

Bran was staring at his arms, his legs. He was so skinny, just skin stretched taut over bones. Had he always been so thin? He tried to remember. A face swam up at him out of the grey mist, shining with light, golden. "The things I do for love," it said.

Bran screamed.

The crow took to the air, cawing. Not that, it shrieked at him. Forget that, you do not need it now, put it aside, put it away. It landed on Bran's shoulder, and pecked at him, and the shining golden face was gone.

Bran was falling faster than ever. The grey mists howled around him as he plunged toward the earth below. "What are you doing to me?" he asked the crow, tearful.

Teaching you how to fly.

"I can't fly!"

You're flying tight now.

"I'm falling!"

Every flight begins with a fall, the crow said. Look down.

"I'm afraid..."

LOOKDOWN!

Bran looked down, and felt his insides turn to water. The ground was rushing up at him now. The whole world was spread out below him, a tapestry of white and brown and green. He could see everything so clearly that for a moment he forgot to be afraid. He could see the whole realm, and everyone in it.

He saw Winterfell as the eagles see it, the tall towers looking squat and stubby from above, the castle walls just lines in the dirt. He saw Maester Luwin on his balcony, studying the sky through a polished bronze tube and frowning as he made notes in a book. He saw his brother Robb, taller and stronger than he remembered him, practicing swordplay in the yard with real steel in his hand. He saw Hodor, the simple giant from the stables, carrying an anvil to Mikken's forge, hefting it onto his shoulder as easily as another man might heft a bale of hay. At the heart of the godswood, the great white weirwood brooded over its reflection in the black pool, its leaves rustling in a chill wind. When it felt Bran watching, it lifted its eyes from the still waters and stared back at him knowingly.

He looked east, and saw a galley racing across the waters of the Bite. He saw his mother sitting alone in a cabin, looking at a bloodstained knife on a table in front of her, as the rowers pulled at their oars and Ser Rodrik leaned across a rail, shaking and heaving. A storm was gathering ahead of them, a vast dark roaring lashed by lightning, but somehow they could not see it.

He looked south, and saw the great blue-green rush of the Trident. He saw his father pleading with the king, his face etched with grief. He saw Sansa crying herself to sleep at night, and he saw Arya watching in silence and holding her secrets hard in her heart. There were shadows all around them. One shadow was dark as ash, with the terrible face of a hound. Another was armored like the sun, golden and beautiful. Over them both loomed a giant in armor made of stone, but when he opened his visor, there was nothing inside but darkness and thick black blood.