

"I shall leave you to talk," her brother said, kissing their lord father gently on the brow before he withdrew.

Catelyn knelt and took her father's hand in hers. It was a big hand, but fleshless now, the bones moving loosely under the skin, all the strength gone from it. "You should have told me," she said. "A rider, a raven..."

"Riders are taken, questioned," he answered. "Ravens are brought down..." A spasm of pain took him, and his fingers clutched hers hard. "The crabs are in my belly... pinching, always pinching. Day and night. They have fierce claws, the crabs. Maester Vyman makes me dreamwine, milk of the poppy... I sleep a lot... but I wanted to be awake to see you, when you came. I was afraid... when the Lannisters took your brother, the camps all around us... was afraid I would go, before I could see you again... I was afraid..."

"I'm here, Father," she said. "With Robb, my son. He'll want to see you too."

"Your boy," he whispered. "He had my eyes, I remember."

"He did, and does. And we've brought you Jaime Lannister, in irons. Riverrun is free again, Father."

Lord Hoster smiled. "I saw. Last night, when it began, I told them... had to see. They carried me to the gatehouse... watched from the battlements. Ah, that was beautiful... the torches came in a wave, I could hear the cries floating across the river... sweet cries... when that siege tower went up, gods... would have died then, and glad, if only I could have seen you children first. Was it your boy who did it? Was it your Robb?"

"Yes," Catelyn said, fiercely proud. "It was Robb... and Brynden. Your brother is here as well, my lord."

"Him." Her father's voice was a faint whisper. "The Blackfish... came back? From the Vale?"

"Yes..."

"And Lysa?" A cool wind moved through his thin white hair. "Gods be good, your sister... did she come as well?"

He sounded so full of hope and yearning that it was hard to tell the truth. "No. I'm sorry..."

"Oh." His face fell, and some light went out of his eyes. "I'd hoped I would have liked to see her, before."

"She's with her son, in the Eyrie."

Lord Hoster gave a weary nod. "Lord Robert now, poor Arryn's gone... I remember... why did she not come with you?"

"She is frightened, my lord. In the Eyrie she feels safe." She kissed his wrinkled brow. "Robb will be waiting. Will you see him? And Brynden?"

"Your son," he whispered. "Yes. Cat's child... he had my eyes, I remember. When he was born. Bring him... yes."

"And your brother?"

Her father glanced out over the rivers. "Blackfish," he said. "Has he wed yet? Taken some... girl to wife?"