

Game of Thrones: Season Nine — A Song of Dawn

A short novella (\approx 1,700 words)

Chapter 1: Ashes in King's Landing

Smoke still coiled above the collapsed spires of King's Landing three months after the dragon's fire. Tyrion Lannister, now Hand to King Bran the Broken, walked the scorched streets with Davos Seaworth at his side. Charred stone cracked beneath their boots; smallfolk glared from makeshift shanties of canvas and bone. Rebuilding a city is harder than razing one, Tyrion mused, especially when coffers are bare and ghosts outnumber living men.

The small council bickered in the Red Keep's shadowed remnant about levies and grain. Tycho Nestoris of the Iron Bank demanded interest, while Gendry Baratheon offered shipwrights in exchange for royal recognition of Storm's End. Above them all Bran's pale gaze drifted through open windows as though he watched a different century.

News arrived that Grey Worm and the Unsullied had seized the isle of Naath, closing its harbours to Westerosi trade. Without the Unsullied garrison, King's Landing's fragile order trembled. Riots flared nightly; gold cloaks deserted. Tyrion knew he needed an ally with blades—and a symbol grander than coin.

He found both on the ramparts when a shadow crossed the sun: Drogon, the last dragon, circling high before vanishing east. The beast's return meant only one thing—the story of Daenerys Targaryen was not done, and the realm would soon remember fire.

Chapter 2: The Queen in the North

Far to the north, snow blanketed Winterfell in dull silence, muffling the talk of hunger that haunted every hearth. Queen Sansa walked the battlements with Brienne of Tarth, her crimson hair a banner against the white. Grain stores ran thin after the Long Night, and the river trade still lay shattered. Sansa refused to beg King's Landing for aid; the North had bled for its freedom.

She convened a council of bannermen and free folk. Ser Davos, arriving from the south at Tyrion's behest, offered a bargain: in exchange for Northern lumber to rebuild the capital's docks, King Bran would send ships laden with Reach harvests. Sansa measured promises the way her mother once measured thread—testing for strength. Finally she agreed, on condition that Winterfell oversee distribution, not the Crown.

Later, by candlelight, she penned ravens to Lady Glover and Lord Manderly, ordering the cutting of timber in the new growth forests. As she sealed each letter, she felt the tug of two wars—one for bread, the other for pride. In the yard below, Arya's restless direwolf Nymeria prowled with her pack like a rumor returned from legend, reminding Sansa that wild blood still beat beneath Northern snow.

Chapter 3: The Dragon and the Priestess

In the shadowed halls of the Red Temple of Volantis, Kinvara, High Priestess of R'hllor, stood before the cold bier of Daenerys Stormborn. Drogon's great head pressed beside the slab, hot tears hissing on marble. Kinvara spoke words older than Valyria, cutting her palm and letting fire—bright blood drip onto the queen's breast.

Flames guttered, then blazed green as wildfire. Braziers erupted; shadows danced like winged beasts. When the fire died, Daenerys gasped, eyes wide with the bewildered fury of birth. Kinvara whispered that the Lord of Light had spared her for one purpose: break the wheel, not with fear but with mercy crowned in flame.

Days later, sails bearing the three-headed dragon left Volantis. Beside them flew Drogon, scar-healed and screaming challenge to every sky. Daenerys watched the horizon, memory fractured: the bells, the ash, Jon's blade beneath her ribs. She vowed she would never again let rage guide her. To rule the living, she must first master the fire within.

Chapter 4: Embers in the Riverlands

The Riverlands festered in the chasm between crowns. With the Freys gone and Edmure Tully struggling to hold Riverrun, mercenary companies roamed like wolves. One such band—the Golden Dawn, veterans of Essos—extorted villagers, claiming taxes for a king no one had crowned.

When Podrick Payne arrived as envoy, he found rivers choked with burned barges and smallfolk hiding in apple cellars. Taking up the sword again with Grey Lady Brienne, Podrick rallied local levies. Yet numbers alone could not match hardened sellswords.

Their salvation rode down the stone road in the form of Sandor Clegane, the Hound, leading a column of Brotherhood Without Banners who had survived the Long Night. Together they ambushed the Golden Dawn at Oldstones. Amid collapsed sepulchres, Brienne's battle cry echoed; the Hound's axe rose and fell like a smith at a forge. Victory was hard but complete.

Afterward, Brienne sent ravens proclaiming that the Riverlands would answer to King Bran until a new Lord Paramount was chosen by the people. It was the first time any realm in Westeros spoke of election. Somewhere, Tyrion smiled over his wine.

Chapter 5: A Pact of Wolves and Lions

Tyrion's next gamble unfolded in the shattered throne room, where Bran sat in his wheeled chair beneath a missing roof. Representatives of every great house assembled: Sansa for the North, Gendry for the Stormlands, Yara for the Iron Islands, and Brienne for the Riverlands. From the golden west came Ser Jaime Lannister's bastard son, Lyonel of Casterly Rock, eager to prove he was more than another lion's cub.

Tyrion proposed a pact: a Great Council every five years to elect or depose the king; each realm to govern internal affairs. Sansa agreed, provided the North's sovereignty remain inviolate. Yara demanded salt immunity from mainland tariffs. The Reach's new Lady Rowan insisted on reparations for fields scorched by dragon flame.

Negotiations teetered until ravens screamed of approaching sails carrying the dragon queen. Panic rose, yet Bran's calm did not shatter. "Let the past judge itself," he said, "while we decide the future."

They agreed to meet Daenerys at Harrenhal—neutral ground scorched by Balerion centuries before—where stone remembered fire and still stood.

Chapter 6: Beyond the Wall

Jon Snow, once Aegon Targaryen, rode with Ghost and the free folk across spring■touched tundra. Green had begun to win its feud with white, exposing black rivers of melt. Tormund joked they should farm cabbages, but Jon's unease grew with every thawing crevasse.

One dawn they found a cavern where ice had split like a wound. Inside skittered creatures spoken of only in Old Nan's tales—white■furred spiders big as hounds, eyes blue as star■kissed winter. The Others were gone, but their pets endured.

Jon led a desperate fight, torch and dragonglass spear in hand. When the largest spider fell, its ichor hissed into fog and the rest fled north. Jon knew the Wall was gone, and nothing held those horrors from realms of men. He swore to warn Bran and rode south with two dozen wildlings, leaving Tormund to guard the newborn greenness.

Chapter 7: The Parley at Harrenhal

Mists clung to the blackened towers when dragon fire lit the sky. Drogon landed before Harrenhal's godswood, folding vast wings. Daenerys dismounted to face the gathered lords. Her silver hair, once a banner of conquest, now fell in a simple braid; she wore no crown.

Sansa stepped forward first. "Queen Daenerys," she said, voice steady as Northern ice. "Why come back?"

"To finish my song without swords," Dany replied. She knelt, offering her blade—Heartsbane, returned by Samwell—at Bran's feet. Gasps rippled through the courtyard.

But Jon arrived then, mud-splattered and weary, warning of the ice spiders. The realm's fears shifted from crown to survival. Bran closed his eyes, ravens spiraling overhead, and spoke: "The creeping death will not stop in the far north. We must stand together, or fall once more."

Daenerys offered Drogon's flame to carve roads through lingering ice. Sansa promised Northern soldiers; Yara her longships; Lyonel his gold. In that smoky ruin, they signed the Pact of Harrenhal: a realm of allied kingdoms, bound not by fear but mutual oath.

Chapter 8: Dawn

Spring finally reached King's Landing, bringing shoots through cracked stones. The Red Keep's new dome, crafted of river oak, gleamed under sunrise. Inside, the first Great Council convened. Bran declined the crown, naming himself "Stargazer," a watcher rather than ruler. He nominated Tyrion as the realm's first Chancellor; the council ratified by acclamation.

They elected Sansa High Lady Protector, chair of the council, her authority limited, her voice respected. Gendry was named Master of Ships, Brienne Captain of the Kingsguard—now sworn to all kingdoms, not one.

Daenerys departed for Meereen, carrying with her refugees and freedmen seeking a new life. At the docks, Jon bid her farewell. There was grief between them, yet also peace. "Break wheels wherever you find them," he said.

Arya's ship sailed west of the sunset; a painted direwolf flew at her mast. Jon returned beyond the Wall, where spring's edge runs thin and Ghost's howl still echoes. On a hill above Winterfell, Sansa watched green banners flutter beside white, and knew the North no longer stood alone.

In the quiet hush before the realm's next heartbeat, a new song began—not of ice and fire, but of dawn.