

GOT: Rasputin of Westeros 20 - Rich Lady, Lannister Dilemma, Daenerys' Corruption & The Prophecy Fulfilled

Oldtown, the Reach,

Years had passed since Lord Septon left the city. Yet, it was as if the Lord Septon's name and fame had only grown larger. It was the first city to have the House of Seven Blessings. It was the first place to witness the Lord Septon's miracles.

And amidst all that was Helen, once a nobody, just a pretty face wedded to the half-witted son of a wealthy family. Lord Septon had blessed her with the most beautiful son, and as years went by and her son grew, she learned of other blessings. Her son was wise, strong, and spoke so well.

The more her son grew, the greater her belief in Lord Septon became.

If one were to ask who was the richest person in Oldtown. Most would say Lord Hightower. But they were wrong, as the richest was Helen herself, well, her family, but she controlled and ran the family.

Over the years, she had taken care of anyone who opposed her. Using her half-witted husband as a proxy, she retired everyone, pushed her husband's mother, uncles, and sisters out of the family. They were an old merchant family, after all, and decisions were made in a council of multiple members.

But now, Helen stood alone as the sole decision maker.

She enriched the cult as well as herself, more for the cult, however. She was the mastermind behind the complete takeover of Oldtown by the faction of septons who believed in Bronn the Blessed more.

There were three factions in the Faith of the Seven. Those who opposed Bronn the Blessed, those who followed him, and finally those who were neutral. And because of the High Septon's incompetence, it was easy for her to conquer Oldtown. The Starry Sept was completely under Bronn the Blessed.

Even the Citadel was supportive, as her merchant family ran a lot of trade for the goods created by the Angel's Peak. From Firewhiskey to medicines. The Citadel loved those medicines, as they helped the old members live a better life.

The Reach was, in a way, completely conquered, and nobody knew.

####

Casterly Rock, Westerlands,

Eddard had never been to Casterly Rock. But this time, circumstances forced him. After he met with Robert and saw the state his friend was in, he had to do something. For the North, more than anyone else.

Every moment wasted meant Bronn grew stronger. Every month past was Westeros growing weaker. The Faith of the Seven had already splintered, and the largest faction belonged to the Lord Septon.

It had been so easy to do, Eddard thought, now that he saw the events at a larger scale. The way Lord Septon healed, helped, and fed the poor. It was all an excuse, a slow game to move the hearts of the smallfolk. After all, the smallfolk numbered millions, and the nobles were a few thousand.

The Tyrells and Hightowers were lost. Lady Olenna was wise, but she was bedridden. Dorne, for some reason, had openly declared its support for Lord Septon, allowing the cult to build a grand sept in many Dornish towns and Sunspear.

That only left Lord Tywin, a man Eddard believed could see the game that was being played.

After rough, hasty travels, he was finally led inside the grand, stony castle that was carved into the rock itself. He didn't care about all the gold shamelessly on display, all the carpets, all the decorations. None of it mattered.

He followed the Steward and soon entered Lord Tywin's solar. Inside, other than Lord Tywin, was Ser Kevan, the trusted advisor of the old lion.

"I can't remember the last time a Stark set foot in Casterly Rock."

Eddard noticed how Tywin remained in his seat, and only Kevan greeted him after standing up. He didn't hold it against them. "Aye, I don't think any Stark has ever been here."

Finally, late, Tywin rose to his feet and offered a hand.

Eddard greeted the sharp man. But then he noticed a smile, and wise eyes that seemed to hold many plans. He could guess them already. He had two sons, and Queen Cersei had a few daughters as well.

"Welcome to Casterly Rock, Lord Stark. Sit. The road from the north is long, and I imagine it has worn you. We would usually dine, but given your haste, I assume words matter more to you than bread."

"Aye, my lord." Eddard sat down in the chair. "I rode from King's Landing to meet only you."

"Pay Ser Kevan no mind. He hears all that I hear. Now tell me, what matter could Lord Stark of Winterfell find so urgent that you came here to speak of it. I fail to see the connectio—"

"Lord Septon." Eddard bluntly cut in. "I know you wish to see your grandson sit on the Iron Throne one day. But I fear the throne is already slipping from the King's hands... and from the realm's as well."

They know.

Eddard saw the two Lannisters exchange silent glances.

"As I sit here, a dozen smallfolk in the North take up the Faith of the Seven each day. I didn't come to weep over it. What now happens in the North has long since happened in the South. The Faith of the Seven is no longer the people's faith. It has become the Lord Septon's game. His word is treated as the word of the Gods, and the realm bends to his will. The Reach is already lost, Dorne obeys him, and it's only a matter of time before the Crown is reduced to an ornament and the true ruler stands at the head of a faith."

"Is that what King Robert had said?" Tywin asked.

"That is what I witnessed, my lord," Eddard said. "This war in Essos. It was his will, was it not? And yet the whole realm is made to bear its cost."

"To its own advantage," Ser Kevan cut in calmly. "The Lord Septon has taken city after city without committing himself to any great battle. Nearly all of eastern Essos now lies under his hand. Because of that, Westerosi ships pay fewer port fees, and our captains are received with greater favor, as Westeros is regarded as the seat of the Faith."

"Lord Stark, we understand what troubles you. But the Lord Septon is not the only one who benefits from this."

Eddard frowned at their answer. "So this is the end of it? For coin, you would let the realm slip into his hands?"

"Lord Sta—"

Ser Kevan had barely started when Lord Tywin raised his hand and silenced him without effort. "You mistake the situation, Lord Stark. You think there remains a battle to be fought. There is not. Nothing remains to be won. Tell him, Kevan."

Ser Kevan looked at Tywin, as if asking again. Only after getting a nod did Ser Kevan speak.

"Lord Stark, the danger you are only now beginning to see was plain to us years ago, when Lord Septon first went to Highgarden. We understood then that Lady Olenna's fall was his doing. From that moment, House Lannister spent every coin we could spare to see him dead. Faceless Men, Sorrowful Men, alchemists, seductresses, poisoners. For years we hunted him, and for years we failed. His magic is no trick, my lord. We poisoned him once, and he woke the next morning as though nothing had touched him. After that... our own began to fall."

"It started with our men, loyal swords like the Mountain, then my children, my wife, and soon nearly everyone in Casterly Rock. We lay helpless, unable to rise from our beds. The maesters could do nothing. Only Lord Tywin remained standing.

"Then, Lord Septon's raven arrived. He wrote that he had cursed House Lannister for sending killers after the Seven's Angel. Tywin was forced to go himself and beg him for Casterly Rock. Only by Lord Septon's mercy did we rise again, and only so does House Lannister still stand."

Eyes wide, Eddard looked at Lord Tywin, who was silently nodding.

"That was how close House Lannister came to extinction, Lord Stark," Lord Tywin said, his jaw set, his anger contained rather than shown. "One man accomplished it, and to this day, we do not know what he did to us. When that curse was lifted, Lord Septon and House Lannister reached an understanding. We will not oppose him, and he will see that my grandson and his line sit on the Iron Throne."

Why tell me all this?

"I say this only because there is nothing else for you to do. Stand against Lord Septon and the realm will come for your blood, every last drop of it. House Stark will not survive that."

Eddard felt a little unsettled. He had no idea something like this had occurred. Perhaps nobody but the Lannisters knew.

"We have men. We can man an army." Eddard said. A futile effort, he knew.

"And he has magic that we cannot even see."

He silently agreed with Lord Tywin. But still, just sitting and watching the North get taken over was too much.

Pat!

He felt Ser Kevan's hand on his shoulder.

"Lord Stark, for as long as the High Septon draws breath, the Seven Kingdoms will watch the Faith swell beyond anything our histories record. This is a wave no man can halt. You either move with it, or you drown."

"Lord Stark must be tired. Ser Kevan, guide him to the prepared chambers."

Eddard didn't bother responding to Tywin and just stood up. He was lost in thought. What to do? The Northern Lords would rebel against him if he allowed the faith to rise there. Then, would Lord Septon erase those houses as well?

Gods, give me wisdom to stand this storm.

####

Volantis, Essos,

Volantis was just as grand as Bronn had imagined it to be. The city sat at the mouth of the Rhoyme River, occupying both banks. Even from a distance, the city was a sea of activity, and yet there was a subtle air of mysticism.

He watched as the city grew bigger. He didn't anchor his ship at the port. No, he kept his fleet away from the city in the harbor, away from any direct attack that could burn his ships. From his flagships, he sat in large rowing boats to reach the city.

He brought Angelic Knights with him, alongside Daenerys and Unella only. He wanted to first set up a base in the city before inviting the rest over. And Daenerys was his apprentice, so he couldn't just leave her.

This one won't go down easy.

He silently eyed the city, sighing. The Red Priests and Priestesses were concentrated in Volantis after he'd taken over the rest. That meant they were going to focus entirely on dealing with him.

"Be alert at all times." He said, resting a hand on Daenerys, who sat right beside him, still slender and lovely as ever. It was also her namesday, at last coming of age, the ripe one.

Until now, he hadn't done anything to her, never disrobed her. He had made her sit on his lap while teaching her, however. He also often made her watch as he 'blessed' women in Pentos.

Unella was the one responsible for teaching her, and she was doing a fine job, as Daenerys never questioned him. Even if his hands took liberties to brush past somewhere, it meant nothing. In a way, Unella was teaching her that she and her body belonged to the Seven, and by essence to Lord Septon.

He had planned something for that night. Still, for now, he needed to reach the city safely first.

After a long, boring song of the waves, they finally reached the port. A lone boat had reached it previously with Angelic Knights, who now guarded him from the first step. As he stood on the wooden docks, the armored knights made a circle around him.

"Stay close," Bronn ordered, and pulled Daenerys by his side until she was hugging his arm against her soft chest. "Unella, take the other side."

A few septons had already arrived in the city long before, so Bronn already had a place to stay. The question was whether the Golden Company was going to attack him or not. They were officially hired to protect the city. But it was unknown who ran the city at that point.

From the port, they soon entered the streets. Instantly, all eyes were on him as the people of Volantis believed that people of quality shouldn't travel afoot. He didn't give a shit about that because eventually he wanted to turn it into a city like King's Landing and erase all the nonsense.

They headed to Eastern Volantis, which was protected by the Black Walls. The walls were massive, two hundred feet high and wide enough for chariots to race on them. It guarded a large labyrinth of palaces, courtyards, towers, temples, and more. Only the Old Blood, those noble families who could prove unbroken descent from old Valyria, were allowed inside.

In normal circumstances, foreigners like Bronn weren't allowed inside. But his magic was something that made his blood far superior to any Old Blood. The world knew of Bronn the Blessed and his true magic. Besides, he was invited by the Triarchs. Daenerys didn't even need that, as she was purer than most of those Old Blood.

The difference between the city inside and outside was great. Outside was chaos, overcrowded streets. Inside was calm and beautiful, gardens and palaces. One of the smaller mansions was given to Bronn for his stay.

Undisturbed, he was led to the mansion to settle down for the day. There was to be no feast or discussions yet. It was nearing evening, and he was rather tired. And besides, he had greater matters to focus on.

He eyed Daenerys with that thought.

"Lord Septon."

Right then, a septon voiced. He was one of the Old Blood himself, but he had taken up the Faith of the Seven when Bronn was in Braavos, and eventually chose to become a septon.

"What is it, Septon Vaelar?"

"A letter arrived this morning for you. It's from Westeros."

Bronn received the folded, sealed parchment. It was tiny, likely arrived through the use of birds. But he paid no mind and unrolled it to read. Inside was a brief word on Lord Eddard Stark's actions. First, the Red Keep and then Casterly Rock.

So unsettled already? I haven't even given any orders yet.

Sighing, he folded the parchment and put it in his pocket.

"Seven bless you, Septon. I will take my rest here tonight. Come morning, I mean to see the city. Keep watch on the Red Temple, and let me know when they preach openly."

After his commands, the Angelic Knights took their positions to guard the mansion. It was purposefully chosen to be small, as that made it easy to hold.

Bronn entered the residence with Unella and Daenerys. But before anything, he planned to have supper. He needed strength for the valuable lessons he wanted to teach Daenerys.

####

Bronn didn't plan to take her that night. No, he wanted that to be memorable, a ritual. For now, he wanted to involve her in the 'blessing' itself. So, he chose to take Unella that night, but in that whole game, Daenerys had a part to play.

It was late at night, and it was the three of them in the locked bedchamber.

Bronn had discarded all his clothes, his fat cock threateningly erect. Unella has removed her septa gown as well, standing tall, proud, with full breasts, wide hips, and a toned belly.

In comparison, Daenerys was still dressed, barely. Hers was a white, thin gown, nearly see-through. Sleeveless, it hung only till the middle of her creamy, pale thighs. The neck of it was wide, as only two thin strings held it, which hung around her neck. And her hair, those silver silken strands, was untied, reaching her hips behind.

Bronn was throbbing at her sight. So delicate, so beautiful. From the seethrough gown, he could see her bright pink nipples, and below, she had trimmed her hair entirely. Truly ripe for the taking. But not that night.

"You are of age now, Daenerys, my beloved apprentice. This very night I shall commence your full training, that your power may swell together with mine own." Bronn lectured like a wise teacher and walked over to Unella. "Men call such things sin beyond these walls, yet here, within the circle of my arms, it is naught but the Maiden's own pure favor"

"I understand, Master."

Oh! Her voice... lovely.

Bronn turned his full attention to Septa Unella, his most faithful. Every depraved act he had ever craved was tested on her willing flesh, and she'd taken it all while moaning prayers to the Seven. Her devotion had never wavered, only deepened.

He walked over to her, one arm snaking around the curve of her hourglass waist to haul her flush against him. Her unbound blonde hair spilled like gold over her shoulders, and he drank in the sight of her flushed cheeks and parted lips before claiming her mouth.

The kiss was hungry from the first instant, deep and wet, tongues sliding together in shameless spirals.

"Hmmm..." Unella moaned into his mouth.

Her greedy, open-mouthed kisses, sucking at his tongue, chasing every taste while her slender fingers wrapped firmly around the thick, pulsing length of his cock. She stroked him in slow pulls, from root to glistening tip, thumb circling the swollen head each time she reached it.

They kissed until saliva gathered. Droplets slid down their chins, trickled along the inner swell of her heavy breasts, while her hand never faltered. Her worshipful strokes kept his cock throbbing in her grip, veins pulsing under her fingers.

At last, Bronn broke the kiss. His hands rose to cup both her full breasts, squeezing the pillowy flesh until her pale mounds spilled between his fingers. He lowered his head and latched onto one stiff nipple, sucking hard, drawing the peak deep into his mouth. He moved to the other breast, repeating the torment, teeth grazing just enough to make her gasp and arch.

Her body had been made to be bred, to nurse, yet he'd kept her womb dry. Tonight was no different.

His cock jerked violently in the air, impatient. With a low growl, he released her mounds and shoved her backward.

Unella stumbled back willingly until the backs of her thighs met the edge of the table. He kept pushing until she toppled onto the polished wood, legs splaying wide, heels kicking uselessly in the air before her legs dangled off the edge. Her dripping cunt hovered at the perfect height, puffy outer lips already parted and shining, inner folds moist and flushed.

"Daenerys," Bronn said without turning. He hooked Unella's knees over the crooks of his elbows, spreading her even wider so her glistening sex was fully exposed, the drooling entrance winking with every breath she took.

"Yes, Master?"

"Take the bottle of red oil I brought." Bronn bent down until his face hovered mere inches from Unella's leaking cunt. "Kneel behind me and coat my holy phallus with it. Knead it. Prepare me properly before I feed Septa Unella the Maiden's blessing."

He heard the sharp little gulp. A smirk curled his lips against Unella's inner thigh. He could almost taste Daenerys' hesitation. She had watched him 'bless' before, but never like this. Never getting intimately involved.

Bronn offered no further words. He simply buried his face between Unella's thighs and devoured her like a starving man. His tongue plunged deep, sloppy and shameless, curling inside her fluttering petals while he sucked noisily at her swollen clit, taking the joy of being the only man to have ever touched this depth of her. His lips sealed over her dripping folds, his tongue fucking in and out with a frenzy.

Slurp! Squelch!

He made sure every sound carried, every wet smack and greedy swallow loud enough to burn into Daenerys' ears while he waited, cock throbbing untouched.

Soon, a soft rustle of fabric, a hesitant shuffle of bare feet. Then warmth, delicate heat, brushing the backs of his thighs. He could picture it; Daenerys on her knees behind him, face inches from his ass, violet eyes wide and uncertain.

He chuckled low against Unella's slick petals, the vibration making her hips jerk.

"M-Master... I'll begin."

Bronn answered only with a deep, approving hum that rumbled straight into Unella's core, tongue never slowing.

Oh! Seven whores and their sons! Fuck!

The first touch nearly made his knees buckle. Those soft, delicate fingers slid from between his parted thighs and cradled his heavy balls. She handled them one at a time, gentle squeezes that sent electric jolts racing up his spine.

Each careful roll of his sac in her palm felt otherworldly; the anticipation clawed at his mind until he was half-mad with it. He wanted to spin around, throw her down, rip that gown away, and plunge into her untouched heat right then. Instead, he forced himself to breathe through his nose, inhaling Unella's thick musk while Daenerys' innocent hands worshipped his family jewels.

He dragged his focus back to the cunt grinding against his mouth. Tongue spearing deeper, lips sucking harder, he drank Unella's flooding arousal like unholy wine.

"Ghhh..." He groaned the instant Daenerys' fingers finally closed around his shaft.

Her petite hand could barely encircle his girth; she had to use both now, spreading the red oil from base to swollen tip in long strokes. She was hesitant at first, then grew bolder. Her fingers glided over every pulsing vein as if he were her stallion.

From base to the tip. Every few strokes, her cheek or the silk of her hair brushed the cleft of his ass as she leaned in closer to reach his full length. The accidental contact sent fresh fire through his veins.

This was perfection, his beautiful Targaryen trophy kneeling behind him to ready his cock for another woman. The sheer taboo of it, the power, the blasphemy, had him teetering on the edge already.

Squelch! Squelch!

Daenerys stared, transfixed, at the thick flesh throbbing in her oiled hands. Pearly beads of precum welled from the slit with every upward stroke, smearing across her palms. Her hands were a mess, slick and sliding with each stroke, glistening with oil. The scent hit her harder now.

Heat bloomed low in her own belly, sudden and unreasonable. Between her pale thighs a shameful dampness gathered, soaking the thin silk of her gown. She pressed her legs together, but that only made the ache sharper, the slick slide of her own arousal more noticeable. Her breath came quicker, shallower.

She told herself this was only curiosity, only obedience to her master's lesson. But she wanted... something.

She stroked faster, almost frantically, chasing the violent throb that seemed to echo in her own core, no more caring if her cheek flattened on his back.

"That's enough."

The command snapped through her haze. Daenerys froze, fingers still wrapped around him, then released him at once and scrambled back a step, cheeks burning.

"Come up here. Stand beside me and watch me bless Unella," Lord Septon ordered.

Still trembling, Daenerys rose on unsteady legs. She stepped to his side until their bare arms brushed and lifted her gaze.

Up close, the scene was obscene; Septa Unella sprawled across the desk, thighs hooked wide over the Lord Septon's elbows, her swollen, dripping cunt spread open. Her master's oiled cock nudged against her entrance, the blunt crown parting her lower lips just enough to show the glistening pink.

Daenerys couldn't tear her eyes from Unella's face. The older woman's cheeks blazed crimson, sweat beading along her brow. Her expression was one of pure, rapturous joy. Her lips parted in a wide, trembling smile, eyes half-lidded in ecstasy.

She wondered, with a strange, twisting ache in her chest, how anything could feel so good as to paint such bliss.

"S-Septa Unella..." she whispered, barely audible over the wet sounds of flesh meeting flesh. "How does it feel?"

Plap!

At her word, Lord Septon buried his entire phallus inside Unella's greedy cunt in one merciless plunge.

"Gaaaaah!"

Daenerys saw Unella's back arched off the table, breasts heaving, throat working around a shattered gasp. Yet that wide, delirious smile never faltered. It was as if the stretch, the sudden fullness, the raw invasion were the greatest gift the Seven could give.

Daenerys stared at the cock so thick it forced Unella's swollen petals to stretch thin around him, the delicate pink flesh clinging desperately, glistening with oil and juices.

Yet...

"Umh." A delicate hum slipped from Daenerys' throat. Her thighs squeezed together, liquid ache blooming between them.

"Blessing! Oh, the most heavenly sensations!" Septa Unella roared. "Yes, yes, pour it all in me! Oh, Angel of the Seven... bless me!"

Daenerys felt a pang of jealousy. She wanted that joy for herself, wanted to feel so utterly blessed that her body sang with it.

Then, Unella started to writhe, hips bucking wildly. A sudden, forceful gush erupted from her cunt. A clear, watery spray that arced across Lord Septon's abdomen and spattered the table in glistening droplets.

"Ooooooooooh! The Maiden has heard my plea. Yes, she has... Lord Septon... yes, yes... bless me harder!" Unella moaned, lost in bliss.

Plap! Plap! Plap!

Daenerys' eyes just froze where Lord Septon's cock pistoned in and out, coated in creamy froth, dragging sticky strands of arousal with every pull. The wet squelch filled her ears, the heavy scent of musk and oil coating her tongue.

She bit her lower lip until it stung, then licked it slowly, unconsciously. Her right hand drifted down, palm pressing over the damp silk between her thighs, rubbing in tiny, helpless circles through the gown. She barely noticed she was doing it.

Creak!

The table groaned louder under the pounding.

Daenerys flicked her eyes upward again. Unella's fingers tangled in her own blonde hair, tugging as though to anchor herself. Her tits jolted with every thrust, nipples stiff. She glanced down at her own small breasts and felt another twist of envy. Was that why Lord Septon didn't bless her?

"Gaaaaaah! Daenerys!"

"Yes, Master?!" she chirped, startled out of her own thoughts.

"Kneel, quick!"

Thud!

She dropped to her knees without hesitation, right there beside Lord Septon. Yet her eyes were stuck. She stared as Lord Septon slammed home one final time, hips grinding flush, balls drawn tight. She saw motion, the waves on his cock. She knew what he did.

But then, halfway, Lord Septon pulled out and turned to her. Creamy ropes still spurted from the tip as he turned, presenting his drenched, glistening cock directly to her face.

"Open your lips and accept the Maiden's first blessing, Daenerys. Today marks a new beginning."

Daenerys gulped, throat clicking, excited. She parted her pink lips wide, tongue peeking out instinctively. Eyes wide, she saw the Lord Septon step closer, resting the swollen head between them. Just the tip, never pushing deeper. He wrapped his fist around the base and stroked, fast.

Hot, thick jets splashed across her tongue, salty and musky, coating the roof of her mouth in heavy cream. Somewhere deep inside, she ached for him to fill her mouth completely, to bless her entirely.

Bronn wanted the same, but he held back, letting the last spurts drip onto her waiting tongue until his shaft started to soften.

"Swallow it and thank the Maiden."

Daenerys closed her eyes, then swallowed hard, the thick warmth sliding down her throat. She clasped her hands together purely, eyes drifting shut in sudden piety. "Oh Maiden above, I thank you for letting me feel your blessing."

Bronn stared down at her sweet, innocent face, and cursed himself inwardly for not painting those delicate features white instead. Soon, he promised himself. Very soon.

When her eyes fluttered open again, he felt it like a physical blow. Those violet orbs stared up at him, needy, pleading, begging without words for him to do the same things to her, to make her scream like Unella had.

"Master, when will you... bless me?"

Ah! Fuck, hard to control.

"Soon, Daenerys. Very soon. A holy rite it shall be. Only the two of us, locked away for seven days and seven nights, as the Seven intend. The Mother will watch over our need, and the Maiden will blush at what must be done."

He could have demanded a month, but he chose restraint. Daenerys was his anyway, after all.

Daenerys' face instantly lit up with a wide, radiant smile, excitement sparkling in her eyes. She got up and hugged him, jumping to wrap her arms around his neck, his cum-drenched cock damping her gown. She was lithe, so delicate that he couldn't help but put her in his arms.

"Now, help Septa Unella clean. Then we'll all sleep together."

"All of us?" Daenerys asked in delighted surprise.

Bronn chuckled, satisfied. Until tonight, he had forbidden her from his bed while he took other septas openly, letting her hear the moans through the walls. The jealousy in her tone now was delicious.

"Indeed. By the Seven's will. All of us."

####

The next morning, Bronn woke up hard. Daenerys hugging him the entire night didn't help. But it was the kind of warmth he liked. Unlike other septas, Daenerys was supposed to be a far greater part of his life going forward. He knew he was going to savor her deliciously during that planned week.

After cleaning up, getting dressed, and breaking the fast, he prepared to head out and see the city. The goal was to perform a few magical miracles that were easy to notice. Also, set up a free food kitchen.

Knock! Knock!

Just when he was getting ready, the door to his residence opened, and Ser Hasty stepped inside, stiff and noble like the holy knight he was.

"Lord Septon, the Captain General of the Golden Company, is here to meet you."

"..."

Bronn froze. Words of that shadowbinder, Quaithe, echoed in his mind. She had told him that this would happen. She had either seen the future or this was an elaborate scheme.

"Let him in."

Careful, Bronn went to the sitting area and took the seat of honor, waiting. Moments later, Ser Hasty brought in the commander of the Golden Company. The man wasn't that old, but he was portly with a big, round head. He didn't seem as mighty as the company he commanded.

"Your Holiness!"

The man took to one knee like a noble knight.

"I feel blessed that I was allowed this boon of seeing you. I am Harry Strickland, Captain-General of the Golden Company."

Kneeling? He follows the Faith?

Bronn gave a nod and, just to test the faith, raised a hand as a blessing and cast a bright light for a quick moment. "Rise, good man. Take a seat. What brings you to me?"

Harry Strickland was frozen for a long time, eyes wide, jaw hanging. That was the usual reaction to magic for most people. When he finally gathered himself, he almost dragged himself to the settee.

"By the Seven, you are every bit as saintly as the bards claim. Lord Septon, I wanted to welcome you properly, and to speak of a certain matter. Are you familiar with Hugor of the Hill?"

Bronn gave a quick nod. "Aye, who does not know him? First king of the Andals in Andalos, right here on this side of the Narrow Sea. The holy books name him oft enough. The Seven blessed the man themselves, the Father set the crown upon his brow."

Strickland nodded strongly. "That is true. Crowned by the Father, the Maiden brought forth a girl supple as a willow whom he took his first wife. The Mother made her fertile, and she bore him forty-four mighty sons, foretold by the Crone. The Warrior gave each strength, the Smith brought armor. Lord Septon, are you aware of the origins of the Golden Company?"

"I am. Ser Aegor Rivers, legitimized bastard of King Aegon, founded it. The company's core members are those who fought for House Blackfyre," Bronn said, trying to remember things correctly. "I'm sure you're not here for a history lesson from me, Ser Strickland."

"No, no, not at all." Strickland gave a small, hurried bow, clutching the cloth bag at his shoulder. "My men and I have followed your journey, every whisper of it, from the very hour you first stepped onto Essos soil. The company holds that your holy blessings are a clear sign from the Gods."

Maiden's cunt! What does he want?

"A sign for what, good Ser?"

"We... Years ago, many Captain Generals before my time, the Golden Company came upon something in the old lands they once called Andalos. And now, after my captains gave it their overwhelming vote of confidence, we have the honour to hand this over to its rightful owner."

Bronn watched in silence. Ser Hasty, behind him, was ready to defend with his sword. He watched Strickland fumble with the bag, as if nervous, his face sweating for some reason.

"Lord Septon... most holy Seven's Angel..." Strickland at last drew the item from his bag and submissively sank to both knees on the floor. He cradled it gently in both hands and lifted it high before him like an offering. "The Golden Company kneels to you, though my brothers are not present in this place. We beseech your blessing and your grace. Pray guide us poor men homeward... back to the promised land we long for, across the Narrow Sea."

Bronn was up on his feet by then, staring at the thing. It was dirty golden, clearly ancient. It had seven spikes, and each one had a star carved on it.

Is that the fucking...

"Once worn by Hugor of the Hill. Lord Septon, I humbly beseech you to take your rightful crown."

"..."