

The slave girl had not been far wrong, she thought. Khal Drogo was a head taller than the tallest man in the room, yet somehow light on his feet, as graceful as the panther in Illyrio's menagerie. He was younger than she'd thought, no more than thirty. His skin was the color of polished copper, his thick mustachios bound with gold and bronze rings.

"I must go and make my submissions," Magister Illyrio said. "Wait here. I shall bring him to you."

Her brother took her by the arm as Illyrio waddled over to the khal, his fingers squeezing so hard that they hurt. "Do you see his braid, sweet sister?"

Drogo's braid was black as midnight and heavy with scented oil, hung with tiny bells that rang softly as he moved. It swung well past his belt, below even his buttocks, the end of it brushing against the back of his thighs.

"You see how long it is?" Viserys said. "When Dothraki are defeated in combat, they cut off their braids in disgrace, so the world will know their shame. Khal Drogo has never lost a fight. He is Aegon the Dragonlord come again, and you will be his queen."

Dany looked at Khal Drogo. His face was hard and cruel, his eyes as cold and dark as onyx. Her brother hurt her sometimes, when she woke the dragon, but he did not frighten her the way this man frightened her. "I don't want to be his queen," she heard herself say in a small, thin voice. "Please, please, Viserys, I don't want to, I want to go home."

"Home?" He kept his voice low, but she could hear the fury in his tone. "How are we to go home, sweet sister? They took our home from us!" He drew her into the shadows, out of sight, his fingers digging into her skin. "How are we to go home?" he repeated, meaning King's Landing, and Dragonstone, and all the realm they had lost.

Dany had only meant their rooms in Illyrio's estate, no true home surely, though all they had, but her brother did not want to hear that. There was no home there for him. Even the big house with the red door had not been home for him. His fingers dug hard into her arm, demanding an answer. "I don't know," she said at last, her voice breaking. Tears welled in her eyes.

"I do," he said sharply. "We go home with an army, sweet sister. With Khal Drogo's army, that is how we go home. And if you must wed him and bed him for that, you will." He smiled at her. "I'd let his whole khalasar fuck you if need be, sweet sister, all forty thousand men, and their horses too if that was what it took to get my army. Be grateful it is only Drogo. In time you may even learn to like him. Now dry your eyes. Illyrio is bringing him over, and he will not see you crying."

Dany turned and saw that it was true. Magister Illyrio, all smiles and bows, was escorting Khal Drogo over to where they stood. She brushed away unfallen tears with the back of her hand.

"Smile," Viserys whispered nervously, his hand failing to the hilt of his sword. "And stand up straight. Let him see that you have breasts. Gods know, you have little enough as is."

Daenerys smiled, and stood up straight.