A GAME OF THRONES

GEORGE R.R. MARTIN

ALSO A NEW ORIGINAL SERIES FROM HBO

DYNAMITE ENTERTAINMENT • ISSUE #2
The visitors poured through the castle gates in a river of gold and silver and polished steel.

The king had come to Winterfell.
NED! IT'S GOOD TO SEE THAT FROZEN FACE OF YOURS! YOU HAVE NOT CHANGED AT ALL.

EDDARD COULDN'T SAY THE SAME IN THE NINE YEARS SINCE THEY'D LAST MET. ROBERT HAD GAINED EIGHT STONE.

YOUR GRAVE, WINTERFELL IS YOURS.

EDDARD, WE HAVE BEEN RIDING SINCE DAWN. SURELY THE DEAD CAN WAIT.

COME, SISTER.
I trust you enjoyed the journey, Your Grace.

I thought we'd never reach Winterfell. The way they talk about my Seven Kingdoms, a man forgets your part is as big as the other six combined. Bosoms and forests and fields, where are all your people?

Likely too shy to come out. Kings are a rare sight in the North.

Winters are hard, but the Starks endure. We always have.

More likely they were hiding under the snow. Snow, Ned. What will this place be like in winter?
YOU NEED TO COME SOUTH. GET A TASTE OF SUMMER BEFORE IT FLEES. EVERYONE IS FAT AND RICH AND DRUNK.

AND THE GIRLS, NED! I SWEAR, WOMEN LOSE ALL MODESTY IN THE HEAT.

SHE IS DOWN AT THE END WITH FATHER AND BRANDON.

IT WAS ALWAYS COLD DOWN HERE. THEIR FOOTSTEPS RANG OFF THE STONES AND ECHOED IN THE VAULT OVERHEAD AS THEY WALKED AMONG THE DEAD OF HOUSE STARK.

YOUR GRACE.

BY ANCIENT CUSTOM, AN IRON LONGSWORD HAD BEEN LAID ACROSS THE LAP OF EACH WHO HAD BEEN LORD OF WINTERFELL. TO KEEP THE VENGERFUL SPIRITS IN THEIR COFRTS, THE OLDEST HAD LONG SINCE RUSTED AWAY.

NED WONDERED IF THOSE GHOSTS WERE FREE TO ROAM THE CASTLE NOW. HE HOPEP NOT.

HERE.
The stonemason had known Lord Rickard well. He sat with quiet dignity, stone fingers tight around the iron sword in his lap. In life, all swords had failed him.

And Brandon, the true heir, eldest born to rule. Strangled by the order of Mad King Aerys Targaryen only a few days before he was to marry Catelyn Tully of Riverbank.

“...And Lyanna...”

“I was with her when she died.”

Promise me, Ned.

“She wanted to come home.”

She was more beautiful than that. Did you have to bury her in a place like this?

She was a Stark of Winterfell. This is her place.

I vowed I would kill Rhaegar for what he did to her.

You did.

Only once.”
TELL ME ABOUT JON ARRYN.

I HAVE NEVER SEEN A MAN SICKEN SO QUICKLY. IT WAS LIKE A FIRE IN HIS GUT. IT BURNED RIGHT THROUGH HIM.

I LOVED THAT MAN.

WE BOTH DID.

CATELYN FEARS FOR HER SISTER. HOW DOES LYSA BEAR HER GRIEF?

I'LL TAKE HIM AS WARD IF YOU WISH. CATELYN AND LYSA WERE CLOSE AS GIRLS.

THAT'S BECAUSE YOU DO NOT SLEEP WITH A LANNISTER.

AH, NED. YOU'RE TOO SERIOUS.

NOT WELL. SHE'S TAKEN THEIR BOY BACK TO THE EYRIE. SIX SICKLY, AND LORD OF THE EYRIE, I'D WANTED TO FOSTER HIM WITH LORD TYWIN LANNISTER, BUT SHE REFUSED TO EVEN HEAR OF IT.

A GENEROUS OFFER, BUT TOO LATE. LORD TYWIN'S GIVEN CONSENT. FOSTERING THE BOY ELSEWHERE WOULD BE AN AFFRONT.

I HAVE MORE CONCERN FOR MY NEPHEW THAN FOR LANNISTER PRIDE.
YOU MUST HAVE WONDERED WHY I FINALLY CAME NORTH TO WINTERFELL.

FOR MY COMPANY, SURELY.

AND THERE IS THE WALL, YOU NEED TO SEE IT, YOUR GRACE. THE NIGHT'S WATCH IS A SHADOW OF WHAT IT ONCE WAS. BENJEN SAYS:

THE WALL HAS STOOD FOR WHAT, EIGHT THOUSAND YEARS? IT CAN KEEP A FEW DAYS MORE.

THESE ARE DIFFICULT TIMES. I NEED GOOD MEN AROUND ME. JON ARRYN SERVED AS LORD OF THE EYRIE, AS WARDEN OF THE EAST, AS HAND OF THE KING. HE WILL NOT BE EASY TO REPLACE.

HIS SON...

IS A CHILD, NOT A WAR LEADER. A MERE BOY CANNOT HOLD THE EAST.

THOSE YEARS WE SPENT AS JON ARRYN'S WARDS TOGETHER... GODS, THOSE WERE GOOD YEARS. SITTING A THRONE IS A THOUSAND TIMES HARDER THAN WINNING ONE.

I AM SURROUNDED BY FLATTERERS AND FOOLS. I WANT YOU AT MY SIDE AGAIN.

LORD EDDARD STARK, I WOULD NAME YOU HAND OF THE KING.
The offer did not surprise him. What other reason could Robert have for coming so far? The hand of the king was the second most powerful man in the Seven Kingdoms.

It was the last thing in the world he wanted.

Your Grace, I am not worthy of the honor.

Damn it, Ned, you might at least humor me with a smile. Come south, I'll teach you how to laugh again. You helped me win this throne, now help me hold it. We were meant to rule together.

If Lyanna had lived, we would have been brothers.

If I wanted to honor you, I'd let you retire.

I'm planning to make you run the kingdom and fight the wars while I eat and drink and wench myself to an early grave.

It's not too late. I have a son. You have a daughter. My toff and your sansa can join our houses.

Sansa's just a girl.
She's old enough for betrothal. The wedding can wait a few years. Now say yes, curse you.

These honors are so unexpected, your grace, may I have some time? I need to tell my wife.

Yes, yes. Tell Catelyn. Sleep on it if you must.

For a moment, Ned was filled with a terrible foreboding. This was his place, here in the North.

Just don't keep me waiting too long. I am not the most patient of men.

Breathing the chill silence of the crypt, he could feel the eyes of the dead. They were all listening, he knew.

And winter was coming.
There were times—Not many, but a few—when Jon Snow was glad he was a bastard.

It was the fourth hour of the welcoming feast. Jon's brothers and sisters had been seated with the royal children. His lord father would doubtless permit each child a glass of wine.

Down here on the benches, there was no one to stop Jon from drinking as much as he had a thirst for, and he was finding that he had a man's thirst.
HIS BROTHERS AND SISTERS HADN’T BEEN PERMITTED TO BRING THEIR WOLVES TO THE BANQUET, BUT THERE WERE MORE CURS THAN JON COULD COUNT AT HIS END OF THE HALL.

NO ONE HAD SAID A WORD ABOUT HIS PUP.

HE TOLD HIMSELF HE WAS FORTUNATE IN THAT TOO.

GRRR
THAT,
AND
BECAUSE HE'S WHITE.

IS THIS ONE OF THE DIREWOLVES I'VE HEARD SO MUCH ABOUT?

UNCLE BENDEN!

A VERY QUIET WOLF, NOT LIKE THE OTHERS. IT'S WHY I NAMED HIM GHOST.

THAT, AND BECAUSE HE'S WHITE.

LADY STARK THOUGHT IT MIGHT GIVE INSULT TO THE ROYAL FAMILY TO SEAT A BASTARD AMONG THEM.

AH, I SEE.
MY BROTHER DOESN'T SEEM VERY REFECTIVE TONIGHT.

THERE ARE DIREWOLVES BEYOND THE WALL. WE HEAR THEM ON OUR RANGINGS.
DON'T YOU USUALLY EAT AT TABLE WITH YOUR BROTHERS?

THE QUEEN IS ANGRY TOO. FATHER TOOK THE KINGS DOWN TO THE CRYPTS TODAY AND SHE DIDN'T WANT THEM TO GO.
YOU DON'T MISS MUCH, DO YOU, JON? WE COULD USE A MAN LIKE YOU ON THE WALL.

THEN TAKE ME WITH YOU, FATHER. I WILL GIVE ME LEAVE TO GO IF YOU ASK HIM.

THE WALL IS A HARD PLACE FOR A BOY.

DAEREN TARGARYEN WAS ONLY FOURTEEN WHEN HE CONQUERED DORNE.

A CONQUEST THAT LASTED A SUMMER AND COST SIXTY THOUSAND MEN, AND DAEREN TARGARYEN WAS EIGHTEEN WHEN HE DIED OR HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN THAT PART?

I'VE FORGOTTEN NOTHING, I WANT TO SERVE IN THE NIGHT'S WATCH, UNCLE.

HOW MUCH WINE HAVE YOU HAD, JON?

NO, NEVER MIND. I WAS YOUNGER THAN YOU WHEN I FIRST GOT WELL AND TRULY DRUNK.

YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE ASKING. THE NIGHT'S WATCH IS A SWORN BROTHERHOOD. WE HAVE NO FAMILIES. NONE OF US HAS A MOTHER OR FATHER. OUR WIFE IS DUTY, OUR MISTRESS IS HONOR.
I'm ready to swear your oath.

Until you have known a woman, you don't understand what you'd be giving up.

You might be less eager to pay the price, son.

I'm not your son!

Mores, the pity.

Come back to me when you've fathered a few bastards of your own, and we'll see how you feel.

I will never father a bastard. Never!

I must be excused.

Laughter boomed around him, and Jon felt hot tears on his cheeks.
THE SOUNDS OF MUSIC AND SONGS SPILLED THROUGH THE OPEN WINDOWS.

THEY WERE THE LAST THINGS HE WANTED TO HEAR.

BOY?

IS THAT ANIMAL A WOLF?

A DIREWOLF.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING UP THERE? WHY AREN'T YOU AT THE FEAST?

TOO HOT, TOO NOISY, AND I'D DRUNK TOO MUCH WINE. I LEARNED LONG AGO THAT IT IS CONSIDERED Rude TO Vomit ON YOUR BROTHER.

MIGHT I HAVE A CLOSER LOOK AT YOUR WOLF?

CAN YOU CLIMB DOWN OR SHALL I BRING A LADDER?

OH, BLEED THAT.
I believe I've frightened your wolf. My apologies.

He's not scared, sit, Ghost.

You can touch him now. He won't move until I tell him to. I've been training him.

Nice wolf.
If I wasn’t here, he’d tear out your throat.

In that case you’d better stay close. I am Tyrion Lannister.

I know.

You’re Ned Stark’s bastard, aren’t you?

Dad, sorry. Dwarves don’t have to be taciturn. Generations of cackling fools in motley have won me the right to dress badly and say any damn thing that comes into my head.

You are the bastard, though.

Lord Eddard Stark is my father.

Let me give you some counsel, bastard.

Never forget what you are. For surely the world will not make it your strength. Then it can never be your weakness. Armor yourself in it, and it will never be used to hurt you.
YOU KNOW ABOUT BEING A BASTARD?

ALL DWARFS ARE BASTARDS IN THEIR FATHER'S EYES.

AM I?

DO TELL MY LORD FATHER, MY MOTHER DIED BIRTHING ME AND HE'S NEVER BEEN SURE.

YOU ARE YOUR MOTHER'S TRUEBORN SON OF LANNISTER.

I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHO MY MOTHER WAS.

SOME WOMAN. NO DOUBT, MOST OF THEM ARE.

REMEMBER THIS, BOY. ALL DWARFS MAY BE BASTARDS...
Yet, not all bastards need be dwarfs.
OF ALL THE ROOMS IN WINTERFELL’S GREAT keep, Catelyn’s Bedchambers were the warmest.

The castle was built over hot springs and the scalding waters rushed through the walls and chambers like blood through a man’s body.

It drove the chill from the stone halls and filled the glass gardens with a moist warmth that kept the earth from freezing.

That was a little thing in summer in winter. It was the difference between life and death.
I will refuse him.

You cannot. You must not.

My duties are here in the North. He will not understand that.

If you refuse him, he will wonder why, and sooner or later he will begin to suspect that you oppose him.

Can’t you see the danger that would put us in?

Robert would never harm me or any of mine. We were closer than brothers. I know the man.

You knew the man. The king is a stranger to you, and pride is everything to a king.

You cannot throw these great honors back in his face.

Honors?
He offers his own son in marriage to our daughter. Sansa might someday be queen.

"Catelyn, she's still a girl. And Joffrey is..."

Joffrey is crown prince and heir to the Iron Throne.

But Brandon is dead, and the cup has passed. And you must drink from it, like it or not.

My Lord?

My Lord. Maester Luwin is without and begs urgent audience.

You told him I left orders not to be disturbed?

Yes, my Lord. He insists.
My lord, pardon me for disturbing your rest. I have been left a message.

A carved wooden box was left on a table in my observatory while I napped.

Inside was a fine new lens, but I found the true message concealed within a false bottom when I dismantled the box.

It is not for my eyes.

Let me have it then.

Pardon me, my lord, but the message is not for you either.

It is marked for lady Catelyn, and her alone.
This is from Lyra. She took no chances. It is written in a private language we had as girls.

Perhaps I should withdraw...

No, we will need your counsel.

Lighting a fire. Maester Luwin has delivered all my children. This is no time for false modesty.

Catelyn, what are you doing?
My Lady, tell me, what was this message?

You sister’s sick with grief, she cannot know what she is saying.

This message is carefully planned, cleverly hidden.

You must be Robert’s hand, you must go south with him and learn the truth.

Lyra says Jon Arryn was murdered by the Lannisters.

By Queen Cersei.

You say you love Robert like a brother.

Would you leave your brother surrounded by Lannisters?
You must govern in my stead, Robb will be a man grown soon. He must learn to rule, and I will not be here for him.

What... what of the other children?

Maester Lumin, give my wife your voice in all things. Teach my son the things he needs to know.
RICKON IS VERY YOUNG. THE OTHERS I WOULD TAKE WITH ME.

NO. I COULD NOT BEAR IT.

SANSARN MUST WED JOFFREY, AND IT'S PAST TIME ARYA LEARNED THE WAYS OF A SOUTHERN COURT.

YES, BUT PLEASE NED FOR THE LOVE YOU BEAR ME, LET BRAN REMAIN.

THERE IS BAD FEELING BETWEEN ROBB AND JOFFREY. LET BRAN GROW UP WITH THE YOUNG PRINCES AND BECOME THEIR FRIEND AS ROBERT BECAME MINE. OUR HOUSE WILL BE SAFER FOR IT.

KEEP HIM OFF WALLS. THEN YOU KNOW HOW HE LOVES TO CLIMB.

THANK YOU, MY LADY. THIS IS HARD, I KNOW.

WHAT OF JON SNOW, MY LORD?
ANOTHER SOLUTION PRESENTS ITSELF. YOUR FRIEND ROBERT HAS FATHERED A DOZEN BASTARDS. JON MUST GO.

HE AND ROBB ARE CLOSE, I HAD HOPED.

HE IS YOUR SON, NOT MINE. I SHALL NOT HAVE HIM. THEY SAY YOUR FRIEND ROBERT HAS FATHERED A DOZEN BASTARDS.

A HARD SACRIFICE, YET HIS ROAD IS NO CRUELER THAN YOURS OR YOUR LADY'S.

AND THE QUEEN HAS SEEN TO IT THAT NONE ARE EVER SEEN AT COURT. JON WOULD BE SHUNNED, HOW CAN YOU BE SO?

ANOTHER SOLUTION PRESENTS ITSELF. YOUR BROTHER BENDEN CAME TO ME ABOUT JON. THE BOY ASPIRES TO TAKE THE BLACK.

THERE IS GREAT HONOR IN SERVICE ON THE WALL, MY LORD. AND EVEN A BASTARD MAY RISE HIGH IN THE NIGHT'S WATCH.

VERY WELL, I WILL SPEAK TO BEN.

WHEN SHALL WE TELL JON?
"It will be a fortnight before we are ready to depart, I would sooner let Jon enjoy these last few days."

"Summer will end soon, and childhood as well."

"When the time comes, I will tell him myself."

"To be continued."