

# Chapter Ten

Celaena awakens in the desert with a pounding headache, disoriented and far from the assassins' fortress. She discovers her belongings packed on her horse, Kasida, but her sword is missing. A note from Ansel explains the Master chose to send her away discreetly rather than publicly dismiss her, providing a letter of approval but no clear reason for her abrupt expulsion. Confused and hurt, Celaena questions what she might have done wrong, feeling betrayed after beginning to see the assassins as her newfound family.

As Celaena rides north toward Xandria, she reflects on her rejection, wondering if her perceived selfishness or her fight with Ansel led to her dismissal. The pain of exclusion stings more than physical wounds, leaving her emotionally raw. Her journey is interrupted when she spots Lord Berick's army marching toward the assassins' fortress. Though she considers warning them, she decides against it, rationalizing that the Master must have anticipated the attack and deliberately sent her away to keep her safe—or because he no longer wanted her involved.

Upon reaching Xandria, Celaena finds the city quieter than during her previous visit. She books passage on a ship to Amier, planning her return to Rifthold. With hours to spare before departure, she wanders the empty streets, her thoughts lingering on the fortress and the impending battle. Despite her resentment, she struggles with guilt over abandoning the assassins, even as she reminds herself they made their choice by casting her out.

The chapter closes with Celaena's unresolved tension between self-preservation and loyalty. Her physical journey mirrors her emotional turmoil—exiled, directionless, and grappling with feelings of inadequacy. The Master's cryptic dismissal and the looming conflict underscore her isolation, leaving her to navigate both the desert and her fractured sense of belonging alone.