaos Roger has unleashed, leaving Linden emotionally and physically battered.

Upon reaching Berenford Memorial, Linden finds the entrance damaged, the lock shattered—evidence of Roger's forced entry. She recalls the staff who might have confronted him, particularly Avis Cardaman, a formidable orderly whose strength may have been no match for Roger's ruthlessness. The presence of multiple police cars underscores the severity of the situation. Linden steels herself to face the aftermath, unsure how many others have been harmed in Roger's rampage. The chapter builds suspense, highlighting the escalating threat Roger poses and Linden's mounting desperation.

The final scene shifts to the hospital lobby, now crowded with law enforcement. Sheriff Lytton and his deputies dominate the space, their presence a stark reminder of the

violence Linden must confront. The chapter ends on a cliffhanger, leaving the full extent of Roger’s actions unclear. Linden’s resolve is tested as she steps into the chaos, torn between her duty as a healer and her fear for Jeremiah’s safety. The narrative underscores themes of maternal protectiveness, the consequences of underestimating evil, and the relentless advance of an impending storm—both literal and metaphorical.

Chapter 6: Prologue - 5. The Cost of Love and Despair

The chapter opens with Linden Avery in a state of acute distress, perceiving her surroundings with painful intensity as she grapples with the realization that she has lost her chance to save her son, Jeremiah. Her friend Megan urges her to go home, warning her not to let the situation worsen, but Linden is already consumed by panic. Ignoring rational thoughts, she flees her office in a frenzy, driven by the fear that Roger Covenant has taken Jeremiah. The wind and her own desperation hinder her as she stumbles toward her car, her actions frantic and uncoordinated.

Once in her car, Linden’s trembling hands struggle to start the engine, her anxiety manifesting in physical violence as she punches the dashboard. She forces herself to focus, remembering that Jeremiah needs her more than anyone else. With determination, she ignites the engine and speeds toward her home, calculating Roger’s possible movements. She berates herself for not warning her housemate, Sandy, sooner, realizing her lapse in vigilance after being away from the Land for so long. The urgency of the situation is palpable as she races against time.

Arriving home, Linden finds her front door forced open and the house ransacked, confirming her worst fears. Roger has taken Jeremiah, leaving behind only the wreckage of his search. The lights are all on, as if to mock her, and the absence of blood suggests Sandy may still be alive. Linden’s terror transforms into a cold, resolute clarity as she realizes Roger’s intent: he seeks leverage over her, possibly to extract her late husband’s wedding ring. She understands that Jeremiah’s abduction is a ploy to manipulate her, either in their world or in the Land.

Steadying herself, Linden methodically changes into practical clothing, choosing items Jeremiah would recognize. As she dresses, she notices a cut on her palm from her

earlier outburst, a small but symbolic wound. Her transformation is complete—she is no longer the panicked mother but the Chosen, ready to confront Roger and the Despiser. The chapter ends with her preparing for the inevitable confrontation, her resolve hardened by love and despair.

Chapter 7: Part One - 1. "I am content"

The chapter opens with Linden Avery trapped in a nightmarish descent into darkness, haunted by gunfire and the crushing guilt of failing to protect her son, Jeremiah. She recalls her vows to safeguard both Jeremiah and Joan, yet feels the weight of her failure as she plunges deeper into despair. Despite her physical wounds, she feels no pain, only the relentless force driving her toward the abyss of the Despiser’s influence. Her thoughts spiral around Jeremiah’s uncertain fate—whether he was killed or taken by Lord Foul—and her inability to shield him, leaving her consumed by anguish and helplessness.

As Linden falls, her desperation ignites a transformative power within her, symbolized by Covenant’s white gold ring. The ring’s energy heals her wounds and fuels her with fiery resolve, yet she remains powerless to return to Jeremiah. She reflects on the ring’s significance as the keystone of the Arch of Time, questioning why it cannot undo her loss. The gunfire fades into a distant rumble, and her descent through shifting realities culminates in a sudden vision of Thomas Covenant, blurring the lines between memory, hallucination, and alternate identities.

Linden’s consciousness fractures further as she experiences fragmented moments from Joan’s tormented life, including scenes of fanatical condemnation from the "Community of Retribution." She is simultaneously Joan, enduring relentless suffering, and herself, grappling with the Raver’s malevolent presence. The Raver, turiya Herem, embodies ancient evil, its hunger for destruction palpable. Linden’s health-sense—a spiritual discernment from her past in the Land—awakens, allowing her to perceive the Raver’s corruption and Joan’s agony, though this awareness only deepens her horror.

The chapter closes with Linden caught between identities and realities, her mind besieged by guilt, visions, and external evil. Her connection to Covenant’s ring and her awakening health-sense offer fleeting hope, but the Raver’s presence underscores the

overwhelming darkness she faces. The narrative underscores themes of failure, sacrifice, and the blurred boundaries between pain and power, leaving Linden’s fate—and Jeremiah’s—uncertain as she teeters on the edge of despair and potential redemption.

Chapter 8: Part One - 2. Caesure

Linden Avery awakens on Kevin’s Watch, a stone platform high above the Land, disoriented but aware of her surroundings. She recalls her previous visit a decade ago and realizes that time in the Land moves differently, with centuries passing in her world as mere months. Fear grips her as she contemplates the changes Lord Foul may have wrought over millennia, corrupting the Land’s healing and beauty. Her primary concern is her son, Jeremiah, whom Lord Foul has taken, leaving her to navigate a transformed and potentially hostile world alone.

The Land, once a place of vitality and Earthpower, had been ravaged by the Sunbane, a corruption Linden and Thomas Covenant had fought to undo. She remembers the purity of Andelain, a sanctuary of Law, and her efforts to restore the Land’s health. Now, faced with the possibility that her work has been undone, she feels the weight of despair. Without guidance or allies, she must confront the unknown, armed only with Covenant’s white gold ring and her own determination to rescue Jeremiah.

Linden’s health-sense, a heightened awareness of life and energy, returns to her, revealing the Land’s current state. The air and sunlight feel pure, but the stone beneath her trembles with hidden weakness, threatening to collapse. Though the immediate danger is not urgent, the fragility of Kevin’s Watch symbolizes the precariousness of her mission. She examines herself, finding scars where she was shot in her former life, now miraculously healed by wild magic. This confirms her transition into the Land, severing her ties to her past existence.

Despite her grief for the life she’s lost, Linden focuses on rescuing Jeremiah. She acknowledges the enormity of her task—navigating a changed Land, confronting Lord Foul’s schemes, and wielding power she barely understands. Alone and unprepared, she clings to her love for her son and her resolve to defy despair. The chapter ends with Linden steeling herself for the journey ahead, determined to face whatever

horrors await in her quest to save Jeremiah from the Despiser’s grasp.

Chapter 9: Part One - 3. In the Rubble

The chapter opens with the catastrophic collapse of Kevin’s Watch, a towering spire that crumbles into rubble, sending Linden Avery and Anele plummeting through the air amidst a storm of shattered stone. Dust obscures the sun as the platform beneath them tilts and gives way, leaving Linden only moments to cry out before the structure collapses entirely. As they fall, Anele clutches her neck, threatening to suffocate her, while the sheer weight of the debris around them threatens to crush them both. The scene is one of chaos and terror, with Linden’s survival hanging by a thread as she tumbles through the sky.

In a desperate moment, Linden instinctively reaches for wild magic, the power tied to Thomas Covenant’s white gold ring. Despite her injuries and disorientation, she taps into this immense force, transforming into a blaze of argent fire that illuminates the sky. The magic suspends the laws of physics, sparing her from certain death as she and Anele are engulfed in a radiant explosion. The narrative shifts to a metaphysical interlude, reflecting on the nature of stars and wild magic as the keystone of Time, hinting at deeper cosmic stakes tied to Linden’s actions.

Linden regains consciousness later, lying atop the wreckage of the Watch, bruised but miraculously alive. The landscape around her is a scene of devastation, with shattered stone covering the valley. She realizes wild magic has saved her, but Anele is nowhere to be found. As she surveys the damage, she notes the absence of the malevolent aura that caused the spire’s fall, though the threat of Anele’s enemies lingers in her mind. Exhausted and injured, she struggles to move, her body weakened by the ordeal, yet her determination to find Anele remains steadfast.

The chapter closes with Linden’s dazed reflection on her own frailty and the inexplicable healing of her wounds. Her hands, though cleansed of blood, feel alien to her, symbolizing her disconnection from her former self. The surrounding hills and

mountains stand as silent witnesses to the cataclysm, while the distant calls of birds suggest a return to normalcy—a stark contrast to the violence of the collapse. Linden’s resolve to locate Anele and confront the looming threats underscores her resilience, even as she grapples with the physical and emotional toll of her journey.

Chapter 10: Part One - 4. Old Friends

Linden Avery is horrified when Anele, a blind old man, suddenly channels the voice of Lord Foul, the Despiser, who taunts her with the knowledge that he holds her son, Jeremiah, captive. The Despiser cruelly toys with her, suggesting he may either enslave or kill Jeremiah, leaving Linden in agonizing uncertainty. The natural world falls eerily silent as Anele's laughter rings with malice, and Linden's initial shock gives way to fury. She seizes Anele, demanding Lord Foul release her son, but the Despiser mocks her powerlessness, claiming his victory is assured through the possession of white gold.

Overwhelmed but resolute, Linden refuses to succumb to despair. Though exhausted, she channels her rage into determination, vowing to rescue Jeremiah despite the odds. She shifts her focus to immediate survival needs—water, food, and shelter—hoping to ground herself in practicality. Memories of the Land's resilience, like the enduring treasure-berries, offer her fleeting comfort. Meanwhile, Anele remains distraught, his silent weeping a stark contrast to his earlier malevolent outburst, and Linden tries to reassure him despite her own turmoil.

Their tense standoff is interrupted when Anele warns of approaching Masters—Haruchai warriors—just as one leaps down from a nearby ledge. Linden recognizes him as one of the Haruchai, a race known for their unwavering loyalty and strength. Though Anele cowers in fear, Linden feels a surge of relief, recalling how the Haruchai once aided her and Thomas Covenant against Lord Foul. She views their arrival as a potential turning point, believing they will stand against the Despiser, whom they despise as "Corruption."

The chapter ends with Linden's cautious hope as she faces the Haruchai, who regard her with characteristic stoicism. Their presence introduces both promise and uncertainty, as their motives remain unclear. Linden's immediate priorities—survival

and rescuing Jeremiah—now intersect with the Haruchai's arrival, setting the stage for a fraught alliance. The tension between Anele's terror and Linden's tentative trust in the Haruchai underscores the chapter's themes of desperation, defiance, and the search for allies in a hostile world.

Chapter 11: Part One - 5. Distraction

Linden Avery, exhausted and bruised, explores the chambers of her stone prison after Anele’s emotional outburst subsides. She finds a rudimentary lavatory with a basin, water, and sand for cleaning, but her physical and emotional pain prevents her from washing. In the next room, she discovers two beds and chooses one, collapsing into immediate sleep despite her distress. Anele remains unresponsive, slumped against the stone floor, refusing the comfort of a bed.

Linden’s sleep is haunted by vivid, painful dreams of her son Jeremiah and Thomas Covenant. She sees Jeremiah’s pleading gaze and Covenant’s distant voice, unable to reach her. Memories of past battles and losses flood her mind, including Covenant’s past efforts to guide her through darkness. The dreams emphasize her isolation and unresolved grief, leaving her weeping in her sleep. Covenant’s faint call to "find me" echoes, mirroring Jeremiah’s unspoken pleas, deepening her emotional turmoil.

Upon waking, Linden finds herself alone in the dimly lit chamber, her body stiff and weary. Anele has not used the other bed, choosing instead to sleep on the stone floor. Fresh food and water have been provided, and Linden forces herself to eat, though she feels no hunger. Her dreams linger, unsettling her, but she focuses on small, practical actions like washing and dressing to regain a sense of control. These mundane tasks help her push back against her growing frustration and helplessness.

Linden resolves to speak with the Haruchai guard, Stave, to learn more about the Land’s fate and the loss of the Staff of Law. However, she finds Anele awake and slightly improved, though still wary. He explains that he avoids beds to escape dangerous dreams, trusting only the stone to protect him. Linden, lacking her health-sense, struggles to understand him but remains determined to uphold her promises. The chapter closes with her reaffirming her resolve, drawing strength from Covenant’s teachings about resilience in the face of despair.

Chapter 12: Part One - 6. The Despiser's Guidance

Linden Avery flees southward with Anele through a violent storm, desperate to escape the Haruchai Masters and the dark forces unleashed from Mount Thunder. Despite the oppressive gloom and her exhaustion, she urges Anele toward the Mithil River, hoping to confuse their pursuers by crossing or floating downstream. Her plan hinges on reaching Andelain, where she might seek guidance from the Dead, though she doubts the Masters will anticipate her route. Anele, seemingly guided by instinct, outpaces her, his madness lending him unnatural speed while Linden struggles to keep up, her physical limits betraying her.

As they break free from the storm into sunlight, Linden collapses, drained and gasping for breath. Anele, however, remains energized, his laughter tinged with madness. Suddenly, Lord Foul’s voice emerges from Anele, taunting Linden for her weakness and predicting her recapture by the Haruchai. The Despiser mocks her failed escape, claiming her actions have only worsened her plight. Enraged but powerless, Linden confronts Foul, vowing to reclaim her health-sense and protect Anele from his torment, though her threats lack the force of wild magic.

Foul revels in Linden’s defiance, suggesting a direct confrontation would amuse him, even if it destroys Anele in the process. Linden silently resolves to defy him, drawing strength from her anger and determination. Though she lacks Covenant’s ring’s power, her resolve remains unshaken. The chapter highlights her vulnerability and resilience, as well as Foul’s cruel manipulation of Anele as a pawn in their struggle.

The confrontation underscores Linden’s precarious position: physically exhausted, hunted by the Masters, and taunted by Foul, yet refusing to surrender. Her promise to reclaim her abilities and protect Anele hints at future battles, while Foul’s mockery foreshadows greater challenges ahead. The chapter ends with tension unresolved, leaving Linden’s next steps uncertain but her defiance unwavering.

Chapter 13: Part One - 7. Companions in Flight

Linden stands frozen on the riverbank, overwhelmed by the sight of Anele, who is writhing in pain despite the healing effects of hurtloam, a substance imbued with Earthpower. She realizes that his madness has twisted the loam's restorative properties, causing him suffering instead of relief. Though she discerns Lord Foul's presence within him, she understands that the Despiser does not fully control Anele but exploits vulnerabilities in his fractured mind. Linden's health-sense reveals these truths, but delving deeper would require an invasive intrusion into Anele's psyche—a costly act she has avoided since her past experiences.

Liand interrupts Linden's thoughts, urging her to flee before the Haruchai Masters discover their escape. She barely registers his words, fixated on Anele's condition and the lingering threat of Lord Foul. When she finally turns to Liand, she perceives his innate honesty and untested courage, noting his lack of awareness of the evil nearby. His horse, though sturdy, bears an old injury that limits its endurance. Above them, the sky's purity is marred by a faint trace of Kevin's Dirt, a reminder of the looming blindness it may yet impose.

Pressed by urgency, Linden agrees to flee, though she questions why the Masters haven't already caught them. Liand helps Anele onto his horse, and as they ride south, Anele's connection to Lord Foul abruptly vanishes, leaving him weakened but himself again. Linden, revitalized by hurtloam, runs alongside them, feeling a surge of strength and hope. However, the terrain grows treacherous, forcing them to slow. The mountains ahead loom ominously, and the thinning air leaves her breathless.

Pausing to regroup, Linden notes Anele's exhaustion and the absence of the Despiser's influence. Relieved, she prepares to discuss their next steps with Liand, aware that their escape remains precarious. The chapter ends with a sense of fleeting respite amid ongoing danger, as Linden balances her newfound energy with the relentless

pursuit of the Masters and the ever-present threat of Lord Foul’s return.

Chapter 14: Part One - 8. Into the Mountains

Linden Avery and her companions, Liand and Anele, begin their ascent into the mountains, though Linden struggles to maintain her stamina despite the healing properties of Hurtloam. Their journey takes a hopeful turn when they discover a cluster of aliantha, a resilient and nourishing plant that thrives even under the Sunbane. The berries rejuvenate Linden, and she takes care to scatter their seeds, ensuring future growth. However, the urgency of their flight from the Haruchai presses them onward, as the dissipating storm signals the imminent start of their pursuit.

The terrain grows increasingly challenging as they approach Mithil’s Plunge, a towering waterfall that seems to block their path. Linden reflects on her vague plans to navigate the mountains and reach Andelain, frustrated by the lack of clear guidance. She considers the enigmatic clues left by Jeremiah, such as his models of Mount Thunder and Revelstone, but remains uncertain how to interpret them. The weight of her mission—to find the Staff of Law—weighs on her, compounded by the limited knowledge of her companions.

As they near the waterfall, the roar and spray of the Plunge become overwhelming, drenching Linden and heightening her fear of the treacherous path ahead. Liand points out a hidden passage behind the cataract, though Linden can barely hear him over the tumult. Anele, seemingly familiar with the route, remains calm, his presence a small comfort. Linden clings to him as they follow Liand and the mustang Somo, stepping onto a narrow, slippery ledge obscured by mist and spray.

The passage behind the waterfall is perilous, with slick stones and moss threatening their footing. Linden focuses intently on each step, the water’s thunder urging her to falter. Despite her terror, she presses forward, guided by Liand’s lead and the faint light filtering through the spray. The chapter ends with Linden entering the hidden path, her resolve tested by the physical and emotional challenges of their journey into

the unknown.

Chapter 15: Part One - 9. Scion of Stone

The chapter "Scion of Stone" follows Linden Avery and her companions—Liand, Stave, and the mad old man Anele—as they flee through a treacherous mountain cleft, pursued by a pack of savage kresh (giant wolves). Linden, weakened and disoriented, grapples with her inability to harness the wild magic of Thomas Covenant’s ring, which she wears but cannot control. Stave, a Haruchai Master, urges her not to use the ring, warning of older, darker evils lurking in the mountains. Despite her desperation, Linden hesitates, torn between her need to protect her son and her fear of unleashing greater dangers.

As the group scrambles up the rocky slope, Stave carries Linden, demonstrating his superhuman agility and strength. Liand struggles to keep pace, slowed by his mustang, Somo, while Anele races ahead, seemingly attuned to the stone beneath them. Linden reflects on Covenant’s past heroics and her own inadequacies, feeling the weight of the ring’s power yet unable to wield it. The tension mounts as the kresh remain unseen but ominously close, driving the group to seek higher ground for defense.

Liand questions Stave’s solitary presence, challenging the Haruchai’s motives and their role as guardians of the Land. Stave deflects the inquiry, emphasizing the Haruchai’s honor but hinting at unforeseen circumstances that left them unprepared for Linden’s arrival. The exchange underscores the mistrust between the characters, as Linden remains silent, caught in her own turmoil. The chapter weaves themes of desperation, power, and legacy, with the landscape itself echoing the fractured history of the Land.

The group’s ascent becomes a metaphor for their internal struggles—Linden’s guilt and doubt, Stave’s conflicted loyalty, and Liand’s growing defiance. The chapter ends with the threat of the kresh unresolved, leaving the characters—and readers—in

suspense. The interplay of action and introspection highlights the broader stakes of their journey, as Linden’s choices could awaken ancient evils or determine their survival. The narrative balances urgency with deeper reflections on power, trust, and the burdens of the past.

Chapter 16: Part One - 10. Aided by Ur-Viles

Linden Avery, exhausted from supporting Anele, realizes he holds crucial knowledge about the lost Staff of Law, though she cannot fathom how. Anele, the ancient son of Sunder and Hollian, briefly regains clarity, expressing his despair over failing to find the Staff in his cave. Stave, a Haruchai, distrusts Anele, while the ur-viles react cryptically to the conversation. Anele, now more composed, climbs the rift alone, refusing further aid, and Stave reluctantly lets him go under the Ramen's watch. Linden, drained and perceptively blind, questions the Ramen's motives but decides to trust them for now.

The Manethrall Hami reveals the Ramen's past kindness toward Anele, though he often fled their help. Linden, grateful for their rescue, introduces Liand, who aided their escape from Mithil Stonedown. Noticing Liand's injuries, she worries about infection but lacks the means to treat him. Hami assures Linden that the Ramen can care for their wounded, emphasizing their long-standing enmity with the kresh. Linden offers her medical skills, but the Ramen decline, confident in their own healing methods. The chapter highlights the tension between trust and skepticism among the group.

Linden's weariness and diminished senses leave her vulnerable, unable to discern the true intentions of her companions. The Ramen's compassion contrasts with Stave's stern detachment, deepening the divide between their factions. Anele's erratic behavior and cryptic hints about the Staff's loss add urgency to Linden's quest. The ur-viles' incomprehensible reactions and the Ramen's guarded hospitality further complicate her understanding of the Land's current state. The chapter underscores Linden's isolation and the growing stakes of her mission.

The battle's aftermath reveals the Ramen's resilience, though some are severely wounded. Linden's concern for Liand and the injured Cords reflects her physician's instincts, even as she acknowledges her limitations. Hami's pride in their self-

sufficiency and hatred for the kresh hints at deeper conflicts within the Land. The chapter closes with Linden’s unresolved questions about Anele’s importance, the Staff’s whereabouts, and the true allegiances of those around her. The stage is set for further exploration of trust, loss, and the looming threats in the Land.

Chapter 17: Part One - 11. Hints

The chapter opens with Linden, Liand, and the Ramen breaking camp and journeying eastward along an escarpment toward a mountain gorge. Liand’s doubts about the Ramen are dispelled when he sees his mustang, Somo, unharmed and ready to travel. Meanwhile, Sahah, an injured Ramen Cord, is left behind with companions to recover, sustained by vitrim and the promise of hurtloam. Anele, the old and maddened man, rejoins the group after wandering off, muttering incoherently, his blindness and confusion hinting at deeper struggles with his fractured mind.

Linden, though wary of Anele’s madness, refrains from probing his mind with her renewed senses, fearing the consequences for both of them. Her recent success with Covenant’s ring has restored her confidence in her abilities, yet her underlying despair over her son Jeremiah remains unresolved. The physical strain of the journey forces her to focus on each step, momentarily shielding her from the weight of her emotional turmoil. As the group navigates the rugged terrain, Liand’s youthful enthusiasm and wonder at the world provide Linden with a fleeting sense of hope.

The company enters a narrow gorge, carefully picking their way through boulders and snowmelt streams. Emerging into sunlight, they traverse an open slope, where Linden’s muscles begin to adjust. The landscape shifts as they descend toward a chaotic field of boulders, but the Ramen redirect their path eastward toward a ridge formed by ancient rockfalls. Linden, weary but determined, refuses Hami’s offer to ride Somo, insisting on walking despite her exhaustion. Her resolve reflects her need to reclaim agency after the vulnerabilities of the previous day.

As they approach the ridge, Linden questions Hami about their destination—the Verge of Wandering—where the Ramen hope to address lingering doubts. Hami reassures her that the path, though rough, is manageable, and Somo could carry her if needed. Linden’s refusal underscores her stubborn self-reliance, even as she grapples with

unspoken suspicions about Hami’s honesty. The chapter closes with Linden preparing to face the physical and emotional challenges ahead, her journey mirroring her internal struggle between hope and despair.

Chapter 18: Part One - 12. The Verge of Wandering

Linden Avery is overwhelmed by grief and confusion after witnessing Thomas Covenant's spirit being violently dismissed while attempting to reach her. Despite the Ramen's care for the unconscious Anele, Linden is consumed by despair, unable to process the cruelty of Covenant's silencing and the parallels to her son's suffering. Liand and Stave try to comfort her, but she remains detached, fixated on Covenant's plea for help. A poultice of amanibhavam briefly stirs her, reminding her of her mission to find the Staff of Law, but her exhaustion and emotional turmoil leave her teetering on the edge of collapse.

Determined to act, Linden insists on seeing Anele, despite her physical and emotional frailty. With Liand's support, she staggers to the shelter where Anele lies unconscious, his injuries superficial but his mind deeply scarred. Fearless in her desperation, Linden entrusts Covenant's ring to Liand, warning him to flee if she is endangered. She then attempts to psychically penetrate Anele's mind, hoping to uncover the source of his torment, but her efforts are met with an impenetrable wall of Earthpower shielding his core identity.

Linden's attempt to heal Anele fails, revealing that his self-protective barriers are too strong for her percipience alone. She realizes that only a power as potent as wild magic—or the Staff of Law—could breach his defenses, but using Covenant's ring risks destroying his mind entirely. Defeated, she acknowledges her helplessness without the Staff, echoing Covenant's earlier insistence that she needs it. Liand expresses his sorrow for Anele's suffering, condemning the forces that manipulate him as evil, but Linden is too bitter to respond.

The chapter closes with Linden's resolve hardening despite her failures. Though she cannot help Anele directly, her determination to find the Staff of Law grows stronger. The presence of a young Ramen Cord hints at further developments, but Linden's

focus remains on her next steps. Her grief and frustration are tempered by a steely resolve, setting the stage for her continued struggle against the forces threatening the Land.

Chapter 19: Part Two - 1. Spent Enmity

Linden Avery, the protagonist, faces a critical moment as she tends to Stave, a severely injured Haruchai, in a Ramen shelter. Despite her exhaustion and emotional turmoil, she recognizes that his life depends on her intervention. Stave, conscious but in agony, pleads with her not to heal him, fearing the shame of being saved after his perceived failures. Linden, however, refuses to accept his resignation, arguing that his failures were inevitable given the Haruchai's limited numbers and isolation. She insists on attempting to heal him, driven by both duty and her own need to prove her strength.

The tension between Linden and Stave escalates as she confronts his despair. She challenges his belief that his inability to capture Anele or foresee threats like the ur-viles constitutes personal failure, attributing it instead to the Haruchai's overextended resources and rigid isolation. Linden's anger masks her fear of inadequacy, but it also fuels her determination to act. Stave's resistance wavers as she presses him, and he eventually asks about her intentions for the Land, though she admits she has no clear plan yet. Their exchange becomes a catalyst for Linden to focus her healing efforts.

As Linden delves into Stave's injuries with her renewed health-sense, she grapples with the ethical dilemma of how to proceed. She considers merely easing his pain as he dies, respecting his wishes, but rejects this as a cowardly compromise. Instead, she resolves to heal him fully, despite the risks. Her decision reflects her growing resolve to confront the challenges ahead, even as she acknowledges her own limitations. The chapter highlights her internal struggle between fear and responsibility, as well as her evolving understanding of the Haruchai's role in the Land.

The chapter also touches on the unresolved tension between the Haruchai and the Ramen, hinted at by Linden's question about their historical grievance. Stave briefly explains that the Ramen resent the Haruchai for riding the Ranyhyn, though the horses

choose their riders willingly. This subplot underscores the broader conflicts and alliances within the Land, setting the stage for future developments. Linden’s actions in this chapter mark a turning point, as she begins to assert her agency and confront the moral complexities of her role as the Chosen.

Chapter 20: Part Two - 2. Dangerous Choices

The chapter opens with the arrival of Sahah, a wounded Cord, at the Verge of Wandering, carried by her companions on a travois. Despite her severe injuries, she has survived due to the miraculous healing properties of hurtloam, a rare and potent mud that mends wounds with preternatural speed. Linden Avery, the protagonist, is astonished by the hurtloam's power as she uses it to treat Stave, a Haruchai warrior, whose injuries begin to heal rapidly. However, Stave's dislocated hip remains a problem, symbolizing a wound beyond physical healing—one tied to his sense of honor and shame.

Linden's actions in saving Stave from death have violated the Haruchai's strict code of personal rectitude, leaving him to face harsh judgment from his people. Stave acknowledges this, warning Linden that they must now endure the consequences of her choice. Despite her weariness, Linden remains resolute, refusing to shy away from the outcomes of her decisions. She offers to set Stave's hip, but he declines, insisting on tending to it himself, further emphasizing his pride and the cultural weight of his people's traditions.

Linden turns her attention to other pressing matters, including speaking with Manethrall Hami and checking on Anele, an old man who had been possessed by a malevolent force. Char, a young Cord, informs her that Anele is wandering aimlessly but appears physically unharmed. Linden feels a sense of urgency, knowing she must act soon to address the larger threats facing the Land. Her love for the Land is juxtaposed with her awareness of her own limitations and the stains of her journey, both literal and metaphorical.

The chapter closes with Linden preparing to confront the challenges ahead, despite her exhaustion and the weight of her responsibilities. She is hungry and weary, yet driven by a clear purpose, underscored by her determination to find the Staff of Law

and protect the Land from the Despiser’s malice. The dawn brings a moment of quiet beauty, but Linden knows she cannot pause for comfort—the time for action has come.

Chapter 21: Part Two - 3. The Will of the Ranyhyn

In this chapter, Linden Avery confronts Stave, a Haruchai Master, about her determination to rescue her son Jeremiah, who was taken by Lord Foul. Despite Stave's warning that her actions could doom the Earth, Linden refuses to yield, asserting her resolve to proceed regardless of the consequences. Stave, though disapproving, chooses not to stop her, acknowledging past mistakes in doubting her and opting to inform the other Masters instead. Linden is left with the grim realization that her enemies now number in the hundreds, but she remains steadfast in her mission.

Linden then turns to the Ramen, seeking their support despite the risks her plan entails. The Manethralls, bound by their reverence for the Ranyhyn who accepted Linden, assure her they will not oppose her. Mahrtiir, eager to prove himself, offers to accompany her, emphasizing his skills in scouting, survival, and combat. Though Linden hesitates to endanger others, she recognizes the practicality of his aid and reluctantly agrees. The Ramen's loyalty contrasts with Stave's caution, highlighting the tension between her desperation and the broader consequences of her actions.

A critical question arises when Dohn, one of the Manethralls, asks how Linden plans to return from her journey into the past via a caesure, a rift in time. Linden admits she may need to create another caesure, a dangerous act that could destabilize Time itself and hasten the Earth's destruction. This revelation underscores the enormity of her gamble—her love for Jeremiah may come at the cost of the world's survival. The chapter delves into her internal conflict as she grapples with the moral weight of her decisions.

The chapter closes with Linden retreating into solitude, her thoughts turbulent as she prepares for her perilous quest. Liand's silent companionship offers little comfort, as his naivety about the dangers ahead inadvertently challenges her resolve. Meanwhile,

the Ramen disperse, leaving Linden to confront the stark reality of her plan. Her determination to save Jeremiah is unwavering, but the chapter leaves lingering doubts about the cost—both to herself and to the Land she seeks to protect.

Chapter 22: Part Two - 4. Heedless in Rain

Linden Avery and Stave return to the Ramen encampment during a violent storm, both physically and emotionally battered. Riding their Ranyhyn through relentless rain and wind, they arrive exhausted, with Linden barely clinging to consciousness. Stave, though weakened by his wounds, manages to dismount, but Linden is so frozen and traumatized that she must be pried from her horse. The Ramen and Liand rush to aid them, recognizing the severity of their condition. The storm’s malice seems almost sentient, having stripped Linden of her strength and left her rigid with despair.

Liand and the Ramen immediately tend to Linden, carrying her to shelter and attempting to revive her with warmth, water, and aliantha. Stave, though drained, refuses assistance but eventually recovers enough to sit by the fire. Linden’s condition is dire—her body is wracked with cold, and her spirit seems afflicted by a deeper, almost metaphysical fever. The Ramen, skilled healers, are uncertain how to treat her ailment, fearing conventional remedies may harm her further. Meanwhile, the Ranyhyn, having ensured their riders’ safety, depart back into the storm.

As Linden’s physical cold begins to recede, it is replaced by a feverish illness that seems rooted in her soul. The Ramen debate using their remaining healing resources but hesitate, unsure of the cause. Liand, desperate, repeatedly calls her name, as if his voice alone could heal her. Slowly, Linden shows signs of recovery, swallowing water and treasure-berries, though her shivers persist. When she briefly regains consciousness, her eyes reflect a profound dismay, hinting at the trauma she endured during her absence.

Linden’s fragmented memories gradually return, piecing together the events that led to her collapse. She murmurs about the Ranyhyn and her son, suggesting the horserite—a sacred experience—has left her emotionally shattered. The chapter ends with her struggling to reconcile her fragmented recollections, the weight of her

revelations still heavy upon her. The storm outside mirrors her inner turmoil, leaving both her and Stave marked by an ordeal that transcends physical suffering.

Chapter 23: Part Two - 5. Against Time

Linden Avery is engulfed by an overwhelming and paradoxical torment as she is pulled into a *caesure*, a rift outside of Time. She experiences simultaneous agonies: a sensation of ants devouring her flesh, an infinite white void of unbearable cold, and a desolate wasteland of shattered stone. Despite the unbearable pain, she remains conscious, unable to escape or succumb to madness. The chaos of the *caesure* defies the natural order of existence, leaving her suspended in a state where life and death lose their meaning, yet she persists in a nightmarish limbo.

Within the white void, Linden finds herself utterly alone, her presence the only marker of reality in an otherwise featureless expanse. Though she can move and feel the cold piercing her body, her actions lead nowhere, and her cries go unheard. The cold is so intense it feels like fire, yet without the passage of time, even her suffering is frozen in place. This isolation amplifies her despair, making her loneliness more unbearable than the physical pain, as she grapples with the futility of her existence in this timeless prison.

Simultaneously, Linden perceives a third reality—a ruined landscape of broken stone, where eerie, emerald-hued creatures called *skest* move among the rubble. These beings, once servants of a malevolent force, now tend to her with bitter care, offering food and water. She realizes she is inhabiting another’s body and mind, witnessing events beyond her control. The landscape reflects a fractured timeline, its stones representing shattered moments of existence, while the *skest*’s presence hints at deeper corruption.

Linden eventually recognizes the mind she is trapped in as Joan’s, Thomas Covenant’s ex-wife, who is under the influence of the Raver *turiya Herem*. Joan’s madness and despair manifest in self-destructive acts, each blow unleashing wild magic that further fractures time. Linden understands Joan’s power could unravel the Arch of Time, but

her fragmented sanity limits her to sporadic destruction. The chapter ends with Linden confronting the horrifying scale of Joan’s devastation, realizing the Land’s fate hangs in the balance as the *caesure*’s chaos spreads.

Chapter 24: Part Two - 6. The Staff of Law

The chapter opens with Linden Avery and her companions—Liand, the Ramen Cords, Stave, and Anele—collapsing onto the ground after surviving a traumatic passage through a *caesure*, a time-distorting Fall. Exhausted and disoriented, they struggle to recover, with Linden finding solace in the warmth and solidity of the earth beneath her. The Ranyhyn, their great horses, remain composed, while the ur-viles quietly confer. Stave urges Linden to assess their surroundings, emphasizing the need to avoid altering the past, but she hesitates, sensing a familiar, unsettling wrongness in the ground.

Linden’s health-sense detects traces of the Sunbane, a malevolent force that once ravaged the Land, confirming they have traveled centuries into the past. Stave estimates they arrived 200–300 years after the Sunbane’s end, a critical detail for their mission to recover the Staff of Law. The discovery unsettles Liand, who recoils from the evil’s lingering presence, while Linden grapples with memories of the Sunbane’s horrors. Despite the distant timeframe, the residual taint underscores the Land’s vulnerability to corruption and the stakes of their journey.

As Linden regains her bearings, she observes their unfamiliar surroundings: a rugged landscape near the Southron Range, with no landmarks she recognizes. Anele, perched on his horse, appears detached, his cloak adorned with raindrops that shimmer like prophetic symbols. The sun’s position confirms the absence of Kevin’s Dirt and the Banefire’s influence, granting her unimpaired perception. Yet the isolation and uncertainty of their temporal displacement weigh heavily on her, compounded by the urgency of their quest.

The chapter closes with Linden’s resolve hardening as she prepares to confront the challenges ahead. The group’s survival hinges on navigating the past without disrupting the timeline, while the Sunbane’s echoes serve as a grim reminder of the

Land’s fragility. Stave’s stoic presence offers stability, but Linden’s leadership is tested as she balances her fears with the need to act. The stage is set for a perilous exploration of a bygone era, where every decision could reshape the future.

Chapter 25: Part Two - 7. Aid and Betrayal

Linden Avery is overwhelmed by despair as she confronts the consequences of her actions. Her son Jeremiah is being tortured far away, her companions have suffered due to her creation of a caesure, and the Staff of Law—which she hoped to retrieve from Anele's cave—is missing. She realizes she had naively assumed the Staff would be there because of her own intervention in the past, ignoring other possibilities. Lord Foul's manipulation becomes clear: by leading her to hurtloam, he set her on a path that enabled her to disrupt Time, neutralizing her threat despite her possession of Covenant's ring.

Her companions are equally devastated. Anele lies bleeding, consumed by grief, while Liand and the Ramen are paralyzed by shock and chagrin. Stave's usual dispassion is replaced by anger at Linden's recklessness. Refusing to accept defeat, Linden rallies her companions, insisting they are not yet beaten. She silences their unspoken reproaches, focusing instead on finding a way forward. Her urgency is palpable as she demands answers, particularly from Stave, about the history of the region and any signs of the Staff's use or destruction.

Stave explains that the Haruchai, now the Masters of the Land, did not extensively monitor the South Plains due to its sparse population and barren soil. He asserts that any significant use of power would have been detected, despite their limited presence in the area. Linden remains skeptical, accusing the Haruchai of ignorance, but Stave insists their senses are attuned to such events. His reassurance does little to calm Linden, whose emotions continue to burn fiercely. She shifts her focus to Mahrtiir, questioning whether the Ramen can track the unknown beings who preceded them to the cave.

Mahrtiir admits defeat, explaining that too much time has passed and the terrain beyond the cave offers no traces to follow. Linden's frustration mounts as her options

dwindle. The chapter underscores her desperation and the weight of her responsibilities, as well as the growing tension among her companions. Despite their dire circumstances, Linden’s determination to save Jeremiah and protect the Land remains unshaken, even as the path forward seems increasingly uncertain.

Chapter 26: Part Two - 8. "Contrive their salvation"

Linden Avery and her companions, exhausted yet resolute, follow the Waynhim into a cave after healing one of their kind. The group, including Stave, Mahrtiir, Liand, Anele, and the enigmatic Esmer, is greeted warmly by the rest of the rhysh in a chamber lit by mystical fires. The atmosphere is peaceful, and Linden senses the nearness of the Staff of Law, which fills her with contentment. The Waynhim’s gratitude is evident, as Linden’s actions have validated their purpose, and the cave’s soothing environment offers respite from their arduous journey.

The chamber is illuminated by lore-fed flames emitting a scent of cloves and coriander, creating an otherworldly ambiance. Linden, now seated, feels the Staff’s presence more strongly, its power resonating with her. Stave stands in respect, while Esmer wanders restlessly, burdened by unspoken sorrows. Anele, though still mumbling, appears more composed, his madness eased by the Staff’s proximity. The Waynhim offer vitrim to the group, then assemble to retrieve the Staff, their reverence underscoring its significance as a symbol of Law and hope.

The Staff of Law is presented to Linden, its pale wood gleaming and its iron bands a testament to its storied past. Crafted from the union of Vain and Findail, it embodies the fusion of wild magic and Earthpower. As Linden grasps it, memories of Andelain’s beauty flood her mind, along with the Creator’s grief over Lord Foul’s corruption. The Staff’s power feels natural to her, instilling confidence and healing. Overwhelmed, she weeps, realizing its potential to aid her in opposing Lord Foul and restoring the Land’s intended splendor.

Anele, trembling with longing, approaches Linden but refrains from touching the Staff, declaring himself unworthy. His poignant renunciation moves Liand and Mahrtiir, who stand ready to support him. Anele’s sorrow underscores the weight of his past failures, yet he finds solace in Linden’s stewardship of the Staff. The chapter closes with a

sense of bittersweet resolution, as Linden’s connection to the Staff strengthens her resolve, while Anele’s sacrifice highlights the personal costs of their quest.

Chapter 27: Part Two - 9. Pursuit

Linden Avery endures the torment of traversing a caesure, a chaotic rift in time, experiencing unbearable pain and sensory disarray. Unlike her previous ordeal, she does not need to manipulate the Fall’s currents; the Ranyhyn’s instincts guide her forward. Covenant’s ring, a source of wild magic, anchors her amidst the chaos, preserving her identity and sanity. The absence of Joan Covenant’s madness in this Fall spares Linden additional anguish, allowing her to emerge into sunlight, though temporarily blinded, with her companions—Stave, Liand, Anele, and the injured Ramen—close behind.

Despite their escape, the Demondim, a relentless horde of creatures, pursue them with undiminished fury. Linden realizes she must confront them, as her companions are too weakened to flee indefinitely. The Ramen are incapacitated by sickness and injury, while the ur-viles and Waynhim are exhausted. Linden prepares to make a stand, relying on the Staff of Law and Covenant’s ring, though she fears wild magic might inadvertently amplify the Fall’s destructive power. Her priority is to protect her group while ensuring she hasn’t disrupted the Land’s timeline.

As her vision clears, Linden assesses their surroundings, recognizing they may have traveled far in both time and space, possibly to the South Plains. The Demondim’s speed and lore make them formidable pursuers, and the caesure lingers ominously behind them. Linden and her companions gain a slight lead, but the threat remains immediate. She quiets the ring’s glow and takes the Staff from Liand, feeling its restorative power. The stakes are high: failure could mean death or madness for her and her allies.

The chapter culminates in Linden’s resolve to fight, balancing the risks of using wild magic against the necessity of stopping the Demondim. Her actions will determine whether her group survives or falls to the horde’s ravenous hunger. The tension

underscores her leadership and the precariousness of their situation, setting the stage for a decisive confrontation.

Chapter 28: Part Two - 10. Troubled Sanctuary

Linden Avery enters Revelstone, the ancient fortress of the Land, burdened by exhaustion and the encroaching blindness caused by Kevin’s Dirt. Though familiar with the forehall from past struggles, she now finds it dark and disorienting, contrasting with the acute senses of the Haruchai Masters. The Staff of Law in her hands offers some solace, sustaining her fading percipience. As the gates close against the pursuing Demondim horde, she fears the impending threat of the Illearth Stone and the Keep’s vulnerability due to the Masters’ rejection of Earthpower and lore.

Amid the crowded forehall, Linden assesses her companions’ injuries. Stave and Bhapa require immediate healing, while Mahrtiir and Pahni tend to their Ranyhyn. The Masters, though wounded, have suffered fewer losses than expected. Linden, reluctant to dismount from Hyn, summons fire from the Staff to illuminate the hall, revealing the toll of the battle. She reflects on the sacrifices made—dozens of Haruchai dead—and feels overwhelmed by the bloodshed. Despite her fatigue, she focuses on healing Stave, Bhapa, and the Ranyhyn, her actions met with silent reverence from the gathered crowd.

A Master named Handir, the Voice of the Masters, approaches Linden, acknowledging her as the Chosen and welcoming her to Revelstone. However, Linden, pushed to her limits, responds with frustration, demanding light to dispel the oppressive darkness. Mahrtiir echoes her plea, invoking her status as Ringthane. Eventually, torches are lit, casting flickering shadows across the hall. Linden’s thoughts drift to the Masters’ dwindling numbers and their ability to defend Revelstone against the Demondim, while Liand watches her with concern.

The chapter underscores Linden’s internal and external struggles—her exhaustion, her defiance of the Masters, and her determination to protect her companions despite their precarious situation. The tension between her and the Haruchai lingers, as does

her fear of their intentions toward Anele and herself. The flickering torchlight symbolizes the uncertain future of Revelstone and the Land, with Linden poised at the center of the looming conflict.

Chapter 29: Part Two - 11. The Masters of the Land

Linden Avery awakens from a deep sleep, disoriented by dreams of Thomas Covenant warning her of danger. Initially mistaking Liand’s knocking for Covenant’s voice, she struggles to shake off her grogginess and respond to the urgency. Her alarm grows as she realizes her health-sense—her ability to perceive the Land’s vitality—has vanished, leaving her vulnerable and disconnected. Despite her frustration, she prepares to face the Masters, who have summoned her to discuss Anele’s imprisonment and other pressing matters.

Liand and Galt inform Linden that the Demondim, who had besieged Revelstone, have mysteriously withdrawn overnight. Galt reveals that scouts have been sent to confirm their departure, but no results have been reported yet. Linden is stunned by this development, questioning how the Demondim could abandon their attack, especially with the Illearth Stone in their possession. The absence of her health-sense leaves her unable to verify the situation, deepening her unease. Meanwhile, Galt’s lack of deference hints at the Masters’ reluctance to cooperate with her.

Determined to secure Anele’s release, Linden adopts a calm, resolute demeanor, masking her inner turmoil. She requests time to eat breakfast, using the delay to gather her strength for the impending confrontation with the Masters. As she prepares, she reflects on her dependence on the Staff of Law, which she crafted to combat the Land’s corruption. However, without her health-sense, she cannot access its power, leaving her feeling powerless. This realization sparks panic, but she forces herself to think logically, recognizing the cyclical dilemma: she needs the Staff to restore her senses, but her senses are required to wield the Staff.

The chapter underscores Linden’s isolation and the mounting challenges she faces. Her inability to use the Staff or perceive the Land’s threats leaves her at a disadvantage, yet she refuses to yield to despair. The mysterious withdrawal of the

Demondim and the Masters’ ambiguous intentions add layers of uncertainty. Linden’s internal struggle—balancing her fear with her determination to protect the Land—sets the stage for a pivotal confrontation, emphasizing her resilience in the face of overwhelming odds.

Chapter 30: Part Two - 12. Find Me

The chapter opens with Linden Avery facing the oppressive judgment of the Masters in the Close, their collective animosity weighing heavily upon her. Supported by her companions, Liand and Mahrtiir, she approaches Stave, expressing profound gratitude for his unwavering loyalty. Stave, however, responds with a sense of finality, as if his actions have irrevocably severed him from his people. Linden’s emotional thanks are met with his stoic acknowledgment, emphasizing his commitment to her cause despite the personal cost.

The tension escalates as Linden confronts Handir, the Voice of the Masters, demanding clarity on whether they will ally with her or oppose her. Handir’s cold demeanor and evasive response heighten her dread, while Mahrtiir’s sharp interjection underscores the tension between the Masters and Linden’s allies. Handir dismisses the Manethrall’s challenge, prioritizing an unresolved matter among the Masters, which leads to a dramatic confrontation between Stave and the Humbled.

The Humbled, Galt, Clyme, and Branl, take turns attacking Stave, each delivering brutal blows while he refuses to defend himself. Linden, though horrified, restrains her companions from intervening, recognizing that Stave must endure this trial to preserve his honor. The violence symbolizes the Masters’ rejection of Stave’s defiance, as he bears their punishment with grim acceptance. Linden’s anguish mirrors the physical and emotional stakes of the conflict, highlighting the Haruchai’s rigid code of judgment.

The chapter culminates in Handir’s formal pronouncement of Stave’s exile, severing him from the Haruchai and their communal mind. Stave’s allegiance to Linden is deemed a betrayal, and he is condemned to isolation. Handir’s final, sudden attack underscores the ruthlessness of the Masters’ verdict, leaving Linden and her allies to grapple with the consequences of Stave’s sacrifice and the uncertain path ahead. The

chapter closes with a sense of unresolved tension and impending confrontation.