

Chapter Eight

The chapter opens with an intimate scene between Celaena and Ansel, highlighting their friendship and contrasting personalities. Celaena, experienced in cosmetics and disguise, shares her routine of applying makeup, which she finds enjoyable and practical for her work. Ansel, though surprised by Celaena's daily habit, recognizes the importance of looking nice, especially on her birthday and Midsummer Eve. The playful banter reveals a tender moment of camaraderie, with Celaena contemplating the emotional weight of leaving her friend behind soon. Their interaction underscores the human side of assassins, blending vulnerability with their hardened exterior.

The narrative then shifts to the Midsummer Eve festival, a silent yet lively gathering of assassins in the fortress courtyard. Despite the absence of music, the dancers move with a strange, almost hypnotic rhythm, their faces lit only by moonlight. Celaena observes the unusual scene—dancing without sound, yet filled with joy and camaraderie. She indulges in wine with Ansel and reflects on her desire to spend more time training with her master rather than socializing, driven by her sense of urgency ahead of her departure. The festival, while festive, also emphasizes the quiet intensity and discipline that define their lives.

The chapter explores Celaena's inner conflicts and her growing awareness of her circumstances. She reflects on her relationship with Arobynn, contrasting him with Mikhail, who shows genuine affection for Ansel. Celaena's thoughts reveal her worries about Sam's wellbeing, especially after her own traumatic experience with Arobynn. Her decision to secure her own apartment signifies her increasing independence and resolve to escape her oppressive past. Her feelings of anger and determination are palpable, especially as she contemplates confronting Arobynn and protecting herself and Sam from future harm.

Finally, a moment of connection unfolds when Celaena accepts a dance from Ilias, breaking her usual reserve. Despite the absence of music, Ilias's confident and steady movements draw her in, symbolizing a rare moment of living in the present. Their interaction hints at a budding bond, offering her a brief respite from her worries. This dance signifies her willingness to embrace new experiences, even in a world filled with danger and emotional turmoil. The chapter closes on a note of tentative hope and the possibility of new beginnings amid the shadows of her past.

