

“Drogo took no harm?”

“A few cuts,” Ser Jorah answered, “nothing of consequence. He slew two khals this day. Khal Ogo first, and then the son, Fogo, who became khal when Ogo fell. His bloodriders cut the bells from their hair, and now Khal Drogo’s every step rings louder than before.”

Ogo and his son had shared the high bench with her lord husband at the naming feast where Viserys had been crowned, but that was in Vaes Dothrak, beneath the Mother of Mountains, where every rider was a brother and all quarrels were put aside. It was different out in the grass. Ogo’s khalasar had been attacking the town when Khal Drogo caught him. She wondered what the Lamb Men had thought, when they first saw the dust of their horses from atop those cracked-mud walls. Perhaps a few, the younger and more foolish who still believed that the gods heard the prayers of desperate men, took it for deliverance.

Across the road, a girl no older than Dany was sobbing in a high thin voice as a rider shoved her over a pile of corpses, facedown, and thrust himself inside her. Other riders dismounted to take their turns. That was the sort of deliverance the Dothraki brought the Lamb Men.

I am the blood of the dragon, Daenerys Targaryen reminded herself as she turned her face away. She pressed her lips together and hardened her heart and rode on toward the gate.

“Most of Ogo’s riders fled,” Ser Jorah was saying. “Still, there may be as many as ten thousand captives.”

Slaves, Dany thought. Khal Drogo would drive them downriver to one of the towns on Slaver’s Bay. She wanted to cry, but she told herself that she must be strong. This is war, this is what it looks like, this is the price of the Iron Throne.

“I’ve told the khal he ought to make for Meereen,” Ser Jorah said. “They’ll pay a better price than he’d get from a slaving caravan. Illyrio writes that they had a plague last year, so the brothels are paying double for healthy young girls, and triple for boys under ten. If enough children survive the journey, the gold will buy us all the ships we need, and hire men to sail them.”

Behind them, the girl being raped made a heartrending sound, a long sobbing wail that went on and on and on. Dany’s hand clenched hard around the reins, and she turned the silver’s head.

“Make them stop,” she commanded Ser Jorah.

“Khaleesi?” The knight sounded perplexed.

“You heard my words,” she said. “Stop them.” She spoke to her khas in the harsh accents of Dothraki. “Jhogo, Quaro, you will aid Ser Jorah. I want no rape.”

The warriors exchanged a baffled look.

Jorah Mormont spurred his horse closer. “Princess,” he said, “you have a gentle heart, but you do not understand. This is how it has always been. Those men have shed blood for the khal. Now they claim their reward.”

Across the road, the girl was still crying, her high singsong tongue strange to Dany’s ears. The first man was done with her now, and a second had taken his place.

“She is a lamb girl,” Quaro said in Dothraki. “She is nothing, Khaleesi. The riders do her honor. The Lamb Men lay with sheep, it is known.”