

BRIENNE

The septray stood upon an upthrust island half a mile from the shore, where the wide mouth of the Trident widened further still to kiss the Bay of Crabs. Even from shore its prosperity was apparent. Its slope was covered with terraced fields, with fishponds down below and a windmill above, its wood-and-sailcloth blades turning slowly in the breeze off the bay. Brienne could see sheep grazing on the hillside and storks wading in the shallow waters around the ferry landing.

“Saltpans is just across the water,” said Septon Meribald, pointing north across the bay. “The brothers will ferry us over on the morning tide, though I fear what we shall find there. Let us enjoy a good hot meal before we face that. The brothers always have a bone to spare for Dog.” Dog barked and wagged his tail.

The tide was going out now, and swiftly. The water that separated the island from the shore was receding, leaving behind a broad expanse of glistening brown mudflats dotted by tidal pools that glittered like golden coins in the afternoon sun. Brienne scratched the back of her neck, where an insect had bitten her. She had pinned her hair up, and the sun had warmed her skin.

“Why do they call it the Quiet Isle?” asked Podrick.

“Those who dwell here are penitents, who seek to atone for their sins through contemplation, prayer, and silence. Only the Elder Brother and his proctors are permitted to speak, and the proctors only for one day of every seven.”

“The silent sisters never speak,” said Podrick. “I heard they don’t have any tongues.”

Septon Meribald smiled. “Mothers have been cowing their daughters with that tale since I was your age. There was no truth to it then and there is none now. A vow of silence is an act of contrition, a sacrifice by which we prove our devotion to the Seven Above. For a mute to take a vow of silence

would be akin to a legless man giving up the dance.” He led his donkey down the slope, beckoning them to follow. “If you would sleep beneath a roof tonight, you must climb off your horses and cross the mud with me. The path of faith, we call it. Only the faithful may cross safely. The wicked are swallowed by the quicksands, or drowned when the tide comes rushing in. None of you are wicked, I hope? Even so, I would be careful where I set my feet. Walk only where I walk, and you shall reach the other side.”

The path of faith was a crooked one, Brienne could not help but note. Though the island seemed to rise to the northeast of where they left the shore, Septon Meribald did not make directly for it. Instead, he started due east, toward the deeper waters of the bay, which shimmered blue and silver in the distance. The soft brown mud squished up between his toes. As he walked he paused from time to time, to probe ahead with his quarterstaff. Dog stayed near his heels, sniffing at every rock, shell, and clump of seaweed. For once he did not bound ahead or stray.

Brienne followed, taking care to keep close to the line of prints left by the dog, the donkey, and the holy man. Then came Podrick, and last of all Ser Hyle. A hundred yards out, Meribald turned abruptly toward the south, so his back was almost to the septray. He proceeded in that direction for another hundred yards, leading them between two shallow tidal pools. Dog stuck his nose in one and yelped when a crab pinched it with his claw. A brief but furious struggle ensued before the dog came trotting back, wet and mud-spattered, with the crab between his jaws.

“Isn’t *that* where we want to go?” Ser Hyle called out from behind them, pointing at the septray. “We seem to be walking every way but toward it.”

“Faith,” urged Septon Meribald. “Believe, persist, and follow, and we shall find the peace we seek.”

The flats shimmered wetly all about them, mottled in half a hundred hues. The mud was such a dark brown it appeared almost black, but there were swathes of golden sand as well, upthrust rocks both grey and red, and tangles of black and green seaweed. Storks stalked through the tidal pools and left their footprints all around them, and crabs scuttled across the

surface of shallow waters. The air smelled of brine and rot, and the ground sucked at their feet and let them go only reluctantly, with a pop and a squelchy sigh. Septon Meribald turned and turned again and yet again. His footprints filled up with water as soon as he moved on. By the time the ground grew firmer and began to rise beneath the feet, they had walked at least a mile and a half.

Three men were waiting for them as they clambered up the broken stones that ringed the isle's shoreline. They were clad in the brown-and-dun robes of brothers, with wide bell sleeves and pointed cowls. Two had wound lengths of wool about the lower halves of their faces as well, so all that could be seen of them were their eyes. The third brother was the one to speak. "Septon Meribald," he called. "It has been nigh upon a year. You are welcome. Your companions as well."

Dog wagged his tail, and Meribald shook mud from his feet. "Might we beg your hospitality for a night?"

"Yes, of course. There's to be fish stew this evening. Will you require the ferry in the morning?"

"If it is not too much to ask," Meribald turned to his fellow travelers. "Brother Narbert is a proctor of the order, so he is allowed to speak one day of every seven. Brother, these good folk helped me on my way. Ser Hyle Hunt is a gallant from the Reach. The lad is Podrick Payne, late of the westerland. And this is Lady Brienne, known as the Maid of Tarth."

Brother Narbert drew up short. "A woman."

"Yes, brother." Brienne unpinned her hair and shook it out. "Do you have no women here?"

"Not at present," said Narbert. "Those women who do visit come to us sick or hurt, or heavy with child. The Seven have blessed our Elder Brother with healing hands. He has restored many a man to health that even the maesters could not cure, and many a woman too."

"I am not sick or hurt or heavy with child."

"Lady Brienne is a warrior maid," confided Septon Meribald, "hunting for the Hound."

“Aye?” Narbert seemed taken aback. “To what end?”

Brienne touched Oathkeeper’s hilt. “His,” she said.

The proctor studied her. “You are... brawny for a woman, it is true, but... mayhaps I should take you up to Elder Brother. He will have seen you crossing the mud. Come.”

Narbert led them along a pebbled path and through a grove of apple trees to a whitewashed stable with a peaked thatch roof. “You may leave your animals here. Brother Gillam will see that they are fed and watered.”

The stable was more than three-quarters empty. At one end were half a dozen mules, being tended by a bandy-legged little brother whom Brienne took for Gillam. Way down at the far end, well away from the other animals, a huge black stallion trumpeted at the sound of their voices and kicked at the door of his stall.

Ser Hyle gave the big horse an admiring look as he was handing his reins to Brother Gillam. “A handsome beast.”

Brother Narbert sighed. “The Seven send us blessings, and the Seven send us trials. Handsome he may be, but Driftwood was surely whelped in hell. When we sought to harness him to a plow he kicked Brother Rawney and broke his shinbone in two places. We had hoped gelding might improve the beast’s ill temper, but... Brother Gillam, will you show them?”

Brother Gillam lowered his cowl. Underneath he had a mop of blond hair, a tonsured scalp, and a bloodstained bandage where he should have had an ear.

Podrick gasped. “The horse bit off your *ear*?”

Gillam nodded, and covered his head again.

“Forgive me, brother,” said Ser Hyle, “but I might take the other ear, if you approached me with a pair of shears.”

The jest did not sit well with Brother Narbert. “You are a knight, ser. Driftwood is a beast of burden. The Smith gave men horses to help them in their labors.” He turned away. “If you will. Elder Brother will no doubt be waiting.”

The slope was steeper than it had looked from across the mudflats. To ease it, the brothers had erected a flight of wooden steps that wandered back and forth across the hillside and amongst the buildings. After a long day in the saddle Brienne was glad for a chance to stretch her legs.

They passed a dozen brothers of the order on their way up; cowed men in dun-and-brown who gave them curious looks as they went by, but spoke no word of greeting. One was leading a pair of milk cows toward a low barn roofed in sod; another worked a butter churn. On the upper slopes they saw three boys driving sheep, and higher still they passed a lychyard where a brother bigger than Brienne was struggling to dig a grave. From the way he moved, it was plain to see that he was lame. As he flung a spadeful of the stony soil over one shoulder, some chanced to spatter against their feet. "Be more watchful there," chided Brother Narbert. "Septon Meribald might have gotten a mouthful of dirt." The gravedigger lowered his head. When Dog went to sniff him he dropped his spade and scratched his ear.

"A novice," explained Narbert.

"Who is the grave for?" asked Ser Hyle, as they resumed their climb up the wooden steps.

"Brother Clement, may the Father judge him justly."

"Was he old?" asked Podrick Payne.

"If you consider eight-and-forty old, aye, but it was not the years that killed him. He died of wounds he got at Saltpans. He had taken some of our mead to the market there, on the day the outlaws descended on the town."

"The Hound?" said Brienne.

"Another, just as brutal. He cut poor Clement's tongue out when he would not speak. Since he had taken a vow of silence, the raider said he had no need of it. The Elder Brother will know more. He keeps the worst of the tidings from outside to himself, so as not to disturb the tranquillity of the septray. Many of our brothers came here to escape the horrors of the world, not to dwell upon them. Brother Clement was not the only wounded man amongst us. Some wounds do not show." Brother Narbert gestured to their right. "There lies our summer arbor. The grapes are small and tart, but make

a drinkable wine. We brew our own ale as well, and our mead and cider are far famed.”

“The war has never come here?” Brienne said.

“Not this war, praise the Seven. Our prayers protect us.”

“And your tides,” suggested Meribald. Dog barked agreement.

The brow of the hill was crowned by a low wall of unmortared stone, encircling a cluster of large buildings; the windmill, its sails creaking as they turned, the cloisters where the brothers slept and the common hall where they took their meals, a wooden sept for prayer and meditation. The sept had windows of leaded glass, wide doors carved with likenesses of the Mother and the Father, and a seven-sided steeple with a walk on top. Behind it was a vegetable garden where some older brothers were pulling weeds. Brother Narbert led the visitors around a chestnut tree to a wooden door set in the side of the hill.

“A cave with a door?” Ser Hyle said, surprised.

Septon Meribald smiled. “It is called the Hermit’s Hole. The first holy man to find his way here lived therein, and worked such wonders that others came to join him. That was two thousand years ago, they say. The door came somewhat later.”

Perhaps two thousand years ago the Hermit’s Hole had been a damp, dark place, floored with dirt and echoing to the sounds of dripping water, but no longer. The cave that Brienne and her companions entered had been turned into a warm, snug sanctum. Woolen carpets covered the ground, tapestries the walls. Tall beeswax candles gave more than ample light. The furnishings were strange but simple; a long table, a settle, a chest, several tall cases full of books, and chairs. All were made from driftwood, oddly shaped pieces cunningly joined together and polished till they shone a deep gold in the candlelight.

The Elder Brother was not what Brienne had expected. He could hardly be called *elder*; for a start; whereas the brothers weeding in the garden had had the stooped shoulders and bent backs of old men, he stood straight and tall, and moved with the vigor of a man in the prime of his years. Nor did he

have the gentle, kindly face she expected of a healer. His head was large and square, his eyes shrewd, his nose veined and red. Though he wore a tonsure, his scalp was as stubbly as his heavy jaw.

He looks more like a man made to break bones than to heal one, thought the Maid of Tarth, as the Elder Brother strode across the room to embrace Septon Meribald and pat Dog. “It is always a glad day when our friends Meribald and Dog honor us with another visit,” he announced, before turning to his other guests. “And new faces are always welcome. We see so few of them.”

Meribald performed the customary courtesies before seating himself upon the settle. Unlike Septon Narbert, the Elder Brother did not seem dismayed by Brienne’s sex, but his smile did flicker and fade when the septon told him why she and Ser Hyle had come. “I see,” was all he said, before he turned away with, “You must be thirsty. Please, have some of our sweet cider to wash the dust of travel from your throats.” He poured for them himself. The cups were carved from driftwood too, no two the same. When Brienne complimented them, he said, “My lady is too kind. All we do is cut and polish the wood. We are blessed here. Where the river meets the bay, the currents and the tides wrestle one against the other, and many strange and wondrous things are pushed toward us, to wash up on our shores. Driftwood is the least of it. We have found silver cups and iron pots, sacks of wool and bolts of silk, rusted helms and shining swords... aye, and rubies.”

That interested Ser Hyle. “Rhaegar’s rubies?”

“It may be. Who can say? The battle was long leagues from here, but the river is tireless and patient. Six have been found. We are all waiting for the seventh.”

“Better rubies than bones.” Septon Meribald was rubbing his foot, the mud flaking off beneath his finger. “Not all the river’s gifts are pleasant. The good brothers collect the dead as well. Drowned cows, drowned deer, dead pigs swollen up to half the size of horses. Aye, and corpses.”

“Too many corpses, these days.” The Elder Brother sighed. “Our gravedigger knows no rest. Rivermen, westermen, northmen, all wash up

here. Knights and knaves alike. We bury them side by side, Stark and Lannister, Blackwood and Bracken, Frey and Darry. That is the duty the river asks of us in return for all its gifts, and we do it as best we can. Sometimes we find a woman, though... or worse, a little child. Those are the cruelest gifts.” He turned to Septon Meribald. “I hope that you have time to absolve us of our sins. Since the raiders slew old Septon Bennet, we have had no one to hear confession.”

“I shall make time,” said Meribald, “though I hope you have some better sins than the last time I came through.” Dog barked. “You see? Even Dog was bored.”

Podrick Payne was puzzled. “I thought no one could talk. Well, not no one. The brothers. The other brothers, not you.”

“We are allowed to break silence when confessing,” said the Elder Brother. “It is hard to speak of sin with signs and nods.”

“Did they burn the sept at Saltpans?” asked Hyle Hunt.

The smile vanished. “They burned everything at Saltpans, save the castle. Only that was made of stone... though it had as well been made of suet for all the good it did the town. It fell to me to treat some of the survivors. The fisherfolk brought them across the bay to me after the flames had gone out and they deemed it safe to land. One poor woman had been raped a dozen times, and her breasts... my lady, you wear man’s mail, so I shall not spare you these horrors... her breasts had been torn and chewed and *eaten*, as if by some... cruel beast. I did what I could for her, though that was little enough. As she lay dying, her worst curses were not for the men who had raped her, nor the monster who devoured her living flesh, but for Ser Quincy Cox, who barred his gates when the outlaws entered the town and sat safe behind stone walls as his people screamed and died.”

“Ser Quincy is an old man,” said Septon Meribald gently. “His sons and good-sons are far away or dead, his grandsons are still boys, and he has two daughters. What could he have done, one man against so many?”

He could have tried, Brienne thought. He could have died. Old or young, a true knight is sworn to protect those who are weaker than himself, or die in the attempt.

“True words, and wise,” the Elder Brother said to Septon Meribald. “When you cross to Saltpans, no doubt Ser Quincy will ask you for forgiveness. I am glad that you are here to give it. I could not.” He put aside the driftwood cup, and stood. “The supper bell will sound soon. My friends, will you come with me to the sept, to pray for the souls of the good folk of Saltpans before we sit down to break bread and share some meat and mead?”

“Gladly,” said Meribald. Dog barked.

Their supper in the septray was as strange a meal as Brienne had ever eaten, though not at all unpleasant. The food was plain, but very good; there were loaves of crusty bread still warm from the ovens, crocks of fresh-churned butter, honey from the septray’s hives, and a thick stew of crabs, mussels, and at least three different kinds of fish. Septon Meribald and Ser Hyle drank the mead the brothers made, and pronounced it excellent, whilst she and Podrick contented themselves with more sweet cider. Nor was the meal a somber one. Meribald pronounced a prayer before the food was served, and whilst the brothers ate at four long trestle tables, one of their number played for them on the high harp, filling the hall with soft sweet sounds. When the Elder Brother excused the musician to take his own meal, Brother Narbert and another proctor took turns reading from *The Seven-Pointed Star*.

By the time the readings were completed, the last of the food had been cleared away by the novices whose task it was to serve. Most were boys near Podrick’s age, or younger, but there were grown men as well, amongst them the big gravedigger they had encountered on the hill, who walked with the awkward lurching gait of one half-crippled. As the hall emptied, the Elder Brother asked Narbert to show Podrick and Ser Hyle to their pallets in the cloisters. “You will not mind sharing a cell, I hope? It is not large, but you will find it comfortable.”

“I want to stay with ser,” said Podrick. “I mean, my lady.”

“What you and Lady Brienne may do elsewhere is between you and the Seven,” said Brother Narbert, “but on the Quiet Isle, men and women do not sleep beneath the same roof unless they are wed.”

“We have some modest cottages set aside for the women who visit us, be they noble ladies or common village girls,” said the Elder Brother. “They are not oft used, but we keep them clean and dry. Lady Brienne, would you allow me to show you the way?”

“Yes, thank you. Podrick, go with Ser Hyle. We are guests of the holy brothers here. Beneath their roof, their rules.”

The women’s cottages were on the east side of the isle, looking out over a broad expanse of mud and the distant waters of the Bay of Crabs. It was colder here than on the sheltered side, and wilder. The hill was steeper, and the path meandered back and forth through weeds and briars, wind-carved rocks, and twisted, thorny trees that clung tenaciously to the stony hillside. The Elder Brother brought a lantern to light their way down. At one turn he paused. “On a clear night you could see the fires of Saltpans from here. Across the bay, just there.” He pointed.

“There’s nothing,” Brienne said.

“Only the castle remains. Even the fisherfolk are gone, the fortunate few who were out on the water when the raiders came. They watched their houses burn and listened to screams and cries float across the harbor, too fearful to land their boats. When at last they came ashore, it was to bury friends and kin. What is there for them at Saltpans now but bones and bitter memories? They have moved to Maidenpool or other towns.” He gestured with the lantern, and they resumed their descent. “Saltpans was never an important port, but ships did call there from time to time. That was what the raiders wanted, a galley or a cog to carry them across the narrow sea. When none was at hand, they took their rage and desperation out upon the townsfolk. I wonder, my lady... what do you hope to find there?”

“A girl,” she told him. “A highborn maid of three-and-ten, with a fair face and auburn hair.”

“Sansa Stark.” The name was softly said. “You believe this poor child is with the Hound?”

“The Dornishman said that she was on her way to Riverrun. Timeon. He was a sellsword, one of the Brave Companions, a killer and a raper and

a liar, but I do not think he lied about this. He said that the Hound stole her and carried her away.”

“I see.” The path turned, and there were the cottages ahead of them. The Elder Brother had called them modest. That they were. They looked like beehives made of stone, low and rounded, windowless. “This one,” he said, indicating the nearest cottage, the only one with smoke rising from the smokehole in the center of its roof. Brienne had to duck when entering to keep from banging her head against the lintel. Inside she found a dirt floor, a straw pallet, furs and blankets to keep her warm, a basin of water, a flagon of cider, some bread and cheese, a small fire, and two low chairs. The Elder Brother sat in one, and put the lantern down. “May I stay a while? I feel that we should talk.”

“If you wish.” Brienne undid her swordbelt and hung it from the second chair, then sat cross-legged on the pallet.

“Your Dornishman did not lie,” the Elder Brother began, “but I fear you did not understand him. You are chasing the wrong wolf, my lady. Eddard Stark had two daughters. It was the other one that Sandor Clegane made off with, the younger one.”

“*Arya Stark?*” Brienne stared open-mouthed, astonished. “You know this? Lady Sansa’s sister is alive?”

“Then,” said the Elder Brother. “Now... I do not know. She may have been amongst the children slain at Saltpans.”

The words were a knife in her belly. *No*, Brienne thought. *No, that would be too cruel.* “*May* have been... meaning that you are not certain...?”

“I am certain that the child was with Sandor Clegane at the inn beside the crossroads, the one old Masha Heddle used to keep, before the lions hanged her. I am certain they were on their way to Saltpans. Beyond that... no. I do not know where she is, or even if she lives. There is one thing I do know, however. The man you hunt is dead.”

That was another shock. “How did he die?”

“By the sword, as he had lived.”

“You know this for a certainty?”

“I buried him myself. I can tell you where his grave lies, if you wish. I covered him with stones to keep the carrion eaters from digging up his flesh, and set his helm atop the cairn to mark his final resting place. That was a grievous error. Some other wayfarer found my marker and claimed it for himself. The man who raped and killed at Saltpans was not Sandor Clegane, though he may be as dangerous. The riverlands are full of such scavengers. I will not call them wolves. Wolves are nobler than that... and so are dogs, I think.

“I know a little of this man, Sandor Clegane. He was Prince Joffrey’s sworn shield for many a year, and even here we would hear tell of his deeds, both good and ill. If even half of what we heard was true, this was a bitter, tormented soul, a sinner who mocked both gods and men. He served, but found no pride in service. He fought, but took no joy in victory. He drank, to drown his pain in a sea of wine. He did not love, nor was he loved himself. It was hate that drove him. Though he committed many sins, he never sought forgiveness. Where other men dream of love, or wealth, or glory, this man Sandor Clegane dreamed of slaying his own brother, a sin so terrible it makes me shudder just to speak of it. Yet that was the bread that nourished him, the fuel that kept his fires burning. Ignoble as it was, the hope of seeing his brother’s blood upon his blade was all this sad and angry creature lived for... and even that was taken from him, when Prince Oberyn of Dorne stabbed Ser Gregor with a poisoned spear.”

“You sound as if you pity him,” said Brienne.

“I did. You would have pitied him as well, if you had seen him at the end. I came upon him by the Trident, drawn by his cries of pain. He begged me for the gift of mercy, but I am sworn not to kill again. Instead, I bathed his fevered brow with river water, and gave him wine to drink and a poultice for his wound, but my efforts were too little and too late. The Hound died there, in my arms. You may have seen a big black stallion in our stables. That was his warhorse, Stranger. A blasphemous name. We prefer to call him Driftwood, as he was found beside the river. I fear he has his former master’s nature.”

The horse. She had seen the stallion, had heard it kicking, but she had not understood. Destriers were trained to kick and bite. In war they were a weapon, like the men who rode them. *Like the Hound.* “It is true, then,” she said dully. “Sandor Clegane is dead.”

“He is at rest.” The Elder Brother paused. “You are young, child. I have counted four-and-forty name days... which makes me more than twice your age, I think. Would it surprise you to learn that I was once a knight?”

“No. You look more like a knight than you do a holy man.” It was written in his chest and shoulders, and across that thick square jaw. “Why would you give up knighthood?”

“I never chose it. My father was a knight, and his before him. So were my brothers, every one. I was trained for battle since the day they deemed me old enough to hold a wooden sword. I saw my share of them, and did not disgrace myself. I had women too, and there I did disgrace myself, for some I took by force. There was a girl I wished to marry, the younger daughter of a petty lord, but I was my father’s thirdborn son and had neither land nor wealth to offer her... only a sword, a horse, a shield. All in all, I was a sad man. When I was not fighting, I was drunk. My life was writ in red, in blood and wine.”

“When did it change?” asked Brienne.

“When I died in the Battle of the Trident. I fought for Prince Rhaegar, though he never knew my name. I could not tell you why, save that the lord I served served a lord who served a lord who had decided to support the dragon rather than the stag. Had he decided otherwise, I might have been on the other side of the river. The battle was a bloody thing. The singers would have us believe it was all Rhaegar and Robert struggling in the stream for a woman both of them claimed to love, but I assure you, other men were fighting too, and I was one. I took an arrow through the thigh and another through the foot, and my horse was killed from under me, yet I fought on. I can still remember how desperate I was to find another horse, for I had no coin to buy one, and without a horse I would no longer be a knight. That was all that I was thinking of, if truth be told. I never saw the blow that felled me. I heard hooves behind my back and thought, *a horse!* but before I

could turn something slammed into my head and knocked me back into the river, where by rights I should have drowned.

“Instead I woke here, upon the Quiet Isle. The Elder Brother told me I had washed up on the tide, naked as my name day. I can only think that someone found me in the shallows, stripped me of my armor, boots, and breeches, and pushed me back out into the deeper water. The river did the rest. We are all born naked, so I suppose it was only fitting that I come into my second life the same way. I spent the next ten years in silence.”

“I see.” Brienne did not know why he was telling her all of this, or what else she ought to say.

“Do you?” He leaned forward, his big hands on his knees. “If so, give up this quest of yours. The Hound is dead, and in any case he never had your Sansa Stark. As for this beast who wears his helm, he will be found and hanged. The wars are ending, and these outlaws cannot survive the peace. Randyll Tarly is hunting them from Maidenpool and Walder Frey from the Twins, and there is a new young lord in Darry, a pious man who will surely set his lands to rights. Go home, child. You *have* a home, which is more than many can say in these dark days. You have a noble father who must surely love you. Consider his grief if you should never return. Perhaps they will bring your sword and shield to him, after you have fallen. Perhaps he will even hang them in his hall and look on them with pride... but if you were to ask him, I know he would tell you that he would sooner have a living daughter than a shattered shield.”

“A daughter.” Brienne’s eyes filled with tears. “He deserves that. A daughter who could sing to him and grace his hall and bear him grandsons. He deserves a son too, a strong and gallant son to bring honor to his name. Galladon drowned when I was four and he was eight, though, and Alysanne and Arianne died still in the cradle. I am the only child the gods let him keep. The freakish one, not fit to be a son *or* daughter.” All of it came pouring out of Brienne then, like black blood from a wound; the betrayals and betrothals, Red Ronnet and his rose, Lord Renly dancing with her, the wager for her maidenhead, the bitter tears she shed the night her king wed Margaery Tyrell, the mêlée at Bitterbridge, the rainbow cloak that she had

been so proud of, the shadow in the king's pavilion, Renly dying in her arms, Riverrun and Lady Catelyn, the voyage down the Trident, dueling Jaime in the woods, the Bloody Mummer, Jaime crying "*Sapphires*," Jaime in the tub at Harrenhal with steam rising from his body, the taste of Vargo Hoat's blood when she bit down on his ear, the bear pit, Jaime leaping down onto the sand, the long ride to King's Landing, Sansa Stark, the vow she'd sworn to Jaime, the vow she'd sworn to Lady Catelyn, Oathkeeper, Duskendale, Maidenpool, Nimble Dick and Crackclaw and the Whispers, the men she'd killed...

"I *have* to find her," she finished. "There are others looking, all wanting to capture her and sell her to the queen. I have to find her first. I promised Jaime. *Oathkeeper*, he named the sword. I have to try to save her... or die in the attempt."