

# PROLOGUE



THE COMET'S TAIL SPREAD ABOVE THE CRAGS OF DRAGONSTONE LIKE A WOUND IN THE SKY.



THE COMET BURNED EVEN BY DAY NOW, WHILE PALE GREY STEAM ROSE FROM THE HOT VENTS OF DRAGONMONT BEHIND THE CASTLE.

AND YESTERMORN, A WHITE RAVEN HAD ARRIVED FROM THE CITADEL.

MAESTER CRESSEN...



...WE HAVE VISITORS.



HELP ME TO MY CHAIR...



WHAT DID IT ALL MEAN?





AH! WHO COMES TO SEE US SO EARLY, PYLOS?



CLANG-A-LANG CLONG

IT'S ME AND PATCHES, MAESTER.

PYLOS SAID WE MIGHT SEE THE WHITE RAVEN.

INDEED YOU MAY.



MAESTER PYLOS, DO ME A KINDNESS AND BRING THE BIRD DOWN FROM THE ROOKERY FOR THE LADY SHIREEN.

IT WOULD BE MY PLEASURE.

BONG-DONG CLONG

UNDER THE SEA, THE BIRDS HAVE SCALES FOR FEATHERS. I KNOW, I KNOW, OH, OH, OH.



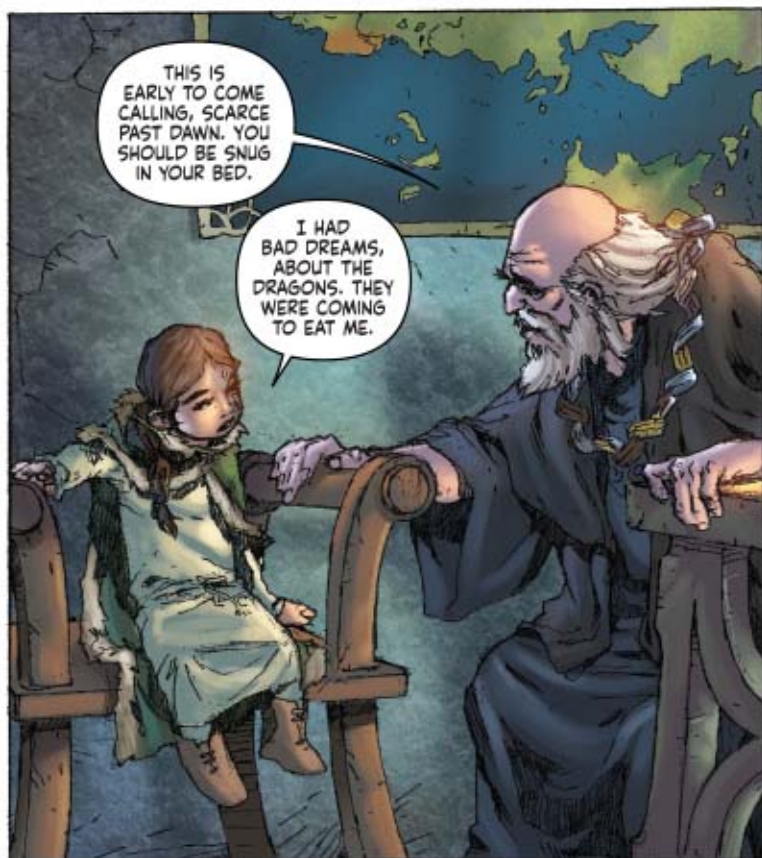
SIT WITH ME, CHILD.



GREYSCALE HAD ALMOST CLAIMED THE GIRL IN THE CRIB, LEAVING HER WITH FLESH STIFF AND DEAD, AND STONY TO THE TOUCH.

SHE WAS THE SADDEST CHILD HE KNEW.





THIS IS EARLY TO COME CALLING, SCARCE PAST DAWN. YOU SHOULD BE SNUG IN YOUR BED.

I HAD BAD DREAMS, ABOUT THE DRAGONS. THEY WERE COMING TO EAT ME.



WE HAVE TALKED OF THIS BEFORE. THE DRAGONS CANNOT COME TO LIFE. THEY ARE CARVED OF STONE, CHILD.



IN OLDEN DAYS, OUR ISLAND WAS THE WESTERNMOST OUTPOST OF THE GREAT FREEHOLD OF VALYRIA. IT WAS THE VALYRIANS WHO RAISED THIS CITADEL, AND THEY HAD WAYS OF SHAPING STONE SINCE LOST TO US.

THE VALYRIANS FASHIONED THESE TOWERS IN THE SHAPE OF DRAGONS TO MAKE THEIR FORTRESS SEEM MORE FEARSOME, JUST AS THEY CROWNED THEIR WALLS WITH A THOUSAND GARGOYLES INSTEAD OF SIMPLE CRENNELLATIONS.



SO YOU SEE, THERE IS NOTHING TO FEAR.



WHAT ABOUT THE THING IN THE SKY? I HEARD THE RED WOMAN TELL MOTHER THAT IT WAS DRAGONSBREATH.

IF THE DRAGONS ARE BREATHING, DOESN'T THAT MEAN THEY ARE COMING TO LIFE?

THE RED WOMAN. I'LL ENOUGH SHE'D FILLED THE MOTHER WITH HER MADNESS. MUST SHE POISON THE DAUGHTER'S DREAMS AS WELL?





THE THING IN THE SKY IS A COMET, SWEET CHILD. A STAR WITH A TAIL, LOST IN THE HEAVENS. IT WILL BE GONE SOON ENOUGH.

RING-A-LONG  
CLONG

MOTHER SAID THE WHITE RAVEN MEANS IT'S NOT SUMMER ANYMORE.



THAT IS SO, MY LADY. THE WHITE RAVENS FLY ONLY FROM THE CITADEL. THEY ARE LARGER THAN OTHER RAVENS, AND MORE CLEVER.

THIS ONE CAME TO TELL US THAT THE CONCLAVE HAS DECLARED THIS GREAT SUMMER DONE AT LAST.

TEN YEARS, TWO TURNS, AND SIXTEEN DAYS IT LASTED, THE LONGEST SUMMER IN LIVING MEMORY.



WILL IT GET COLD NOW?

IN TIME. IF THE GODS ARE GOOD, THEY WILL GRANT US A WARM AUTUMN AND BOUNTIFUL HARVESTS, SO WE MIGHT PREPARE FOR THE WINTER TO COME.



CLANG-A-LANG  
CLONG  
CLONG

UNDER THE SEA, IT SNOWS UP, AND THE RAIN IS DRY AS BONE. I KNOW, I KNOW, OH, OH, OH.



WILL IT TRULY SNOW?

IT WILL.

AH, HERE IS PYLOS WITH THE BIRD.



