

Chapter Ten

The chapter opens with Celaena awakening abruptly to a pounding noise, which she initially perceives as an anvil but quickly realizes is a metaphorical representation of her headache. She finds herself alone in the desert, miles from her presumed location near the assassin's fortress, with Kasida watching over her. Her belongings are mostly gone, except for her dagger and a tucked-in scroll. The scene sets a tone of confusion and vulnerability, as Celaena grapples with her situation and the realization that she has been abandoned or possibly betrayed, intensifying her sense of isolation in the vast desert landscape.

Celaena discovers a farewell letter from Ansel, apologizing for the abrupt end and instructing her to go home, accompanied by the Master's approval letter. She questions why she was expelled so suddenly, suspecting it might be due to her recent conflicts or perceived flaws. Her mind races to interpret her standing with the Master and the assassin's organization, feeling hurt and betrayed by the apparent rejection. Despite her doubts, she considers breaking the seal on the approval letter, but hesitates, fearing repercussions or uncovering unpleasant truths. Her emotional turmoil underscores her vulnerability and longing for belonging.

Determined to leave her uncertain fate behind, Celaena mounts Kasida and rides toward the port of Xandria, opting to find a ship there instead of crossing treacherous sands. As she journeys, she notices a large contingent of soldiers marching into the desert—members of Lord Berick's forces—raising her suspicion. Her careful observation reveals no sign of their lord, hinting at a larger, possibly ominous, military movement. The presence of the assassins' fortress in the distance, along with the approaching soldiers, heightens her awareness of the dangerous political and military tensions at play, prompting her to remain cautious and alert.

The next morning, Xandria appears eerily quiet, likely due to recent conflicts or the aftermath of an attack on the assassins. Celaena manages to secure passage on a ship bound for Amier, a remote port in Melisande, as the region faces an embargo on ships to other parts of the empire. Her plan is to travel from Amier back to Rifthold via Kasida, hoping to find another vessel to complete her journey. The chapter concludes with her preparing for departure, emphasizing her resolve to escape her current predicament and the uncertain future awaiting her beyond the desert and political upheaval. This chapter captures her ongoing struggle for freedom and the complex web of loyalties and betrayals surrounding her.



Summary