

When she was clean, the slaves helped her from the water and towed her dry. The girl brushed her hair until it shone like molten silver, while the old woman anointed her with the spiceflower perfume of the Dothraki plains, a dab on each wrist, behind her ears, on the tips of her breasts, and one last one, cool on her lips, down there between her legs. They dressed her in the wisps that Magister Illyrio had sent up, and then the gown, a deep plum silk to bring out the violet in her eyes. The girl slid the gilded sandals onto her feet, while the old woman fixed the tiara in her hair, and slid golden bracelets crusted with amethysts around her wrists. Last of all came the collar, a heavy golden tore emblazoned with ancient Valyrian glyphs.

"Now you look all a princess," the girl said breathlessly when they were done. Dany glanced at her image in the silvered looking glass that Illyrio had so thoughtfully provided. A princess, she thought, but she remembered what the girl had said, how Khal Drogo was so rich even his slaves wore golden collars. She felt a sudden chill, and gooseflesh pimpled her bare arms.

Her brother was waiting in the cool of the entry hall, seated on the edge of the pool, his hand trailing in the water. He rose when she appeared and looked her over critically. "Stand there," he told her. "Turn around. Yes. Good. You look..."

"Regal," Magister Illyrio said, stepping through an archway. He moved with surprising delicacy for such a massive man. Beneath loose garments of flame-colored silk, rolls of fat jiggled as he walked. Gemstones glittered on every finger, and his man had oiled his forked yellow beard until it shone like real gold. "May the Lord of Light shower you with blessings on this most fortunate day, Princess Daenerys," the magister said as he took her hand. He bowed his head, showing a thin glimpse of crooked yellow teeth through the gold of his beard. "She is a vision, Your Grace, a vision," he told her brother. "Drogo will be enraptured."

"She's too skinny," Viserys said. His hair, the same silver-blond as hers, had been pulled back tightly behind his head and fastened with a dragonbone brooch. It was a severe look that emphasized the hard, gaunt lines of his face. He rested his hand on the hilt of the sword that Illyrio had lent him, and said, "Are you sure that Khal Drogo likes his women this young?"

"She has had her blood. She is old enough for the khal," Illyrio told him, not for the first time. "Look at her. That silvergold hair, those purple eyes... she is the blood of old Valyria, no doubt, no doubt... and highborn, daughter of the old king, sister to the new, she cannot fail to entrance our Drogo." When he released her hand, Daenerys found herself trembling.

"I suppose," her brother said doubtfully. "The savages have queer tastes. Boys, horses, sheep..."

"Best not suggest this to Khal Drogo," Illyrio said.

Anger flashed in her brother's lilac eyes. "Do you take me for a fool?"

The magister bowed slightly. "I take you for a king. Kings lack the caution of common men. My apologies if I have given offense." He turned away and clapped his hands for his bearers.

The streets of Pentos were pitch-dark when they set out in Illyrio's elaborately carved palanquin. Two servants went ahead to light their way, carrying ornate oil lanterns with panes of pale blue glass, while a dozen strong men hoisted the poles to their shoulders. It was warm and close inside behind the curtains. Dany could smell the stench of Illyrio's pallid flesh through his heavy perfumes.