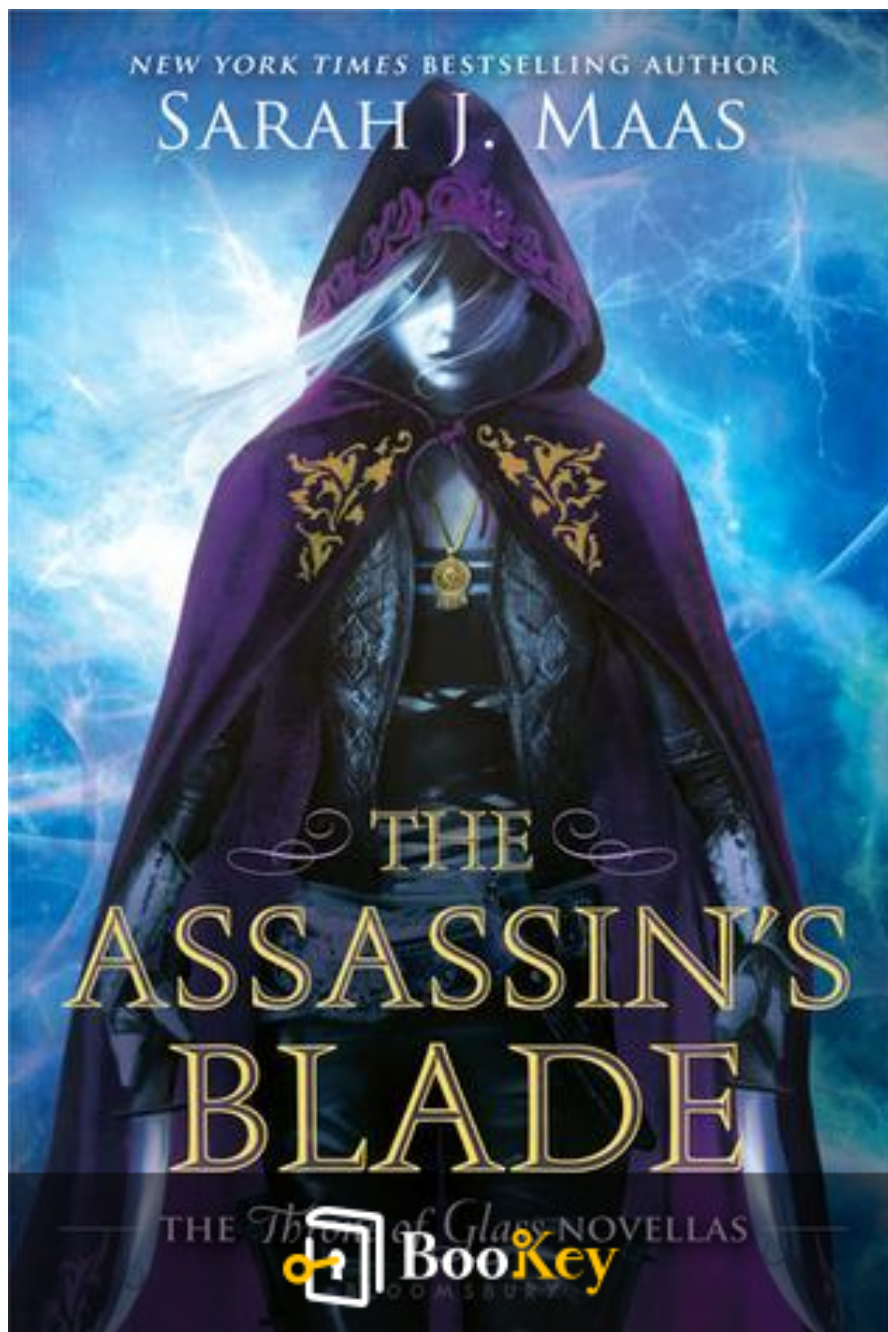


# The Assassin's Blade PDF (Limited Copy)

Sarah J. Maas



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## **The Assassin's Blade Summary**

"Tales of Secrets and Sacrifice in a Shadowed World."

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## About the book

Step into a world of intrigue and danger with **\*\*The Assassin's Blade\*\***, a mesmerizing prequel to the Throne of Glass series by Sarah J. Maas. This captivating collection of novellas introduces darling readers to Celaena Sardothien, a fiercely skilled assassin navigating treacherous landscapes teeming with betrayal, dark magic, and blossoming friendships. Embark on a heart-pounding journey filled with daring exploits and hidden agendas, where Celaena's unyielding spirit faces the ultimate trials in the tumultuous empire of Adarlan. Each gripping tale reveals the complexities of her character — from her daring escapades to her tender moments of vulnerability — leaving readers spellbound and yearning for the world beyond each page. Dive into Celaena's origin story, where every shadow conceals a thrilling secret and every alliance tests the boundaries of loyalty and deceit, compelling you to turn the page and uncover the fate of the world's deadliest hero.

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## About the author

Sarah J. Maas is a renowned American author celebrated for her captivating fantasy novels, which have enraptured readers worldwide with their intricate plots and compelling characters. Born on March 5, 1986, in New York City, Maas later pursued creative writing at Hamilton College. She catapulted to literary fame with her debut series, "Throne of Glass," which she began writing at just sixteen. Combining elements of magic, romance, and adventure, Maas's works explore themes of empowerment and resilience, appealing to a wide audience. Beyond "The Assassin's Blade," a prequel compilation to the "Throne of Glass" series, Maas has also penned the acclaimed "A Court of Thorns and Roses" series, further solidifying her status as a master storyteller in the fantasy genre.

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## Chapter 1 Summary:

In the dark, drafty chamber of the Assassins' Keep, Celaena Sardothien, a sixteen-year-old prodigy assassin, finds herself summoned for an urgent meeting with Arobynn Hamel, the King of the Assassins. Despite the late hour, she projects confidence, seated among older and more experienced assassins, who are part of Arobynn's trusted inner circle. The meeting's gravity is clear, especially given the sudden wake-up call she received.

Arobynn discloses that Gregori, one of their own, has fallen into a trap and is currently incarcerated in the royal dungeons. Celaena suggests a cold, pragmatic solution: eliminate Gregori before he can divulge any secrets, a tactic expected in their perilous line of work. This prompts a challenge from Sam Cortland, another young assassin, who has consistently competed with Celaena due to their shared upbringing under Arobynn's tutelage.

As tension crackles between the young assassins, Arobynn reveals the somber news that Ben, another member of Arobynn's core team and a figure dear to Celaena, has been killed. The revelation rattles her, unleashing a wave of grief and anger. Ben had been a constant in her life, a mentor and friend who had believed in her potential.

Sam explains the grim circumstances that prevented them from reclaiming Ben's body, citing the overwhelming guard presence as a risk to their



clandestine existence. The exchange escalates, highlighting the latent animosity between Celaena and Sam, as both struggle with Ben's death and their respective positions within the guild.

Arobynn steps in to defuse the heated argument, warning Sam against provoking Celaena further. His intervention, however, does little to temper Celaena's fierce determination. She vows to retrieve Ben's body herself, signaling both her deep respect for Ben and her resolute defiance against the notion of leaving one of their own behind.

With emotions running high and a silent agreement hanging in the air, Celaena's parting words sting the room. She declares that while she intends to bring Ben back for a proper farewell, she graciously refrains from promising the same to her fellow assassins, a mark of her disdain for their lack of action.

Her exit is swift and resolute, slipping away into the stillness of the city streets, driven by the haunting absence of Ben and the pressing weight of unfinished business.



## Chapter 2 Summary:

In this chapter of "The Assassin's Blade," two prominent characters, Celaena Sardothien and Sam Cortland—both assassins from Arobynn Hamel's Assassins' Guild—are on a mission in Skull's Bay. They are sent to meet Captain Rolfe, the Lord of the Pirates, who is notorious for his ruthless ways and his tattooed hands, which boast a magical map of the world's oceans. The meeting is set to address a deadly incident: three assassins from their guild were murdered by pirates in Bellhaven. Though Rolfe is late, so are Celaena and Sam, due to some overstretched sailing by their crew into pirate territory—a venture that cost their master, Arobynn, heavily in bribes.

Celaena, disguised in a black cloak and mask, ready for her mission as a seeker of retribution, impatiently waits in Rolfe's office, passing time by rifling through his papers and ruffling Sam's nerves. Her disguise serves dual purposes: concealing her identity and enhancing her intimidating presence. Sam, ever the watchdog as much as a partner, is wary of their host and uncomfortable with Celaena's antics.

The office of the Pirate Lord is surprisingly modest, not the grand, fortified setting Celaena expected. Rolfe eventually arrives, and to her surprise, he differs from the swashbuckling stereotype she had in mind. Rolfe is well-groomed and composed, standing tall and exuding an aura of casual authority.



Tension brews as Celaena accuses Rolfe of his pirates' involvement in the assassins' murder. Rolfe counters by questioning the credibility of the surviving assassin's account, casting doubt due to the lack of visibility at the scene. However, the conversation takes an unexpected turn when Rolfe addresses a different purpose of their visit altogether. It turns out Arobynn's letters outline terms for a business venture, which shockingly involves the slave trade—a morally questionable enterprise that Arobynn has entered, unbeknownst to Celaena.

Sam, privy to the real mission, remains silent, leaving Celaena feeling betrayed and furious about being left in the dark about Arobynn's grim dealings. Rolfe's casual demeanor during the negotiation, paired with the unexpected revelation of the slave trade, further stirs Celaena's ire. Nonetheless, she maintains her composure and feigns knowledge of the trade agreement, while internally rebelling against the abhorrent practice.

With the terms of the deal laid out, Rolfe offers them accommodation, teasingly suggesting a romantic connotation when they request a single room with two beds. Celaena must tightly leash her rage, at least until she confronts Sam later for keeping such a repulsive secret. Their mission's focus shifted dramatically, leaving Celaena to struggle with her disdain for Arobynn's choices and the unsavory path he has chosen for the guild.



## Chapter 3 Summary:

In this chapter, tension is palpable as Celaena Sardothien and her partner, Sam, navigate a dangerous and unfamiliar environment in pursuit of their mission. The duo finds themselves in a cramped room, taking meticulous precautions to ensure privacy. Celaena, a highly regarded assassin known as Adarlan's Assassin, is troubled by a recent encounter and seeks answers from Sam about their current predicament.

The story unfolds in a setting filled with political intrigue and shadowy dealings. Celaena and Sam have been sent to meet with Rolfe, the Pirate Lord, on orders from Arobynn Hamel, the powerful and enigmatic King of the Assassins. However, neither Celaena nor Sam knows the exact reason behind their mission, which hints at more sinister motives, possibly linked to the slave trade. This raises concerns, as slavery remains a particularly detestable practice for Celaena, who prides herself on her elite status and adherence to a moral code that rejects such brutal business.

During a tense dinner with Rolfe and his pirate captains, Celaena's resolve is further tested. Forced to wear a mask to conceal her identity, she endures Rolfe's taunts while struggling with her hunger and exhaustion. The conversation shifts to Rolfe's ascension as Pirate Lord, a journey marked by violence and ambition, drawing a sharp contrast with Celaena's own path to becoming Arobynn's protégé. The underlying tension escalates as Rolfe





warns Celaena to be wary of betrayal, even suggesting that Sam might not be trustworthy. Despite this warning, the dynamic between Celaena and Sam is one of mutual reliance, complicated by occasional teasing and banter.

As night falls, the oppressive heat of the room mirrors the tension hanging over their mission. Facing the uncertainty of their assignment and the potential threat posed by Rolfe's unsavory business practices, both Celaena and Sam remain vigilant. They humorously contemplate the possibility of betrayal but know their mutual survival depends on cooperation and trust. The night stretches on, offering a short reprieve as they prepare to confront the challenges that await them in the days ahead, knowing that only through unwavering determination can they fulfill their enigmatic mission.

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## Chapter 4:

In this chapter, Celaena Sardothien, a skilled assassin, finds herself conflicted over a mission to transport slaves, a task that assaults her sense of morality and justice. Her mentor, Arobynn, has sent her to Skull's Bay to work with the Pirate Lord, Rolfe, on a deal involving slaves—people she empathizes with, as they have been captured for seeking freedom.

The chapter opens with Celaena unable to sleep, wrestling with the morality of her task. The death of her compassionate ally Ben has left her feeling isolated, intensifying her inner conflict. When Sam, her fellow assassin and reluctant partner in the mission, mocks her unrested appearance, she retreats to the bathroom to ready herself, contemplating a plan to derail the slave deal without facing deadly consequences from Arobynn or Rolfe.

After preparing herself, Celaena sets out to gather information from Rolfe, determined to sabotage the mission. Her interaction with Rolfe is tense; she inquires about inspecting the slaves, using the opportunity to learn as much as possible about the operation. Rolfe, assuming she's more concerned about the 'quality' of the slaves than their freedom, agrees to let her inspect them during their arrival.

As they navigate the grimy streets of Skull's Bay, known for its giant chain 'Ship-Breaker'—a defense mechanism to prevent unwanted ships from



entering or leaving the harbor—Celaena uses her sharp wit to mask her intentions. Despite Rolfe's skepticism about her arrogance, which he predicts could lead to her downfall, Celaena remains unfazed, gaining the intelligence she needs to formulate her plan while silently taunting him with her hidden ambitions.

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## Chapter 5 Summary:

Celaena and Sam, two assassins at the mercy of their mysterious and powerful master, Arobynn Hamel, are escorted by Rolfe, a cruel and ambitious pirate lord, to a disturbing holding facility full of enslaved people. The facility, a nightmarish warehouse reeking of unwashed bodies, hosts a variety of prisoners from different conquered kingdoms, all of whom have been torn from their lives and families, including those from Eyllwe—a land ravaged by Adarlan's brutal conquest. The vivid sight of men, women, and even children packed into cells, their spirits broken yet defiant, deeply affects both Celaena and Sam, igniting a moral conflict within them about their roles as enforcers of such a system.

While Rolfe and his pirate captains discuss the grim logistics of the slave trade, Celaena's and Sam's rage simmers. Sam's past is touched on; his mother, a successful courtesan who was sold into a brothel as a child, was murdered when Sam was just a boy, leaving a raw nerve when it comes to the topic of trafficking children. Their master, Arobynn, appears to have made dark deals to profit from this human misery, revealing a complex web of power and profit across the continent.

Struggling with this grim reality, Celaena and Sam leave the warehouse. Their emotions boil over, leading to a fight on the beach where Sam finally pins Celaena down, demanding she promise to stop attacking him in her



rage. This confrontation becomes a pivot in their relationship, highlighting the intense bond they share. Sam's plea and vulnerability disarm Celaena and reveal their shared humanity amidst their violent world.

After their altercation, Sam learns of Celaena's plan to free the slaves; a reckless but deeply meaningful mission fueled by the injustice they've witnessed. Despite the danger posed by Rolfe and the looming threat of Arobynn's wrath, Celaena is determined to act. Sam, initially hesitant, is moved by her conviction and their shared past. Together, they begin to devise a plan to free the captives, aware of the deadly consequences but driven by a newfound sense of agency and moral clarity.

In their downtime, doubts about Arobynn's true motivations surface. Sam hints at the possibility that their master deliberately sent them away from Rifthold for reasons beyond the trade negotiation, suggesting ulterior motives and casting a shadow of doubt over their loyalty. Although Celaena hesitates, still clinging to her trust in Arobynn, the seeds of skepticism are planted.

That night, at the beach alone, Celaena reflects on her past and the road that led her to become Adarlan's Assassin. The distant memory of Orynth, her true home lost to her since childhood, beckons in the moonlit night, stirring long-buried dreams of freedom and identity. Standing beneath the stars, she is acutely aware of the chains of her current life and the choices that lie





ahead, choices that may finally allow her to reclaim her soul.

The chapter ends with Celaena resolved to carry out her plan, ready to challenge her master's hold over her and the cruelty of the world she inhabits. Driven by the possibility of freedom—for both the captives and herself—she walks back with a renewed sense of purpose and the weight of decisions yet untouched by the dawn.

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## Critical Thinking

**Key Point:** Sam's vulnerability and plea for trust

**Critical Interpretation:** In this pivotal chapter, Sam's vulnerability becomes a beacon of inspiration, inviting you to recognize the strength that lies in embracing your own vulnerabilities and seeking transparent, honest connections with those around you. Through Sam's plea and his raw display of emotion, you're reminded of the profound impact of placing trust in others and allowing yourself to be genuinely seen. This moment challenges you to confront your own emotional walls, encouraging a transformation that not only fortifies your relationships but empowers you to stand resilient amidst life's storms, offering a path to healing and a gateway to a deeper sense of unity and shared humanity.

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## Chapter 6 Summary:

Celaena and Sam spent yet another sweltering day in Skull's Bay meticulously planning their next move, which involved walking through the bustling streets and gathering crucial information for their mission. The oppressive heat did little to dampen their resolve as they visited vendors, engaged with townsfolk, and subtly inquired about the local routines. From the fishermen, they found out that the rowboats moored at the piers were not owned by anyone in particular, and learned that the morning tide rolled in shortly after sunrise – not ideal but more favorable than midday.

Sam gathered intelligence from the harlots, learning that their adversary, Pirate Lord Rolfe, often funded extensive festivities for his pirate crew, ensuring that celebratory debauchery lasted for days. Meanwhile, a half-inebriated pirate provided Celaena with insights into the guarding details of the slave ships, including their defenses and where the captives were kept.

By four o'clock, the pair watched as ninety-three enslaved individuals were marched onto the deck of the ship Rolfe had arranged. Mostly composed of young men, the group also included women of varied ages and a few children, as Rolfe had described. Celaena maintained her icy demeanor when Rolfe approached, noting fewer slaves than expected. Rolfe explained that seven had perished during transit. As Sam inquired about expected losses en



route to Rifthold, Rolfe grew exasperated by their persistent questioning yet provided little assurance.

Observing the proceedings, Celaena inquired into the ship's security for the night and the schedule of the watchtower across the bay. Rolfe explained the shift change occurred just before dawn, suggesting an opportune moment for their planned endeavor. They gauged which captives could speak the common tongue, deeming it a potential asset in their mission, and found an older Eyllwe man named Dia who could communicate fluently. This interaction further fueled Celaena's determination, as she regarded the downtrodden individual with familiarity.

As the night descended, the town's celebratory atmosphere aided Celaena and Sam's covert operations. Disguised under cloaks, they silently navigated rowboats toward the slave vessels situated offshore. Despite the moonlit calm, the watchtower posed a looming threat, its jagged turret faintly illuminating the bay's chain defenses. The timing had to be perfect; launching an escape at night with low tide spelled disaster.

Approaching the Golden Wolf, Celaena secured her boat while Sam did the same at the Loveless. Their silent signals through compact mirrors confirmed readiness. Tomorrow, with the tide and chaos at their advantage, their carefully orchestrated plan would be set into motion—a plan to strike at dawn, liberating the slaves and escaping the grip of Skull's Bay.



## Critical Thinking

**Key Point:** Unwavering determination in challenging circumstances

**Critical Interpretation:** From the oppressive heat of Skull's Bay to the intimidating presence of the watchtower overlooking the slave ships, every moment was a test of willpower and resolve for Celaena and Sam. Yet, they persisted, meticulously planning each step despite the odds stacked against them. This chapter serves as a powerful reminder that in the face of insurmountable challenges, your determination to carry through can shape the outcome. As you navigate the bustling paths of your own life, let no circumstance, however daunting, deter you from pursuing your goals. Instead, draw inspiration from this narrative of resilience. Like Celaena and Sam, who trusted their instincts and worked collaboratively despite external pressures, you too can harness the strength within to remain steadfast, regardless of the trials you face. Remember, every calculated risk and informed decision can pave the way to a triumphant transformation.



## Chapter 7 Summary:

In a tense and daring rescue operation, Celaena, a skilled assassin, infiltrates a slave ship with the precision and stealth that is her hallmark. She quietly eliminates the guards one by one, her movements as fluid as a cat and as silent as a shadow. Her mission: to free a group of slaves and safely guide them away from danger.

The ship is shrouded in darkness as Celaena tactically takes down three guards, ensuring her approach is undetected. Her partner, Sam, mirrors her efforts on another ship, the Loveless, coordinating their actions to maximize their impact. The urgency of their mission weighs heavily, as every delay could mean discovery and disaster.

Her next target is Captain Fairview, whose quarters she infiltrates deftly before subduing him and locking him in the brig. She swiftly moves to the cramped, foul-smelling cargo hold, where she finds the enslaved men and women chained together in appalling conditions. These prisoners include a significant figure named Dia, whom she seeks out specifically, as he holds the key to communication with the diverse group of captives. He is to be her translator, aiding in this high-stakes escape plan.

The slaves, previously silent in their suffering, begin to stir as Celaena frees them. Instructed through Dia's translations, they engage in a coordinated





effort to liberate themselves. She briefly outlines the escape plan: they must sail out of the bay at dawn, risking the dangerous waters of the Dead Islands for their liberty. Captain Fairview is to guide them, his life hanging on his compliance, while the disguised slaves must row furiously to avoid Rolfe's pursuing pirate fleet.

Despite language barriers, the gravity of the situation is understood by all. The murmurs of Dia's translation ripple through the captive crowd, kindling the hope of escape. Celaena assures them that she and Sam will handle the chain blocking the bay's entrance and create a distraction in town to facilitate their escape.

Before parting, Celaena gives Dia a crucial task: to row to the Loveless and share the plan with the other captives, ensuring both ships' crews work in unison. Disguised in a guard's cloak, Dia prepares for his solo mission. Sam, bloodied and determined, stands ready by her side, poised for whatever comes next.

As they retreat from the ship, their hearts race — they know too well the stakes of their plan. The rescue of the slaves, the neutralization of pirate threats, and the success of their mission hinge on perfect execution and flawless timing. They navigate towards Skull's Bay, where an air of celebration conceals the imminent turmoil. Amidst the night sounds, Celaena and Sam prepare to unleash chaos, every moment drawing them



closer to a desperate dawn that will test their resolve and skill.

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## Critical Thinking

**Key Point:** Empowering Unity Through Diverse Communication

**Critical Interpretation:** In a world tethered by barriers of language and culture, you're inspired by the way Celaena unites countless oppressed voices to execute a shared vision of freedom. Through Dia's translation, you witness how the strength of a collective mission transcends individual constraints, embedding trust and courage into each heart. This reminds you that the richness of diversity becomes a beacon of hope during challenging endeavors. As you pursue your own goals, remember that collaboration thrives through understanding and empathy, and even barriers like language can be transformed into bridges that unite diverse peoples under a common purpose.

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## Chapter 8:

In a dimly lit tavern on Skull's Bay, the notorious assassin Celaena Sardothien is immersed in a plan with her accomplice, Sam. Disguised behind her mask, Celaena observes a drinking contest between Sam and Rolfe, the Pirate Lord. Sam cleverly feigns intoxication, using a trick mug to deceive Rolfe and the rowdy, inebriated crowd around them—comprised of pirates, musicians, and various unsavory characters populating the packed tavern.

Amid the boisterous environment, Rolfe engages Celaena in conversation, intrigued about the face behind the mask and her reputation. With witty banter, Celaena deflects his curiosity, aware that their mission is precarious. Their task is to free enslaved people, a daring move that could incur the wrath of both Arobynn Hamel, her assassin master, and Rolfe.

Meanwhile, Sam keeps up appearances, winning a significant sum in a game of cards, leading Rolfe into a foul mood. Taking advantage of that, Sam and Celaena trigger a brawl in the tavern by orchestrating a series of chaotic events, fanning the flames of aggression among the pirates.

As chaos erupts with people fighting and swords drawn, Celaena skillfully navigates the brawl, avoiding serious harm but contributing to the bedlam to distract Rolfe and his men. Amidst the melee, she finds her way out into the



streets, which are equally frenzied with fights spilling out from various taverns.

Reunited with Sam in an alley, they acknowledge the success of their distraction. Celaena teases Sam about his card-playing skills, hiding her admiration for his deceptive prowess. However, their mission isn't over; they must now disable the harbor defenses—a formidable chain and several catapults—before dawn.

As they make their way toward the docks, Rolfe intercepts them, stepping out of the shadows. The tension is palpable, as their carefully woven plan faces a sudden and dangerous obstacle.

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## Chapter 9 Summary:

In the tense coastal town where pirate and intrigue intermingled, Celaena Sardothien, a skilled assassin known for her beauty and deadly prowess, found herself in a volatile standoff with the Pirate Lord, Rolfe. Her mission, under the orders of her master Arobynn Hamel, was seemingly simple—but nothing ever stayed simple for long.

As dawn broke, revealing the grim silhouettes of slave ships in the bay, Rolfe confronted Celaena. He accused her of deception, her actions having stirred an unexpected chain of events. Moments before the encounter, she had discreetly triggered a tavern brawl to divert attention, giving her partner, Sam Cortland, a chance to carry out a critical part of their plan—all an effort to liberate hundreds of slaves destined for a life of misery.

Rolfe saw through her feigned innocence, suspecting a hidden agenda, perhaps theft of treasure or secrets. Beneath the morning light, Celaena, forced into quick thinking, distracted Rolfe by revealing her true identity, tossing aside her mask to let her golden hair gleam in the awakening sun.

With Sam given the signal to act, an electrifying dance of swords commenced between Celaena and Rolfe. Each move was a precarious step in her strategy to delay the pirate's efforts to consolidate his forces, ensuring Sam enough time to release the bay's mastsnapping chain—a barrier



preventing the ships from fleeing to freedom.

Despite her youth, merely sixteen but bearing the confidence of a seasoned warrior, Celaena battled Rolfe with a ferocity matched only by her resilience. Wounded in the skirmish, she persevered, motivated by the need to halt the Pirate Lord's machinations long enough for Sam to complete his mission. Rolfe underestimated her resolve to dismantle the oppressive slave trade he profited from.

Meanwhile, Sam, exemplifying skill and nerve, fought his way up the steps of a tower, the crux of their plan hanging in the balance. Engaging a slew of pirates, he reached the chain's anchor just as realization hit—they had overlooked the chain's immense weight, too great for a single person to release. Yet, as determined as his counterpart below, Sam used his surroundings creatively, manipulating a catapult to break the tower where the chain was fastened, causing it to collapse.

With this crash, the path to freedom was opened for the slave ships, their sails catching the dawn breeze, carrying them toward a hopeful horizon now that the daunting barrier lay shattered.

As Celaena marveled at the ships' escape, horror seized her at the thought that Sam might have perished in the bold maneuver. The destroyed catapult platform, compromised by the force needed to break the chain, was a deadly



gamble with more than just stone and metal at stake.

Haste led her back to the tower, her mind swirling with fears about Sam's fate. Yet, before she could make her move, Rolfe reemerged from the shadows, pressing his dagger against her neck—a sharp reminder that their ordeal was not over. Thus, she found herself at a crossroads, grappling with relief for the liberated souls and dread for the survival of her companion in this precarious dance of deception and danger.

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## Chapter 10 Summary:

In this intense and revealing chapter from "The Assassin's Blade" by Sarah J. Maas, Celaena Sardothien, the renowned assassin, finds herself in a precarious situation with Rolfe, the Pirate Lord. Following their failed attempt to free slaves, Rolfe confronts Celaena with a blade to her throat, expressing his anger over the loss of two hundred slaves, several ships, and countless lives. Rolfe, a significant antagonist in the story, is known for the magical map tattooed on his hands, which marks him as a powerful figure in the pirate world.

Despite the danger, Celaena remains defiant, and in an unexpected twist, she manages to turn the tables on Rolfe. Using her combat skills, she disarms him and gains the upper hand. With Rolfe subdued, Celaena demands that he sign two letters. The first is addressed to her master, terminating the deal for slave trading. The second letter binds Rolfe to cease participating in the slave trade entirely and to offer Skull's Bay as a safe haven for fleeing slaves. This action highlights Celaena's growing moral compass and her determination to fight against the oppression embodied by the slave trade.

Throughout the tense exchange, Celaena demonstrates her cunning by revealing that she had previously stolen Rolfe's seal ring, ensuring she could forge his signature if necessary. This foresight emphasizes her resourcefulness and strategic thinking. Despite Rolfe's resistance, he



ultimately complies, setting the stage for a significant shift in power dynamics in the pirate realm.

Once Rolfe is incapacitated, Celaena searches for Sam, her partner and fellow assassin. The relationship between Celaena and Sam is complex, filled with both camaraderie and tension. Their bond is tested as Celaena frantically searches through the wreckage for him. The narration captures her fear and desperation, underscoring her deep connection to Sam.

When Sam finally emerges, dust-covered but alive, their reunion is marked by a rare moment of vulnerability as Celaena embraces him. This emotional exchange reveals a softer side to Celaena, contrasting her usual hardened demeanor. Their banter and warmth underscore the depth of their partnership and hint at Celaena's internal struggles with intimacy and trust.

As the chapter concludes, Sam suggests returning home, a poignant reminder of the temporary nature of their reprieve from danger. Celaena's grin as they leave together hints at the evolving nature of their relationship and the adventures that still await them. The chapter masterfully blends action, intrigue, and emotion, offering insights into Celaena's character and setting the stage for her future journey.



## Chapter 11 Summary:

The short story "The Assassin and the Healer" introduces us to a tense encounter between two young women at the White Pig Inn in the small port town of Innish, a place of questionable repute and limited luxury.

The story unfolds with Yrene Towers, a weary barmaid, silently observing a mysterious, veiled stranger in the inn's taproom. This woman, despite being outwardly solitary and aloof, carries an air of power and sophistication, evident from her fine dark clothing and an ornate gold brooch with a striking ruby. Yrene is curious, as it is unusual to see an unaccompanied young woman in this gloomy establishment. Though Yrene finds herself in a position of servitude, she had chosen the relative safety of the tavern over the dangerous streets of Innish, all the while dreaming of a life beyond the confines of the inn.

The stranger at the back, whom no one recognizes, is revealed to be Celaena Sardothien, the most notorious assassin in Adarlan's empire. For now, she remains incognito, hiding beneath a heavy hood which shrouds her identity. Her presence in Innish is part of a penance for displeasing her master, Arobynn Hamel, King of the Assassins, by thwarting a slave-trade agreement. This punishment is supposed to lead her to the Red Desert, where she must undergo a month of training with the Mute Master of Assassins.



Celaena is restless and disgruntled with her situation, despising the filthy inn and the unremarkable people around her. We learn of her turbulent past, the recent punishment which left her bruised and battered after self-righteously saving countless slaves, and her prior status as Arobynn's favored heir in the Assassins' Guild. Her impulsive side, craving conflict, relishes in bar fights as a rush of nostalgia for her former life as the unyielding assassin she still yearns to be.

Nolan, the opportunistic innkeeper, eagerly caters to Celaena because of her apparent wealth, unaware of her true identity or the danger she represents. Celaena, in turn, is annoyed with his obsequiousness but uses her riches as bait, displaying her jewelry with the hopes of inviting trouble from any reckless locals. Her weapons, wealth, and demeanor paint a picture of someone no sane person would cross.

As night deepens and the inn's atmosphere grows more volatile, Celaena contemplates the possibility of forging a new path, free from Arobynn's grasp—a life where she could establish herself independently. This uncharted future tempts her, though the unresolved fate of fellow assassin Sam and the fear that Arobynn would chase her down no matter the distance keep her hesitant.

The story sets up a poignant yet tense intersection of two different lives:

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Yrene, the barmaid clinging to threads of her dreams, and Celaena, the bitter assassin finding herself at a crossroads. In the final hours of her stay in Innish, where tensions rise and the call for violence grows, Celaena considers her choices, aware that she is on the cusp of a significant decision.

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## Chapter 12:

In a tense night at the White Pig tavern, Yrene Towers, a barmaid with a past touched by loss and dreams of becoming a healer, senses a change in the atmosphere. The patrons seem to be waiting for something, their eyes occasionally drifting to a hooded girl sitting brooding at the back. This girl, known to be armed and leaving at dawn, has attracted the unwelcome attention of some local thieves and mercenaries, eager for what could be their last chance to rob or harm her.

Yrene, despite feeling the urge to warn the girl, knows that any intervention could cost her dearly—possibly even her job or safety. Her employer, Nolan, has alliances with these patrons and would not tolerate any betrayal. Yrene reflects on her late mother, a compassionate healer who was executed for her magic by Adarlan's soldiers, and on how her own path diverged into working at this dismal tavern instead of pursuing her dream of training at the Torre Cesme in Antica.

The tavern's closing time creeps nearer as Yrene silently endures unwanted attention from a group of mercenaries. She navigates their crude advances with practiced avoidance, ultimately retreating to the bar, clinging to the hope of reaching the end of her shift without incident.

Meanwhile, the hooded girl, Celaena Sardothien—an accomplished



assassin—is aware of the eyes on her. After a night of impatient waiting for conflict or conversation, she finally decides to leave the tavern. Despite the tension of the room and her own thoughts of escaping to adventure, she remains poised, leaving a coin for Yrene as she departs. Celaena harbors thoughts of her friend Sam, and contemplates the idea of starting anew, free

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## Chapter 13 Summary:

In this gripping chapter, the tension unfolds in a dark alley where Yrene, a barmaid with a hidden lineage, finds herself at the mercy of mercenaries. She's moments away from harm when Celaena, a mysterious and deadly young woman, intervenes. With unparalleled skill, Celaena swiftly and gracefully dispatches the mercenaries, leaving Yrene shocked but alive.

Yrene, trembling and overwhelmed, expresses her fear that Celaena might kill her as well. However, Celaena dismisses the notion with a dry humor, suggesting that saving Yrene would be pointless otherwise. For Celaena, encountering the mercenaries was an unexpected opportunity to vent her pent-up aggression. The encounter was over almost before it began, lacking the challenge she craved, and one mercenary managed to flee, but Celaena refrains from pursuit to avoid further distressing Yrene.

Yrene notices a wound on Celaena's arm from the skirmish and offers to tend to it, invoking Silba, the Goddess of Healing, which surprises Celaena. It's unusual to hear someone call on the deity in these times, hinting at Yrene's connection to her mother, a healer who passed some knowledge on to her. Despite her initial frustration at Yrene's vulnerability and naivety for being caught in such a dangerous situation, Celaena is intrigued by the girl's calm persistence amidst danger.



Reluctantly, Celaena agrees to let Yrene tend to her wound, intrigued by her sudden display of strength and determination. As they leave the alley, Celaena feels no remorse for the dead mercenaries, confident the town will overlook their disappearance. The chapter closes with Yrene’s resolve shining through, hinting at her potential beyond the frightened barmaid and setting the stage for a deeper connection between the two women.

Scene	Description
Setting	A dark alley where tensions unfold.
Characters Introduced	Yrene, a barmaid with a hidden lineage, and Celaena, a mysterious and deadly young woman.
Conflict	Yrene is surrounded by mercenaries and moments from harm.
Resolution	Celaena intervenes, dispatching the mercenaries with skill and ease.
Character Dynamics	Yrene is frightened and vulnerable, while Celaena remains composed and uses humor to dismiss Yrene's fears.
New Information	Yrene offers to tend to Celaena's wound, suggesting her hidden connection to healing.
Character Development	Celaena is intrigued by Yrene's strength and persistence despite her naivety.
Conclusion	The two leave the alley together, Yrene's character shows potential for growth.





## Critical Thinking

**Key Point:** Harnessing the Power of Bravery

**Critical Interpretation:** In Chapter 13 of 'The Assassin's Blade,' Celaena's intervention in the dark alley not only saves Yrene from impending danger but also highlights the immense power of bravery. This courage showcases how, even in dire circumstances, a fearless spirit can transform a potentially tragic outcome into an empowering experience. The chapter reflects an essential life message: bravery doesn't exclusively belong to those who wear it as a daily armor, like Celaena, but can also be discovered spontaneously within those who appear vulnerable, like Yrene. Embracing your bravery doesn't mean dismissing fear, but rather facing it head-on, displaying strength in times you least expect. Yrene's journey shows you that your inner strength can shine through when you allow yourself to draw on the courage you didn't realize was there.

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## Chapter 14 Summary:

Yrene Towers, a young barmaid in a small town, brings a mysterious and battered young woman to her room under the stairs. Yrene, who is wary of potential mercenary threats upstairs, decides it's safer to tend to this stranger's wounds in her cramped quarters. The girl, despite her hardened exterior and remarkable combat skills, reveals little about herself, not even her name. Yrene, filled with gratitude, sets to work cleaning a cut on the girl's bicep, noting the scars that trace her younger yet weathered body. As Yrene tends to her, the girl shares a piece of advice laced with bitter wisdom learned from her own experiences: life is difficult no matter where one resides, so Yrene might as well pursue her dreams of joining the Torre Cesme, the renowned healers' academy in Antica, rather than remain in obscurity.

The dynamic between the two women shifts as they engage in a candid conversation. The mysterious girl, hinting at her own roguish past, encourages Yrene to steal money for her passage if necessary. Yet Yrene is resolute in her principles, even when questioned about her decision to stay in the oppressive environment. The girl's astute observations of Yrene's surroundings and her bitter smile at the mention of bruises being "reminders" suggests a troubled past characterized by violence and survival.

In a surprising twist, the stranger, later revealed to be Celaena, offers to



teach Yrene self-defense maneuvers. Yrene, though initially hesitant, follows Celaena into the alley behind the inn. Here, Celaena instructs her in basic techniques to fend off attackers, including eye-gouges and strategic strikes. The lessons are drawn from Celaena's own experiences, rooted in survival and taught by those who trained her in the dark arts of self-preservation. Yrene learns quickly, driven by a newfound determination to defend herself in a world rife with danger.

After a grueling session, Celaena warns Yrene about potential future threats, sharing practical advice on how to escape when confronted by robbers. As dawn approaches, Celaena realizes it's time to leave for the Red Desert to face her own destiny. The training session reveals an unexpected bond between the assassin and the healer, representing two sides of the same coin. Both are shaped by loss and dreams deferred, and yet, they both find strength in their chosen paths.

When danger materializes in the form of advancing assailants, the urgency of Celaena's lesson becomes clear. Yrene retreats inside as Celaena confidently draws her sword, poised to face the oncoming threat. This moment marks a turning point for Yrene—a chance to forge a new path armed with knowledge and skills imparted by the enigmatic girl whose past imbues her with a lethal edge.





## Critical Thinking

**Key Point:** Pursuit of dreams despite adversity

**Critical Interpretation:** In chapter 14 of 'The Assassin's Blade,' you are drawn into the poignant interaction between Yrene Towers and Celaena, where the mysterious assassin instills a powerful message: life is fraught with challenges, yet this should not deter you from pursuing your dreams—no matter the obstacles or the environment you find yourself in. By encouraging Yrene to join the Torre Cesme, a prestigious healers' academy, despite her humble beginnings as a barmaid, Celaena embodies the notion that the pursuit of one's dreams is a daring yet worthwhile venture. Her advice reverberates with the understanding that the journey to fulfilling your potential requires courage and a willingness to confront difficult decisions. For you, this chapter serves as a testament to the belief that the adversity you face should only fuel your determination to carve out a path towards your aspirations, inspiring resilience and fortitude in the face of life's inevitabilities.



## Chapter 15 Summary:

In a tense chapter set in a dimly lit kitchen, we find Yrene, a young barmaid with a healer's heart, grappling with fear as chaos erupts outside. Earlier, a mysterious young woman had defended Yrene and chased away a group of mercenaries, showcasing impressive combat skills. However, the mercenaries have returned, now with reinforcements, and Yrene is filled with dread over what might happen to her savior.

As the sounds of battle intensify, Yrene feels a surge of apprehension. Suddenly, she is grabbed from behind by one of the mercenaries who sneaked through the inn, bringing a cold blade to her throat and demanding her compliance. Dragged into the alley, she finds herself in a deadly standoff, with the mercenary threatening her life to force the young woman to disarm.

The mysterious girl, exuding a composed yet feral aura, refuses to yield, communicating silently to Yrene the importance of fighting back. Yrene, drawing strength from memories of her mother's bravery, refuses to become a victim. Overcome with rage and determination, she boldly fights back, surprising the mercenary and freeing herself from his grip.

Empowered by her triumph, Yrene watches as the girl swiftly dispatches the remaining mercenaries. Despite her healer instincts protesting, Yrene finds



herself simultaneously shocked and liberated by the violence. The young woman, now bloodied but unscathed, acknowledges Yrene's efforts with a faint smile, questioning if Yrene truly wants to become a healer.

Yrene, shaking and furious, confronts the girl for endangering her life unnecessarily. The young woman, seemingly unfazed and perhaps a bit unhinged, explains that the experience was a calculated opportunity for Yrene to discover her own strength. Despite the unsettling manipulation, Yrene cannot deny that she has gained courage and confidence.

As they part ways, the young woman advises Yrene to stay silent about the night's events, hinting at the possibility of further danger. With a pouch of coins in hand, presumably taken from the fallen mercenaries, she leaves Yrene to ponder the night's revelations. Yrene, still reeling from the ordeal, follows her back inside, deeply shaken but resolute, aware that her life will never be the same.



## Critical Thinking

**Key Point:** Discover Your Inner Strength

**Critical Interpretation:** In the intense chaos faced in Chapter 15, you realize that amidst fear and uncertain danger lies an untapped reservoir of strength within you. The chapter illustrates Yrene's journey from a position of vulnerability to a stance of empowered defiance. This serves as a vivid reminder that in life, even when circumstances feel overwhelmingly daunting, you have the power to channel inner courage and fight back against the odds. Just like Yrene, you can draw upon memories of past inspirations, using them as fuel to ignite an indomitable spirit. This key moment in the narrative inspires you to believe in the bravery you possess, often undiscovered within the depths of your own heart, urging you not merely to stand down but to challenge the adversity with newfound confidence. Take this lesson to heart, knowing that in the face of seemingly insurmountable challenges, your spirit is capable of surprising triumphs against fear itself, transforming every obstacle into an opportunity for growth and self-discovery.

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## Chapter 16:

In this chapter, we follow two women navigating pivotal moments in their lives. Yrene Towers, a young healer, is overwhelmed by the events of a recent night. Having just helped a mysterious girl, her hands tremble as she washes the blood from her clothes in the quietude of the inn's kitchen at dawn. With the light of a new day creeping in, Yrene faces the daunting prospect of pretending to discover bodies and keeping her secret. Retiring to her small room to hang her wet clothes, she discovers a leather pouch and a note left behind by her enigmatic visitor. The contents—a trove of gold coins and a ruby brooch—leave Yrene stunned and contemplative about the deities her mother mentioned, wondering if their whispers guided the girl to her aid. This "gift," laden with fate and possibility, offers Yrene the chance to pursue her dreams at the Torre Cesme in Antica, if she dares seize it.

Simultaneously, Celaena Sardothien, the mysterious girl whom Yrene helped, prepares to leave. An assassin on a mission, Celaena feels both hollow and relieved as she boards a ship headed across the Gulf of Oro to the Deserted Land, home to the Silent Assassins. The night prior, she was moved by the sight of Yrene's humble quarters, knowing firsthand the devastation the tyrannical King of Adarlan had wrought, displacing countless children turned assassins and barmaids. Perhaps it was fate or the gods working invisibly, but Celaena left Yrene the gold and the brooch, a symbol of a painful past, hoping it would fund the healer's future.



As Celaena drifts to sleep in her cabin, she reflects on Yrene's courage and potential, wishing the girl seizes her newfound opportunity and possibly returns one day to help heal their war-torn world. Both women, driven by invisible forces and their own determination, embark on journeys that hold the promise of change, hinting at a future intertwined by destiny and their actions.

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## Chapter 17 Summary:

In "The Assassin and the Desert," Celaena Sardothien finds herself amidst the vast, relentless sands of the Red Desert. Exposed to the oppressive heat, she reflects on the unexpected journey that has brought her here. Once a proud assassin under the King of the Northern Assassins, Arobynn Hamel, she's now been sent to train with the legendary Silent Assassins—an order steeped in myth and feared across the desert.

This exile to the desert is a harsh punishment for defying Arobynn's plans. He had previously sent Celaena and her friend Sam Cortland to Skull's Bay, where they discovered they were meant to trade in slaves. Disgusted by the task, they chose instead to free the slaves, an act of rebellion that did not sit well with their master. As retribution, Arobynn sent Celaena to this sweltering wasteland, not just as a punitive measure but as a challenge to learn obedience and discipline under the guidance of the infamous Mute Master.

Challenged by her daunting trek across the desert accompanied by a reluctant nomad guide, Celaena's journey is fraught with both physical and emotional strain. The unforgiving landscape, with dunes like waves of a sun-baked sea, tests her endurance as her guide abandons her two miles from the fortress of the Silent Assassins. With her reputation as a fierce and independent assassin, Celaena is determined to approach her new mentors





with dignity and caution.

Upon reaching the fortress—a hidden oasis of lush greenery and adobe walls—Celaena enters a world both beautiful and dangerous. As she navigates through the labyrinthine halls, her senses remain sharply attuned to her surroundings. Her escort leads her to the Mute Master, who exudes an air of authority without uttering a word. The Master, renowned for his self-imposed silence and formidable skills, assesses Celaena with a calm demeanor that belies the threat inherent in his gaze.

When Celaena presents herself formally, acknowledging her master's directive to train with the Silent Assassins, she feels both exposed and vulnerable, aware that she stands alone in this foreign land. Her introduction is met with a silent but rigorous appraisal from the Mute Master, who carefully observes the signs of her recent beating—bruises and scars inflicted by Arobynn himself. Despite her uneasy feelings, she manages to suppress her pride and submits herself to the Master's inspection.

Acknowledging the bruises that hint at her tumultuous departure, the Master engages Celaena in a test of trust by closely examining her face. Capturing this moment of vulnerability, he silently communicates his understanding of her troubled past. As he steps back, she perceives a moment of connection, quickly shattered as he snaps his fingers. Instantly, four assassins charge at her, signaling the true nature of her trial and her first lesson in earning the



Mute Master's respect and survival in this new, perilous environment.

In these opening steps of her journey, Celaena must balance her defiance and independent spirit with the humility and adaptability needed to navigate a world of silent but deadly fighters, a trial that will demand all her cunning and skill.

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## Chapter 18 Summary:

Celaena Sardothien, the renowned assassin, found herself in a new environment, far removed from her usual life in Rifthold. As part of a test to assess her combat abilities and determine her eligibility for further training, Celaena faced four unarmed men who attacked her in a wrestling-style melee, a common initiation rite in this desert fortress. Demonstrating her expertise, she skillfully incapacitated them one by one, showcasing her agility and combat prowess. Despite the absence of weapons, the attackers' intent was clear: to judge her worthiness to train with their Master, a leader of this secluded community of assassins.

Amongst those observing in the shadowy chamber was Ansel, a striking young woman clad in ornate armor adorned with wolf motifs. Her introduction to Celaena marked the beginning of what would be an important relationship during Celaena's stay. Ansel, with her carefree demeanor and mysterious accent, revealed that they would be roommates. Although accompaniments of armor seemed impractical in such heat, Ansel carried it with an air of distinction, and her presence hinted at Ansel's desire to stand out in this competitive assassin's fortress.

Celaena was granted permission to stay for a month—a time she intended to use wisely, far from Rifthold and its complications. This forced pause was a result of her recent defiance against Arobynn Hamel, her mentor, and the



King of Assassin's Guild, who, in a fit of cold rage, had brutally beaten her for the financial loss after she freed 200 slaves in defiance of a job he assigned. Though Sam, her fellow assassin and companion, tried to intervene, Arobynn's wrath was directed solely at Celaena, ensuring she bore the brunt of his calculated punishment.

The fortress was a world away from her usual life, its halls echoing with a myriad of scars, each with a story. Children called acolytes scurried about, their tasks forming part of their early training. Ansel shared personal tidbits, like her noble heritage from Briarcliff in the former Witch Kingdom—a distant place unfamiliar to Celaena—and her father's noble gift of a sword that matched the wolf-themed armor. Whereas Ansel spoke freely of her past and ambitions, Celaena was more reserved, holding back details of her former life and exploits, only affirming her identity as Celaena Sardothien when pressed.

As Ansel guided Celaena through the fortress, the challenges of her new environment became clear. Sharing a room with a stranger was a novel and somewhat unwelcome experience, and the absence of her weapons a reminder of her vulnerability. But Ansel's friendliness, despite its occasional intrusiveness, was a comfort in this foreign land. Ansel's curiosity extended to Celaena's past victories and the fresh injuries that marked her—a reminder of the fierce discipline handed down to her back in Rifthold.



The women's baths provided a sanctuary for Celaena, a solitary moment to reflect away from the stone walls and their echoes of silent judgment. There, submerged in cool waters, the reality of her bruised and battered form was both a reminder of past pain and a quiet solace from her tumultuous past.

As she settled into life at the fortress, the memories of Arobynn's brutality lingered—a stark contrast to the openness of her new environment where she was just another novice among many, neither feared nor revered. While Celaena hoped for strength and resilience to grow in her time away from Rifthold, she knew returning would mean facing unresolved challenges, her past inextricably intertwined with her future. In her soul, the names and faces of those she had wronged and saved pressed upon her, a constant reminder of the path she had chosen—and the steely resolve it demanded of her.

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## Chapter 19 Summary:

In this chapter of "The Assassin's Blade" by Sarah J. Maas, Celaena Sardothien, known as Adarlan's most infamous assassin, prepares for a dinner in the fortress of the Silent Assassins in the Red Desert. Despite the heat, she takes care with her appearance, hoping to make a good impression, as she aims to gain training and a letter of approval from the Master of the Silent Assassins. Ansel, a fellow assassin, guides her to the dining hall, a place where silence or hushed tones are often required, reflecting the somber and disciplined atmosphere of the fortress.

During dinner, Celaena meets some of the Silent Assassins, including Ansel's friend Mikhail, and learns about the tension with Lord Berick, a local lord who antagonizes the assassins relentlessly to win favor with the King of Adarlan. Ansel shares stories of Berick's failed attempts to eliminate them and the ways in which the king's orders have led to their current predicament.

The hall is a confluence of cultures and backgrounds, with foreign dignitaries observing the assassins, likely to recruit some of them for missions. Mikhail and Ansel share their reasons for staying, revealing the diverse motivations of the assassins in this mysterious place.

As the meal progresses, Celaena is reminded of her past, particularly her



complex relationship with Sam, her fellow assassin from Rifthold. The presence of Ilias, the Master's silent yet watchful son, evokes curiosity and a subtle connection with Celaena. She reflects on her standing and reputation, realizing the inherent challenges she faces in the desert fortress.

The next day, Celaena is disappointed to learn that her training would begin with a grueling run to a distant oasis. Ansel, her guide and companion, explains that proving oneself through physical trials is a rite of passage before being deemed worthy of the Master's tutelage. Though frustrated, Celaena endures the harsh conditions, aware that her reputation as Adarlan's Assassin holds little sway in this new world.

The chapter delves into Celaena's internal struggle as she grapples with homesickness, longing for familiarity, and the demanding expectations placed upon her in the desert. Her interactions with Ansel reveal the latter's own experiences and perspectives, as well as a budding friendship amid the challenges they face.

As night falls, conversations between Celaena and Ansel provide insight into their personal lives and struggles. Ansel's relationship with Mikhail and the cultural norms of her homeland contrast with Celaena's own experiences. Reflecting on her past, including the punishment received from Arobynn Hamel, her mentor and the King of Assassins, Celaena confronts her personal demons and vulnerabilities.



Through this chapter, Celaena's journey in the Red Desert unfolds, revealing her determination to overcome obstacles, secure the training she so desperately seeks, and ultimately return to Rifthold with the approval of the Silent Assassins, regardless of the trials she must endure.

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## Chapter 20:

Celaena Sardothien, a skilled assassin from the land of Adarlan, found herself undergoing training with the Silent Assassins, a group known for their stealth, rather than their brutality. Although she initially resisted their practices, Celaena realized the wisdom in their teachings and gradually improved her skills, driven by the need to earn a letter of good behavior from the Mute Master, the leader of the Silent Assassins. This letter was crucial for her to prove the validity of her training and skills.

The culture within the fortress of the Silent Assassins was starkly different from what Celaena was accustomed to. Back home, Arobynn, her mentor, fostered a ruthless atmosphere, pitting assassins against each other. In contrast, the Silent Assassins valued collective wisdom and cooperation, sharing knowledge to better themselves. Many of them were mute from birth, creating an air of mystery around them as they communed silently, like a family knit together by shared secrets.

One significant night marked a turning point for Celaena. The fortress was threatened by an attack from Lord Berick's men. Using cunning tactics, the assassins orchestrated a plan to deter the attackers without bloodshed. Under the cover of darkness, Celaena, alongside her fellow trainee Ansel, participated in the defense. As flaming arrows soared and ignited a pre-planned fire line around the fortress, Lord Berick's men retreated in



panic. The event, while perilous, kindled a sense of exhilaration and camaraderie, with Ansel and Celaena savoring their small victory.

Following the skirmish, Ansel received secretive orders to journey to Xandria, presenting another pivotal moment for Celaena to prove her mettle.

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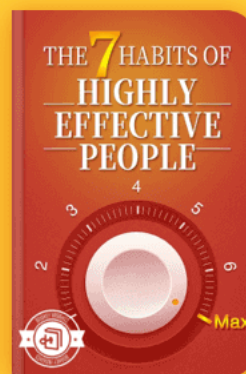
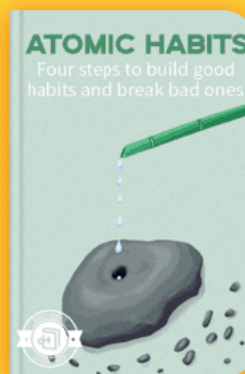
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## Chapter 21 Summary:

In a desolate desert, Celaena lay on her cloak, wrestling with the discomfort of the gritty sand beneath her. She longed for her luxurious mattress back in Rifthold, worried about scorpions venturing into her hair during the night. Beside her, Ansel, her red-haired travel companion, inquired about her restlessness. Despite their arduous trek across the scorching sands, refueling only with sparse meals of dates and bread, Ansel seemed unfazed. They were en route to Xandria, a small port city, where Ansel promised they could replenish supplies.

As they settled for the night, Ansel shared the dark history of her homeland, once under the beautiful reign of the Crochan Queens until the brutal Ironteeth Clans overthrew them, cursing the land. Celaena felt a chill when Ansel recounted a harrowing childhood tale of encountering a witch with deadly metal teeth. The memory haunted Celaena, making sleep elusive.

The following day brought them to Xandria on Market Day, a vibrant tapestry of cultures, even amidst the shadow of Adarlan's embargo. Ansel, adept at navigating the bustling souk, moved with enviable ease through the throngs of people. She soon left Celaena to her own devices, needling her to enjoy the marketplace while she attended a secretive meeting at the palace, hinting at dealings beyond Celaena's participation.



Separated, Celaena meandered through the souk, lamenting her limited funds when faced with enticing goods, from elaborate curled-toe shoes to exotic lilac perfume. However, it was a stall displaying rare Spidersilk that truly captivated her. The merchant, middle-aged yet worn well beyond his years, claimed he had exchanged twenty years of his life for his stock, a stark reminder of the silk's unparalleled value. Intrigued by his tale and the suggestion of adventures in the Ruhnn Mountains where stygian spiders dwell, Celaena considered seeking out the silk hunter in Rifthold for potential collaborations.

Afterward, Celaena reconvened with Ansel, curiosity about her clandestine encounter unsated. Ansel led her with urgency to the opulent stables of the Lord of Xandria, revealing the prized Asterion horses—mythical creatures said to be forged from the four winds by the Fae. Ansel schemed to abscond with the horses, fearing they'd be squandered under Lord Berick's care. The adrenaline rush took over as Ansel mounted swiftly and urged Celaena to ride hard and fast. Seizing a rare moment of daring spontaneity, Celaena sprang after her, riding into the unknown.



## Chapter 22 Summary:

In this thrilling chapter, the story focuses on Celaena Sardothien and her companion Ansel as they make a daring escape from pursuers. The chapter opens with the two speeding past guards on horseback, Ansel's fiery red hair serving as a beacon as they race through the gates of the city and into the Red Desert. This desert is known for its vast sea of crimson dunes, and Ansel leads the way fearlessly, with Celaena struggling to keep pace.

Riding the powerful Asterion horse, Kasida, Celaena experiences a rare sense of exhilaration and freedom despite the imminent danger. However, the pursuit continues as guards give chase, their ordinary horses unable to match the purebred speed of the Asterion. Ansel, in her daring style, opts for a shortcut that takes them to the edge of the Gulf of Oro, its turquoise waters a stark contrast to the surrounding red sands.

Ansel's audacity knows no bounds as she leads them towards the Desert Cleaver, a massive, imposing wall of rock stretching across the desert landscape with a narrow fissure running through it. Known for its treacherous terrain, the Cleaver is a formidable challenge, yet Ansel plans to leap the ravine dividing it—a leap nearly thirty feet across.

The breathtaking jump over the ravine is executed with a mix of skill, luck, and sheer daring. Celaena follows Ansel, putting her trust in Kasida's





exceptional abilities, and they narrowly escape the guards who are unable to make the jump with their ordinary mounts.

Once safe from pursuit, Ansel and Celaena pause in the desert, the race and tension behind them. As night falls, they make camp under a brilliant canopy of stars, finding a moment of peace amid chaos. Lying on the sand, Celaena points out constellations, connecting her new world back to her memories of Terrasen, her homeland.

Ansel shares her painful history, revealing a life marked by tragedy and driven by a quest for vengeance. Her family was brutally murdered by Lord Loch, a tyrant seeking to expand his dominion over the Western Wastes. Ansel's survival and subsequent training in the Silent Assassins compound of the Red Desert have been guided by a singular purpose: one day to reclaim her home and avenge her family.

Moved by Ansel's story, Celaena finds a deep camaraderie with her. Both young women are united by loss and a burning desire for justice against oppressive forces. Ansel's admission highlights not only the shared weight of grief but also a fierce determination driving them forward. The chapter ends on a note of solidarity and resolve, as the two girls, under the vast and unyielding desert sky, promise to hold those accountable for their sufferings.



## Critical Thinking

**Key Point:** Unity in Loss and Purpose

**Critical Interpretation:** In the heart of Chapter 22, you discover that sharing stories of personal loss can create a powerful bond, even amidst chaos and danger. Celaena and Ansel, although drawn together by circumstances beyond their control, find solidarity in their mutual pain and aspirations for justice. This chapter inspires you to see that connecting with others over shared struggles can foster understanding and camaraderie. It's a reminder that you are not alone in your challenges and that there is strength in unity. By embracing your vulnerabilities and opening up to others, you can build relationships that empower both you and those you confide in, driving you forward with a renewed sense of purpose and shared resilience.

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## Chapter 23 Summary:

Celaena and Ansel's misadventure with the Asterion horses was a reckless escapade they knew would have repercussions. Expecting to fabricate an adequate lie about acquiring the horses, they were unprepared to find Mikhail and other assassins awaiting their return to the fortress. News of their exploit had already reached the Master, to whom they now had to answer.

As they knelt before him in silence, the Master's very presence radiated impending tension. Celaena, mindful of past abuses suffered at the hands of Arobynn, recalled Sam's fervent threats during that ordeal. The memory was vivid enough to interrupt her present thoughts until the Master's approach brought her back to the moment. Unlike the brutal Arobynn, the Master, clad in white, exuded a sense of quiet authority.

Ansel, addressing the Master, expressed regret but insisted she could manage Lord Berick, suggesting a history of tension and unfulfillment with her current role. When the Master finally acknowledged them, his disapproval was clear, and Celaena's attempt to explain their actions was met with contemplation rather than immediate punishment.

Ansel cleverly proposed stable duty as a penance, and the Master, with a glimmer of amusement, accepted. After they were dismissed, the Master



discreetly instructed Celaena via hand motions, relayed through Ansel, that she was to attend a lesson at sunset the next day. Celaena, a smile of relief on her face, realized she had finally impressed him enough to earn his tutelage.

The imposed punishment was arduous, involving the cleaning of pens from morning until noon, but it spared them from their usual grueling runs. As the day of Celaena's first lesson arrived, anticipation and trepidation filled her. Her nerves were further tested when she found herself on the fortress rooftop with the Master and a menacing black asp. The Master silently instructed her to emulate the snake—its grace and lethality—without harming it. Through nights spent silently observing the creature, Celaena learned valuable lessons in stealth and agility.

Her training extended to meditations with bats and mimicking the alertness and swiftness of jackrabbits on the dunes. Each session honed her physical and mental acuity, guided by the Master's subtle teachings. These methods, focused on absorbing the essence of different creatures, transformed her combat style.

During daylight, moments of reflection or casual encounters with fellow assassins punctuated her efforts. Ansel, merrier each day, spent her mornings with Celaena in labor. Whatever she had resolved in Xandria with Lord Berick, and the impact of the Master's intervention, kept potential reprisals



at bay. Such tranquility allowed Celaena the introspection to consider the complexity of her relationship with Sam and Arobynn, though thoughts of Skull's Bay often remained suppressed.

Through a blend of punishment and profound mentorship, Celaena's resilience and capacity evolved, fostering a transformation as she strove to harness the lessons of the diverse wildlife around her.

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## Critical Thinking

**Key Point:** Embrace the lessons from the unexpected

**Critical Interpretation:** In witnessing Celaena's encounter with the Master, you learn that life's most critical lessons often arise in the wake of our mistakes. Just as Celaena embraced the unique tutelage offered by the Master—turning punishment into an invaluable learning opportunity—you, too, have the power to transform unanticipated setbacks into moments of growth. Allow each experience, whether anticipated or not, to refine your skills and enhance your resilience. In doing so, even the most challenging circumstances can evolve into a path towards self-improvement and insightful gains.

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## Chapter 24:

In this chapter, we find Celaena Sardothien, a notorious assassin from Rifthold, spending time with her newfound friend, Ansel, during a Midsummer Eve celebration at the fortress of the Silent Assassins. The story picks up with Celaena applying makeup for Ansel, and their playful banter hints at a budding friendship between the two young women. Ansel, who seems to enjoy the rare chance to have fun, prepares for the evening's festivities, despite her initial disbelief at Celaena's daily dedication to her beauty regimen.

As the evening unfolds, the silent and mystical nature of the Midsummer Eve festival surprises Celaena. Unlike the loud, music-filled celebrations she's accustomed to, this one is marked by a quiet, communal rhythm where the dancers move soundlessly under the moonlight. Despite the silent dancing, there is wine, and Celaena lets herself indulge in the celebration, reluctantly allowing herself a break from training with the Master of the fortress.

During the dances, Ansel and Mikhail, a fellow assassin, share a palpable connection, highlighting Ansel's desire to savor life despite her harsh past. Meanwhile, Celaena muses on her complex history with Sam, her old companion, and former Abroynn's disciple, reflecting on the pain and injustice from her past, including an attack that left her determined to break



free from Arobynn's control.

Then comes a moment of pause with Ilias, the handsome son of the Master. His silent company tempts Celaena into a dance, filling her with a rare moment of shared understanding, and yet, as their encounter leads to a near-kiss, Celaena pulls back—a reminder of how memories of Sam linger in her heart, more poignant than she's prepared to accept.

The following morning reveals the aftermath of Ansel's evening, with her relationship with Mikhail standing in sharp contrast to Celaena's isolated world. As they work together on chores, simmering tensions erupt; Ansel voices her insecurities about her own standing within the fortress, in part, driven by jealousy at Celaena's prodigious talent and remarkable reputation.

This exchange escalates into a confrontation that reveals deep-seated resentments and vulnerabilities. Ansel accuses Celaena of being privileged and celebrated, unaware of the personal struggles that accompany her notoriety. Celaena's harsh retort cuts deep, inadvertently wounding Ansel's pride and exposing the fragile threads of their nascent friendship.

The chapter captures the complexity of youthful bonds tested by ambition, insecurity, and the realities of life as assassins. It paints a vivid scene of a unique cultural festivity, filled with unspoken emotions and the ever-present undertone of personal dreams and regrets, all in the shadow of Celaena's



inevitable departure from the fortress.

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## Chapter 25 Summary:

Celaena found it difficult to concentrate during her lesson with the Master of the Silent Assassins. The words of her friend Ansel echoed in her mind, nagging at her with the uncomfortable truth that she might be spoiled and selfish. This lingering thought distracted her from her practice with the asp, a snake she had been studying to mimic its movements. Startled when she noticed it creeping toward her, she jumped back, only to find the Master gently guiding her to sit beside him on the roof's parapet.

Initially hesitant to discuss her troubles, Celaena finally admitted to the Master her fear of returning home. Ever since she was punished by Arobynn, her cruel mentor, and after her time at Skull's Bay, the world seemed irrevocably changed. She grappled with the idea that she might not want things to return to their previous state, a revelation that scared her. The Master, understanding and compassionate, began to demonstrate a series of fluid, lethal movements, encouraging Celaena to join him. Through repetitive practice, Celaena found a sense of rightness and joy, losing herself in the motions until the sun rose.

Returning to her room, bracing for another confrontation, she discovered Ansel had already left for the stables. Feeling vindicated from the previous day's abandonment, Celaena indulged in a nap, only to be roused by Ansel later. The two exchanged apologies, each acknowledging their faults.



Despite Ansel's popularity, she confessed that Celaena was her first true friend, making their impending parting more poignant.

As a peace offering, Ansel brought wine to toast to their reconciliation. Though touched by Ansel's gestures, Celaena noticed something amiss. Ansel's sorrowful eyes hinted at a deeper truth, confirmed by the strange taste of the wine. Before she could piece together the betrayal, darkness engulfed her, and she lost consciousness, leaving the question of Ansel's true intentions lingering ominously in the air.

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## Chapter 26 Summary:

Celaena Sardothien awakes in the Red Desert with a pounding headache, only to find herself abandoned with her horse, Kasida, her belongings, but missing her sword. Confused and betrayed, she discovers a note from Ansel, another assassin, indicating she's been let go from the Silent Assassins' fortress, but not explaining why. Frustrated, Celaena sifts through her memories, trying to figure out how she might have offended the Master. She finds a letter of approval but hesitates to open it, fearing it might contain negative remarks about her. Feeling a deep sense of betrayal and loss, she mounts Kasida and decides to head to Xandria to find a ship home.

While traveling, Celaena encounters a large band of soldiers marching towards the assassins' fortress, recognizing them as Lord Berick's men. She surmises that the Master must have sent her away for her own safety, knowing about the impending attack. Deciding not to interfere, she continues to Xandria, convinced the assassins can defend themselves without her.

In Xandria, as she awaits a ship to Amier, Celaena reflects on the situation. She suspects the fortress could fall victim to Lord Berick's ambitions. Digging through her saddlebags, she reviews the notes from Ansel and the letter of approval. Shocked, she discovers the letter is blank, leading her to suspect betrayal. Ansel could have manipulated the situation, using the



Master's stolen signet ring to seal a fake letter.

Realizing Ansel might have been colluding with Berick, Celaena is determined to return to the fortress and thwart any treachery. She swiftly mounts Kasida, ready to race against time and face the army threatening her former allies. With her reputation as Adarlan's greatest assassin, Celaena rides off, with the spirit to make a difference in the looming battle.

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## Chapter 27 Summary:

In a dramatic and heart-pounding chapter, Celaena races across the desert on her trusty mare, Kasida, to a fortress under siege. Kasida, sensing the urgency, swiftly navigates the terrain, leaping over obstacles with agility. As they approach the fortress, the evidence of a brutal battle becomes clear: breached walls, fires smoldering, and bodies strewn across the sand. Celaena picks up a sword from a fallen soldier, its quality questionable but serviceable for her needs.

Inside the fortress, the scene is chaotic, with bodies of both assassins and soldiers indicating a fierce fight. The atmosphere is tense, as Celaena knows someone must have allowed the soldiers in, likely setting the stage for treachery. Her thoughts immediately turn to the Master of the fortress—the enigmatic leader she and others respect and follow. It becomes apparent that the invaders are meant to serve as a distraction, making the Master vulnerable to attack.

Celaena rushes to the Master's greeting room and is devastated to find Mikhail dead and Ilias, the Master's son, gravely injured. Ansel, a close acquaintance, stands over the Master, who is paralyzed from a drug she administered, ready to strike him down. Despite their friendship, Ansel reveals her betrayal, driven by a promise from Lord Berick to provide her with an army to retake her homeland, the Flatlands.



Celaena acts quickly, using her skills to stop Ansel in her tracks. In a tense and emotional confrontation, the two women clash. Ansel tries to persuade Celaena to join her, but Celaena refuses, despite Ansel's tempting offer of freedom and power. They fight, each blow entangled with their shared history and the betrayal cutting deeper than any weapon.

In a precarious struggle, Celaena manages to gain the upper hand, pinning Ansel to the ground with her own father's sword against her neck. At this moment, the reality of Ansel's betrayal is bitterly clear, but so is the pain of losing a friend. Celaena demands to know if any of their shared experiences had been genuine, and Ansel admits some moments had been real, especially when she sent Celaena away to keep her safe.

In a surprising act of mercy, Celaena spares Ansel's life, telling her to leave and never return. She gives Ansel five minutes to pack and flee before Celaena would make an attempt on her life. With a mixture of relief and sorrow, Celaena returns Ansel's father's sword, symbolizing one last act of friendship and hope. Ansel takes one final look at Celaena before sprinting into the distance, leaving her former life and a broken friendship behind.



## Chapter 28:

In this gripping chapter, Celaena Sardothien, a renowned assassin, finds herself in a tense situation as she rushes to aid Ilias, who is gravely wounded. With the Master slowly recovering from a paralytic poison administered by Ansel, a former ally, Celaena quickly assesses the situation, requesting an antidote and leaving Ilias in the care of other assassins. The realization dawns that Ansel had intended to paralyze and betray the Master, driven by deep-seated revenge.

As Ansel makes her escape across the Red Desert toward the Western Wastes, Celaena keeps a promise by firing an arrow, but purposefully misses Ansel by a hair's breadth, letting her disappear beyond the horizon. This subtle act of mercy encapsulates the complex, conflicting emotions and loyalties at play.

The following day, Celaena meets with the Master, who breaks his usual silence to express relief that Ansel was spared. He reveals his long-held knowledge of Ansel's tragic past, explaining that her family was murdered, and hopes she might have eventually confided in him. Despite Ansel allowing her pain to turn into hatred, the Master sees potential for redemption thanks to the friendship she shared with Celaena.

Celaena's encounter with the Master is both introspective and illuminating.



He acknowledges her as one of Ansel's closest friends and speculates that her act of sparing Ansel and returning her father's sword might influence her actions in the future. The Master's unexpected use of speech highlights the importance of this moment, sharing wisdom about enduring pain and survival.

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## Chapter 29 Summary:

In "The Assassin and the Underworld," we find Celaena Sardothien returning to the Assassins' Keep, radiant with a sense of triumph and freedom, as she bears a letter proving her resilience. This letter signifies the end of her mission in the Red Desert, where she learned discipline under the Silent Assassins. Now armed with enough wealth to clear her debt to her mentor, Arobynn Hamel, Celaena approaches his study, only to find her anticipation deflated as he makes her wait in silence—a power play echoing their complicated relationship. Arobynn, the King of Assassins, represents a pivotal figure in Celaena's life, balancing between a mentor, father, and potential enemy. His past betrayal, when he beat her for sabotaging a slave trade agreement, casts lingering shadows over their interaction. Yet, in his apology, Arobynn opens the door to potential reconciliation, offering a lavish emerald brooch as a peace offering.

While Arobynn claims to regret pushing Celaena away, he draws her back with a new mission—an intricate assassination involving Benzo Doneval. Doneval's scheme, linked to a slave trade through a proposed Melisande road, exposes tensions between the burgeoning trading states and the looming threat of the Adarlan empire. Celaena confronts the moral duality of doing what she does best—killing—for a cause greater than gold: halting a slavery plot and protecting those who resist Adarlan's tyranny.



A deeper layer of intrigue unspools through personal dimensions—Celaena's complex feelings toward her ally, Sam Cortland. Their bond, strained yet strengthened during past adversities, faces further tests. Upon returning, Celaena momentarily reunites with him, her trust wobbly after her experience with Ansel, an ally turned adversary. That trust deficit looms large when Sam seems intimately familiar with Lysandra, a courtesan and Celaena's childhood rival. Ceci's penchant for rivalry surfaces as she interprets Lysandra's positioning near Sam as a threat, hinting at competition and jealousy in a dominantly male world. This newfound feminine rivalry brings past tensions to a boil, inciting in Celaena a cocktail of insecurity and rage—a reflection of her challenging navigation through relationships that dictate survival and status.

Entrenched in a world of deception and dark bargains, Celaena must navigate these webbed alliances—deciding whether to seize her newfound independence from Arobynn or confront the shadows of her past stretched across this underworld chessboard. The chapter closes with Celaena isolated in her room, simmering with unresolved conflicts and the fresh sting of feeling overlooked by those closest to her, leaving readers immersed in her internal struggle between seizing agency or succumbing to the undercurrents of the assassin's guild's politics.



## Chapter 30 Summary:

The following chapters detail Celaena's journey through the rainswept streets of Rifthold, a city where luxury and peril coexist. As the plot advances, readers witness Celaena Sardothien grappling with her complex relationship with Arobynn Hamel, the King of the Assassins. Despite receiving exquisite gifts, such as gold hair combs adorned with sapphires, Celaena cannot simply forgive Arobynn for his past transgressions. The trappings of civilization—luxurious attire and jewels—lure Celaena back to a sense of normalcy, yet she remains haunted by Arobynn's betrayal.

Against the backdrop of a relentless autumn rain, Celaena ponders her impending mission to take down Doneval, a man embroiled in slave-trade blackmail. Arobynn, with a deceptively kind demeanor, subtly encourages her to accept the job. Meanwhile, the capital city buzzes with the arrival of a convoy from Melisande, famous for its ingenious tinkers. Despite the inviting parade, Celaena is frustrated by the rain obstructing the view of Melisande's famed masterpieces.

Her subsequent visit to a favorite city shop for self-pampering reveals the wear she endured over the summer. Yet, amid this outward polishing, Celaena's internal struggle simmers, particularly her conflicted feelings toward Sam Cortland, a fellow assassin and Arobynn's second-in-command. Sam's perceived alignment with Lysandra, a rising courtesan, erodes



Celaena's trust in him and strains their relationship.

As the chapters unfold, Celaena tests a revolutionary black suit—a blend of armor and weaponry, custom-made by a master tinkerer. This equipment, a gift from Arobynn, promises to transform Celaena's missions. Its concealed blades, released with a flick of her wrist, serve as dual reminders of the perilous life she leads and the privilege she commands as Adarlan's Assassin.

Amid these complexities, Celaena's interactions with Sam become a charged battleground. Their exchanges, fraught with accusations and misunderstanding, reveal Sam's efforts to protect Celaena from Arobynn's wrath over the summer. Sam has bargained for her safety at the cost of his own pride, requesting Arobynn's promise to never harm Celaena again. This sacrifice delivers a blow to Celaena's heart, unraveling her previous perceptions of him.

The narrative crescendo arrives as Celaena preps for a night at the theater—an opportunity to observe Doneval under the guise of enjoying a cultured evening. She is forced into close quarters with both Arobynn and Lysandra, the latter vying for favor ahead of her imminent bidding. The tension in the carriage, especially with Sam present, underscores Celaena's struggle between gratitude and guilt.



Through this series of events, readers gain insight into Celaena's internal and external conflicts, her conflicting feelings of mistrust, loyalty, and the relentless drive to assert her independence despite the allure of Arobynn's manipulative gifts. The chapters delve into the complexity of her alliances and her pursuit of personal justice in a city swathed in shadows and rain.

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## Chapter 31 Summary:

In this chapter, we find Celaena Sardothien and her companions, Arobynn, Sam, and Lysandra, as they attend a performance at a grand theater. The scene is set with opulence and luxury, as the group is greeted by Arobynn's attendants and offered sparkling wine. Celaena, however, is more focused on her mission than the social niceties, making her way to the private box for a clear view of the stage. The theater holds a special place in her heart—it's a refuge and a place where she feels most at home. Despite its proximity to the Assassins' Keep, Celaena ponders the sacrifice she'll make once she moves into her new, more distant apartment.

Celaena's mission is to assassinate Doneval, a seemingly ordinary man involved in a plot with implications far beyond his mundane appearance. Arobynn points out Doneval and his associates, including his former wife, Leighfer Bardingale, who is responsible for hiring Celaena. Bardingale is presented as a formidable woman with both elegance and steely resolve, eager to maintain her wealth and standing while avoiding suspicion for her husband's pending assassination.

As the performance begins, Celaena is swept away by the music. The powerful composition resonates deeply with her, underscoring a tale of love and adventure. In this moment, her focus shifts entirely from her mission, as the music dismantles and rebuilds her emotional barriers. The dark theater



and enchanting music provide a temporary escape from her complex life, including her complicated feelings for Sam, who sits nearby.

After the performance, feeling emotionally wrung but invigorated, Celaena navigates back home, choosing solitude over joining Arobynn and the others for a celebratory gathering. She finds solace in the music room, attempting to replicate the theater's melody on the pianoforte, though with limited success. Her frustration grows until she encounters Sam, who has been quietly observing her efforts. Their conversation reveals mutual wounds from their past and a tentative new alliance. Despite their rivalry and individual grievances, there's an undercurrent of unspoken understanding and alliances forged in challenges faced together—particularly against Arobynn's manipulative influence.

They agree to work together on Celaena's mission, setting aside their reservations for a common cause against Doneval's corrupt dealings. In a subtle exchange of vulnerabilities and pride, something of a truce is formed. A momentary warmth is shared between them, making their partnership official, and Sam discloses that he, too, has missed Celaena over the summer. The chapter closes with a subtle sense of reconciliation and the promise of collaboration, setting the stage for their mission against Doneval.





## Chapter 32:

In the late afternoon rain, Celaena Sardothien, a young and skilled assassin, crouches by a gargoyle, observing the rented home of Doneval, a wealthy businessman involved in shady dealings. Joined by her partner Sam, they have spent six hours staking out the location to gather intelligence on Doneval's illegal activities. The house is heavily guarded, and while the rain limits Celaena's vision, the pair devises a plan to possibly slip past the guards, hoping to avoid unnecessary violence. Doneval's unusual level of security signals the importance of his documents, which contain information about slave sympathizers—a mission critical to Celaena's involvement.

Celaena and Sam notice an opportunity when a servant accesses Doneval's private study, possibly preparing it for an impending dark dealing. As they speculate about Doneval's whereabouts, a domestic festival and his ex-wife's Harvest Moon party are potential distractions. Their banter reveals a complexity in their relationship as they broach past flirtations and potential partnerships within the Assassins' Guild hierarchy.

When Doneval finally returns with his menacing bodyguard, the pair discreetly follows to gather more information. Shifting through the rain-soaked streets and dense crowds drawn by the city's festival, they tail the guard to a tavern. There, they observe his affinity for alcohol, providing a potential weakness in their plan. They further discuss the intricate political



maneuverings involving Bardingale, Doneval's ex-wife and a key player working to quash the slave trade, contemplating her influence within the royal court.

Later, back at the Assassins' Keep, Celaena reflects on their progress, feeling unsatisfied and contemplating their next move. Immersing herself in a luxurious bath and gifted with music sheets from Sam, her resolve strengthens. The narrative illustrates Celaena's duality—her precision as an assassin and appreciation for life's finer, artistic moments, hinting at her complex identity beyond mere contract killing.

The chapter culminates at the opulent Harvest Moon party hosted by Bardingale, where Celaena and Sam, donned in elegant attire, navigate a crowd teeming with the elite. Their mission is to surveil Doneval, noting his interactions and the possible time of the critical exchange. Amidst the hedonistic revelry with lavish displays and private alcoves, Doneval revels with courtesans, a behavior that might be misdirection or genuine indulgence.

Acknowledging Doneval's penchant for feminine company, Celaena decides on a bold tactic—an attempt to infiltrate his circle under the guise of one of the courtesans. With Sam's reluctant approval, she maneuvers through the party towards Doneval, setting the stage for a direct engagement that might divulge crucial details of his clandestine affairs. This chapter highlights



Celaena's strategic acumen and adaptability, poised to leverage her surroundings to achieve her mission.

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## Chapter 33 Summary:

In this chapter, Celaena Sardothien, an assassin forced to take on a mission, strategically infiltrates a high-society party to gather intelligence on her target. The target, a man named Doneval, is a businessman embroiled in shady dealings. Celaena, under the guise of a young maiden named Dianna Brackyn, approaches Doneval, feigning admiration and interest in setting up a meeting on behalf of her 'uncle.' Her disguise and act are convincing enough to secure an invitation for tea, successfully learning the timing of Doneval's clandestine meeting to ensure her mission advances smoothly.

During the party, Celaena enjoys the revelry of Melisande—a wealthier district—while maintaining her focus on her primary goal. The night is a blend of seductive dance, intriguing characters, and underlying tension. Sam, Celaena's fellow assassin and companion, watches over her, cautious of the attention she garners, which includes a flirtatious exchange with a masked noble.

Their professional relationship is strained with unspoken emotions, and Sam's protective instincts surface when he separates Celaena from the masked noble. Despite this interruption, they manage civil conversation, with Celaena suggesting they address their complicated feelings another day. Sam's frustration gives way to caring warmth, revealing his deeper feelings for Celaena—a feeling Celaena herself struggles to comprehend or



reciprocate fully.

After the night of indulgence and tension, Celaena reflects on the solitude and freedom represented by her new apartment overlooking the Avery River. It's a hidden sanctuary, marking her independence from her mentor, Arobynn. This place is meant to be a fresh start, untainted by past ties or obligations, representing Celaena's desire to shape her destiny away from the world of assassins. As dawn breaks, she is enveloped by a sense of empowerment, realizing the world—and her future—is within her grasp, as long as she has the courage to take it.

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## Chapter 34 Summary:

The morning after a vibrant party, Celaena Sardothien, a skilled assassin, is keen to thank Sam for providing the music, but she can't find a private moment. Instead, she endures her usual training session at the Assassin's Keep, ignoring the lingering effects of the previous night's indulgence. While practicing in the hall, she showcases new techniques acquired in the Red Desert, subtly impressing the resident instructor and Sam, her close companion, both of whom are also skilled assassins.

Their conversation soon turns to a looming mission to gather intelligence on Doneval, a target whose documents might hold critical information. Sam regretsfully informs Celaena he cannot accompany her due to a prior engagement guarding Lysandra, a beautiful courtesan preparing for her Bidding Night—a sinister event in which brothel workers are auctioned off to the highest bidder. Despite Sam's offer to join later, Celaena decides to pursue the mission solo, confident in her abilities, having previously liberated two hundred slaves in Skull's Bay with Sam's help.

As they exit the training hall, their exchange is interrupted by Lysandra and Madam Clarisse, the brothel's owner, both closely tied to Arobynn, the ruthless leader of the Assassin's Keep and Celaena's mentor. Lysandra's open flirtation with Sam irks Celaena, causing a momentary tension. However, Celaena keeps her emotions veiled and dismisses Sam to enjoy Lysandra's



tea invitation, ensuring him she has critical work to accomplish.

Venturing alone into the rainy night, Celaena approaches Doneval's seemingly unguarded house, her senses heightened by the storm. Her new black suit, a gift from Arobynn, enhances her agility and stealth, allowing her to move unhindered despite the weather. Anticipating danger, she skillfully climbs up to Doneval's study window, observing the lax security below. Inside, the room appears deserted, with no obvious sign of the documents she seeks.

Expertly picking the window lock, Celaena slips inside, her movements quiet on the lavish rug as she secures her entry point behind her. Thoroughly alert, she begins her search but suddenly senses an attack, her instincts honed from years of peril springing into action just in time.

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## Critical Thinking

**Key Point:** Trust in your capabilities; embrace challenges solo.

**Critical Interpretation:** In Chapter 34 of *The Assassin's Blade*, you're inspired by Celaena Sardothien's decision to tackle a dangerous mission on her own, demonstrating immense confidence and self-reliance. Even in a world shadowed by threats and underscored by competitive alliances, she chooses to trust her learned skills and instincts. When faced with life's inevitable obstacles, remember Celaena. Her journey through the storm to Doneval's house speaks to the power of trusting your abilities, even when you stand alone. Embrace your inner strength, let self-belief lead the way, and you'll find that you're more than capable of navigating challenges with adeptness and grit.

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## Chapter 35 Summary:

Celaena, an adept assassin, finds herself ensnared in a perilous situation, drawing on her training in the Red Desert to navigate a deadly encounter. Having incapacitated several guards with skills honed under the guidance of the Mute Master, she is ultimately overpowered and loses consciousness. Awakening bound to a chair in a rising, water-filled sewer, she overhears the menacing Doneval's bodyguard taunting her for surveillance on their illegal operations. The bodyguard, Philip, leaves Celaena to drown as the sewer rapidly floods, dismissing her as expendable.

With the water climbing higher, Celaena remembers the secret blades she'd concealed. Despite her hands being bound, she manages to cut herself free using a hidden weapon crafted by a master tinkerer. Desperately, she wades through the filthy, rat-infested water, propelled by the thought of imminent death. Discovering a small tunnel, she drags her battered body through the cramped, mud-choked passage, her goal a faint shaft of light ahead.

Reaching the upward shaft and ladder to the street, Celaena faces a rusted grate that refuses to budge. As the water rises around her, panic threatens to close in, but she screams for help, a last attempt to escape her impending doom. Remarkably, her companion, Sam, finds her, galvanized by their earlier plan of monitoring Doneval and his opulent house.



Sam, armed only with his strength and wit, attempts to extricate her by prying open the stubborn grate. The flood relentlessly follows Celaena, inching up her body as Sam desperately labors against time and mounting water levels. Despite their best efforts, the grate resists, and Sam's knife snaps, casting doubt on their survival.

Trapped and with no recourse, Celaena confronts the inevitability of death, assigning Sam a final request—to return her body to Terrasen, her homeland. As the dark, cold water engulfs her, Celaena's indomitable spirit endures, facing the end with the same courage that has defined her harrowing journey.

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## Critical Thinking

**Key Point:** Resilience in the Face of Adversity

**Critical Interpretation:** In Chapter 35 of "The Assassin's Blade," you glean the lesson of resilience and self-belief from Celaena's harrowing experience. Trapped and seemingly hopeless, she's bound underwater in a sewer, with death creeping upon her. Yet, it's the indomitable spirit that nudges her to act in the face of overwhelming adversity. This moment teaches you the invaluable power of inner strength, illustrating that even in the grimmest situations, your willpower and resourcefulness can carve a path to survival. By staying resolute and leveraging every available tool, you can transform the tides of fortune.

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## Chapter 36:

The chapter opens with a dramatic scene as Celaena Sardothien is resuscitated after nearly drowning. Sam, her fellow assassin and confidant, is by her side, having saved her life. The two mysterious women who helped with her rescue remain unnamed but seem relieved and puzzled by the situation. The sewer water still drips around them, highlighting the intensity of her near-death experience.

Despite multiple baths and using liquor as a disinfectant, Celaena cannot shake the feeling of filth. She orders everyone, including Arobynn, the leader of the assassin group, out of her chambers, emphasizing her need for solitude and recovery. With Sam's unexpected visit, the chapter delves into the complexities of their relationship, marked by camaraderie and tension.

Sam explains how he ended up at Doneval's house, led there by concern and the unsettling comments from the guards. He found Celaena in distress and rescued her, but this only exacerbates her mixed feelings about him.

Although she struggles with gratitude, deep down, she appreciates Sam's intervention, confessing her thankfulness and expressing regret over past events in Skull's Bay, where she inadvertently involved Sam in a dangerous situation that led to him being harmed by Arobynn.

Amidst vulnerable confessions and apologies, Celaena reveals the story of



Ansel, a past friend who betrayed her. It becomes clear that this betrayal has left both physical and emotional scars on Celaena. Sam listens intently, offering empathy and understanding, which creates an intimate yet charged atmosphere.

As they share this moment, Sam's genuine apology and subtle touch on her scar reflect a deepening bond. However, Celaena shifts the focus back to their current mission, hinting at her desire for revenge. The chapter concludes with Celaena resolving to add Philip, who attempted to kill her, to her list of targets, solidifying her fierce determination and her reputation as Adarlan's Assassin. This chapter lays bare Celaena's vulnerabilities, strengths, and the intricacies of her relationship with Sam, setting the stage for retaliation against those who wronged her.

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## Chapter 37 Summary:

In this chapter, Celaena Sardothien, a skilled assassin known for her prowess and independence, confronts her complex relationship with Arobynn Hamel, the manipulative and powerful King of the Assassins who once controlled her life. The story unfolds after she returns from an arduous mission in the Red Desert, where she has not only survived but thrived, earning her freedom by paying off her debt to Arobynn.

As Celaena enters Arobynn's study with various trunks filled with gold, she confidently declares that her debts are settled, signaling a shift in their power dynamics. Despite the uncertainty and the memory of past abuses, she tells Arobynn that she wishes to maintain a working relationship. Arobynn, though showing a hint of regret, accepts this change but remains seated, possibly signaling his acknowledgment of her newfound autonomy.

Later, Sam Cortland, Celaena's close companion and also an assassin, joins her on a mission to break into the house of their target, Doneval. The sewer beneath the city serves as their clandestine route, and as they plot their entry, their banter reveals an underlying tension in their relationship. Sam confides in Celaena about his intention to leave Rifthold and establish himself in Banjali, a decision driven by his desire to escape Arobynn's manipulative grasp and the toxic environment that pits them against each other.





Celaena is taken aback by Sam's announcement, struggling with the thought of his departure. Despite her independence, the idea of life without Sam's constant presence is unsettling. As Sam explains his reasons, his love for Celaena becomes apparent. He admits that Arobynn's actions were designed to exploit Sam's feelings, knowing the pain it would cause him. Celaena is forced to confront the depth of her feelings for Sam as he reveals his own.

In a heartfelt and raw exchange, Sam confesses his long-held love for Celaena and the agony of watching Arobynn mistreat her. Despite the danger and the emotional turmoil, he cannot remain in a place where he must witness such manipulation. Celaena, realizing her own feelings, passionately assures Sam that he is the one she'd choose over anyone, including Arobynn.

The chapter concludes with Celaena closing the distance between them, bringing their simmering emotions to a climax as she kisses Sam, symbolizing both a beginning of something new and an end to the struggles that have kept them apart. Together, they stand on the precipice of a new chapter in their lives, united in their resolve to break free from the past and hopeful for what lies ahead, even as uncertainties linger.



## Chapter 38 Summary:

In this chapter, Celaena Sardothien, a skilled assassin, experiences a profound moment of intimacy and self-realization as she shares her first kiss with Sam, a fellow assassin and long-time companion. Despite a rocky history and years of tension between them, this intimate connection leaves her questioning her previous animosity towards him and contemplating the depth of her feelings. Her emotions are a complex mix of longing and bewilderment over Sam's enduring affection for her, which she had not fully acknowledged until now.

As they navigate the aftermath of their shared moment, Celaena's focus is pulled back to the mission at hand. She's preparing to infiltrate the house of Doneval, a corrupt businessman entangled in a slave trade agreement, who is also set on blackmailing those who oppose the slave trade. Their plan involves sneaking into Doneval's house, with Sam setting a fire in the cellar as a diversion for the operation. Despite her rising emotions and concern for Sam's safety, Celaena knows she must remain focused on the task ahead, both for the mission's success and for the financial independence it promises her.

The narrative shifts to the infiltration scene, with Celaena waiting patiently in the shadows beside a sewer door leading to Doneval's cellar. She's poised and alert, using her skills to slip past an unsuspecting servant depositing



garbage. Once inside the cellar, her mission becomes a strategic exercise in stealth as she sets up the space for Sam's impending infiltration. The cellar, laden with barrels of wine, promises an explosive distraction once ignited.

Fast forward to the evening, Celaena ascends to Doneval's study, intent on gathering crucial documents before the arranged meeting takes place. The absent guards raise suspicion but provide an opportunity for her to exploit. Inside the study, amidst the mundane clutter of papers, she discovers a hidden cache under a floorboard containing sensitive documents—maps, charts, and lists detailing a network designed to smuggle slaves to freedom. Doneval plans to use this incriminating information to threaten these freedom fighters, bolstering his illegal operations. Horror-stricken and determined to stop him, Celaena gathers the documents, intent on thwarting his schemes and protecting those at risk.

Her resolve is abruptly tested when she hears approaching voices, signaling imminent danger and propelling her towards a crucial choice between her mission and her personal safety, and reminding her of the stakes not only for herself and Sam but for countless lives depending on their success.

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## Chapter 39 Summary:

The chapter unfolds in a tense sequence of events centered around Celaena, a skilled assassin, as she executes a high-stakes mission in a shadowy setting filled with espionage and betrayal. The scene opens with Celaena in a dimly lit room, hurriedly hiding stolen documents in her suit before concealing herself in an armoire. She's aware that it won't be long before Doneval, a corrupt businessman, and his mysterious partner discover the missing documents. Her plan hinges on luring them away from their guards, creating a window of opportunity to eliminate them.

As expected, Doneval and his unnamed partner enter the room, engaged in a conversation that hints at a nefarious business deal. Doneval attempts small talk and offers brandy, but the stranger, whose identity is shrouded in secrecy, remains curt and focused on the documents. Celaena observes from her hiding spot, her heart racing as she waits for the right moment to strike.

When Doneval retrieves his hidden documents, he soon realizes they are missing. This is Celaena's cue to act. With deadly precision, she emerges from her hiding place and swiftly kills Doneval, severing his spine with her blade. Chaos erupts as an explosion shakes the house, providing the distraction she had hoped for. The unnamed stranger seizes the opportunity to flee the scene, exhibiting impressive agility and speed.



Celaena gives chase, pursuing him through the burning house and into the capital's streets. Her path is briefly impeded by Philip, Doneval's bodyguard, who recognizes her by her assassin's suit despite the mask concealing her identity. A fierce, brutal fight ensues, and Celaena emerges victorious, killing Philip and pondering his cryptic final words about loyalty to Doneval and patriotism.

The nameless accomplice of Doneval leads Celaena on a relentless chase through the city. She follows him into an alley that ends in a dead end, where he makes a futile attempt to scale a wall. In a desperate act, he ignites a stack of documents he had been carrying, setting them ablaze before consuming a vial's contents, which quickly ends his life. Though perplexed by his decision, Celaena stamps out the fire, salvaging charred remnants of the papers.

Examining the fragments, she discovers that the documents contain sensitive information on safe houses and individuals connected to Adarlan, even reaching the border with Terrasen. Intrigue and doubt cloud her thoughts as she questions the true nature of her mission and whether her mentor, Arobynn, had disclosed the full extent of their target's significance. Despite the burn of doubt and the realization that the stranger might have held noble intentions, she chooses to destroy the remaining documents completely, offering him an unspoken tribute.



Later, Celaena reunites with Sam, her companion in the mission, who is nursing a wound from the skirmish with guards in the cellar. Their suits, made from costly and mystical Spidersilk, had protected them from serious harm. Their conversation reveals that the mission has concluded, though the depth of its implications leaves Celaena contemplative. As the chapter closes, the bond between Sam and Celaena is momentarily reaffirmed as she confirms their mission's completion with a kiss, but a lingering unease remains about the true cost of their actions and the murky truths that still elude them.

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## Chapter 40:

As dawn broke over the city, Celaena stormed into Arobynn's study, her mind racing with the events of the previous night. Wesley, Arobynn's bodyguard, let her in without protest, closing the doors behind her. Celaena wasted no time in delivering her news: Doneval's partner had burned crucial documents and then poisoned himself before she could intervene. Though she had slipped some papers under Arobynn's door the previous night, she chose to explain the situation the next morning.

Arobynn, a cunning and manipulative figure in Celaena's life, looked up from his ledger with an inscrutable expression. He inquired whether Doneval's house had been torched before or after the incident with the documents. Celaena, unfazed, replied that it hardly mattered. The conversation took a tense turn as Arobynn criticized the mess Celaena had left behind, expressing anger over the absence of Doneval's identifiable body, which jeopardized their client's satisfaction.

The conversation revealed a disturbing truth: Celaena had been caught in a web of deceit. Arobynn tauntingly confessed there was never a trade agreement as Doneval had led her to believe. Instead, the real negotiations about the slave trade were happening within the king's glass castle, led by Leighfer Bardingale. Arobynn's revelation left Celaena reeling. Doneval, contrary to what she believed, had been working to establish a network



against slavery, and she had been manipulated into killing him and delivering the documents to someone who supported the slave trade for profit.

Feeling cornered and betrayed, Celaena accused Arobynn of punishing her for a past incident at Skull's Bay that affected his business dealings. An underlying tension between them escalated when Celaena announced that Sam's debt to Arobynn was paid with the money from selling Kasida, her beloved Asterion horse. Arobynn admitted to squandering the money on a lavish bidding event for Lysandra, a move intended to hurt Celaena further.

This final betrayal prompted Celaena to declare her independence from Arobynn, announcing her decision to move into her own apartment. Arobynn, seemingly unfazed, took a cruel pleasure in his manipulation, savoring her torment. As Celaena left, she and Arobynn exchanged menacing words, both aware their future encounters might turn violent.

Outside Arobynn's study, Celaena grappled with her emotions. The world around her seemed indifferent to her turmoil as the convoy from Melisande departed, marking the end of a tempestuous chapter in her life. Amidst her dark reflections, Sam, her love and confidant, appeared on the rooftop where she sought solace. A tender exchange ensued as Sam acknowledged the weight of her sacrifices and promised to stand by her side, no matter the cost.





In the dying light of day, Celaena and Sam found solace in each other, confirming their commitment to face whatever lay ahead together. Despite the betrayals and manipulation, Celaena emerged with a sense of freedom, ready to forge a new path with Sam by her side, leaving behind Arobynn's schemes and the complications of her past life. As the sun set over the capital, the world transformed into hues of crimson and shadow, mirroring Celaena's resolve to embrace the uncertainty of her future.

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## Chapter 41 Summary:

In a prison wagon, Celaena Sardothien reflects on her predicament, surrounded by darkness, shadows, and the chatter of guards as she is transported in shackles. Her thoughts are consumed by silence, and a haunting question lingers: did she bring this upon herself?

**Eleven days earlier**, Celaena is some place far happier: the Royal Theater, enjoying a symphony from the rafters—a secret spot she chose to avoid Arobynn Hamel, the King of Assassins and her former mentor. Arobynn sits with Lysandra, a courtesan whose virginity he had won to spite Celaena, notably occupying the private box Celaena once shared with him.

While the symphony unfolds, Celaena battles with memories of her past connections to Arobynn and questions her legacy as Adarlan's Assassin. Despite paying off her debts to Arobynn and moving on to a new chapter of her life with her partner, Sam Cortland, she grapples with the impact he had on her life. Arobynn manipulated and betrayed her, but she chose freedom—even at the cost of enduring the painful sights in the theater.

Back in her shared apartment with Sam, Celaena finds a note indicating he's not home—not a surprise as he's likely fighting in the brutal underground fighting pits of the Vaults, notorious for their danger. Despite Sam's skill and confidence, Celaena is enraged he continues to risk his life for paltry



earnings, a testament to their growing financial strain.

When she confronts Sam after another victorious but bruising match, the conversation inevitably turns to their future. Sam suggests a daring escape from their life in Rifthold—a city Celaena has known all her life. They debate the feasibility of leaving the capital and the necessity of gaining Arobynn's permission to survive outside his influence. Celaena knows the Guild will seek retribution if they leave without Arobynn's blessing, a daunting proposition given her and Sam's prior roles enforcing similar punishments on others.

The tension between them gives way to gentler moments as Sam expresses his desire to simply be with Celaena, unburdened by city life or their former allegiances. They share a tender embrace, yet one question looms unspoken between them: will Arobynn Hamel, the man who manipulated and molded them, allow them to leave the Guild and Rifthold peacefully, or will more sinister plots lie ahead?

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## Chapter 42 Summary:

In this chapter, Celaena Sardothien and Sam Cortland, two skilled assassins, return to the Assassins' Keep, a central hub for their guild in Rifthold, where they encounter Wesley, the head bodyguard of Arobynn Hamel, the King of Assassins. Despite previous tensions, Sam amiably greets Wesley, though tensions underlie with Celaena—Wesley had always distrusted her, predicting a rift between her and Arobynn.

Inside, Arobynn uses his charm to mask his manipulations, playing a verbal chess game with Celaena and Sam. They announce their desire to leave Rifthold and the guild to start their own assassin business elsewhere, a decision spurred by previous betrayals and the need for independence. However, Arobynn employs clever wording and insinuations to avoid giving them a straight answer regarding their freedom from the guild, hinting at the cost of their departure.

Faced with an exorbitant fee from Arobynn to officially leave the guild, Celaena, despite Sam's protests and her personal grievances, agrees to pay the price to avoid future interference by Arobynn and the guild. Sam is angered by her unilateral decision, leading to a heated exchange between them as they traverse the bustling capital streets, reflecting on the complexity of leaving their current lives behind.



Sam continues to be intensely frustrated at playing Arobynn's games and proposes a lucrative but dangerous contract that involves assassinating Ioan Jayne and his brutal second-in-command, Rourke Farran—major crime lords in Rifthold. While the financial reward could secure their future, Celaena is apprehensive due to the notoriety and danger surrounding Jayne and Farran. Nonetheless, Sam argues the necessity of taking the contract for their financial liberation.

The scene shifts to a more personal moment between Celaena and Sam, as they navigate their relationship amidst their professional turmoil. There's an emotional depth to their bond, hinting at Celaena's fear of vulnerability and her role in their shared predicament. Their relationship deepens, marked by tender moments and acknowledgment of their long-standing feelings for each other. Despite the passion, they agree to take things progressively, underlining their trust and commitment, imbued with the hope of a future together away from their life as assassins.

In summary, this chapter delves into the nuanced dynamics of power, loyalty, and love, pushing Celaena and Sam toward a transformative decision to leave behind a life of manipulation and violence for the hope of freedom—a journey fraught with danger and risk, yet underscored by their growing dependence on each other.





## Chapter 43 Summary:

The chapter opens with a serene dawn scene where Celaena Sardothien, a renowned assassin known as Adarlan's Assassin, watches her companion Sam. His body, marked with scars from a life of combat and training under their shared mentor, Arobynn Hamel, tells the story of his tumultuous life. Despite their dark past, Celaena dreams of a future where they can leave behind their deadly professions. They plan to start by taking down notorious crime figures, Ioan Jayne and his sadistic second-in-command, Farran.

Their initial target is Farran, known for his brutal rise from orphan to feared Second in Jayne's criminal empire. Farran's vicious reputation and ability to inspire fear and chaos make him a key obstacle. Sam and Celaena strategize, knowing that removing Farran will destabilize Jayne's operations, making it easier to execute Jayne afterward.

While they gather intelligence on these targets, their resolve is tested. They encounter Farran, and his cold gaze reminds them of the danger ahead. Sam is particularly protective of Celaena, wishing to shield her from Farran's brutality. He insists on handling Farran alone, aware of Celaena's strength but determined to steer his own path—to be a protector rather than overshadowed by Celaena's infamous persona.

Their partnership, built on mutual respect, is strained by Sam's insistence.



Though Celaena is used to being in charge and renowned for her prowess, she eventually concedes, agreeing to let Sam confront Farran, preserving his sense of agency and accomplishment.

With plans set, Celaena attends a dancing lesson with Madame Florine, a strict teacher who has nurtured her grace and agility—skills essential for an assassin but also a reminder of her personal passions outside her deadly trade. Florine’s refusal to accept payment emphasizes the respect and bond between teacher and student.

As Celaena walks home, she's reminded of what she'd give up for Sam—libraries, bookshops, and the familiar rhythm of Rifthold. Upon returning to their apartment, she finds Arobynn Hamel, the manipulative mentor who shaped much of her life, waiting for her. His presence signifies an ominous reminder of the past they wish to escape, suggesting that their departure and plans for freedom are not without complications.





## Chapter 44:

In a tense and introspective chapter, Celaena Sardothien finds herself alone in her kitchen, trying to steady her nerves with a cup of tea. Her unease is justified when she discovers Arobynn Hamel, her former mentor and the notorious King of Assassins, has broken into her home. Arobynn, with his usual arrogance, has made himself comfortable on her sofa. As Celaena hands him a cup of tea, the air crackles with unspoken tension and history between them.

Arobynn brings up Celaena's and her partner Sam Cortland's plan to assassinate Ioan Jayne, a significant crime lord in Rifthold, and Rourke Farran, his second-in-command. He questions their judgment, emphasizing Jayne's lethal reputation. Despite Arobynn's veiled advice imbued with personal history and possibly genuine concern, Celaena remains defiant. The conversation quickly turns into a power play where Arobynn tries to manipulate her emotions, even admitting his love—words she'd longed to hear but now understands are being used to control her. His declaration only intensifies her resolve to have him leave, reminding her of past betrayals and wounds.

After Arobynn's departure, Celaena meets Sam at the Black Cygnet tavern, a place they frequent for its normalcy amidst their chaotic lives. The tavern is lively, filled with chatter about the Crown Prince's vacation, but Celaena is



too consumed with thoughts of Arobynn's visit to truly engage in conversation, despite Sam's efforts to discuss their mission.

Back at their apartment, still rattled by Arobynn's intrusion and the memories it stirs, Celaena seeks comfort in Sam's presence. Sam notices her

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## Chapter 45 Summary:

In this tense and revealing chapter, we delve into the shadowy world of Celaena Sardothien, a skilled assassin navigating the perilous streets of Rifthold. Together with her partner, Sam, she is tailing a dangerous figure named Rourke Farran, a key player in the criminal underworld dominated by Jayne, a crime lord they plan to take down. Under the cloak of early morning, the two track Farran's every move—his arrogance on display as he travels without guards, stopping at banks, Jayne's properties, and seedy alleys.

Despite their stealthy observation, Celaena is unsettled by Farran's unexpected venture into a bookstore, where he purchases adventure novels—books she herself has enjoyed. This unwelcome connection leaves her with a sense of violation as she grapples with the enigma of their sadistic target.

Their pursuit of Farran eventually leads Celaena and Sam to the notorious Vaults—a den of illegal activities owned by Jayne. The sight of enslaved workers and exploited prostitutes evokes a visceral reaction in Celaena, who dreams of exacting justice upon the place and those behind its horrors. Observing Farran's unsettling inspection of the enslaved girls and his ruthless handling of a debtor, they witness firsthand the cruel dynamics of power and fear.



Haunted by these events, Sam and Celaena seek solace in a nearby park, where they confront the moral complexities of their own lives as assassins. They reflect on their training under Arobynn, a man who skillfully molded their fury and skills for his purposes. Both struggle with the fear of losing their humanity and becoming akin to the very monsters they despise.

The chapter reaches an emotional crescendo as Sam, driven to escape the ever-looming shadow of Arobynn, reveals his plan for a new life on the southern continent—an unexpected shift from their original idea to relocate within their own continent. Celaena grapples with this drastic change, torn between fear of the unknown and the potential for a fresh start far from Arobynn's influence.

As the night deepens, they prepare for the imminent confrontation with Farran, sharpening weapons and mapping out escape routes. In this moment of vulnerability, Sam professes his love for Celaena, and together they envision a hopeful future—one where they might find peace and freedom from their past.

United by love, desire for redemption, and the dream of a new beginning, Sam and Celaena's story continues to unravel, leading them toward a pivotal moment that could redefine their destinies. The chapter ends on a poignant note with Celaena's resistance to the mundane task of packing, juxtaposed



against the weighty decisions and challenges they face.

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## Chapter 46 Summary:

The night dragged on interminably for Celaena, as the clock seemed stuck at nine. Despite her efforts to distract herself with a variety of activities—reading a romance novel, playing cards, poring over an atlas, or indulging in hidden candy—she failed to shake off a sense of unease. Her partner, Sam, had taken out their trunks for packing when she complained about the task but then wisely left to complete a dangerous mission: killing Farran. Though Sam promised his absence would make travel arrangements easier, he insisted Celaena's extensive shoe collection wouldn't accompany them.

The morning had felt equally restless after she contacted a solicitor about selling her apartment. Though it might be a complicated endeavor, Celaena was eager to conclude her business remotely. She sighed at the notion of having a new home. Her thoughts kept returning to Sam's mission and the possibility he was delayed due to Farran's unpredictable schedule—or perhaps Sam had completed the task and was lying low.

Minutes seemed to pass as slowly as her worried thoughts. Checking her dagger and surveying her arsenal of hidden weapons, she resolutely refused to check on Sam, determined to respect his desire to handle this operation alone. The urgency of packing lingered in her mind; once Jayne was dispatched the following night, they needed to be ready to leave Rifthold



immediately, especially since she wanted the identity of her kill—Celaena Sardothien, a notorious assassin—spread far and wide.

As time inched toward eleven, anxiety got the better of her. Donning her special suit and arming herself further, Celaena ventured into the slums, driven by the nagging fear that her partner, Sam, hadn't returned, well before their agreed-upon search deadline. Hurrying through the dim streets, she listened intently but found no evidence that Farran had been dealt with.

Slowing her pace upon reaching the upscale area surrounding Jayne's estate, she found the neighborhood calm and undisturbed. Wealthy couples meandered back from the theater, but there was no suggestion of conflict at Jayne's brightly lit house, where the guards appeared indifferent and unaware of any danger.

Despite slipping through all the locations Sam might be, not a trace of blood or struggle emerged, leading her to speculate that Sam discovered Farran hadn't left yet and returned home. Recognizing she wouldn't escape his displeasure at finding her out, Celaena reassured herself he'd reciprocate the same concern. With a mixture of longing and resignation, she returned to their apartment, hoping Sam would soon be home safely.





## Chapter 47 Summary:

Celaena returns to her apartment at an ungodly hour, only to find it empty and Sam, her partner, missing. She scrutinizes the mantel clock, hoping it's wrong, but time relentlessly ticks away. To cope with the unease, she stokes the fire and disarms herself, yet stays in her battle suit, anticipating his return any minute.

As the clock chimes two, sleep overtakes Celaena on the couch, and she's startled awake hours later. It's now four in the morning. Desperation fuels her; maybe Sam took refuge at the Assassins' Keep after killing their dangerous nemesis, Rourke Farran.

With blurry eyes from a sleepless night, she scours the city at dawn, sweeping through both the impoverished slums and the opulent districts, desperately hunting for any trace of Sam. Her search takes her to the riverbanks, where fear gnaws at her resolve—the same river they dreamed of sailing to freedom soon.

As noon approaches and uncertainty festers, Celaena's hope hinges on finding Sam home, ready to scold and embrace him in relief. Climbing the stairs to their apartment feels surreal, each step oscillating between heaviness and weightlessness.



Reaching the door ajar, her anticipation is shattered. Bursting inside, preparing to unleash her fury and longing, she's met instead by Arobynn Hamel, the King of the Assassins and her former mentor. His presence is a prelude to the dreadful truth he speaks with a remorseful whisper: "I'm sorry." Those words signal a change, one that marks the abrupt silence overtaking her world, as everything about her reality shifts uncomfortably under the weight of implied tragedy.

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## Chapter 48:

In this gripping and emotional chapter, Celaena Sardothien, a renowned assassin, finds herself engulfed in a whirlwind of grief and disbelief following the death of Sam, someone deeply close to her. The scene opens with Celaena, reacting impulsively, hurling a clock across Arobynn Hamel's office, her mentor and the enigmatic leader of the Assassins' Guild. Arobynn quietly tries to console her, but Celaena is unyielding in her demand to see Sam's body, suspecting some terrible mistake.

Under a veil of silence broken only by distant city sounds like horses and market vendors, Celaena strides through the familiar streets of Rifthold, accompanied by Arobynn and Wesley, Arobynn's ever-vigilant aide. Her mind clings to the hope that Sam might still be alive, perhaps a victim of mistaken identity or a cruel deception by Arobynn. Their journey takes them to the Keep, the Guild's stronghold, a place steeped in the uneasy history of death and betrayal.

Arobynn leads her down to the cellars, where the truth awaits behind the heavy door to the mortuary. Despite Arobynn's implorations for her to stay away, Celaena insists on seeing for herself, driven by denial and determination. The small room is dimly lit, casting light on the gruesome reality of Sam's mutilated body—a vision that shatters her remaining hopes and thrusts her into a pit of anguish.



Sam's body bears brutal marks of torture inflicted by Farran, an assassin known for his sadistic methods. The once-familiar face is almost beyond recognition, its features marred by violence. As Celaena confronts this unimaginable loss, her body reacts viscerally, and she collapses under the

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## Chapter 49 Summary:

Celaena Sardothien awoke in a bed that once felt like home but now seemed unfamiliar, as if a vital part of her life was missing. The renowned assassin, who had been mentored by Arobynn and had run alongside Sam Cortland, her fellow assassin and rival, was now grappling with an immense loss. Sam, the young man she loved, was gone, and the world, indifferent to his absence, seemed to carry on as if he had never existed. The clarity of his memory was fading, leaving her in the shadow of sorrow.

A conversation outside her door roused her from her grief-stricken stupor. Arobynn, the King of the Assassins and her former mentor, planned a night of retribution against the men responsible for Sam's death, Farran and Jayne. Arobynn's trusted assassins, Tern and Harding, discussed their strategy: to strike Farran and Jayne in their home, aiming to kill them while they slept. Celaena remained unnoticed in her supposedly locked room, listening as Arobynn and his men plotted their move.

Her instinct to be part of this vengeance simmered beneath her grief, yet Arobynn had locked her in to prevent her from joining the mission. Despite the years she had spent training and learning under Arobynn, and despite his intimate knowledge of her resourcefulness, this room held hidden weapons known only to her. In her determination, she retrieved daggers and swords she had stashed over the years, feeling the weight of her resolve to exact her



own vengeance.

Escaping through an unlocked window, she maneuvered down the side of the house, the familiar stealth returning to her limbs. But her flight was interrupted by Wesley, another of Arobynn's assassins, who tried unsuccessfully to dissuade her in the dark. A brief confrontation left Wesley unconscious from the blow of Celaena's dagger hilt, and she resumed her path into the city, driven by the existing fire of rage within her.

As she navigated the streets with the practiced ease of a shadow, she aimed for the home of her targets. She knew every step of this path by heart, having walked these streets with Sam enough times to know Jayne's house and its layout. Her plan was clear; she would infiltrate through a second-story window, bypassing the guards fronting the house.

The moment of her approach to Jayne's house arrived; from the rooftop of an adjacent structure, she prepared for the final leap into potential violence. Her senses were honed, and the empty presence of guards on the neighboring roofs played to her advantage. In her mind, she held onto the thought that after claiming her vengeance, she might dismantle this house, and perhaps the city that had taken her most cherished person as well.

Blinded by her wrath but guided by precision, Celaena surged forward in an unstoppable crescendo toward the edge of the roof—her leap of resolve,

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fury, and hope trailing behind her like a comet destined to crash.

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## Chapter 50 Summary:

In this tense and action-packed chapter, Celaena Sardothien, the notorious assassin, finds herself in the midst of a perilous trap. As the scene unfolds, she crashes through a window into a seemingly empty room, only to find herself confronting Jayne, Farran, and a host of guards. Despite her skill and ferocity, the ambush is meticulously orchestrated by Farran, who has cunningly prepared the setting with a deadly smoke that renders her incapacitated.

The sinister Farran orchestrates the scene with an eerie calm, revealing his long-awaited plans to ascend in power by eliminating his superior, Jayne, and handing Celaena over to the king as a bargaining chip. The use of a toxic substance called gloriella, known for paralyzing its victims, adds a chilling layer to the ambush. This same drug was used against Celaena's beloved companion, Sam, indicating the extent of Farran's calculated cruelty.

Despite her fierce efforts, Celaena is overpowered and paralyzed, unable to fight back against the tide of guards attacking her. She struggles internally, battling with the realization that someone close to her has betrayed her. While she considers various possibilities, she dismisses the idea of betrayal from her mentor, Arobynn, focusing instead on the potential treachery of others within the assassin guild.



As she lies helpless against the wall, Farran revels in his victory, taunting her with her own helplessness and the prospect of being handed over to the king. His words drip with malice and a promise of future torment, leaving Celaena with a burning rage and a desperate need to escape.

Farran's plan is to take over Jayne's criminal empire, and Celaena's capture serves as a crucial step in his rise to dominance. The urgency of her situation is underscored by her limited timeframe; she must find a way to escape before the poison wears off and before Arobynn and any potential rescuers can arrive.

This chapter highlights Celaena's vulnerability in the face of betrayal and the brutal power struggles of the criminal underworld. It sets the stage for a race against time as she plots her escape and vows revenge against those who have wronged her and taken Sam's life. The intricate plotting and character dynamics add depth to a tale of trust, deception, and the relentless pursuit of power.



## Chapter 51 Summary:

Celaena Sardothien, known as Adarlan's Assassin, awoke with a headache, shackled in a dank, cold, and mildew-scented dungeon. Without opening her eyes, she realized her dire situation: her weapons were gone, more than six hours had passed, and Sam, her beloved, remained dead—a victim of a betrayal so cruel it left her reeling. She found herself chained to the wall and floor, with just enough slack to reach a bucket in the corner, marking her first indignity. Stranded in an impenetrable cell with no window, Celaena gathered her thoughts.

Her mind raced back to the betrayal—likely orchestrated by someone like Harding, a person with everything to gain from her disappearance. More troubling was that Arobynn Hamel, the King of Assassins and her mentor, hadn't come for her. Despite the severest chains of Adarlanian steel binding her, she clung to the hope that Arobynn would rescue her, though her rational mind knew he might not. She quickly assessed her physical confines, but the chains and her limited resources left her with no means of escape.

Her solitude was interrupted when a guard arrived, placing food on the floor—proof that she was in the royal dungeon. The middle-aged man, experienced and unarmed, accompanied by three others, was cautious not to enter. He announced the meals and reaffirmed the futility of any escape



attempts, highlighting the dungeon's notorious security. Her heart sank; if Arobynn hadn't yet found her, she feared he never would. With Sam dead and nothing left to fight for, Celaena's indomitable spirit, once strong enough to confront pirate lords and steal Asterion horses, felt utterly defeated.

Even as she consumed the tasteless meal, her mind drifted to possibilities of escape—each more improbable than the last. Yet, despair took over, eroding her will. Sam's death weighed heavily on her, a constant reminder of her failure to protect him and avenge his death.

Celaena's time in the dungeon was punctuated by the guards' conversations, snippets of which sometimes pierced her silent resignation. Their discussions ranged from army movements to rumors about her identity. They debated if she truly was Celaena Sardothien, given her youth, pondering if the king had simply needed someone to blame for Jayne's demise. Some even doubted her sanity due to her detached demeanor. Regardless, the guards anticipated her trial and execution, speculating whether she'd be hanged or beheaded, musing over the king's insistence on privacy to conceal her true identity.

As her trial day loomed near, Celaena was left with the grim reality that her life, once vibrant and full of promise, now rested in the hands of her enemies. The infamous assassin, who had captured so many, lay captured



herself, awaiting a fate she might be powerless to change.

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## Chapter 52:

In the chilling aftermath of a brutal arrest, Celaena Sardothien, known as Adarlan's most feared assassin, finds herself in the depths of despair. The narrative unfolds with fragments of consciousness—dungeons, stale food, and the relentless passage of time indicated by her bruises and unchanged surroundings. As guards with crossbows usher her into the harsh light of day, Celaena faces a grim reality: a trial and an inevitable grim fate.

Brought before the King of Adarlan, a figure shrouded in darkness and known for his ruthless conquest and destruction of magic in Erilea, Celaena is indifferent to the council's proceedings against her. The charges read aloud by Councilor Rensel are a litany of deaths attributed to her, a testament to her past as an assassin. Her silence is taken as acquiescence, and her mind drifts to the many regrets that led her here, especially the ill-fated mission involving Sam and Rourke Farran.

The King surprises everyone, including his council, by sentencing her not to death but to a more tortuous fate: a life of labor at the infamous Salt Mines of Endovier, known for their brutality and hopelessness, where she is to endure prolonged suffering. As she is dragged away, the reality of her predicament settles in, yet a flicker of defiance prompts her to challenge the king with a simple request: "Make it quick."



As Celaena is transported in a prison wagon out of the capital, Rourke Farran and Arobynn Hamel, the latter being the manipulative King of the Assassins who trained her, watch from a rooftop. Arobynn refrains from intervening, despite having orchestrated many of Celaena's life events. Farran, curious about Arobynn's motives, suggests rescuing her might have

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