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Crown of midnight chapter summary

"A line that should never be crossed is about to be breached. It puts this entire castle in jeopardy—and the life of your friend." From the throne of glass rules a king with a fist of iron and a soul as black as pitch. Bold, daring, and lethal, assassin Celaena Sardothien won the brutal contest to become his Champion. Yet Celaena is far from loyal to the crown. She hides her secret vigilantly; she knows that the man she serves is bent on evil. Keeping up the deadly charade becomes increasingly difficult when Celaena realizes she is not the only one seeking justice. As she tries to untangle the mysteries buried deep within the glass castle, her closest relationships suffer. It seems no one is above questioning her allegiances—not the Crown Prince Dorian; not Chaol, the Captain of the Guard; not even her best friend, Nehemia, a foreign princess with a rebel heart. Then, an unspeakable tragedy shatters Celaena's world. She must decide once and for all where her loyalties lie . . . and whom she will fight for. Bryan is back and so is Celaena Sardothien! The first in our four sequel episodes, check out Sarah J. Maas' second book in the Throne of Glass series. Bryan's quick summary: Celaena is now the King's Champion ... or in other words: his top assassin. Having been pulled from the salt mines and pitted against all the others in a cruel contest, when Celaena won, she knew she'd be required to do the King's bidding. Which really means killing all his potential opponents. While the work is distasteful, Celaena carries it out with cold precision, raising the eyebrows of her two previous suitors, Chaol, the Captain of the Royal Guard, and Dorian, the King's son. But unbeknown to anyone, Celaena is playing a deadly game. One that would be fatal for her if the King were to know. And now the King has given her a killing spree task that will prove to be her undoing unless she can stay one step ahead of the intense political posturing and the hidden power the King seems to command. Crown of Midnight is by Sarah J. Maas So what did we think? (From a reader's perspective) 1. (Robert) This story is great! So much more riveting than the first book. The twists and turns are fast and furious, and we see plenty of Celaena in full action (what I was missing from Book one!). The characters are sharper and more believable in their motivations. It's a leap above Throne of Glass. NOTE: There is implied sexual content (though not explicit) and PLENTY of violence and gore. Older YA readers only. 2. (Robert) The story starts completely in mid action (in media res) and you know you are already off on an adventure. I unfolds with new characters, snappy dialog with good repartee between the main characters. We also get some more back story slowly unwinding, and more about the problems with magic vanishing - and the threat of its return. 3. (Robert) I liked the much deeper twists and plot elements. Celaena really has to keep her wits about her on almost every page, and this is what we love about this character. It's as if she has grown into her King's Champion role, and her sassiness and street-smarts has risen several notches to keep pace. If you loved the first book, the second is going to be a treat. What did we think from a writer's perspective? 1. (Robert) I liked the complexity in the this story: a much more mature and interwoven plot in this sequel. Maas has "masterfully" incorporated editorial feedback from Throne of Glass; polished and sharpened her writer skills and written a wonderfully thrilling book. This is how to do a sequel in a series - and who wouldn't want to read on! The great chasm that opens up between her and Chaol is really good (quite raw and emotionally believable). 2. (Robert) We get some new revelations thrown out, and there are some genuine "I didn't see that coming" moments, without it being silly. There's lots of foreshadowing too, so the combination of these two makes for a great reader experience where some of what you expect to happen plays out (this is enjoyable) and some throws you nicely and makes you want to read on to find out what happens next! (Especially a fantastic mid-point involving Nehemia!) 3. (Bryan) I still think that all these hidden corridors which are only behind tapestries are a bit weak: why does no one else other than Celaena seems to accidentally discover these? I also found all the POV changes far too frequent (many within one chapter) and jarring for me. I wonder how this works in the audio version? Bryan and Robert's Famous Takeaways: 1. Great new characters, sharpening of the old ones and some meaty action make for a great sequel! 2. I can see why Sarah J. Maas commands a decent shelf presence in my local stores, and this series is only getting better. Love to see it on Netflix or similar for a binge-watch! 3. Celaena is growing into a fully-fledged character we'll want to follow, a killer with a conscience! Prompt of the Week: You are given a mission by your ruler that is impossible to decline and impossible to achieve without revealing a deep and dark secret. How do you turn this to your advantage and gain the upper hand? Write your response to the prompt or the show in the comments! Click here to check out Crown of Midnight on Amazon Listen to the podcast: Watch on YouTube: Top reviews Most recent Top reviews 8/10 If you liked Throne of Glass then you will love this one. Crown of Midnight has to be my favourite book in the series so far with Celaena really coming into her own and where we really start to get into the story.Having survived the trials in Throne of Glass, Celaena takes on her role as the King's Assassin for a King that she despises. Her role causes some friction between her and her friends as Chaol and Dorian struggle to understand why Celaena would work for a man that killed her entire family. Secretly Celaena has her own agenda as she is tasked with killing one of the court's most popular male consorts, a young man who trained with Celaena as a child.While the characters in this book go about their daily lives, Celaena begins to unearth dark secrets of the king and finds herself drawn into a plot which forces her to confront her past and who she truly is. Something she has worked hard to run away from for so many years.The opinions that I developed in Throne of Glass about various characters really began to change in this book as characters such as Chaol and Dorian start to show their true colours. I found that I started to like Dorian a lot more in this book and while I rooted for Chaol in a lot of the storyline he quickly fell from my good graces as he struggled to cope with what Celaena truly is.As for Celaena, I found that I really enjoyed seeing Celaena go from a girl who worked at the whim of others to a young and powerful heroine. You finally get to see a fraction of why she is considered Adarlan's most famous assassin now that she has some freedom to manoeuvre. Despite the strong woman she becomes, I love that she continues to have a weakness for books, luxuries and beautiful dresses. Despite her weaknesses she comes across as a strong and confident lead willing to sacrifice everything for the person she loves but not letting that love define her in any way.I thoroughly enjoyed this book as the pacing was good; it rarely felt like we were being forced into a plot twist at any point. There were some plot twists that I guessed while others I was pleasantly surprised with. To be honest anyone who is a regular reader of fantasy will predict many of the plot twists but I found them all rather enjoyable anyway.The greatest surprise for me was the big romance for Celaena. One of my pet peeves is that romance in fantasy stories always feels so forced and characters end up being dictated by them. In Crown of Midnight I found that while Dorian and Chaol let their feelings guide them, the way Celaena is able to detach herself from this to do what she needs to do was a refreshing change.If you liked Throne of Glass then you will love this one. While it isn't one of the great epic stories like Terry Goodkind's Sword of Truth, or George R. R. Martin's Game of Thrones, this is definitely a great read and I could barely put it down. I would highly recommend this book to anyone who wants an enjoyable read. Cover illustrations (c) 2013 Talexi Following the events of Throne of Glass, Celaena Sardothien has a lot on her plate. Assassination, scheming, magic, Wyrdmarks, loss, love, witches, a major revelation or two—Crown of Midnight may not have the plot-driving competition of the previous book in the series, but it's got all the intrigue you could ask for and then some (and two creepy monsters, no less!). In short, this book is a lot. Welcome to the next installment of Reading Throne of Glass! In anticipation of Kingdom of Ash, I'm reading the entire series over the next six weeks. This isn't a reread for me, but a first-read: if you've already read the whole series, you will be able to feel extremely superior while I ponder things you probably know backwards and forwards. My fellow first-readers, though, beware: there are likely to be spoilers for future books in the comments. Spoilers for all of the first two books below! A Brief Summary of Some of the Bananas Happenings in Crown of Midnight Being the King's Champion sucks, like we all knew it would. Not that Celaena's really being the Champion so much as playing the part: as soon as the first chapter cut away before the murder I knew she wasn't really killing people. But what a precarious place that puts her in! She has to trust her targets to stay away, fake their deaths, and believe that she can keep this game going long enough, and that the king won't catch on. In the castle, the mysteries of the Wyrdmarks, and magic, deepen: The doorknocker on Elena's tomb starts talking to Celaena, who eventually figures out the riddle of Elena's tomb, the Wyrdkeys, and the threatening power the king really has. Dorian discovers he has magic. Another Havilliard, Roland, comes to court, and seems like a royal turd. Chaol falls for Celaena, hard, and realizes he'd give up everything—again—for her. In Rifthold, Celaena plays a dangerous game, giving her latest target—Archer Finn, a courtesan—a few weeks to feed her information before she fakes his death, too. But it's hard to keep control of that kind of situation when you can't see the whole picture, and Archer, it turns out, is not quite the person he pretends to be. No: He's the kind of person who'd decide to have Nehemia horribly murdered, because Nehemia had a conscience when it came to using the Wyrdkeys, and Archer Finn does not. And we meet our first witch, Baba Yellowlegs (RIP), and there's a very strange and terrifying creature in the labyrinth of halls beneath the library, and when an untrained Celaena tries to use the Wyrdmarks to bring back Nehemia, she opens a portal that unintentionally reveals her true nature to Chaol: She's Fae. (Which explains ... a lot.) And there's not even the half of her secrets, as Chaol figures out after plotting to get her sent to Wendlyn, where Fae are safe. Spoilers, Secrets, and Selves As I mentioned last week, I came to this series knowing three major spoilers—and it turned out that two of them are central to Crown of Midnight, which I didn't expect. Somehow, I thought the mystery of Celaena's backstory might take a little longer to reveal. But as soon as Aelin Galathynius, heir to Terrasen, was mentioned, I sat up straight. I knew Celaena's real name was Aelin; I did not know that made her the lost Terrasen princess (though I had my suspicions). Sometimes, knowing spoilers can ruin a reading experience, but not in this case: Knowing almost made reading the book more tense, because I was constantly wondering how: How would this come out? Who would find out? Would Celaena ever admit it to herself? She starts to acknowledge her history, little by little, and the hints dropped are delicious (Mort the doorknocker saying "I couldn't lie to you," for one, made me even more certain she was royal.) But at the end, when Chaol finds the answers in Dorian's books, I read so fast I kept having to go back and reread, to firm everything up in my head. Everything about this reveal is delicious, and so carefully seeded, from the scene mid-book where Celaena takes off on her parents' death-day and remembers the day she snapped in the mine all the way up to the moment when Dorian brings his genealogy books to her room and leaves them there. It was seeded even before that, in the first book, when Celaena received the arrow at Yulemas. And Chaol almost figured it out himself, once. Just not quite. I love it when a plan—or, in this case, a plot—comes together. (I love that Chaol's discovery in the books feels very clearly like a shout-out to Ned Stark figuring out the Baratheon/Lannister secret in Game of Thrones.) And I especially love that this isn't one of those stories where a person has to be convinced that they are X long-lost heir to Y country. No, Celaena knows. When Archer Finn first mentions Aelin, Celaena knows that anyone claiming to be the heir of Terrasen is a fraud. And she shoves down "a desperate, foolish hope." Is it a hope that she could be heir again? That she could tell full truths, rather than just parts of them? Yes, Arobynn found her, but it clearly wasn't quite as simple as that. Yes, she's from Terrasen. Yes, her parents are dead. But there's so much more to the story, and Maas is smart to end this book on this single short sentence: "Chaol sank to his knees." One thing is certain: he's overwhelmed by what he's just pieced together from the clue Celaena gave him. But it's not yet clear why. Chaol's lesson, the one he learns horribly throughout this book, is that his unwavering loyalty isn't always a good trait. The mistakes he makes are horrible, but not surprising: the way they drive a wedge between him and Celaena is painful for both of them, but equally understandable. So now he's faced with an incredibly powerful secret and a choice: Is he loyal to king and country, still, after all of this? Or is he brave enough to go against his own nature and see this piece of knowledge as a tool and a possibility? And what about that joke-that-wasn't-a-joke, early on, about how useful it is to have Adarlan's Assassin in one's debt? Magic and World-embiggening I had a lot of questions, last week, about the Wyrdmarks and the witches and the magic and the world—and while some of them were answered, others just got ... bigger. Magic vanished before the king banned it? If Elena's story was rewritten to erase that she was a warrior, what else has been rewritten in this country's history? Why did Gavin build the castle there? So Calaculla is near an iron deposit, which is handy, since iron is immune to magic—but what about all that salt they're mining in Endovier? There were demons called Valg and they stole Fae to breed with them and that made witches? So witches are sort of ... the Uruk-hai of this world? "By the Valg, three were made"—so the Wyrdkeys are inherently demonic, but the Wyrd itself, which does a lot more than just make keys and gates, is neutral? Though we're rarely with the king until the very end—when we find out this crazy bastard is breeding wyverns? (all that dreaming of wings!)—there's clearly a lot of action running along in the background of this story, from the slave revolt in Calaculla to the disappearing scouts in the White Fang Mountains. Knowing that pieces are moving off-screen deepens the action we do see: all this happens in the king's castle, with him mostly unaware—but our heroine is equally unaware of what the king is up to in the world. She's hardly heard a thing about the war since she went to Endovier. It's all secrets, all the way down. The important part, though, is that the king has Wyrdkeys, and that is very bad, and all of the backstory to how the keys were made, and Queen Maeve, and the very founding of countries in which this is all taking place—it's all tied together, though Maas is still being coy about how. And it definitely matters who that monster beneath the clock tower was, once. (There were no holidays, religious or otherwise, this time around, so less for me to ponder about belief in this world—apart from the bit about how Queen Mab became Lady Deanna, Goddess of the Hunt, which is pretty interesting, given the idea that dead Fae can be "made into" goddesses.) You Say "Archer," I See Arrow If Throne of Glass's plot was a little predictable, big-picture-wise—Celaena was never going to lose that competition—Crown of Midnight took me by surprise at least once. And the most effective of those surprises was probably Archer Finn, that pretty, conniving, power-hungry man. When we meet Archer, there's a suggestion that he deserves some of the same sympathy a reader might give Celaena—that his experience being raised as a courtesan shared more than a little in common with her experience being raised as an assassin. He too is very good at his job, and full of surprises, and strikingly attractive, and I have to admit, part of what made me believe him for too long was probably that I couldn't help but picture him as rather like a young Oliver Queen (as played by Stephen Amell). Wealthy, smooth, hiding things, better at fighting than you might expect—you can see where this is coming from, right? So Archer's betrayal was a twist I didn't see coming, even though I was certain it wasn't Minister Mullison behind Nehemia's death. (I thought perhaps the king was feeding Archer information, to set Celaena up so he could make good on his threats, and get rid of her.) There's a lot to process in the things Archer reveals, or that Celaena remembers while dealing with him: He knows, he claims, about Celaena's heritage: Arobynn told him. Arobynn, who hovers behind so much, still unseen. Maas doles out little tidbits about Arobynn, and, meaningfully, about the night Celaena got caught: It was a trap. Arobynn's personal guard tried to warn her, but wound up dead. Sam was tortured. Celaena has a "long, violent" history with a courtesan she never wants to see again. I'm wondering if that's the same ex-friend who told her horror stories about the witches. And speaking of witches, I want to know what such a powerful witch was doing traveling with a carnival. Baba Yellowlegs was a terrifying piece of work—and we still don't know who wanted to buy Dorian's secrets, though presumably it was Roland, and presumably this is Very Bad given that Roland has one of those creepy dark rings and a magical bloodline too—but I was sad to see her end, because, well, witches. Even if this witch maybe ate some Fae who were stuck in their animal forms. (More than once, my notes just say "YIKES.") When Dorian meets Baba, one question hangs over everything: If no one person could still have magic, if even the Fae are lost, what's up with his just-appearing power—power Nehemia seems to be aware of, and have some idea how to help with? Speaking of Nehemia... One of the other spoilers I knew, and the one I was aware occurs in this book, was Nehemia's sacrifice. And it's probably good that I knew about this one rather than was surprised by it, because it's ... not so great. And I don't just mean because I'm heartbroken that she's gone. While Celaena was off not-murdering people, and the king was off breeding wyverns and who knows what else, Nehemia was off in Rifthold trying to build a rebellion—to make a better world. She's smart, clever, canny in all the right ways, angry, has no time for your nonsense; she's a really wonderful blend of character traits that don't always crop up in the same people. And she knows more than she ever lets on. Nehemia gets things that Celaena never will, for all of Celaena's sympathy and anger and rage at a king who enslaves and ruthlessly murders and otherwise tramples all over the people he conquers. And we, as readers, understand why each woman is like this: They were raised differently, one to rule and guide; the other to, well, murder and vanish. There's an argument that Nehemia's choice to let herself be murdered makes sense within the world Maas has created, and I can almost understand that, if I squint a little: Nehemia said, more than once, that she would do anything to free her people, and clearly she believes that Celaena can help with that. But I'm not sure I buy that her belief in Celaena was as zealous as her sacrifice suggests. I'm also not convinced that the idea she and Elena discuss, in that odd single-page chapter, holds water—the idea that Celaena (or Dorian) needs to "break." After everything? After losing her parents, being betrayed, spending a year in the salt mines, and enduring the king's contest, Celaena needs to be more broken? To what end? To make her angry enough to kill again? But the choice to have Nehemia die so that Celaena might be motivated to pick up her fight also has ramifications out here in the real world, where her death reads as an unfortunate entry into the list of People of Color Making Huge Sacrifices So White People Can Save the Day. Nehemia is the only major character of color in these books (so far), and her fate reminds me of all the SFF movies where the black character dies first, all the characters of color who exist primarily to teach the white characters something, and all the ways that characters of color, when they exist in fantasy at all, are frequently pushed to the sidelines. Nehemia deserved better, and having her choose to make this sacrifice doesn't take away the sting. I will miss Nehemia's anger, her willingness to push Dorian and Celaena on their privilege, the excellent way she played the entire court; I will keep wishing she'd gotten to have a narrative of her own, on the page, apart from helping Celaena; I will keep being disappointed that Maas took the only other major female character out of play. Where Does All of This Leave Our Girl? Well, on a boat to Wendlyn, on the most basic level. But she snapped, again, in her way: she turned into a cold, lethal killing machine, the person Chaol thought she'd be when he found her in Endovier. She stalked the streets, tortured people for intel, took out her rage in the only ways she could find—and then got dragged back to herself by a bigger threat in the form of the creature under the library. I don't want to say I like this about Celaena, but it makes for an interesting character trait: She can absolutely be self-absorbed and destructive, but she'll try like hell to do the right thing, the best thing, where the people she cares about are concerned. Even if she's furious at them. Even if she just wants to be left alone to wreak havoc and get vengeance. It's a specific kind of loyalty, and Maas writes it well—and seals it with Celaena's will. All she wants is freedom, and that's exactly what she chooses to leave for Chaol. (Don't think I didn't notice that Baba Yellowlegs tells Celaena the price for her intel is "nameless," and at the end the king considers her Wyrdmark, which roughly translates to "nameless" or "unnamed." Oh, I caught that.) I STILL Have a Lot of Questions and Random Thoughts I'm extremely relieved that nothing worse happened to Fleetfoot. Celaena is spending all of her considerable salary: really? I'd have thought she'd be saving for the eventual freedom she wants so badly. But retail therapy can be a powerful balm. Names are so important in these books that I made a note that Sam's last name was Cortland. "Aren't you going to knock?" is straight-up "It's very rude to stare!" and thus Mort looks like these guys forever and ever, amen. Is it not really conspicuous when she's assigned to guard duty, given that there seem to be no other female guards or soldiers? Boy, I can't wait to see more of Hollin. (I can. I really can.) Do we get to hear the story about her stealing the fancy horse? Can I give Dorian a hug for that great moment when he decides to let Celaena go? What an interesting throwaway reference to Celaena's "brutish" cousin becoming one of the king's generals. I continue to be anxious about Kaltain and what Perrington has done to her now. I've only just cracked Heir of Fire, and am so curious to see what Celaena gets up to once she gets bored of drinking on rooftops! Molly Templeton is also still thinking about the witch's mirrors. Come tell her your theories on Twitter!

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