A Game of Thrones

Book One of A Song of Ice and Fire

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ENOUGH!

CRAK

--

THE BASTARD BROKE MY WRIST.

THE BASTARD HAMSTRUNG YOU, OPENED YOUR EMPTY SKULL, AND CUT OFF YOUR HAND, GRENN, OR WOULD HAVE, IF THESE BLADES HAD AN EDGE.

IT'S FORTUNE THAT THE WATCH NEEDS STABLEBOYS AS WELL AS RANGERS.

--

THAT WILL BE ALL. I CAN SAY STOMACH SO MUCH INEPTITUDE IN ONE DAY.
No one had told Jon that the night's watch would be like this. No one except Tywin Lannister, and by then it had been too late.

He missed his true brothers. He missed the girls, too. Even Sansa.

There was scant warmth to be found in Castle Black. The walls were cold here, and the people colder.

You broke my wrist, bastard boy.

You make us look bad.

Toad, you looked bad before I ever met you.

Little Lordling's got a big mouth.

Maybe we break you.
YOU KEEP YOUR QUARRELS OUT OF MY ARMORY, OR I'LL MAKE THEM MY QUARRELS.

GRENN, GO TO MAESTER AEMON ABOUT THAT WRIST. THE REST OF YOU RETURN TO YOUR CELLS.

NOT YOU, SNOW. YOU STAY.

THE WATCH NEEDS EVERY MAN IT CAN GET. EVEN MEN LIKE TOAD AND GRENN.

LOOK AT ME WHEN I'M TALKING TO YOU, BOY.

THIS IS THE WAY IT IS, AND YOU'RE HERE FOR LIFE, A LONG ONE OR A SHORT ONE, IT'S UP TO YOU.

THE ROAD YOU'RE WALKING, ONE OF YOUR BROTHERS WILL SLIT YOUR THROAT ONE NIGHT.

THEY'RE NOT MY BROTHERS!

THEY HATE ME BECAUSE I'M BETTER THAN THEM!

NO, THEY HATE YOU BECAUSE YOU ACT LIKE YOU'RE BETTER THAN THEM. YOU'RE A BASTARD AND A BULLY.
Think on this, snow. None of these others has had a master-at-arms until Ser Allister Thorne.

"What they know of fighting, they learned between decks and in alleys. Not one in twenty was rich enough to own a real sword.

I didn't think...

Best you start thinking, that or sleep with a dagger by your bed.

Now go.

Donal Noye could talk about life. He'd had one. He'd only taken the black after he'd lost an arm at the siege of Storm's End.

Before that, he'd smitred for Stannis Baratheon, the king's brother.

They said it was Donal Noye who'd forsed King Robert's warhammer, the one that crushed the life from Rhaegar Targaryen on the Trident.
Why is that when one man builds a wall, the next immediately wants to know what's on the other side?

The Rangers say it's just woods and mountains and frozen lakes.

Let's not forget the grumkins and snarks, Lord Snow, or else what's that big thing for?

Don't call me Lord Snow.

Would you rather be called the Imp? If they give you a name, take it and make it your own. Then they can't hurt you with it.

I don't see your wolf.

I chain him while we're training. The rest of the time he stays with me. My cells in Hardin's tower.

I'll be sure to tell your father to arrest more stonemasons before your tower collapses.

Snow! The Lord Commander wants to see you.

The one with the broken battlement and a lean to it like our noble King Robert after a long night's drinking?
THREE DAYS AFTER THEIR ARRIVAL, BENJEN STARK HAD LED A HALF-DOZEN MEN ON A RANGING INTO THE HAUNTED FOREST.

HE HAD NOT YET RETURNED, AND THE BLACK BROTHERS WERE WHISPERING THAT HE WAS TOO LONG AWAY.

JON HAD PLEASSED TO GO WITH HIM, BUT BENJEN HAD REFUSED HIM CURTLY.

YOU'RE NO RANGER, JON. ON THE WALL, A MAN GETS ONLY WHAT HE EARS.

THE LORD COMMANDER'S NOT ACCUSTOMED TO WAITING, AND I'M NOT ACCUSTOMED TO HAVING MY ORDERS QUESTIONED.

STOP IT, THORNE. YOU'RE FRIGHTENING THE BOY.

YOU HAVE NO PLACE HERE, LANNISTER.

A BIRD CAME THIS MORNING FROM WINTERFELL CONCERNING YOUR BROTHER. HALF BROTHER.

I HAVE AT COURT, THOUGH. A WORD IN THE RIGHT EAR, AND YOU'LL DIE BEFORE YOU GET ANOTHER BOY TO TRAIN.

NOW TELL SNOW WHY THE OLD BEAR NEEDS TO SEE HIM.
Bran, what's it say about Bran?

I'm told you can read.

Corn, corn!

He woke up. The gods gave him back.

Crippled, I'm sorry, boy.

My brother is going to live.
HE'S GOING TO LIVE!

BRAN'S GOING TO LIVE!

STAY AWAY FROM ME, YOU BASTARD.

I'M SORRY ABOUT YOUR WRIST, GRENN. ROBB USED THE SAME MOVE ON ME ONCE, AND IT HURT LIKE THE SEVEN HILLS.

IF YOU WANT, I CAN SHOW YOU HOW TO DEFEND THAT.

LORD SNOW WANTS TO TAKE MY PLACE NOW.

I'D HAVE AN EASIER TIME TEACHING A WOLF TO JUGGLE THAN YOU WILL TRAINING THIS AUROCHS, SNOW.
I'll take that wager, Ser Allister. I'd love to see Ghost juggle.

Ha ha ha ha ha

Heh. Heh heh.

That was a grievous error, Lord Snow.
Eddard came to the Red Keep. Some, tired, hungry, and irritable. His dreams were of a long, hot soak, a roast fowl, and a feather bed, but it was not to be.

Lord Stark! Grand Maester Pycelle has convened a meeting of the Small Council. Your presence is requested as soon as it's convenient.

My thanks.

And so he came striding into the Council chambers, bone-tired and dressed in borrowed clothes, to find four members of the Small Council waiting for him.

Lord Stark! I was grievous sad to hear about your troubles on the Kingsroad. I pray for Prince Joffrey's recovery.
THE GODS HAVE HEARD YOU. THE PRINCE GROWS STRONGER EVERY DAY.

THOUGH MUCH BETTER DRESSED. I HAVE HOPED TO MEET YOU FOR SOME YEARS, LORD STARK. NO DOUBT LADY CATELYN HAS MENTIONED ME?

SHE HAS, AS DID MY BROTHER BRANDON... AND WITH SOME HEAT.

A POOR COPY.

MAESTER PYCELLE, I TRUST YOU ARE WELL?

WELL ENOUGH FOR A MAN OF MY YEARS, THOUGH I DO TIRE EASILY. I SHALL FALL ASLEEP IF WE WAIT MUCH LONGER.

I’M SORRY TO HAVE KEPT YOU WAITING, BUT WE ARE ONLY FIVE...

LORD STANNIS IS IN DRAGONSTONE, AND SER BARRISTAN NO DOUBT RIDES WITH THE KINGS. OUR GOOD KING ROBERT HAS MANY CARES, AND ENTRUSTS SOME SMALL MATTERS TO US.
WHAT LORD VARYS MEANS IS THAT COIN AND CROPS AND JUSTICE BORE MY BROTHER TO TEARS, SO IT FALLS TO US TO GOVERN THE REALM.

THOUGH HE DOES SEND US A COMMAND FROM TIME TO TIME.

GODS BE GOOD.

HIS GRACE INSTRUCTS US TO STAGE A GREAT TOURNAMENT IN HONOR OF LORD STARK'S APPOINTMENT AS HAND OF THE KING.

NINETY THOUSAND GOLD DRAGONS IN PRIZES.

WILL THE TREASURY BEAR THE EXPENSE?

WHAT TREASURY? I SHALL HAVE TO BORROW THE MONEY. WE OWE LORD TWYIN SOME THREE MILLION DRAGONS. WHAT MATTER ANOTHER HUNDRED THOUSAND?

THE CROWN IS SIX MILLION IN DEBT, LORD STARK. THE LANNISTERS ARE ONLY THE BIGGEST PART OF IT.

THE CROWN IS THREE MILLION GOLD PIECES IN DEBT?

I WILL SPEAK TO HIS GRACE. THIS TOURNEY IS AN EXTRAVAGANCE THE REALM CANNOT AFFORD.

I AM TIRED. LET US CALL A HALT FOR TODAY AND RESUME WHEN WE ARE FRESHER.

THE MASTER OF COIN FINDS THE MONEY. THE KING AND THE HAND SPEND IT.
You're going the wrong way, Stark. Come with me.

This is not the way to my chambers.

Did I say it was? Your wife awaits.

What game are you playing, Littlefinger? Catelyn is hundreds of leagues from here.

We're outside the castle.

For the last time, come, or don't, and I'll keep her for myself.

You're a hard man to fool, Stark. Was it the sun that gave it away, or the sky?

We ride from here.
A brothel? You've brought me all this way to take me to a brothel?

As it chances, I own this particular establishment. Your wife is inside.

That was your last insult. Brandon was too kind to you.

My lord, no!

Ser Rodrik? Then Catelyn is truly here?

She awaits you upstairs.

Try to look a shade more lecherous and a shade less like the king's hand. It would not do to have you recognized.
NED...

MY LADY...

OH, GOOD, YOU RECOGNIZED HER.

I FEARED YOU WOULD NEVER COME.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING AT KING'S LANDING?

IS IT BRAN? IS HE...

IT IS BRAN, BUT NOT AS YOU THINK.

YOUR HANDS! HOW DID THIS HAPPEN, MY LADY?

THIS BLADE WAS SENT TO OPEN BRAN'S THROAT. IT BELONGS TO TYRION LANNISTER.
Why would Lord Tyroen want Bran dead? The boy's never done him harm.

He would not have acted alone.

The Lannisters? The Queen? I won't believe that Robert...

Most likely the king did not know. He's practiced at closing his eyes to things he'd rather not see.

I have told Petyr our suspicions about Jon Arryn's death. He has promised to help you find the truth.

Does Varys know about all this?

I would worry more about the Lannisters and less about the eunuch.

Leave Lord Varys to me.

There is nothing more that you can do here. Return to Winterfell. If there was one assassin, there could be others. Whoever ordered Bran's death will soon hear that he lives.

Yes, my lord.
I will not forget the help you've given me, Petyr.

You have my thanks as well, Lord Baelish.

Well, there's a treasure. We should return to the castle before our absences are noticed.

Only a moment.

Best not to tell anyone. I've spent years convincing the court that I'm wicked and cruel.

I should hate to see that go for naught.

When you return home, you must prepare. Raise archers and strengthen the defenses at White Harbor. And keep close to Theon Greyjoy. We'll need his father's fleet if there is a war.

War?

I pay it will not come to that. I will find proof that the Lannisters murdered Jon Arryn.

When I have proof, I will take it to Robert.

And pray he is the man I believe he is, he thought, and not the man I fear he has become.
THE DOTHRAKI SEA.
Dany wished her brother had stayed behind in Pentos, but Viserys would remain with Drogo until he had the crown he'd been promised.

But she did not want to hear her brother's complaints. The day was too perfect.

Tell them all to stay here. I command it.

You are learning to talk like a queen.

Not a queen.

A Khaleesi!
HER FIRST DAYS HAD BEEN HARD. SADDLE SORES AND CHAPPED THIGHS. HER HANDS BLISTERED FROM THE REINS. THE MUSCLES OF HER BACK SO WRACKED SHE COULD SCARCELY SIT.

AND EVERY NIGHT, DROGO WOULD COME TO HER TENT AND TAKE HER FROM BEHIND, RIDING HER AS RELENTLESSLY AS HE RODE HIS STALLION.

EVENTUALLY A DAY HAD COME WHEN SHE KNEW SHE COULDN'T ENDURE ANOTHER MOMENT MORE. WHEN SHE WOULD KILL HERSELF RATHER THAN GO ON.

WHEN SHE SLEPT THAT NIGHT, SHE DREAMED OF THE DRAGON. AND WHEN SHE OPENED HER ARMS TO ITS FIRE, THERE WAS NO PAIN.

SHE EMBRACED THE FLAMES, LET THEM TEMPER HER AND SCOUR HER CLEAN. SHE FELT STRONG AND NEW AND FIERCE.

AFTER THAT, EACH DAY WAS BETTER THAN THE ONE BEFORE.

THE AIR WAS RICH WITH THE SCENTS OF EARTH AND GRASS. THE SMELL OF HORSE, HER OWN SWEAT, THE OIL IN HER HAIR SEEMED TO BELONG HERE.

YOU DARE!
YOU GIVE COMMANDS TO ME? TO ME?

I DON'T TAKE ORDERS FROM SOME HORSELORD'S SLUT, DO YOU HEAR ME?

SHE HAD NEVER DEFIED HIM. NEVER FUGHT BACK.

HE WOULD HURT HER NOW, AND BADLY. SHE KNEW THAT.

CRAK

THOSO ASKS IF YOU WOULD HAVE HIM DEAD, KHALEESI.
I DON'T WANT HIM HARMED. TAKE HIS HORSE AND LET HIM WALK BACK TO THE KHALASAR. LET EVERYONE SEE HIM AS HE IS.

NO! HURT HER, MORMONT. KILL THESE DOthraki dogs and teach her. YOUR KING COMMANDS IT!
Ser Jorah, do you think... he'll be so angry when he gets back?

I won't. The dragon didn't?
COMMON PEOPLE PRAY FOR RAIN, HEALTHY CHILDREN, AND SUMMER THAT NEVER ENDS.

IT'S NO MATTER IF THE HIGH LORDS PLAY THEIR GAME OF THRONES, SO LONG AS THEY'RE LEFT IN PEACE.

THEY NEVER ARE.

AND WHAT DO YOU PRAY FOR, SER JORAH?

HOME.

I PRAY FOR HOME TOO, BUT MY BROTHER HAS NO COIN, AND THE ONLY KNIGHT WHO REVILES HIM AS LESS THAN A SNAKE.

HE WILL NEVER TAKE US HOME.

WISE CHILD.

I AM NO CHILD.
By the time Viserys came limping back, every man, woman and child would know him as a walker. There were no secrets in a Khalasar.

Her dragon’s eggs were only stone. Even Illyrio said all the dragons were dead.

They were only warm from the sun.

Have you ever seen a dragon?

Dragons are gone, Khaleesi.

“Everywhere? Even in the East?”

“No dragon. Brave men kill them, for dragon terrible, evil beast.”
A TRADER FROM GARTH ONCE TOLD ME THAT DRAGONS CAME FROM THE MOON.

THAT ONCE THERE WERE TWO MOONS IN THE SKY, BUT ONE WANDERED TOO CLOSE TO THE SUN AND CRACKED FROM THE HEAT.

"A THOUSAND DRAGONS POURED FORTH AND DRANK THE FIRE FROM THE SUN. THAT IS WHY DRAGONS BREATHE FIRE."

"AND SOME DAY THE OTHER MOON WILL RISE TOO, AND THEN IT WILL CRACK AND THE DRAGONS WILL RETURN."

DOREM? YOU WILL STAY WITH ME. THERE ARE THINGS I WOULD KNOW.

IRRI AND JHIGLI MAY GO.

THAT NIGHT, WHEN KHAL DRAGO CAME FROM HIS MEN, SHE WAS WAITING FOR HIM.

THIS NIGHT WE MUST GO OUTSIDE, MY LORD."
THE DOTHRAKI BELIEVED THAT ALL THINGS OF IMPORTANCE MUST BE DONE UNDER AN OPEN SKY.

THERE WAS NO PRIVACY AT THE HEART OF A KHALasar. Dany felt eyes on her as she did the things that Doreah had told her to do.

THE VOICES WERE NOTHING TO HER. WAS SHE NOT KHALEESI? HIS WERE THE ONLY EYES THAT MATTERED.

SHE RODE HIM AS FIERCELY AS SHE RODE HER BLUES. AND WHEN THE MOMENT OF HIS PLEASURE CAME, KHAL DROGO CALLED OUT HER NAME.

DAENERYS!
KHALEESI!

YOU ARE WITH CHILD.

I KNOW.

TO BE CONTINUED