The Assassin and the Desert: A Throne of Glass Novella

The Assassin and the Desert is the second novella in the *Throne of Glass* prequel collection, *The Assassin's Blade*. This story follows **Celaena Sardothien** as she is sent to the **Silent Assassins in the Red Desert** for punishment and training after defying her master.

Isolated and far from everything familiar, Celaena must prove her worth without the comforts of her reputation or alliances. As she trains under a legendary assassin leader, she learns discipline, patience, and discovers hidden threats that could endanger the entire kingdom.

Brimming with desert mystery, self-discovery, and quiet strength, this novella reveals a transformative chapter in Celaena's journey and the beginning of her evolution from a feared assassin to a true hero.

Chapter One

The chapter opens with Celaena Sardothien standing atop a crimson dune in the vast, unforgiving Red Desert, where the landscape is dominated by endless sand and wind. She reflects on the oppressive heat that clings to her, contrasting it with the milder climate of Skull's Bay. Her guide points her toward a distant location associated with the legendary Silent Assassins, known as sessiz suikast, whom she is destined to train with. This journey is framed as both a test of endurance and a form of punishment, stemming from her past actions involving the rescue of slaves and defiance of her

employer, Arobynn Hamel.

Celaena’s physical struggle with the desert environment is palpable; she battles dehydration, exhaustion, and the relentless sun as she makes her way across the dunes. Her guide’s reluctance to accompany her further underscores the danger surrounding the assassin’s destination. Despite her frustration and the perilous distance, she presses on, understanding that her mission is critical. Her awareness of the threat posed by the Silent Assassins heightens her resolve, even as the landscape and her own discomfort threaten to overwhelm her.

After hours of arduous travel, Celaena finally arrives at an oasis nestled between massive dunes, a lush sanctuary that starkly contrasts the surrounding desert. Her physical state remains fragile, yet she maintains her composure, embodying her reputation as Adarlan’s greatest assassin. As she navigates through the fortress, she observes the bustling activity within—a training ground filled with diverse individuals, the sound of weapons, and the tranquil flow of water. Her sharp senses note the strategic layout, exits, and sentry positions, reflecting her military acumen and her constant vigilance.

The chapter culminates with Celaena entering a grand chamber where she is to meet the White-Robed Master. The space is alive with activity, shadowed figures, and the hum of the fortress’s life. Her appearance and demeanor are confident, despite the underlying tension. The Master, appearing around fifty, exudes authority and calm. As she approaches, her posture and resolve indicate her readiness to face the challenges ahead, hinting at the significance of her training and the dangerous, secretive world she is stepping into within the fortress of the Silent Assassins.

Chapter Two

In this chapter, Celaena Sardothien undergoes a rigorous combat test designed to evaluate her fighting skills and readiness for training. Despite lacking weapons, she demonstrates her prowess through quick reflexes and strategic movements, effectively disarming and subduing multiple attackers. Her layered clothing hampers her speed, but her agility and strength shine through as she fights off the assault. The scene emphasizes her resilience, confidence, and innate talent, setting the stage for her potential as a formidable assassin. The master overseeing the test observes her performance with a smile, hinting at her suitability for the training ahead.

The chapter further introduces the environment and the people within it, highlighting the diverse group gathered around. A young woman named Ansel catches Celaena's attention with her striking armor, which is both ornate and symbolic, featuring wolf motifs that suggest strength and independence. Ansel’s playful demeanor and bright personality contrast sharply with the seriousness of the training, providing a glimpse into the camaraderie and underlying tensions among the recruits. Celaena’s cautious curiosity about her new surroundings reveals her awareness of her unfamiliarity with this world and her desire to adapt quickly.

As the scene shifts, Celaena learns she will be staying for a month, a period that signifies her temporary acceptance into the training program. Her relief is palpable, especially given her previous doubts fueled by her manipulative master, Arobynn. The master’s approval for her to stay indicates her potential and the possibility of a new path ahead. Ansel’s friendly yet teasing attitude suggests an evolving relationship, and the promise of beginning her training at dawn underscores the chapter’s focus on her transition into this new, challenging environment.

The chapter concludes with Celaena preparing to leave the chamber, feeling a mixture of anticipation and wariness. She is conscious of her missing weapons, which were

confiscated at the gate, and remains alert for any threats. Her observation of Ansel’s armor and demeanor hints at her own insecurities and the uncertainty of her place among these strangers. Despite her guarded exterior, she recognizes that sharing a room with someone new could be an opportunity for growth, even if it initially feels like an unwelcome surprise. The chapter ends with her cautious optimism about the future and her determination to prove herself.



Chapter Three

The chapter opens with Celaena preparing for an evening meal, dressing modestly yet effectively to highlight her striking eyes despite the oppressive desert heat. Her careful appearance reflects her awareness of her surroundings and her desire to maintain composure in unfamiliar territory. She is exhausted from her journey, feeling the weight of her fatigue but still conscious of her environment as she navigates the social expectations of her new setting. Her modest adornment and restrained makeup suggest a balance between practicality and a subtle attempt at self-presentation amid the unfamiliar and tense atmosphere she finds herself in.

As Celaena is accompanied by Ansel to the dining hall, she observes the bustling, diverse gathering of people from various nations and backgrounds. Ansel, familiar with the political and dangerous landscape, questions Celaena about her journey while subtly indicating the tense political climate. The hall is lively yet hushed, suggesting a place where discretion is valued, and conversations are carefully muted. Celaena’s awareness of her surroundings and her cautious attitude reveal her underlying suspicion and the need to remain alert in an environment rife with potential threats.

The dialogue reveals the complex political tensions between Lord Berick, the local ruler, and the wider powers at play. Ansel explains Berick’s aggressive attempts to undermine and threaten their group, which is considered a formidable and skilled band of assassins. The narrative details Berick’s failed schemes, such as sending spies and soldiers to infiltrate or attack their fortress, underscoring the constant danger they face. The story emphasizes the cunning and resilience of the assassins, who are aware of Berick’s cruelty and strategic miscalculations, highlighting the ongoing conflict between these factions.

In the concluding part, the conversation shifts to Ansel’s role as a diplomat and her risky negotiations with Berick, hinting at the fragile balance of power and the personal

danger involved. Mikhail’s teasing adds a touch of camaraderie, contrasting with the serious undertones of the political tensions. Celaena’s silent observation of the diverse crowd and her reflections on the unfamiliarity of such a multicultural gathering deepen her sense of being an outsider yet also highlight her curiosity and resilience. The chapter ends with a note of cautious optimism, as the group continues their meal amidst an atmosphere of underlying threat and strategic diplomacy.



Chapter Four

The chapter begins with Celaena acknowledging her persistent efforts to improve her skills, particularly her running, which she does more frequently to avoid the Master’s scrutiny. Despite her attempts to stay ahead, her progress is slow, and she remains frustrated by her inability to seek out the Master directly, as she perceives his authority as distant and dismissive. Her focus shifts towards training with Ansel and the other assassins, where she receives rudimentary guidance on posture and technique from seasoned fighters. Throughout these sessions, she becomes increasingly aware of the silent, disciplined nature of the Silent Assassins, contrasting sharply with the brutal, cutthroat environment she was accustomed to under Arobynn’s rule.

The narrative explores the unique culture of the Silent Assassins, emphasizing their collective approach to learning and their reliance on shared wisdom. Unlike her previous experiences, where weakness was punished and betrayal rewarded, these assassins foster a sense of unity and mutual growth. Many of them are mute from birth, which adds an air of mystery and secrecy to their training. Celaena perceives the fortress as a place of hidden truths, where silence is a form of strength and a key to unlocking deeper knowledge. Despite her reservations, she recognizes the importance of demonstrating her competence, hoping that her dedication and skill will earn her the coveted letter of good behavior, which she believes could elevate her standing with the Master.

The chapter takes a tense turn with the night of the attack by Lord Berick's soldiers. Celaena is caught in the midst of a covert operation that reveals the assassin’s strategic use of stealth and deception. From her vantage point atop the battlements, she observes the silent communication among the assassins, orchestrating a plan to defend the fortress without provoking an outright battle. The plan involves igniting a

line of oil-soaked ropes to create a wall of fire, designed to intimidate and scare off the enemy rather than kill outright. Celaena’s role in this operation underscores her desire to prove herself capable and resourceful in dangerous circumstances, aligning her actions with her goal of gaining recognition and respect.

In the climax of the chapter, Celaena participates in the fiery attack, firing flaming arrows into the night sky as part of the defensive maneuver. The scene is chaotic and intense, with flames erupting and arrows raining down on the enemy soldiers. Despite the danger and the risk of injury, Celaena maintains her composure, exemplifying her resilience and determination. The successful execution of the plan results in a dramatic display of fire and light, serving as a powerful symbol of her growing skill and her commitment to earning her place among the assassins. The chapter concludes with the aftermath of the attack, highlighting her resolve to continue honing her abilities and to navigate the complex, perilous world of the Silent Assassins.

Chapter Five

In this chapter, Celaena Sardothien endures a harsh desert journey, lying on her cloak and trying to imagine comfort amidst the sand and exposure. Her discomfort is compounded by the relentless sun, insufficient food, and the pervasive grit of the environment. Despite her roughing-it attitude, she expresses her frustration at the lack of luxury, highlighting her familiarity with hardship but also her desire for comfort. Her interactions with Ansel reveal her curiosity about the desert's history and the land's cursed past, setting a tone of tension between her resilience and her longing for normalcy.

The conversation with Ansel delves into the region's dark history, particularly the rise and fall of the Crochan Kingdom and the destructive Ironteeth Clans. Ansel recounts tales of the once-beautiful Crochan land, overrun by witches with ethereal beauty and dangerous iron teeth. She explains how the Ironteeth Clans overthrew the Crochan Dynasty, leaving a land cursed with barren, muddy, and lifeless terrain, until the land regained fertility after their departure eastward. This history underscores the perilous relationship between the land, its witches, and the ongoing conflicts that have shaped the region.

Ansel shares a chilling story from her childhood about her sister and a mysterious tower where a witch with metal teeth appeared. Her tale recounts a summer solstice event where her sister and friends encountered an otherworldly portal and a sinister old woman who abducted a girl named Maddy. The story culminates in the discovery of a child's bones and the terrifying realization of the witch's presence. This narrative emphasizes the danger and mystery surrounding witches and their dark magic, leaving Celaena haunted by the possibility of similar threats lurking in the shadows.

As the chapter concludes, Ansel expresses her desire to hunt witches and build an army of assassins to defend the realm, criticizing the current passivity of her people

and their reliance on foreign courts. Celaena's sarcastic response underscores her skepticism, but the underlying tone reveals her acknowledgment of the dangerous power witches possess. Ansel’s dreams of glory contrast with her reality, and her conviction that witches can be defeated by decapitation offers a grim but hopeful perspective. Meanwhile, Celaena remains awake, haunted by the stories, contemplating the lurking darkness of magic and the perilous landscape they traverse.



Chapter Six

The chapter opens with a high-stakes escape scene where Ansel and Celaena burst through the palace gates, pursued by guards on horseback. The chaos erupts suddenly as the girls' swift horses, especially Ansel's fiery mare Kasida, dash into the vast Red Desert. The guards are left scrambling to catch up, but the girls' daring escape is marked by their reckless determination and the thrill of the chase. Ansel's bold decision to escape through the desert highlights her resourcefulness and willingness to take risks, setting the tone for a tense, adrenaline-fueled pursuit across treacherous terrain.

As they race across the dunes, the landscape shifts from red sands to the shimmering turquoise of the Gulf of Oro. Celaena, overwhelmed by the speed and freedom of the moment, experiences a rare moment of pure bliss. The wind whips her hair and clothes as she leans into the ride, momentarily forgetting danger. Ansel's exuberance and daring push the boundaries of their escape, emphasizing her fearless nature. The scene captures the visceral thrill of flight and the fleeting nature of such moments of joy amid peril, reinforcing Celaena's complex feelings of liberation and vulnerability.

The narrative then intensifies as Ansel leads them toward the imposing Desert Cleaver, a massive rocky wall with a central fissure. Her plan is to use her knowledge of the geography and her horse's agility to bypass the pursuing guards by jumping through a narrow opening in the wall. Celaena's concern underscores her cautious nature, questioning the recklessness of Ansel's choice. The tension builds as they approach the dangerous passage, with Celaena contemplating her options—either confronting the armed guards or risking the perilous jump—highlighting her internal conflict between survival instincts and morality.

In the final segment, the girls navigate a perilous canyon with narrow walls and treacherous turns. Ansel's daring leap over a ravine exemplifies her boldness, while

Celaena’s hesitation reveals her pragmatic approach to danger. The scene is punctuated by the threat of arrows and the imminent risk of a fatal fall, emphasizing the precariousness of their escape. The chapter concludes with Ansel successfully clearing the ravine, her exuberant cry echoing in the canyon, symbolizing their resilience and unyielding spirit as they continue their flight into the unknown, pushing past physical and strategic obstacles.



Chapter Seven

In Chapter Seven, Celaena and Ansel face the repercussions of their reckless horse theft involving the Asterion mares. Upon returning to the fortress, they discover Mikhail and other assassins awaiting them, indicating that news of their stunt has already reached the Master. Recognizing the gravity of their actions, Celaena and Ansel kneel in submission, aware that their chances of receiving training are now diminished. The chapter emphasizes the tense atmosphere and Celaena’s growing awareness of the consequences her impulsiveness has brought, setting a tone of impending discipline and the importance of obedience within their environment.

The chapter vividly depicts the Master’s formidable presence, as he assesses the girls with disapproval. Celaena, recalling her past abuse at the hands of Arobynn and the fierce words of Sam, feels a surge of adrenaline and dread. The Master’s silent scrutiny and gentle, yet commanding, gestures reveal a complex dynamic of authority and unspoken expectations. Celaena’s attempt to explain her actions is met with a measured response, hinting that her honesty may earn her some leniency, but the underlying tension remains palpable. Ansel’s willingness to accept a minor punishment underscores her desire to learn and her purpose within the assassin’s world.

As the chapter progresses, the girls are assigned to stable duty, a task that keeps them busy from morning until noon. This laborious chore provides a temporary respite from the tension of their previous misstep, yet it also fuels Celaena’s anxiety about what the future holds. The narrative underscores the grueling routine of their training and responsibilities, highlighting their physical and emotional endurance. Despite her eagerness to leave the stables, Celaena’s anticipation grows as she awaits her first lesson with the Master, symbolizing her hope for redemption and acceptance.

In the concluding part, Celaena ascends to the fortress roof, where she finds the Master gazing across the desert. Her visit to this elevated vantage point signifies a

moment of reflection and potential transformation. The chapter ends with a sense of anticipation, as Celaena prepares for her upcoming lesson and the challenges it may bring. The scene underscores her resilience and determination to prove herself, hinting at the pivotal role that her training and inner strength will play in her journey ahead.



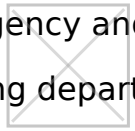
Chapter Eight

In this chapter, the focus is on Celaena’s preparations for her upcoming departure and her attempt to enjoy a rare moment of camaraderie with her friend Ansel. The scene begins with Celaena applying makeup, highlighting her skill and the dual purpose of her routine—both practical for her work and a source of personal enjoyment. Ansel, celebrating her birthday and Midsummer Eve, is surprised by Celaena’s insistence on fun, though Celaena’s playful threat underscores their close bond. This intimate moment reveals Celaena’s desire for normalcy amidst the chaos of her life as an assassin, emphasizing her longing for connection and fleeting happiness before her imminent departure.

The chapter then shifts to the Midsummer Eve festival, a silent yet vibrant gathering of assassins in the fortress courtyard. Contrary to expectations of lively music, the scene is characterized by silent dancing under the moonlight, with everyone engaging in strange and familiar dances. Celaena observes the unusual atmosphere, feeling a mix of nostalgia and detachment. The gathering is infused with wine and a sense of carefree revelry, contrasting sharply with her usual focus on training. Despite her love for parties, she is inwardly torn, wishing she could spend more time honing her skills with her master, yet understanding the importance of participating in this tradition.

Further into the festivities, Celaena witnesses her companions, especially Ansel and Mikhail, enjoying the dance and the night’s fleeting joy. Her thoughts drift to Arobynn, her former master, and her conflicted feelings about him—his calculated grace versus Mikhail’s carefree nature. She also reflects on her concern for Sam, worried about what Arobynn might have done to him, and her guilt for not checking on him sooner. These reflections highlight her internal struggle with trust, safety, and her desire for independence, as she contemplates her future away from Arobynn’s control.

In the closing moments, Celaena’s resolve solidifies as she prepares to leave her current life behind. She has secretly acquired her own apartment, a symbol of her independence and her defiance against Arobynn’s authority. She is determined to stand up to him if he ever harms her or Sam again. When Ilias offers to dance, she initially hesitates but ultimately decides to embrace the moment, influenced by her friend Ansel’s advice to live a little. This decision marks a pivotal step toward reclaiming her agency and embracing her own path, even as the shadow of her past and her impending departure loom over her.



Chapter Nine

In this chapter, Celaena struggles with her focus during a training session with the Master of the Silent Assassins, distracted by lingering thoughts and her recent conflicts. Her mind is preoccupied with feelings of guilt and self-awareness, especially after a confrontation with her friend Ansel, whom she perceives as spoiled and selfish. Despite her internal turmoil, Celaena observes and begins to mimic the Master's movements, learning to embody the qualities of power, agility, and restraint. The training on the rooftop serves as a metaphor for her internal development, blending physical discipline with emotional reflection.

As night deepens, Celaena confesses her fears about returning home, revealing her anxiety about the changes she anticipates and her uncertainty about the future. She admits that her experiences, especially her punishment by Arobynn and her time in Skull's Bay, have altered her perception of the world. The Master listens with compassionate silence, providing a quiet space for her to voice her vulnerability. Her fear of the past and hope for the future intertwine, highlighting her emotional complexity and the weight of her recent experiences.

The chapter also explores the evolving friendship between Celaena and Ansel. Ansel, dressed in her father's armor, admits her regret over past harsh words, expressing her genuine affection and concern for Celaena. Their exchange is tender and sincere, marked by mutual apologies and an understanding that their bond is rare and valuable. Ansel's declaration of being her first true friend underscores the loneliness Celaena feels despite her confidence and skill. Their heartfelt conversation, accompanied by shared wine, signifies a moment of reconciliation and emotional intimacy amidst the overarching tension.

The chapter concludes with a sinister turn as Celaena, after sharing a toast with Ansel, experiences a sudden, strange taste in her wine. Her realization that the drink is

poisoned comes too late, and she collapses into unconsciousness. This ominous ending hints at impending danger and betrayal, adding a layer of suspense and foreshadowing the peril that awaits her. The chapter masterfully combines themes of self-discovery, friendship, vulnerability, and treachery, setting the stage for the challenges ahead.



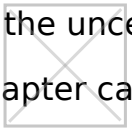
Chapter Ten

The chapter opens with Celaena awakening abruptly to a pounding noise, which she initially perceives as an anvil but quickly realizes is a metaphorical representation of her headache. She finds herself alone in the desert, miles from her presumed location near the assassin’s fortress, with Kasida watching over her. Her belongings are mostly gone, except for her dagger and a tucked-in scroll. The scene sets a tone of confusion and vulnerability, as Celaena grapples with her situation and the realization that she has been abandoned or possibly betrayed, intensifying her sense of isolation in the vast desert landscape.

Celaena discovers a farewell letter from Ansel, apologizing for the abrupt end and instructing her to go home, accompanied by the Master’s approval letter. She questions why she was expelled so suddenly, suspecting it might be due to her recent conflicts or perceived flaws. Her mind races to interpret her standing with the Master and the assassin’s organization, feeling hurt and betrayed by the apparent rejection. Despite her doubts, she considers breaking the seal on the approval letter, but hesitates, fearing repercussions or uncovering unpleasant truths. Her emotional turmoil underscores her vulnerability and longing for belonging.

Determined to leave her uncertain fate behind, Celaena mounts Kasida and rides toward the port of Xandria, opting to find a ship there instead of crossing treacherous sands. As she journeys, she notices a large contingent of soldiers marching into the desert—members of Lord Berick’s forces—raising her suspicion. Her careful observation reveals no sign of their lord, hinting at a larger, possibly ominous, military movement. The presence of the assassins’ fortress in the distance, along with the approaching soldiers, heightens her awareness of the dangerous political and military tensions at play, prompting her to remain cautious and alert.

The next morning, Xandria appears eerily quiet, likely due to recent conflicts or the aftermath of an attack on the assassins. Celaena manages to secure passage on a ship bound for Amier, a remote port in Melisande, as the region faces an embargo on ships to other parts of the empire. Her plan is to travel from Amier back to Rifthold via Kasida, hoping to find another vessel to complete her journey. The chapter concludes with her preparing for departure, emphasizing her resolve to escape her current predicament and the uncertain future awaiting her beyond the desert and political upheaval. This chapter captures her ongoing struggle for freedom and the complex web of loyalties and betrayals surrounding her.



Chapter Eleven

In this chapter, the narrative follows Celaena’s intense and urgent infiltration of a besieged fortress. She rides swiftly across the dunes, driven by a sense of immediacy, and dismounts to stealthily enter the chaos within. The scene is vivid with imagery of fires, fallen bodies, and signs of a recent breach, suggesting a covert entry possibly facilitated by someone who deliberately left the gates unlocked. Celaena’s focus is sharply on her mission, and she carefully navigates the battlefield, aware that the true danger lies not just in the enemies outside but in the mystery of the whereabouts of the Master, a key figure she must find.

As she advances deeper into the fortress, the scene becomes increasingly violent and chaotic, with bodies of soldiers and assassins mingling in the blood-soaked courtyard. She observes the devastation and contemplates the possibility that someone allowed the enemies inside. Her thoughts reveal a deeper concern: the Master’s absence and vulnerability, which could be exploited by her enemies. The chapter emphasizes her growing suspicion that the attack was orchestrated from within, and her urgency intensifies as she pushes forward to locate the Master and uncover the truth behind the assault.

The climax approaches as Celaena reaches the Master’s chambers amidst a scene of bloodshed and destruction. She finds the Master and his son, Ilias, both critically injured, revealing that the attack was targeted and personal. The Master appears drugged and helpless, and Celaena witnesses a tense confrontation with Ansel, a woman who is revealed to be an antagonist. The confrontation is charged with emotion, as Celaena fights to save the Master’s life and prevent Ansel from executing her deadly plans. The scene underscores themes of loyalty, betrayal, and the desperate struggle for control amid chaos.

In the final moments, Celaena confronts Ansel in a fierce struggle, with the stakes higher than ever. She manages to wound her adversary, but the confrontation is far from over. Ansel’s hatred is palpable, and her resolve to carry out her mission reveals her as a deeply committed and dangerous foe. The chapter ends on a tense note, with Celaena questioning her enemy’s motives and the true extent of the betrayal, leaving the reader eager to see how she will navigate the perilous aftermath and the ongoing threat posed by Ansel’s machinations.



Chapter Twelve

In this chapter, Celaena demonstrates her resourcefulness and compassion as she tends to Ilias’s bleeding wound, showing her resolve in the face of danger. She quickly assesses the threat, binds Ilias’s wound, and calls for help, revealing her ability to remain composed under pressure. Meanwhile, the Master’s condition is critical, having been poisoned with a paralyzing agent in his wine—an act of betrayal by Ansel, intended to incapacitate him before her final act of violence. Celaena’s quick thinking to find an antidote underscores her role as both healer and protector in a perilous situation.

As the scene shifts to a tense chase, Celaena prepares to confront Ansel, who is fleeing across the desert on horseback. Using her skills with a bow, she takes aim at her target, firing an arrow that narrowly misses. Her decision to fire after the allotted twenty minutes reflects her sense of duty and the weight of her promises. The pursuit culminates with her watching Ansel disappear into the horizon, symbolizing a complex mix of duty, regret, and the harsh realities of her mission. The chapter emphasizes her internal conflict between personal feelings and the demands of her role.

The narrative then reveals a long night of recovery and reflection. The aftermath of the battle leaves many dead, including twenty assassins, and the fortress is filled with mourning. The Master’s discussion about Ansel’s past reveals a history of pain, loss, and the consequences of unresolved trauma. His insights into her character—how she endured pain and transformed it into hate—add depth to her motivations. Celaena’s presence in this moment highlights her understanding of the complex nature of her enemies and the importance of mercy and restraint.

In the concluding moments, the Master confides in Celaena about his long-held knowledge of Ansel’s true background and his hope that she would eventually reveal herself. His reflection on pain, endurance, and the potential for redemption

underscores a recurring theme: that suffering can forge strength or destroy a person. The chapter ends with a poignant acknowledgment of the fragile connection between Celaena and Ansel, emphasizing that her mercy and kindness might leave a lasting impact. The chapter explores themes of loyalty, betrayal, and the moral ambiguities faced by those caught in the shadows of war and revenge.

