

# Chapter 1

The chapter opens with a tense depiction of a covert infiltration into a manor house during a storm. The protagonist, the King's Champion, moves stealthily through the darkness, having carefully planned her entry over several days. Her silent approach is emphasized by the storm's noise, which masks her movements, and her mastery of stealth is evident as she scales the garden wall and slips inside unnoticed. The setting establishes a mood of secrecy and danger, highlighting her skill and determination to carry out her clandestine mission without alerting anyone within the estate.

As she navigates the dark hallways, the Champion remains vigilant, listening for any signs of disturbance. She carefully observes her surroundings, noting the layout of the house and the specific location of Lord Nirall's bedroom, which she has memorized. Her focus is razor-sharp as she moves through the house, blending into the shadows and avoiding detection. The storm continues to rage outside, adding to the atmosphere of chaos and urgency, yet she remains calm and precise, driven by a sense of duty and purpose.

Upon reaching Lord Nirall's bedroom, the Champion pauses to assess her surroundings. She observes the sleeping figures of Lord Nirall and his wife, questioning the reason behind the king's desire for their death. Despite her curiosity, she suppresses her doubts, understanding that her role is to obey orders without question. Her inner conflict is subtly hinted at, but her professionalism prevails as she prepares to execute her mission. The scene underscores her resolve and the gravity of her task, emphasizing the peril and moral complexity involved in her assignment.

The chapter culminates with a tense moment as she raises her sword over Lord Nirall, just as he awakens. The narrative halts at this critical juncture, heightening suspense and emphasizing the life-and-death stakes of her infiltration. Her breath is shaky, and her hand is steady but trembling, illustrating the emotional weight of her actions. The

storm's thunder serves as a backdrop to this pivotal scene, symbolizing the chaos and moral ambiguity that underpin her clandestine operation, leaving readers eager to discover the outcome of this dangerous confrontation.

