

“No one knows his name,” Hallis Mollen told her. “He was no man of Winterfell, m’lady, but some says they seen him here and about the castle these past few weeks.”

“One of the king’s men, then,” she said, “or one of the Lannisters’. He could have waited behind when the others left.”

“Maybe,” Hal said. “With all these strangers filling up Winterfell of late, there’s no way of saying who he belonged to.”

“He’d been biding in your stables,” Greyjoy said. “You could smell it on him.”

“And how could he go unnoticed?” she said sharply.

Hallis Mollen looked abashed. “Between the horses Lord Eddard took south and them we sent north to the Night’s Watch, the stalls were half-empty. It were no great trick to hide from the stableboys. Could be Hodor saw him, the talk is that boy’s been acting queer, but simple as he is...” Hal shook his head.

“We found where he’d been sleeping,” Robb put in. “He had ninety silver stags in a leather bag buried beneath the straw.”

“It’s good to know my son’s life was not sold cheaply,” Catelyn said bitterly.

Hallis Mollen looked at her, confused. “Begging your grace, m’lady, you saying he was out to kill your boy?”

Greyjoy was doubtful. “That’s madness.”

“He came for Bran,” Catelyn said. “He kept muttering how I wasn’t supposed to be there. He set the library fire thinking I would rush to put it out, taking any guards with me. If I hadn’t been half-mad with grief, it would have worked.”

“Why would anyone want to kill Bran?” Robb said. “Gods, he’s only a little boy, helpless, sleeping...”

Catelyn gave her firstborn a challenging look. “If you are to rule in the north, you must think these things through, Robb. Answer your own question. Why would anyone want to kill a sleeping child?”

Before he could answer, the servants returned with a plate of food fresh from the kitchen. There was much more than she’d asked for: hot bread, butter and honey and blackberry preserves, a rasher of bacon and a soft-boiled egg, a wedge of cheese, a pot of mint tea. And with it came Maester Luwin.

“How is my son, Maester?” Catelyn looked at all the food and found she had no appetite.

Maester Luwin lowered his eyes. “Unchanged, my lady.”

It was the reply she had expected, no more and no less. Her hands throbbed with pain, as if the blade were still in her, cutting deep. She sent the servants away and looked back to Robb. “Do you have the answer yet?”

“Someone is afraid Bran might wake up,” Robb said, “afraid of what he might say or do, afraid of something he knows.”

Catelyn was proud of him. “Very good.” She turned to the new captain of the guard. “We must keep Bran safe. If there was one killer, there could be others.”

“How many guards do you want, m’lady?” Hal asked.