



ARYA

Outside the inn on a weathered gibbet, a woman's bones were twisting and rattling at every gust of wind.

I know this inn. There hadn't been a gibbet outside the door when she had slept here with her sister Sansa under the watchful eye of Septa Mordane, though. "We don't want to go in," Arya decided suddenly, "there might be ghosts."

"You know how long it's been since I had a cup of wine?" Sandor swung down from the saddle. "Besides, we need to learn who holds the ruby ford. Stay with the horses if you want, it's no hair off my arse."

"What if they know you?" Sandor no longer troubled to hide his face. He no longer seemed to care who knew him. "They might want to take you captive."

"Let them try." He loosened his longsword in its scabbard, and pushed through the door.

Arya would never have a better chance to escape. She could ride off on Craven and take Stranger too. She chewed her lip. Then she led the horses to the stables, and went in after him.

They know him. The silence told her that. But that wasn't the worst thing. She knew them too. Not the skinny innkeep, nor the women, nor the

fieldhands by the hearth. But the others. The soldiers. She knew the soldiers.

“Looking for your brother, Sandor?” Polliver’s hand was down the bodice of the girl on his lap, but now he slid it out.

“Looking for a cup of wine. Innkeep, a flagon of red.” Clegane threw a handful of coppers on the floor.

“I don’t want no trouble, ser,” the innkeep said.

“Then don’t call me *ser*.” His mouth twitched. “Are you deaf, fool? I ordered wine.” As the man ran off, Clegane shouted after him, “*Two cups!* The girl’s thirsty too!”

There are only three, Arya thought. Polliver gave her a fleeting glance and the boy beside him never looked at her at all, but the third one gazed long and hard. He was a man of middling height and build, with a face so ordinary that it was hard to say how old he was. *The Tickler. The Tickler and Polliver both*. The boy was a squire, judging by his age and dress. He had a big white pimple on one side of his nose, and some red ones on his forehead. “Is this the lost puppy Ser Gregor spoke of?” he asked the Tickler. “The one who piddled in the rushes and ran off?”

The Tickler put a warning hand on the boy’s arm, and gave a short sharp shake of his head. Arya read that plain enough.

The squire didn’t, or else he didn’t care. “Ser said his puppy brother tucked his tail between his legs when the battle got too warm at King’s Landing. He said he ran off whimpering.” He gave the Hound a stupid mocking grin.

Clegane studied the boy and never said a word. Polliver shoved the girl off his lap and got to his feet. “The lad’s drunk,” he said. The man-at-arms was almost as tall as the Hound, though not so heavily muscled. A spade-shaped beard covered his jaws and jowls, thick and black and neatly trimmed, but his head was more bald than not. “He can’t hold his wine, is all.”

“Then he shouldn’t drink.”

“The puppy doesn’t scare . . .” the boy began, till the Tickler casually twisted his ear between thumb and forefinger. The words became a squeal

of pain.

The innkeep came scurrying back with two stone cups and a flagon on a pewter platter. Sandor lifted the flagon to his mouth. Arya could see the muscles in his neck working as he gulped. When he slammed it back down on the table, half the wine was gone. “Now you can pour. Best pick up those coppers too, it’s the only coin you’re like to see today.”

“We’ll pay when we’re done drinking,” said Polliver.

“When you’re done drinking you’ll tickle the innkeep to see where he keeps his gold. The way you always do.”

The innkeep suddenly remembered something in the kitchen. The locals were leaving too, and the girls were gone. The only sound in the common room was the faint crackling of the fire in the hearth. *We should go too*, Arya knew.

“If you’re looking for Ser, you come too late,” Polliver said. “He was at Harrenhal, but now he’s not. The queen sent for him.” He wore three blades on his belt, Arya saw; a longsword on his left hip, and on his right a dagger and a slimmer blade, too long to be a dirk and too short to be a sword. “King Joffrey’s dead, you know,” he added. “Poisoned at his own wedding feast.”

Arya edged farther into the room. *Joffrey’s dead*. She could almost see him, with his blond curls and his mean smile and his fat soft lips. *Joffrey’s dead!* She knew it ought to make her happy, but somehow she still felt empty inside. Joffrey was dead, but if Robb was dead too, what did it matter?

“So much for my brave brothers of the Kingsguard.” The Hound gave a snort of contempt. “Who killed him?”

“The Imp, it’s thought. Him and his little wife.”

“What wife?”

“I forgot, you’ve been hiding under a rock. The northern girl. Winterfell’s daughter. We heard she killed the king with a spell, and afterward changed into a wolf with big leather wings like a bat, and flew out a tower window. But she left the dwarf behind and Cersei means to have his head.”

That's stupid, Arya thought. Sansa only knows songs, not spells, and she'd never marry the Imp.

The Hound sat on the bench closest to the door. His mouth twitched, but only the burned side. "She ought to dip him in wildfire and cook him. Or tickle him till the moon turns black." He raised his wine cup and drained it straightaway.

He's one of them, Arya thought when she saw that. She bit her lip so hard she tasted blood. He's just like they are. I should kill him when he sleeps.

"So Gregor took Harrenhal?" Sandor said.

"Didn't require much taking," said Polliver. "The sellswords fled as soon as they knew we were coming, all but a few. One of the cooks opened a postern gate for us, to get back at Hoat for cutting off his foot." He chuckled. "We kept him to cook for us, a couple wenches to warm our beds, and put all the rest to the sword."

"All the rest?" Arya blurted out.

"Well, Ser kept Hoat to pass the time."

Sandor said, "The Blackfish is still in Riverrun?"

"Not for long," said Polliver. "He's under siege. Old Frey's going to hang Edmure Tully unless he yields the castle. The only real fighting's around Raventree. Blackwoods and Brackens. The Brackens are ours now."

The Hound poured a cup of wine for Arya and another for himself, and drank it down while staring at the hearthfire. "The little bird flew away, did she? Well, bloody good for her. She shit on the Imp's head and flew off."

"They'll find her," said Polliver. "If it takes half the gold in Casterly Rock."

"A pretty girl, I hear," said the Tickler. "Honey sweet." He smacked his lips and smiled.

"And courteous," the Hound agreed. "A proper little lady. Not like her bloody sister."

"They found her too," said Polliver. "The sister. She's for Bolton's bastard, I hear."

Arya sipped her wine so they could not see her mouth. She didn't understand what Polliver was talking about. *Sansa has no other sister.* Sandor Clegane laughed aloud.

"What's so bloody funny?" asked Polliver.

The Hound never flicked an eye at Arya. "If I'd wanted you to know, I'd have told you. Are there ships at Saltpans?"

"Saltpans? How should I know? The traders are back at Maidenpool, I heard. Randyll Tarly took the castle and locked Mooton in a tower cell. I haven't heard shit about Saltpans."

The Tickler leaned forward. "Would you put to sea without bidding farewell to your brother?" It gave Arya chills to hear him ask a question. "Ser would sooner you returned to Harrenhal with us, Sandor. I bet he would. Or King's Landing . . ."

"Bugger that. Bugger him. Bugger you."

The Tickler shrugged, straightened, and reached a hand behind his head to rub the back of his neck. Everything seemed to happen at once then; Sandor lurched to his feet, Polliver drew his longsword, and the Tickler's hand whipped around in a blur to send something silver flashing across the common room. If the Hound had not been moving, the knife might have cored the apple of his throat; instead it only grazed his ribs, and wound up quivering in the wall near the door. He laughed then, a laugh as cold and hollow as if it had come from the bottom of a deep well. "I was hoping you'd do something stupid." His sword slid from its scabbard just in time to knock aside Polliver's first cut.

Arya took a step backward as the long steel song began. The Tickler came off the bench with a shortsword in one hand and a dagger in the other. Even the chunky brown-haired squire was up, fumbling for his swordhilt. She snatched her wine cup off the table and threw it at his face. Her aim was better than it had been at the Twins. The cup hit him right on his big white pimple and he went down hard on his tail.

Polliver was a grim, methodical fighter, and he pressed Sandor steadily backward, his heavy longsword moving with brutal precision. The Hound's own cuts were sloppier, his parries rushed, his feet slow and clumsy. *He's drunk*, Arya realized with dismay. *He drank too much too fast, with no food*

in his belly. And the Tickler was sliding around the wall to get behind him. She grabbed the second wine cup and flung it at him, but he was quicker than the squire had been and ducked his head in time. The look he gave her then was cold with promise. *Is there gold hidden in the village?* she could hear him ask. The stupid squire was clutching the edge of a table and pulling himself to his knees. Arya could taste the beginnings of panic in the back of her throat. *Fear cuts deeper than swords. Fears cuts deeper . . .*

Sandor gave a grunt of pain. The burned side of his face ran red from temple to cheek, and the stub of his ear was gone. That seemed to make him angry. He drove back Polliver with a furious attack, hammering at him with the old nicked longsword he had swapped for in the hills. The bearded man gave way, but none of the cuts so much as touched him. And then the Tickler leapt over a bench quick as a snake, and slashed at the back of the Hound's neck with the edge of his short sword.

They're killing him. Arya had no more cups, but there was something better to throw. She drew the dagger they'd robbed off the dying archer and tried to fling it at the Tickler the way he'd done. It wasn't the same as throwing a rock or a crabapple, though. The knife wobbled, and hit him in the arm hilt first. *He never even felt it.* He was too intent on Clegane.

As he stabbed, Clegane twisted violently aside, winning himself half a heartbeat's respite. Blood ran down his face and from the gash in his neck. Both of the Mountain's men came after him hard, Polliver hacking at his head and shoulders while the Tickler darted in to stab at back and belly. The heavy stone flagon was still on the table. Arya grabbed it with two hands, but as she lifted it someone grabbed her arm. The flagon slipped from her fingers and crashed to the floor. Wrenched around, she found herself nose to nose with the squire. *You stupid, you forgot all about him.* His big white pimple had burst, she saw.

"Are you the puppy's puppy?" He had his sword in his right hand and her arm in his left, but her own hands were free, so she jerked his knife from its sheath and sheathed it again in his belly, twisting. He wasn't wearing mail or even boiled leather, so it went right in, the same way Needle had when she killed the stableboy at King's Landing. The squire's eyes got big and he let go of her arm. Arya spun to the door and wrenched the Tickler's knife from the wall.

Polliver and the Tickler had driven the Hound into a corner behind a bench, and one of them had given him an ugly red gash on his upper thigh to go with his other wounds. Sandor was leaning against the wall, bleeding and breathing noisily. He looked as though he could barely stand, let alone fight. "Throw down the sword, and we'll take you back to Harrenhal," Polliver told him.

"So Gregor can finish me himself?"

The Tickler said, "Maybe he'll give you to me."

"If you want me, come get me." Sandor pushed away from the wall and stood in a half-crouch behind the bench, his sword held across his body.

"You think we won't?" said Polliver. "You're drunk."

"Might be," said the Hound, "but you're dead." His foot lashed out and caught the bench, driving it hard into Polliver's shins. Somehow the bearded man kept his feet, but the Hound ducked under his wild slash and brought his own sword up in a vicious backhand cut. Blood spattered on the ceiling and walls. The blade caught in the middle of Polliver's face, and when the Hound wrenched it loose half his head came with it.

The Tickler backed away. Arya could smell his fear. The shortsword in his hand suddenly seemed almost a toy against the long blade the Hound was holding, and he wasn't armored either. He moved swiftly, light on his feet, never taking his eyes off Sandor Clegane. It was the easiest thing in the world for Arya to step up behind him and stab him.

"Is there gold hidden in the village?" she shouted as she drove the blade up through his back. "Is there silver? Gems?" She stabbed twice more. "Is there food? Where is Lord Beric?" She was on top of him by then, still stabbing. "Where did he go? How many men were with him? How many knights? How many bowmen? How many, how many, how many, how many, how many, how many, how many? Is there *gold* in the village?"

Her hands were red and sticky when Sandor dragged her off him. "Enough," was all he said. He was bleeding like a butchered pig himself, and dragging one leg when he walked.

"There's one more," Arya reminded him.

The squire had pulled the knife out of his belly and was trying to stop the blood with his hands. When the Hound yanked him upright, he screamed and started to blubber like a baby. "Mercy," he wept, "please. Don't kill me. Mother have mercy."

"Do I look like your bloody mother?" The Hound looked like nothing human. "You killed this one too," he told Arya. "Pricked him in his bowels, that's the end of him. He'll be a long time dying, though."

The boy didn't seem to hear him. "I came for the girls," he whimpered. "... make me a man, Polly said ... oh, gods, please, take me to a castle ... a maester, take me to a maester, my father's got gold ... it was only for the girls ... mercy, ser."

The Hound gave him a crack across the face that made him scream again. "Don't call me ser." He turned back to Arya. "This one is yours, she-wolf. You do it."

She knew what he meant. Arya went to Polliver and knelt in his blood long enough to undo his swordbelt. Hanging beside his dagger was a slimmer blade, too long to be a dirk, too short to be a man's sword ... but it felt just right in her hand.

"You remember where the heart is?" the Hound asked.

She nodded. The squire rolled his eyes. "Mercy."

Needle slipped between his ribs and gave it to him.

"Good." Sandor's voice was thick with pain. "If these three were whoring here, Gregor must hold the ford as well as Harrenhal. More of his pets could ride up any moment, and we've killed enough of the bloody buggers for one day."

"Where will we go?" she asked.

"Saltpans." He put a big hand on her shoulder to keep from falling. "Get some wine, she-wolf. And take whatever coin they have as well, we'll need it. If there's ships at Saltpans, we can reach the Vale by sea." His mouth twitched at her, as more blood ran down from where his ear had been. "Maybe Lady Lysa will marry you to her little Robert. *There's* a match I'd like to see." He started to laugh, then groaned instead.

When the time came to leave, he needed Arya's help to get back up on Stranger. He had tied a strip of cloth about his neck and another around his thigh, and taken the squire's cloak off its peg by the door. The cloak was green, with a green arrow on a white bend, but when the Hound wadded it up and pressed it to his ear it soon turned red. Arya was afraid he would collapse the moment they set out, but somehow he stayed in the saddle.

They could not risk meeting whoever held the ruby ford, so instead of following the kingsroad they angled south by east, through weedy fields, woods, and marshes. It was hours before they reached the banks of the Trident. The river had returned meekly to its accustomed channel, Arya saw, all its wet brown rage vanished with the rains. *It's tired too*, she thought.

Close by the water's edge, they found some willows rising from a jumble of weathered rocks. Together the rocks and trees formed a sort of natural fort where they could hide from both river and trail. "Here will do," the Hound said. "Water the horses and gather some deadwood for a fire." When he dismounted, he had to catch himself on a tree limb to keep from falling.

"Won't the smoke be seen?"

"Anyone wants to find us, all they need to do is follow my blood. Water and wood. But bring me that wineskin first."

When he got the fire going, Sandor propped up his helm in the flames, emptied half the wineskin into it, and collapsed back against a jut of moss-covered stone as if he never meant to rise again. He made Arya wash out the squire's cloak and cut it into strips. Those went into his helm as well. "If I had more wine, I'd drink till I was dead to the world. Maybe I ought to send you back to that bloody inn for another skin or three."

"No," Arya said. *He wouldn't, would he? If he does, I'll just leave him and ride off.*

Sandor laughed at the fear on her face. "A jest, wolf girl. A bloody jest. Find me a stick, about so long and not too big around. And wash the mud off it. I hate the taste of mud."

He didn't like the first two sticks she brought him. By the time she found one that suited him, the flames had scorched his dog's snout black all the way to the eyes. Inside the wine was boiling madly. "Get the cup from my

bedroll and dip it half full,” he told her. “Be careful. You knock the damn thing over, I *will* send you back for more. Take the wine and pour it on my wounds. Think you can do that?” Arya nodded. “Then what are you waiting for?” he growled.

Her knuckles brushed the steel the first time she filled the cup, burning her so badly she got blisters. Arya had to bite her lip to keep from screaming. The Hound used the stick for the same purpose, clamping it between his teeth as she poured. She did the gash in his thigh first, then the shallower cut on the back of his neck. Sandor coiled his right hand into a fist and beat against the ground when she did his leg. When it came to his neck, he bit the stick so hard it broke, and she had to find him a new one. She could see the terror in his eyes. “Turn your head.” She trickled the wine down over the raw red flesh where his ear had been, and fingers of brown blood and red wine crept over his jaw. He *did* scream then, despite the stick. Then he passed out from the pain.

Arya figured the rest out by herself. She fished the strips they’d made of the squire’s cloak out of the bottom of the helm and used them to bind the cuts. When she came to his ear, she had to wrap up half his head to stop the bleeding. By then dusk was settling over the Trident. She let the horses graze, then hobbled them for the night and made herself as comfortable as she could in a niche between two rocks. The fire burned a while and died. Arya watched the moon through the branches overhead.

“Ser Gregor the Mountain,” she said softly. “Dunsen, Raff the Sweetling, Ser Ilyn, Ser Meryn, Queen Cersei.” It made her feel queer to leave out Polliver and the Tickler. And Joffrey too. She was glad he was dead, but she wished she could have been there to see him die, or maybe kill him herself. *Polliver said that Sansa killed him, and the Imp.* Could that be true? The Imp was a Lannister, and Sansa . . . *I wish I could change into a wolf and grow wings and fly away.*

If Sansa was gone too, there were no more Starks but her. Jon was on the Wall a thousand leagues away, but he was a Snow, and these different aunts and uncles the Hound wanted to sell her to, they weren’t Starks either. They weren’t *wolves*.

Sandor moaned, and she rolled onto her side to look at him. She had left his name out too, she realized. Why had she done that? She tried to think of Mycah, but it was hard to remember what he'd looked like. She hadn't known him long. *All he ever did was play at swords with me.* "The Hound," she whispered, and, "*Valar morghulis.*" Maybe he'd be dead by morning . . .

But when the pale dawn light came filtering through the trees, it was him who woke her with the toe of his boot. She had dreamed she was a wolf again, chasing a riderless horse up a hill with a pack behind her, but his foot brought her back just as they were closing for the kill.

The Hound was still weak, every movement slow and clumsy. He slumped in the saddle, and sweated, and his ear began to bleed through the bandage. He needed all his strength just to keep from falling off Stranger. Had the Mountain's men come hunting them, she doubted if he would even be able to lift a sword. Arya glanced over her shoulder, but there was nothing behind them but a crow flitting from tree to tree. The only sound was the river.

Long before noon, Sandor Clegane was reeling. There were hours of daylight still remaining when he called a halt. "I need to rest," was all he said. This time when he dismounted he *did* fall. Instead of trying to get back up he crawled weakly under a tree, and leaned up against the trunk. "Bloody hell," he cursed. "Bloody hell." When he saw Arya staring at him, he said, "I'd skin you alive for a cup of wine, girl."

She brought him water instead. He drank a little of it, complained that it tasted of mud, and slid into a noisy fevered sleep. When she touched him, his skin was burning up. Arya sniffed at his bandages the way Maester Luwin had done sometimes when treating her cut or scrape. His face had bled the worst, but it was the wound on his thigh that smelled funny to her.

She wondered how far this Saltpans was, and whether she could find it by herself. *I wouldn't have to kill him. If I just rode off and left him, he'd die all by himself. He'll die of fever, and lie there beneath that tree until the end of days.* But maybe it would be better if she killed him herself. She had killed the squire at the inn and he hadn't done anything except grab her arm. The Hound had killed Mycah. *Mycah and more. I bet he's killed a hundred Mycahs.* He probably would have killed her too, if not for the ransom.

Needle glinted as she drew it. Polliver had kept it nice and sharp, at least. She turned her body sideways in a water dancer's stance without even thinking about it. Dead leaves crunched beneath her feet. *Quick as a snake*, she thought. *Smooth as summer silk*.

His eyes opened. "You remember where the heart is?" he asked in a hoarse whisper.

As still as stone she stood. "I . . . I was only . . ."

"*Don't lie*," he growled. "I hate liars. I hate gutless frauds even worse. Go on, do it." When Arya did not move, he said, "I killed your butcher's boy. I cut him near in half, and laughed about it after." He made a queer sound, and it took her a moment to realize he was sobbing. "And the little bird, your pretty sister, I stood there in my white cloak and let them beat her. I *took* the bloody song, she never gave it. I meant to take her too. I should have. I should have fucked her bloody and ripped her heart out before leaving her for that dwarf." A spasm of pain twisted his face. "Do you mean to make me beg, bitch? *Do it!* The gift of mercy . . . avenge your little Michael . . ."

"*Mycah*." Arya stepped away from him. "You don't deserve the gift of mercy."

The Hound watched her saddle Craven through eyes bright with fever. Not once did he attempt to rise and stop her. But when she mounted, he said, "A real wolf would finish a wounded animal."

Maybe some real wolves will find you, Arya thought. *Maybe they'll smell you when the sun goes down*. Then he would learn what wolves did to dogs. "You shouldn't have hit me with an axe," she said. "You should have saved my mother." She turned her horse and rode away from him, and never looked back once.

On a bright morning six days later, she came to a place where the Trident began to widen out and the air smelled more of salt than trees. She stayed close to the water, passing fields and farms, and a little after midday a town appeared before her. *Saltpans*, she hoped. A small castle dominated the town; no more than a holdfast, really, a single tall square keep with a bailey and a curtain wall. Most of the shops and inns and alehouses around the harbor had been plundered or burned, though some looked still inhabited.

But the port was there, and eastward spread the Bay of Crabs, its waters shimmering blue and green in the sun.

And there were ships.

Three, thought Arya, *there are three*. Two were only river galleys, shallow draft boats made to ply the waters of the Trident. The third was bigger, a salt sea trader with two banks of oars, a gilded prow, and three tall masts with furled purple sails. Her hull was painted purple too. Arya rode Craven down to the docks to get a better look. Strangers are not so strange in a port as they are in little villages, and no one seemed to care who she was or why she was here.

I need silver. The realization made her bite her lip. They had found a stag and a dozen coppers on Polliver, eight silvers on the pimply squire she'd killed, and only a couple of pennies in the Tickler's purse. But the Hound had told her to pull off his boots and slice open his blood-drenched clothes, and she'd turned up a stag in each toe, and three golden dragons sewn in the lining of his jerkin. Sandor had kept it all, though. *That wasn't fair. It was mine as much as his*. If she had given him the gift of mercy . . . she hadn't, though. She couldn't go back, no more than she could beg for help. *Begging for help never gets you any*. She would have to sell Craven, and hope she brought enough.

The stable had been burnt, she learned from a boy by the docks, but the woman who'd owned it was still trading behind the sept. Arya found her easily; a big, robust woman with a good horsey smell to her. She liked Craven at first look, asked Arya how she'd come by her, and grinned at her answer. "She's a well-bred horse, that's plain enough, and I don't doubt she belonged to a knight, sweetling," she said. "But the knight wasn't no dead brother o' yours. I been dealing with the castle there many a year, so I know what gentleborn folk is like. This mare is well-bred, but you're not." She poked a finger at Arya's chest. "Found her or stole her, never mind which, that's how it was. Only way a scruffy little thing like you comes to ride a palfrey."

Arya bit her lip. "Does that mean you won't buy her?"

The woman chuckled. "It means you'll take what I give you, sweetling. Else we go down to the castle, and maybe you get nothing. Or even hanged,

for stealing some good knight's horse."

A half-dozen other Saltpans folks were around, going about their business, so Arya knew she couldn't kill the woman. Instead she had to bite her lip and let herself be cheated. The purse she got was pitifully flat, and when she asked for more for the saddle and bridle and blanket, the woman just laughed at her.

She would never have cheated the Hound, she thought during the long walk back to the docks. The distance seemed to have grown by miles since she'd ridden it.

The purple galley was still there. If the ship had sailed while she was being robbed, that would have been too much to bear. A cask of mead was being rolled up the plank when she arrived. When she tried to follow, a sailor up on deck shouted down at her in a tongue she did not know. "I want to see the captain," Arya told him. He only shouted louder. But the commotion drew the attention of a stout grey-haired man in a coat of purple wool, and he spoke the Common Tongue. "I am captain here," he said. "What is your wish? Be quick, child, we have a tide to catch."

"I want to go north, to the Wall. Here, I can pay." She gave him the purse. "The Night's Watch has a castle on the sea."

"Eastwatch." The captain spilled out the silver onto his palm and frowned. "Is this all you have?"

It is not enough, Arya knew without being told. She could see it on his face. "I wouldn't need a cabin or anything," she said. "I could sleep down in the hold, or . . ."

"Take her on as cabin girl," said a passing oarsman, a bolt of wool over one shoulder. "She can sleep with me."

"Mind your tongue," the captain snapped.

"I could work," said Arya. "I could scrub the decks. I scrubbed a castle steps once. Or I could row . . ."

"No," he said, "you couldn't." He gave her back her coins. "It would make no difference if you could, child. The north has nothing for us. Ice and war and pirates. We saw a dozen pirate ships making north as we

rounded Crackclaw Point, and I have no wish to meet them again. From here we bend our oars for home, and I suggest you do the same.”

I have no home, Arya thought. I have no pack. And now I don't even have a horse.

The captain was turning away when she said, “What ship is this, my lord?”

He paused long enough to give her a weary smile. “This is the galleas *Titan's Daughter*, of the Free City of Braavos.”

“Wait,” Arya said suddenly. “I have something else.” She had stuffed it down inside her smallclothes to keep it safe, so she had to dig deep to find it, while the oarsmen laughed and the captain lingered with obvious impatience. “One more silver will make no difference, child,” he finally said.

“It's not silver.” Her fingers closed on it. “It's iron. Here.” She pressed it into his hand, the small black iron coin that Jaqen H'ghar had given her, so worn the man whose head it bore had no features. *It's probably worthless, but . . .*

The captain turned it over and blinked at it, then looked at her again. “This . . . how . . . ?”

Jaqen said to say the words too. Arya crossed her arms against her chest. “*Valar morghulis*,” she said, as loud as if she'd known what it meant.

“*Valar dohaeris*,” he replied, touching his brow with two fingers. “Of course you shall have a cabin.”