

“No, m’lady,” he said. “M’lord Littlefinger said only to bring you to him, and see that you were not mistreated.”

Catelyn nodded. “You may wait outside while I dress.”

She bathed her hands in the basin and wrapped them in clean linen. Her fingers were thick and awkward as she struggled to lace up her bodice and knot a drab brown cloak about her neck. How could Littlefinger have known she was here? Ser Rodrik would never have told him. Old he might be, but he was stubborn, and loyal to a fault. Were they too late, had the Lannisters reached King’s Landing before her? No, if that were true, Ned would be here too, and surely he would have come to her. How... ?

Then she thought, Moreo. The Tyroshi knew who they were and where they were, damn him. She hoped he’d gotten a good price for the information.

They had brought a horse for her. The lamps were being lit along the streets as they set out, and Catelyn felt the eyes of the city on her as she rode, surrounded by the guard in their golden cloaks. When they reached the Red Keep, the portcullis was down and the great gates sealed for the night, but the castle windows were alive with flickering lights. The guardsmen left their mounts outside the walls and escorted her through a narrow postern door, then up endless steps to a tower.

He was alone in the room, seated at a heavy wooden table, an oil lamp beside him as he wrote. When they ushered her inside, he set down his pen and looked at her. “Cat,” he said quietly.

“Why have I been brought here in this fashion?”

He rose and gestured brusquely to the guards. “Leave us.” The men departed. “You were not mistreated, I trust,” he said after they had gone. “I gave firm instructions.” He noticed her bandages. “Your hands...”

Catelyn ignored the implied question. “I am not accustomed to being summoned like a serving wench,” she said icily. “As a boy, you still knew the meaning of courtesy.”

“I’ve angered you, my lady. That was never my intent.” He looked contrite. The look brought back vivid memories for Catelyn. He had been a sly child, but after his mischiefs he always looked contrite; it was a gift he had. The years had not changed him much. Petyr had been a small boy, and he had grown into a small man, an inch or two shorter than Catelyn, slender and quick, with the sharp features she remembered and the same laughing grey-green eyes. He had a little pointed chin beard now, and threads of silver in his dark hair, though he was still shy of thirty. They went well with the silver mockingbird that fastened his cloak. Even as a child, he had always loved his silver.

“How did you know I was in the city?” she asked him.

“Lord Varys knows all,” Petyr said with a sly smile. “He will be joining us shortly, but I wanted to see you alone first. It has been too long, Cat. How many years?”

Catelyn ignored his familiarity. There were more important questions. “So it was the King’s Spider who found me.”

Littlefinger winced. “You don’t want to call him that. He’s very sensitive. Comes of being an eunuch, I imagine. Nothing happens in this city without Varys knowing. Oftimes he knows about