

# Chapter Nine

In Chapter Nine, Celaena begins her day with a sense of liberation, having paid off her debt to Arobynn and reclaimed her independence. She reflects on her recent experiences, including her time in the Red Desert, which rekindles her desire to forge her own path. Her confrontation with Arobynn is tense but ultimately empowering; she asserts her newfound freedom by presenting him with the money she earned, which she claims covers her debt and more. Despite her desire to maintain their working relationship, she firmly states that she no longer belongs to him, signaling her resolve to move forward on her own terms. Arobynn's response is bittersweet, acknowledging her departure with a hint of regret, yet he respects her decision, which marks a pivotal shift in their dynamic.

Later, Celaena prepares for her covert mission into Doneval's house, returning to the sewer tunnels she despises. Alongside Sam, she meticulously plans their infiltration, recognizing that the front entrance is too heavily guarded. Their strategy involves waiting for the right moment when the servants are likely to discard trash, creating an opportunity to slip inside unnoticed. The sewer setting underscores the danger and the clandestine nature of her quest, emphasizing her determination to take control of her circumstances despite the risks. Sam's lighthearted banter contrasts with the tension of their plan, highlighting their camaraderie and shared understanding of the peril involved. Celaena's strategic thinking and resolve are evident as she envisions the best way to outsmart her enemies.

The chapter also explores Celaena's emotional state as she grapples with her recent victory and the lingering sense of unease. Her reflection on the money she paid Arobynn reveals her complex feelings about her newfound independence—it feels both empowering and hollow, given the circumstances. Her thoughts about her upcoming infiltration are tinged with anticipation and a desire for retribution, especially targeting

Philip, whom she intends to confront. The sewer tunnels symbolize both the literal and metaphorical darkness she navigates, representing her ongoing struggle to reclaim her agency in a hostile environment. Her cautious optimism is tempered by the understanding that her journey toward true freedom is far from over.

In closing, Celaena and Sam leave the sewer, their plan set in motion. They share a quiet moment about her recent financial independence and his concern for her safety. Celaena admits that her sense of freedom is not quite what she envisioned, hinting at the emotional and physical toll her actions have taken. Their conversation underscores the fragile balance between her determination and the dangers she faces. As they walk away from the dangerous house, Celaena's resolve remains strong, knowing that her next steps will be critical. The chapter ends with a sense of anticipation, emphasizing her readiness to confront her enemies and carve out her future, no matter the cost.