

EXT. CLEARING - DAY

Snow drifts across the bodies of the fallen dead. Eight corpses lie frozen on the ground-- men, women, and children, wearing heavy furs. The wind whips through their long hair.

At the edge of the clearing, WILL (20), a young ranger dressed all in black, surveys the grim scene from the back of his gelding. He gathers his reins and guides his horse south.

EXT. FOREST - DUSK

Will rides hard between the towering pines, his horse's hooves kicking up fresh-fallen snow.

He comes to a halt and dismounts beside two tethered horses. His comrades, GARED (50) and SER WAYMAR ROYCE (18), crouch beside a stream, filling their skins with cold water. They rise and look to the newcomer expectantly.

Ser Waymar is gray-eyed and graceful, with an aristocrat's air of command despite his youth. He wears a supple coat of gleaming black ringmail and a lush sable cloak.

Will and Gared also wear the black of the Night's Watch, but their clothes are far less regal, their leather and fur battered from hard usage. Gared wears a hood for warmth.

WILL

We should start back. They're all dead.

Gared offers Will his water skin and Will takes a drink.

SER WAYMAR

Any blood?

WILL

Not that I saw.

SER WAYMAR

How close did you get?

WILL

Close enough to see they was dead.

SER WAYMAR

(skeptical)
Or sleeping?

GARED

If Will says they're dead, they're dead. We should head back to the Wall.

SER WAYMAR
(with the hint of a smile)
Do the dead frighten you?

GARED
Mormont said we should track 'em.
We tracked 'em. They won't trouble
us no more.

SER WAYMAR
You don't think Mormont will ask us
how they died?

He walks toward his horse. Gared and Will exchange a troubled glance.

EXT. EMPTY CAMP - NIGHT

Moonlight shines down on the clearing, the ashes of the firepit, the snow-covered lean-to. If there were corpses on the ground before, they're gone now.

The three riders enter the camp. Their horses seem spooked, as if they smell a predator nearby.

SER WAYMAR
Your dead men seem to have moved
camp.

Will looks around, confused. He knows what he saw.

WILL
They were here...

Spotting something shimmering on the ground near the firepit, he walks his horse closer, dismounts and looks down.

Lying at his feet is the hilt of a steel longsword. The blade has been shattered into a thousand shards.

Will stares at the shattered sword. He knows what this means; the dread on his face is unmistakable.

From his horse, Gared looks at the ground. The indentations where the bodies once lay are still visible-- as are the faint but unmistakable footprints leading away from them.

GARED
We have to move. Now.

He is interrupted by a neigh. Will's horse, riderless and panicked, bolts from the camp site.

Ser Waymar's horse rears back on its hind legs, throwing its rider to the ground before galloping after the first horse.

Gared struggles to keep his own horse under control. Ser Waymar stands unsteadily, brushing the snow from his cloak.

WILL
(terrified)
Gods...

He's staring into the darkness at the edge of the clearing. Ser Waymar turns to see what the young tracker sees: a shadow emerging from the forest.

A figure steps into the moonlight, tall and gaunt, with flesh pale as milk. It slides toward the rangers on silent feet.

Its armor appears to be carved from ice. Its sword is translucent, a shard of crystal so thin it almost seems to vanish when seen edge-on.

Ser Waymar's voice cracks like a boy's:

SER WAYMAR
Stay where you are!

The OTHER keeps coming. Ser Waymar draws his sword with trembling hands. Will, standing near the fire pit, and Gared, still on horseback, draw their own swords.

The Other halts. For the first time we see its eyes, bluer than any human eyes, a blue that burns like ice.

They emerge silently from the shadows, on all sides of the clearing. Five of them... six... seven... their strange swords shimmering in the moonlight.

Gared can no longer control his panicked horse; it bolts from the clearing, ignoring its rider's commands.

The Others watch Gared flee. They turn back to Ser Waymar and Will and begin to advance on the young men.

As the circle closes, the Others speak to each other in a language we've never heard, with voices like cracking ice.

Waymar and Will stand together, class distinctions forgotten, two boys about to die. They steady their sword hands and mutter quick prayers as the Others descend upon them.

CREDIT SEQUENCE

CLOSE on a pair of ancient, gnarled hands writing a message on a small parchment scroll. The old man (we never see his face) tightly rolls the scroll, binds it with a black ribbon, and ties it with a leather strip to the leg of a BLACK RAVEN.

The old man lifts the raven off his desk; it flaps its dark wings and flies out of the open chamber window.

The raven flies away from Castle Black, a large and ancient fortress dwarfed by what lies behind it: the Wall. Older than history, this is the 800-foot-high barrier of ice and stone that guards the northern edge of the Seven Kingdoms.

As the raven gains altitude, the landscape below it TRANSFORMS into a map of Westeros. The Wall is revealed to cross the entire continent, a boundary between the Haunted Forest to the north and the civilized lands to the south.

The raven flies south over the map, on which the cities, regions and features of the land are named: Winterfell, the Kingsroad, Moat Cailin, the Riverlands, the Vale of Arryn.

Occasionally the bird dips down, and the map resolves back into reality for just long enough to give us a view of some points of interest: Winterfell's old stone towers, full of cold beauty. The foreboding Eyrie castle high atop the Vale of Arryn, a feat of montane architecture that would have been impossible for medieval engineers.

When the raven reaches King's Landing, the map resolves back into reality as the bird drops down into the dirty sprawl of the capital.

The raven flies through the open gates of the Red Keep, a massive compound with red walls the color of blood. The bird flies through an open window into the throne room, to land on the Iron Throne itself-- a throne built from the hammered swords of a thousand defeated enemies.

The raven pecks at its wings, cleaning itself after the long journey, alone in the empty throne room.

END CREDIT SEQUENCE

EXT. HILLTOP - DAY

LORD EDDARD "NED" STARK (40) sits on his motionless horse, his long brown hair stirring in the wind. His closely-trimmed beard is shot with white. He has spent half his life training for war and the other half waging it, and his face conveys both authority and a haunted sadness.

He is accompanied by a dozen members of the HOUSEHOLD GUARD, all on horseback. Over their heads flaps the Stark banner: a gray direwolf racing across an ice-white field.

South of the Wall the grass is still green and the sun is shining, but the air is cold enough to cloud the breath of four guardsmen as they escort Gared toward the stump of a massive oak tree.

Weeks have passed since we saw the ranger but he seems to have aged years, his eyes bloodshot and weary, his face haggard, his clothes filthy and torn.

Ned's sons, JON SNOW (17), ROBB STARK (17) and BRAN STARK (8) sit on their own horses (a small pony in Bran's case).

Jon is slender, darker than his half-brothers, his eyes black and watchful.

Robb is big and broad, with fair skin and reddish-brown hair.

Bran sits very still, watching the doomed man. He has never seen an execution before. The prospect of it terrifies him, but he tries hard to imitate his father's solemn expression.

The Guardsmen force Gared's head onto the stump. Ned dismounts.

His ward, THEON GREYJOY (19), hands over Ned's sword: Ice, a beautiful weapon, centuries old. Theon is the only man in the party wearing a kraken sigil instead of a dire wolf.

Ned peels off his gloves and hands them to JORY CASSEL (30s), a bull-necked warrior with a heavy mustache.

Ned walks to the stump. He speaks in low tones to Gared, who responds. We watch this exchange from the boys' perspective.

Gared's final words clearly trouble Ned, who studies the condemned man's face, judging his honesty.

Bran watches from afar, his head slightly cocked, trying to make out what Gared is saying.

There is a great weariness in Ned's eyes as he places both hands on the hilt of his greatsword.

NED

In the name of Robert of the House
Baratheon, the First of his Name--

As Ned delivers the formal sentence to the condemned man, Jon Snow moves closer to Bran.

JON SNOW (whisper) Keep the pony in hand. And don't look away. Father will know if you do.	NED (O.S.) King of the Andals and the First Men, Lord of the Seven Kingdoms and Protector of the Realm--
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Bran keeps his pony well in hand and does not look away.

NED
I, Eddard of the House Stark, Lord
of Winterfell and Warden of the
North, sentence you to die.

Ned lifts Ice high above his head and brings it down.

Blood sprays the swaying grass.

Gared's head topples off the stump, bounces off a root, and rolls. When Ned's back is turned, Theon put his boot on the head, kicks it away and laughs.

Jon watches this with disgust but says nothing. He turns and grips Bran's shoulder.

JON SNOW
You did well.

It's only three words, but compliments are hard to come by in the Stark house. Bran is proud to be treated like a man, but he cannot look away from the head lying in the tall grass.

EXT. HILLSIDE - DAY

Bran rides with his brothers, his hard-working pony trying to keep up with the bigger horses.

JON SNOW
I thought he was brave.

ROBB
Brave? He was dead of fear. You
could see it in his eyes.

JON SNOW
What would be in your eyes with
your head on the stump? He died
well. Give him that much.

Robb considers the point for a moment and shrugs, already losing interest in the subject.

ROBB
Race you to the bridge?

Jon rolls his eyes as if he's beyond such juvenile games-- then, without warning, he spurs his horse and gains a good head start. Robb curses and follows. They gallop off down the trail, Robb laughing and hooting, Jon silent.

Bran's pony can't compete in that race, so he follows slowly behind, craning his neck to see if he can spot the winner.

NED

You understand why I did it?

Bran turns in his saddle, startled. On his great warhorse, Ned looms above him like a giant. Bran nods to his father.

BRAN

Jon said he was a deserter. He was in the Night's Watch and he ran away.

Even when speaking with his son, Ned constantly surveys his surroundings, aware of his men's positions, the possible sites for an ambush, the angle of the sun.

NED

True enough, but do you understand why *I* had to kill him?

Bran thinks about this for a few seconds, confused.

BRAN

King Robert has a headsman.

NED

He does. As did the Targaryen kings before him.

Ned reaches out to grab the pommel on Bran's saddle. He forces the horse and pony to walk very close.

NED

Our way is the old way. The man who passes the sentence should swing the sword.

Bran stares at the massive sword sheathed at Ned's hip.

BRAN

Is it true he saw the Others?

Ned stares at his son for a long beat.

NED
You heard that?
(off Bran's nod)
The Others have been gone for eight
thousand years.

BRAN
So he was lying?

NED
He believed it. A madman sees what
he sees.

They're interrupted by the sound of hooves; Jon reappears on
the crest of the hill before them, waving urgently.

JON
Over here!

EXT. RIVERBANK - DAY

Ned's party reaches the riverbank. Jon has dismounted beside
Robb, who cradles something in his arm.

Bran and Ned stay back with the rest of their party as Jory
and Theon approach the older boys.

When he sees what lies on the ground beside Robb, Theon
curses and pulls his horse away. Jory does the same and yells
to the boys:

JORY
Get away from it!

ROBB
She can't hurt you. She's dead.

Burning with curiosity, Bran spurs his pony to keep up with
Ned as they approach the others, who are all dismounting.

THEON
What in hell is it?

Bran finally gets close enough to see.

ROBB
A wolf.

The dead wolf is impossibly huge, bigger than Bran's pony.
Its blind eyes crawl with maggots.

THEON
It's a freak.

JON
No. That's a direwolf.

Ned kneels beside the wolf. Groping under the beast's head, he gives a yank and comes up with a foot of shattered antler, slick with half-dried blood.

THEON
There hasn't been a direwolf south
of the Wall for two hundred years.

Jon looks at the bundle beneath Robb's arm and grins:

JON
Well... now there are five.

When Bran sees what everyone is staring at his eyes widen. He moves in to get a closer look at the direwolf pup-- a tiny ball of gray-black fur, eyes still closed, nuzzling blindly against Robb's chest, whimpering.

JORY
Tough old beast, wasn't she?
Birthing a litter with an antler in
her throat.

ROBB
(to Bran)
Go on. You can touch him.

Bran gives the pup a quick, nervous stroke. As he turns:

JON
Here you go.

Jon thrusts another pup into Bran's arms. Overjoyed, Bran plops down in the snow and rubs the wolf pup's soft fur against his cheek.

Ned picks up two more helpless pups, one in each hand. Jon picks up the fifth.

HULLEN (40s), the horse master, frowns at this ill omen.

HULLEN
Direwolves loose in the realm.

THEON
Not for long.

Theon draws his sword and reaches for Bran's pup.

THEON
Give it here.

BRAN
No! It's mine!

Robb speaks to Theon in a commanding tone.

ROBB
Put your sword away. We're keeping
them.

Theon bristles at the command.

THEON
I take orders from your father, not
you.

HULLEN
It'll be a mercy to kill them.

BRAN
No!

Bran looks to Ned for support, but finds none.

NED
Better a quick death. They won't
last without their mother.

JON
Lord Stark... There are five pups.
Three male, two female.
(off Ned's curiosity)
You have five trueborn children.
Three sons, two daughters. The
direwolf is the sigil of your
House.

Everyone looks to the Stark banners, with their direwolf
crest-of-arms. We see their opinions about the pups change,
as they come to understand the import of this omen.

JON
Your children were meant to have
these pups.

NED
And you?

JON
I am not a Stark, my Lord.

Ned weighs the situation for a moment in silence.

NED
You will feed them yourselves. And
train them yourselves.

Bran nods eagerly. Robb nods as well.

NED
They may die anyway, despite all
you do.

ROBB
They won't. We won't let them.

The decision made, people start to remount their horses.

Bran tugs gratefully on Jon's sleeve. Jon smiles at him, but beneath his smile there is a trace of sadness.

Jon is about to climb onto his horse when he hears a distant whimpering. Leaving the horse behind, he ranges into a snow drift, and scans the ground until he finds the source:

A sixth wolf pup, with white fur. Unlike the others, its eyes are blood-red and open, and it is completely silent. Jon picks it up.

Theon scoffs.

THEON
An albino. It'll die even faster
than the others.

Jon ignores Theon. He stares into the pup's eyes and the pup stares back.

JON
This one belongs to me.

INT. DRESSING ROOM - SUNSET

DAENERYS (15) stands by the window, staring out at the bay of Pentos, where shirtless FISHERMEN haul nets full of wriggling fish from their boats onto the docks. The setting sun silhouettes the brick towers of the Free City; intricate and colorful geometric patterns decorate their bulbous domes.

Daenerys is a beautiful girl but nobody has bothered to tell her. She is awkward in her own skin, unaware of how rare her violet eyes and lush silver hair really are.

VISERYS (O.S.)
Where's my sweet sister?

VISERYS (20) steps into the room, a gaunt young man with nervous hands and a feverish look in his pale eyes. He holds a lilac gown in his hands.

VISERYS
A gift from Illyrio. Touch it. Go on. Feel the fabric.

Dany lets the delicate silk run through her fingers. It is a gorgeous gown but the sight of it gives her no pleasure.

VISERYS
Tonight you must look like a princess.

Daenerys hands the gown back to her brother.

DAENERYS
He gives us so much... we've been his guests for a year and he's never asked for anything.

VISERYS
Illyrio's no fool. He knows I won't forget my friends when I come into my throne.

He hangs the gown from a hook beside the door.

VISERYS
I'll send the slaves in to bathe you. Be sure you wash off that stable stink.

He studies her critically.

VISERYS
You still slouch.

He pushes back her shoulders.

VISERYS
Let them see you have a woman's body now.

His fingers brush lightly over her breasts, judging their shape beneath the rough fabric of her tunic.

VISERYS

Don't fail me tonight. You don't
want to wake the dragon, do you?

His fingers tighten over one of her nipples, pinching. He's hurting her but Daenerys does not resist or open her mouth.

VISERYS

Do you?

DAENERYS

No.

VISERYS

Good.

He smiles, releasing her, brushing back her hair with something like affection.

VISERYS

When they write the history of my
reign, they will say it began
tonight.

EXT. STREETS OF PENTOS - NIGHT

A dozen STRONG MEN carry a palanquin through the pitch-black streets of Pentos. Two SERVANTS walk in front, holding oil lanterns to light the way.

INT. PALANQUIN - NIGHT

Inside the curtained litter, Daenerys, Viserys and MAGISTER ILLYRIO recline on soft pillows. Daenerys wears the lilac gown. Her makeup has been artfully applied but somehow she looks even younger than before. She seems terribly nervous.

Illyrio (50) is tremendously fat, but he carries himself with a certain elegance. He smiles at Daenerys, takes the girl's hand and gives her a comforting squeeze.

ILLYRIO

(to Viserys)

She is a vision, your Grace. Drogo
will be impressed.

VISERYS

She's too skinny. Are you sure he
likes his women this young?

ILLYRIO

She's had her blood, she's old
enough. Look at her!

(MORE)

ILLYRIO (cont'd)
Highest of the highborn, daughter
of the past king, sister to the
future king... he'll want her.

VISERYS
I suppose. The savages have queer
tastes. Boys, horses, sheep...

ILLYRIO
Best not suggest this to Khal
Drogo.

VISERYS
Do you take me for a fool?

Magister Illyrio gives a slight bow.

ILLYRIO
I take you for a king. Kings lack
the caution of common men. My
apologies if I have given offense.

He claps his hands and a SLAVE BOY wearing a brass collar,
crouched in the corner of the litter, hurries over to refill
Illyrio's wine glass.

VISERYS
I know how to play a man like
Drogo. I give him status--
(nodding at Dany)
-- and he gives me an army.

His fingers toy with the hilt of his sheathed sword.

VISERYS
I could sweep the Seven Kingdoms
with ten thousand Dothraki
screamers behind me. The people
will be with us. They cry out for
their true king.

Viserys pauses and gives Illyrio an anxious look.

VISERYS
They do, don't they?

ILLYRIO
(an amiable salesman)
All across the Kingdoms, men lift
secret toasts to your health. Their
women sew dragon banners in hope of
your return from across the water.
(shrugs)
Or so my agents tell me.

Daenerys, who has watched Illyrio throughout his speech, turns away. She keeps her own counsel, but it's clear the words that so inspire Viserys do not impress her.

EXT. DOTHRAKI ENCAMPMENT - NIGHT

A great field outside the city walls of Pentos, ringed by hundreds of the distinctive, round Dothraki tents.

The moon and burning torches light the milling guests. Many are DOTHRAKI HORSELORDS, big men, their black hair oiled and braided and hung with silver bells. No women are present.

A smooth-cheeked EUNUCH announces the newcomers:

EUNUCH

Viserys of the House Targaryen, the
Third of his Name. King of the
Andals and the First Men, Lord of
the Seven Kingdoms and Protector of
the Realm. His sister Daenerys
Stormborn, Princess of Dragonstone.
His honorable host, Illyrio
Mopatis, Magister of the Free City
of Pentos.

The three honored guests step into the clearing. Illyrio guides them, pointing out various luminaries.

ILLYRIO

Those three are Drogo's
bloodriders.

The BLOODRIDERS, fearsome Dothraki warriors, stare back at Daenerys. She quickly averts her eyes.

ILLYRIO

Over there is Ser Jorah Mormont.

VISERYS

A knight? What's he doing here?

SER JORAH is past forty and balding, but still strong and fit. When he sees the Targaryens staring at him he bows deeply. Viserys gives a slight nod, pleased by the obeisance.

ILLYRIO

King Robert-
(correcting himself)
-the *Usurper* wanted his head. Some
trifling affront. Sold poachers to
a slaver.

VISERYS
He could be useful.

Illyrio places his hand on Daenerys' bare shoulder.

ILLYRIO
Over there, sweet princess. There
is the Khal himself.

KHAL DROGO (30) is the tallest man in the courtyard, but despite his size and musculature, he has the grace of a panther. His black hair is woven into a single braid, hung with silver bells, that swings below his belt.

Illyrio walks over to the Khal (a dozen yards away). Viserys leans closer to his sister, never taking his eyes off Drogo.

VISERYS
You see how long his hair is? When
Dothraki are defeated in combat,
they cut off their braids in
disgrace, so the world will know
their shame. Khal Drogo has never
been defeated. A savage, of course,
but one of the finest killers
alive. And you will be his queen.

Daenerys stares at the Khal. The man's face is hard and cruel, his eyes dark as onyx as he watches Illyrio perform his submissions.

DAENERYS
(her voice small and thin)
I don't want to be his queen.
Please, *please*, I don't want to, I
want to go home.

Viserys maintains a mask of politeness and keeps his voice low, but there is fury behind his eyes.

VISERYS
Home? How do we go home? They took
it from us.

He grabs her arm and drags her into the shadows, his fingernails digging into her.

VISERYS
How do we go home?

Tears well in her eyes.

DAENERYS

I don't know.

VISERYS

I do. We go home with an army. With
Khal Drogo's army.

He brushes her cheek with the back of his hand and speaks to her with real tenderness.

VISERYS

I'd let his whole *khalasar* fuck
you, all forty thousand men and
their horses too, if that's what it
took. Come, dry your eyes.

Dany wipes away the unfallen tears. Illyrio, all smiles and bows, escorts Khal Drogo toward them.

VISERYS

(nervous whisper)

Smile. And stand up straight. Let
him see that you have breasts. Gods
know, they're small enough as is.

Dany smiles and stands up straight.

EXT. KING'S LANDING - DAY

The walled city of King's Landing, capital of Westeros. The royal castle, the Red Keep, built of red sandstone, perches on the cliffs above Blackwater Bay. The seven-towered Great Sept of Baelor rises on the south edge of the city. In between sprawls the fetid slum called Flea Bottom.

We PULL IN closer to the Red Keep, to a window near the top of the Tower of the Hand.

INT. BEDCHAMBER - DAY

JON ARRYN (60s), cold and still, lies on his deathbed.

Two SILENT SISTERS, veiled adherents to the Faith of the Seven, fold his hands across his chest and close his eyelids.

GRAND MAESTER PYCELLE (70s) stands beside them. He wears a heavy chain around his neck, each link forged with a different metal.

Beside him is QUEEN CERSEI (30s). Green-eyed and golden-haired, the queen's beauty has already become legend. Both look down at Jon Arryn.

PYCELLE

I gave him milk of the poppy at the end. To ease his path.

Cersei touches the old Maester's arm in thanks.

CERSEI

We are blessed to have a man of your wisdom caring for us.

The old Maester is not too old to appreciate a little flattery, or the touch of a beautiful woman.

CERSEI

He was peaceful, in his final hours?

PYCELLE

Mostly he slept, my Grace. Though he had moments of clarity.

CERSEI

Did he? What did he say, in these moments of clarity?

PYCELLE

He asked to see the King--

CERSEI

Robert will never forgive himself for not being here. These hunts of his last longer and longer.

PYCELLE

And he asked to see Lord Stark.

CERSEI

A shame Lord Stark is a thousand leagues away. That was all?

PYCELLE

Yes... No. There was a phrase, one phrase he kept repeating. "The seed is strong."

Cersei focuses her green eyes on the Maester.

CERSEI

The seed is strong? What does that mean?

PYCELLE

(shrugs)

The dying mind is a demented mind.
For all the weight they're given,
last words usually have as much
significance as first words.

CERSEI

Where is the Hand's wife?

PYCELLE

Lady Arryn left the moment he
breathed his last.

Cersei turns and heads for the door.

CERSEI

Send a raven to Casterly Rock. My
father should know Jon Arryn is
dead.

PYCELLE

At once, my Grace.

Cersei exits the bedchamber. Pycelle watches the Sisters perform their ritual ablutions, imagining, perhaps, the not-too-distant day when they will minister to his own corpse.

EXT. FLEA BOTTOM - NIGHT

The most dangerous neighborhood in the kingdom. DRUNKS spill out of doorways of taverns lit with oil lamps, singing:

DRUNKS

*She kicked and wailed, the maid so
fair, but he licked the honey from
her hair, her hair! Her hair!*

INT. BROTHEL - NIGHT

Outside we hear the sounds of rough laughter and singing. The room is expensively appointed in silks, damasks and gilded ornaments, but its garishness betrays its true nature.

That, and the naked REDHEADED WHORE on her knees beside the bed. She bestows oral favors upon TYRION LANNISTER, a dwarf with mismatched eyes: one green, one black.

Tyrion's hands grip her hair as he shudders. Bells begin to ring outside, thousands of them, great pealing bells from all across the city.

The Redhead, finished with her work, wipes her mouth with the back of her hand.

REDHEAD

Who they ringing the bells for?

TYRION

The King's Hand died this morning.

Tyrion grabs a goblet of wine from the bedside table. He swigs and passes it to the whore. She raises it in toast.

REDHEAD

Here's to Jon Arryn, then. He was the only one of you lot who cared about the smallfolk.

She drinks deeply, sloshing the wine around her mouth.

TYRION

I care about the smallfolk.

REDHEAD

Only the ones with good tits. Who's Robert picking for a new Hand?

TYRION

If he's smart, my father.

REDHEAD

And if he's not smart?

TYRION

If the King is not smart? Milady, these are treasonous words...

He clamps his palms on the back of her head and guides her back toward his crotch.

The Redhead laughs, disbelieving.

REDHEAD

No chance you're ready again.

He takes the goblet from her, downs the remainder, and tosses it across the room.

TYRION

The gods gave me one blessing.

The Redhead grins and pushes her hair away from her face as she dips down for further service.

Just as Tyrion closes his eyes the door swings open. SER JAIME LANNISTER (30s), the Queen's twin brother, stands in the doorway.

Considered by many the best-looking man in the Seven Kingdoms, there is a hint of savagery behind his green eyes.

He smiles as the Redhead, flustered, covers her breasts.

JAIME

Don't get up.

REDHEAD

Forgive me, my lord...

TYRION

Should I explain to you, dear brother, the meaning of a closed door in a whorehouse?

Jaime continues to favor the redhead with his lazy grin, fucking her with his eyes as he speaks with his brother.

JAIME

You have much to teach me, no doubt, but in this instance perhaps you'll forgive the interruption. You told me once that you wanted to see the North. I didn't want you to miss your chance.

TYRION

Who's going North?

JAIME

We are. The royal "we." The King. The Queen. Me. You, if you can find your pants.

TYRION

Why?

JAIME

Well, I'm used to it, but the rest of the court might be frightened by the sight of your wet little dagger.

TYRION

(annoyed)

Why are we going north?

JAIME

The King has chosen his Hand. And
no one's going to be happy about
it.

EXT. WINTERFELL GATES - LATE AFTERNOON

Winterfell, the stronghold and ancestral home of House Stark, is an ancient and austere place. Many acres lie within its two concentric granite walls; its keeps and towers stretch toward the gray skies above.

A RAVEN flies into view, heading toward the stronghold with a small parchment scroll dangling from its leg.

We follow the black bird as it glides over the Winterfell walls, banks over the main courtyard, and comes to rest on the windowsill of

INT. MAESTER LUWIN'S CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

The raven jumps from its windowsill perch onto the arm of MAESTER LUWIN (75). He is a small, gray man: gray eyes, gray hair, gray wool robe. A heavy chain lies around his neck, much like Maester Pycelle's.

The Maester removes the scroll from the raven's leg and opens it. His face darkens as he reads.

EXT. GODSWOOD - DUSK

A thousand years of humus lie thick upon the forest floor, swallowing the sound of a woman's feet as she walks.

LADY CATELYN STARK (35), Ned's auburn-haired, blue-eyed wife, makes her way among the dark tree trunks, their twisted branches weaving a dense canopy over her head. In her hand, she holds the small parchment scroll from the above scene.

She reaches a small grove at the center of the wood, where an ancient weirwood tree broods over a small, black pool.

Looking like no tree on Earth, the weirwood's bark is bone white, its leaves dark red. Long, long ago, a melancholy face was carved into its trunk; its deep-cut eyes are red with dried sap. They seem to follow her as she rounds the tree.

Seated on a moss-covered stone on the other side of the tree, Ned rests his sword, Ice, across his knees as he cleans it with a cloth dipped in the black waters at his feet.

CATELYN

I knew I'd find you here.

He lifts his head to look at her. He sees her shivering and hands her his cloak, which she wraps around herself before sitting on the forest floor.

He registers her somber face, and the scroll in her hand. He stops cleaning his sword.

NED

Tell me.

CATELYN

Forgive me, my lord... there was a raven from King's Landing. Jon Arryn is dead.

Ned looks at the wet sword, lying flat across his lap.

NED

How?

CATELYN

A fever took him. He was healthy at the full moon and gone by the half.

NED

Your sister, the boy...?

CATELYN

The letter said they're well.

Ned looks more angry than grief-stricken. He dries his sword with a swatch of oiled leather.

CATELYN

He loved you very much.

NED

I haven't seen him in how long, nine years?

CATELYN

You couldn't have known--

NED

Of course I could have known. He was an old man. Every year he asked me to visit and every year I told him, "Next year."

He sheathes the blade. Catelyn reaches for his hand. For a moment they are silent.

NED

The girls won't remember him. Bran never even met him.

CATELYN

You'll tell them the stories.

NED

Old Jon would have been proud of Bran. He was a brave boy at the beheading.

Catelyn is troubled by the thought. She releases his hand.

CATELYN

Eight is too young to see such things.

NED

Should I tell you about the things I saw before I was eight?

(beat)

He won't be a child forever. And winter is coming.

The words disturb Catelyn but she keeps her silence.

NED

His brothers helped him. Especially Jon.

CATELYN

Jon Snow is his half-brother. My lord.

Ned notes his wife's tone but says nothing. This isn't a fight he needs right now. Catelyn, realizing she has broached the wrong topic at the wrong time, changes the subject.

CATELYN

The raven brought more news. The king rides for Winterfell.

(beat)

Along with the queen and her brothers.

Ned considers this prospect for a moment. Clearly Catelyn already has. They both know what it means.

NED

He hates the cold. Always has. If he comes this far north, it's one thing he's after.

CATELYN
You can always say No.

Ned allows a grim smile, taking his wife's hand and helping her to her feet.

NED
You don't know the king very well.

EXT. WINTERFELL GATES - DAY

From the stronghold's gates, the King's Road wends its way to the horizon -- where tiny specks of red and gold appear, barely visible. Very slowly, they grow larger.

The king's party approaches.

EXT. TOWER - DAY

Bran climbs down the side of the tower, his hands and feet finding purchase on its jutting stones with a monkey's unthinking agility.

Climbing is as natural to him as studying is onerous. He smiles as he makes his way toward the ground in record time, very pleased with himself--

Until his mother yanks him off the stones. Catelyn lowers him to the ground and sternly waits for an explanation.

BRAN
I was... I was...

CATELYN
You were bored with your lesson so you decided to climb the castle walls, even though I've forbidden it two hundred times.

BRAN
I--

CATELYN
Brandon... I want you to promise me: No more climbing. Promise.

Bran looks at his feet before gazing up at her solemnly.

BRAN
I promise.

Catelyn leans over to look her son dead in the eye.

CATELYN
You know what?

BRAN
What?

CATELYN
You always look at your feet before
you lie.

Despite Bran's best efforts, his mouth stretches into a smile, and a chuffing laugh escapes from behind it.

Catelyn smiles, unable to help herself. She sees that his hands, clothes and bare feet are filthy from the climb down.

CATELYN
Go on, clean yourself up. The king
will be here soon.

Bran kisses his mother on the cheek and runs off.

EXT. WINTERFELL GATES - DAY

The king's party pours through the gates of Winterfell in a river of gold, silver and steel, one hundred strong.

Over their heads, a dozen golden banners whip in the wind, emblazoned with the crowned stag of the House Baratheon.

INT. WINTERFELL - COURTYARD - DAY

At the far end of the yard, Ned's face betrays nothing as he watches the King's party approach with his family beside him.

Catelyn, Robb, Jon and Bran are here, as are SANSA (13), traditionally beautiful, with high cheekbones and thick red hair; ARYA (11), a skinny tomboy; and their little brother RICKON (3).

Ser Jaime rides through the gate and into the courtyard.

BRAN
(whispering to Jon)
Is that the king?

JON
That's Jaime Lannister. The
Kingslayer.

Bran can't take his eyes off the man. He's heard the stories.

Tyrion Lannister rides behind his brother Jaime, studying the castle and its occupants, missing nothing.

JOFFREY BARATHEON (13), the crown prince, tall for his age, and haughty. Beside him:

SANDOR CLEGANE (35), "The Hound," Joffrey's bodyguard. Terrible burn scars cover half his face.

A huge man approaches, flanked by knights in snow-white cloaks. A black beard covers his double chin, but nothing can hide the belly that threatens to burst his doublet's buttons.

This is KING ROBERT BARATHEON (40s). He vaults from his warhorse and gives Ned an imperious once-over.

ROBERT
You've gotten fat.

Ned tries to maintain his stony decorum, but it's hopeless. For the first time, we see him laugh -- and it becomes clear that Ned and the King are actually old friends.

Robert joins in, engulfing him in a bone-crunching hug. He finally releases Ned, who takes a moment to catch his breath.

ROBERT
Nine years! Why haven't I seen you?
Where the hell have you been?

NED
Guarding the north for you, your
Grace. Winterfell is yours.

As the king's party dismounts, an ornate wheelhouse pulls into their midst. QUEEN CERSEI LANNISTER (32) emerges with her younger children, TOMMEN (7) and MYRCELLA (8).

Ned kneels to kiss her ring; her smile is pure formality.

Robert, on the other hand, embraces Catelyn like a long lost sister. As the children on both sides are brought forward and introduced, Robert steps back to Ned.

ROBERT
Take me down to your crypt. I want
to pay my respects.

CERSEI
We've been riding since dawn.
Surely, the dead will wait.

Robert gives her a hard look. Cersei stares back at him, uncowed. Finally Robert turns and walks away. After an awkward glance at the Queen, Ned leads Robert toward one of Winterfell's old towers.

INT. WINTERFELL - CRYPT STAIRS - DAY

Ned holds a lantern as he leads Robert down the narrow, winding stone steps.

ROBERT

I thought we'd never get here. All the talk about my Seven Kingdoms... a man forgets your part is as big as the other six combined.
(disbelief)
It *snowed* on us! Snow!

As they descend, their breath becomes more and more visible from the cold, and Robert's becomes more and more labored.

ROBERT

How will you stand it, man, when winter finally comes? Your balls frozen right up into your guts for the next twenty, thirty years?

NED

The Starks will endure. We always have.

ROBERT

You need to come south, get a real taste of summer before it's gone. Everyone is fat, drunk and rich. And the *girls*, Ned! Women lose all modesty in the heat. They swim naked in the river, right beneath the castle...

The king laughs happily, but his laughter trails off as the staircase ends.

INT. WINTERFELL - CRYPT - CONTINUOUS

Ned sweeps the lantern in a semicircle; shadows lurch along a procession of granite pillars that recede into the dark.

NED

She's down at the end, your Grace.

Side by side they proceed, their footsteps ringing off the stones as they walk among the dead of House Stark.

Between the pillars on either side: granite sculptures of the deceased sitting on thrones, their backs against their own sepulchres. Great stone direwolves curl around their feet.

Ned stops at the last tomb and lifts the lantern. The crypt continues on into the darkness ahead of them, but beyond this point the tombs are empty, waiting for him and his children.

In front of him, illuminated by the lantern, a beautiful young woman stares out at them with blind, granite eyes: Lyanna Stark, Ned's sister.

ROBERT

She was more beautiful than that.

Silently, Robert kneels and bows his head. Ned joins him. Robert's voice is hoarse with remembered grief.

ROBERT

Did you have to bury her in a place like this? She should be on a hill somewhere, with the sun and the clouds above her.

NED

She was a Stark. This is her place.

The king rises to touch her cheek, his fingers brushing the rough stone as gently as if it were living flesh.

ROBERT

In my dreams, I kill him every night.

NED

It's done. The Targaryens are gone.

The warrior Robert used to be surfaces in his face, pitiless.

ROBERT

Not all of them.

NED

We should return, your Grace. Your wife will be waiting.

ROBERT

To hell with my wife.

That said, he starts back the way they came. Ned follows.

ROBERT

And if I hear "your Grace" one more time, I'll have your fucking head on a spike. We're more to each other than that.

NED

I haven't forgotten.
(beat)
Tell me about old Jon.

ROBERT

(shakes his head)
One moment he was fine, and... It burned right through him, whatever it was.
(stops walking)
I loved that man.

NED

We both did.

ROBERT

He never had to teach you much. But me? You remember me at sixteen? All I wanted to do was crack skulls and fuck girls. Old Jon showed me what was what.

Ned gives the king a sidelong, skeptical look, barely suppressing a smile.

ROBERT

Don't look at me like that. It's not his fault I didn't listen.

He puts a massive arm around Ned's shoulder and walks on.

ROBERT

You must wonder why I've finally come north, after all these years.

NED

Your inspection of the Wall is long overdue.

ROBERT

The Wall's stood for eight thousand years. It can keep a while longer.

Robert stops walking and turns to face Ned.

ROBERT

These are dangerous times... I need good men around me, men like Jon Arryn.

(beat)

Men like you. I want you down in King's Landing, not up here where you're no damn use to anybody.

(stops walking)

Lord Eddard Stark, I would name you Hand of the King.

Ned drops to one knee, not at all surprised.

NED

I'm not worthy of the honor.

ROBERT

I'm not trying to honor you. I'm trying to get you to run my kingdom while I eat, drink and whore my way to an early grave. You know the saying...

NED

The King shits, and the Hand wipes.

Robert laughs. Still on one knee, Ned can't help but join him.

ROBERT

Damn it, Ned, stand up.

(Ned does)

You helped me win the Iron Throne, now help me keep the fucking thing. We were meant to rule together.

(beat)

If your sister had lived, we'd have been bound by blood. Well, it's not too late. I have a son, you have a daughter... my Joff and your Sansa will join our houses.

This does surprise Ned. After a moment he shakes his head and smiles.

NED

How long have you been planning this?

ROBERT

How old is your daughter?

Both men laugh. Robert's face grows serious.

ROBERT

I never loved my brothers. A sad thing for a man to admit, but it's true. You were the brother I chose. We were meant to be family.

NED

(moved by these words)
I don't know what to say.

ROBERT

Say "Yes"!

NED

If I could have some time to consider these honors...

ROBERT

Yes, of course, talk it over with Catelyn, sleep on it if you must.

He claps his hands roughly on Ned's shoulders.

ROBERT

Just don't keep me waiting too long. I'm not the most patient man.

Ned smiles-- but his glance drifts over Robert's shoulder to the dead of Winterfell, who watch with disapproving eyes.

INT. GREAT HALL OF WINTERFELL - NIGHT

The feast for the king is in its fourth hour. A SINGER plays the harp at one end of the hall but no one can hear him above the roar of the fire, the clangor of pewter plates and cups, and the din of a hundred conversations.

The long wooden tables are covered with steaming platters of roasted meats and baked breads.

Banners hang from the stone walls: the dire wolf of Stark; Baratheon's crowned stag; the lion of Lannister.

Ned and Catelyn host King Robert (already drunk), Queen Cersei, Ser Jaime and Tyrion Lannister (the queen's brothers) and a few other luminaries at a table on a raised platform.

The Stark and Baratheon trueborn children sit at a table directly below the guests of honor.

On the main floor, the SOLDIERS, SQUIRES and other COMMONERS sit on backless benches. Jon Snow sits with them.

The young men sitting around Jon are telling the usual stories about fighting and fucking. Jon seems comfortable in their midst, but he's not paying attention to them; he's stealing a glance at his siblings, at their table of honor.

Jon downs his wine, and signals a serving boy for a refill, and watches his father and the King and the high table.

Robert and Ned toast with tankards full of ale. Ned takes a healthy drink; Robert drinks the whole tankard.

A few seats down, Catelyn notices Queen Cersei staring at her drunk husband with plain disgust. A good hostess, Catelyn tries to distract Cersei.

CATELYN

Your children are quite beautiful,
my Queen. They have the gift of the
Lannister eyes.

Cersei, a little startled to be addressed, stares at Catelyn with her vaguely reptilian green eyes.

CERSEI

I heard a rumor we might share a
grandchild someday.

CATELYN

(pleased)
I heard the same rumor...

CERSEI

Of course, these decisions
ultimately fall to our husbands. As
all important decisions must.

She glances past Catelyn to Robert, as he gnaws on a rib and leers at the BUXOM SERVING GIRL refilling his tankard. Only her eyes reveal her anger, and they only do so briefly.

Jaime, sitting on the other side of Cersei, leans forward, his forearms on the table, flashing his white teeth at Catelyn. Many women have waited their whole lives for that smile, but it only serves to make her nervous.

JAIME

You'd enjoy the capital, my lady.
The north must be hard for someone
who wasn't born here.

CATELYN

I'm sure it seems very grim, after
King's Landing.

(MORE)

CATELYN (cont'd)
I remember how scared I was when
Ned brought me up here the first
time.

CERSEI
You were only a girl. I'm sure you
were scared of many things.

CATELYN
But harsh as it is, I've come to
love it. The north gets in your
blood.

Cersei seems skeptical, looking around the rough-hewn Great Hall, which would fit in the kitchen of her own palace.

CERSEI
Your daughter will take to the
city. Such a beauty can't stay
hidden up here forever. It's time
we introduce her to the court.

CATELYN
Mm... of course, I have two
daughters.

If Cersei knew this at one point, she had forgotten. She sees Catelyn's distressed look and follows her gaze to the children's table, where Sansa looks as radiant as ever, chatting with young Princess Myrcella.

Arya, on the other hand, has already ruined her evening dress. She uses her spoon as a catapult to fling a wad of pigeon pie at Bran, across the table. It hits him square in the forehead.

JAIME
The girl has talent.

Catelyn, embarrassed, begins to stand so she can take matters in hand. But Ned, passing behind her, grips her shoulders, leans down and kisses the side of her neck.

NED
I'll take care of it.

Cersei smiles at Catelyn. To her credit, she has an excellent fake smile. The two women resume their conversation.

As Ned passes behind Jaime's seat, Jaime pushes his chair back, momentarily blocking Ned's path. Jaime stands.

JAIME
Excuse my clumsiness.

He smiles down at Ned. Jaime is taller and broader in the shoulders. They are considered two of the greatest warriors in the Seven Kingdoms, and there can be little doubt that right now each man wonders who would win a fight.

NED

Not a trait most people associate
with you. Your pardon--

He moves to step around Jaime, but Jaime puts his hand on Ned's shoulder.

JAIME

I hear we might be neighbors soon.
I hope it's true.

Ned would rather talk to any living man than this one.

NED

Yes, the King has honored me with
his offer.

Again he tries to pass, and again Jaime sidesteps to block him. Jaime smiles but his actions are just shy of aggression.

JAIME

The King has promised a tournament
to celebrate your new title... if
you accept. It would be good to
have you on the field. The
competition has become a bit stale.

NED

I don't fight in tournaments.

JAIME

No? Getting a little old for it?

Ned is tired of trying to get around Jaime. He stands very close to the younger man and looks him dead in the eye.

NED

I don't fight in tournaments
because if I ever have to fight a
man for real, I don't want him to
know what I can do.

The comment pleases Jaime immensely, judging from his smile.

JAIME

Well said, well said! I do hope you
take the King's offer.

(MORE)

JAIME (cont'd)

Though of course, we all know the court hasn't been kind to Stark men.

Ned stiffens at the comment. Nobody wears swords at the banquet but his hand reflexively grips for the absent hilt.

JAIME

Your father and brother. Yes, I was a witness to that... tragedy.

NED

I know you were.

JAIME

I suppose it's some consolation that justice finally came to their killer. No need to thank me-- oh, I'm sorry, you never did.

NED

Was it justice you were thinking of when you shoved your spear in the Mad King's back?

JAIME

It was his kidneys I was thinking of. His liver and spleen. Was that terrible of me? After all the suffering the man caused?

Ned has had enough. He pushes past Jaime. This time the Kingslayer lets him go, but not before one final remark. For an instant Jaime's air of perpetual amusement evaporates.

JAIME

The worst king in a thousand years... and people treat me like some back-alley cutthroat.

But Ned is already gone, heading down the raised platform. Jaime stands alone. The only one at the banquet table who has overheard the Jaime/Ned conversation is Tyrion, who grins at his brother and raises his tankard in toast.

TYRION

If it came down to it, big brother, I'd bet on you-- but I wouldn't bet much.

He downs his tankard of ale with a single, heroic gulp and wipes the foam from his mouth, pleased with himself.

A second later it hits him: he's one tankard over the line. Tyrion stands and staggers away from the royal table without a goodbye.

Jaime retakes his seat beside his sister, who watches Tyrion stumble down the steps to the main floor.

CERSEI

He is a vile little beast.

JAIME

He plays the hand he was dealt.

His gaze floats over Cersei's shoulder, to Robert.

JAIME

As do we all.

Tyrion lurches past Ned on the main floor, nearly bumping into him. Ned extends a hand to steady the little man but Tyrion brushes past him, not wanting any help, heading for the exit.

Ned turns; for a second, from where Jon Snow is sitting, it seems Ned is staring right at him.

Jon smiles at his father, eager for acknowledgement. A wink would suffice.

But Ned wasn't looking at him at all; his eyes are on the table of trueborn children that lies between Jon and Ned. Ned heads over to break up the Arya/Bran foodfight.

Slightly bitter, more than slightly drunk, Jon takes a large hunk of honeyed chicken from his trencher and chucks it under the table to his dire wolf puppy, GHOST. The way Ghost devours it in seconds is cute -- until we remember the size of his mother.

One of the boys at the table is filling wine cups from a flagon. Jon nods for another cup and gulps from it while watching his pup lick the chicken bones clean.

JON SNOW

You never stop eating, do you?

BENJEN (O.S.)

Is this one of the direwolves I've heard so much about?

Jon looks up happily as his uncle BENJEN STARK (40s) ruffles his hair.

Benjen is sharp-featured and gaunt, but there's always a hint of laughter in his eyes. He wears the black garb of a sworn brother of the Night's Watch.

JON
His name is Ghost.

One of the squires at the table makes room. Benjen straddles the bench, takes the cup from Jon's hand and sips.

BENJEN
How many cups have you had?
(off Jon's guilty smile)
As I feared. Well, I believe I was
younger than you the first time I
got truly and sincerely drunk.

Benjen grabs a roasted onion from a nearby trencher and bites into it. He watches Ghost as he chews.

BENJEN
Don't you usually eat with your
brothers?

JON
(flat, sardonic)
Most times. But Lady Stark thought
it might insult the royal family to
seat a bastard among them.

BENJEN
I see.

Benjen glances over his shoulder at the elevated table, where Ned returns to sit with Catelyn.

BENJEN
My brother doesn't seem so festive
tonight.

JON
He's sad about Jon Arryn.

Jon's eyes go to the queen.

JON
The queen is angry. Father took the
king down to the crypts this
afternoon. She didn't want him to
go.

Benjen gives Jon a careful, measuring look.

BENJEN

You don't miss much, do you?

(beat)

We could use a man like you on the Wall, someday.

JON

(a sudden rush)

Take me with you when you go back. Father will let me go if you ask him. I know he will.

BENJEN

The Wall is a hard place for a boy.

JON

I turn seventeen on my next name day. And Maester Luwin says bastards grow up faster.

BENJEN

(frowning)

That's true enough.

Benjen fills the wine cup and takes a long swallow.

JON

I want to serve in the Night's Watch. I'm ready to swear your oath.

BENJEN

You don't understand what you'd be giving up. We have no families. None of us will ever father sons.

JON

I don't care about that!

BENJEN

You might, if you knew what it meant. Come talk to me after you've dipped your wick a few times.

He stands, grips his nephew's shoulder, and takes his leave.

Frustrated, Jon drains his cup, slams it on the table and rises from the bench. Too late he realizes how drunk he really is-- he lurches into a SERVING GIRL, sending a flagon of wine crashing to the floor.

Laughter booms all around. Jon flushes and runs for the door. Ghost follows at his heels.

EXT. WINTERFELL - COURTYARD - NIGHT

The yard is quiet and empty. High on the battlements of the inner wall, a lone SENTRY takes brief notice of Jon as he storms from the banquet hall with Ghost close behind.

The music and song spilling through the hall's open windows seem to taunt Jon as he walks away from the feast.

TYRION (O.S.)

Boy.

Jon turns to see Tyrion Lannister sitting like a gargoyle on the ledge above the door to the great hall. Tyrion is drunk like Jon, only more so.

TYRION

Is that animal a wolf?

JON

A direwolf. His name is Ghost.

(beat)

What are you doing up there? Why aren't you at the feast?

TYRION

I learned long ago that it's considered rude to vomit on one's brother. Might I have a closer look at your wolf?

Jon hesitates, nods-- and gasps as Tyrion pushes himself off the ledge, falls twelve feet to the ground and lands roughly. Ghost flinches and backs away behind Jon's legs.

Tyrion stands and dusts himself off.

TYRION

I've frightened the beast. My apologies.

JON

He's not afraid.

TYRION

He is! I am terrifying!

He is not. Jon commands his wolf:

JON

Ghost, come here. Come on, boy...

The pup comes back around front, keeping a wary eye on Tyrion. When Tyrion reaches out to pet him, Ghost bares his fangs in a silent snarl. Tyrion hesitates.

JON
Sit, Ghost.
(Ghost sits; to Ghost)
Hold.
(to Tyrion)
You can touch him now. He won't
move. I've been training him.

Tyrion kneels and ruffles the white fur between Ghost's ears.

TYRION
Nice wolf. Niiiiiice wolf.

JON
He's not. If I wasn't here, he'd
have your throat out.

Tyrion cocks his head and looks Jon over, possibly impressed by the boy's bravado. Ghost is still far too small to tear out anyone's throat.

TYRION
In that case, you'd best stay
close.

He stands and looks up at Jon.

TYRION
I am Tyrion Lannister.

JON
I know who you are.

TYRION
You're Ned Stark's bastard, aren't
you?

Jon presses his lips together and says nothing.

TYRION
Did I offend you? Sorry.
(beat)
You are the bastard, though.

JON
Lord Eddard Stark is my father.

Tyrion steps in closer and examines Jon's face.

TYRION

Yes... you have more of the north
in you than your brothers.

Jon tries to hide his pleasure at this observation.

JON

Half brothers.

Tyrion's mouth is fixed in a sardonic grin, but his eyes burn
with intensity as he speaks.

TYRION

Let me give you some advice,
bastard. Never forget what you are--
the rest of the world will not.
Make it your strength, and it can
never be your weakness. Wear it
like armor, and it can never be
used to hurt you.

Jon is in no mood for anyone's advice.

JON

What do you know about being a
bastard?

TYRION

All dwarfs are bastards in their
father's eyes.

Tyrion saunters back into the feast, whistling to himself.
When he opens the door, the light from the hall throws
Tyrion's shadow clear across the yard.

INT. CATELYN'S BEDCHAMBER - NIGHT

Ned opens the room's high narrow windows.

A blast of cold night air blows into the chamber. On the bed,
Catelyn pulls the furs up to her chin. Ned breathes deeply,
taking the cold into his lungs, staring out into the dark.
Then he turns back to face her.

NED

I'll refuse him.

CATELYN

You cannot. You must not.

NED

You said yourself I could tell him
no. I'm a northman.

(MORE)

NED (cont'd)
I belong here, not down south in
that rats' nest they call a
capital.

CATELYN
He would make our daughter Queen.

Ned turns away, facing the darkness again. She softens and is about to go to him when a loud knock comes at the door.

NED
I gave orders not to be disturbed.

From the other side of the door, a SENTRY answers.

SENTRY (O.S.)
It's Maester Luwin calling, my
lord. He insists.

Ned slips on a heavy robe.

NED
Send him in.

The door opens and Maester Luwin enters. He waits until the door is shut behind him before speaking.

MAESTER LUWIN
My lord, pardon for disturbing your
rest. I have been left a message.

NED
Been *left*? By whom?

MAESTER LUWIN
There was no messenger, my lord.
Only a carved wooden box, left on a
table in my observatory while I
slept. This was concealed in a
false bottom.

Maester Luwin draws a tightly rolled paper from his loose sleeves. Ned holds out his hand.

NED
Let me have it, then.

MAESTER LUWIN
A thousand pardons, my lord. The
message is marked for the eyes of
the Lady Catelyn alone.

Ned isn't used to being denied by anyone below the rank of king.

He considers the old man for a second and steps aside, allowing Maester Luwin to place the paper on the bedside table. Luwin bows and begins to retreat.

NED

Stay.

Catelyn looks at the blue wax moon-and-falcon seal on the paper with foreboding.

CATELYN

It's from my sister. Something's wrong. Why would she hide the letter? They said she left the capital right after he died...

NED

Open it.

Catelyn breaks the seal. Her eyes move over the words. For a moment, she is confused-- then a smile flits across her lips.

CATELYN

She took no chances. When we were girls, we had a private language.

NED

Can you still read it?

CATELYN

Yes...

Her smile disappears as she reads.

Catelyn wraps herself in one of the bed furs and pads toward the hearth. She tosses the paper in the fire and watches to make sure it burns through.

CATELYN

She says Jon Arryn was murdered.

(beat)

By the Lannisters. By the Queen.

The accusation shocks Ned. He tries to rationalize it away:

NED

Your sister is sick with grief. She doesn't know what she's saying.

CATELYN

Lysa isn't easy, but she's never been a fool.

NED
This is madness...

CATELYN
You say you love Robert like a
brother. Would you leave your
brother surrounded by Lannisters?

Ned looks to Maester Luwin, hoping for a different opinion.

MAESTER LUWIN
The Hand of the King has great
power, my lord. Power to
investigate. And to punish, if need
be.

CATELYN
You must go south with him. Become
his Hand and learn the truth.

NED
I am not your dog to command, my
lady.

But Ned's words are belied by the resignation in his face.
She is right and he knows it. He sits heavily in a chair
beside the hearth.

NED
My father went south once, to
answer the summons of a king. He
never came home again.

MAESTER LUWIN
A different time. A different king.

Ned says nothing, watching the flames devour the wood.

INT. WINTERFELL - TOWER ROOM - DAY

Sansa and Princess Myrcella both knit, overseen by Myrcella's
ladies-in-waiting, and Sansa's tutor, SEPTA MORDANE (60s).

Arya sits near the door. Her needlework is as grim as Sansa's
is perfect, her face as plain as Sansa's is beautiful.

She doesn't want to be here. While the Septa fawns over the
princess, Arya quietly lays down her knitting and sneaks away.

EXT. WINTERFELL - COURTYARD - DAY

Bran and Prince Tommen drill in the yard with padded wooden swords. The children are so heavily padded themselves that they look like they've been wrapped in featherbeds.

Huffing and puffing, they thump each other under the watchful eye of SER RODRIK CASSEL (60), the master-at-arms, a stout keg of a man with thick white sideburns.

A dozen (male) spectators call out encouragements, Robb the loudest among them. Theon Greyjoy watches with his characteristic wry contempt.

Twenty yards from the others, Jon Snow watches as well, seated alone on a rough wooden bench. Absorbed in the action, he is unaware of Arya's approach until she jumps on his back.

JON
Shouldn't you be working on your
stitches?

Arya makes a face at him.

ARYA
I wanted to see them fight. Why
aren't you with them?

JON
Bastards aren't allowed to damage
young princes.

Arya watches her little brother Bran whack at Tommen, almost toppling over himself in the process.

ARYA
I could do better than Bran. I'd
knock the prince's fat head off.

Jon looks at her with mock shock. Then he takes her arm and examines it, feeling her muscle. He shakes his head.

JON
Too skinny.

She snatches back her arm and glares at him. He messes up her hair. A cheer goes up from the drilling field.

Bran has managed to knock Tommen over; the prince is rolling in the dust, trying to get up and failing, like a padded turtle. Bran stands at the ready with upraised wooden sword, ready to whack him again once he regains his feet.

The spectators laugh until Ser Rodrik ends it. He yanks the prince to his feet.

SER RODRIK
Well fought. Prince Joffrey, Robb,
will you go another round?

ROBB
Gladly.

Joffrey, however, looks bored; he remains among his men.

JOFFREY
This is a child's game.

THEON
That's because you're children.

JOFFREY
Robb may be a child. I am a prince.
And I'm tired of swatting at Starks
with a play sword.

ROBB
You got more swats than you gave.
Afraid?

JOFFREY
Oh, terrified. I might get a
splinter.

The Lannister men all laugh.

Jon and Arya watch with contempt.

JON
What a shit.

Ser Rodrik asks Joffrey:

SER RODRIK
What do you suggest?

JOFFREY
Live steel.

ROBB
Done.

Ser Rodrik puts a hand on Robb's shoulder.

SER RODRIK

Too dangerous. I'll let you go with
tourney swords with blunted edges.

A muscled knight with black hair and terrible burn scars on his face pushes forward: Sandor "The Hound" Clegane, Joffrey's bodyguard.

THE HOUND

This is your prince. Who are you to
tell him he can't have an edge on
his sword?

(to Robb)

How old are you, boy?

ROBB

Sixteen.

THE HOUND

I killed a man at twelve. And not
with a blunt sword.

Arya watches with worry as Robb bristles, his pride wounded.

ROBB

(to Ser Rodrik)

Let me do it. I can beat him.

SER RODRIK

Beat him with a tourney blade,
then.

Joffrey shrugs and starts to turn away.

JOFFREY

Come and see me, north boy, once
your balls thaw.

Laughter from the Lannister men. Robb loses his temper.

ROBB

I'll cut yours off, you little piss-
haired-

Arya's and Jon's eyes widen in surprise.

But Theon seizes Robb's arm to keep him away from the prince.
Joffrey feigns a yawn and turns to his younger brother.

JOFFREY

Come, Tommen. Playtime is over.
Leave the children to their games.

More laughter from the Lannisters, more curses from Robb. Theon continues to hold Robb back, now aided by Ser Rodrik, until the Lannister party is safely away.

Far from being frightened, Arya is thrilled. This is where she wants to be, among the rough and brawling boys.

JON
(to Arya)
You'd better get back.

ARYA
I hate needlework! It's not fair!

JON
Nothing is fair.

He messes her hair again and walks away, Ghost following silently. Reluctantly, Arya turns in the other direction.

In the distance, she sees Septa Mordane waiting for her - along with Lady Catelyn herself. Neither looks pleased.

Arya sighs and goes to take what she's got coming.

EXT. DOTHRAKI ENCAMPMENT - DAY

Outside the city walls of Pentos, hordes of DOTHRAKI WARRIORS-- along with their WOMEN, CHILDREN, and SLAVES-- have gathered to celebrate their Khal's wedding day.

An earthen ramp has been raised in the middle of a vast grass field. Dany sits beside Khal Drogo. Beautiful as she is in her wedding silks, she looks as scared as a trapped animal.

Khal Drogo does not seem to notice her. He shouts commands and jests in his own tongue to his bloodriders, who sit below him on the second-highest level of the ramp.

Also seated on that level are Jorah Mormont, Magister Illyrio, and Viserys, who looks splendid in a new black wool tunic with a scarlet dragon on the chest. They are in the midst of an urgent conversation, keeping their voices low.

Illyrio waves languidly, rings glittering on his fingers.

ILLYRIO
Trust me. The Khal has promised you
a crown and you shall have it.

VISERYS
When?

ILLYRIO

When the Khal chooses. When the
omens favor war.

VISERYS

I piss on Dothraki omens. I've
waited fifteen years to get my
throne back. I'm tired of this
country, tired of living with
savages.

Above them on the ramp, Daenerys steals a glance at Khal Drogo. He seems unaware of her existence, staring at the grass below with no expression on his face.

Daenerys turns to see what he's watching: Dothraki drummers pound on their horseskin drums as a dozen young Dothraki women begin dancing for their Khal.

The Dothraki are not a repressed people. The dance is overtly sexual, so overt that a warrior soon steps into the circle, grabs a dancer by the arm, pushes her to the ground and takes her right there in front of the cheering crowd.

Khal Drogo grins and nods. Evidently this is appropriate wedding behavior. Daenerys watches with horror.

Soon a second warrior has grabbed a dancer, and then a third. The trouble begins when two warriors try to lay claim to the same woman. Both men draw their scimitars and begin swinging at each other.

The combat is fast, brutal and efficient, the steel blades blurring in the sunlight. Finally one man misses a parry. An instant later his entrails spill onto the dust and he falls.

The victor seizes a girl-- not even the original girl they were fighting over-- and the crowd roars in approval.

Daenerys struggles to keep from vomiting. The platter of blood sausages in front of her do not help.

Illyrio claps politely and explains to Viserys:

ILLYRIO

A Dothraki wedding without at least
three deaths is considered a dull
affair.

Khal Drogo stands and raises one hand. Instantly the horde goes silent. The only noise is the bleating of a lost sheep.

Drogo looks at Dany. There is no sign of mercy in his face. She realizes that everyone at the wedding is watching her. Finally she stands. He nods and leads her down the ramp, into the center of the field.

Dany stands beside her new husband, encircled by her new tribe, looking very small and pale next to Drogo.

ILLYRIO
(to Viserys)
Time for the gifts.

Dothraki men surge forward, prostrating themselves before their Khal and laying down gifts in a growing pile: medallion belts and painted vests, soft furs and silks, silver rings.

Viserys approaches with a thin smile on his face. He leads three HANDMAIDS. Two are Dothraki girls with black hair and almond-shaped eyes. The third is fair-haired and blue-eyed.

VISERYS
(to Dany)
These are not common servants. Irri will teach you riding, Jaqui the Dothraki tongue, and Doreah... the art of love.

He grins at Doreah, who lowers her eyes.

VISERYS
She's quite good. Illyrio and I can vouch for that.

Ser Jorah approaches next, laying a small stack of old books before Dany and bowing deeply.

JORAH
A small gift, my princess, but all a poor exile could afford. Songs and histories of the Seven Kingdoms.

The gift touches Dany: she smiles, and speaks for the first time at her own wedding.

DAENARYS
Thank you, Ser.

Ser Jorah is pleased that his gift is pleasing. He glances at Khal Drogo, bows again, and steps back.

Illyrio snaps his fingers. Four BURLY SLAVES hurry forward, bearing between them a great cedar chest bound in bronze.

Illyrio bows low and gestures for Dany to open the chest. Inside, resting on a pile of fine velvets and damasks, are three large eggs: one green, one cream, one black.

She takes one into her hands. The egg shimmers like polished metal. The surface of the shell is covered with tiny scales.

ILLYRIO

Dragon's eggs, from the Shadow
Lands beyond Asshai. The ages have
turned them to stone, but they will
always be beautiful.

Viserys, standing beside Ser Jorah, rolls his eyes.

VISERYS

Fakes, of course.

Fake or real, the egg mesmerizes Dany. She rolls it in her hands, letting the light play off the shell.

DAENARYS

Thank you, Magister. I owe you
everything.

Khal Drogo walks into the crowd. The Dothraki part for him.

Daenerys, confused, tries to hide her anxiety. The Dothraki look back at her. To her, they are an exotic people, but to them she is like a visitor from another planet. They have never seen a girl with silver hair and violet eyes before.

Drogo reemerges from the crowd, leading a splendid young filly, gray as the winter sea.

Everyone waits to see how Dany will react. Hesitantly she reaches out to stroke the horse's neck, running her fingers through its mane.

Drogo says something in the Dothraki tongue and Illyrio translates.

ILLYRIO

Silver for the silver of your hair,
the Khal says.

DAENERYS

(murmuring)
She's beautiful.

Drogo steps forward, puts his hands on Dany's waist, lifts her as easily as if she were a child's doll, and places her on the filly's thin saddle.

The Dothraki stare at their new queen.

DAENERYS
(to Illyrio)
What should I do?

Ser Jorah answers for the Magister.

JORAH
Take the reins and ride. You don't
have to go far.

Dany gathers the reins and slips her feet into the stirrups. She squeezes gently with her knees and the filly breaks into a trot. At first Dany seems frightened, but as the crowd parts for her and the speed increases, she smiles.

She sends the filly into a gallop through the campground, and now the Dothraki are hooting and laughing and shouting at her, impressed by their new *khaleesi's* spirit.

At full speed Dany and the filly circle back, a little out of control. A fire pit looms ahead, directly in their path. They are hemmed in on either side by hollering Dothraki. There is no way out but straight ahead.

The silver horse leaps the flames as if she had wings.

The crowd cheers. Dany pulls up beside Illyrio.

DAENERYS
Tell Khal Drogo he has given me the
wind.

Illyrio translates the line. And for the first time that we've seen, Khal Drogo smiles.

The bloodriders bring forth the Khal's horse, a lean red stallion, and Drogo mounts.

Viserys approaches Daenerys on her filly. He looks very pleasant as he grips his sister's leg.

VISERYS
Make him happy.

His fingers dig into her thigh and Daenerys flinches.

Khal Drogo trots off on his stallion and Dany follows behind, looking back at Viserys and Illyrio and Ser Jorah.

The exhilaration that brightened her face a minute before is gone. The fear is back.

EXT. MEADOW - DUSK

Drogo drives his stallion at a hard trot, the tiny silver bells in his long braid ringing softly as he rides.

Dany follows behind. The sun is down and the darkening sky above her head is vast and ominous.

They ride through a meadow of cattails and tall grass.

EXT. STREAM - DUSK

Drogo stops at a grassy spot beside a gently-flowing stream. He swings off his horse and lifts Dany off hers.

She stands there, helpless and trembling in her wedding silks, while Drogo secures the horses to a nearby tree.

When he returns Dany starts to cry. Drogo stares at her, his face strangely empty of expression. He rubs away her tears with a callused thumb.

KHAL DROGO

No.

DAENERYS

You know the Common Tongue?

KHAL DROGO

No.

He touches her hair lightly, sliding the silver strands between his fingers and murmuring softly in Dothraki.

Dany does not understand the words, but there is a warmth in his tone, a tenderness she had not expected.

He puts his finger under her chin and lifts her head, so she is looking him in the eyes. Drogo towers over her the way he towers over everyone.

Taking her lightly under the arms he lifts her and seats her on a rounded rock beside the stream. He sits on the ground facing her, legs crossed beneath him. Finally their faces are at the same height.

KHAL DROGO

No.

DAENERYS

Is that the only word you know?

He doesn't reply. His long heavy braid is coiled in the dirt beside him. He begins to remove the rings and bells. After a moment, Dany leans forward to help.

When they are done, Drogo nods. Dany hesitates and then understands: she begins to undo his braid. He sits silently, watching her. When she is done he shakes his head and the hair spreads out behind him like a river of darkness.

Now it's his turn. Drogo undresses her, his fingers deft and strangely gentle. He removes her silks one by one while Dany sits unmoving, staring at his dark eyes.

When he bares her small breasts, she averts her eyes and covers herself with her hands.

KHAL DROGO

No.

He pulls her hands away from her breasts, gentle but firm. He lifts her face again to make her look at him.

KHAL DROGO

No.

He pulls off the last of her silks. She shivers in the evening wind. Khal Drogo, still sitting with his legs crossed, looks at her, drinking in her body with his eyes.

He runs his hand gently down her leg. He strokes her face, tracing the curves of her ears, running a finger over her lips. He turns her around, kissing her from the nape of her neck to the small of her back.

He pulls her down into his lap. Dany is flushed and breathless. He cups her face in his huge hands and she looks into his eyes.

KHAL DROGO

No?

She takes his hand and moves it between her thighs.

DAENERYS

Yes.

EXT. WINTERFELL - COURTYARD - DAWN

Near the main gate, the King's hunting party is almost ready to leave. Hullen the horse master checks the saddles; other retainers sharpen spears and ready the hounds.

Jory, Theon, Ser Rodrik, Benjen and Tyrion outfit themselves. Tyrion does so very, very slowly; badly hung-over, he looks like day-old death as he turns to Benjen:

TYRION

If I get through this without
squirting from one end or the
other, it'll be a miracle.

A few yards deeper into the courtyard, Ned sits on a bench, strapping a leather-and-steel vambrace to his forearm. He seems preoccupied and careworn as King Robert steps up behind him and gives him a friendly shake of the shoulders.

ROBERT

You as good with a spear as you
used to be?

Ned smiles, hiding his worries from the happy king.

NED

No. But I'm still better than you.

Robert laughs. As one of the king's squires kneels beside Robert and begins lacing padded half-greaves onto the king's legs, Robert squeezes Ned's shoulder.

ROBERT

I know how much you love it up
here. Coming south with me, serving
as my Hand-- I know it's not what
you wanted. You're a loyal friend.
You hear me? A loyal friend. The
last one I've got.

Ned stands. The two men clasp hands.

NED

I hope I'll serve you well.

ROBERT

You will. And I'll make sure you
don't look so fucking grim all the
time.

Ned smiles and looks to the hunting party.

NED

I hear the southern boars are twice
as nasty as the ones up here.

ROBERT

Oh, you won't have time for
hunting. You'll be too busy
wrangling the snakes that call
themselves my court.

The king laughs, throws his heavy arm across Ned's shoulders,
and leads him towards the horses.

At the other end of the courtyard, Bran watches the hunting
party mount their horses. He wants very badly to go with
them, but he's too young.

About fifty yards to his right, he sees Jon Snow sullenly
watching the hunting party as well. Jon has been left behind
himself, for different reasons.

Bran tries to wave to him, but Jon sulks off without seeing
him. Bran sighs, his mood sinking further.

But he hears a small growling at his feet. He looks down to
see his wolf pup-- as yet unnamed-- jerking his head back and
forth, with Bran's pant leg clamped between his jaws.
Finally, Bran smiles.

BRAN

Come on, you.

He runs off. His wolf bounds after him.

EXT. WINTERFELL - FIRST KEEP - MORNING

With his wolf at his heels, Bran runs toward the First Keep,
the oldest part of the castle.

He reaches the squat round tower and looks up. The Keep has
been deserted for years; its crown has begun to crumble, and
moss grows between the stones. High above, it is festooned
with gargoyles leaning blindly over empty space.

Bran turns to the pup.

BRAN

Lie down. Now *stay*.

The wolf does as he is told. Bran scratches him behind the
ears, then finds a handhold in the keep wall and begins to
climb, moving from stone to stone quickly and instinctively.

When Bran is about ten feet up, his wolf rises to his feet
and begins to howl. Bran looks down.

His wolf falls silent. There's something eerily imploring about the way the animal looks up at him through slitted yellow eyes. He doesn't want Bran to keep climbing.

Bran starts climbing again. His wolf starts howling again. Bran shouts down sternly:

BRAN
Quiet! Sit! Stay!

The wolf continues to howl, until Bran is far, far above him. Then he drops back down onto his stomach and whines.

Bran scrambles up the rough-cut stones of the ancient tower. He climbs with no fear and no hesitation. When he gets high enough he begins swinging from gargoyle to gargoyle. He knows where to find every handhold and foothold.

He is near the top when a woman's voice from inside the tower startles him, nearly causing him to lose his grip.

WOMAN'S VOICE
I don't like it. You should be the
Hand.

MAN'S VOICE
There's an honor I can do without.
Far too much work involved.

Clinging to a gargoyle, Bran looks down, past his dangling feet. The voices come from a row of glassless windows below.

WOMAN'S VOICE
Don't you see how dangerous this
is? Robert loves the man like a
brother. We'll have to watch him...

MAN'S VOICE
(lazy; seductive)
I'd rather watch you. Come back
here.

Bran reaches for the next gargoyle over. It seems too far, he won't make it...

But Bran has climbed this tower a hundred times. He swings over to the second gargoyle, straddles the stone monster's back, tightens his legs and turns himself upside down.

Perched like a bat, Bran is able to look in through the window. From his vantage he cannot see the couple's faces.

A fur cloak has been laid on the stone floor of the unlit chamber. A naked woman lies belly down on the fur. A naked man lies on his side beside her, mostly hidden by the shadows. Their voices echo strangely off the ancient stones.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Stark has never cared about the south. Never. He wants to move against us. Why else would he leave this place? He's like a king himself up here.

MAN'S VOICE

Maybe he just wants to be warm for once in his life.

The naked man grabs her by the hair and forces her to rise to all fours. She gasps with pain.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Stop...

He does not stop. Keeping one hand on her hair, he pushes himself to his knees. He seizes her hip with his free hand and pulls her toward him, thrusting deep into her.

WOMAN'S VOICE

(moaning)

Stop it... stop it... please...

Her voice is low and she does not push him away; the harder he pulls her hair, the more she moans.

Bran has no idea what to make of all this. He tries to get a better view and in doing so his sleeve brushes against the stone edge of the empty window.

The woman turns and stares right at Bran.

Queen Cersei screams.

Everything happens at once. Cersei pushes the man away, shouting and pointing.

Bran tries to pull himself up, bending double as he reaches for the gargoyle's head. In his panic his hands scrape uselessly against smooth stone, his legs slip, and suddenly he is falling.

He shoots out a hand and grabs the window ledge. His momentum forces him to swing against the wall, hard, knocking the wind out of him. He dangles one-handed, panting.

Faces appear in the window above him: Cersei and her twin brother, Jaime.

CERSEI

He saw us.

As distraught as the queen looks, Jaime simply seems amused, watching the terrified boy with a small smile.

Bran's fingers start to slip. He grabs the ledge with his other hand. Fingernails dig into unyielding stone. Jaime reaches down.

JAIME

Take my hand.

Bran seizes Jaime's arm and holds on with all his strength. Jaime yanks him up to the ledge with no apparent effort and stands him on the window sill.

CERSEI

What are you doing?

JAIME

(ignoring her)

How old are you, boy?

BRAN

Eight.

Now that he's safe, Bran trembles, realizing how close he came to dying. He releases Jaime's arm.

Jaime looks at his sister. There is loathing in his voice:

JAIME

The things I do for love.

He shoves Bran. The boy falls backward out the window, screaming, the courtyard rushing up to meet him.

Somewhere in the distance, a wolf howls.

Crows circle the broken tower.