

Robb put a hand on his shoulder. "You said you had business with Bran. Well, here he is, Lannister."

Bran was uncomfortably aware of Tyrion Lannister's eyes. One was black and one was green, and both were looking at him, studying him, weighing him. "I am told you were quite the climber, Bran," the little man said at last. "Tell me, how is it you happened to fall that day?"

"I never," Bran insisted. He never fell, never never never.

"The child does not remember anything of the fall, or the climb that came before it," said Maester Luwin gently.

"Curious," said Tyrion Lannister.

"My brother is not here to answer questions, Lannister," Robb said curtly. "Do your business and be on your way."

"I have a gift for you," the dwarf said to Bran. "Do you like to ride, boy?"

Maester Luwin came forward. "My lord, the child has lost the use of his legs. He cannot sit a horse."

"Nonsense," said Lannister. "With the right horse and the right saddle, even a cripple can ride."

The word was a knife through Bran's heart. He felt tears come unbidden to his eyes. "I'm not a cripple!"

"Then I am not a dwarf," the dwarf said with a twist of his mouth. "My father will rejoice to hear it." Greyjoy laughed.

"What sort of horse and saddle are you suggesting?" Maester Luwin asked.

"A smart horse," Lannister replied. "The boy cannot use his legs to command the animal, so you must shape the horse to the rider, teach it to respond to the reins, to the voice. I would begin with an unbroken yearling, with no old training to be unlearned." He drew a rolled paper from his belt. "Give this to your saddler. He will provide the rest."

Maester Luwin took the paper from the dwarfs hand, curious as a small grey squirrel. He unrolled it, studied it. "I see. You draw nicely, my lord. Yes, this ought to work. I should have thought of this myself."

"It came easier to me, Maester. It is not terribly unlike my own saddles."

"Will I truly be able to ride?" Bran asked. He wanted to believe them, but he was afraid. Perhaps it was just another lie. The crow had promised him that he could fly.

"You will," the dwarf told him. "And I swear to you, boy, on horseback you will be as tall as any of them."

Robb Stark seemed puzzled. "Is this some trap, Lannister? What's Bran to you? Why should you want to help him?"

"Your brother Jon asked it of me. And I have a tender spot in my heart for cripples and bastards and broken things." Tyrion Lannister placed a hand over his heart and grinned.

The door to the yard flew open. Sunlight came streaming across the hall as Rickon burst in, breathless. The direwolves were with him. The boy stopped by the door, wide-eyed, but the wolves came on. Their eyes found Lannister, or perhaps they caught his scent. Summer began to