

from his limp fingers. Even now Viserys did not understand. “No,” he shouted, “you cannot touch me, I am the dragon, the dragon, and I will be crowned!”

Khal Drogo unfastened his belt. The medallions were pure gold, massive and ornate, each one as large as a man’s hand. He shouted a command. Cook slaves pulled a heavy iron stew pot from the firepit, dumped the stew onto the ground, and returned the pot to the flames. Drogo tossed in the belt and watched without expression as the medallions turned red and began to lose their shape. She could see fires dancing in the onyx of his eyes. A slave handed him a pair of thick horsehair mittens, and he pulled them on, never so much as looking at the man.

Viserys began to scream the high, wordless scream of the coward facing death. He kicked and twisted, whimpered like a dog and wept like a child, but the Dothraki held him tight between them. Ser Jorah had made his way to Dany’s side. He put a hand on her shoulder. “Turn away, my princess, I beg you.”

“No.” She folded her arms across the swell of her belly, protectively.

At the last, Viserys looked at her. “Sister, please... Dany, tell them... make them... sweet sister...”

When the gold was half-melted and starting to run, Drogo reached into the flames, snatched out the pot. “Crown!” he roared. “Here. A crown for Cart King!” And upended the pot over the head of the man who had been her brother.

The sound Viserys Targaryen made when that hideous iron helmet covered his face was like nothing human. His feet hammered a frantic beat against the dirt floor, slowed, stopped. Thick globs of molten gold dripped down onto his chest, setting the scarlet silk to smoldering... yet no drop of blood was spilled.

He was no dragon, Dany thought, curiously calm. Fire cannot kill a dragon.