

Chapter Eight

In Chapter Eight, Celaena Sardothien engages in a lighthearted moment with her friend Ansel, applying makeup for Ansel's birthday and Midsummer Eve celebration. Their banter reveals Celaena's fondness for cosmetics, which she considers both practical for her work as an assassin and enjoyable. The playful exchange underscores their growing friendship, a rarity for Celaena, who reflects on her impending departure from the desert fortress and her reluctance to leave Ansel behind. The chapter highlights Celaena's internal conflict as she grapples with her attachment to Ansel and her unresolved feelings about returning to Rifthold.

The Midsummer Eve festival unfolds in an unusual silence, with assassins dancing without music under the moonlight. Celaena observes the festivities with a mix of curiosity and detachment, noting the contrast between the Master's joyful, grandfatherly demeanor and Arobynn's calculated grace. Ansel's carefree dancing with Mikhail contrasts with Celaena's introspection, as she reflects on her strained relationship with Arobynn and her concern for Sam, whom she fears may have suffered worse punishment than she did. The festival serves as a backdrop for Celaena's simmering anger toward Arobynn and her resolve to assert independence.

Celaena's thoughts drift to her plans to move out of the Assassin's Keep, a decision fueled by her growing disillusionment with Arobynn's cruelty. She vows to protect herself and Sam from further harm, even contemplating violent retribution if necessary. Her internal monologue reveals a shift in her loyalty and a desire for autonomy, underscored by her admiration for the Master's kindness. The chapter captures Celaena's emotional turmoil as she balances her past traumas with her newfound sense of agency.

The chapter concludes with Ilias inviting Celaena to dance, breaking her reverie. Despite her initial hesitation, she accepts, allowing herself a rare moment of levity.

Their silent dance symbolizes Celaena's tentative steps toward embracing joy and connection, even as she remains aware of the challenges awaiting her return to Rifthold. The scene encapsulates the chapter's themes of friendship, resilience, and the tension between duty and personal freedom.

