

Chapter Two

Celaena Sardothien faces a brutal test of skill and worthiness as she is ambushed by four attackers in a desert chamber. Despite being unarmed and clad in cumbersome clothing, she deftly disables each assailant through quick reflexes and precise strikes. The confrontation is revealed to be an initiation, overseen by a silent Master, to determine her readiness for training. Celaena's confidence in her abilities is unwavering, even as she battles exhaustion and thirst in the harsh environment.

After proving her combat prowess, Celaena is introduced to Ansel, a striking young woman adorned in ornate wolf-themed armor. Ansel's playful demeanor and unique appearance intrigue Celaena, though she remains wary of the unfamiliar surroundings. The Master signals their shared living arrangements, and Ansel reveals Celaena's training will begin at dawn. Despite initial reservations, Celaena accepts the arrangement, relieved to have passed the test and earned the Master's approval.

As they leave the chamber, Celaena reflects on her discomfort with sharing a room with a stranger, a stark contrast to her solitary life as an assassin. She observes the presence of other female assassins, a novelty compared to her guild back home. Ansel's casual friendliness and lack of personal boundaries unsettle Celaena, who remains guarded. The thought that Ansel might surpass her in skill lingers, adding to her unease.

Their conversation turns to Celaena's reputation, with Ansel teasing her for being less dramatic than expected. Despite the lighthearted exchange, Celaena remains vigilant, acutely aware of her missing weapons. The chapter ends with Celaena following Ansel through the halls, her mind racing with questions about her new environment and the challenges ahead. The dynamic between the two women hints at both camaraderie and potential rivalry.