

her dress. The blood orange had left a blotchy red stain on the silk. "I hate her!" she screamed. She balled up the dress and flung it into the cold hearth, on top of the ashes of last night's fire. When she saw that the stain had bled through onto her underskirt, she began to sob despite herself. She ripped off the rest of her clothes wildly, threw herself into bed, and cried herself back to sleep.

It was midday when Septa Mordane knocked upon her door. "Sansa. Your lord father will see you now."

Sansa sat up. "Lady," she whispered. For a moment it was as if the direwolf was there in the room, looking at her with those golden eyes, sad and knowing. She had been dreaming, she realized. Lady was with her, and they were running together, and... and... trying to remember was like trying to catch the rain with her fingers. The dream faded, and Lady was dead again.

"Sansa." The rap came again, sharply. "Do you hear me?"

"Yes, Septa," she called out. "Might I have a moment to dress, please?" Her eyes were red from crying, but she did her best to make herself beautiful.

Lord Eddard was bent over a huge leather-bound book when Septa Mordane marched her into the solar, his plaster-wrapped leg stiff beneath the table. "Come here, Sansa," he said, not unkindly, when the septa had gone for her sister. "Sit beside me." He closed the book.

Septa Mordane returned with Arya squirming in her grasp. Sansa had put on a lovely pale green damask gown and a look of remorse, but her sister was still wearing the ratty leathers and roughspun she'd worn at breakfast. "Here is the other one," the septa announced.

"My thanks, Septa Mordane. I would talk to my daughters alone, if you would be so kind." The septa bowed and left.

"Arya started it," Sansa said quickly, anxious to have the first word. "She called me a liar and threw an orange at me and spoiled my dress, the ivory silk, the one Queen Cersei gave me when I was betrothed to Prince Joffrey. She hates that I'm going to marry the prince. She tries to spoil everything, Father, she can't stand for anything to be beautiful or nice or splendid."

"Enough, Sansa." Lord Eddard's voice was sharp with impatience.

Arya raised her eyes. "I'm sorry, Father. I was wrong and I beg my sweet sister's forgiveness."

Sansa was so startled that for a moment she was speechless. Finally she found her voice. "What about my dress?"

"Maybe... I could wash it," Arya said doubtfully.

"Washing won't do any good," Sansa said. "Not if you scrubbed all day and all night. The silk is ruined."

"Then I'll... make you a new one," Arya said.

Sansa threw back her head in disdain. "You? You couldn't sew a dress fit to clean the pigsties."

Their father sighed. "I did not call you here to talk of dresses. I'm sending you both back to Winterfell."

For the second time Sansa found herself too stunned for words. She felt her eyes grow moist again.

"You can't," Arya said.