Don't Be Stupid
by tiberiusirius

Summary

When the King comes north to Winterfell, the Starks expect to play host to the Lannisters. Instead they are introduced to his bastard son. None but Ned, the Hand and the King really know the true reason why.

Notes

Starts at the beginning of the first book. Jon Arryn hasn't been poisoned or killed.
As I'm sure you are all aware all characters belong to GRRM. I'm just playing around while waiting for the next damn book to come out so I can buy it and gobble it up.

From all the stories she’d heard of the war from her father, Arya thought the King would be a great warrior of a man. Even the distance she was away viewing the procession approaching Winterfell from the branches of a tall leatherleaf, she could tell he was a stout, obese beast. She frowned and looked down at the wolf pup whining and circling the tree below her.

“Dad never said anything about the King being fat Nymeria.” She told the animal.

From what she’d been told he was supposed to be a handsome brute who inspired courage in his men, wielding his enormous hammer like the warriors in the stories. She supposed the southerners must’ve fattened him up.

She frowned squinting off into the distance and sighed. “His horse looks as if it’s going to collapse.” She said disappointedly. Carelessly she climbed her way down the tree, jumping when she felt she was close enough and ripping the skirt of her dress horribly in the process.

“Damn.” She cursed pausing to inspect the damage. There really was nothing for it so she just shrugged it off as accident. “Come on girl. We best get back. I want to see the soldiers up close.” She started running for the walls of Winterfell. They would only just beat the arrival and her mother would already be angry she’d run off.

She sprinted off in the direction of the east gate, Nymeria trailing after her leisurely, bounding through the high grass and keeping pace. She made it through the entrance just as the procession was coming into the Keep’s yard. She spotted her family lined up and quickly skidded into her place among them amidst glares from her mother and sister. She ignored them, choosing instead to marvel at the armor of the Kingsguard and trying to pick out notable knights among them.

The King was even larger up close than he was from further away. His Barathron livery looked as if it would come undone from the strain. She couldn’t help but imagine golden stag buttons flying everywhere if it were to burst open from the tension of being stretch across such a substantial girth.
She felt a bony elbow jab her on the left side of her ribcage. “You look a wreck.” Sansa whispered tersely. “What happened to your dress.” It wasn't really a question, more of an exasperated admonishment after seeing the tear in skirts. Sansa was glaring at her out of the corner of her eye while trying to remain the picture of a perfect lady for the arrival of their guests. No doubt she was angry that Arya ruined her image of a grand welcoming reception with her disheveled appearance.

Arya pursed her lips and only just managed to refrain from sticking her tongue out, she knew if she did she’d only be in more trouble later. Instead she settled for annoying her sister further. “Septa told me to find things to mend for sewing practice and now I have.” She offered smartly as explanation for the obvious rip in her dress. Arya wore a self-satisfied mischievous smirk, her sister’s mask failing for an instant to scowl at her younger sibling.

She heard the stifled chuckles of both Bran and Robb at her words and she thought she could see the corners of her father’s lips twitch upwards after glancing at his profile. Suddenly she realized they were missing one person. “Where’s Jon?” She questioned frowning.

Bran jerked his head motioning across the way while Sansa scathingly murmured, “It’s not like he can stand with us, idiot. It wouldn’t be proper.”

She looked to where she saw her half-brother alongside Mikken and other townsfolk and glowered unhappily. To hell with civilities, he should be standing with them! Jon gave her a knowing smile, if a bit sad, and shook his head ruefully after looking at her pointedly, taking in her sorry appearance.

The injustice of her mother’s discrimination was infuriating and unfair, and she knew it hurt Jon. Her mood was suddenly soured and she found herself gratified a bit thinking she had caused her a bit of aggravation by running off while everyone scrambled to prepare. She was lost in her resentment and started when the King stepped in front of her.

“And who is this wild, unruly northern Lady.” He asked mirthfully, taking in her disheveled appearance.

She blinked and grimaced slightly smelling the alcohol on his breath. “Arya Ser.” She answered. She grunted feeling another elbow to the ribs. “—I mean your Grace.” She corrected. She offered him her best curtsey and almost fell on her face in the process. She thought she heard a whimper of horror from Sansa seeing her less than impeccable gallantries and had to work to stifle a grin. She knew she’d hear more on it later from both her sister and mother, and probably Septa Mordane as well, but hopefully she could find the means to sneak away again. She didn’t see how it really mattered anyways because the King had already moved on and didn’t seem to care about her indiscretions, he’d almost seemed amused.
Her attentions turned back to the introductions as a boy about the same age as Robb, although much broader and corded with muscle, hopped awkwardly off his horse after being beckoned to by the King. He marched up to the fat royal with his head hung a bit low and keeping his eyes on the ground.

“Where’s your spine boy?” The King told him as he gave him a hard smack on the back.

Had it been anyone else, Arya would’ve bet they stumbled forward from the force of the blow. He however, stood his ground like a weathered oak rooted in granite, barely flinching from the jolt. He was huge, especially for his age, he couldn’t be more than four and ten. Standing next to him her own nine, almost ten, years would look more like five. The boy finally looked up and gave everyone a view of the electric blue of his eyes, very similar in color to the king.

“Ned, I’d like you to meet Gendry Waters, my bastard son.” There were murmurs within the crowd as Robert continued. “The Lannister brood wished to remain in King’s Landing so I brought the boy along.” He slapped him on the back again and threw an arm around his shoulders. “A glimpse into days long past is he not?” The King grinned.

Eddard looked as if he couldn’t believe his eyes, shock written all over his features. “He is the mirror of you from our years at the Eyrie.” His expression turned a bit perplexed. “How come I’ve not heard of him before?”

Robert harrumphed. “You can thank my lion of a wife for that! Tried to force my hand and have me send ‘em to the Wall, but Jon Arryn found the boy an apprenticeship with a blacksmith. The Hand’s taken a liking to the child it seems. Son of his disgraced niece he is.” He waved his hand dismissively. “I’ll speak with you more about the Hand later. He’s become a surly old lummox, always arguing with that damnable Littlefinger and that golden haired coin-purse Tywin. But enough with the miseries of ruling Seven Kingdoms. Right now I have need of a proper meal and a large goblet of your finest wine.”

Her lady mother stepped forward. “Forgive my husbands want of proper cordiality. We have a feast made ready for your arrival your Grace.”

The King grinned. “Ned never was one for manners. He’s lucky to have a proper southron Lady who knows her courtesies and can keep his head off the block. Would that my own wife were as capable! Luckily no one would be daft enough to try that as I sit on the throne, though I’d welcome the chance to wield my hammer once more! The tortures of being a King!” He jested as he followed Catelyn’s lead into the Keep with everyone shuffling in behind them.
The feast was like nothing Arya had seen in Winterfell before. The food was plentiful and the amount of wine consumed was sure to leave their stores empty come winter. Even so, it was none too enjoyable a night for Arya.

Sansa wouldn’t stop pestering her to act like a lady and Arya was reprimanded when she attempted to get her insufferable sister to shut her fat mouth by flinging potatoes at her. To make matters worse, Jon was left to sit by himself while the other bastard sat along side the king. She even heard word that the Imp had come North but had gone on to the Wall and wouldn’t be seen until the whole procession was to head back south for King’s Landing. She desperately wanted to see the half-man and now that was even out of the question. The King’s visit certainly wasn't turning out to be anything like she'd expected and it didn’t get any better in the weeks following.

Her behavior at the arrival ensured that her Lady mother kept a close eye on her to make sure she remain with the other girls for their tedious lessons. She had tried everything to sneak off but Sansa and Jenye Poole always managed to catch her and tattle. It was as if they made a game of it. She pushed them both in the mud when Septa Mordane took them for air, but after the third time they both became wary and expected it.

It wasn't for a long while that she actually managed successful escape. When she did she was making her way to the practice yard, hoping to find someone to spar or shoot arrows with, when she saw noticed a large crowd amassed in the stable lawn. It was a hunting party and she wasted no time running up to her father and tugging on his stirrup pleading to go along. He never got the chance to answer before the King began laughing jovially.

He was looking down on her from his saddle, chuckling patronizingly with a gleam in his eye. “I’m afraid you’d find it hard to keep up with the dogs riding side-saddle little Lady.”

Arya glowered at him unhappily. “I don’t ride side-saddle.” She spat at the King, forgetting all decorum. Her expression twisted into one of disgust at the idea of such nonsense.

“Arya!” Her father bit out gruffly causing her to flinch. Hearing the outrage present in his tone, when she was only used to receiving it from her mother, had an immediate effect. He was normally so level headed and soft spoken. “Be mindful of your manners! You’re speaking to your King.” He scolded her angrily.

She looked to the ground scuffing her shoes. “Forgive me your Grace. I meant no offense.” She bowed her head. Still, she wasn't going to relent. “Father, please let me come.” She begged before looking back up at him wide-eyed and imploring. “My fingers are numb from stabbing myself with needles. I hate my sewing lessons. You know I won’t slow you down. I can out ride Jon and Robb,
you’ve seen it first hand!”

Her father grimaced trying to find words, but it seemed the King was disbelieving. He turned to Robb and Jon. “Is it true what she claims? Can she really out ride two strapping Northern bred lads?”

Her brothers both sent her displeased looks, pursing their lips unhappily. Finally Robb sighed resignedly. “We always jest she’s half horse.” He admitted.

Arya grimaced thinking of the nickname his best friend Theon liked to call her. Arya Horseface. It had caught on with Sansa and Jeyne as well.

Jon nodded his head in agreement not acknowledging the disguised slight or not noticing it. “She rides as if she were a Ranger. She’s like no other girl I’ve witnessed.”

Ned shook his head pensively after hearing Jon’s statement. He looked to be recalling something a bit painfully when he met the Kings eyes, a meaningful look in his own. “She rides like Lyanna.” He murmured significantly.

It seemed as if that was explanation enough. There was silence in the courtyard as the King shifted his gaze towards the young girl in between him and his old friend. His expression was haunted and he seemed to be considering her carefully. The silence was broken however when all heads whipped up to the Keep’s wall where Septa Mordane could be seen scowling and heard yelling.

“Arya Stark! You get back to your chambers this instant! Your mother is furious and so am I!” She shrieked.

Arya’s eyes widened and suddenly instincts took over. She bolted out the open gate and off into the town, the sound of the King’s uproarious laughter following her and supplemented by that of her brothers and father.

Of course she would have to face punishment for her escape eventually, and she did. but she needed a little freedom in the meantime. She wandered around the walls fighting off dragons and battling with the odds against her, trusty stick-sword in hand and wolf pup companion by her side. She knew the hunting party would be gone for a couple days and that meant no reprieve for her besides whatever chance she had now and she meant to take advantage.
When she did eventually make it up to her chambers come darkness, it was to find her mother had assigned a serving girl to tail her for the time being. It wasn’t until the last day of the Kings visit that she managed to get her freedom back.

It was right after the departure feast that she snuck off seeing her brothers do the same. She lost track of them for a moment and began searching the grounds when she turned a corner and ran straight into something solid. She grunted from the force of the collision, and thought she was going to hit the ground when someone reached out and caught her hand, allowing her to find her balance and pull her into them.

“Are you alright milady?” They asked anxiously. “You’re not hurt are you?”

Arya pushed away from the person roughly and looked up into the concerned but timid clear blue eyes of the King’s bastard son. “Don’t be stupid.” She said dusting herself off. “Off course I’m not hurt. I’m not breakable you know.”

The boy chuckled softly hiding a grin and Arya glowered at him. “What’s so funny?” She demanded to know.

He looked up, startled by her snippy tone having been caught laughing. “It’s nothing milady. I meant nothing by it I promise.” He said hurriedly.

“Quit calling me m’lady. I’m not a Lady!” She told him appearing stroppy and stamping her feet.

He looked at her quizzically. “Aren’t you Arya Stark? Daughter of Lord Eddard Stark?”

She huffed at him knowing where this was going. “Well yes, but that doesn’t mea—“

“That makes you _Lady_ Arya Stark, does it not milady?” He chastised, knowing his logic was clear and inarguable. She scowled at him and a subtle grin eventually erupted on his face unable to contain the fact that he was pleased to have irritated her.

She continued to glare at him and childishly tried to push him, but he was much too big for it to move him at all. Honestly, he was as heavy as a marble statue and had the physique of one as well. The fact that her attempt only made him chuckle outright doubled her fury. She stamped on his foot as hard as she could and snickered, snorting unattractively when he started hopping around
cursing creatively. It was the noise that brought her older brothers and Theon from wherever they had run off to.

Robb saw the scene before him and gave Arya a knowing look. “What’ve you done now Arya? Leave the poor fellow alone.”

She glowered and knew she was going to get lectured by her siblings. “I haven’t done anything!” She huffed indignantly. *He* was the one who laughed at her and called her a Lady after all.

Robb rolled his eyes and brushed past her looking to speak with Gendry as he stood upright, finally able to put his significant weight back on his foot. “Are you alright? You’ll have to excuse my sister.” Robb tried to apologize for her.

Gendry glanced at Arya’s pleading expression and exhaled loudly. “It’s nothing. It wasn’t her.” He assured. “Really.”

Arya felt a wave of relief run through her. She didn’t understand why exactly he was sticking up for her but she appreciated it.

Robb frowned perplexed and Theon snorted from off to the side. “Standing up for Arya Underfoot? Don’t want her to stomp your foot again?” He goaded.

“*Theon.*” Robb looked to his friend warningly.

Theon ignored him. “Looks like the King was right.” He said shaking his head smirking. “His bastard really doesn’t have a spine.” Then he glanced at Jon. “Must be a common trait for the whole breed.”

Arya and Robb both glared furiously at Theon and Jon just looked away, nose flaring at the slight and clearly biting back rage but still managing to harness it.

“Apologize.” Robb demanded.

Theon snorted again. “Why in the Seven Hells would I do that?”
Robb went to open his mouth, but before he could, the large blue-eyed boy went barreling past him, tackling Theon into the wall where the Ironborn had the wind knock out of him. He got his breath back quickly though and began pummeling the larger boy in the sides trying to make him let him down. It didn’t work, but pretty soon they were on the ground with Gendry on top of him, returning the blows to the ribs he’d received.

Robb quickly saw the need to get involved, but his allegiance being to his friend since birth, he grabbed Gendry by the collar and threw him onto his back. Seeing his chance, Theon promptly climbed on top of his attacker and brought fist after fist to his face.

Arya looked to Jon who appeared torn between helping and staying out of it. “Do something!” She screamed at him. His expression twisted painfully but he still didn’t take action, he didn’t want to go against his brother regardless of the harshness of Theon’s familiar words.

Huffing, Arya launched herself at Theon wrapping her arms and legs about his person, restricting his air and his movements as he flailed about. He stopped his assault in shock at the weight on his back just as Gendry, still underneath him, threw his own punch towards his jaw. The blow landed true, and Theon was knocked out cold on contact, Arya still latched on to his back. Together they fell to the ground, Arya underneath him and almost crushed by his weight, hitting her head against the stone of the walkway. She heard multiple calls of ‘Arya!’ sounding frightened at the sound of the impact, but her senses were a bit blurred and she couldn’t tell where or whom they had come from.

It was Gendry who was the first one to her. He rolled the unconscious Theon off her and lifted her slightly off the ground with a hand underneath the neck. She blinked profusely coming to, finding two pairs of blue eyes and one grey looking down on her concernedly.

“Are you hurt?” She heard Robb ask at the same time she heard Jon say, “Are you alright?”

Arya scowled at them, still a bit dizzy, but sat upright steadying herself with her arms behind her for support. “Of course I’m alright you idiots! I’m not made of glass!” She asserted grumbling. She heard chuckles from everyone, even Gendry, as she started to rise. They died out however as she stumbled dizzily and almost fell again. She felt strong arms catch her and heft her up easily.

“Put me down.” She said through gritted teeth. “I can manage just fine!”

“No milady, I don’t think you can.” Insisted Gendry. “We can’t have you to hit your head again.
I’ll take you to the Maester’s.”

“No!” Three voices said at once.

Gendry looked around bewilderedly at the three siblings. Robb grimaced but explained. “Maester Luwin has known us since birth. If we make up a story as explanation he’ll know we’re lying and find out about the fighting. My Lady mother would throw a fit and I’m certain you don’t want the King to find out about this.”

Gendry looked at Theon on the ground and the young girl in his arms, his expression looking as if he were battling himself. Finally he made a decision, even if he didn’t much like it. “We have to take her to the Maester’s. She wasn’t walking proper.”

Arya began struggling in his arms to get out knowing she’d be in trouble. “I’ll have you know I can walk just fine!” She insisted, becoming aggravated that she couldn’t get out of his grip. “If you don’t let me down this instant I’ll do worse than stamp foot the first chance I get! I’ll have Nymeria piss in your boots I swear it!” She seethed, glaring at him even though her eyes couldn’t focus on his and trying to made her woozy.

There were more chuckles at her threats, and stronger flailing on her part as a result, but Gendry only held her to his chest more firmly. She stopped eventually, sulking petulantly but figuring there was no use. He really had an iron grip.

“You’ll have Nymeria do no such thing or I’ll lock her in the stables and have Ghost guard the doors.” Jon warned her.

Arya crossed her arms and stuck her tongue out at her favorite brother.

“Do think you could manage seeing Arya to her chambers?” Robb asked of Gendry suddenly.

His eyes widened. “Me?” He questioned incredulously. “Wouldn’t that appear improper?”

Robb considered it for a moment but then nodded his head. “Mayhaps, but I have to stay with Theon and get him back to his rooms once he stirs, and Jon will have to remain close by in case an explanation of our whereabouts is necessary. The servants will only think it suspicious and go searching if you are here to offer words rather than someone they are familiar with.”
Gendry frowned realizing there was sense in his words. He sighed in resignation. “Where are her chambers?” He asked. There were relieved breaths all around and Jon explained the best route to go to avoid being seen.

He wasn’t even around the bend when Arya again began asserting she was fine to walk.

“You can let me down now.” She told him.

He looked down at her sideways, lopsided grin in place. “No I can’t. I gave my word to your brothers that I’d see you to your rooms.”

Arya rolled her eyes and immediately regret it as it left her dizzy. Regardless, she wasn’t going to let that stop her protests. “Yes but that was before I was okay. I’m fine now.” She asserted.

She couldn’t quite make out his expression because her eyes wouldn’t focus but she could tell by his tone it was insufferable. “So you’re normally cross-eyed?” He asked holding back laughter.

She huffed and began struggling once again, angry that she was being cradled like a helpless baby. If there was one thing she wasn’t it was helpless, although the fact that she was still unable to get out of his grasp really made her feel like it. “Will you just let me walk! What kind of stupid boy has arms this big anyhow?”

He lifted an eyebrow at her. “I’m not a boy, I’m almost a man grown.” He told her.

“If your stupid arms get any bigger you’ll fall over from the weight of them.” She grumbled insultingly. “How much bigger could you possibly hope to grow?”

He shrugged. “Don’t know milady.” She scowled at the formality and he sighed noticing. “Don’t know Arya.” He corrected.

She smirked satisfied that she could get her way on this one thing. They were silent for a moment as he made his way carefully up the stairs towards her door. They were almost there when she decided to speak again.
“Thank you.” She burst out.

He looked at her brows furrowed. He definitely hadn’t been expecting her gratitude. “For what?” He questioned.

She looked at him as if he were daft. “You know what.” She almost went to roll her eyes at his expression but then thought better of it remembering how it had left her woozy the last time. “For not telling my brothers I stamped your foot, that’s what!” She explained not sounding very appreciative.

He smirked. “It was pretty obvious what you’d done anyhow.” He told her.

“But you still didn’t tell them.” She nodded her head as if that was that.

He gave her a small smile chuckling. “You’re welcome then mi—Arya.” He caught himself at the last instant and he was happy to see her grin.

There was another moment of silence and she once again broke it. “You shouldn’t let Theon bother you. He’s stupid. He’s just mad he’s a ward of Winterfell. Jon says he needs to feel more important than everyone else and that’s why he makes stupid comments.”

He blinked at her. “You and Jon seem close.” He really didn’t want to discuss what had happened with Theon.

Arya smiled genuinely at his statement. “We are. He’s plays stick-fight with me and helps me hide from Septa Mordane and my mother.”

Gendry chuckled. “You really shouldn’t run from your lessons. How are you supposed to learn to act a proper Lady if you do?”

Arya frowned at him affronted and crossed her arms over her chest petulantly. “I don’t want to be a Lady.” She snapped crossly.
Gendry rolled his eyes. “If you don’t want to be a lady what do you want?” He kicked open the doors to her chambers and made his way over to her bed.

“I want to have adventures.” She told him, eyes gleaming at the mere thought of experiencing the world and discovering all its secrets.

He smiled down at her and sat her on top of the covers. “Let your head feel better first before you go gallivanting off.” He turned to leave giving her a small coy smile. “Good night milady.” He teased finally, smirking now.

She had the urge to run up to run up and kick him in the shin but refrained, opting for words instead. “My head is fine stupid!” She insisted. “And I’m not a Lady.” She yelled after him but didn’t get out of bed. Her head really was hurting her.

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It was five years and then some before any of the Starks ever saw King Robert or Gendry Waters again. When they did, not many of them were glad for it.

Their trip south was quite unexpected. Arya had woken one morning to the feel of something sticky between her legs and thrown off her covers to find her linens and smallclothes a mess with the coming of her first moon-blood. As soon as Catelyn had informed her husband of her daughters flowering he had grimaced and ordered preparations to be made for the trip south, heading to the Maester’s chambers and sending a crow to King’s Landing.

No one except Ned seemed to know the significance of their travel but Arya was panicking almost immediately. Her first bleeding followed by a journey to the capital, it was too much of a coincidence not to be correlated. When she approached her father and begged him to abandon the trip he could hardly look at her. It was an admission to the worst kind of guilt as far as she was concerned.

She had screamed at him and thrown things and he had done nothing. He didn’t reprimand her and he didn’t try to stop her, he left her to rage. It was only after she demanded he look her in the eyes that he turned to face her and she saw his tears. She had never seen her father cry and never wished to again. It was unsettling, and it was all the confirmation she needed to know what was planned for her.
She didn’t talk to her father for the whole slow trip south and it didn’t go unnoticed. Her brothers had begun to worry and her mother and sister would offer them no enlightenment even though it was obvious they had an inkling of what was going on. Initially Sansa had been unwilling to admit that her younger, wilder sister had flowered before her, but after seeing how closed off and despondent Arya became the further south they traveled, she approached Jon hoping he would talk to her. He did, but it only made things worse.

Arya had told Jon of her suspicions regarding the intent behind their trip and begged him to run away with her, to find passage to the free cities like they had always imagined when they promised each other to find adventure together. It was with pain that he had informed her of his plans to become a Brother of the Night’s Watch like their Uncle Benjen. She had broken down at the thought of having her favorite sibling so far from her, alone in the wind and cold with nothing more to hope for but fights among wildlings. She couldn’t bear to think that they were both being forced to give up their dreams, to think that he’d already abandoned his own and her time to do so had come now as well. It made everything so much more miserable and real.

It wasn’t until they reached The Neck that she began to come to terms with her circumstances. She certainly wasn’t happy, but she was a Stark of Winterfell. She would do her duty and no one, not even a husband, would take away her wildness. The North was in her blood, they couldn’t make her something she wasn’t. Mayhaps she could still try and make adventures for herself, even if they were small.

Knowing she might not be as free to do the things she loved in the near future, Arya began to spend all her time on horseback or practicing her archery and swordplay. She had become quite talented with the Braavosi rapier and could regularly challenge Theon at archery. Still, it was on horseback that she felt most free, and with the Red Keep in sight she took to the saddle hoping to keep the city at her back and her thoughts at bay. She galloped in the opposite direction of King’s Landing, refusing to go anywhere but away until she came upon the end of their procession.

She expected one of her brothers to be sent to fetch her but was surprised to see her father fast approaching. Immediately she dung in her heels and took off at a gallop, she had no wish to speak with him, not yet. She knew he would catch her eventually considering his mount was of much better breeding, but she was determined to be as far from the city as she could before then.

She was almost over the next hill when her father’s hand grasped the reins of her horse’s bridle and brought them both to a stop. He didn’t say a word at first, just pulled her off of her saddle and into his, hugging her tightly to his chest. She wanted to resist but she didn’t. She wasn’t sure how much longer she’d be able to have moments like this with him and it felt good to be in his arms after not talking to him for so long. He was a solemn man who could always communicate better with actions than words. She knew in her heart marrying her off wasn’t something he wanted to do, but rather an obligation.
When he pulled away he pushed her dark brown waves away from her eyes and grasped her head with both hands searching her face like it was the last time he would ever see her. He looked almost desperate and after a moment he hugged her back to him. His voice was hoarse when he spoke into her ear. “I always hoped it would be Sansa I’d give away first.” He wrapped his arms more tightly around her and she fisted his cloak. “Sansa’s ready to leave the North. Not you, my willful wolf-pup. You’re as untamable as the winds of the Winterfell themselves.”

Tears were streaming down her face now, but she pulled away so she could look into steel colored eyes so similar to her own. “Who am I promised to?” She asked fearing the answer.

He looked at her appearing pained. “Gendry Waters.” He told her resignedly, stroking her hair.

Confusion swept over her and it must have shown on her face for he spoke again before she had a chance to ask questions. “He will be given titles, wealth, and lands along the Kings road near the Long Lake. There is an old hold that will be rebuilt and there are caved in mines that were once bountiful and can be reopened. You’ll be in the North where you belong.” He told her.

She wasn’t unhappy to hear it but she was still perplexed. She was a Stark of Winterfell, a daughter to the Warden of the North, a member of one of the Great Houses and a powerful wife for anyone to have. “I am to marry a bastard?” She breathed sounding perplexed.

He grimaced at her. “Your brother Jon is a bastard and you love him fiercely.” He reminded her. “Gendry is a good man.” He murmured trying to sooth her.

Arya wiped the tears from her face. “That doesn’t mean I want to marry him. I don’t want to marry anyone! I want to travel and have adventures like Queen Nymeria and Wenda the white fawn.” She entreated, wide-eyed and peering up at him like the incorrigible boyish ten-year-old girl of years past.

The agony displayed on his features was exceedingly apparent and his eyes turned to a soft grey mist, his heart aching. She was his brave little girl and it tore him up to think someone with such an unbridled spirit would be forced to settle down at such a young age. She had to understand that he wouldn’t make her a match that would destroy her. She knew he would have his reasons for making her a match at all. He reluctantly let go of her as she moved within his grasp.

Arya climbed back onto her own horse and out of his arms. “When you see fit to tell me the true reason I am to marry this man I’ll gladly hear it.” She told him steering the creature back towards the city.
There was a tinge of bitterness in her tone, but Eddard knew it wasn't because she believed he didn’t have her best interest at heart. It was because she knew that he was keeping something from her concerning one of the most influential decisions he’d have to make on her behalf.

She didn’t hear the hooves of her father’s horse following her for almost a full minute, but then he heeled his horse around and caught up to her. They rode in silence until they were less than a league from the Walls of the city. He’d apparently told their caravan to go ahead without them and it appeared as if they’d already made their way to the Keep.

With how far away she had ridden from the city in her escape, she almost thought her mother would now be in the throne room greeting the King by herself. The thought gave her a brief moment of happiness but seeing her father break out into a gallop while eyeing her challengingly caused her to grin in true delight. One more lasting moment of freedom was just what she needed before she was to be cloaked in the protection of another man's name.

He of course did beat her by the original two-length advantage he’d started with, plus one more due to the quality of his horse. She didn’t hold it against him though. In fact she was content to feel her heart racing and was pleased to know that her hair was a complete wreck and she was probably covered in the dirt her horse had kicked up.

Her father either didn’t take notice of her unkempt appearance or didn’t care because he led her through the Keep and into court without stopping to have her fix her clothing or wipe the dirt from her face. She strode into the hall next to him and whispers followed in her wake, nobles discussing what she could only assume was the condition in which she chose to address the court.

The King was speaking with her mother when he saw them enter. The bright smile he directed at Ned faded into astonishment as his eyes glided over to her and nearly bulged out of his head. He pushed past Robb and Sansa brusquely and walked towards her and her father as if he was unaware of the steps he was taking, as if he were possessed.

Arya stopped where she was and tugged on her father’s hand, frightened of what was taking place and thinking the King might’ve actually taken her tousled garb as insult. Robert didn’t take notice of her movement towards her father and never took his eyes off her. He slowed his approach as he came nearer and held out his hands as if he were going to grasp her face in affection. “Lyanna.” He breathed disbelievingly as if he thought his senses were failing him.

Her eyes widened in panic comprehending that he was mistaking her for her long deceased relative. Before she could stop to remind herself of the courtesies necessary in court she was speaking curtly, horrified at the idea he believed she was his lost love and finding it necessary to correct him
before he laid a hand on her and she took action that would land her in the dungeons.

“Arya. My name is Arya.” She corrected him tersely before realizing she sounded hostile. She shook her head and managed a strained smile knowing she had to make up for coming across as offensive to a very powerful man. “Apologies my King.” She bowed her head slightly. She was in King’s landing after all. She must at least attempt to remember her civilities less she find herself at the wrong end of the executioners axe. “I am Arya Stark of Winterfell your Grace.” She introduced herself properly though her tone was still as bit rough. She only barely managed an embarrassing excuse of a curtsey.

Her emphasis on her name seemed to shake the King from his stupor. “Arya?” He babbled withdrawing his hands as if stung. He blinked a couple of times and then glanced over at Eddard, his eyes widening in comprehension. “Yes yes of course!” He said loudly. “Forgive me my mistake. Your hair, your eyes. You are every bit the image of your father’s sister. My you’ve grown in five years time! A northern beauty if ever there was one!”

Arya frowned trying to figure out if he was jesting or not. She probably looked like a Wildling at the moment, and she'd never been called beautiful by anyone who wasn't obligated to say so. Perhaps the days where people had referred to her as Arya Horseface had long since past, but she certainly wasn't chasing suitors off with a stick like Sansa. Although there was that one time the when the baker’s boy Mycah had absurdly tackled her and tried to pin her to the ground while playing stick-fight. At first she'd thought he was simply trying to wrestle, but then there had been hands in inappropriate places. She had quickly ensured he’d never try anything further by bringing her knife to his neck. She was certain he'd warned the other boys in town as well because they all went from hanging around and being friendly to avoiding her like the plague, even seeming afraid to look at her wrong less she take action.

She didn’t really have much of a chance to dwell on whether the Kings words had genuinely been meant as compliment considering her father was now pushing her towards the front of the room where she could see the Queen still seated on her throne, her golden haired children flanking her menacing chair. She thought to fall in line between Sansa and Bran, but Eddard brought her forward to stand facing the gathered crowd and grabbed her sister as well.

Once they were both settled and standing in front of their father facing the court, King Robert projected his voice across the room seeking to clear up the speculation that could be heard in the whispers whirling around court. He didn’t draw it out longer than necessary. “I am aware that it is unorthodox to do what I intend without a formal introduction of the Stark girls to the court, but I do so nonetheless with my own authority. As King of the Adals, the Rhoynar and the First Men, Lord of the Seven Kingdoms and Protector of the Realm, I Robert Baratheon, First of his name, with honor and praise to the Seven announce with a happy heart the joining of House Stark with House Baratheon through the betrothal of Sansa Stark to my son and heir Joffery Baratheon.” The hall erupted into astonished chatter but the King quieted them all down with a wave of a hand and an angry bellow of “Quiet you fools I haven’t finished!” Everyone including the Queen, Lady Catelyn, and Sansa herself appeared quite surprised at the proclamation, but their objections and
exclamations died out as the Kings voice rang out. “They will marry as soon as she is a woman flowered.” King Robert paused and glared challengingly less anyone speak, holding up his hand once more to indicate that he still wasn't finished. It seemed as if the whole hall choked on their words as one, waiting to hear what else he could possibly stun them with. He certainly didn’t disappoint. “I am also to announce the betrothal of Arya Stark to my son Gendry Waters Baratheon.” Gasps could be heard from nearly everyone, not only at the betrothal but the apparent legitimatization of his bastard. “They will be united as one in the Godswood tomorrow and a celebratory feast held in their honor following. Sons, come greet your wives.” He finished, apparently done with court altogether. As the King turned around and made his exit, an angry Queen following behind closely, the court erupted into near chaos. Amongst it all Sansa turned to face Joffery blushing, and an absolutely flabbergasted Gendry stumbled forward having been pushed from within the crowd by the wisened Lord of the Vale. Arya wasn't sure what was being shared between her sister and her newly betrothed as all she could concentrate on was the floor in front of her feet.

It wasn’t until she saw boots come to stand in the exact spot her eyes were focused that she looked up. She remembered him being large the last time she had seen him, but she had just chalked that up to having possessed only nine, nearly ten, years compared to his four and ten at the time. Now, five years later and then some, she couldn’t help but think maybe she hadn’t been wrong in her first impression. He towered over her still, and his muscles were just as large if not larger than she remembered. If that were at all possible.

She let her eyes sweep over his massive frame and felt herself beginning to lose her breath. He was certainly formidable. Somewhere in the back of her mind she remembered something about him working as a blacksmith, and while that explained a lot, he was certainly the largest smith she had ever seen. She cautiously let her eyes move upward to meet his own, and she stared wide-eyed into his ice blue gaze, unable to look away.

He bowed his head to her nervously but never broke eye contact. “Milady.” He greeted cautiously.

Arya ripped her gaze away from his and scowled. “Don’t call me that.” She said through gritted teeth before pushing past him and practically running from the hall leaving him there. Tomorrow was going to be horrid enough, there was no need to prolong the torture this night.

She didn’t see him at all for the rest of the day. In fact, she didn’t see anyone at all for the rest of the day except for her mother and what she was assured was the city’s finest seamstress. As if she cared. By the end of it she wanted to throttle the both of them for their fussing.

Time seemed to pass exceptionally fast while somehow she moved painfully slow through it. She didn’t sleep at all that night and wasn't surprised that her mother and Sansa admonished her the next morning for the appearance of dark circles under her eyes.
She said barely a word as they dressed her in silks of white and grey mimicking the colors of House Stark, powdering her face and lining her eyes. She only ever objected when they tried to tie her hair up off her neck. When her mother protested to her request she almost felt herself snap. “Leave it down and leave it wild.” She fumed whirling on them eyes flashing. “I’ll not have my husband believe he is receiving a tamed wolf!”

“Arya—“ Catelyn had tried to reason with her.

“No.” She snarled cutting her off. She wasn't going to compromise on anything further. She was giving up her happiness and that should be enough for them. “You’ll leave it down or I’ll cut it all off and you’ll be giving me to my husband bald!” She thundered, making it clear she wasn't jesting.

They mostly complied with the request, curling the ends of her unruly dark hair and leaving it down around her face. They did, however, manage to secure half of it on the top of her head with some jewel-encrusted combs while she stared off into the unknown, dreading the hour she knew was fast approaching.

It wasn’t until her father entered the chamber alongside her brothers that she felt her chest tighten and her eyes begin to water. Several times Robb or Jon tried to speak to her but she’d cut them off with her most murderous glare, desiring to be left alone and not wanting to hear any of their meaningless comforts. There would be no escape for her and she’d had enough of them telling her she might come to be happy in time.

No one said a word as the family left and they made their way towards the Godswood together. As each one of her siblings and her mother walked past her to join the small crowd gathered beneath the Heart tree, leaving her with her father, she felt as if they were deserting her forever.

Jon was the last to depart and he pulled her into an abrupt embrace looking pained as he did. She gave in and threw her arms around him, holding onto him desperately as he whispered into her ear. “I’m sorry love.” He pulled back and tried smiling to lighten the mood. “At least your not stuck with that little Lannister shit.” In spite of herself Arya laughed and he smiled if a bit sadly, he rarely ever cursed. Nevertheless, as he turned and walked to stand next to Robb, his arm extended and hand reached out so as to never leaving contact with hers until they were too far away to do so, she began to tremble in fear anticipating what was about to come.

When her father secured the white fur lined, gray velvet maidscloak about her shoulders, it felt like the noose tightening around her neck. She tugged back on his arm and refused to walk when he tried to usher her forward. Seeing her frightened look, he softened and gave her a kiss on the forehead.
“Come little wolf.” He told her with a reluctant sigh.

She followed him this time, though she looked at the ground the whole while, and continued to do so as her cloak was removed and replaced by large unfamiliar hands with emerald green silk lined in gold. Her eyes never wavered from the soil until she felt calloused fingers grasp her own gently and a cord wrap around their joined palms. She stared at their merged limbs feeling as if she were looking into the mouth of a dragon. She didn’t even hear the words she had been instructed to say coming out of her own mouth as she spoke them. It was all too surreal.

When a hand not entwined with her own reached up to caress her cheek, her own fingers flew to a wrist wanting to prevent them from reaching her skin. She only just managed to stop herself from flinging Gendry's hand away from her, but he seemed to be reading her hesitancy because he withdrew himself.

Finally, she chanced a glance at his face and was almost relieved to see he didn’t look very joyful, in fact he looked utterly miserable and was similarly staring at the ground. When his blue eyes met hers she saw the guilt there, and she could feel a question developing in her own. They stared one another down, brows furrowed for what seemed like an eternity until throats were cleared around them and they both blinked.

“Kiss her boy,” She heard the voice of King Robert urging his son.

Her eyes widened realizing it was almost over, that she was almost married, all they had left to do was seal it with a kiss. She wanted to run, to make sure none of this could hold, but she knew she couldn’t. When she saw him step closer it was out of instinct that she tried to take a step back. She found she couldn’t though as a strong arm snaked its way about her waist. Not really sure what to do next she closed her eyes and waited.

His lips ghosted over hers tenderly, almost remorsefully, before pulling away. He never left contact though as she found her mouth following his of its own accord, seeking more pressure. He seemed to recognize her unconscious appeal for more sooner than she did because instantly his lips were pressed back up against hers only more firmly. He moved his mouth cautiously against hers and she followed suit curious about the sensation. When he finally pulled away she was surprised to find herself left feeling wanting, one hand fisted in the fabric of his tunic.

She gaped at him in surprise, not completely comfortable with the strange feelings she was experiencing. She saw some of that mirrored in his own expression although he looked more worried, though about what she couldn’t say. They didn’t have much time to really dwell on it before they were being showered with unwanted congratulations and shuffled off towards the
banquet hall and the feast.

Arya still hadn’t come to terms with everything that had taken place by the time they were halfway through the meal. She was married. She had a husband. She was a wife.

She didn’t even touch her food until Gendry gently tried suggesting to her that she fill her stomach and calling her milady once again. She tried to resist the urge to throw a drumstick at him and instead settled for a roasted carrot. She heard him chuckle a bit beside her at the action and blushed when she saw her mother shaking her head at her from across the hall. Arya’s expression quickly turned into a scowl that she directed at Gendry. Leave it to her to get reprimanded on her wedding day. Stupid cad just had to provoke her.

Soon enough people were up and dancing and she couldn’t help but gulp thinking of what was coming next. As soon as the sun was set the first drunkard would call out that it was time for the Bedding. She had never been exceptionally fond of wine, she didn’t like feeling fuzzy with her senses dulled, but now she understood why people might enjoy that sensation. She drank one goblet then another, hoisting shaky hands to her mouth anxiously.

Jon seemed to comprehend the worry she was experiencing and tried to give her cause to forget about it by taking her for a spin dance around the floor even though he knew she hated dancing. It was an effort she appreciated regardless, although it appeared her disquiet was written all over her face all the while.

“Stop fretting Arya. There’s nothing for it.” He tried to tell her gently.

“It’s not as if I want to fuss.” She glowered at him before snappily adding. “You can tell me to stop fretting when you have a dozen men waiting in the wings to rip your clothes off.”

Jon grimaced and scanned the hall, only to begin glaring darkly ahead of him realizing she was correct.

His apparent worry did nothing to help quash her nerves. “Will it hurt?” She asked meekly looking up at him through painted lashes.

Jon looked at her, his expression twisted as if she had just ripped out his heart. He stopped their dancing and held her to him, resting his head atop hers momentarily before dragging her off to the side. He sat her down on a nearby bench and crouched in front of her pushing stray hairs behind
her ears. “I’m not sure what it will be like. You’re used to bumps and bruises though. I can’t imagine its more than a bit of discomfort.” He looked around the hall and beckoned someone behind him. “Perhaps you should ask Robb or Theon. They would know better.”

Arya glanced around her brother to see Robb and Theon approaching looking concerned, Robb more so than Theon.

When they arrived Robb looked between his two siblings. “Is everything all right?” He asked brows furrowed.

Jon glanced at the two briefly before turning back to Arya seeing her picking at her skirts. He could tell she wasn't comfortable asking the question again. He sighed and looked to the other boys. “She wants to know what to expect. To know if it will hurt.” He told them for her.

Robb softened same as Jon, but Theon just snorted out a laugh. “The way she rides she probably already ruptured her maidenhead.” Robb and Jon both sent him murderous glares and he rolled his eyes and turned to Arya. “You ever returned from riding to find blood stained your small clothes?” He asked her condescendingly, as if he already knew her answer.

Arya shook her head no.

He looked genuinely surprised for a moment then shrugged. “Well then it might hurt a bit.” He told her honestly before seeing her expression turn upset and adding. “Only for a moment though. Once he starts to move again you’ll like it. I’ve never known a woman who hasn’t. Besides, you like to ride. Get on top and it’s much the same as that. If you can ride a man like you can ride a horse you’ll have a happy husband indeed.” He told her smirking.

Jon stood up threateningly at the same time Robb pushed Theon away forcefully giving him a stony look. Neither action caused the Ironborn to stop from laughing having gotten his jest in. Robb tried to help brush it off by taking her for a whirl around the dance floor but nothing was really going to help at this point. There were too many thoughts running through her head. Men liked to be ridden? Was that even possible? Jon had often let her ride around on his back when she was younger, pretending as if he were her horse and she a knight, but she didn’t think that was what Theon meant now. That couldn’t be anything like lying with a man. She was now possibly more confused than ever.

It wasn't until she had danced with both her Father and the King that Gendry sought her out for his turn. He cut in just as Arya was certain his father was going to start calling her Lyanna once more. She really couldn’t have been more appreciative. The King’s breath had reeked of sour wine and
his hands held her a bit too closely. It was all a stark contrast to the behavior of his son, her husband.

Gendry rested his hand lightly on her waist while the other entwined his fingers with hers slowly, almost gingerly. Neither of them were particularly good dancers and he left enough room between their bodies to fit another person. He didn’t meet her eye for the entirety of the dance, instead choosing to stare pointedly past her. It made her wonder why he had asked for the dance in the first place though she didn’t ask. Soon enough the torture was over and Theon interceded. Both Arya and Gendry grit their teeth seeing him approach, however they couldn’t come up with a proper excuse to turn him away.

His smirk was entirely insufferable as he pressed himself against her and began the steps to the song that was being played. She followed his lead with a clenched jaw as he used words to goad her further, just as he had always done.

“No much of a dancer, are you?” He sniggered.

Arya only rolled her eyes. Then a thought occurred to her and she smirked. “If you would like me to show you the water dance it would be my pleasure.”

The smile dropped off Theon’s face and he scowled at her. Everyone in Winterfell knew the dance lessons she had been privy to weren’t necessarily what one thinks of when the word ‘dance’ is uttered. Her mother had thrown quite the fit when she discovered what kind of instruction her father had allowed her. The servants had quickly let it spread.

“No you eager for the Bedding?” He retorted acerbically, leer sliding back into place knowing full well that she was dreading the inevitable custom. He nodded towards the window where the last light of day could be seen disappearing. “It’s almost time.”

Arya looked to the ground and away from him, her body going stiff in his grip at the reminder.

His expression was wicked and he was enjoying the torture too much. He didn’t stop either. “If your husband is at all proportional then I suppose it will hurt more than just a bit.” He leaned in to whisper malevolently. “They do call him the bull. Perhaps he is hung like one.”

Arya wasn’t really sure what he meant with his comparison but looked up and glared murderously at him nonetheless. She didn’t need a reminder of the hurt she would have to tolerate while at the
mercy of her new husbands whims. It was already at the forefront of her mind.

He only smiled happy to get a rise out of her. He shrugged for show, “I suppose we won’t have to be guessing for long. We’ll find out soon enough won’t we?” He took a long greedy sweep of her body, “We’ll find out what’s beneath your smallclothes as well. Tell me Arya, are you still the skinny little stick you’ve always been, or has your body followed the lead of your handsome face and transformed into that of a woman?”

She did her best to restrain herself, and she thought she had done a damn good job so far considering she hadn’t acted until that point, but she’d put up with enough. Without so much as a warning she brought her foot down hard on his instep and whirled away from him as soon as he let up his grip on her.

She was wearing quite the self-satisfied smirk as she stalked away from him, but she hadn’t gone more than four steps when it faded into a look of complete horror.

From behind her, in the unmistakable voice of Theon, she heard a bellow projected loud enough for the whole hall to hear. “It’s time for the Bedding.” He rang out malevolently, greeted by the sound of boisterous agreement.

To Arya it was if someone had sounded the warhorn of an approaching army. She heard chairs scraping back and sinister chuckles as men began to make their way towards her. Her hackles rose along with a growl in her throat.

She was desperately trying to control her breathing and had to resort to her training to do so, she felt like a cornered wolf, panicked and dangerous. When she felt wind at her neck and heard the noise of boots settling behind her, her instincts took over and it was as if everything went in slow motion. She had never moved so quick in her life.

Before she really had time to comprehend what she was doing, she whirled around suddenly, grabbed the dagger at Theon’s belt, unsheathed it and had it flush with his neck. Somehow she’d known it’d be him.

Everyone in the hall froze and all eyes were on her holding in a collective breath. She glanced at the hand Theon had on her shoulder, his fist full of her dress, and pressed the knife further against his throat. “Remove your hand.” She said through gritted teeth.
He did as was directed but not before she heard her mother’s pleading but appalled voice. “Arya! Stop this at once!” She hissed.

Arya bid her no mind and felt herself snarling more. She saw someone, two more people, enter her periphery and let her eyes flicker to Jon and Robb.

“It is tradition.” Robb tried to tell her gently, looking tensely around at the men encircling his sister. He rest his hand on her arm and put pressure there, hoping to get her to lower her arm less someone else try to and find themselves at the wrong end of the blade. It didn’t work.

“Listen to Robb.” Jon urged slowly, trying to make her see sense.

She didn’t care about the stupid tradition, it was barbaric and there was no way she’d submit herself to the fancies of these degenerate drunkards. She frowned at both of her brothers wondering when it was they had stopped trying to protect her.

It wasn’t until she saw ice blue eyes over Theon’s shoulder that she realized what she was doing.

“Arya.” Gendry said firmly, eyes boring into hers brokering no nonsense.

Working her jaw for a moment unhappily, she finally acquiesced. “Fine.” She spat before hastily adding a warning. “But no one is disrobing me. I'll do it myself.” She would do this on her own terms, custom be damned.

There seemed to be a massive release of held breaths throughout the hall once she removed the dagger from Theon’s throat. After she did, it seemed as if the crowd was moving in to claim her heedless of her defiant words but they stopped again eyes wide as she turned the blade towards herself with a trembling hand. Everyone collectively halted, a chorus of incredulous gasps echoing through the hall and assuming the worst while wondering exactly what she planned.

She knew there was no chance she'd be able to remove all of layers of clothing herself, what with all the buttons and laces, and she certainly wasn’t going to ask for help after the scene she'd just caused. Besides, the help she would receive wasn't something she'd readily welcome, in fact, it was exactly what she was trying to avoid. She wouldn’t give these fools the satisfaction of degrading and stripping her for the sake of this sickening perversion they disguised as tradition. She resigned to cut herself out of her clothing and take at least that much power away from them.
She started at the collar of her dress and sliced the fabric down to the waist where she stepped out of her skirts. With a deft hand, although still slightly quaking, she cut the laces of her bodice and then stepped out of her small clothes. She was completely naked except for the fabric she used to bind her breasts and she wasn't going to take the time to unwind it. Running the dull side of the dagger against her skin, once it was fully underneath the cloth she pressed the blade against the material and felt it fall to the floor. She was bare for all to see and she could feel eyes grazing her skin though she refused to acknowledge them, instead choosing to stare at the Baratheon banners hanging as decoration.

She stood there for what seemed a lifetime, waiting to be picked up and carted off to the Bedding Chambers, but it seemed everyone had forgotten that part of the ritual. She heard a rustling within the crowd and felt silk encircling her shoulders.

Confusion swept over her and she lowered her eyes to see Gendry fastening his huge emerald and gold marriage cloak about her shoulders, giving her some semblance of coverage. It seemed as if that brought everyone back to their senses because she was almost immediately scooped up into the arms of an eager stranger and hauled out of the room as the majority of men followed and began poking, pinching, and prodding.

They cackled at her sinisterly carrying her up to the tower, laughing as they questioned if she was prepared to be mounted by the bull. They shared jests as she scowled at them murderously and they spoke of how he’d take her roughly from behind like the bastard animal he was. How as the northern whore she’d probably enjoy it. Several of them tried and succeeded to grope at her bum and her breasts. And while she initially thrashed wildly in protest, throwing elbows and lashing out with her legs, she refrained after her flailing only worked to displace the cloak and expose her to them renewing their fervor.

She was passed around carelessly like one of Sansa’s old porcelain dolls, no one with the strength to hold her for long as she writhed fiercely and knocked the wind out of them. Each man commented vividly on how they’d like to take her, how they’d best her as she struggled, and how she’d incur a bastard’s temper should she try to deny Gendry his rights.

She did her best to ignore the cruel remarks but it was more difficult than she imagined and she found herself repeating the names of the worst offender in hopes she could one day serve them their just desserts. Her anger and dread built to the point of explosion or break down, and once they arrived at the Bedding Chambers, she was pushed inside unceremoniously and left to wait while they continued to offer crude remarks about her person through the door.

It wasn't long she was left by herself, and she was glad for it because she couldn’t stand the anticipation and fidgeting, it was bound to drive her mad before long and she was helpless to stop it after the torment she’d endured. When she heard the door rattling open, and an uproarious commotion erupt outside, she bolted up right from her position seated on the bed just as Gendry
stumbled inside wearing not a stitch of clothing but holding his bits and covering himself. She wondered if the women had traumatized him the way the men did her. She doubted it.

They stood there awkwardly for a moment just staring at each other. Arya eyes wide like a deer facing a predator, and Gendry startled at finding himself alone with his petrified Lady wife. She looked as if she was prepared to run or fight if need be, eyeing him as if he would pounce on her.

After a moment of tormented consideration Gendry dropped his hands away from his body and strode towards the opposite side of the room and away from Arya. “No need to be frightened milady.” He asserted a bit bitterly, solemn eyes turned towards the ground and head hung stiffly, jaw clenched. “I won't force myself on you.”

Arya narrowed her eyes at him suspicious of his intentions, not sure what he was on about. Was he attempting to take her by surprise or was he truly not trying to lie with her this night? Either way he wasn't serving anyone considering their union would have to happen eventually and she’d be drowning in dread until then.

The way he pointedly kept his back to her and refused to glance in her direction allowed for the conclusion that he had been speaking truly, he genuinely had no intention of taking her maidenhead. Suddenly she felt rebuffed and oddly insulted that he could so easily brush her off and had no inclination of consummating the marriage. She stalked after him indignant, but stopped suddenly when he turned to face her questioningly having heard her follow.

Unsure of what to do, or what she’d meant to do once she reached him, she halted her progress abruptly feeling foolish. Eyes scanning the room trying to figure out an explanation for her behavior, her gaze strayed to his groin, eyes bulging at the sight of him before they snapped back up to his face. Arya gulped. She had seen her brothers on many occasions as a child but never a man, and he was certainly grown.

She flushed red and struggled to figure out what to say. Eventually she found her words. “What makes you believe you could force yourself onto me?” She challenged ridiculously, drawing herself up to her full height.

He was huge, he could easily have his way with her. She was practically defenseless without any weapons. That’s not to say she wouldn’t put up a fight if necessary even though she was naked as her nameday.

He seemed to agree with the fact that her question was a bit absurd. He lifted an eyebrow bemused, holding back sardonic laughter. “You truly want me to answer that milady?” He asked letting an
incredulous little chuckle escape as he did.

She scowled at him and clenched her fists at her side. “Stop calling me m’lady, and don’t laugh at me!”

Whatever humor he’d felt died out and he exhaled heavily, sighing upon seeing her irritation. “I’m sorry milad—Arya.” He ran a hand over his face frustrated. “I wasn’t laughing at you.” He tried.

“Don’t be stupid.” She scowled at him. “Of course you were.”

He grit his teeth clearly exasperated and at a loss. “Okay, mayhaps I was.” He admitted in irritation. “Its just, you’re a slight thing. What would you have me do?”

She grimaced at his description of her and licked her lips looking around. She really wasn't sure what she would have him do, or what he was supposed to do even. She was a maid! He ought to know how this was supposed to go.

The extent of her knowledge regarding what was supposed to happen was the disgusting bits she’d overheard from Theon and Robb, as well as what little her mother had decided to disclose less she decide it sounded appealing and disgrace herself. The way Robb and Theon had discussed the squirting and ejaculating made it seem like one huge, humiliatingly horrible mess of nauseating bodily fluids complete with awful squishing noises, smacking, and awkward positions. Coupled with her mother’s description of a man ‘sheathing his sword inside of a woman to draw her maidens blood’, that was enough to shock her vivid imagination into believing it would be as painful as being stabbed with a blade and as gruesome and messy as viewing her mother giving birth to Rickon. Of course the added tidbit that should anyone try to ‘grope or penetrate her inappropriately’, she was to tell her father and he’d have them publicly flogged only added to the confusion. Why anyone would attempt such an act considering how repulsive and painful it all sounded, only to risk the wrath of another's family, was beyond her. It certainly didn’t sound like it would bring pleasure regardless of what everyone was always going on about. She didn’t care if people thought she would take to it eagerly, she would happily stick to riding and fighting.

Besides, what classified as an appropriate type of penetration? Is that what she should have Gendry do?

“I would have you do your duty.” She finally told him. It seemed simple enough.

His brow furrowed momentarily, uncertain if that’s what she really desired, but then he took a step towards her intending to do as she asked. He stopped, however, when she took a step away from
him swallowing thickly, eyes wide and anxious.

Gendry ran a hand through his hair aggravated at her apparent uncertainty and the guilt he felt because of it. “You don’t want this.” He told her brushing past her and climbing into the opposite side of the bed. He lay down facing away from her.

She bristled at his action and the assumption of his words, and climbed into the other side, making certain the maidenscloak didn’t flutter open even though he wasn’t looking at her. “You don’t know what I want.” She flared, lifting her chin impudently. “Besides, I was told I’d probably be good at it.”

At that he rolled over to face her, looking at her skeptically although appearing slightly entertained. “Is that so?” He asked disparagingly amused.

It was clear he didn’t believe her and that renewed her anger. “That is so!” She snapped. “Theon told me that I was talented on horseback so I should be good at riding men.” She stated matter-of-factly.

Gendry snorted and really did have to hold back his mirth. He looked to her with laughing eyes. “Do you even realize what you’ve just said?”

She glowered at him. “Of course I do idiot.” She lied.

He looked at her sideways, clearly not believing her. Patronizing silence dominated for a moment and she couldn’t take it.

She didn’t understand why this was so difficult. From what she’d been led to believe men usually didn’t give their new wives much of a chance to protest. Yet, here he was letting her stew in apprehension.

“Am I not to you’re liking? Do you not wish to take my maidenhead?” She questioned curiously. She came out with it brazenly, but the idea that he didn’t want her brought strange and unwelcome pangs to her stomach.

His eyes widened and he sat up. “No.” He said quickly. “No, that’s not it at all. I—I just don’t want you do anything you don’t wish to.” He offered quickly. “I don’t want to hurt you.” He explained.
She looked at him as if he were daft. “Don’t be stupid. You won’t hurt me.” She told him. “I’m not breakable you know.”

At her words he smiled wistfully and chuckled. She found she quite liked the look of him that way. “You spoke those exact words to me five years past.” He reminded her, regarding her with glittering blue eyes.

She bit her cheek and furrowed her brow. “You don’t believe them then?”

He shook his head. “I do believe them.” He told her. “You may be a little Lady, but you’re quite tough.” He chortled at her.

She should’ve appreciated the favorable expression of his opinion but she found she could only fidget under the intensity of his soft gaze. It felt as if her skin were ablaze underneath the cloak. She scooted a bit closer to him before settling back on her knees. “Then why not just do it? I won’t try to stop you.” She told him quickly, tilting her head and trying to figure him out.

He grimaced and looked to be trying to find words while waging an inner battle. It was then that she realized he was akin to her brother Jon. He was a bastard and didn’t think himself good enough, he didn’t see himself as a Highborn. He didn’t think he had a right to her even though he’d been legitimized and they were now married.

She now knew he wasn’t going to do anything and that she’d have to. Rolling her eyes and trying to relieve herself of her nerves, Arya surprised him by moving to straddle his legs. Once there she paused, feeling her pulse begin to quicken. Licking her lips and building up courage she pushed the cloak off her shoulders.

She sat there, bare breasts on a level with his face, breathing heavily not really sure where to go from there. Searching his face for anything, she only saw him staring stunned. “Go on.” She urged him, feeling silly just kneeling there over him.

His eyes ravenously scanned her body breath held, but after a moment he sat up and met her gaze, pulling the combs from her hair and letting it fall around her face before bringing a hand to her neck and cautiously tugging her closer to press his lips against hers. He was afraid she’d pull away leaving him feeling guilty, like an unwelcome aggressor. She didn’t.
Much like their previous kiss, Arya was intrigued by the pressure and feel of him and moved in tandem with his lips, wondering how this could possibly feel as wonderful as it did. When his tongue ran across her bottom lip she pulled back in astonishment bringing her fingers to her lips and feeling a shudder run through her body.

“What was that?” She asked him wide eyed.

His eyes scanned hers momentarily unsure of what she meant. “My tongue?” He finally answered brows furrowed, hoping that’s what she was referring to.

She had figured as much, what she couldn’t figure out was why she enjoyed it so thoroughly and where the sensational jolt had come from. Hastily she decided she didn’t care. “Do that again.” She ordered before she eagerly crashed her lips back down on his mouth and wrapped her hands around his neck, pressing herself up against him and feeling a needy heat rise deep within her begging for contact.

Gendry, surprised at first by her enthusiasm, moved one of the hands from either side of her face to between her shoulder blades, holding her close and assisting to press her up against him further. He relished the feel of her supple skin against his. As soon as he slipped his tongue past her lips, she moaned against him and melted in his arms.

Allowing his tongue to explore the sweet taste of her mouth, Gendry let himself fall onto his back then rolled her over onto hers never breaking their kiss. Ayra was a bit startled by the change of positions but was too enthralled with the magnificent feel of his lips to care. Suddenly Sansa’s incessant prattling didn’t seem all that much like nonsense. This was nice, exhilarating even. She was even surprised to find that she didn’t mind him hovering over her like he had bested her in some type of wrestling match. Instead of trying to move to the dominating position she simply arched her back thrusting her body up to keep in contact with his.

Gendry was happily amazed by the eagerness with which she responded to his touch and didn’t know which of the Seven he should be sending his praise to. Then again he should probably be thanking the Old Gods of the North because she was like no southern Lady he’d come across. Her claim in that regard was true.

She was impetuous and audacious and wild, just like her wolf and just like her homeland. He couldn’t imagine her ever being anything but, and found he didn’t want to. If nothing else, her brazen approach to even the unfamiliar often provided cause for amusement and endeared her to him further.
She pulled away from their kiss abruptly, this time looking slightly alarmed. She squirmed underneath him trying to gain room while clenching her legs together. “Something’s wrong.” She told him.

He had to bite back a groan as he felt his cock twitch due to the friction of her fidgeting. She must’ve felt it too because she went still and then looked down between their bodies.

She furrowed her brows further and looked at him confused. “It’s growing bigger.” She stated clearly intrigued and seemingly having forgotten about her worry in the face of this new development. “Is that supposed to happen?” She questioned shamelessly. She didn’t appear afraid, just curious as she looked for explanation for the strange phenomenon.

He grimaced slightly at her ignorance feeling uncomfortably hard now and a bit idiotic as she stared. “It is.” He told her she continued to marvel at his prick. He was surprised it didn’t wilt under her scrutiny.

She looked up after a moment to meet his eyes. “Can I touch it?” There was no awkwardness in her tone, just interest and a bit of a hopeful gleam.

He swallowed but nodded his head, watching as she reached her hand down gingerly and wrapped her slim fingers around his girth. He felt a rush of blood to his groin on contact and grunted slightly, holding his breath before exhaling deeply. He struggled not to pant as all the muscles in his body tensed and she tested his weight in her grip. The unexpectedness of the movement caused him to involuntarily jerk his hips into her hand and grit his teeth in aggravated embarrassment. She didn’t seem to mind though, she was too captivated with his cock care.

“The skin! It’s loose! It feels like satin” She exclaimed, informing him of her findings as if he didn’t know the feel of his own prick. Her fingers darted from his head to stem covetously and he bit his lip at the feel. “It’s hard too, and long.” She paused with her hand still gripping him and looked back to his eyes appearing thoughtful. “Is that what they mean when they say you’re hung like a bull?”

“What?” He sputtered hoarsely in astonishment. His voice was much more of a croak than he would’ve liked to admit as he stammered out his question. Hung like a bull? He knew people called him the bull because of the helmet he’d made, but did they actually say that about him as well?

She frowned at him removing her grip on his cock thinking maybe she shouldn’t have said anything. “What? That’s not a bad thing is it?” She asked of him.
He licked his lips wishing her hand would return to him and shook his head. “No its not. It means…never mind.” He said brushing it off. Now that he was fully erect he desperately wanted more contact and didn’t want to explain, or have her considering his anatomy awkwardly for that matter. “Did you say something was wrong?” He asked.

“Yes.” She told him suddenly remembering. She squirmed again propping herself up on her elbows and reaching down. Spreading her legs a bit, she ran a hand over herself and brought it back up between them to observe the sticky substance on her fingers. She examined it for a moment. “It’s not my moon-blood. That ended weeks ago.” She told him before meeting his eyes.

He bit his cheek to keep from laughing. “That’s meant to happen as well.” He tried explaining.

She searched his eyes, her own narrowed slightly, trying to figure out if he was just saying that.

He considered her intently, brows furrowed. “Have you never touched yourself before?” He asked scrutinizing her features disbelievingly. He knew most men could hardly go a day without stroking themselves until release, he among them, and he’d heard women speaking of delving fingers into themselves for relief as well. He couldn’t imagine that everyone didn’t do it.

She shook her head no then spoke seeing his surprise. “Should I have?” She asked intrigued.

He blinked at her words then shrugged. “I suppose not. Men do and it’s said to feel good for women as well. Of course its better when another person does it for you.”

She stared at him blankly for a moment then a demanding expression came over her features. “Show me.” She insisted of him, grabbing his hand boldly and guiding it down her belly as if she didn’t think he’d do it himself.

He paused for a moment hovering over her belly button, but hesitation was short lived. He didn’t need any more encouragement than the feel of his throbbing cock and the inviting look of her creamy white skin. He trailed his hand slowly down to the bottom of her abdomen, feeling her stomach shy away from him as she inhaled sharply, wondering at the magnificence of the foreign sensation of another’s touch.

His fingers moved delicately through the soft dark curls of the hair decorating her mound and he saw her gulp before he ran a hand over her opening. She fists the linens and squeezed her eyelids.
shut as he rolled her shiny pink lips between his thumb and forefinger, appreciating the wetness he felt and the delightful little gasps she tried to hold back by biting her lip.

When his thumb finally came back up to gently circle her clit as experiment, her hips jerked off the linens and she cried out loudly, one of her hands flying down to lie on top of his, gripping him tightly.

He thought she meant to push him away. “Should I stop?” He asked hastily.

She writhed against him and gave him a contemptuous look. “Don’t be stupid.”

He struggled to hold back a smile at her choice of words and only chuckled a bit before picking up where he’d left of, stroking her gently now rather than just skirting around her nub. He watched as her eyes darted all over the ceiling, not really sure about what she was feeling.

She couldn’t decide if it was pure ecstasy or some obscene agony, but she wasn't indecisive about the fact that she didn’t want it to stop. She felt the muscles at the base of her abdomen flutter in pleasure and the building of something in her core that she couldn’t quite comprehend. She didn’t know what would happen when that feeling came to be too much, but she knew by instinct it would be something significant. The instinct alone was enough to make her anxious, and the perception of some unbelievable, euphoric frustration instigating pleasure caused her to question if she was going mad. She grit her teeth in aggravation but couldn’t help but thrust herself against him, using her hand to push his against her further.

The fact that Gendry could feel her appeal for more as her hand scraped up and down his substantial forearm, urging him on in his rhythms, was enough permission for him to move his mouth to circle her nipple with his tongue. He and every other man at the wedding feast had probably wanted to do as much after she rendered them all speechless, proving her still budding figure did have curves.

Just eyeing her while she was clothed, one wouldn’t really think there was much underneath. She was a tall skinny little rail of a thing, or at least that’s what he’d come to believe. After she’d cut herself out of her skirts, he was surprised to find they hid long attractive legs which led up to shapely hips and an ass with curves that would make any mans blood boil. She was quite the active one, so maybe her lithe, elegant body should’ve been expected, but the size of her breasts had been a shock to practically all the men present in the hall.

He’d heard of women binding themselves to their chest to prevent their tits from hindering movement, but only among those who worked fields or the rare woman soldier, certainly not
proper Highborn Ladies. He still remembered the way Arya’s surprisingly sizable, pert breasts had bounced proudly when she cut away the fabric, her small rosy nipples springing erect once exposed to the breeze that swept through the hall.

He appreciated them even more now that he had his head buried between them and she was shoving them up in his face as she moaned, appreciating his efforts. He devotedly bit and sucked at them with his mouth and massaged and plucked with his hand, welcoming the mesmerizing melody of her keens. They were the perfect small handful for his large callused palms, and as he explored them he felt a new wave of wetness from between her thighs, beckoning the fingers he had still diligently working her clit lower to her opening.

The moment Arya felt his fingers let up on the pressure and leave her completely she growled angrily. She almost felt obliged to act out on her anger after hearing him laugh slightly hearing her protestation, but then she felt him move from his position lying next to her, down the length of her body. She felt all her muscles stiffen, entirely uncertain of what he was going to do and unsure if she should let him, but she didn’t have time to object and she was happy she didn’t.

When his mouth came down in place of his fingers, sucking magnificently, tongue flicking just so, her eyes bulged out of her head and she clawed the linens of the bed with one hand. Her other hand flew to clutch at his ebony curls as her hips rose in the air. She was vaguely aware of her strangled cry of “Gendry”, before he chortled into her sex. She nearly forgot her own name in the feel of the vibrations.

Something within her center was throbbing desperately, and while his mouth was remarkable, the addition of his fingers probing her entrance made the whole symphony of sensations excruciatingly glorious. He circled her opening with his middle finger teasingly as one of his hands snaked its way up her belly to toy with her breasts. His mouth worked in concert flicking and circling and nursing on her clit, his fingers finally plunging into her impossibly tight cunt, slowly setting a smooth easy rhythm.

Arya didn’t know what to do with herself. She couldn’t imagine anything more exhilarating than riding or fighting, but this was incredible, something else entirely, something more exquisite. The whole conflagration of movement fostered feelings of pleasure similar to those of her favorite distractions, though more intense if not frighteningly maddening. She wanted to move, to sweat. She wanted to feel the ache of her muscles alongside this new arousing ache he was cultivating between her thighs. She bit her lip, ignoring the keens coming out of her mouth, completely at a loss of what to do and squirming because of it, though careful not to lose the feel of his fingers.

The deliberate slow pace Gendry worked into her seemed like it wasn't quenching her need sufficiently. Soon enough she was driving herself further onto his fingers and shoving her clit into his face expectantly. Her groans were reaching a higher frequency the faster and further he plunged into her wet opening, and she was clearly close to orgasm though he wasn't sure she knew exactly
what was happening. She was almost thrashing now, unable to cope with the sensation as she reached a fever pitch. He was struggling, although determined, to keep his mouth latched onto her clit and his fingers pumping in and out, her walls convulsing around his digits. He brought his spare hand up and used his considerable strength to keep her hips pressed to the linens, but she overcame even that as her body tensed in climax.

She was incapable of noise entirely as her eyes widened in final ecstasy, breath caught in her throat as she ultimately reached release. It wasn’t until her hips collapsed back onto the linens having been lifted in the air as she arched her back impossibly high, that she finally found her voice. “Seven Hells!” She breathed closing her eyes briefly.

Gendry moved to his knees while wiping the taste of her from his cheeks. He intended to move to lay next to her but he fell back onto his rump after deciding that his view of her as she lay there in the last thralls of her orgasm was much too exquisite to pass up.

Her wild hair was even more unruly as it cascaded away from her head in a dark halo framing her long, blissfully satisfied face. She had one hand thrown above her head and the other resting carelessly on her stomach below her lovely breasts. She was beautiful, gorgeous even, and when his eyes moved back up to her face he was immediately drawn to her gaze.

She was smiling at him serenely now, still intoxicated with pleasure. Where her eyes were typically a vibrant clear steel, they were now the tempestuous grey of a summer storm, promising relentless winds and pounding rains, but also life for the lands they swept across in their passion. In her stare he neglected to see himself as a bastard, he was a man reveling in the fervency he’d cultivate in such an astonishing creature. He felt powerful here with her.

He returned her smile with a heady one of his own, smirking almost. “Did you enjoy that milady?” He asked impishly, feeling entitled to use the formality she found irritating after bringing her to climax. He clearly knew the answer to his own question.

For some reason the formality didn’t annoy her this time. She found that the way he said it caused that same throbbing to begin again within her abdomen. She rolled her eyes and swiftly crawled towards him. “What do you think?” Then her expression morphed to one of incomprehension. “Your fingers didn’t hurt.” It was as if she suspected they should’ve. She cocked her head to the side sitting down next to him. “Did you take my maidenhead?” She asked him curiously, grabbing his sizeable hands audaciously and inspecting for blood. When she found no trace of crimson she looked to him questioningly.

“I’m afraid fingers won’t do it.” He informed her carefully, still entertained by her unabashed flagrancy and holding back chuckles. She was utterly unaffected by the embarrassment that generally accompanied the impropriety of talking about such deeds. Gendry himself still found he
squirmed when speaking crudely, but here she was entirely crass bordering on shameless and still a maid.

She frowned a bit at his words then shrugged. “Well go on then, Lord Baratheon.” She urged him now with a little nudge, rolling her eyes at his new title and happy to see him grimace. “Now that I see what everyone is always going on about I think I might overlook the pain.”

He was still resistant and apprehensive about hurting her, and she seemed to read it in his expression. She drew closer though hesitantly. Settling herself on her knees next to him, she captured his lips in a chaste kiss before pulling away. She blinked a bit and looked at him peculiarly, rolling the flavor around in her mouth. “Is that me I’m tasting?” She asked curiously.

He nodded thinking that she wasn’t going to want to kiss him after his response, but she just blinked then pressed her mouth back against his. He was surprised momentarily but should’ve expected as much. He responded just as eagerly as she did, matching her desire with his own. He brushed his lips against hers fiercely, answering her aggression by nibbling on her lip and drawing her into his side a bit roughly as she ran hands through his shadowy locks and across his broad chest.

Soon enough he needed her even closer. She didn’t flinch at all when he grasped her with two hands on either side of her hips, picking her slight body up easily and bringing her to straddle him once again. She didn’t break her contact with his lips until she pressed herself up against him in such a manner that his erect cock probed her entrance.

She pulled away eyes wide searching his face, apprehension still present but masked now by want. Seeing Gendry’s eyes roll back in his head at the feel of him so close to inside of her, Arya couldn’t help but be curious what his reaction would be once he actually was. Without a second thought she sank herself further onto him and was delighted to see his eyes fly open as he watched her in shock and struggled to control himself, growling in need as she brought him inside her warmth.

Arya had to bite her lip feeling the resistance of her body to his girth. He was thick and long, and the way he parted her, her walls tensely giving way around him, made her eyes water a bit.

She never remembered holding her breath, but as his progress into her stopped, and she felt a prickly pressure causing her to squeeze her eyes shut as he came into contact with something that eventually burst painfully, she found herself gasping and panting. The strength of her muscles gave way leaving her to fall the rest of the way onto him until he was fully sheathed inside of her.

They sat there fully immersed in one another. Arya with her arms thrown about his neck breathless
and clutching him to her as the pain ebbed only to be replaced by something else, and Gendry breathing thickly into her collar trying his damnedest to stop himself from moving until she was ready to do so herself.

As soon as her breath slowed she pulled away from him meeting his eyes, gazing at him in amazement but a bit unsure what to do now. Still, she figured it out on her own by testing to see if the sting truly was gone. He groaned into her skin as she wiggled her hips slightly, moving in small circles to check. She sighed at the feeling and seemed curious about how other movements would feel.

Gendry threw his head back and exhaled loudly as she used her knees to sit up, drawing him out of her snug warmth. It wasn't until she fell back onto him rather more abruptly and with more force than he anticipated that he finally gave voice to his ecstasy.

“Fuck.” He stammered loudly, his eyes bulging and rolling back in his head as she too cried out blissfully. She paused, savoring the feeling the jolt had given her, and looked to him to find an agonized expression twisting his features as he tried to hold himself back from surprised release.

“Did I hurt you?” She asked seeming uncertain, concerned she might’ve done some harm as unlikely as it seemed.

He let out a brusque little laugh and shook his head adamantly. “No.” He told her smirking briefly. “Quite the opposite actually.”

She grinned along with him. “Good.” She told him with a nod. “I really want to do that again.”

Gendry felt himself gulp, unsure how long he could take her exploration until he gave in and began thrusting into her without heed. Regardless, he was resolved to let her do as she pleased. Hell, if she kept up with the movements she claimed to enjoy he might not be left to exert himself at all.

She didn’t hesitate to start once more, this time with new confidence though she watched his face carefully to see if she did anything wrong. She began slowly, rising up off his cock languidly, feeling herself convulse around him involuntarily as if her cunt was trying to lure him back in. She withdrew from him languorously up until the point she couldn’t take the absence any longer and had to drive herself back onto his prick, happy to feel full once again.

Her pace steadily grew faster and faster, and where she had been using his shoulders to assist in her
movements, after he laid back onto the sheets to watch her work, it was the strength of his arms and his grip on her hips as he came up to meet her with his own that now aided in keeping the pace.

Gendry had an exceptionally difficult time trying to keep his eyes on one thing. He also couldn’t help but think that she was right, she was good at this. Her head was thrown back in breathtaking euphoria, her eyes closed as she rode him. A sheen of sweat highlighted her body beautifully as her breasts bounced delightfully in rhythm with her glorious movements, indulging him with an unanticipated spectacular bliss. He grit his teeth craning his neck so he could view himself disappearing into her, gobbled up by her tight virginal cunt. She was a vision as she rode him, giving the both of them satisfaction, there was just too much to see.

She kept up her efforts for an impossibly long time as her muscles began to ache, but even then she couldn’t give up the pleasure. She continued, only now falling forward and resting hands on his chest for support as her hips continued to bob deliciously up and down over him.

Gendry grunted as she fell forward onto him, hands propping herself up using his pectorals. He was surprised that she hadn’t fallen on him in complete exhaustion considering the fervor with which she was fucking his exultant cock. Now that she had a means to support herself, he removed one hand from her hips and ran a knuckle over her clit.

Arya reveled in the burn of her muscles and the sweat dripping from her pours as she speared herself over and over again savoring this new addictive gratification. Impaling herself again and again she felt the build of that fantastic throbbing that promised an ecstatic release like nothing else she’d experienced in the world. When she felt one of his hands leave her hip she didn’t think anything of it until he brushed over her nub and she lurched forward. It took her a moment to find her rhythm again but she did with a renewed vigor, mewling reflexively as his pressure drove her mad.

Her movements became frantic as she neared the edge, her thrusting erratic and losing pace. With practiced ease he remedied the situation and flipped her onto her back, picking right back up with the pace, propelling his cock into her just as feverishly. She met his hips with her own eagerly, one leg wrapped about him, heel digging into his back, and the other bent at the knee, foot flat against the linens for leverage.

Her attempts to meet him thrust for thrust eventually caused them to move slowly up the bed as she pushed up off it. Eventually her head was pressed up against the carved wood headboard, her neck craned at an odd angle. She didn’t complain, and seemed as if she had no inclination to stop. Still, it looked uncomfortable and he had no desire to cause her pain. He grabbed two handfuls of her brilliantly enviable ass, keeping himself sheathed inside of her all the while, and lifted her effortlessly up off the sheets, pressing her back against the headboard and pinning her there with his body as she instinctively wrapped both her slim legs around his waist to hold herself up.
They both seemed to be of the same mind because she lifted her arms back over her head and grasped the headboard for leverage just as he did the same, moving one leg from kneeling so that he was flatfooted and could supplement his thrusting with more force. She rode him marvelously as he skewered her again and again coarsely, both of them grunting and moaning loudly in ecstasy as their bits collided over and over with obscene, wet sounding smacks.

She was right on the verge and so was he. They both renewed their passion, frenetically anticipating release. As her cunt began to spasm deliciously, she buried her face in his neck, throwing her arms around him as he felt himself come as well, her walls milking the seed from within him. He held her to him relishing the feel of her compulsory convulsions before he fell back on his rear still clutching her to him, their sweat and juices melding as they panted from exertion still intertwined.

She pulled away after a moment just to gaze into his eyes, scrutinizing his face with an amazed, euphoric expression as he did the same, brushing a stray strand of her wild dark hard behind her ear tenderly.

He placed a kiss on her forehead before resting his own against hers. Gods he wanted another go. The knowledge that she’d be sore in the morning from their union made him hold himself back. “Best you get some rest milady.” He told her still breathing hard.

She furrowed her brows slightly but shook her head. She wasn't nearly done now that she’d started. “More.” Was all she said before she crushed her mouth to his passionately and they began anew.

They lay together twice more that night, bringing each other to magnificent climax before finally collapsing in exhaustion, limbs intertwined atop the sheets as they fell asleep side-by-side. When the suns rays finally entered through the windows the next morning and they began to stir, it was to find servants fussing about in their chambers.

They didn’t share many words while dressing themselves for the day, feeling slightly ill at ease in the presence of others and each other. When he was fully clothed he turned to her, mouth opening and closing uncertainly. He scratched the back of his neck embarrassedly, looking as if he wanted to say something, but then thought better of it and departed without a word, head hung low, leaving her to stare after him strangely.

Arya had no idea where he disappeared to that day nor did she really concern herself with it. She was to meet her family that morning to break fast, so she headed to her parents chambers as soon as she was clothed.
Soaaaaa I'm pretty sure this chapter may piss people off, however I am going to remain staunchly unapologetic for it even if some of it may admittedly be a bit OOC in some aspects. Gotta stick to my guns and just hope you enjoy the filth!

Making her way up to her family’s chambers, Arya found herself groaning at the ache she felt all over. She was feeling parts of her body she never even knew existed as sharp, horribly unpleasant sensations tore through her overused limbs and punished muscles. Her legs were sore beyond belief, and every time she coughed or sneezed she found herself hunched over clutching at her abdomen as her insides throbbed painfully.

By the time she finally arrived at her destination she was dragging her feet and cursing Gendry in her head. He did try to warn her what her zealousness would mean for her body come the morning, but she hadn’t believed him. Regardless, she still considered it his fault because he never saw fit to actually stop her, or control his own arousal for that matter. Never mind that she made both tasks particularly impossible for him.

Arya must’ve looked miserable in her pain when she opened the door to her family’s chambers because when they turned to greet her their faces twisted into various expressions of pity at first glance. Well everyone except Theon of course, as he just smirked like the prat he was, and young Rickon, who was too busy flinging his eggs at Bran to bother with the appearance of another person.

Arya looked up and halted her progress into the room, blinking in confusion at their reception of her. Their collective thoughts were made clear to her as her mother let out a strangled exclamation and hurried over.

“Arya!” She called out remorsefully, quickly moving to embrace her youngest daughter. She grasped either of her cheeks and searched her eyes. “Was he not gentle? Did you resist him?” Catelyn asked in quick succession as her family listened intently behind her.

Arya flushed slightly in embarrassment but it was quickly overwhelmed by a surge of anger. She slapped her mother’s hands away glowering. “What does it matter?” She snapped tetchily. What right did any of her family have to act concerned and ask such questions after they’d put her in this situation?
None of it was Gendry’s fault, so she didn’t know why her mother thought to blame him. He had in fact been gentle at first, at least gentler than Arya had been to herself, but then she had asked him for more and he had undoubtedly, and marvelously, acquiesced. Still, regardless of whether it had been magnificent, they were both just doing their duties, nothing more. Neither of them had wanted this marriage. If this whole debacle was anyone’s fault it was their families’, and they had yet to provide a reason for it. So really, what did her mother care if she was hurt? She wasn’t letting her get away thinking she wasn’t culpable for her condition.

Arya narrowed her eyes at her mother fuming. “You certainly didn’t seem concerned about how he’d treat me when you saw fit to give me away!” She continued to seethe. “It’s not as if you didn’t know what was going to happen!”

Her mother took a step back from her, eyes hurt and glossing slightly. “I didn’t want this for you.” She murmured breathlessly into the silent room.

She met her mother’s gaze, a defiant frown gracing her features. Arya’s hard steel eyes flashed angrily, focused on deep blue ones. “Neither did I.” She stated pitilessly.

She heard a seat scrape back and then a solemn voice. “That’s enough.” Her father told her gruffly.

Arya glanced at her father’s rigid expression then sullenly shoved past her mother, intentionally letting their shoulders meet and putting her strength behind it. She felt a slight bit of satisfaction as her Lady mother was forced to take a step back, but all that was erased as she plopped down into her seat rather roughly and yelped as a jolt of pain darted up through her middle on contact. She blushed crimson and grit her teeth, squirming and trying to find a comfortable position. She never did, and when she looked up to the table it was to find her father grimacing uncomfortably and working his jaw while everyone else shot her consolatory looks clearly having deduced the reason for her hurt. She scowled at their sympathy and dumped some eggs onto her plate, childishly spearing them with her fork before bringing them to her mouth. She despised that they were all looking at her as fragile.

Her father seemed to be having the most trouble coming to terms with the condition in which he found his youngest daughter. He was standing hunched over and battling his own guilt, eyes alternating between leashed outrage and forced acceptance as he worked his jaw. He was just about to retake his seat when Septa Mordane came bustling through the door looking as if she had seen the Others.

Pale faced and distraught, the graying woman strode quickly over to Ned who listened intently as she whispered something frantically for his consideration only. Everyone in the room strained to catch the words of the familiar intruder as she disrupted their family breakfast, but their efforts were fruitless. Nevertheless, watching Ned’s recently restored stoic disposition crumble into an
expression of anguished, shocked grief, they gleaned enough. Something was well and truly wrong.

Ned looked to his wife. “Come Catelyn.” He rumbled a bit hoarsely. She wasted no time in getting to her feet and rushing to her husband’s side, questioning worriedly what was wrong. Her father however was still busy giving the Septa direction. “Find Jon and tell him to come here at once and tell our men to take up watch outside these chambers. Send word to Winterfell as soon as you can.” With that he was towing his wife behind him and leaving his children to protest in his wake. He turned back only briefly. “Robb, keep your brothers and sisters here and all but Stark bannermen from this room. Have Bran stay with Rickon in his chambers to keep him calm while your mother is away.” With no offer of explanation besides their father’s direction, all of the Stark children were left to stare at the door wondering whether or not they should be afraid.

Robb moved to usher Bran and Rickon away, but Bran had already moved to do so himself realizing gravity of the situation. Once the youngest Stark boys were safely tucked within their rooms, silence dominated until they heard someone at the door, and even then their noise wasn’t words, it was a collective in take of breaths. Robb and Theon marched forward unsheathing swords halfway until they all sighed in relief finding it was only Jon.

“What’s happened?” He asked looking just as confused as they all were.

Robb eased his sword back into its scabbard and shook his head grimly. “I hoped you could tell us.” He grimaced.

Just then Jon laid eyes on Arya and he closed the distance between them, drawing her into his arms. He’d only had her in his embrace for a moment before he quickly pulled away and held her at arms length inspecting to see if she was all right. “Did he hurt you? Did anyone hurt you?” He asked fretfully, though there was an edge to his voice that promised pain if someone had.

Arya rolled her eyes. “Seven Hells! I’m fine!” She stated stamping her foot for emphasis. She was beginning to come under the impression that they all thought her weak.

All heads whipped to the side hearing a incredulous snort. It was Theon, and apparently he didn’t believe she was fine. In fact, he completely ignored her proclamation and chose to answer Jon’s initial question. “Oh he’s done more than hurt her Snow. He’s made it so she can’t even sit down without writhing in bloody pain.” He chuckled derisively turning to Arya. “I didn’t think the bastard had it in him. I can’t imagine you enjoyed having your maidenhead taken from you so roughly.” He smirked.

Jon took a step towards him, his eyes dark, just as Arya whirled around scowling.
“He didn’t take my maidenhead!” She shouted at him fiercely before she really had time to think about what she was saying.

Everyone froze in silence, forgetting Theon’s harsh words and instead focusing on the significance of hers. They all turned to look at her questioningly, appearing utterly perplexed.

Robb approached her cautiously. “What are you saying Arya? Can the marriage still be questioned?”

Arya huffed in irritation finding she regret her outburst. “Well no.” She began fidgeting.

Theon interrupted her when it was clear she was reluctant to continue. “The marriage is legitimate and yet he hasn’t taken your maidenhead.” He stated flatly, clearly disbelieving the contradictory statement.

She grimaced and looked away. “No he hasn’t.” She told them shrugging. It wasn’t as if she was exactly lying, but now that she’d made her ridiculous claim she wasn’t going to be thought a fool. “Not precisely, anyways.” She clarified scuffing her shoes and feeling a blush bloom in her cheeks. She really didn’t want to explain what she meant to her brothers. Besides that, she knew Theon would give her grief if she did.

She looked to Jon pleading him with her eyes to make everyone drop the subject but he too looked confused and as if he wanted an explanation, though she noticed his eyes still had a dark cast to them. She even chanced a glance at Sansa, thinking she might object to this line of questioning considering the crudeness of such talk, but she just looked thoroughly bewildered.

Robb furrowed his brow. “I don’t understand. What do you mean ‘not precisely’?”

Arya rolled her eyes even though she was feeling highly discomfited by this line of conversation. “I mean.” She began slowly, clearly annoyed, “I took it myself.”

She thought maybe they’d catch on to her meaning, but when everyone just furrowed their brows quizzically and stared at her incredulous, she huffed knowing it wasn’t good enough of an explanation. Her eyes scanned the ground as if the stone would tell her what to say so she didn’t stick her foot in her mouth again. “The stupid bull felt guilty so I did it myself…by, you know…kneeling over him.” She described it as best she could without going into detail.
The eyes of all three of the older boys widened in stunned comprehension while Arya stared at the ground and Sansa looked between them confused. The older Stark girl glowered at being kept out of the loop. “What do you mean kneeling? Weren’t you supposed to be lying together?” Sansa asked, the usual belittling bite back in her tone.

Jon ignored her red headed half-sisters ignorant question and came at Arya with one of his own, the hardness lifting from his eyes. “If you came to him willingly,” He began looking as if he was on the edge of figuring something out. “Why are you sore to the point that you can’t sit comfortably?” He inquired meeting her eyes finally.

Arya quickly moved her gaze to the ground turning scarlet, and realization consequently flooded through Robb, Theon, and Jon upon observation of her abashed behavior. They now grasped that she was at fault for her own pain considering her silent admission to fucking Gendry until she couldn’t walk straight. In reaction to their comprehension Jon stumbled back a step wide eyed and stunned as Robb exclaimed “Seven Hells” running a hand through his locks and Theon sniggered in derisive glee.

Sansa frowned, inappreciative at the being left to guess why they were all so staggered. “What are you all going on about?” She asked peevishly.

Everyone suddenly remembered her presence but only glanced in her direction, it was Theon who finally decided to enlighten her. “We’re going on about the fact that your sister’s apparently an eager little wench.” He laughed mockingly before turning back to Arya. “Tell me Arya, which do you like riding better, your horse or your husband? Or can you even tell the difference?”

Theon was standing on the other side of the chamber and across the table from her, but not even the distance or her sore muscles were enough of a deterrent to stop her from launching herself at him. She leapt onto a nearby chair and vaulted herself over the table, flying through the air and tackling a shocked Theon.

He grunted from the force of the impact, but caught her as he fell to the ground and rolled her over pinning her hands above her head.

“Eager to be on your back, are you?” He sneered from on top of her while she struggled underneath him. He leaned forward and lowered his voice so no one could hear. “Didn’t you say were on your knees? Did you get a taste of his cock as well?”
She wasted no time in maneuvering a knee up into his groin and delighted in seeing his eyes roll back in his head and the feel of his grip on her weaken as he rolled off of her in agony. She wasted no time in essentially reversing their positions and straddling him, knees on either one of his shoulders to pin him there as she began wailing on him, bringing fist after fist to his face.

She could hear the shrieks of Sansa and the yells of Robb, but it wasn't until he picked her up and peeled her off that she stopped her assault, though she yelled at him to put her down so she could continue. Robb eventually did place her back on her feet but then he rounded on her furiously.

“Have you taken leave of your senses!” He bellowed at her.

Arya whirled on him eyes flashing, rage flooding through her thinking on the circumstances that had been forced on her since leaving Winterfell. “Have I taken leave of my senses?” She questioned him belligerently. “Ask yourself that Robb! You’re the one who took leave of your sense last night!” Her expression twisted painfully as all her suppressed feelings bubbled to the surface. “How could you just leave me at their mercy? Both of you!” She spun to include Jon. “Were you so concerned with the knife I had at Theon’s neck that you couldn’t see how scared I was! Or did you just not care?” She yelled at them, happy to see both of them flinch at her words. “Seven Hells! Why didn’t you just pick me up and carry me yourselves? Or punch Theon in the face for that matter? He wasn’t the one who needed you!” She pushed Robb as hard as she could in frustration. “I needed you. Was I supposed to fight my way through a hall full of drunken men as they tore off my clothes and mother screamed at me to stop?” She pushed Jon now. “How could you leave me no choice but to let them strip me bare, to stand their naked for all eyes to see! You were going to let them grope me either way, so the only thing I could think to do was not give them to have the satisfaction of disrobing me as well!” She explained incensed. “At least Gendry gave me his cloak! That’s more than I can say for my own brothers! My own blood!” She fumed finding that her eyes were much more watery than she would have liked. “When did you stop caring about me?” She shouted at them losing her last bits of composure. “When did you all stop caring about me?”

“Arya—“ Jon tried softly taking a step towards her.

She shook her head. “No Jon!” She looked around the room at all of her siblings finding them all looking at her apologetically. She couldn’t take it. “Did I do something wrong?” She desperately wished she had, at least then maybe she could understand it. “Have you ever known me to take exception to being treated like that? Did I do something that would give you cause to stand by and condone such treatment? To see me so belittled and not come to my aid?”

Jon took another step towards her, looking pained and beseeching her to understand with his remorseful eyes. “I desperately wanted to put a stop to it Arya, you must believe that. Lady Stark only let me come on the promise I wouldn’t make myself noticed.”
Arya scowled at him though she did admit that sounded like her mother. She let him know with her eyes that she thought his was a shit excuse as she turned to Robb. “Do you have a justification as well?” She spat acerbically.

Robb grit his teeth and looked to the ground. He was waging an inner battle and appeared a bit ashamed at himself. Still, eventually he steadied his jaw resolving himself. When he met her eye he looked every bit the unrelenting Lord he’d eventually have to become. “It is tradition Ayra.” He asserted gently though it didn’t seem like he particularly liked what he was saying. “We aren’t above it, and we can’t be thought contemptuous of it. You held a blade to Theon’s throat, I didn’t want there to be any more cause for incident less someone take offense.” He tried explaining before softening. “Our idleness doesn’t mean we love you any less. You are still our sister, Arya. You are still a Stark.” He told her hoping to bring her comfort. It didn’t work.

Arya laughed bitterly and felt the tears finally fall. “I would gladly die for you and you’re worried about drawing offense and causing bloody incident! Damn your tradition Robb and damn it if the Southroners aren’t contemptuous of us already!” She seethed sadly before turning on her heel and heading for the door. She turned back with one foot in the corridor, “And you’re wrong about another thing.” She told him waspishly. “My surname is now Baratheon, not Stark.” She spat, still disgusted with the fact and glaring through angry tears at the heart wrenching expressions of her siblings. It gave her little comfort to know she wasn’t the only one with a dismayed awareness of her new name. She’d been struggling to come to terms with it since her father wrapped the maidenscloak around her shoulders. Now so were they.

No one tried to stop her as she left, although she did hear Sansa calling for her weakly in what wasn’t a disparaging tone for once. It was all too much. She was glad no one came after her to see her tears and counted it a good thing considering the fact that she would’ve fought them tooth and nail had they tried to force her to stay.

She marched angrily straight past her father’s men who seemed at a loss of what to do although one did end up tailing her. She went straight to her rooms and withdrew Needle from her belongings and began slicing at everything in sight.

It wasn’t until hours later when Gendry returned to find her sitting atop their bed in a pile of feathers, hay, and torn linens that she was no longer alone. He was covered in sweat and soot and appeared tired, however he took one look at her and halted his progress into the room a bit startled, everything was torn apart. She abashedly turned her gaze away, embarrassed at what she had done in her wrath and that he had to see it. He on the other hand didn’t much care except that it was clear to him something was wrong.

Gendry turned back for the door. “I’ll find your brother Jon.” He told her thinking that was who
she would wish to speak to.

Suddenly Arya was off the bed. “No!” She cried bounding to the floor and diving into the door, driving it closed just as he had been about to open it. “I don’t want to see Jon.” She grumbled crossly at the thought of her brother. She especially didn’t want any of her family to see what she had done to their rooms.

He looked at her puzzled. “Why not? I thought you and Jon were close?”

Arya grimaced not really wanting to explain what had transpired and searched for something to say. She glanced up at him imploringly, a hopeful gleam in her eye as she tried to change the subject. “Let’s go somewhere.” She suggested. “Let’s leave the city for the day.” She wasn’t too keen on spending so much time with him, she knew nothing about him, but she really could use a stint away from the Red Keep and she didn’t want to be alone. Besides the fact that she’d only been there two days, she’d already come to abhor the stink of so many hot bodies confined to such a small area and he’d surely be more familiar with the these lands than she was.

Gendry looked bewildered. “Where would you have us go?” He had no idea where this all was coming from or what had brought it on.

Arya shook her head then shrugged. “The Kingswood? We don’t have to tell anyone.” She pleaded. “We can return tomorrow.”

He looked at her sideways. “Arya I don’t think it wise to leave the city over night. Wouldn’t your family worry?”

She looked away and scowled at the mention of her kin. “It’s not as if they care what happens to me.” Then she looked at him, her grey eyes mercurial. “You’re my family now are you not?” She nodded as if to say that was that.

His eyes softened at her statement but he couldn’t help but sigh. She had clearly had a disagreement with her loved ones, and while he didn’t feel it was his place to interfere, he couldn’t help but want to. He’d never had a true family considering it was only when his mother had been on her deathbed that she saw fit to tell him he was the King’s Bastard. She told him she’d written to Jon Arryn, her uncle, and appealed to him to take care of the son she was leaving behind. He’d never known his mother came from a hightborn family until he was nearly ten and two, and even after he was taken in by the King and the Hand he had only ever felt like a burden. The Queen’s callous attitude certainly hadn’t helped. Arya didn’t understand how lucky she was to have a family that was so clearly devoted to one another.
“I am.” He agreed with her statement finding he liked the thought. Then something else occurred to him. “We may now use the name Baratheon, but it’s new to us both. Don’t fool yourself into thinking you won’t always be a Stark. I will certainly always be the Water’s Bastard.” There was no way anyone would ever look at him as anything but. He’d come to terms with it long ago. “Your family loves you Arya, their only wish is for your happiness.” He told her gently.

She pouted petulantly and looked away blinking. “Then why did they see fit to give me away?”

She questioned her voice wavering.

Gendry grimaced but shook his head. “I don’t know.” He told her honestly, feeling his own insecurities rise to the surface. “Why did my father suddenly see fit to legitimize me?” He shook his head trying to make sense of it all, none of it did. “There’s no logic to any of it. Especially, them finding me a match for a High Born Lady.” He was looking off into the distance trying to puzzle things out and wasn't expecting her to respond.

Arya shrugged at his question. “Better you than that golden haired Lannister shit Joffery.” She repeated what Jon said to her yesterday feeling it appropriate.

Gendry snorted at her statement and chuckled. His half-brother really was a grimy little bugger. He was glad he wasn't the only one who thought so. He had a hard time even considering the boy his relative at all. They were so different and looked nothing alike. He was all Lannister as far as Gendry could tell.

Looking at his new wife’s still forlorn expression, he suddenly changed his mind. Something was clearly bothering Arya and she wanted nothing more than to get her mind off of it. They wouldn’t have any furniture left if she didn’t get out of this room shortly. “If we’re going to leave the city best we get a move on before we have no light. It’s a long ride to the Kingswood.” He told her holding back a small smile.

Her head whipped up to his searching his face to make sure he was serious. When she was satisfied he wasn’t jesting with her she turned around and began scrambling to grab her things. Gendry just shook his head and did the same and before long they were ready to head off.

There was of course the little matter of getting past the Stark bannermen posted outside their rooms, but that was solved when Nymeria chased them off after they reached the stable yard. Still, it was quite obvious that they were leaving, what with their stop to the kitchens to gather food, and Arya and Gendry both strapped to the teeth with knives and supplies, Gendry carrying his massive warhammer and Arya Needle and her bow. It was only a matter of time before her family knew they’d wandered off. That just meant they had to be quick about leaving and making camp for the
night, which they were. Although Gendry couldn’t help but notice they were slow on horseback considering she couldn’t sit a saddle very well. He blushed once he came to the conclusion that it was because of him and felt guilty once more.

Night was falling quick when he led them off the Kingsroad and into the forest towards where he knew there was a hot springs nearby. He figured it might bring her a bit of solace and remind her of Winterfell and he wasn’t wrong. She delighted to see steam rising up off the ground and he thought he saw her eyes water a bit though he didn’t move to comfort her. He didn’t think she’d appreciate it nor did he feel like it was his place.

They were silent as they set up camp, her wandering off in the woods and then coming back with kindling and wood, making a fire faster than he’d ever seen anyone accomplish the feat in his life. He unpacked and unsaddled the horses, tying them up before bringing furs next to the fire and resting his hammer within arms length of them.

Arya had wandered off again by the time Gendry was getting a bit hungry so he withdrew the bundle of food they’d manage to grab before setting off. He was cutting vegetables with his belt knife and throwing them into a soup pot when she came back carrying two rabbits, Nymeria holding a third in her jaws. He grinned to himself, shaking his head but not saying a word, thinking about how much better of a woodsman she made than him. He put the sausage he’d been planning to throw in off to the side for their morning meal.

Together they worked in silence, him slicing vegetables and her skinning and butchering the two rabbits, throwing the organs and innards to Nymeria and cleaning the bones of good meat to throw in the pot. He was done before she was and went to scoop water out of the springs for broth using his helmet. Soon after she added some wild herbs she’d come across and then threw the carcasses into the soup and explained it would bring flavor and that they’d take them out later before they ate. Together they waited for the soup to simmer and boil, happy to listen to the sounds of the forest alive around them.

She was cleaning the furs of the rabbits she skinned when the silence was finally broken. She didn’t look up from her work as she spoke.

“Are you any good with that hammer?” She asked boldly, there almost seemed a challenge behind her words.

Gendry lifted an eyebrow but shrugged. “I suppose so.” He told her before explaining, “The King says I’m better than he was, though I think he justancies that he is looking at himself when he watches me. It’s a bit unsettling to be honest. It’s the only time he really ever takes interest.” He nabbed a piece of carrot for himself and chomped on it thoughtfully. “I much prefer my smiths hammer if you must know. I like the harsh jolt that metal runs up my arm rather than the give of
flesh and bone.” He explained, hefting the humungous hammer easily in one hand and testing its weight while examining it. When he looked up Arya was scrutinizing him solicitously. “What?” He asked.

She shook her head dismissing the thought. “It’s nothing.” She told him before she went back to distracting herself with the furs. A mischievous glint came into her eyes then. “Do you think you could best me with that hammer?” She asked.

He was a bit caught off guard by the question but sized her up thinking he was probably two times her size if not more. Finally he came to an answer. “I would if you use that blade you seem to like so much.” He told her referring to Needle. “You’ve outgrown it.” He informed her plainly.

She scowled at him and abruptly stood up, bringing her prized sword out challengingly. “Shall we find out if your confidence is misplaced?”

Gendry stayed seated and went to protest, but when he opened his mouth to do so she brought the point of her blade to his throat drawing a bit of blood in warning.

“I would grab your hammer if I were you.” She told him coolly.

Gendry scowled unhappily but eventually did as told, rising up off the ground with his hammer in his grasp to stand facing his new wife.

She squared off facing him as he took a defensive pose. Before he really had a chance to register what was happening she was coming at him blindingly fast, all fluid movements and graceful thrusts, harrying him seemingly from all sides at once. Luckily he was controlled chaos, his hammer spinning and thrusting and swiping her blows away easily, keeping her at a distance and causing her frustration to rise.

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Jon hunched down in the saddle and rode like the wind, Ghost sprinting in front of him in much too precise a direction not to be following a trail. He was in the Kingswood now, and though he wasn't familiar with it, he was by nature comfortable in the forest. He’d find Arya soon enough and bring her back to King’s Landing kicking and screaming if he had to.
He was completely of the mindset that she’d convinced Gendry to run off to Braavos like she’d always planned. They had discussed it and Robb was to go North towards Maidenpool while he would search south, riding all the way to Storm’s End if need be. Those cities marked the two closest ports where they could find passage, other than King’s Landing itself of course, though surely the Harbormaster would’ve recognized the King’s Bastard and they had made a point to question him before running off in search.

Jon had resolved himself to the likelihood that he’d be riding through the night, thinking Arya wouldn’t risk her escape to stop for sleep. He was quite shocked when Ghost turned off the road, moving inland into the forest on an almost indiscernible deer path. He thought it odd but from experience knew his wolf wasn’t wrong.

Once he was out of sight of the road, he heeled his horse to a stop and tied it up to continue on foot as he would be faster and his mount wouldn’t succumb to injury. He followed Ghost silently through the woods until the wolf halted completely and he could see light up ahead. He knew he was near, and if he knew Arya at all she’d have arranged a circumference of sticks and leaves about their camp to alert them of any type of prowler, just as she’d been taught.

He proceeded on, carefully placing each foot until he began hearing the sounds of metal on metal, the familiar clash of weapons. Then he was rushing headlong through the undergrowth noisily. He had his sword half unsheathed when he saw the small fire and two figures dancing in front of it, but it wasn’t until he comprehended that one was a light footed female and the other a hulking beast of a man that he stopped in his tracks.

Jon was utterly confused when he realized that it was Gendry and Arya matching skills rather than fending off rough riding poachers and bandits, fighting for their lives like he’d assumed. He found himself sinking back into the depths of darkness amongst the trees to watch and observe, curiosity overtaking him. He didn’t know how they hadn’t heard his raucous approach, but they didn’t, they appeared too enthralled in sparring and Jon was intrigued to see how it would end.

He knew Arya was no fool with a sword. She knew her way around a blade just as well as he did. One time out of every three she could best both him and Robb and she was getting better everyday. If she were given free reign over the weapons yard as they were, he was certain she’d be on a level with them. She had definitely taken to it easily enough. And yet here, matched against her husband, her skill seemed ineffective.

Last Jon remembered of the boy he sparred with in Winterfell was a clumsy fellow wielding a broadsword slothfully. He had easily been beaten and didn’t seem all that interested in fighting. Now it appeared as if he had been doing it all his life. He was much more suited to the weapon he swung presently and he moved with a steady confidence that would be hard for anyone to outmatch. Blacksmith or warrior, he was clearly crafted to wield a hammer.
Jon couldn’t help but think that what he was witnessing now was what his father was always referring to when he spoke of the King during the War, though Ned had always talked about the King possessing an unbridled fury in the way he handled his weapon. His son was much more controlled, although there was a smooth madness to his strength that made him hard to predict. He knew every inch of his weapon, no doubt because he crafted it himself, and every stroke, thrust and spin he aimed at Arya appeared as meticulous and precise as that of a Blacksmith fashioning his life’s masterpiece, though with a feral might behind it that promised death.

He watched as his sister came at the large fellow again and again, as fast and as fluid as a snake striking out at its prey. He watched as she assaulted him over and over again from all sides, attempting to find a weak point in his defenses and exploit it as he moved his hammer deliberately, a stony look of concentration on his face. She never did find a fault in his form, and neither could Jon.

Where at first glance it might have appeared she had him on the defense, a closer look made Jon realize he wasn’t even trying to be the aggressor. He was letting her work out her frustrations, careful not to hurt her. Arya must have recognized this too because she was becoming reckless in her charge as her frustration mounted taking insult. She was wildly assailing him, now hacking at him with barely any form at all, trying desperately to make it past his guard and clearly enraged that it wasn’t going her way.

None of it worked, in fact it only seemed to humor him as a smirk lit up his face. Soon enough though, having had his fill of Arya’s savage assault after it turned even more vicious and frenzied, he finally decided to go on the offensive and it was like nothing Jon had ever witnessed before in his life.

His face hardened to steel and in three massive strides forward, he had Arya moving backwards and beaten. He thrust the shaft of his hammer forward after dodging one of her wild slashes and controlled the movement enough to prevent painful impact of his weapon into her gut as he saw her drift back like he intended. Immediately following, Needle was knocked clean out of her grip and sent flying into the night as he spun the weighted head of his hammer around fluidly, only changing his grip ever so slightly making it hard to anticipate. Finally, she was forced back up against a tree as he swept the weapon above his head using its established momentum seamlessly. From there he brought it down with all his massive strength, driving it nearly two feet into the ground right in front of her with a resounding thud that Jon was certain they would feel back in King’s Landing.

Arya and Jon were both left to marvel at the delicate deliberateness and startling power of his form. Arya looked absolutely staggered by what had just taken place as she stared at the man in front of her chest heaving and hair wild. She was looking at him as if it was the first time she’d truly seen him.
Gendry didn’t look particularly self-satisfied with his show. He just stood there looking down on her impassively, making no comment about besting her, just letting his eyes bore into hers. His hammer was entrenched in the ground between them, seemingly having missed her as his mark, though Jon knew having witnessed his faculty that had Gendry wished to land a blow elsewhere, it would have landed true. He knew Arya realized this as well as she gazed up at his stoic form.

Before Jon really had time to comprehend the lust filled look in his sister’s eyes, she had already flung herself at her husband who caught her easily and returned her vehement plea for kisses willingly as he crashed his lips against hers.

Jon wanted to look away, and he did briefly, but found he couldn’t help that his gaze strayed and he found himself watching as Arya wrap her long legs around Gendry’s massive middle as best she could while he held her up with one hand. He watched as the man’s other reached out for the shaft of the hammer in front of him and pulled it out of the ground effortlessly, not bothering to pull away from Arya at all. It was too easy for him, it was as if the weapon hadn’t been driven into the ground as deeply as a that of a sharpened sword having pierced through flesh. Jon watched in astonishment as Gendry hauled the weapon from the ground and hefted the hammer off to the side so he could walk forward and press Arya’s back against the tree and smother her with his body.

Jon understood what was going to happen next. He knew what he’d be privy to if he stayed and he knew it was wrong to wish to see it. Swallowing thickly and gritting his teeth he turned to walk away, shame overwhelming him at his reluctance to do so. With every progressive stride he fiercely battled the desire to just remain hidden and watch them from the shadows. He knew Theon had spoken of spying on people in the brothels of Winterfell, but this was his sister. It was highly unsettling that his feet felt more and more like granite with every renewed step he took away from the firelight.

Appallingly, he halted his progress and stiffened upon hearing Arya’s pleasure filled groan, finding the urge to linger too great as her noise surged forth into the silence of the night, filling the air with her lusty need. His debauched body turned back rigidly of its own accord while he clenched his jaw and tried to combat the feeling of his disgraceful arousal, hoping he could stop this madness and run back to the Kingsroad and find his horse. He thought his enormous disgust with himself was all encompassing but learned differently when everything else was overwhelmed by a covetous thirst to see more. He couldn’t force his legs to move, to leave; he was deprived of his capacities entirely.

He watched frozen and morally agonized as Gendry pushed Arya’s legs off of him so she could stand. Once she found her footing, he turned her around crudely where he pushed her front back up against the tree, fiddling with the laces of her dress as he pressed kisses into her neck and she moaned, thrusting her ass back into breeches that were similarly strained to Jon’s own.
Even from a distance Jon could tell that Gendry was becoming aggravated with the ties of her
dress, and so was he considering it took so long that he vulgarly contemplated revealing himself to
help assist. Eventually the blacksmith had it and then he was pushing fabric over slim shoulders
and watching the dress fall to the ground along with her shift underneath it. Jon’s breath hitched
and he swallowed thickly, powerless to tear his eyes away while still finding his own anticipation
utterly revolting.

Soon enough Arya was left in nothing but her smallclothes and Gendry just so happened to turn her
back around again so Jon had a fine view of her perfect breasts. He just barely caught himself from
falling to his knees in anguish, his gut wrenching horribly at the enormity of his wicked desires at
the same time as his balls drew up sickeningly, his cock well and truly leaden. Gods she was
beautiful, and how despicable was he for thinking it.

As her husband knelt down in front of her, making her step out of her final piece of clothing by
pushing it over her hips, she simultaneously pulled the tunic over his head. Jon gulped at the sight
of her completely exposed, his cock twitching traitorously just like last time.

Just like at the Bedding, Jon couldn’t rip his eyes from her person, heedless of the nauseating feel
in his abdomen telling him it was criminal. He was immobilized now, as well as incredibly
immoral and exceedingly depraved. He hated himself for his thoughts, but she was the most
beautiful creature he had ever seen, and only more so because she was completely oblivious to it.
Yes her body was flawless, and yes he could stare at her face forever and still wonder at the exact
grey of her eyes, but she emanated a pure, ethereal exuberance that was absolutely intoxicating. Its
what made her utterly irresistible as well as wholly unlike any of the other submissive Ladies of
court. She oozed unbridled spirit on top of being utterly gorgeous. None of the men in Winterfell
had been impervious to the noticeable changes in her physique and features, and it was as if all of
them were drawn like moths to a flame. There was not a man among the townsfolk who hadn’t
spoke of desiring to lie with her.

Jon even knew Theon desired to bed her, as he always told him so to rile him up. He’d even caught
the Ironborn stroking himself hard while whispering her name as he thrust into his hand and came
messily all over himself. Though that time he’d given the intolerable prat a black eye and told him
if he ever uttered his sister’s name like that again he’d feed his shriveled prick to Ghost.

He wasn’t even sure that Robb hadn’t had indecent thoughts about Arya. He’d seen his brother
gaping at their sister just as lecherously as he himself had been yesterday as she cut herself from
her clothes. He flushed angrily thinking such dishonorable things about his brother, but he couldn’t
help but think it wasn’t of his own imaginings. Suddenly it didn’t seem so unnatural that he was
painfully hard at the sight of his beloved sister, watching as her husband ravaged her. Everyone
else seemed to be similarly effected. Maybe it was to be expected for him as well bearing in mind
they’d always been close and he’d always been attracted to her fiery gumption. Besides, he didn’t
know many men who would walk away from such a show, though any type of justification only
worked to make himself loathe his debased nature more.
As Arya let a hand stray to her magnificent breasts and began massaging them, her other hand threaded through the curls of Gendry’s hair while his mouth and tongue worked her clit. Jon swallowed thickly and mournfully surrendered, fumbling repentantly at his laces craving shameful friction. He knew he’d never be able to forgive himself though he withdrew his leaking cock anyway. He thumbed at the tip as it throbbed in his grasp, tidal waves of shame washing over him like fire.

When Arya moaned and started writhing, shoving herself up and down on what he could only imagine were Gendry’s fingers, Jon began to stroke himself battling his own appallingly revulsion. He grimaced, abysmally horrified at what he was doing but not finding the strength to halt, finding he craved release more. He used one calloused hand to prop himself up on the tree he was behind, and trembled cruelly as began with his nauseating pleasure.

Arya breathed Gendry’s name continually and threw her head back when the blacksmith hit just the right spot, arching her back and thrusting her breasts out into the cool night air, her nipples painfully erect. Jon bowed his head fighting himself at the horrid wish he could take one of them into his mouth and tug her nipples in place of her own ravenous fingers. Blinking and trying unsuccessfully to separate his relation to the couple he was watching, he spit quietly into his hand desiring lubrication and began anew with his caresses. He drew out his strokes slowly, tugging at his shaft before curling and twisting his palm around his head, self-loathing making him bite his lip at his pleasure and causing him to guiltily look away from the glorious spectacle as he worked himself shamefully, though not for long.

Soon enough Arya was crying out marvelously, her keens boiling Jon’s blood as she reached her climax and luring him back in for more torture. He had to look again. He almost felt his knees buckle when he did, though whether from enjoyment or the recognition of his depravity he couldn’t be sure.

Jon watched, his expression twisting excruciatingly, as all of Arya’s muscles tensed and her exquisite body trembled in ecstasy, face exultant and gratified, her lips a soft ‘O’ of desperation the instant before she finally found release. Then Gendry was there, standing up and blocking some of his view of her as he shoved his tongue into her mouth, allowing her a taste of herself. Jon wished he could have a taste. Gods how heinous was that! He felt his cheeks heating as he disgracefully pictured himself between his sister’s legs, sucking on her clit then laving at the juices pouring out her wet cunt. He hated himself for it, berated himself in his own mind even, though none of it did anything to prevent his treacherous member from bobbing delightedly in his hand, urging him on in his debauchery. He stroked and watched and despised himself for loving the sight of Arya writhing in frenzied bliss.

Throughout their wet kiss, he could see Arya’s hand fondling Gendry’s cock teasingly just before she began to undo his laces painfully slow. Jon had to stifle a grunt as she finally extracted Gendry from his restraints, her hand grasping him firmly and forcing him to watch the other man’s body
tense at her touch. He felt his own grip tighten around his cock wishing it was Arya’s fingers he was feeling and not his own. He stared at the slim fingers wrapped around Gendry’s wood, practically salivating at the monstrous idea that it was himself he was really looking at, and that hers were the fingers now working him devotedly.

Whatever words she issued to make his gaze whip up to hers, Jon didn’t hear them though he could see her lips moving. Gendry nodded hesitantly to her question and whispered something back. Then suddenly Arya was on her knees, looking up at her husband with nervous but committed eyes as she took him into her mouth. Jon fell into the tree he’d been using to support himself, switching hands and jerking himself wildly. Gods those lips! The self-reproach he experienced as his filthy mind thanked him for staying was almost too much to cope with, though it wasn’t enough to make him leave.

He could tell she hadn’t had a man in her mouth before, and realized that was probably what had been discussed. He watched her wrap her swollen pink lips around Gendry’s cock and gobble him up almost to the base. The other man threw his head back and groaned loudly and Jon almost joined him, the both of them loving the eager sight of her. As she withdrew herself, cheeks hollowed, she began a pace, sucking his stiff girth greedily as well as noisily. Jon matched her movements with his hand on his own prick.

It looked like Gendry was struggling not to thrust into her mouth, and the one time he did she wasn’t prepared for it and choked. Jon couldn’t exactly say why but he found the sight of her sputtering especially enticing as her breasts jiggled and her face twisted; he gripped himself a bit harder feeling his stomach turn at his own hedonism. Gendry looked to be apologizing for it but Arya waved it off and said something that visibly took the blacksmith aback. Jon only realized what she must have suggested as she enveloped his cock with her mouth once again, looking up at him expectantly as he tentatively grabbed her face with both hands and gingerly began thrusting into her mouth.

Jon felt his own mouth drop open, and closed his eyes at the wonton sight, gritting his teeth although not stopping with his hand but rather tossing faster. He was a needy abominable swine who might burn in hell but he couldn’t stop, not now.

When he finally lifted his eye-lids back up he almost lost his load seeing Gendry’s pace had picked up and his sister was squeezing her eyes shut in apparent discomfort. Gods but he hated that the muscles in his lower abdomen fluttered in pleasure at the glorious sight. How could he be enjoying this so thoroughly when it was so utterly repugnant on his part?

When Gendry’s thrusting and lusty need became too much, her mouth now only open around him instead of sucking at him avidly, he brought her up off her knees. He turned her facing away from him and she immediately began grinding her wonderfully round ass back against him, practically begging to be penetrated. Jon had to bite his lip at the scene, and he watched as Gendry pressed his
own throbbing cock up against her in an appeal for friction. Jon couldn’t help but imagine how wet she was as Gendry tweaked her nipples and grabbed at her breasts, burying his head against her neck. Fuck was he on the verge, and damn was there anything ever more grossly immoral than that!

Jon involuntarily thrust into his hand, and found himself thanking the old gods and the new as Gendry bent her over so she could brace herself against the tree, giving him a perfect view of the slick blushing lips of her sex and the wonderful pink warmth of her cunt behind them. Gendry himself seemed to enjoy the view, though he wasn't a filthy ingrate for doing so, and he took more than a moment to stare at her like that until she wiggled her hips beckoning for him to take her. He lined himself up.

Jon brought a fist to his mouth and bit down hard seeing Gendry probe her entrance lightly. Just as he prepared to enter her, Arya thrust herself back onto him impatiently, unable to wait any longer. They both called out at the feeling of their union and it was a good thing because Jon couldn’t stop his own guilty strangled moan.

Arya started throwing her hips backwards as Gendry and Jon both looked to where they were joined, enthralled by the sight of watching him disappear into her over and over again, her lips straining around his girth and sliding up and down in tandem with her splendid movements. Eventually Gendry felt the need to assist and then he was thrusting into her languidly, snapping his hips coarsely at the end and driving the last few inches into her roughly. The sound of their skin meeting in lewd sounding smacks had Jon stroking furiously in twisted need.

Soon enough Gendry was overcome by the sensation and began plowing into her unreservedly, each blow running deliciously up through her core, the violent collision of their hips making her tits bounce spectacularly in rhythm and her fine little ass jiggle as she mewled agreeably and met him fervently thrust for ferocious thrust. Jon was helpless to the whims of his wicked pleasure at the exquisite sight and even more so when Gendry moved one hand to Arya’s lower back, pressing down hard enough to make her arch her spine while he moved his other hand to her shoulder to assist in throwing her back into him brutally.

Jon worked himself raw, finally feeling his eminent climax just as Gendry roared out his own, burying himself deep into Arya as she moaned in magnificent release around him, clutching at her breasts weakly as she struggled to keep herself standing on orgasm weakened legs. Jon spurted his creamy white load hard all over the tree in front of him, muscles convulsing, and jaw clenched, eyes drinking in the sight of his sister in utter satisfaction and loving it in all his remorseful shame.

When he finally came down from his pleasure all he was left with was guilt and self condemnation, mortified with himself at what he had just done, that he couldn’t stop himself while it was happening. His lack of self-control was reprehensible. The only thing that stopped him from revealing himself and submitting to whatever punishment they deemed fit was the fact that he
couldn’t bear to think of his sister not speaking to him ever again.

Jon didn’t look back up, he didn’t want to know if they would go again less his body force him to stay for more torture. He hurriedly fumbled with his laces, hands trembling thinking about the horrid deed he’d just committed. He slipped his way back through the woods silently, hoping it all was some disgusting out of body experience, some evil nightmare.

When he knew he was far enough away that he’d just be another muddled sound in the darkness of the forest, he finally let out the breath that he didn’t know he’d been holding and he staggered into a tree feeling the bile rise in his throat as he experienced the unfettered need to wretch. He was a decrepit bastard piece of filth, he knew it now and he knew it back when he had his prick in hand, caressing himself at the sight of his favorite sibling in the heat of her desire.

Suddenly he was sprinting to his horse, not really aware of what he was doing, running desperately away from the hideous reality of his wonderfully corrupt release. He almost mounted his horse and galloped back to Kings Landing, almost. Then he remembered why he was here and what he had promised.

His legs felt like lead as he turned back towards the forest, head hung low as he made his way back towards his sister, only this time making as much noise as possible and sending Ghost ahead of him to make his presence known.

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When Arya felt Gendry withdraw from her with what she had now deemed her favorite of his appendages, it was as if the all strength in her body left her and she almost crumpled to the ground. She hadn’t realize that her knees were so weak but apparently Gendry had and suddenly his large arm was looped just under her bare breasts and making sure she didn’t collapse.

She weakly managed to find her footing and turned around to face him wincing at the feel of her punished cunt. She had already been sore, but now her body felt completely brutalized and she couldn’t blame anyone but herself. She was never one to do things half way and had always been known to throw herself into her passions once discovered. Bed sport was certainly no different, and like all things she enjoyed she paid for her eagerness in the sore feel of her body afterwards.

Gendry noticed her discomfort and his own expression twisted into one of guilt, appearing anguished and remorseful for what he had inflicted on her, looking like he was about to make a fuss about it.
When he opened his mouth for what she was sure was going to be an apology she glared and cut him off. “Don’t you look at me like that stupid! How many times do I have to tell you I’m not breakable!” She huffed.

Gendry grimaced and fidgeted. “I should’ve held myself back. You could hardly sit your saddle before.” He offered her ashamedly.

Arya snorted. “I would’ve taken more offense to your restraint than anything else. Besides it not as if you really had a say in the matter.” She grabbed her discarded clothing and looked to begin dressing herself when he halted her.

“The springs might ease the pain of your muscles a bit.” He suggested, nodding to where steam was rising from the small pool.

She didn’t need to be told twice, it sounded like more than a brilliant idea. She dropped her clothing and strode past him not bothering to test the water but rather just falling right into its welcoming warmth and feeling some of her pain easing as it enveloped her.

Arya hadn’t planned to lie with him again so soon, and while still recovering from the vigorous activities of their marriage night no less. Regardless she didn’t regret one second of it.

Never before had she ever been subject to desiring a man, but with his hammer driven into the ground in front of her and his powerful body silhouetted against the firelight he had been practically irresistible to her in his strength. She hated being bested in a spar, but somehow that hate transformed into a need to devour him in the only other way she could think. Her lingering ache had been forgotten entirely as a completely hedonistic lust rose within her and took over. She craved the feeling of power her body exerted over his. What was strange was she even enjoyed the dominance his had shown over hers, found it arousing even. Normally she loathed to be reminded that she was generally outmatched in might because of her gender, but with him she relished it, reveling in the newfound wetness it caused between her thighs. It was certainly a new development, if a one to be wary of.

She moved to float on her back, closing her eyes. “Will you spar with me again?” she asked.

She heard him chuckle and opened her eyes seeing him enter the water, bowl of soup in hand. “I suppose so.” He told her.
She swam over to him and stole the spoon from his bowl and scooped herself a bite. “Good because I’d hold a sword to your throat again if you didn’t agree.”

Gendry snorted and swiped the spoon back. “I’m sure the master at arms would love to see my wife threatening my life.” He took an exceptionally large spoonful of soup and spoke while chewing. “Though if you plan on flinging yourself on me after every time I may have to insist that we keep out of the weapons yard.”

Arya punched him in his solid stomach under the water as hard as she could and he sputtered for a moment through his food before catching his breath and smirking at her, shaking his head ruefully and taking another bite. The fact that she affected him so little with the blow irked her. She promptly snatched the soup bowl and turned intending to keep it away from him, though she halted in making off with it across the pond as she turned and her gaze fell on the glowing yellow eyes of Ghost as the silent wolf came into the firelight.

Her eyes whipped upwards as she heard something clamoring towards them in the woods. Gendry was next to her in an instant and then pushing her behind him protectively the next. Arya rolled her eyes and shoved past him getting out of the pool and hurriedly going for her clothes. “It’s Jon.” She told him. When he didn’t move she rolled her eyes again. “Well don’t just stand there idiot. Get dressed.”

She heard her brother’s distinctive voice calling her name in the darkness long before he came through the ring of trees entering the small clearing into the firelight. Arya was still struggling with the ties of her dress but just managed a sad excuse of a knot before turning to face him. It was strange though because he wouldn’t meet her gaze and looked like he was agonizing over something. He wasn’t acting like himself and the way his posture was sagging and he was dragging his feet made him appear as if he had given up all his fight.

Even though her instinct was to run to him and ask what was wrong, she was still more than cross with him, and even more so now that he had come after her when she had just wanted to get away. She scowled at the crown of his head until he swallowed thickly and met her eyes. His expression was twisted sorely and his normal quiet confidence seemed overwhelmed by a dreadful tension that had his shoulders slumping.

He looked and sounded defeated as he spoke. “I’m sorry Arya.” He told her hoarsely sounding nothing like himself.

The tone made her heart ache for him but she wasn't going to let him off that easy. “That doesn’t mean I’m just going to forgive you.” She snapped at him.
He stared at her solemnly, his eyes slightly glossed over. “You shouldn’t. I don’t deserve your forgiveness.” His demeanor was stoic and he gulped sorrowfully.

Arya stared at him brows furrowed and took a step towards him before she realized what she was doing and stopped herself. She considered him warily, “What’s wrong?” She asked him seriously. He was behaving strangely and it had her on edge and alarmed.

Usually after he’d apologize for being an ass and she had stubbornly refused to accept said apology, he’d tell her she had no choice seeing as they were siblings and it was his right to irritate her with his infallible wisdom. There was generally some ruffling of hair on his part and some begrudging hugs on hers, and then he’d always tickle her until he got a smile and she’d elbow him in the stomach before they ran off to find trouble, Jon assisting in sneaking her away from lessons with Septa Mordane. Never before had it gone like this.

He just stood there and told her he’d understand if she never forgave him. That she shouldn’t forgive him. The Bedding had been a nightmare and she truly hadn’t been prepared to excuse her brothers their apathy towards her degrading plight but suddenly she felt horrible for making Jon feel so guilty. He looked broken and remorseful and he could hardly look at her.

“What’s wrong Jon?” She repeated. “Did you just come after me to apologize?” He knew her well enough to know she’d be more agreeable after some time alone sulking so she knew there must be other reasons that he had sought her out preemptively.

“No.” He shook his head looking to the ground trying to figure out what to say. “I’ve come to bring you back to King’s Landing.” He told her. When she scowled he licked his lips and went on before she could get a word in. “Your Lady mother leaves for Winterfell with Robb, Bran, and Rickon as soon as preparations have been made and you’re safely returned to bid them goodbye. Our father is sending a third of our men back to accompany them.”

Arya tried to process all the information quickly but none of it made sense. “Leaving?” She asked breathlessly. Nearly half all of her family was deserting her, leaving her to rot in the capital and not even lingering a full day after her wedding before they made ready to depart. The realization would’ve stung more if she didn’t comprehend there must be a reason behind it. “Why only a send a third of the men as escort? Why not half?” She asked seeing the discrepancy immediately. Robb was her father’s heir, and Bran and Rickon behind him, surely he would provide more guards to protect his legacy and the Stark bloodline. Why would he stay behind himself? “Jon what’s going on?” She asked him anxiously.

Jon grimaced sadly. “The Hand’s been found dead Arya.” He told them gravely. “There are
whispers it may have been poison. The whole city is up in arms.”

Arya was about to say something when a third voice startled her into realizing it wasn’t just her and Jon. She had forgotten Gendry was still there until he stepped forward.

“The Hand is dead?” He questioned somberly looking for confirmation he’d heard correctly. “Jon Arryn is dead?” There was an edge of disbelief to his voice.

When Jon nodded grimly Gendry immediately strode over to saddle the horses hiding his face though the stiffness of his movements gave his thoughts away.

Arya frowned at her husbands back sadly. “Gendry...” She called out to him her voice anguished. She approached, feeling for his loss, and reached out to put a comforting hand on his shoulder but withdrew herself and stopped, bowing her head not really feeling it was her place to console him. She was no good at this sort of thing. “I’m sorry.” She told him remorsefully staring at the ground. He only nodded curtly before gathering their things.

Arya moved to help him break camp and dumped the soup out on the ground where Ghost and Nymeria quickly lapped up the broth and devoured any pieces of meat. She dunked the pot in the springs and poured water on the fire before stamping out the ashes and strapping needle to her saddlebag. She hauled Gendry’s bloody heavy hammer over to him so he could do similarly. They were quick about it with Jon there to help and soon enough he turned to find his own horse muttering about meeting them at the road. Arya was left to struggle in mounting her mare feeling sorer than she could ever remember.

Gendry saw her hesitation and instead of leaving her there to decide how to go about easing herself atop her horse without causing a great amount pain, he lifted her off the ground and gently placed her in the saddle. Had the situation been any different she probably would’ve scowled and kicked him in the chest, insisting that she was capable of doing it herself even if it did hurt, but she wasn't heartless. She knew he just wanted to get back to the city and didn’t want her holding them up.

The Kingsroad was silent as their horses rode through the night, making as good of time as they could. No one spoke a word until Jon left them at the gates explaining he was going after Rob who had apparently headed towards Maidenpool seeking out Arya and Gendry to the North. Evidently they had both ridden out solely with their wolves insisting Stark bannermen remain in the city should incident occur within the keep. Arya sent Nymeria with her brothers in case they should come upon trouble on the Kingsroad. Three huge Direwolves escorting two Northern lads strapped with castle-forged steel wouldn’t be a welcoming sight for bandits or thieves. There were three more wolves in the keep that would do for protection for the rest of them.
Gendry led the way back to the Keep at a brisk pace and Arya couldn’t help but notice that the city seemed quiet, as if everyone were perched on the edge of a knife, waiting for the coin to drop and chaos to erupt. She didn’t quiet understand how the death of one man could cause such alarm and anxiety, but she wasn't familiar with the politics of the capital, nor the Game of Thrones. To her it was just silly southron nonsense, although now it seemed much more real, and much more dangerous. The common folk certainly seemed to be sensitive to the significance of it all.

By the time they were back in the keep Arya was just following Gendry and she wasn't even sure where they were headed at this point. That is until he approached a door flanked by two of the Kingsguard, Barristan Selmy and Mandon Moore. There must've been orders to let the two of them past because they were let through without so much as a protest or a word. They entered into the King’s solar and both her father and King Robert ceased their words and turned to examine the newcomers.

Ned was up on his feet and striding towards them the instant he realized who had come in. Before Arya could determine if he was going to yell or send her away she was being pulled into a bone crushing hug that she returned though with less force. After a moment he held her at arms length. “Are you unharmed? Where’re your brothers?” He asked in quick succession.

“I’m fine.” Arya gritted out. She was really getting tired of saying that. “Jon went to find Robb. I sent Nymeria with him.” She informed her father.

Ned gave her the briefest of smiles. “Good.” He told her fondly, cupping her cheek. His eyes flashed to steel though when he turned to Gendry. He took a threatening step towards the large boy clearly working to restrain himself. “I thought I could trust you with my daughter.” He rumbled softly, leashing his anger and looking for an explanation. “I thought you’d match well with her, be able to power over her willful demands. Instead the both of you steal out of the city like smugglers, leaving your family to guess where you’ve gone off to.” His anger was directed at the both of them now.

Arya frowned indignantly ignoring her father’s ire and feeling her own well up. She spoke just as her husband went to open his mouth. “Power over me?” She seethed at her father. “Is that what you wished in selling me off? In making me marry?” She asked hazardously. “To find someone to tame me and make me a proper lady?” She spat out disgustedly. She sounded almost frenzied at the end. She’d had it with people trying to manipulate her into being something she so clearly wasn’t

Her father turned to her looking irritated. “Ary—“

“No!” She cut him off as well. “If that was your aim I assure you, you have failed miserably!” She was enraged and there was no stopping her. "You don’t know me at all if you think I will just stand by and let myself be—“
“Arya!” She actually jumped at the loudness of Gendry’s bark, as embarrassing as it was. He too looked heated and she’d never even considered the thought that he could raise his voice to such a decibel let alone do it. He may have been large but he seemed a bit bashful and meek, although he could wield a hammer like no man she’d ever witnessed. Maybe she should’ve expected it.

“Enough!” He thundered at her gruffly though bringing his volume down. “You’re not helping at all! You’re father has a right to be angry.” He said through a clenched jaw, ready to take whatever chastisement their father’s saw fit to dole out.

Arya frowned sullenly and looked to the ground. Had she been looking up she would have seen her father blinking in surprise momentarily as he looked between them. Whatever his consideration, he brushed it off to continue once he realized his resentment hadn’t dissipated. “Did you think I’d take it in stride to find my daughter and her new husband slipping away to Braavos without a word?” He questioned coldly.

Arya gulped, she could understand why her father would jump to that conclusion. She’d threatened to do as much for years, though never in the company of a man. In fact, it was usually implied she’d do so to escape a betrothal before she was to be wed. She wondered if she could sneak off now without being seen so as to avoid the awkwardness of the required explanation that was sure to follow.

Gendry looked genuinely confused. “Braavos?” He asked bewildered. “We went to the Kingswood.” He told them perplexed. He had no idea what her father was on about.

Ned was similarly caught of guard. “The Kingswood?” He questioned skeptically. When Gendry nodded Ned blinked. “Why the Kingswood?”

Gendry shrugged. “I came back to our rooms after the forge and I found she’d—“

Arya elbowed him and gave him a sharp look. She definitely didn’t want her father to know she had destroyed their chambers.

Gendry rolled his eyes but continued. “I found her,” He looked at her pointedly, “upset.” He explained. “She said she wanted to get away from the city so I took her to the hot spring in the Kingswood hoping it would bring her some comfort and remind her of Winterfell. I should’ve left word with your men. I see that now. It was foolish of me not to think of the courtesy.” He paused for a moment before looking confounded again. “Why’d you think we went ran of to Braavos if
you don’t mind me asking?”

Arya watched as a wave of relief flooded her father’s face and then the King slap his back chummily. She was happy that Gendry’s question was ignored.

“I told you the boy wouldn’t be so convinced, Ned.” The King chuckled. “He’s just been given titles and a hightborn wife. He wouldn’t let the girl talk him into fleeing for Braavos! He comes from my seed, it’s not in his nature to let a woman lead him by the balls.”

Arya scowled at the Kings words but watched as her father came forward and grasped her husband’s forearm.

“I owe you an apology. I was quick in my assumptions but I was worried.” Ned said solemnly his eyes now a soft smoke.

Gendry nodded and shook her father’s hand. “It is I who am sorry. It wasn't my intention to frighten you or your family.”

When they broke away from each other’s grasp Gendry’s gaze turned disconsolate and he regarded his father and her own with dread apparent in his eyes. “We’ve heard news of Jon Arryn.” He muttered morosely, his tone along with the mood in the room turning somber. “What’s happened to my Uncle?”
Chapter Summary

I don't expect too much hate for this one, well except maybe for how long it took me to get it out. Enjoy!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Jon Arryn’s funeral was massive and all of King’s Landing came out to honor him. The King spared no expense to ensure his long time friend was sent off properly. The High Septon offered kind words and gushed that the Hand of the King had been well loved among Highborn families and very much all of the baseborn commoners. He motioned towards the crowd gathered in the Sept of Baelor, the building packed entirely with the overflow spilling out into the filled the square just beyond, and insisted that the adoration felt for the deceased man could be articulated in terms of the numbers of those who had turned out to see him laid to rest.

Nevertheless Gendry couldn’t help but think that half of the men and women there couldn’t be anything but pleased to have the Hand gone regardless of their kind words and gushed sentiments. The thought had his blood boiling and his fists clenching. He may not think like a Highborn but he knew enough to realize that the majority of them were there just for show, etiquette dictated they had to come.

They weren’t there to respect the memory of the Lord of the Vale. Several didn’t even find shame in telling him as much. He was a bastard, whether or not he had been legitimized meant nothing, and as a bastard people weren’t afraid to make japes rather than offer pleasantries or condolences to the deceased’s natural born nephew. He knew the truth of their apathy concerning his Uncle’s death and they didn’t try to hide it from him.

Knowing Gendry’s affection for his Uncle, people found a way to both mar the man’s memory and make themselves feel superior by asserting it was his Uncle’s well regard and trust for those of low birth that found him in an early grave. That it was his political impropriety that did him in. It didn’t help that Gendry was almost certain whoever was responsible for his death was probably in this very room offering up their false respects and reveling in their treacherous deceit. He was convinced it had indeed been murder the minute Jon Snow had whispered of poison in the Kingswood. The idea of such sedition had hardened his heart and instilled within him an insatiable rage that he desperately needed to dispel and couldn’t find the means to do so.

Ever since the news was broken to him and preparations for the funeral were being made he had spent every waking moment in the forge using his hammer in hopes to beat out his laments and
frustrations. After four days it had yet to have the desired effect. The normally calming heat of the fire and the dull soothing ache of his protesting muscles as he shaped and molded, creating a piercing but mollifying metallic melody as he bashed his hammer against anvil, did nothing to clear his head and stop his morose thoughts. The only man he had ever considered family, the man who had given him a hammer and a purpose, pressed upon the King to give him titles and a wife, had been murdered and there were only whispers as to why. All those he could truly call family had now been taken from this world.

Vaguely in the back of his mind he thought of Arya, and he almost felt guilty having not returned to their chambers in four nights. He had been sleeping in the forge, feeling as if it were the only true place he belonged now. He certainly didn’t belong in the Red Keep, not with Jon Arryn dead. The familiar warmth of his old cot seemed to beckon to him that this was his rightful place, not acting the Lord where he wasn’t even welcome. Besides, he had never slept well on the preposterously soft feather beds of his chambers. Though he had to begrudgingly admit that had changed since he had Arya next to him, splayed out across the majority of the bed and pushing the covers off the both of them, kicking him in his sleep as she thrashed about dreaming of what he could only believe was the wild North. Somehow having her next to him made finding rest easier. As odd as he found it, he couldn’t deny that in someway her complaints that it was too damn hot in the south, and the fact that he might unknowingly get clobbered in his sleep, was absurdly comforting and somehow normalizing in this foreign Highborn world he found himself unwelcomed in. Even in her sleep she was her normal riotous self, a constant, unapologetic, and tenacious personality in an otherwise shifty and conniving city. He wanted to believe that what she had said about him being family was now truth, but he couldn’t convince himself it was anything other than her seeking comfort having felt betrayed by her real family for having married her off against her will in the first place. It was a cruel thought for him to process, but one he did nonetheless. Harsh realities were a staple in his life and the fact that his wife didn’t want to be stuck with him just as he grew fond of her was simply something else he’d have to take in stride.

He knew he should’ve at least sent word as to where he had disappeared to but he didn’t want to bothered, and especially not today of all days. He needed his own time to grieve properly and knew when it came time to attend the funeral he’d need the means for a quick escape from the Sept. He sat by himself near the back for that exact reasoning knowing it would all become too much. It did, but what surprised him was the trigger.

He didn’t know why his anger welled up looking upon the impassive expression of the Queen as she stood next to his father. Still, he found he didn’t think it misplaced. His Uncle had always spoken about her with nothing but derision and contempt and Jon Arryn was anything if not a good judge of character. Gendry found himself glaring daggers into the back of her golden head as she watched the proceedings with a droll expression on her face, as if she thought cleaning the grime from underneath her fingernails would be better suited to her precious time.

Gendry slipped from the ceremony to go pray to the only Gods that ever saw fit to bring him reprieve, the saviors that his Uncle had introduced him to, the hammer and anvil. He didn’t know
how long he was pounding away, or even what he was making, but when he finally drifted from his thoughts it was to find familiar grey eyes staring at him underneath the twilight of dusk.

“Has the steel done something to offend you lad?” Asked Ned Stark.

Gendry looked down at the red hot metal that he held between tongs, considering it carefully before he walked over to quench the rod in water listening to the liquid hiss and steam roil up. “No.” He told his good-father. “Steel is the least offensive thing in this Gods forsaken city.” He answered solemnly.

Ned seemed to nod to himself in understanding of Gendry’s rash reply. “Your Uncle will be sorely missed.” He stated after a moment. It wasn't an offer of comfort, just a sentiment of camaraderie, a shared sorrow.

Gendry nodded his agreement and stuck the metal back into the forge to reheat it before turning to face his visitor. “Can I help you with something?” He questioned a bit gruffly. He wanted to wallow in his own solitude for as long as he could and was dreading being dragged back to the castle.

Ned grimace slightly but broached the subject though it was clear he didn’t want to. “I was hoping you could help me to understand some things.”

Gendry wiped the sweat off his brow and smeared some new soot over his skin in the process but he didn’t say anything.

Ned was a silent man himself and understood his lack of words was an invitation to continue. “The day he passed, I was to meet with Jon Arryn. He said it was urgent but that the Wedding needed to be seen to first and his words could be heard the day after. Did he speak to you about any matter at all which raised question in your mind?”

Gendry frowned now not really understanding where this all was going. “We rarely spoke on anything other than my apprenticeship, or my lessons with the Maester or the Master at Arms.” He considered his own words carefully before feeling the need to add. “He always was insistent that I hone my skills with arms even though I thought it strange he believed a blacksmith should be skilled with the weapons he forged as a means to maintain a livelihood. I thought my time would be better spent honing my craft. Though of course that was before I found out he meant to match me with the youngest Stark girl and leave me responsible for the protection of a northern holdfast.”
Ned considered his words looking thoughtful. “When did the Hand broach the subject of a marriage proposal with you?”

Gendry walked back to the forge and examined the color on the steel before turning it over and burying it in the coals once more. Only then did he turn back to his good-father to reply. “A year or two after our return from Winterfell he asked me what I thought of your daughters, but it never occurred to me what he had in store until it was announced in court with your arrival. Why do you ask?” Gendry probed. He was answering far too many inquiries without really knowing where the line of questioning was headed.

Luckily Ned wasn’t trying to hide anything, just figure things out for himself. He offered explanation willingly. “The idea to make you a match with one of my daughters was your Uncle’s own, and he had it in his mind to make certain it came to pass before you even set out for your visit to Winterfell. He told the King plainly of his intent.” Ned informed him as if that should be meaningful, and it was though bewildering as well.

Gendry looked at Lord Stark with a skeptically raised eyebrow. “I have unknowingly been betrothed to Arya Stark for the past five years?” He asked questioningly.

Ned shook his head. “No son, you’ve been betrothed to which ever of my girls flowered first for the past five years.”

Gendry couldn’t help but snort. “Don’t tell Arya that. She may very well strangle Lady Sansa if she finds out.”

Eddard chuckled faintly and removed his gloves tucking them in his sword belt. Gendry definitely wasn’t wrong in his statement and the understanding he possessed of his youngest daughter soothed Ned a bit though he fidgeted thinking about what else he had to ask. “I don’t mean to be discourteous when I ask this, but did you ever mention wishing to be more than a smith. Mayhaps you desired titles?”

Gendry frowned and shook his head, “If there is anyone less deserving of titles I know not of them.” He stated plainly. “Jon Arryn saw fit to give me a means of a better life by placing me with Master Mott and I saw fit to make the trade my purpose and express my gratitude through success. How could I ask for more than what was given already?”

Ned grimaced. “I’m sorry I had to ask lad. It’s just, your Uncle impressed insistently upon your father and myself that he desired our approval on the matter of your betrothal above anything else. The Hand was one of the few men in Westeros I had faith would keep good council and do what’s
best for the realm. I didn’t much question it when he asked me to trust him and beseeched me to agree to the betrothal if I still bore any love for him. I owed the man Winterfell, not least of all my loyalty, considering what he did in calling his banners against the Mad King following the murders of my brother and father and theft of my sister. At the time I thought he was brokering your engagement out of his affection for you and was attempting to keep word of his intentions low less the Queen find out the King was giving rights to his natural born son. But now…” He explained trailing off at the end. He took a step closer and looked around before lowering his voice. “I must know Gendry, did Jon Arryn seek to usurp Joffery’s right to the crown and place you on the throne in his stead?”

Gendry’s eyes widened and his jaw dropped. He certainly hadn’t been expecting that. “What! No!” He croaked hoarsely. He was very happy he hadn’t been pounding metal against anvil seeing as he would’ve surely missed his mark and sent his hammer flying to break his toes. “I am not fit to be King.” He whispered harshly. “Its as you said! I’m not trueborn! I’m a bastard!”

“Keep your voice low.” Ned murmured looking around inconspicuously. “I am only trying to make sense of your Uncle’s actions. As it was explained to me, your betrothal was towards the purpose of ensuring your safety should the King pass and the Queen seek to secure her son’s legacy by eliminating other claimants, you among them. Jon Arryn wanted you in the North and trusted that I wouldn’t let any harm come to the husband of my daughter, his own beloved nephew. I couldn’t bare to deny him anything given the fond memories I still have of my time spent at the Eyrie and his support for seeking retribution regarding my family during the war.”

Gendry blinked and swallowed thickly. It never occurred to him that he was in any danger, then again he was well aware of the cruelty of his father’s Lannister wife. Another thought occurred to him. “What was the purpose of the betrothal to Joffrey?”

Ned grimaced showing he wasn't too pleased with that part of the arrangement. “After the subject was broached with your father he alleged that Cersei would make what Jon sought for you impossible. The King knew the Queen wouldn’t be pleased to find him elevating someone other than his trueborn children. The offer of another of my daughters to Joffrey was meant to show that I wouldn’t support what little claim you had to the Iron Throne or send men against the Cersei’s son. I would never wed one of my daughters, knowingly putting her in harms way and leaving her as a hostage for those I would seek to overthrow. Sansa’s betrothal to Joffrey was meant to placate the Queen and those who would believe your betrothal to Arya a political maneuver seeking to usurp Joffrey’s claim as heir to the Seven Kingdoms.”

Gendry understood what he was saying but furrowed his brow trying to figure out why he looked so concerned. It seemed as if they had planned it all very carefully. “I don’t understand. It sounds like you thought it all out. Why are you worried then?”

Ned’s grimace deepened and he lowered his voice so much that Gendry had to strain to hear. “You
and Arya were married quickly so the Queen would have little time to object or make other arrangements. The same was not settled for Joffrey and Sansa. I didn’t think anything of it beforehand other than to believe that Jon Arryn was eager for your marriage to take place so that it would. Now I am questioning why he didn’t want to wait until both of my girls had flowered and we had two weddings and could insist there was no mal intent towards the Lannister’s. There would’ve been no need to calm any fear that you had your eyes set on the throne. As it is now however, you are my good-son and not Joffrey. I owe him no allegiance where as I do to you in the eyes of some.’’ He paused to let his words settle in and stepped even closer. “Jon Arryn had something he very badly wished to tell me but seemed to dread the obligation to do so. I believe whatever it may have been is the reason why he was poisoned, and I believe it has something to do with you and his plans to tie you to House Stark.”

Gendry felt a sense of dread settle within his own stomach. “Is there a danger? Should I be worried for Arya?’’ He asked in quick succession.

Ned smiled slightly before he resolved himself and hardened his expression grimly as he shook his head. “This is King’s Landing son. In the capital you’re always at risk.’’ He placed a hand on his good-son’s shoulder and gave it a consolatory squeeze. “As for Arya, you should always be worried. She can make enough trouble for all Seven Kingdoms combined. It is your job as well as mine to make certain she remains safe and even more so with her brothers leaving for the North tomorrow.’’

“You are not to accompany your family then?” Gendry inquired with a frown.

Ned looked away and scowled uncharacteristically. “Your father has named me the new Hand.’’ He paused and turned back towards Gendry having found his composure again. “They are your family now as well Gendry. You should send them off, spend what little time with them that you can.”

Gendry looked to the ground suddenly feeling guilty for having remained in the forge for so long lost in his own solitude and sorrow. He fidgeted not knowing what to say.

Luckily Ned seemed to read his face well. “Your absence is understandable in wake of your Uncle’s death, son. Every man deserves his time to grieve, though one must still remember their duty.’’ The way he leveled his eyes Gendry showed he thought he was already on the cusp of forsaking his obligations. “They have just ended lessons with the Grand Maester. I believe you can find them in the weapons yard.” He finished before patting him on the back and making his way down the Street Of Steel.

Gendry watched Ned’s retreating back not knowing what to make of all that had just been divulged, but one thing was for certain, beating steel wasn’t helping him to come to terms with things.
Mayhaps squaring off against his good-brothers would sooth him some. He hastily bid goodbye to Master Mott and made his way back to the keep for the first time in four days.

It didn’t take him long to travel the familiar distance, and when he entered the weapons yard it was to find Jon Snow crossing blunted practice swords with Theon Greyjoy. Jon had him on the defense and the Ironborn was clearly unhappy about it and his anger had him swinging foolishly and pushing forward instead of falling back. Gendry walked to where Robb stood and leaned against the wall next to him to watch how things panned out.

Robb nodded towards the pair sparring. “What do you think?” He asked with an arched eyebrow being cordial.

Gendry shrugged. “I think Greyjoy will have a nice bruise on his back and your brother will put him on his arse for good measure if the idiot keeps leading the charge forward with his right foot and leaving his left side blatantly exposed like that. He should be defending.”

Robb chuckled and grinned, appreciating and agreeing with the candid words and Gendry felt his lips twitch upward as well, finding the eldest Stark’s waggish demeanor a bit infectious. His expression morphed into a full out smirk though when he saw Theon surge forward with an ill fated thrust as Jon dodge right, twirling past his opponents blade and bringing his sword around with him to collide with a resounding thud on the Ironborns back left side. He could have ended it there as it was a debilitating blow but instead he decided to continue, bending low and using his sword to swipe the legs out from underneath of him, depositing him firmly on his arse. Gendry and Robb shared a look and a laugh as they watched Theon get to his feet appearing put out and glaring at them unhappily in their mirth at his expense.

He dusted himself off with a clearly bruised ego. “I suppose you think you could do better?” Theon jeered as he stepped towards them focusing his wrath on Gendry. “Last I remember of you, you were swinging a sword like a girl trying to stream pink ribbons through the air.”

Gendry remained solemn and stared the Ironborn down. “I don’t swing a sword.” He said simply not letting the man get a rise out of him. “I use a hammer now.”

Theon sneered. “Fancy yourself the likeness of your father do you? Think because you’re the Kings bastard you can live up to the tales of his campaign for the Iron Throne?” He laughed derisively showing he certainly didn’t believe it.

Gendry only shrugged knowing his lack of emotion was getting to Theon. “I fancy myself a smith.” He stated coolly. “It’s the King and Jon Arryn who fancy I’m my father come again.”
They’re the ones who imagine I could best the King at his finest.” He wasn’t lying either, they had both professed as much on numerous occasions and with witnesses in the yard to hear their opinions as well.

Theon scoffed “I’m going to enjoy watching Robb show you what it means to wield a weapon.”

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Arya couldn’t say why she was so angry. Well, that wasn’t necessarily true. She did have an idea as to why, though that only brought up another question in what seemed a non-ending series of questions she couldn’t find answers to lately. She was angry because the last four days she had been utterly distracted and performed horridly in her dance lessons with Syrio Forel. If that wasn't irritating enough she couldn’t seem to puzzle out what caused her lack of concentration, there was no logical reason for it.

Sure two days after her wedding and the first day back at lessons she was still finding herself wincing at sudden movements due to the lingering effects of Gendry’s punishment of her body. Stupid Bull. In her head it was all his fault, never mind how much she enjoyed coming undone in his arms and reveling in her own rough treatment. She found bliss in the fact that for once she wasn’t being treated like some delicate flower, and unlike riding and fighting it seemed as if she was actually allowed to whole heartedly throw herself into this passion while not being seen as forsaking her duty in acting like a Lady. It seemed too good to be true, she was actually permitted to enjoy something and not be found improper.

Still, after the soreness faded there was no explanation for her piss poor performance in lessons the following three days. Syrio didn’t hold back in telling her how badly her execution and technique had regressed either. She couldn’t count the number of times she had the pointy end of the rapier of the First Sword of Braavos brandished at her as he asserted she was ‘dead’. After another atrocious lesson she was almost wishing he would actually help her to that fate and save her some dignity.

Stomping down the halls in frustration she strode towards the weapons yard hoping Bran was there and she could steal his bow and take a few shots. Gods knows she was mindlessly good at that. Maybe it would calm her temper.

She walked out into the fresh air and found there was a large circle of people gathered facing towards the sparring pits. Her curiosity got the better of her wondering who had drawn such a crowd and she pushed her way to the front by using her elbows to get a better view. When she stepped through to the front to find it was Gendry facing off against Robb she scowled unattractively.
For four days she had not seen Gendry in the Red Keep. At first she thought mayhaps he was just sleeping in the adjoined chamber, but checking his bed each morning revealed he hadn’t returned the night before. He had appeared to be taking his Uncle’s death to heart so she only experienced mild irritation at his absence at first, but on the second night that had evolved into anger and on the third and fourth it had boiled over into out right rage. Where could he possibly be staying that the servants couldn’t find him and he didn’t need to come back for a change of clothes? She had begun to wonder if he had inherited his fathers taste for whoring. For some reason the thought grated her more than she would like to admit. As far as she was concerned he was only useful in this marriage for one thing and now it appeared she couldn’t even count on him for that.

Gods why couldn’t she have been born a man? Having a prick meant you could fight, drink, ride and fuck to your hearts content while being a woman meant you had to avoid and abhor all the same things less you earn a bad reputation. Never mind three of the four of those things were the activities she received the most pleasure from in life.

Looking back on it now, she didn’t understand how she could’ve been thick enough to fear lying with a man for the first time. Knowing women weren’t supposed to like it and men loved it should’ve told her all she needed to know—it was going to something she thoroughly enjoyed and wanted to participate in as much as she could. At least if she were a man she could go to a brothel and enjoy herself without having to rely on another as the only proper person available for the purpose of finding release. She wished she had such freedom. Hell if it wouldn’t cause such a scandal she wouldn’t mind going to a pleasure house to see if they could teach her a thing or two. She had a dance instructor so she could improve her skills with a sword, why not someone to educate her in bedsport? Besides, she had tried touching herself using her fingers in place of Gendry’s own, but she just couldn’t seem to get it right and it was beyond infuriating to realize she wasn’t capable of finding a way to get herself off without him.

Finding him here in the weapons yard just caused all of her pent up frustration and outrage, directed at him or otherwise, to rise to the surface. She glared at his form with narrowed eyes as he continued to exchange blows with her brother. They were both good, but it was clear Gendry had the advantage. She watched exceptionally close in hopes of finding a weakness so that she could exploit it the next chance got. She spotted Jon to her right and stalked over to him knowing he had a good eye for that sort of thing.

Jon smiled at her noticing her approach, although the expression seemed a bit apprehensive, it didn’t go unnoticed that he fidgeted a bit uncharacteristically as well, however that faded away quickly as he took in her own expression and his seamlessly morphed into a questioning look equipped with arched eyebrows. “Not enjoying the show?” He asked nodding towards the pair sparring and resuming his careful inspection of their precarious dance.

Arya snorted, “I’d enjoy it much more if Robb would bloody the stupid bull.”
Jon glanced at her sharply his brows furrowed. “Has he wronged you in someway?” His tone was dangerous and he eyed her carefully.

Arya scowled. “Do you think he’d still be standing if he had?”

Jon snorted and chuckled a bit shaking his head, turning his attention back to the fight looking placated. “What finds you in such a foul mood then little wolf?”

She grimaced and shrugged, “I’ve been performing poorly in dance lessons.”

Jon gave her a look. “And that’s why you want Robb to bloody your husband?” He eyed her dubiously chortling incredulously. His expression showed just how ridiculous he found the explanation and she didn’t much appreciate it.

Arya kicked him in the shin for his trouble and he hopped around cursing, but after the initial shock of the strike he only smirked at her and shook his head with an exasperated smile on his face which earned him a deeper scowl.

“I want my husband bloodied because I haven’t seen or heard from him in four days!” She snapped at him, begrudgingly coming out with it figuring he’d draw it out of her anyways.

Jon rolled his eyes at her. “His Uncle just passed Arya. Mayhaps he’s been keeping vigil in the Sept?”

Arya blinked and it was enough of a tell that Jon knew she hadn’t considered that.

He laughed at her. “Gods you make a horrible wife.”

She tried to kick him again but he dodged it smirking, much to her chagrin. She grimaced at him. “I didn’t want to be a wife! You wouldn’t run away with me like you promised and I never asked to be a Lady either!” She told him through gritted teeth.

Jon pulled her under one of his arms and ruffled her hair chuckling. “No one with any sense would call you a Lady, little Arya Underfoot. Unless of course they wanted to get stuck with the pointy
end.” He teased good-naturedly and was happy to elicit a small smile. He kissed her on the top of the forehead, all reservation forgotten as they fell back into their normal rhythm, and laughed when she tried to push him away. He nodded back towards the fight, “Your husband is quite good.”

Arya tucked herself up against her brother’s side and scowled. “Yes, unfortunately he is.”

Jon let out an amused little laugh, “Unfortunately?” He questioned looking down at her. “And here I thought you would appreciate his ability to provide you with protection!” He mocked. He fully expected the blow he received to the stomach and his anticipation meant he only lost half of his breath at the impact. He just hugged her closer as a result and was happy to see she did eventually break out in a grin before pushing him away half-heartedly.

They were silent for a moment after his laughter faded and they continued to watch, both intent on finding gaps in both Gendry’s and Robb’s defenses.

“There.” Jon whispered leaning down towards Arya more. “Did you see that?” He asked her.

She pulled away a bit and looked up at him shaking her head.

“Watch.” He told her. “His stance when he blocks high from the left, it leaves his right leg open from the hip down. There’s not much you could do to exploit that with a two handed longsword, but with your Braavosi balde, feign high then switch hands and you could easily slice the tendon in his right ankle if your fast enough. Though you’d be leaving yourself open and would most likely take a blow if you don’t move to get out of the way quick enough.”

Arya watched closer again and saw what Jon was talking about although she barely had time to register the break in his form before it disappeared. It’d be hard for anyone to capitalize on such a small shortcoming but mayhaps she could try. She observed for a moment longer and smirked noticing what the gap resulted from. “He raises his left elbow when he should keep it tucked in.” She grinned malevolently, whispering out of the corner of her mouth. “It alters his grip. That’s his weakness. That’s why his leg is left open. He’d never be able to get back into stance to block properly in time.” She smiled triumphantly and was happy to see Jon smirking down at her as well, obvious in his agreement.

She wondered if anyone else had noticed what they had, and couldn’t help but chuckle a bit at the thought that Robb definitely hadn’t. Gendry had charged at him unexpectedly and startled, Robb lost his footing and ended up on his arse leaving him with no other option but to yield, though there was nothing but a smile on his face and respect in his eyes as he did. Gendry extended his hand and helped him to his feet.
“Seven Hells!” Robb exclaimed still a bit short of breath as he came to stand. “My shoulders feel as if I just tried to square off against a bull. Fitting name they call you. I’m glad you’ve married my sister! I certainly wouldn’t want to face you on the field.”

Gendry smiled. “S’only luck really.” He tried. “Your quicker than I am. I needed to find a way to end it before my stamina gave out.”

Arya snorted off to the side. She knew for a fact he was being modest. She knew first hand from several different experiences that he certainly had much more stamina than that. Besides she was quicker than Robb and he’d bested her easily as well.

Robb seemed to sense he was being humble as well. “You’re too kind.” He said slapping him on the back. “Mayhaps we can spar again in the future and I’ll manage to find a weakness of yours that will put you on your arse.”

Gendry smirked and looked to be about to retort, but Arya stepped forward seeing her opportunity. “I think mayhaps I’ve already beaten you to that goal brother.” She approached them, eyeing Gendry in particular with predatory gleam in her eye. “I think I could put you on your arse. Would you care to see if I am right husband?” She hissed her at challenge him none too pleasantly, letting it be know she wasn't happy with him.

He gleaned that she wasn’t very fond of him at the moment and so did Robb as he looked between the two. Both men looked a bit at a loss but eventually the confusion and uncertainty faded from Gendry’s face and he shrugged. “If you wish to expose a flaw in my form then be my guest.” He motioned behind him to the practice ring.

Arya pushed past the both of them, ignoring Robb’s look of warning and the whispers that were being taken up amongst the disbelieving crowd. Her world narrowed to the blunted rapier she picked up off the rack and the burly, formidable looking man standing across from her with a similarly unthreatening hammer.

This time she wouldn’t let her anger get the best of her. For the first time in days she pushed everything away and cleared her mind, calling upon everything she knew of the Water Dance and taking stance as she watched Gendry do the same.

She didn’t rush in like she had the last time, eager to prove she had skill. This time she waited for him to come to her, waited to see what he would do. For all of his claims that he wasn't quick, he
came at her awfully fast, his hammer a blur of motion as it whirled about his person seeking out a means to reach her. The control she remembered was still there, but none of the force. Within minutes of them exchanging lightening fast blows it was painfully obvious to her that he was hardly putting any strength behind his swings at all.

Rolling her eyes, she found herself very near anger though she kept her mind clear. She had to remedy the situation regardless. As he brought his hammer around horizontally, aimed at her right shoulder, instead of ducking parrying or dodging she threw her practice blade to her left hand caught the shaft of his hammer in her right using it to steady herself as she brought a foot to his chest causing him to stumble backwards and the crowd to break out in a murmur.

“You aren’t weak so why would you act it.” She hissed circling him as he recovered and moved himself back into stance. “Use your strength, all of it.” It sounded more a command and a threat than a request. “Do you think an opponent won’t use theirs on me should I ever need to use these skills outside the yard?” She questioned him dangerously.

He grimaced slightly hearing sense but didn’t reply, and this time he waited for her to come to him. She obliged. She used all her speed to harry him methodically, attempting to find other parts of his form to exploit that she may have missed in her anger or watching from the sidelines. He was good other than what she and Jon had already discussed, so she resigned herself to the fact that their battle would be one of anticipation and visceral instinct, knowledge of ones opponent, a battle of the minds rather than simply skill.

She kept him busy enough that he made no move to take the offense until she intentionally let up and backed off. Then she waited and braced herself, looking once more for holes as he did. His charge was just as unyielding as she remembered it, but in the clarity of her mind she was prepared, although mayhaps not as much as she originally thought.

He seemed to read her expertly, and as she moved to block his assault it was as if he need only a second to realize her method and brush it aside while already having considered carefully his next attempt to maim her. He was towering fluid grace, but thankfully she was rapid wind. Had it not been for her equally quick thinking in throwing herself backwards over the hammer aiming towards her exposed spine, and then springing up off of the ground with her hands to find her feet again, he would’ve had her on her knees. He had clearly expected to win with the move because instead of following through with the strike as he would’ve had he been facing a man, he had halted the swing enough that she would’ve only lost her footing. He had thought he was going to connect and slowed the blow not to hurt her.

Narrowing her eyes at the knowledge she found herself gritting her teeth. “Hit me you fool!” She seethed at him as they circled each other once more. The look in his eye was enough to tell her that he had no intention of doing anything of the sort and she found rage seeping into her cleared mind.
She attacked, wasting little time before sweeping her blade down towards his left shoulder to expose his weakness. When he moved to block, she saw his eyes widen in surprise as she changed her weapon to her other hand and spun, using her wrist to arc up and down quickly, bringing it down on his unprotected calf before diving away from his attempt at a recovery and rolling to her feet. She was pleased to see he had fallen to one knee from her blow and that she had managed to get away unscathed. “Keep your elbow down.” She smirked at him.

He got to his feet his face turning completely to stone as he turned to her. He waited patiently for her to come back at him and she did. He continued diligently blocking his blows, though he was considering her with a new shrewdness and his elbow now stayed properly tucked into his side not giving her any more openings to abuse.

Arya could feel the sweat dripping off of her in sheets but refused to feel the burn in her muscles. It felt like they had been going at it for years, exchanging blows without either of them managing to find a way to make the other yield. Then she saw it, she saw a small hole developing where she might just be able to catch him along his right side and end the stalemate.

Before really thinking it through she decided to try and capitalize on it. She drew his weapon arm far right and was then thrusting for his middle directly afterwards. Too late she realized he had not only anticipated it, but had left himself open towards the purpose of drawing her into his trap. It was an interesting move to say the least, leaving himself prone to injury and risking taking a blow so he could ultimately win the fight. It worked. He sidestepped so her weapon glanced off him with little impact while his hammer swung around unimpeded aiming a debilitating blow toward her unprotected middle. He stopped it before it could land true and sweep the breath from her lungs. He left it just hovering there over her stomach, a reminder taunting her that he had once again bested her.

Angered at herself for falling for his trick, she felt herself become even more furious he hadn’t followed through by actually hitting her. She threw down her weapon crossly and swiped his hammer away from her looking murderous. She pushed him with all the strength she had. “Hit me you idiot! Finish the fight properly!” She demanded ludicrously. He just stood there stoically, letting her attempt to push him with little result and doing nothing to stop her. Enraged and feeling like a child she pushed him one last time before stalking out of the practice yard, pushing past the still silent crowd and ignoring Gendry’s calls after her as well as the fall of footsteps she could hear following her.

She didn’t realize who it was coming after her until she was in the stables and a hand reached out grabbing her wrist and whirling her around. It was Gendry.

“Wait. Arya.” He beckoned as he grabbed her and spun her into him.
She didn’t wait to hear what he had to say. She pushed away from him and had her right fist sailing towards his face. He caught her wrists at the last instant, surprise and affront flashing through his eyes before his grip tightened.

“Arya I—“ He tried again.

She cut him off again, this time using the hand that he didn’t currently have a hold on to try and punch him in the jaw once more. It didn’t work. Again he saw it coming and again he caught her other wrist in his grip, his eyes heated and showing his displeasure.

“Seven hells! Stop trying to hit me woman!” He growled, shaking her a bit in his frustration. “How can someone so small be such a huge pain in my ass?” He asked, his own anger now apparent, eyes boring into her own.

She narrowed hers at his statement and snapped right back at him even though he still had her completely restrained. “Why couldn’t you just hit me!” She spat at him face twisted in anger.

His nostrils flared and his jaw clenched staring her down, but as he went to open his mouth to offer what she was sure going to be a shit explanation she decided she didn’t even want to hear it, didn’t need to really. With her blood running warm from sparring, his cobalt blue eyes were just too damn pretty and seeing the stubborn set of his jaw and the feel of his large calloused hands engulfing her wrists in a strong grip instantly had moisture dripping down her thighs beneath her breeches.

She curled a leg around one of his trunk like calves and jerked him towards her. It had the desired effect. He dropped her wrists as he stumbled into her, his body crashing into hers as he moved to hold her against him so he could steady them both and prevent a fall to the ground. Wide-eyed, he made a surprised little sound as her lips crudely found their way to his. As soon as he was steady his lids fluttered closed and a growl came from low in his throat as he fully immersed himself into the rough hunger and lust behind her kiss, adding his own ravenousness to it, neither of their angers having dissipated at all.

It was all teeth and hard pressure, a battle in and of itself, all the fury she felt at his absence and the inkling that she was being set aside for another being poured into it along with his own addition, the mournful anger and frustration he had towards his Uncles death and the aggravation that she simply wouldn’t talk to him. Together they bruised and bloodied and warred one another with lips in a harsh and brutal rhythm that neither was willing to stop. His reaction had been instantaneous and the kiss itself all consuming, it wiped all thought from his brain and had the hands he’d been using to steady them both trailing down to her ass to bite into her flesh harshly.
She didn’t cry out at the pain though she did groan against him, she was sure to have bruises marring her pale skin in minutes. Nevertheless she exacted her retribution as she bit his lip hard enough to draw blood, the taste of it immediate as it coated their tongues and yet not enough for them to pull apart. With their crossing of blades not long past and they way the kiss was paced and the anger behind it, the tangy iron of blood almost seemed an appropriate backdrop.

When he heard his tunic being ripped down the front and felt her fumbling with his laces he withdrew breathless, his gaze a heady blur as he mindlessly sought out her laces as well. He pushed her pants over her hips as she hastily kicked only one leg out of them while simultaneously withdrawing his throbbing from cock from his own breeches. The feel of her hands on his prick had him snarling as his eyes rolled back in his head and his mind went blank with need. In his sudden ferocious haste to see her disrobe her bottom half he stopped bothering with her smallclothes and ripped them clean off her body, urgency paramount along with the desire to bury himself deep in her cunt and take her as roughly here as she’d wanted him to on the field.

She was on him again as soon as he had ripped free of the fabric that confined her, jumping back onto him, her lips savagely seeking his as he caught her and her legs wrapped around his broad middle. He wasted no time in using one hand to position himself at her entrance and once there he was thrusting himself as deep as he could go with no preamble, causing her the gasp as she threw her head back at the welcomed intrusion.

With nothing for his hungry lips to ravage they found their way to her neck and then lower to her sternum even as he began a relentless, voracious rhythm plunging into her thoughtlessly in his angry need. Her shirt was still clinging to her sweaty body, but he didn’t bother with removing it, just nipped hard at her breasts through it, wetting the linen even as she arched into him. Somehow he remembered to be thankful she hadn’t bound them today.

He had begun walking backwards towards a stable door aiming to utilize it as something to push her up against so he could fuck her as hard as he wanted rather than just supporting her all on his own standing in the middle of the corridor. But then her nails dug deep into his back at a particularly enthusiastic bite to her breasts. He hissed in pain and the feeling of the blood she had drawn dripping down his spine, mingling with his sweat, had him growling and closing the last of the distance to the wall fast enough that the impact her back had with it was loud in their ears and shook what felt like the whole structure as the horse inside the stall whinnied and nickered anxiously.

The noise Arya made as she was slammed up against the wall and she lost her dominance in the battle over his lips was part breathy sigh, part painful yelp, and part snarl. Gendry took note of it only as far as it aroused him further. He peeled her legs from about his torso so he could loop elbows under her knees and hold her up like that to spread her wider and go deeper. Her face twisted and her mouth was now ajar with eyes wide, surprised at the depths he was reaching as she panted in time with his thrust, helpless to move while he held her there and fucked her savagely.
He used the strength of his thighs and her position against the wall to begin pistoning into her, the rage he hadn’t been able to release by beating hammer against steel supplementing each forceful stroke of his cock into her magnificent warmth.

Arya had reached back behind her with one hand to grab a bar there, seeking something to hold onto to as a means to brace herself as he pounded into her without reserve, and soon he found he was guiding her legs back around his waist so he could grab hold of the metal as well in order to assist in the task of submerging his cock even more brutally into her tight little canal. With her legs once again back round him and his knuckles now white around the iron, Gendry drove into her with all the force he could muster in his frenzied pace while Arya gasped and fell forward onto him, burying her head in his neck and her nails in his back.

He grit his teeth at the bit of pain of her nails and found that he was thrusting harder and faster as a result, causing the door to shake and the horse behind it to snort skittishly at the noise, their furious coupling sounding like a battering ram beating at the gates of a battle entrenched castle. She was clutching herself to him for dear life as he punished her body, her hold threatening to strangle him as he crushed her over and over again against the door and she began to near climax as indicated by her involuntary moans.

He could feel her teeth grazing his skin as he jarred her again and again, and when it was finally enough to bring her over the edge and leave her convulsing around him, she cried out stridently before muffling the sound by gnawing harshly into his neck. The bite was hard enough to draw curses from his mouth, blood from his veins, and the seed from within him. He joined her in finding release with a shout of pain that beckoned forth his orgasm and had him spilling fiercely inside of her, his cock twitching from the fury with which the seed exited his loins.

Arya was still moaning in his arms when the rage ebbed away from him and his head finally cleared. He collapsed against her fully, still pressed the wall. She was still in his arms, her legs wrapped around his torso and him still fully immersed in her cunt though going soft. He removed a hand from the bars and stroked her hair as he tried to catch his breath. His chest was heaving like the billows they used at the forge to keep the fire at temperature, and with each breath he took the pain of the bite and claw marks she’d left became more acute.

When Arya finally untangled her arms from around his neck and leaned back, he got a good look at her flushed faced and throat. He immediately felt horrible seeing purple skin and a fatigued face, the violence of what had just occurred between them finally settling in his mind as his stomach turned.

Suddenly he was disgusted with what had just transpired. He was appalled by the madness of what had taken place between them, the anger and urgency, and especially his barbarism towards her. He had lost control, and given recent events he should’ve been aware of how little it would take.
This was his *wife*. He’d never shown any woman anything remotely resembling forcefulness beyond gripping them a bit demandingly, his fingers digging into flesh slightly harder than they should, or tossing them about a tad carelessly to get to a better position. None of his previous experiences compared at all to the savagery he had just shown in his need to dominate her, to show her he could be just as fierce and brash as she and that his strength wasn't something to be trifled with. That it wasn't something she should try to coax out of him, but rather something to be wary of.

What’s worse was she didn’t seem to mind his method of expressing as much. She actually seemed to marvel at the manner in which he had just taken her. She was exhausted, and bruised and satiated and her now serene expression echoed the idea that she liked that he had taken her in a stable and fucked her raw like a common whore; giving the pain her body so desperately sought from him in the weapons yard but to her cunt instead. She was boneless in his arms breathing heavily as her shirt clung to her breasts from where he had attacked it with his mouth rendering it transparent.

He almost got lost in the look of her, her hair wild, brow glistening with sweat, and cheeks a rosy pink. She looked more alive than he’d ever remembered seeing anyone and he found it laughable that he considered her more at home here than in their chambers. It didn’t drown out his sense of shame at what just occurred though, and it was her words that finally brought him back to reality along with the turning of his stomach.

“Our is the fury.” She had whispered her eyelids fluttering closed, a happy little smile on her face.

His stomach plummeted at those words. The words of his father’s house, the man he aspired to be different from. He pushed her legs off of him roughly and dropped his hold on her stepping back quickly. “*Never* do that again.” He teemed dangerously, turning away from her harshly, eyes on the ground. He was shaking in rage as he put his cock back behind laces and began trying to tie them closed. Ours is the fury indeed!

When he felt a hand brush his shoulder he whirled on her, gaze burning and finding her putting herself back together. “I’m your *husband* Arya.” He seethed at her, turbulence behind his bright eyes watching as she tugged on her britches. “I’m not your personal toy or the tool you use to *fuck away your frustration*.” He spat at her disgusted. “I’m a fucking person!” He roared, taking a threatening step towards her. He clenched his fists trying to maintain control and bring down his volume. “Jumping on me and kissing me like *that*… the *anger*…the both of us…seven hells, what that brought to mind and what I *did*! I don’t want to be that man.” He breathed out trying to explain it and doing a shit job. “I can’t just mindlessly fuck you into oblivion in the middle of the royal stables. You are my *Lady wife* Arya… I might’ve hurt you! I couldn’t think I was so mad with frustration! You were being so infuriating I *wanted* you to feel my strength…” He trailed off realizing that was exactly what he had wanted and feeling lower than scum because of it.
Arya took a step towards him but he halted her with a warning hand and his own backward step. He closed his eyes trying to get a hold of himself. “Fucking like animals isn’t going to solve problems and it doesn’t just make the anger you’re feeling go away. It’s not fair to use me like that just to make yourself feel something other than your own frustration! I won’t stand for my own wife treating me as just the cock that gets her off! We are married Arya, there’s more to it than just sex.”

Her grey eyes flashed. “Oh there’s more to it than just sex but respect has nothing to do with it does it?” She questioned harshly. He looked at her bewildered as to what that had to do with anything but she paid it no heed, just kept going. “Why couldn’t my husband just do me the courtesy of treating me like an equal hmm? Show me respect enough as a fellow swordsman not to take it easy!”

Gendry rolled his eyes. “You challenged me remember?” He growled harshly.

Arya rolled her eyes. “Yes and you could’ve been decent enough to hit me!”

Gendry snorted and chuckled mirthlessly. Decent enough to hit her! How ridiculous did that sound! She must’ve seen the look in his eyes because she was suddenly speaking again. “Don’t you look at me like that you stupid bull!” She scowled. “Don’t look at me like I’m some helpless little girl who can’t take a hit from the likes of you.”

He threw his hands in the air. “You can’t!” He yelled exasperated.

She glared at him fiercely enough that he felt like he might spontaneously combust. “Oh yes I can.” She told him adamantly. “What do you call what you just did back there, hmm? When you just tackled me into the wall? You speared me harder with your cock than Theon has ever has managed to do with a blunted practice sword and I took it fine.” She said matter-of-factly before taking a step towards him eyes narrowed slightly. “Not only did I take it, seven hells I enjoyed it.” She told him. He blinked rapidly and she saw his adam’s apple bobbing as he swallowed thickly. “I may be small but I’m not breakable and damn it if I’m not powerless to the fact that you and that stupid hammer make me furious enough to want to beat you silly while at the same time making something in my belly begin to ache and that traitorous thing between my legs start dripping with need.” She was babbling now, on a rampage, but Gendry didn’t look like he was going to speak, or if he even could really, and she couldn’t stand the silence so she just went on.
“I may be new to it, and from what little my septa has ever told me, lying with you should be a burden but its not. I don’t care if that’s un-lady like. I like it. I like it as much as fighting and riding and hunting and I want to do it just as much as I want to do any of my favorite things. I like the way your cock feels inside me.” She noticed Gendry’s eyes closed at that of all things and his jaw clenched. She couldn’t quite figure out why but she wasn't nearly done venting. “I like the feel of my muscles burning, and the feel of you over me and your sweat dripping down after awhile. I like watching the muscles in your arms ripple or your abdomen flutter and the faces you make because of me. I’ve never felt powerful around men, I’m always being underestimated, but it’s different when I’m with you. You make me feel powerful and I like it. I like how my name sounds coming from your mouth and I certainly like it when you use your mouth on me. I even like tasting myself on your lips when you kiss me afterwards and it lingers in your stubble. I don’t taste as good as you do though and I still don’t understand why you were so concerned about thrusting into my mouth when I practically suffocate you between my legs by writhing round like a bloody fish.” She took his chuckling as a good sign. “I enjoy it too you know. Returning the favor and taking you in my mouth, hearing the noises you make. I really enjoy the way you tense up and how it feels when you spill your seed inside me. I can feel the warmth of it and how your cock shudders a bit as it does. It feels nice, and it feels nice when I stand up afterward and it starts to drip down my leg. Sometimes when it does I’ll even run my fingers through it so I can taste it, curious if it’s different each time it mixes with mine.” She fidgeted a bit unable to discern the exact meaning of the look in his eye as he stared her down intensely. She felt kind of foolish after just coming right out and saying all these things to him but it felt good to say them at the same time. He was the only one she could actually admit it to anyways without causing offense or disgust. Still he wasn’t saying anything back so she began fidgeting slightly. “I’m sorry if I jump on you when you don’t want me to, I didn’t know you didn’t like it.”

“Arya looked at him puzzled. “What are you trying to control?”

He laughed again at her naivety and just ran a hand over the back of his neck sheepishly. “I’m trying to stop myself from doing what I did back there. Being cruel and hurting you, or selfish and not giving you your pleasure before I take mine.”

She frowned. “You always give me pleasure and you can’t hurt me.”

The thrill of hearing the beginning of that statement was negated by the last. Gendry rolled his eyes. “Yes and I’m sure your back feels wonderful and won’t be bruised in the morning.” He stated sarcastically. “And yes I know you’re not breakable and that you’re not made of glass. No need to remind me again.”
She punched his arm pouting and the corners of his mouth twitched upwards slightly in amusement of their own accord as they both fell into silence, just staring at each other. Her words replayed through their heads on loop causing her to blush like mad and his blood to run hot.

“Where have you been for the past four days?” She blurted out into the silence before she could stop, horrifying herself with how desperate she sounded. The knowledge had been plaguing her for days, and if she was honest with herself she knew that was why she had been distracted in her dance lessons.

He grimaced having hoped she wouldn’t ask, still he gave her an answer. “I’ve been at the forge.”

She scrutinized him pryingly, a bit apprehensive and feeling vulnerable. “And that’s where you slept?” She asked her voice sounding skeptical.

His eyes widened as he realized what she must have thought and suddenly it made sense why she had truly been angry with him. “Yes! Gods! I have a cot there.” He hurried to explain. “I slept only in the forge.” He took a step towards her but stopped himself from drawing her into an embrace. “There’s only you Arya. I swear it.” He told her eyes shining with sincerity. It amazed him how much smaller than him she really was as he towered over her, and that he still didn’t feel like he could just pull her into his arms like he wanted to. Even after all of their couplings they weren’t completely comfortable with one another, at least not yet, they still had reservations. “I’m not my father.” He assured her and himself. “I must say though, I’m flattered you think I’d have the stamina for others considering how busy you seem to want to keep me.” He chuckled softly hoping to relieve the tension a bit.

She smiled a bit but said, “Your mad if you believe I think that highly of your talents.” Then she looked to the ground before meeting his eyes resolutely, her voice turned more insistent, “I might like your cock but I won’t be disinclined to chop it right off if I find it necessary. Don’t convince yourself otherwise.”

Gendry grinned like a fool, especially in face of such a threat and from such a capable woman. Still her jealousy was endearing, especially because she didn’t seem to recognize it for what it was. Plus he did find her irritation and snark quite beguiling though it was a bit stupid on his part. Why it would bring anyone amusement to anger someone as skilled with a blade as she was beyond him, but he did nonetheless. She was magnificent in her anger.

He mock bowed at her smirking. “Of course m’Lady. I would expect nothing less from you.”
She scowled at him and he only chuckled which earned him a smack. “Don’t laugh at me! I’m serious you stupid bull!”

His face erupted into a lopsided grin as he half-heartedly attempted to bat her assault away. “I’m not laughing.” He lied.

He really should’ve been prepared for it, but he was still surprised when her foot came down on his instep. She’d done the same thing to him out of anger when she was still a child and it seemed it was still her go to move. He cursed loudly and stooped down as he hopped around trying to relieve the pain. He knew he must’ve looked the fool considering how large he was but he really didn’t care.

He tried to glare at Arya but when she just smirked at him he began to chuckle finding the whole situation laughable. The two of them were quite obviously the worst suited people to court. When he was finally able to put his significant weight back on the foot she looked to him again.

“I must go. I’m to join Sansa and Lady Margery in dressing for tonight’s feast.” She informed him distastefully.

He gave her a pitying look. “How’d you get lured into doing that?” He knew enough to realize she’d find that kind of thing quite tedious. She’d never willingly get stuck with insipid women and their gossip.

Arya grimaced. “I’ve been distracted and you’ve not been around so I couldn’t very well say no when I was invited to spend time with the gaggle of Tyrells from Highgarden. It was mind numbingly boring listening to their nonsense and I had to keep poking myself with an embroidery needle just to stay awake.” Gendry snickered imagining it, her in her britches with a tangle of knots in her lap that she tried to pass for stiches while everyone else made perfect lace and twittered at one another. “I sort of dozed off in the middle of conversation when I was being asked a question. Everyone just stared expectantly so I nodded my head yes and now I’m expected to arrive to the torture cheerfully.”

Gendry thought about trying to ease her pain a little by being understanding of her plight, but then the pain in his foot reminded him that he should probably goad her and return the favor. “Mayhaps you should’ve stuck yourself with the Needle you carry at your hip instead of the one in your sewing basket. It would’ve been more effective in keeping you awake and probably gotten you out of it sooner, though with more blood shed on your part surely.” He smirked pleased with himself.

She scowled at him unhappily and went to stomp away but he quickly darted out and grabbed her,
pulling her back to him. He had intended on simply giving her a kiss to feel her anger melt, and he
did, but found he was only able to pull away slightly before something came over him and he was
whispering in her ear, her previous confession in his mind as he did. He suddenly needed her to
know he felt the same.

“I enjoy it too.” There was no mistaking what ‘it’ was given the tone of his voice. He brushed hair
behind her ear so his lips could graze skin as he continued. “Still I find it hard to believe you enjoy
my taste half as much as I do yours.” He murmured in a voice he didn’t know could sound so
husky. It gave him confidence to feel her knees weaken slightly as they both had to steady her
against him so she didn’t collapse. Her breathing was now ragged and he loved knowing he had
such an effect. He wanted to exploit it. “I don’t think I could ever truly explain how much it makes
my blood boil when you ‘writhe like a bloody fish’ and I have to hold you down to properly
pleasure you with my mouth. I love it when you come across my tongue.” She actually whimpered!
He had to gulp and get his own pulse under control before he could go on. “No words have ever
pleased me more than your confession to crave for me the way I crave to fill you.” He trailed a
finger down her neck. “I very nearly ravaged you again when you spoke of how much you loved
drawing my cock inside of you.” He pulled back to look into her eyes. “Arya.” He whispered. Her
gaze was darkened by a lust that mirrored his own as he brushed her cheek and lips with his thumb.
“My Wife.” He told her possessively, not really knowing what came over him. He thought she
might pull away at that but she didn’t so he found his hand trailing below her britches to do the
unthinkable and she didn’t stop him.

He had been dwelling on it ever since her words gave voice to the thought and now he needed to
witness the magnificence of it. He moved two fingers up the inside of her thigh where their sex had
collected and smeared it on his skin before running his digits back up through her cleft wanting for
more. He hadn’t even pulled his large hand from behind her laces before she had caught him
around the wrist and was moving to bring his fingers to her mouth and suck off the juices there, her
grey eyes directed at him through her lashes as she did. He groaned in agony at the exquisite sight,
his eyes flickering shut as he battled to keep them open and watch her. He had truly never known
beauty until he had seen Arya Stark. The moment his fingers left her mouth he crashed his lips to
hers, reveling in the taste of them he found on her tongue. When he pulled away he did so reluctantly.

Placing a last chaste kiss on her forehead he whispered a hasty, “I’ll see you at the feast,” Before
withdrawing and stalking quickly away from the stables. He couldn’t look behind him for fear of
running back and finishing what he’d started, but if he had he would’ve seen his wife sliding down
the wall of the stable unable to support herself in the boneless state which he had left her.

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Arya picked herself up from the ground after a moment, completely mortified and infuriated that
she found herself in a wilted heap because of some whispered words from a stupid bull of a man.
She was furious once she realized he’d probably known what he was about and had done it on
purpose. The anger was only given more fuel after she realized she’d done nothing to stop it; that
she wanted it to go on even. Gods she was letting a man turn her into a simpering wreck. She cringed thinking she might be turning into a twittering little Lady, a woman who would throw herself at their Lord’s feet.

Stalking through the halls simmering in her anger she had resolved to find a way to get her revenge. She was so absorbed in her mission to come up with a plan that she probably threw open the door to Lady Margery’s apartments rather harder than necessary. She made quite the entrance and only stopped once she was halfway into the chamber and realized they weren’t her own. How her feet had carried her here she wasn’t entirely sure. She blinked rapidly scanning the room and its occupants. She found Lord Renly and Ser Loras playing cyasse while Margery and Sansa examined dresses. They all were looking at her with varied expressions of astonished amusement or in Sansa’s case exasperated mortification.

“Err, sorry I’ve just come from the weapons yard. I meant to head to my rooms first. I haven’t the slightest idea how I ended up here” She frowned in thoughtful confusion thinking back on the route she’d just taken.

Renly’s expression erupted into an uncomfortably familiar grin seeing her bewildered expression and Ser Loras looked highly tickled as well. Sansa on the other hand looked appalled and she was quick to voice her opinions.

“Gods Arya! Look at you, you’re filthy! Did you have any intention of bathing before the feast?” She admonished derisively.

Arya narrowed her eyes and turned to glare at her elder sister, clearly not in the mood. She went to open her mouth, but the swivel of her head must’ve given Sansa a clear view of her throat.

Immediately the redhead was gaping at her, gasping in revulsion. “Your neck!” She squealed pointing at her, eyes bulging out of her head. “How are you going to hide that!”

Arya glowered unhappily at her sister, uncertain of what she was supposed to be hiding. Still, she brought her fingers up to her throat where Sansa’s eyes seemed to be fixated. Upon contact with the skin there she hissed at the tenderness of it and suddenly realization flooded her.

She ran towards the room’s large vanity and looked at herself in the mirror. She found the right side of her neck covered in bruises from ear to sternum and saw her face turning purple in fury.
“That fucking bastard!” She thundered exposing her neck and moving so her nose was almost touching the mirror to get a better glance. It looked worse up close. “Roose Bolton is going to cringe after I’m done with that idiot! I’m going to flay that stupid bull alive!” She huffed enraged.

Loras and Renly were howling with laughter now, and she saw Margery approaching her from behind and examining the love bites with a smile.

The older girl’s eyes twinkled and her face was warm. ”Your husband I presume?” She asked as she examined the purple marring Arya’s skin. Arya just nodded yes, afraid she would snap if she opened her mouth to answer such a ridiculous question. Who else would it be? Margery smiled knowingly before continuing. “He could hardly have given you these without your consent.” The truth in her statement caused Arya to pout sullenly as the older girl just tittered softly. “Not to worry I have potions and experience in masking such marks. You’ll need to bathe first of course.” She motioned off to the side and Arya saw several of her ladies maids move to bring out a copper tub and silk screen to hide it before exiting to fetch water.

Arya frowned not really knowing how to respond though Sansa was eager to offer gratitude for her, ever the polite Lady. “Your assistance is most gracious Lady Margery. My sister thanks you for saving her from the shame of attending the feast in such a condition.” She looked at Arya pointedly before going on with gritted teeth and in a strained tone. “I’m sure she’ll reprimand her husband and make certain this doesn’t happen again.”

Arya snorted angrily and mumbled under her breathe. “He’ll be lucky if I don’t bury my dagger in his flesh given the way he left me in the stables.”

Margery’s eyes flashed in glee and a languid smile curled her lips. “And just what did he do to you in the stables, hmm?” She asked with a conspiratorial grin.

Arya hadn’t realized anyone would be able to her and too quickly she replied “Nothing.” Blushing crimson in the process.

Margery looked at her sideways, her expression prompting Arya to think she might look much the same had someone just stolen her favorite dress. “Oh come now, we’re among friends. You can be free with your tongue, we certainly won’t be repeating what you say. Isn’t that right?” She turned to her guests.

Ser Loras and Lord Renly both readily swore their tongues weren’t prone to flapping, and, aiming to please Margery and remain polite, Sansa begrudgingly agreed she wouldn’t tell either. Still, Arya looked wary and distrusting. It didn’t help that she was reluctant to admit to anyone the
embarrassing manner in which she had succumbed to Gendry’s words. Margery however was incorrigible and had a surprisingly sharp ability to read people.

“So then tell us Lady Arya, did your husband bruise your cunt as readily as he did your neck?” She asked lightly, as if she were speaking about the weather. “Or is the reason you seek to flay him because he left you wanting as most men are prone to do?”

Arya was just as shocked as Sansa to hear such crude words spoken so freely from such pretty, innocent looking lips, however the traumatized look on her sisters face had her laughing wolfishly at the brazenness of it. She instantly decided she may have jumped too quickly to conclusions about Margery Tyrell. She could actually grow to like the girl.

When she stopped laughing she found Margery sill looking at her expectantly. “So, which one was it?” She prompted sweetly just as her handmaidens returned with buckets of water. She could still see Arya’s reluctance so she leaned innocently forward with an offer, “Mayhaps if you tell me we could think up an appropriate course of action in order to return the favor to your Lord husband.”

At the proposal to help her find revenge Arya almost found herself giving in, the only thing that stopped her from loosing her tongue was the embarrassment that was sure to follow. She’d need to be well into her cups for that she reckoned.

“Loras,” Margery looked to her brother, “would you care to share some of that fine Tyroshi pear brandy with Lady Arya? I think it might assist in our efforts to come up with the best method of reprisal for Lord Baratheon.”

Arya looked at her stunned wondering if she could read minds. Margery Tyrell was certainly more than a pretty face. Arya didn’t know whether to laugh at that fact that it was she who was underestimating another woman, or run in the opposite direction of the wit that could surely cut as severely as any sword. In the end she was too dumbfounded to do anything but remain. She found herself accepting the brandy that was offered her in a delirious stupor, still in shock. She had never been one for alcohol but she found herself craving it now, and it did in fact loosen her tongue enough to regale them with the full story while her bath was prepared, though it did take some skillfully led questions to get her to come out with it.

Renly was the one who approached her rather than Ser Loras, swaggering over after snatching a glass off the table and pouring some liquid out of a wineskin as he did. “So little she-wolf, was it that show you and your husband put on in the weapons yard that’s got you wishing for retribution against my dear nephew?” He asked lifting an eyebrow playfully. “I must say I’ve never seen a woman so adamantly insist that her husband strike her. Then again I’ve never seen a woman who wanted to be struck at all. They must do it very differently in the North.” His eyes glittered with suppressed laughter over the rim of his glass as he joined her in taking a sip.
He looked much too much like Gendry for her not to scowl at him. Still, he wasn't tall enough or broad enough to match the stature of her husband, though he was clearly more arrogant by half, not to mention exuberant. The man had on more jewels than she ever hoped to own.

“I didn’t want him to hit me, I wanted him to try and hit me.” She attempted to explain. It sounded admittedly less logical once she tried to voice her sentiment aloud. She frowned huffily at the realization even though she still tried to clarify it with different words. “The stupid bull was lessening his blows and swinging lethargically. He was only using half as much skill as he had! I wanted a fair fight is all.”

Loras wandered over to stand in their little circle. “You don’t believe he gave you a fight?” He raised an eyebrow.

Before she had a chance to answer Renly was smirking and adding. “I would be careful how you answer that my Lady. If remember it correctly he did best you.”

Arya scowled. “Did I yield?”

Loras and Renly both grinned but it was Loras who spoke up. “No you surely didn’t.” He agreed before modifying his statement, “you did, however, halt your dance when his hammer stopped at your back.” He tarried a bit before his smile widened. He looked as if he was recalling something exceptionally hilarious. “Then of course you stomped off in a right strop. But not before you tried to push him over. I can’t imagine the mountain could push your husband over!” He said turning to share a laugh with Renly, both of them smirking at the thought and looking highly amused.

Arya however was not. Too bad she didn’t have time for a retort.

Renly picked it right back up after that, “I wonder what would’ve happened had we followed you after you disappeared. It seems as if the show might’ve continued, perhaps taken a wicked little turn.” He waggled his eyes suggestively.

Arya couldn’t help but snort at how ridiculous he looked when he did that. “You’re just as infuriating as my bloody husband.” She told him.

Renly grinned and shrugged flippantly. “What can I say, it must run in our blood.” Then he feigned worry while considering her. “You’re not going to throw yourself at me now are you? Just because
you find me infuriating I shouldn’t be concerned that you might try rip my clothes off, should I?”

He paused momentarily before continuing. “That is what you did to my nephew though, isn’t it?” He questioned her a bit too knowingly. “I saw him in the corridor not long before you arrived. His shirt had somehow been ripped right down the middle and it was the strangest thing, there were small streaks of blood staining the back that look suspiciously like claw marks.”

Arya blushed and Sansa inhaled sharply off to the side. The elder girl looked to her sister for confirmation and appeared as if she needed to find a seat when she realized from Arya’s expression that it wasn’t just an unsaid insinuation on Renly’s part but truth. Her voice was hoarse and horrified and there was a tinge of disgust there as well. “Isn’t it enough that you insist on crossing blades with him?” Sansa asked sharply. “Why in the name of the Seven would you rip his tunic and raise your hand against him as well?”

Suddenly Arya was furious again and it all came tumbling out. “It’s not my fault he’s a massive idiot who insists on infuriating the Seven hells out of me!” She shouted indignantly. Sansa always could make her loose her temper. “The stupid lummox just had to go and try and treat me like a Lady when he knows I hate it!” The liquor probably didn’t help either. “Of course somehow he makes himself transform into some sort of legendary warrior from the stories and makes it so I can’t resist him! All I wanted to do was take that blasted hammer of his and shove it so far up his ass, but I just couldn’t do that, could I? Now I just go completely senseless and throw myself on him. As if I think that strangling his cock with my cunt and thumping him with my lips rather than my fist is anywhere near the same as teaching him I’m not to be trifled with.”

Loras snorted and chuckled sardonically, “I think that probably does quite the opposite really. He’ll be trifling with you a lot more I’d say.”

Arya pouted petulantly, glaring unappreciatively at the comment, and plopped herself down into the seat Renly had vacated. “No he won’t.” She told them. Eyebrows rose all around but she didn’t see them before she explained. “I bit and scratched him, we marked each others necks, and he lifted me off the ground and fucked me hard up against the door to a stable, but afterwards he was furious with himself. He was angry that he’d let me goad him into being so rough and treating him like a cock instead of a person. The idiot was actually afraid he’d hurt me.” Arya took a swig of the brandy and made a face as it burned her throat on the way down. “As if that stupid bull could have hurt me! I was the one gave him little choice but to take me! It was all me!” She seethed. “Naturally I got angry with him again and I just started babbling, well yelling really. He made the strangest faces as I did but I couldn’t very well stop once I’d started.”

“What could you possibly have yelled at him about?” Renly asked truly looking baffled.

Arya harrumphed sardonically recalling the awkward admission that had spilled out of her in anger, though in hindsight it didn’t seem all that discomfiting to remember. She wrote that off as the effects of the brandy though and allowed her tongue to flap. “I yelled that if spearing me with
his cock and tackling me into the wall as hard as he did wasn’t enough to hurt me it wasn’t likely that he could.” None of the occupants on the room had expected her to say anything quite like that and she thought their speechlessness meant she should go on. “I told him that if anything I enjoyed it, and that I enjoyed having his cock inside me and feeling powerful because of the way I could make him lose himself. I told him that I liked taking him in my mouth just as much as I enjoyed having his mouth on me.” Everyone looked floored but they came to their senses relatively quickly as she added. “Then of course I informed him that just because I liked his cock it didn’t mean I wouldn’t hesitate to geld him if I found it necessary.”

After a brief period of silence Loras and Renly were howling with laughter while Margery giggled behind her hand and Sansa blushed crimson absolutely mortified.

Arya just grimaced. “It’s not funny! I was serious! Gods why does everyone laugh when I say that?” She felt anger remembering Gendry had had much the same reaction to those words. “I swear I’d do it if I found reason!” She avowed indignantly, wondering if they really didn’t imagine she would follow through.

“We believe you.” Loras finally managed between breaths. “It’s just, you can’t confess to liking all those things and not expect a man to visualize it in his head.” He explained. “And then of course you continued on and forced the poor fellow to picture his new wife cutting his balls off. I can’t imagine what he replied to that.” He sounded curious.

Arya pouted thinking about it and figured she might as well tell them. “He called me m’Lady just to be infuriating and told me he wouldn’t expect anything less.” She spat distastefully, “I stomped on his foot because I knew he was mocking me and then I tried to storm away but he—” She stopped abruptly feeling a heat rise in her cheeks thinking about what happened next. His lips grazing her ear as he whispered into it. She shivered and finished off her drink in a large gulp, determined not to admit to what happened next. She was definitely going to be dizzy at dinner.

Everyone gave her a knowing look, but it was Renly who finally spoke up. “Oh come now! You can’t just stop there and expect us not to ask. Especially after the shade of red you’ve just turned. ” She scowled at him and finally Margery approached, “If you don’t tell us how he left you I don’t see how we are supposed to assist you in retaliating.”

She scowled at him and finally Margery approached, “If you don’t tell us how he left you I don’t see how we are supposed to assist you in retaliating.”

Arya pouted but she finally and begrudgingly admitted it. She really did want to commiserate with someone about the confusing nature of it all and the brandy definitely assisted in easing the discomfiture of doing so. “I tried to leave and he wouldn’t let me.” She began. “He drew me back into his arms and brushed his lips over the skin of my neck telling me he loved it when I would come across his tongue and that he’d never heard anything more pleasing than to hear me say I craved to have him fill me.” She paused remembering what his words had done to her and how
she’d felt betrayed by her own reaction to him. “I’m still angry that I let his words have such an
effect. He knew it too, my traitorous body just kind of went boneless. Then my beloved husband
just left me there, weak kneed and barely able to stand.” She finished sounding bitter.

Renly and Loras were smirking and sniggering but they were smart enough to try and suppress it as
she glared at them murderously.

It was Margery who spoke once more. “Such a foolish man.” She sighed. “Your revenge will be
entirely too easy I’m afraid. It’s nothing if not a Lady’s obligation to man men drool, and after
leaving you wanting I can only imagine you wish to pay him back in kind.”

Arya peered into pretty brown eyes looking as if she was speaking to someone who had
momentarily gone mad. “I can hardly make men drool. Sansa is the beauty of the family.” She
gestured sourly at her sister.

Sansa frowned thoughtfully at her. “Really Arya, are you that oblivious?” She asked lightly. “Ever
since you sprouted breasts and grew into your features everyone has done nothing but compare you
to Lyanna. You’d be quite the beauty if you’d take the time to care. Why do you think Robb and
Jon warned off all the boys of Wintertown from befriending you?”

Arya looked at her dumbfounded. “That was Robb and Jon?” She questioned.

Sansa looked at her funnily, “Who else would’ve done it?”

She glowered. “I thought I was the one who scared them all off when I threatened Mycah with my
knife after he tackled me during a stick-fight. His hands wandered too much for my liking.”

Sansa snorted uncharacteristically. “Well mayhaps that did have something to do with it as well.”
She admitted before adding, “It probably also has something to do with why you still don’t realize
the effect you have on men. You’ve given them cause enough to be afraid of letting their looks
linger. I can’t imagine any man in the Seven Kingdoms wants to be at the wrong end of your blade
less they find themselves shamed.” She chuckled slightly and was joined by everyone else who
nodded in agreement.

Sansa did have a point, as much as it begrudging Arya to admit it. Finally she exhaled loudly,
thinking mayhaps her sister and Margery would have the ability to help her on this one small thing.
Men did eagerly and obviously pine after them after all. She really did want to make sure Gendry
knew her capable of leaving him in a similarly debilitated state as the one he’d left her in earlier. If he had an influence over her she needed to remind him the power she had over him as well, she just needed direction on how to do that. “If I’m going to do this I insist on more brandy.” She sighed resignedly. “I’m yours to dress for the feast.” She said looking anxiously between Sansa and Margery.

Both women looked to each other with wicked grins before Margery insisted that Loras pour Arya another cup of brandy and then retire with Renly to wait in her solar. The flurry of fussing and a glimpse of the dresses caused Arya to gulp and wish she could take back her words and control, but too soon she found herself stripped and plunged into citrus scented bathwater.

Chapter End Notes

Wanted to get one in for February, its been a rough month in terms of being busy. Things will start really taking off the chapter after next so expect a lot more skipping ahead time wise after some of the Starks return to Winterfell, which will be the subject of the majority of the next chapter.

Also I've been doing more reading than I should lately considering how bogged down I am, but I'm throwing this out there anyways...there needs to be some more Jaqen/Arya fics. Should anyone have any recs or feel the need to write one I would greatly appreciate it :P. I thought about writing one but I have another Arya fic in the works and I dunno if I can handle more right now.

As always I hope you enjoyed the filth and will leave me some love!

Thanks TS
The throne room was packed with people milling about waiting for the feast to begin while still more were arriving every minute. Gendry was holding an untouched goblet of wine and fussing with the black velvet and gold trimmed tunic that Renly had apparently left for him to wear for the festivities. It supposedly belonged to his father at a point in time when the man wasn’t as round in girth as the stuffed boar that they were to feast on, though even now the fit on Gendry wasn’t quite right. The sleeves were a bit too short and it was tight across his broad chest and back. Still, it was nicer than anything else he owned and he actually didn’t feel too out of place standing next to Robb, Theon, and Jon who were all decked out in their finest as they scanned the ladies of court discussing their many physical virtues or lack thereof. Well, Theon and Robb did at least, Jon and Gendry remained silent although they couldn’t stop themselves from smiling every once in a while at particularly crude or humorous comments.

“She looks as if she’s wrapped a Braavosi sail around herself the way that dress billows and engulfs her.” Theon griped in annoyance while eyeing Arianne Martell. “Considering all the tales from the war told by your father's bannermen I thought Dornish noblewomen were supposed to dress far more indecently than even the most desperate Northern girls.” He grumbled before taking a swig from his goblet, clearly unhappy at finding the tale to be hyperbole. “If the whores of Wintertown dressed like that Dornishwoman they’d not see a copper from me, I can tell you that much. Old Nan wears dresses that have more shape than whatever the bloody hell that unfortunate thing is she's wearing!” He finished before walking a few paces to where a pitcher was situated on the table so he could refill his cup.

Robb rolled his eyes but shook his head in amusement. “War stories shared between drunken soldiers are hardly ever prone to exaggeration, are they Theon?” He drawled sarcastically, chuckling at his friend’s unappreciative scowl. “I’m sure Lady Martell is probably just trying to discourage the likes of you from following her around all night, speculating as to whether or not she’s wearing smallclothes and picturing what’s under them.” He quipped at his friend’s expense.
Theon just snorted. “If only I could get a better view of the ripe breasts and thick thighs I’ve heard so much about…” The Ironborn trialed off imagining just that. He turned to Robb conspiratorially with a sly smile on his face. “Makes me wish I were that Sand Steed of hers I’ve seen in the stables. That horse should count itself lucky to know what it feels like to have the likes of her straddling its back. I certainly wouldn’t mind if she straddled me.” He smirked earning a grin and laugh from Robb while the former shook his head at his friend.

Gendry on the other hand chuckled a bit thinking he’d prefer Theon the horse to Theon the man, especially if the git were to be owned by the strong-willed heir to Sunspear. There really weren’t more appropriate words to describe the individuals of House Martell other than what they’d been using for generations; unbowed, unbent, unbroken. He was sure Arianne would gladly impart the significance of their meaning onto the Ironborn if given the chance. She was as hot-blooded and fiery-tempered as the Dornish were rumored to be.

Robb seemed to find his friend amusing as well, though not in the same manner as Gendry. “She is quite beautiful isn’t she?” Robb pondered. “If I thought she wouldn’t be miserable in a Northern climate, or that her father might actually agree to a betrothal, I may have tried my hand at courting her.”

“She is the heir to Sunspear. Women inherit in Dorne.” Jon piped up sensibly. “I doubt she will ever leave her home, nor would wish to.”

Gendry couldn’t agree more and honestly didn’t think Arianne would be comfortable anywhere else, she certainly made her dislike of the capital well known to court. Reflecting on the freedoms allowed to women of Dorne, he found his thoughts straying to Arya and that fact that she would probably find the southern most of the Seven Kingdoms more appealing than elsewhere in Westeros for the same reasons as the uncompromising Dornishwoman, if only it weren’t entirely desert. If she thought King’s Landing was sweltering, she’d most likely succumb to heat exhaustion upon stepping foot into the harsh Dornish sun. Her pale skin would probably burn and blister within the hour.

“Well there’s always Margaery Tyrell to consider and those scraps of fabric she calls dresses.” Theon mused unscrupulously shaking Gendry from his thoughts. “I’m quite fond of the way the they garb themselves in the Reach. Would that she could bring such influence to the Ladies of Winterfell.” He waggled his eyebrows at Robb who just snorted.

“I doubt she or any of the other women of Winterfell would find it practical to dress in such a manner during the throes of a Northern winter Theon.” Robb countered reasonably. “Besides, I had heard she was promised to Lord Renly.” He finished.

Gendry audibly scoffed at the preposterousness of such a match and all eyes turned to him for
explanation upon hearing the larger man’s unvoiced objection. He sighed and wondered how they all hadn’t heard the truth of the rumors circulating around court concerning his uncle during their stay. “If Margaery is pledged to Renly the only reason it was agreed upon by my uncle is because it comes with the promise of an excuse for Ser Loras to visit Storm’s End as much as he pleases.” He told them plainly. “I can’t imagine it would be a very fulfilling marriage for her considering he’s not interested in the bits she’s got.”

All three of his companions were looking at him with flabbergasted expressions.

“You’re saying your Uncle would prefer the brother over the sister?” Theon asked incredulously, pointing to where Margaery was being led into the hall on arm of Ser Loras, Sansa on his other. Looking over the red head with heated eyes he couldn’t help but add. “Looks like Lady Margaery already is influencing the way Northern women dress.” He smirked happily while Jon and Robb scowled seeing the revealing way their sister was garbed.

Gendry interrupted before the brothers could act on their wish to cause bodily harm to the Ironborn and make a scene for the way he was leering at Sansa. “I’m saying my uncle would prefer even the likes of your few pleasing qualities over a beautiful girl like Margaery.” He stated impatiently and was happy to see that Theon was glowering at him and had picked up on the disdain with which he referred to his person while Jon and Robb both grinned and laughed.

The Ironborn looked like he was about to offer some words in retribution to the slight, but something over Gendry’s shoulder caused his breath to catch in his throat and his eyes to widen in delight while turning dark. Smirking happily he turned to Gendry looking smug “Your uncle doesn’t seem very interested in cock if you ask me.” He motioned again towards the entrance to the thrown room. “Not when he has that on his arm. He seems quite happy cozied up with whoever that shameless little minx may be.” He finished sounding more captivated than smug as his eyes trailed over the woman in question.

Gendry turned and was shocked to see his Uncle talking animatedly with what was truly a stunning woman. He had to blink a couple of times and clench his jaw to keep from gaping, though he was comforted in the realization that he wasn’t the only one.

She was mostly facing away from them and what wasn’t covered by the dark shiny waves of hair that spilled to her waist, was completely bare of the black-as-night silk of what he was obligated to call a dress. Her back was naked of fabric all the way past the gentle curve of her spine, and only after the swell of her ass had begun did there rest the start of her long trailing skirts, the bottom of which was embroidered heavily in gold until it faded away into the dark silk about half way up.

The skirts themselves seemed to cling a bit more rather than flow away from her body as most dresses worn in court were prone to do, and as she took steps and her hips swayed alluringly you
could peak the beginnings of the cleavage of her rump which promised, by the look of it, to be firm and bubbly. Several adam’s apples were bobbing at the sight including his own.

If the back was bad, what he could see of the front wasn’t any better in terms of modesty. The way the fabric of the skirts swept up over her hips to connect to the bodice underneath her breasts left two symmetrical triangles of skin on either side of her smooth stomach exposed, displaying perfectly how her tiny waist curved in before flaring out. Her breasts themselves were covered but looked as if they may spill out at any moment due to the tight stretch of fabric and only the tiny straps circling her shoulders to hold them and her top in place. The weighty gold and black pearl necklace that rest atop them only emphasized their entrancing rise and fall and drew the eye.

She was a black and gold siren, her somehow familiar profile sporting kohl-smudged sultry bright eyes, flushed cheeks, and pretty pink full lips. Half of her dark hair was pinned up in an intricate golden metal net and the rest was left to cascade over her mostly bare shoulders. He found himself wondering where his uncle had found this woman and why he seemed so enthralled with her as she spiritedly whispered secrets in his ears and drew out his loud boisterous laughter as they sauntered merrily through the hall following after Loras, Sansa and Margaery.

“Gods be good.” Cursed Robb breaking the silence as they all continued to gawk, though most had the good sense not to be so conspicuous.

Theon was not one of those. “Indeed, they seem to be in a pleasing mood.” He agreed leering openly.

Robb nodded dumbly. “Would that Renly does prefer cock if only she would seek pleasure from mine instead.” Robb blurted out before he could muster up the wisdom to stop himself. He did have the good grace to clear his throat somewhat shamefully, realizing his indecency before gathering his wits and asking, “Who is that?”

They all shook their heads indicating that they too were at a loss, though they all continued to blatantly gawk along with half the other men in the hall. It wasn’t until Jon went to take a sip of his wine and the girl turned slightly more towards them that they all came out of their reverie.

It was the sound of Jon sputtering and choking that made them all turn towards the man.

Robb looked at him concerned and smacked him on the back unnecessarily hard a couple of times. “Alright brother?” He asked curiously.
Jon shook his head vehemently. “No.” He stammered hoarsely. “Robb that’s—that’s Arya.”

All four heads whipped back to where the girl stood with Renly, his hand resting idly on her bare lower back as they laughed together.

“Seven fucking hells.” Affirmed Theon. “That is the little she-bitch.”

Gendry growled low in his throat at the Ironborn’s words but was too busy staring at his wife in complete shock to take action. He should’ve recognized that flawless backside and those luscious breasts immediately, but never before had he seen them adorned in a manner that flaunted them so deliberately, not to mention temptingly.

He consoled himself for his lack of recognition in the fact that, not only did her own kin not make the connection, he never expected her to actually allow anyone to paint her face let alone dress her up like some sort of enchantress. He could already feel his temperature rise just looking at her, and when she finally caught sight of them and smiled beguilingly at him specifically, he almost bit through his tongue to keep from becoming embarrassingly erect. He didn’t know whether he wanted to rip the clothes off of her or stare at her forever she looked that completely mouthwatering.

His fiery ravenous gaze swept over her again and again as she approached on the arm of Renly, stepping up to each of her brothers, and strangely even Theon, to give them a quick peck on the cheek. To Gendry she just briefly curtsied, a very mischievous look in her eye. “Husband.” She inclined her head.

Before he had a chance to respond, Robb was interjecting, his teeth gritted and voice strained. “Arya what in the Seven Hells are you wearing?”

She blinked her eyes innocently while biting back an obvious grin. “What?” She asked. “You don’t like it?” She gave them a little spin and an eyeful, giggling while she did of all things.

Her brothers fidgeted, eying her uncomfortably and with suspicion due to her uncharacteristic behavior. Theon and Gendry on the other hand just eyed her, though their brows did furrow when she giggled. Arya Stark did not giggle, and when she did it certainly couldn’t mean anything good.

Not one to pass up the chance at a jibe, Theon smirked looking between Arya and Robb. “It’s not that he doesn’t like it, I think the problem is he likes it more than is proper for a brother.” Theon
snickered remembering what his friend had said before he had realized he was speaking about his sister.

Robb rewarded him with a sharp and painful elbow to the ribs and a look of cold fury that he then turned on Arya. “Are you aware of how inappropriately you’re dressed?” He seethed.

Arya went to open her mouth looking angry but Renly saw her temper flaring and moved to dampen the escalating situation.

“You’ll have to forgive your sister Lord Stark.” Renly began, oozing his usual charm. “Lady Margaery had the gowns your sisters wear cut in a style popular amongst the Ladies of Highgarden. They were gifts, for it appears all the Tyrells have grown quite fond of both your sisters. It was quite clear they were wary about disapproval concerning the dresses on the part of your family, but Lady Margaery can be quite insistent as well as convincing and they didn’t wish to offer her insult.” He presented reasonably.

Robb’s eyebrows drew together as he glowered. “Yes, of course not.” He began. “I meant no offense its just that I’m not used to seeing my sisters so revealed and am not inclined to like it. The gowns certainly wouldn’t be practical to wear about Winterfell.”

Renly grinned. “No I imagine not.” He agreed. “That far past the Neck you’d be wearing fur where once was any exposed skin I’m sure. Though of course, we aren’t in the North now are we?” He asked cordially with a bright smile.

“We most certainly are not, praise the Gods for that.” Theon mumbled, leering happily at Arya.

Noticing the Ironborn’s lecherous grin Arya snorted, cracking up loudly unable to contain herself while thinking about how ridiculous this situation was, with her the center of it and on the receiving end of looks she didn’t believe were warranted. Once again her brothers and Gendry looked to her uncharacteristic behavior distrustfully. Why wasn’t she glaring daggers at Theon or trying to do him bodily harm for such a comment? It was only when she swayed slightly and Renly went to steady her that realization occurred.

“Are you drunk?” Asked a disbelieving Gendry.

His insides squirmed as well as something in his pants when she bit her lip innocently and shrugged, affecting nonchalance. “Mayhaps Ser Loras might’ve shared some Tyroshi pear brandy
with me.” She conceded, although a bit begrudging with her answer.

Renly laughed. “I also think it might’ve been part of Margaery’s strategy for coercing her to play dress up. She wasn’t as amiable to the plans as the Lady Sansa I assure you.”

“I imagine not.” Jon said eyeing his sister warily knowing her well enough to understand there was something more going on and wondering what it was. It would take more than drink to get Arya to agree to such a gown and it didn’t go unnoticed that she avoided his observant gaze in particular.

“It seems the feasting is about to start.” Renly interrupted jovially. “I just came to reluctantly deliver my Nephew back his wife.” He turned to Gendry and grinned in a devilish manner. “You quite lucked out with this one Gendry, never a dull moment with her.” He told the larger man before departing with a nod of his head to find his seat next to Margaery.

Jon, Theon and Robb followed and took their seats just as Gendry grabbed Arya by the hand and led them to the long table to join and find their own. Once seated, Arya had Gendry on her right, Theon on her left and Gerold Dayne across from her, while Gendry had Arya on his left, Sansa on his right and Arriane Martell across from him. Gendry noticed that as Arya went to take her seat she scooted her chair closer to his before he could help push it in for her and frowned once again thinking something was off. He took his seat next to her eyeing her suspiciously and even in her inebriated state it didn’t go unnoticed.

“What?” Arya smiled up at him prettily, even if it did have a bit of mischief behind it.

Gods she looked incredible the way she’d been made up, it was utterly distracting. Still, he couldn’t help but think she looked just as lovely with Needle in her hand, covered in dirt, and with a sheen of sweat covering her lean little body. He had to shake himself from his stupor before he was caught staring hungrily at the way his wife’s breasts heaved alluringly. He was sure he wasn’t the only one preoccupied with thinking that if he stared long enough they just might pop out.

Gendry cleared his throat to try and clear his thoughts. “I thought you misliked having your head clouded by drink.” He commented as he set his own full goblet down next to his plate.

“I also mislike dresses dear husband, but there is a time and place for everything it seems.” She told him smiling slyly, knowing the added endearment would put him on edge more, probably even more so than her admission that there was a use for gowns, which in and of itself was shocking. When she saw him grimace and take another long suspicious sweep of her in the reveling garment she added, “Do you not like the dress? I’m afraid Margaery won’t be please to hear it. Everyone was of the opinion that you’d be thrilled with it.”
Gendry pursed his lips. “Really?” He deadpanned a bit acerbically, “Everyone thought I’d enjoy having my wife paraded around and on display for the eyes of all the Lord’s in King’s Landing?”

Arya smirked. Margaery had said he might be a bit angry and act possessive, saying he wouldn’t be pleased that his wife was attracting the attention of other men. She herself thought that was just Margery being ridiculous. No one would be looking at her with Sansa and the other women of court similarly dressed in their finery. At the time she thought it especially ridiculous because he didn’t actually possess her. She had even gone so far as to assert that if he acted like such a twat and made such a claim she’d punch him in the stomach and kick him in the shin for being stupid. Now however, she found she actually enjoyed this type of peevishness from him, even if no one was looking at her and he had no reason to be angry. It felt good to know she could make him jealous although that wasn’t her goal this evening.

“Don’t be stupid Gendry, no one is eyeing me.” She stated naively. “Besides, it matters only that you eye me. No one else will be tasked with getting me out of this blasted gown later.” She told him smartly.

From across the table Gerold Dayne chuckled, attracting her attention while eyeing her in decidedly predatory manner with his menacing, albeit provocative, deep purple gaze.

“What a tiresome task indeed.” He drawled sardonically in a smooth gravelly baritone while sitting back in his seat arrogantly, ignoring the scathing looks being sent his way by Gendry as he let his gaze rove over what was displayed by Arya’s dress.

His meaning was apparently lost on Arya who took no notice of his tone and thought he was simply in agreement. “Precisely my point! And if not tiresome gowns are most certainly time consuming and irksome.” She insisted obliviously while continuing to rant. “They’re unnecessarily complicated compared to tunics and britches and what good are they really other than to trip you up and hinder your movement?” Arya babbled, her tongue loosened by drink and completely ignorant to the unfamiliar Lord’s sarcasm in her tipsy state. She just looked to the silver haired man sitting in front of her as if they were having a normal conversation. “And with all the small buttons and ties it’d be easier just rip it off and save time, but of course that is not an option.”

“Oh?” Smirked the Dornishman across from her taking a sip from his wine. “And why not? That sounds like a completely reasonable option to me. Enjoyable even.” He egged her on earning sniggers of approval from Theon.

“It was a gift,” She explained simply before anyone had the chance to step in and save her the embarrassment. “And clearly an expensive one at that. It may not be as practical as a sword or
armor but I must admit it is quite beautiful and took a deft hand to craft, even if it doesn’t suit me.”

“On the contrary.” Gerold drawled letting his eyes bore into hers, making sure she could no longer mistake his connotation. “It suits every part of you with remarkably appealing emphasis.” He practically purred with a dark smirk situated on his overly pretty features as he sipped his wine haughtily.

Arya stared back at him funnily, her face twisted into a look part disgust and part disbelief. Was he actually insinuating he liked the way she looked, and in a blatantly bawdy manner no less? Certainly he wasn’t trying to have a go at her!

When she finally registered the rapacious nature in which he was eying her, her lips twitched into an annoyed snarl and her hand instinctually went for the dinner knife lying next to her plate. Gendry’s hand however was immediately over hers, trying to pry the utensil from her grip, though only because if anyone was going to maim the idiot it would be him.

Her verbal assailant smirked wickedly and laughed low in his throat at her reaction, almost seeming as if he enjoyed having provoked her which only succeeded in enraging her further and compelled her to keep the knife in her possession. The dry sultry chuckle from her right, however, attracted her attention and distracted her from her anger as she was obliged to turn towards the raven-haired beauty sitting across from Gendry.

Arianne Martell was considering the silver haired man in a disparagingly taciturn sort of manner as she spoke up. “How foolish of you to think a Direwolf would take to your boorish brand of flattery.” She drawled before turning back to Arya her eyes now glittering. “You must forgive Lord Dayne his ill-mannered arrogance. It is an unfortunate truth that he does find success with it more often than not, and you truly are a sight to behold Lady Arya.”

Arya frowned thinking the last thing she needed to do was forgive the idiot, especially with the way he just shrugged his broad shoulders as if he couldn’t help himself, that macabre smirk still plastered on his face. And besides that, flattery didn’t work with her because it wasn’t rooted in truth. Even if he was admittedly handsome she wasn’t going to swoon and blush like Sansa would while he leered at her openly as if she were an animal he wished to hunt for sport, at least not now that she realized that's what his aim was.

She wasn’t used to having attentions trained on her and now she was feeling thankful for that. Clearly she had avoided necessary confrontation on numerous occasions due to her plain looks. She was not an object to be obtained. She was a Direwolf however, and anyone careless enough to think otherwise and offer her anything but respect would feel her fangs. She was the huntress, not the hunted, and there would be no mistake about that.
Arianne seemed to understand that her words had yet to quell Arya’s temper and went on, glancing at her countrymen briefly with nettled but mockingly amused eyes. “Would that you could cure the lout of his egotistical philandering ways, but I fear Lord Dayne is too far gone and couldn’t help himself even if he did care to acknowledge the gross impropriety of his advances and how they promise to bring peril upon himself. You can not blame him fully for his foolishness however, we Dornish are taught to appreciate and exult beauty where others might consider such praise libidinous.” She explained having turned back to Arya. “I had wished for Edric Dayne to escort me to the capital, however he is now squiring for Lord Beric Dondarrion so I unfortunately was left with the more iniquitous cousin.” Arianne laughed sardonically as if it were some cruel but shared jape as Gerold lifted his glass to her with a lopsided grin. “Gerold seems not to recognize nor care when he is in danger of losing his tongue, and I’m afraid if you laid your hands upon him even with violent intentions he’d find perverse enjoyment in it.” She explained, her eyes glittering in amusement as she watched Gendry finally able to remove the knife from Arya’s grip. She’d dropped the utensil immediately knowing the one she intended to attack would only find satisfaction in it.

“It appears you are just as fierce as all the tales would lead me to believe.” Arianne continued, trying to smooth over the situation now that the chance for confrontation had passed. “Anyone might believe you are part Dornish yourself for you certainly have the temperament! It is a shame you could not be matched with my brother Quentyn, I think you would take to Dorne easily.”

Gendry grunted in annoyance at the whole situation. “Does everyone wish to make a match of my wife?” He asked in irritated exasperation.

“I don’t.” Arya piped up just as the food was beginning to be brought out and placed in front of the King and her father at the head table. “You didn’t seem too please with the match either if I recall.” She grinned up at him, the alcohol easily allowing her to redirect her attention and forget her temper. Besides, she did have a mission to complete.

In spite of himself Gendry chuckled and shook his head, remembering how miserable he had been in the Godswood and then afterward at their wedding feast. He was just thinking about how infuriating she’d been even then when his eyes suddenly widened to saucers and he was shaken from his recollection as he felt the shock of a hand leisurely beginning to trace patterns on his thigh, working northward and inward to where his laces were rapidly beginning to strain.

He blinked and glimpsed under the table fighting the disbelief he felt at actually finding Arya’s slim fingers lavishing gratifying torture upon his person. He fruitlessly tried to scoot away from her, but the action only brought upon him the unwanted attention of Sansa who, seated on his right, huffed indignantly at her sister’s less than appropriate behavior as she looked between them and saw exactly what was taking place. Thankfully she had the good sense not to say anything and draw attention, though by the glare she sent at her sister she clearly wanted to.
Feeling helpless and embarrassed at being caught by the perpetually critical Sansa, Gendry tried swatting Arya’s hand away discreetly, and when that didn’t work, sat back heavily in his chair, banging his head a bit obviously on the back of it in his frustration as his wife’s fingers got hopelessly closer to their goal and his misery. This was going to be a long dinner if he had to sit through it in a state of uninterrupted arousal while Arya sat before him looking like some sort of ravishing dark siren. If he could’ve picked her up and carried her out of the hall to have his way with her he would’ve.

Wasn’t he supposed to be the authority in the marriage? Short of snatching her hand off his leg and placing it firmly on the table, what was he supposed to do to get her to stop? That method would surely draw attention to what had been going on and he had no intention of publicizing the state of the stirring he felt his trousers. In a last ditch effort he tried absurdly to cross one leg over the other underneath the table but only succeeded in banging his knee rather loudly and fidgeting preposterously.

The move seemed to have the opposite effect of what he desired considering her hand strayed to rest on top of his laces while he attempted the adjustment that he thought would rid him of her torment altogether. Worse still, when he frustratedly settled back into his original position she chuckled and gave him a squeeze that had his eyes nearly bulging out of his head and his fists clenching the arm rests of his chair so hard he actually heard the wood groan. It was a wonder it didn’t splinter.

Clearing his throat to try and get ahold of himself he scooted closer to his wife and leaned towards her, his expression dark. “Now is not the time nor the place to tempt me Arya.” He growled through a clenched jaw.

She blinked up at him innocently and was pleased to see his angry glare dissipate and transform into something of wary vulnerability as he met her gaze. She couldn’t help but notice and be pleased to find his adam’s apple bobbing as he visibly gulped feeling assailed by the image of her. Mayhaps there was some usefulness to being dressed this way after all.

Arya smiled slyly up at him, “I fear the stable wasn’t the time or the place to tempt me either.” She told him quietly as food was finally set down in front of them. She left Gendry to gape at her as she turned towards the food and raised her voice enough that anyone could hear if they were listening. “Will you not serve and cut me my meat husband?” She asked him with a devilish glint in her eye.

Gendry scowled at the realization that he would get no easy reprieve this night and that she was intentionally torturing him as some sort of retaliation for leaving her in a similarly worked-up state earlier in the day. It wasn't lost on him the irony that after she had felt him up under the table, now she was trying to act like the perfect picture of a wife, badgering him to do the husbandly duties she
would normally accost him and berate him for attempting because she asserted she wasn’t a helpless invalid.

He angrily sliced a piece of lamb and placed a portion on both their plates. “If I recall correctly, when I offered you this courtesy at our wedding feast you threatened to slice my fingers off and told me you were very capable with a knife and I would do well to remember it less I had no use for my fingers.”

Arya smirked at the memory and chuckled before responding. “Yes but that was back when I was still a maid.” She began, happy to see the confusion playing on Gendry’s face, clearly wondering what being a maid had to do with anything. “Now that I appreciate and see the use for a husband with such thick and capable fingers it wouldn’t do to threaten the source of such exquisite pleasure now would it?” She asked him with a beguiling and mischievous smile, uncaring that those around had heard and that Sansa was huffing irately.

Gendry couldn’t help the twitching of his trousers or stop his jaw from falling open at her brazen and shameless admission.

Apparently Theon couldn’t control which pipe his food went down either because next to Arya he was sputtering and laughing while trying to find his breath. Eventually he did though. “Remind me why we never saw fit to get you drunk before?” Theon asked her rhetorically. Arya ignored him completely in favor of torturing her husband more.

When Gendry felt her hand once again snaking its way onto his lap he quickly grabbed his hand in hers, lacing their fingers together and bringing them to rest on top of the table. He knew it would be difficult to eat with hands entwined but if that’s what it took to get her to stop bloody torturing him he’d do it. Unfortunately she was too clever by half to let that stop her schemes, and she had clearly given thought to this.

She tried to pout at him but it was hard while attempting to hold back her rascally snickers. She was enjoying his discomfort entirely too much. “Aren’t you going to cut my lamb for me?” She asked lifting an eyebrow expectantly, not fully capable of keeping the amusement from her tone. She knew she had him.

He glowered at her but did his duty and dropped her trapped hand so he could pick up his knife. Almost immediately after he did he felt a hand on his thigh again and he gritted his teeth trying to cut the piece of meat faster.

He found himself powerless to even move however when she quit with the teasing and began
stroking him for true in a very insistent rhythm. All at once it was as if he was unable to continue functioning properly. Still he tried to get ahold of himself as he glared at his wife and gripped the utensils he had been using with white knuckles on either side of her plate.

“Arya, stop this.” He quietly pleaded with her closing his eye as she gripped him maddeningly.

She just smirked. “I’m not as cruel as you are. I fully intend to finish what I’ve started.” She whispered evilly.

Gendry gritted his teeth in frustration and slammed his fist down on the table in aggravated bliss before he could find the strength to stop himself. Glancing around finally, he noticed that those close enough to have heard his fist connecting with wood were staring, and worse, Margaery, Renly and Loras were holding back laughter looking much too smarmy not to know what was going on.

Infuriated upon the realization that this had all been planned at his expense he forgot sense. Seeing red he dragged her chair closer to his, turning slightly towards her and trailing one hand down her bare back making her shiver while using the other to reach under the table and begin hiking handful after handful of her skirts up her legs. “Mayhaps if I reciprocate and finished what I started in the stables you’ll forgive me my cruelty.” He threatened leaning in closer to her ear.

She froze and her breath hitched as he forcefully made his way into her smallclothes where he softly began stroking over her folds, wetness coating his fingers. She let a breathe out heavily and closed her eyes as he dragged a finger through her lower lips and teased her entrance with his thick digit.

“What are you doing?” She asked breathlessly, her own task forgotten at this unforeseen turn of events.

It was finally his turn to grin, though it wasn’t a pleasant one. “Just returning your attentions.” He smirked at her infuriatingly, happy to see her just as flustered as he had been initially as she glanced at those next to them and they looked on curiously. “I may as well use my fingers since you’ve shown me the mercy of letting me keep them.” He told her.

Arya scowled at him and remembered her ultimate purpose, determinedly squeezing his shaft through his britches before slowly and deliberately stroking down his hardened length causing him to groan audibly in need. She smiled at her small retaliatory victory but it was short-lived as he lifted his murderous gaze to glare at her while pushing his forefinger further into her warm depths. The fact that he elicited a small gasp for his action made him smirk pleased with himself and
before she could make another move on him he brought his thumb up and pressed demandingly against her clit, causing her to bite her lip to try and unsuccessfully muffle a loud moan.

Arya closed her eyes squirming around attempting to find a means to relieve the pressure but couldn’t, his force was relentless and he followed her movements determinedly. Feeling flustered and more than a little bit bothered she opened her eyelids and flushed red to find more than one set of eyes watching her come undone on her husbands fingers as they fought some sort of ridiculous battle trying to force each other into getting off there at the feast in front of everyone.

She turned to Gendry beseechingly. “Please.” She asked in a decidedly unintentional husky tone. She had other more insistent and threatening words in mind but they dissolved on her tongue the minute she opened her mouth, his fingers making it hard to think clearly.

“I fear I don’t know what you’re asking for.” Gendry growled at her. “Please, you want more?” He asked while thrusting a second finger inside of her roughly.

Arya had to squeeze her eyes shut at the unwelcome intrusion as waves of unbridled pleasure flooded her body accented by outraged fury; the stifled chuckles from bystanders watching the exchange only amplified the feeling. Glaring at him in an unadulterated rage she returned the favor by resuming her insistent rhythm, fondling him now with added pressure and uncaring that the movement of her arm was now obvious and the intent of her actions unmistakable to those who had eyes on her.

He visibly tensed at the contact, but then his jaw clenched as he grit his teeth and he reached with the arm he had tracing her bare back to forcibly remove her hand from his groin and pin it down, palm against the armrest of her chair. She flailed angrily, trying to yank out of his grip but she was no match for his strength.

Attempting to make her forget that he had her restrained he moved his thumb in small fast circles on her nub causing her whole body to jerk forward and their audience to snigger seeing her at a disadvantage. “Ask me to stop and I will give you the courtesy you denied me.” Gendry told her seriously. He disliked the fact that everyone seated near them was privy to the vision his beautiful wife’s flushed cheeks and this particular feistiness that she reserved only for him.

She stubbornly glared daggers at him, loathing in her eyes as she tried to figure out how he’d once again turned this around on her.

“Ask me.” He growled again as he began thrusting his fingers in and out of her at a faster pace for emphasis.
Her eyes rolled to the ceiling while her jaw clenched, but she still stubbornly refused to give in. With her free hand she latched on to the wrist he had underneath her skirts and held on with a frighteningly tight grip trying to lessen the effects and work against him as he continued to delve inside of her, that familiar heat building frenetically just below her belly.

Gendry grunted as her nails dug into his skin and withdrew his long fingers from within her only to bring them up to pinch her clit and roll the sensitive bundle of flesh between the calloused pads his of thumb and forefinger teasingly, knowing what it would do to her. The move had its desired effect and she lurched forward breathing heavily, gripping the edge of the table for dear life and removing the nails from his wrist altogether while trying to keep her seat.

“You brought this on yourself. Ask me.” He told her gruffly though she never responded. “Would you rather be brought to climax with so many eyes on you? Do you think you can actually hide it?” He rasped challengingly into her ear. He hoped it would expedite the process of making her surrender, either to his request or her own pleasure he cared not, he just wanted the scene to find its end with him the victor.

The little whimper she let out was almost enough to make him withdraw for true, but then he felt a new wave of juices pouring over his digits as he thrust them back inside of her. A jolt of incredulity ran through him at her body’s admission to liking the threat of being watched, and then again when he felt his cock twitch at the realization that her reaction had turned him on as a result.

Suddenly he hoped she wouldn’t ask for him to stop, suddenly he was back down the rabbit hole with her. He was aroused at the idea of publically displaying his capabilities in giving her pleasure and flaunting that he alone would be the man to make her behave like this, he alone for the rest of their lives would be the man to touch her and make her come.

Sitting nearby and watching, hypnotized by her undeniable and provocative magnetism, was as close as any other man would be to helping her find this bliss. Finally, he had something he could be proud of, he had that which others thought him unworthy, that which they wished for themselves.

He would show her and everyone else that he was worthy.

When Arya felt him curl both fingers while inside of her, running them along the top of her cunt and exerting pressure along the span as he withdrew them, her eyes were forced open along with her jaw in a cry of silent and desperate wonder. She found herself blindly staring past the darkly delighted and hawkish purple gaze of Gerold Dayne as well as the dusky spellbound eyes of Arianne Martell, and at the wall, somehow feeling as though the light reflected by their pupils and
onto her skin was the addition of more worshiping hands on her body.

She only hoped there was no indication of just how much having eyes ravish her as Gendry worked magic within her helped to stoke the fire inside of her. The blaze that had somehow transformed to provide her with a burning pleasure having originated from her aggravation at a failed attempt to frustrate Gendry, an aggravation which was still very much alive within her despite it being overwhelmed by delight currently.

She had never been more thankful to know her brothers were three seats down and surrounded by the gaggle from Highgarden where Margaery had assured her they would be distracted for the duration of the meal, for she was fast coming undone and she didn’t think she could hold it back for much longer.

Damn the warty prick next her whose talented fingers never ceased to reduce her to a quivering mass! How come it never felt so amazing when she tried to do this to herself?

The Other’s take him for always getting the better of her, especially in this! He was bloody infuriating and she’d rather hurl herself into Blackwater Bay than let him win by asking him to stop, even if it the situation was more than undignified. She was too stubborn to give in and it had absolutely nothing to do with an inability to deny herself the exquisite bliss he was forcing upon her! Seven fucking Hells! She was in plain view of others who clearly knew what kind of torture he was subjecting her to for lights sake!

Risking humiliation she glanced first at Gerold Dayne, whose eyes glittered seemingly enraptured by the sight in front of him, before they flickered over to Arianne Martell, who bore a curiously similar expression to her Dornish countryman. She didn’t have time to dwell on what any what their interest might mean however because Gendry’s wondrous fingers brushed a spot within her that made her core clamp around his digits and caused her to jerk her head towards him in astonishment as her body tensed in euphoria.

Shining grey eyes met blazing blue as she locked gazes with his intense and enamored stare. Gods he was beautiful, gods what he could do to her was fucking beautiful!

“Come for me Arya.” He whispered lightly, eyes still fastened on hers.

As if proving to herself the truth of her previous thoughts her body responded in kind and she was obliged to squeeze her eyes shut as convulsions began to spread from some unknown place low in her belly and outwards, her cunt pulsating frantically around his fingers, completely in rapture and exaltation at the stimulation he’d provided her with.
As her orgasm over took her, she was helpless to the stretch of her back as her breasts were pushed outwards more than they already were by the dress and her slim legs extended under the table as her toes curled.

Just as suddenly as her body went rigid in euphoric delight, she spasmed visibly and collapsed in on herself with an unsteady exhalation of air and a breathy whimper of, “Fucking Hells!” that she tried to unsuccessfully suppress by biting harshly into her lip as she was overwhelmed with pleasure.

Her forehead had somehow found its way into the crook of Gendry’s neck as she trembled through the afterglow, the fading tremors heightened by the work of his fingers still gently thrusting inside of her and his thumb soothing her over-stimulated and swollen clit as she moaned embarrassingly.

He was withdrawing his fingers and letting her skirts fall back into place by the time she was lifting her dizzied head up slowly. Whether her light-headedness was from the force of her release or the drink she had partaken in she hadn’t a clue. She did however recognize the anger she felt.

Her lousy swine of a husband had gotten the best of her again, and in her hazy state her fist was unwisely and suddenly sailing for his jaw.

When he once more stopped her assault by managing to effortlessly catch her wrist before the blow landed true, and without even looking for it, she scowled at him. It was almost as if he had anticipated it the stupid cad.

“Why do you have to be so bloody infuriating?” She gritted out furiously as if she hadn’t tried to just assault him mid feast in the most obvious and inappropriate manner possible for a Lady.

His bewitched cerulean gaze never once strayed from hers though his mouth did curl upwards slightly in the corners, looking as if he had a secret he wanted to share with her. She stared back angrily but became distracted as she noticed his hand moving. Her breath caught in anticipation for what she was suddenly sure he was going to do, and in front of everyone no less.

She watched entranced, eyes burning with new hunger as he brought his thick, glistening wet fingers to his mouth and licked himself slowly and deliberately clean of her essence. He was smugly proud of what he had cultivated within her and he swallowed every bit of her juices in reward as if she was the most delicious taste in the world, communicating to her that he loved her flavor just as much, if not more, than she loved his. It was a mesmerizing and affirming action that had heat coiling dangerously within her once more.
As soon as his fingers were free of his mouth she used her unrestricted hand to yank him by the hair and to her lips for a voracious kiss, careless of who was watching as she shivered, recognizing the tang of herself on his welcoming tongue while his hand fisted itself fervidly in her hair.

The hand she had used to try and strike him he brought to rest on his laces with their lips still locked and she pulled away briefly when she felt a dampness on the black velvet of his thigh, a question in her gaze as she looked to him with disbelief. He laughed low in his throat, his smile letting her know she hadn’t completely lost the battle after all. Almost immediately she crushed her smiling lips passionately against his, her pride and stubbornness thankful for the admission and a new love developing for him at his willingness to admit his own vulnerability to her.

When she finally did pull away from the dizzying kiss she turned away smiling goofily and quickly grabbed her goblet before swallowing its contents in one go then setting it on the table roughly. She shook her head out as if it would clear her mind and rid herself of the shame she knew she should be feeling more acutely as it tried to creep it way in but was kept at bay with the knowledge of the pleasure they had just shared.

She blinked several times not wishing to dwell on the indecency of what occurred and picked up her fork to begin tucking into her food. “Seven Hells I’m starved after that.” She muttered to no one in particular as she popped a large hunk of lamb into her mouth.

The still silent and stunned crowd of onlookers seemed to come out of their astonished stupor at her abrupt proclamation and Theon and Renly led them all in a round of belly aching laughter before they were finally able to start in on their meals. They too had been entirely too distracted by the exchange between Arya and Gendry to have bothered with it previously.

Chapter End Notes

I had more to add as a second part but I deleted it all after deciding there was a better more realistic situation where I could use the concept later on, hence, this chapter was the shortest one yet. I know this was mostly just smutty filler and there wasn't much with the plot, but there were some interactions that I plan to use later on with this being the introduction, so technically it was necessary.

Anyways, as for when the next chapter will be out, I can't really say and I don't want to speculate because I really felt horrible when I couldn't come through on the dates I said I'd deliver last time. To give you an idea of my priorities here's a list of things I'm working on and in what order.

-Horror Red Canyon fic
-RPF Norman Reedus fic
- Arya/Gendry one-shot
- Don't Be Stupid
- Dragon's Milk
- Arya/Jamie
- Charlie/Hermione
- Original Piece

As always, I hope you enjoyed the filth and feel free to leave me some love!!!!
Arya awoke with a thirst she hadn’t thought possible. Her whole body felt withered and her tongue dried out, as if she had a mouth full of cotton. She groaned slightly and turned her neck only to feel the twang of a crick from sleeping perpendicular to the length of the bed with her feet dangling off the edge, cheek resting on the familiar rock hard warmth of her husband’s stomach.

She smiled sleepily to herself and smirked, happy to have succeeded in returning him to their chambers after four days. It was a short lived personal victory however, considering it felt as if a whole herd of horses thundered through her head the minute she opened her eyes. She hissed as the vision of light assaulted her sensitive pupils and assisted in making her head throb even after she’d squeezed her lids back shut.

She cursed herself for the amount of drink she’d consumed the night before but when only half the memories came rushing back, changed her tune and considered herself lucky. What little she could remember had her turning red from embarrassment and vowing never to drink again. The headache and queasy feel of her stomach only supplemented the thought.
Trying to prepare herself to once again be accosted by the light, seeing as she would have need of her vision in her imminent and imperative quest for water, she slowly opened her eyes while beginning to sit up. She blinked a few times and rubbed her lids hoping to ease into the onslaught of oncoming sensitivity. It worked a bit though she did come away with knuckles smudged with black kohl and had to blink a few more times before realizing why.

It was ultimately the sight of black silk embroidered with gold that brought back memory of how she’d allowed her sister and Margaery to make her up for last night’s feast. She cringed feeling flushed, though its effect only amplified even more so when she realized she was absent of her top as it was hanging down and her breasts were free of restraint. She somehow hadn’t managed to rid herself of the skirts though—damn dress.

She ran her hands over her face feeling the fool and threw off what little of the covers she’d managed to get tangled around a leg so she could stand, though she never did get to her feet.

A wonderful little grunt made her halt her struggle and look over her shoulder instead.

She had expected to see Gendry easing into consciousness but that wasn’t at all what she was greeted with. He was in fact still asleep, eyes darting around aimlessly beneath lids deep in a dream, but his soft snores had ceased abruptly with the movement of the covers and instead he was issuing little moans intermittedly. Though the sounds did send jolts straight down to her bones, it wasn’t the pleasing little noises that had her biting her lip and trying to hold back chuckles. It was the sight of his prick, rigid and bobbing having been arousingly disturbed when she flung the covers off the both of them that had her staring. She hadn’t noticed it standing at attention before but now she was hard pressed to take her eyes off it.

He lay with legs and arms both thrown away from his body and she couldn’t help but take the time to admire his form feeling almost obligated to do so. She had to begrudgingly admit that the gigantic lug was quite the specimen. His thighs jutted out from a narrow waist like tree trunks and were supported by strong shapely claves that she knew were capable of providing just the right kind of leverage. It was his sculpted chest and abdominals that had her gulping and holding back lust though, not least of all because of the vee of muscles that guided her sightline to the thatch of black as night hair framing the base of his thick throbbing cock. It made him look all too appetizing.

As the muscles in his lower abdomen fluttered and he released another small grunt which left his member twitching and beginning to pool clear fluid at its tip, she was compelled to finally tear her gaze away and glance at his face. His forehead was scrunched with his eyebrows furrowed faintly while his breath came out in a light whistle between slightly parted lips. She was amazed that even
in sleep he could look frustrated and anxious and frowned to herself thinking he hardly ever seemed to look happy or peaceful. He was always grumpy or worried and worked up—always brooding, just like Jon.

It irked her that he didn’t look happy in his arousal, and come to think of it, never did until he saw her satisfaction or reached his own. He almost looked like he was afflicted with some sort of pain that he wished to be rid of and she suddenly wished for nothing more than to help him in his release to give him relief.

She glanced back towards his cock surreptitiously, unsure if he would want to be woken up and how he would react to finding her on top of him. If it were herself, she surely wouldn’t wake peacefully to the feel of someone hovering over her, so why should she expect him to? And even though she wanted to pleasure him, the ability to do so properly with her mouth seemed to escape her as of yet and she loathed feeling inept and didn’t want to wake him with her bumbling about.

Arya felt her jaw clench at her own thoughts as she frowned. She hated being plagued with uncertainty in anything, and even more so at having a reluctance to try. It grated her ridiculously to know it was because of the man lying asleep in front of her and a wish not to disappoint him.

How his regard for her had weaseled its way to become of such import and so fast was beyond her and beyond maddening.

Before she could talk herself out of it her hand was reaching out defiant of her own hesitancy as her fingertips lightly but determinedly trailed over his muscled abdominals. She felt him intake a breath as she did so and stared at her fingers on his stomach tentatively, only to jolt slightly when a creamy rope of white unexpectedly spattered across the back of her hand.

Her incredulous gaze immediately shifted to his cock as she watched his bollocks draw up and his shaft twitch as he gave a small, sleepy little involuntary thrust of his hips. He groaned quietly in relief as another thicker rope of silky white seed ejected from his thick girth to paint both her hand and his stomach.

She stared enraptured at the sight, her chest heaving with concupiscence as the onslaught continued and they were both decorated with it, the haphazard pools of white reaching just below his left nipple and the last of it dribbling down the length of his cock enticingly.

After staring at the sight before her for a moment and watching him wilt underneath her gaze, she instinctively but slowly brought her hand closer for inspection. The back span of her palm was almost completely covered and she turned it about letting her eyes rove captivatingly over the pearly viscous liquid. It was alluring in some carnal way and she was compelled to let it run between forefinger and thumb before licking the digits clean and savoring the salty warmth.
It daunted her to feel a sort of reverence for the milky fluid painting them both, acknowledging the power that his pleasure held and the changes it could stimulate in both her mind and body, short term and long. Unbidden she began to wonder what the sight of him discovering relief within her would look like rather than just over himself. If somehow seeing him find climax into her warmth, observing them joined as one from within, would be even more pruriently fascinating.

The thought somehow made her envious, made her believe the magnificent mess before her was naught but a waste, that it should be between her thighs instead of splayed carelessly and wastefully over them both.

She felt an absurd twinge of anger upon the thought and it only amplified with the unwelcome realization that his release hadn’t been of her doing even though she had intended to help him, wished to even.

His bloody dreams had brought him to the point of climax and without physical stimulation!

The injustice of it all was what she found unbelievably infuriating. She couldn’t even work herself up with her own fingers after rolling around and trying to fuck herself in all manner of ways and he could get off without even a touch? How was that fair! Without thought the hand she held in front of her face came down hard with a loud wet smack near its former resting place low on his abdomen.

With a startled groan and wild eyes Gendry sat up awake only to find his wife’s stormy grey gaze narrowed at him accusingly.

Befuddled and perplexed he looked around and then down before blushing crimson at seeing the mess he’d made of himself in his sleep. “Sorry.” He rumbled, voice still groggy though still noticeably embarrassed. “I didn’t get you did I?” He inquired sheepishly, blinking his eyes free of sleep and then clearing his throat nervously.

Arya huffed and turned away, completely disregarding his question as she stood up and began trying to rid herself of her skirts while grumbling irritably. “How is it that dreams can get you off when my own bloody touch is useless for me?” She snapped rhetorically as she fussed with trying to push her skirts over her hips.

When she was unsuccessful she grit her teeth and tensed her muscles ready to erupt feeling overly aggravated with the garment as well as everything else. Seemingly unprovoked, she was
preposterously flailing in useless frustration and gripping the black silk in ridiculous tantrum, yanking futilely in all directions and flinging it about while getting no closer to free of the garment.

Pouting and annoyed, shoulders slumped, she turned back to face a bewildered Gendry while simmering in irritation. “How is it possible for a blasted skirt that reveals too much not come off at all!” She seethed, punctuating her defeat with a juvenile stamp of her foot.

Gendry did his best to try and hold in his smile and laugh but it was hard. She was completely topless, her perky breasts emphasizing her childish outburst with their residual movement as she stomped about. Her hair was a mess, the kohl of her eyes was smudged making her appear as if she were painted for intimidation in battle, and she was pouting at him ridiculously with fistfuls of silk gripped tightly in each hand.

When he let out a little chuckle against his own will he had to look away less he lose it completely and laugh uncontrollably seeing her lips turn downward even more so in adorable affront. Her grumbled utterance of a childish “I hate you”, defeated his attempts to hold back his mirth and he found himself choking on amusement while wiping himself off with their linens and heading towards her.

She looked at him skeptically upon his approach, but once he was in front of her and instructing her to lift her arms, she did so without hesitation, though still with a frown and displeased gaze. He pulled the fabric up the length of her slim body and over her shoulders to rid her of her frustration though she still looked at him as if the whole predicament were entirely his fault.

As she watch him throw the dress onto a nearby chair looking entirely too pleased with himself she hit him in the stomach for a second time that morning and made for the door to their antechambers.

She had only peeked through and began to ask for a bath to be drawn when a large forearm was looped around her waist and she was being pulled back and carried towards the bed, Gendry cradling her in his arms as she writhed in objection.

“She argued noticing where he was heading “Go get yourself off you stupid…lucky…abled…” She struggled to find an appropriately insulting word. “…ARSE!” She finally and ludicrously repeated.

He only grinned down at her shaking his head as he tried to quell her anger—at least marginally. “It was you I was dreaming of my Lady,” He rationalized before going on with an explanatory shrug “…so you did have a hand in my pleasure…even if you didn’t have a hand in it…” He smirked, snickering at his own stupid wit as he threw her unceremoniously onto the bed eliciting an
Arya wasn’t similarly pleased and was quick to get on her knees and face him at the edge of the mattress. “I was going to attempt to have a hand in it but you apparently don’t need me—or anyone for that matter—including yourself!” She snapped while poking him in the chest for good measure. “And don’t bleeding call me My Lady!” She finished with angry hands on her hips as if she were squaring up to him.

Gendry only smiled wryly and backed her up on the bed as he forced his way to kneel in front of her. Taking hold of her waist and drawing her in, he ran the tip of his nose up the sensitive and bruised side of her neck, nipping at her ear and feeling her involuntary shiver. Meeting her gaze again he lifted an eyebrow with a lopsided grin. “You are mine lady, and if you can’t find satisfaction in your own dreams, you need only ask me to teach you how to find pleasure in my absence. I do believe you have fingers.” He informed her gibingly.

Arya scoffed at him communicating exactly how useless she thought his instruction would be. “Look at this!” She grasped his hand and pressed her palm against his. His fingers could very nearly curl completely over hers, only the first knuckle of her digits extending beyond his palm. “Do you see this? Your fingers are much thicker and longer than mine! How am I to pleasure myself the way you do?” She asked him looking bitter. “It’s not bloody fair! When I try mine feel nowhere near as wonderful as yours do. Having you teach me would be as effective as…” She looked around trying to find the words to sufficiently express her frustration. “…as training me to swing a Westerosi Longsword while leaving me to practice with only my Braavosi rapier. It wouldn’t work! Two different weapons require two different plans of attack!” She expounded seriously.

Gendry held back a snort at her ridiculous but appropriate analogy. He realized she had a point but was more so amused that she’d fancy it akin to swordplay. Even so, rather than agree, after a moment he just shrugged feigning nonchalance. “Well then it appears you have more need of me than I, you.” He told her before grinning smugly and ducking away from her hands.

Even before she scowled angrily and punched him in the stomach once more, he’d realized she wasn’t going to make it easy for him to emphasize just how much she needed and wanted him, and especially not after such an intentionally riling statement. He knew she wouldn’t simply just fall onto her back without resistance and let him see to her needs. So instead he pulled her into him and lifted her up with one hand between her shoulder blades and the other cupping her arse just under the thigh. Guiding one of her legs around him he spun her around and then onto her back so they were no longer kneeling and perpendicular, but now parallel to the beds length.

Startled momentarily, Arya was none too happy by the change in positions and began hitting Gendry about the shoulders and ribs. When he restrained her hands above her head with a wicked smile, instead she tried to buck him off with her hips. “Get off me you stupid oaf! Go dream and
get yourself oohhfff—“ She trailed off as her failed attempt to throw his overly large frame off of her was halted by the feel of the head of his hard cock hitting a particularly sensitive bundle of nerves.

Her objections stopped almost immediately as she bit her lip helplessly, and though she turned her head in defiance of the pleasure she felt, and to ignore what she knew would be an insufferable look plastered on his face, she was a glutton for the sensation and so moved her hips again hopeful to feel his round tip brush up and down her slick lips once more.

The sultry laugh he gave while picking up on the torturous teasing rhythm she’d begun both renewed her anger and stoked her arousal while Gendry couldn’t help but be overwhelmed by brass as he continued to rub and grind himself up against her saturated lips and through her folds, watching her for every little unthinking reaction and letting it fuel his confidence and drive. She unintentionally and continually had a way of making him feel monumentally capable despite years of assertions that he was less than nothing, just a bastard.

It wasn’t until her pleading eyes met his that he finally gave her what she truly desired. With a harsh jerk of his hips he drove himself into her fully and suddenly, savoring the helpless little trill of surprise and pleasure she issued, watching her eyes widen as he did. He moved with long but languorously hard strokes as he began, still pinning her hands above her head in either of his own while feeling all of her indignation at being restrained swiftly transform into need.

The fact that she struggled not at all and instead had her eyes pinned penetratingly on his own, her brow furrowed earnestly as she moved herself to meet and anticipate the punishing jerk of his hips, had him growling low in his throat in satisfaction.

The sight of her protestation swayed, now submissive to his exertions as he worked his cock into her, was something he didn’t take for granted given her normally willful disposition and he was captivated by it. Captivated by the way her situation trapped beneath him had adrenaline coursing through her person as was evidenced in the way her eyes had dilated and how he could feel the now rapid beating of her heart as her cunt pulsed around his cock.

She was enjoying his forceful dominance, and enjoying it just as much as he was enjoying having her at his mercy. He watched entranced by her and his own power, what it could do to her. He was riveted by the feel of her, loving the way she squirmed helplessly underneath him, moving as much as he allowed, her breasts heaving with her back arched towards him and highlighting the smooth hurried movement of her stomach as she let out throaty exhales in time with the agonizingly slow withdrawal of his cock from within her as well as the the sharp intake of her breathe as he drove starkly and suddenly back home with each punishing thrust of his hips.

Feeling her heels dig into the muscles of his arse, beckoning him deeper and for more, he
thoughtlessly pulled out of her and flipped her effortlessly onto her stomach. He wasn’t ready to
give her any measure of control or let her dictate their movement. That she needed him to find
pleasure gave him license to captain their current coupling and assist her with what she required,
but in the manner of his choosing, his way. She was to be shown that her deference to him would
be rewarded with what she sought—that their goal was the same and she could trust him with their
gratifications and open her eyes to the reality of what vulnerability could bring her with him.

He meant to give her unsuspected pleasure from a mindset she wasn’t familiar or comfortable with
and so maneuvered both of her hands together behind her back and again restrained her with one of
his as he situated himself straddling both of her legs pushing them together, his cock now
throbbling and resting in the crevasse of her pert little arse.

He felt her tense at the new position, sensed the beginnings of her outrage as she struggled to free
her hands from behind her back. But then he was at her entrance and as he slide into her he watched
her deliciously firm cheeks clench and felt her cunt constrict around him while she drowned out a
loud, very un Arya-like, wonton moan by burying her head in the linens as she became entirely
boneless in his grip.

Drunk with power and reveling in her surrender to the feel of his girth, he used the span of his free
hand to push the flesh of her cheeks together as he withdrew, tightening her further around his cock
while leaning back and cocking his head slightly to watch himself disappear as he pulled on her
restrained arms for added leverage and thrust his hips forward once more. Her upper body lifted
slightly up off the linens as a result and her back arched and stretched away from him, his grip on
her hands bending her backwards while he held her hips down with his other hand on her arse and
fucked into her slowly, rapidly developing a demanding pace.

Arya’s breath escaped her entirely as her back strained while he pulled on her hands and drove in
between her closed legs into her snug warmth. She was helpless but to savor every single inch of
his long circumference now that she wasn't spread wide and it felt altogether too magnificent, her
velvety warmth now the perfect all encompassing sheath for his leaden prick and her lips
stretching and clasping rapturously around him. The only thing she was capable of besides little
whimpers as he drove the breath from her lungs and battered her from behind was to attempt to
raise her ass against the pressure of his hand and meet his thrusts. In essence she was powerless to
his treatment and against all instinct she relished her weakened state and this new trust for him as
he beckoned forth an orgasm that had her trembling from the onslaught.

As her keens became more consistent and higher pitched, he pummeled her relentlessly to ensure a
continued melody. Once her body tensed and Gendry began to feel her muscles spasm as her cunt
fluttered around him, he gave one last punishing jerk of his hips to finish himself off along with
her. After they were both in the obvious throes of pleasure he looped an arm under her hips and
rolled them both over so he was on his back only to sit up so her putty like body was situated in his
lap while still within her.
Feeling her head loll on his shoulder he moved a hand low on her belly so his fingers could circle and torture her swollen nub, his other hand palming and tweaking her breasts and nipples as he pumped what was left of his seed up into her, eager to prolong what he could of her climax as well as his.

Hearing her moan and feeling her squirm happily and move her hand to cover his on her mound, he smirked into her neck and chuckled as he kissed her glistening skin and breathed in her scent.

“Any more need of me Lady Baratheon?” He growled still breathless, nipping at her skin.

“Need?” Arya snorted, still smiling in satisfaction. “I may have a use for you, but who says I need you?” She asked him smartly, happy to feel the smirk on her neck transform into a frown as his lips left her skin entirely. Her mirth was short-lived as well though considering the smarmy grin swiftly left her for an expression of befuddled curiosity; an intriguing thought occurring to her.

She craned her neck around to face him. “Is that how most Lords treat their Ladies?” She gestured to the bed referencing what had just taken place. She had been told that most men tended to be forceful with their wives and had heard many stories of women who had to be restrained so marriage rights could be taken. What she hadn’t expected was to find the treatment so agreeable.

Gendry smirked knowingly while still feeling some lingering insecurity about her previous statement. “Why? Do you suddenly fancy yourself a Lady?” He couldn’t help but ask. Feeling yet another elbow to the stomach as she climbed off of him and their bed, a true smile squirmed its way onto his face knowing violence was akin to an endearing kiss to her.

“Don’t be stupid.” She told him with a level glare before stomping off with their sheet.

Gendry was happy to stare at her bare arse wearing a smarmy grin of his own before falling tiredly back to lay in bed with a huff.

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Breaking fast with her family that morn had been a joyfully somber affair. What with everyone savoring each other’s presence, only stifled by the awareness that they would not soon enjoy the company of one another.
Gendry and Arya were to remain in King’s Landing until the wedding of Jofferey and Sansa while the rest of the Starks returned to Winterfell and Jon made for the Wall.

None of it was fair really.

That she had to marinate and cook in the stench of the capital while everyone else was to find relief back in the North sat not well at all with Arya. That Jon was no longer welcome in Winterfell since her mother would not tolerate him without their father’s presence was worse still. She tried to communicate her feelings on this injustice by ignoring and turning her back on her mother whenever she tried to approach, but the thought of not seeing her for months on end made her surrender and now she found herself tasting salty tears as she buried her face in graying auburn locks amongst the awaiting Stark caravan in the yard of the Keep.

It was Catelyn who finally pulled away, trails of tears finding their way down her own still handsome face as she smoothed her daughter’s unruly hair and cupped her cheeks with a sad smile. She tried to give off an air of confidence for the sake of her family and spectators, but her voice and words betrayed real and unsettling anxiety. “Watch after your father for me sweetling. We leave you in a den of lions and I fear he believes everyone will act with the same honor that rules his decision.” She confided, eyes flickering over to her husband worriedly. Her voice turned quiet as she continued and pressed on tensely, the gravity of her gaze disturbing Arya and putting her on edge. “Make no mistake about it Arya, the capital is no friendly place. The Game of Thrones consumes and corrupts while those naïve enough to think they can avoid it, or triumph because what they do is right, would be wise not to play all.” She finished blinking back tears and swallowing down fear. She somehow made certain not to let her gaze flicker back to Ned but saw her daughter shoot a nervous glance over at her father and felt her own heart clench at the sight.

Gathering herself with a weighty exhale, Catelyn searched her daughter’s face once more and mustered up a watery smile as she moved her hands to grip Arya’s shoulders firmly. “For years I’ve fretted over your unruly manner and tried to mold you into the Lady you still refuse to be.” She stroked a smooth cheek fondly, finding herself smiling ruefully as she went on. “Now I can only find comfort in that failure.” She confessed, chuckling as Arya frowned and blinked profusely in obvious confusion as she tried to process her mother’s words.

“It pleases me to know that the defiance that disarms and so endears you to your father affects others as well.” Catelyn explained. “People don’t know what to make of you here and there is advantage to that.” She shook her head, begrudgingly thinking back on all the times she’d been baffled by her own daughter before clearing her throat and thoughts and allowing herself to return to her prior urgent and troubling resolve.

“Arya, you must realize Sansa sees only the good amongst those of court and not yet past the surface of their pleasantries. Your father—” Catelyn choked up breathlessly before looking away for a moment to gather herself. She met Arya’s concerned eyes as she continued, though her voice
was notably shaky, as if she didn’t want to utter or believe her own words, “Your father will face death if only to do what he believes must be done and honor his duty.” She conceded finally, hoping at least one of those she loved and must leave behind would understand where they stood.

Arya frowned, disliking seeing her mother so tense and worried—so forthcoming. “I won’t let anything happen to Father.” She promised with more confidence than she felt after listening to such ominous words. “…Or Sansa.” She added as an afterthought.

Despite herself Catelyn chuckled and shook her head. “You are sister’s Arya,” She chided lovingly. “You should look out for one another despite your differences.” She pushed with insistence. “I once would’ve said you shared nothing but blood, but now…with the way you’ve taken to marriage and your new husband…I think you might have something more to learn from each other than even I thought.” She smiled while placing a hand on Arya’s belly. “I certainly hope that you return to me before you find yourself quick with the child it seems you’re so determined to have.” She placed a soft kiss on her stunned daughter’s forehead. “I await word of your departure eagerly sweetling.” She avowed soberly. “I love you Arya. You belong in the North, we all do.” She finished, turning and answering the call of her name from somewhere down the Caravan.

Arya watched her mother leave feeling forlorn and wary, and yet somehow, more than anything, all of it was drown out by the shock of three disturbing words…quick with child.

Once her mother’s hands left her stomach she found her own had replaced them and she was staring down at herself mouth agape. She knew what the purpose of lying with ones husband was within a marriage, but somehow she’d let it escape her. The fact that she couldn’t picture herself with child, and had never longed for motherhood the way her sister had, almost made her believe it couldn’t happen to her.

The realization of how stupid that was, and how exceedingly careless she’d been after discovering the pleasures of her husband, left her feeling helpless and ill at ease. Suddenly her new favorite hobby wasn’t so spectacular. Now it was rather frightening due to possible consequence. If it wasn’t for Jon’s interruption she might’ve found herself physically sick, and not because of lingering queasiness due to her over zealousness in partaking in last night’s feasting activities.

“Are you feeling well little wolf?” Jon asked as he hunched down to catch her eyes.

Arya shook her herself from her stupor but still had to meet her brothers eyes while holding back tears of anxiousness as she nodded her head.

Jon just nodded back at her, though wringing his hands. “I’m going to miss you.” He told her with a
tense sad smile as he ruffled her hair half-heartedly.

Out of reflex she smacked his hand away earning a true smile and suddenly everything else escaped her entirely. She stepped towards him grasping his hands imploringly. “Don’t go Jon.” She entreated him. “Stay in the capital. Help me look after Father and Sansa. It isn’t safe for us here.” She pleaded with him seriously.

Jon sighed looking anguished and untangled their fingers only to fold her hands together and cradle them in his own. “We’ve been over this Arya. My mind’s made up. The capital is no place for someone like me and I’m no longer welcome in Winterfell. The Watch is where I belong. A life of service is an honorable one.” He expounded gently, appearing resolved.

His gentle tone did nothing to ease her of her worry. “To hell with honor, Jon!” She snapped irritably, her mother’s warning about the possible downfall to their father’s righteousness still haunting her. Jon was nothing if not the mirror of Eddard Stark and suddenly it seemed as if the two men she loved most had decided to stare down death. “I can’t bare the thought of you freezing atop the wall, or rarely seeing you for the rest of my life!” She expounded selfishly. “I can’t bare the thought of you freezing atop the wall, or rarely seeing you for the rest of my life!” She expounded selfishly. “Stay and return North with Gendry and I, or leave now and go on to our hold. There is no one I would trust more with the task of seeing it rebuilt. Robb would gladly let you oversee it.” She beseeched him. “You will have a place as our Master at Arms or Castellan, whatever you wish.” She told him knowing she sounded desperate and not caring. “You can have a family of your own Jon. We can visit the Wall together, you can still keep that promise to me.” She begged him, eyes gleaming hopefully while tears once again threatened to spill over, desperate to ensure his safety.

Jon grimaced and had to look away. Somehow he managed to pull her in for a hug, both of them holding on fiercely. “I can’t Arya.” He said hoarsely into the crown of her head. “In another life we could do all the things we planned and find the adventure we promised, but this is what we have and we make of it what we can.” He tried to explain again. “You’re my sister always and I love you. Now all I can promise is to protect you as a Member of the Night’s Watch and leave Gendry to watch after you. He’s a good man Arya, and he’ll treat you well.” He withdrew to look her in the eye, hands on her shoulders. “You’ll grow to love him if you already haven’t.” He smiled as he wiped tears from her eyes.

Arya again smacked his hand away as she continued to try and deny that she was crying. “You bastards are a hard lot not to love.” She told him with a begrudging smile and snuffle.

Jon grinned truly and hugged her one last time. “Winter is coming, but we’re wolves, and you a Stark.” He nodded resting his forehead affectionately against her. “We will see one another again.” He promised firmly and then held her at arms length waiting for a nod of reciprocation. When he received it he stood up straight, chuffed her on the chin, and ruffled her hair one last time only to smile at her scowl and turn towards their father.
Arya watched him go miserably until she felt a tap on the shoulder and turned to find Robb. She went to open her mouth to speak but he held up a hand and she stopped.

“Yes Arya, I promise I’ll try and sway him, but the decision is still his.” He told her reasonably, already knowing what she was going to ask of him. Arya pouted up at her eldest brother and grumbled wordlessly when he cracked a smile and pulled her into a hug. “Would that we were all still children terrorizing the Godswood or abed and listening to the tales of Old Nan.” He said rubbing her back warmly. “Stay out of harms way and look out for Sansa. She’s beguiled by court and all the tales and fancies she’s pictured in her mind…unlike you.” He finished with a grin. “I’m sad to leave you behind but I’m not sad to be going. Try not to anger anyone as you are like to do little Arya Underfoot.” He chortled smiling fondly. “Still, if you do, know you have Father and Gendry, and even Sansa.” He paused looking more staid as he continued. “Remember what Father always says: when the snow falls and the white wind blows, the lone wolf dies but the pack survives.” He looked down on her solemnly. “Keep them close, keep the pack together. I hope to find you safe within the walls of Winterfell soon sister.”

She nodded up at him still bleary eyed. “Me too Robb. Take care of Mother and Bran and Rickon.” She ordered him seriously.

“Aye.” He laughed. “And see that you take care of that husband of yours, or better yet let him take care of you!”

Arya rolled her eyes as she watched him walk off and found herself almost taken aground by her youngest, wildest brother while caught off guard.

“Omphff.” She huffed out as she just managed to hoist him onto her back where he’d jumped, Bran now in front of her. “Would you care to switch places with me and stay in the capital while I return home to run wild with this one?” She japed sarcastically at Bran while nodding toward Rickon whom she held on her back.

Bran just smirked back at her. “I doubt your husband would find me an agreeable replacement.”

Arya snorted. “Yes well, I don’t exactly find him an agreeable replacement for you. I can’t imagine he’s any good at climbing, though I’d wager I’d actually win once in a moon if I’d challenge him rather than you.”

Bran grinned and moved in for a hug. “Come home soon. I mislike any of us being separated.”
Arya nodded her agreement. “As do I.” Once released, Rickon hopped off of her as well and she turned and managed to catch him on the cheek with a kiss, grinning when he pulled a face and made as if he could wipe off her affections. “Keep up with the training of Shaggy, wild one.” She told him ruffling his hair the way Jon did her as he glared at her. Looking back up at Bran she nodded at him, “Take care of them all for us.” She beseeched him. He only nodded and steered their younger brother towards their mother.

She stared off at where her departing family had gathered around her father and then turned to go stand next to Sansa only to come face to face to a smiling Theon.

“No farewell for me then?” The Ironborn asked, arms out and questioning while feigning mock offense.

Arya rolled her eyes but surprised even herself by electing to forgo violence and instead quickly and lightly throw her arms about his neck before continuing on wordlessly to take her place next to where her sister stood solemnly on the steps overlooking the yard.

Neither sister offered words of consolation but as Sansa’s hand sought out her own, Arya didn’t jerk or shy away from her touch. Instead she threaded her arm through her sisters, pulled her closer into her side, and took her hand to give it a squeeze. For the first time in a long while, the sisters shared a look and small miserable smiles of solidarity. Though it wasn’t free of tears, at least this time it wasn’t because they were at odds. They stood hand in hand, watching as their father embraced their mother one last time before more than half of their father’s men proceeded out the gate with more than half their family along with them.

Once out of sight and down Aegon’s hill, Ned turned back to his remaining daughter’s and couldn’t help but smile slightly seeing them take comfort in one another rather than squabbling.

“Three wolves remain.” He informed them in his somber way, coming to a halt before the steps.

While Sansa nodded, Arya’s brow furrowed with a thought.

“And a bull.” She contended nodding towards someone over his head.

Despite himself, a small mirthful smirk graced Ned’s lips and he nodded his agreement. “And Gendry.” He granted, turning to find his good-son approaching having said his own farewells off
to the side so as not to intrude on the family.

He clasped the boy’s shoulder finding comfort in knowing there was at least one man remaining in King’s Landing he could call family.

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It was nearly a month later when they received word that there were Starks returned to Winterfell. However, with it came the news that Jon hadn’t been swayed and he’d gone on to pledge his sword to the Night’s Watch.

Gendry didn’t know what to do to or say to console Arya and so he let her cope in her own manner. She’d chosen to remain silent and instead work herself ragged in dancing lessons to attempt to dispel some of the anger. It didn’t work. It was obvious she’d been harboring hope that he’d for some reason change his mind and was only now realizing she had to come to terms with what amounted to the loss of a sibling—at least in her eyes.

Two weeks after the Raven had been received she’d lost her head while at a dinner in the Hand’s chamber and went on a bit of a verbal rampage. Her father had simply wondered aloud if anyone had heard word from Jon when she went quiet for a long moment before absolutely exploding, shouting at her father for encouraging her brother to go, and then turning her attentions to Sansa for making him feel like he wasn’t good enough and essentially forcing him into thinking there was nothing else for him but to enlist.

Whatever commonality the Stark sisters had fleetingly managed to forge had been completely shattered in that moment, and suddenly Gendry noticed that Ned was scarce to be found either. Everything felt strained; the mood in the keep, the mood between his wife’s family, and the mood between his wife and himself.

Though she was less inclined to talk than ever, her sexual appetite hadn’t been quelled in the least and yet their bedroom dynamic had noticeably changed—she’d race to reach her orgasm, and whether she did or not, made a point to finish him off with her mouth when he expressed he was close. While the benefit of that was she’d quickly become an expert with what she had at first struggled with, it was pretty obvious her intent in doing so and he found it strangely difficult to come to terms with.

…She didn’t want his children.
He didn’t ask her the why of it all because he felt he already knew the answer. There was no Lady in all of the Seven Kingdoms who’d wish to beget the child of a bastard, even the King’s bastard. Instead he kept to himself and his distractions; days in the yard with his hammer and now axe, as well as long nights at the forge.

He didn’t know why he continued on with his current project or how he bore no ill will towards his wife, but hammering away at steel, and Valyrian no less, left little time to contemplate anything else and he was content with that. His peace wasn’t to last long though, and he knew from his last visit with his goodfather that his appearance at the forge couldn’t mean anything good.

Upon Ned Stark’s approach he lifted a stoic brow and turned to call for Master Mott. He didn’t much like the idea of handing over work to his mentor at this point, but working metal while participating in a conversation he presumed would prove troubling wouldn’t do anything for quality. He’d put too much time and care into the weapon to reforge it when it’s mirror was ready for finishing, and so he handed it over to Tobho knowing the Master smith was more than capable.

“That’s some fine work Lad.” Ned offered greeting with a tense smile, watching as his Good-son passed off the sickled blade. “Valyrian steel is it not?” He asked with an air of cordiality, seeming as if his mind was really otherwise preoccupied.

Gendry nodded. “Aye it is.” He answered being less than forthcoming, stepping away from the heat of the forge.

Ned just nodded, his gaze elsewhere taking note of the people moving through the city and lingering on those who’d paused near enough to be in earshot. “Not many have the skill to work with the metal.” He offered compliment offhandedly, his eyes settling on an empty alleyway before finally turning back to face Gendry. “It speaks well of your abilities that Master Mott would assign you such a task.”

Gendry looked out the canopy of the shop trying to find the source of Ned’s obvious disquiet. Unsuccessful he glanced back and just shrugged. “It wasn’t his task to assign. I commissioned the project.”

“Oh?” It was Ned’s turn to raise a brow, his attention suddenly drawn. “Those blades look a bit small for your hand.” He japed good-naturedly with a half smile. When he noticed Gendry blush slightly, realization dawned on him. Ned drew calloused fingers over his lips in mild surprise as he nodded with a lightly exhaled guffaw. “It seems I’ve found the reason my daughter now practices with two swords instead of one.” He chuckled amusedly. “You’ve spoken with Syrio then?”
He nodded feeling slightly abashed. “She’s outgrown the weapon Jon gave her—Needle.” He said momentarily meeting Ned’s eye before looking quickly away. “She’s fast and her footwork draws from more than just the Braavosi Water Dance despite her training. I’ve found her in our chambers mimicking court acrobats time and again without her dancing teacher’s instruction to do so. She’s a student of movement and she needs something…different.” He explained, attempting to use his hands to assist with his explanation. “I wanted to forge her a weapon that worked with her strengths so I met with Syrio hoping he’d have more to offer than what I’ve just witnessed myself.”

Ned looked thoughtful, hands tucked in his sword belt. “She does tend to square up as if she’s handling a longsword when she looses patience. A habit she’s no doubt picked up from years of sparring with her brothers.” He pondered unobtrusively, interest piqued. “What did Syrio have to say?” He asked squinting against the heat of the forge as he looked back up at the taller man.

Gendry couldn’t help the small smile that took over his features as he began to toy with cleaning the tools on the workbench. He wasn’t used to people sharing an interest in things that excited him and felt silly about his own giddy enthusiasm given the chance to share it. He tried to mask it by busying himself with menial tasks. “He said she’s ravenous to learn all she can and favors the Braavosi Water Dance but bends it as she sees fit.” He looked back at Ned fleetingly, trying to gauge his thoughts. “She’s developed her own style and he admits that it suits her and may even be better adapted for defense against longswords and polearms than the Water Dance, at least for her smaller reach.”

Ned seemed more pensive than normal. “Syrio said this?” When Gendry smiled lightly and shrugged, conveying with his slightly thinned-lipped lifted brow nod that he too had been initially incredulous, Ned felt compelled to question more. “And he still teaches her the Water Dance?” He asked quickly.

“A version of it.” Gendry confirmed head bobbing left and right. “He said she’d never been one to frustratedly lunge, as most beginners with the Braavosi Rapier are prone, and thinks that mayhaps it’s because of her time spent facing Westerosi men with greater weapon range.” He informed Ned, gleaming eyes betraying his excitement for the subject as he went on. “Instead she relies on her speed, and since she’s never hoped to match in strength, she uses her blade as a means to draw attention away from her intention, and her footwork to put her opponents off balance.” He paused to let it sink in before going on. “From what I’ve learned from Syrio much of the Water Dance lends itself to this but…so does the Shadow Drift.”

Ned frowned skeptically, eyebrows drawn together. “Shadow Drift? The Asshai’i way?” He questioned hesitantly in succession. “He’s trained in this before?”

Gendry nodded again. “To an extent.” He explained. “He spoke of spending time in Yi Ti and a Shadowbinder who moved unlike any other, all spinning fluid menace, drawing you in as if you’d been set adrift in a whirlpool.” His hand motioned in a circle, expression engrossed. “Apparently
he’d come at you fast but never with much force and suddenly you’d be disarmed, the hook on the end of his blade wrenching your weapon from your grasp before he’d strike. The mental complexities and strategies of the technique are evidently similar to the Water Dance even though Syrio admits they are ideologically different. He spent some time traveling with the man and learned some of his methods, what he remembers he’s teaching Arya and he’s rather impressed with what she’s managed to pick up and meld with what she already knows.” He told him, fidgeting and licking his lips, slightly more nervous as he continued. “Between Syrio and Master Mott, I think we’ve come up with the design of a blade that would prove most effective for her unique style.” He told Ned with a small prideful smile.

“And?” Ned prompted keenly, clearly intrigued and waiting to hear more.

Gendry couldn’t help but grin as he reached to grab the rough unsharpened blade and held it out flat before his Good-father. “Two identical sickled blades mirroring one another, short swords somewhat similar to a scaled down Dothraki Arakh.” He said once again bobbing his head left and right as he tried to simplify his thought process and explanation. “The notable differences are obviously the continued hooks on the end and the crescent blades fitted over the knuckles of what will be the pommel. Syrio insisted those were unique to the Shadowbinders swords.” He pointed to each feature in turn. “The hooks can catch on shields or be used to disarm, but they can also loosely hook into one another and essentially double the weapons length for swinging to gain room and reprieve from an aggressive opponent. The blades over the pommel then become of more use than just deflection and also have added function in close quarters when you may find yourself striking with knuckles.” He explained with eyes bright before seamlessly and excitably delving into the complexities of how he’d made it. “I fashioned the ingots to give it a diamond cross section as well as added strength before working it into its sickle shape and hammering flat the blades on either side. It will be double edged and perfect for wielding on horseback as well as lending added force to the spins she seems to favor.” He finished hurriedly.

“May I?” Ned asked, nodding down at and reaching out for the weapon.

Gendry bowed consent. “Of course.” He replied handing over his work slightly nervous.

Ned considered it in his solemn quiet manner before finally giving his thoughts. “It’s quite foreign looking,” Ned commented, running fingertips along its length before attempting to balance the blade on a finger where the hilt started. “And menacing.” He frowned watching it tilt toward the hooked end.

Gendry was quick to move. “The crescent daggers over the pommel act as only part of the counter weight.” He added before picking up what looked like two clumps of metal and fastening one to the end of the blade and handing it back. “These will secure the finished grip and serve to balance the rest of the weight on either blades.” He held the second mass meant for the other sword out for Ned’s inspection and watched him examine first the sculpted bull in his palm and then direwolf on
the end of the blade he held. “Master Mott helped me get it right.” He looked to the ground apprehensive of his good father’s scrutiny.

“You mean he helped you get it perfect.” Ned supplied quietly, still concentrated on the metal, which sat perfectly balanced on a single finger now that the decoration had been attached. He hadn’t taken notice of Gendry’s blush. “Where did you come by the steel?” He asked finally looking up.

Gendry scratched the back of his head, “Master Tobho came by it a couple months ago actually. The fellow didn’t know what he had so he got it at a good price. It used to be a crest of some sort if you can believe that, but from no House I can recall.” He let out a small laugh. “A monstrous and overly gilded thing with an odd abundance of dragons and crabs. I managed to forge both blades for Arya as well my axe from its metal.” He motioned to the corner where his new and impressive weapon stood. “When I expressed interest, Tobho was generous enough to take what I could offer and told me to forge ancestral weapons for our new House. Wedding presents of sorts.” He shrugged before chuckling and adding. “Expensive wedding presents.”

Ned nodded but gave a questioning look. “I don’t recall you withdrawing coin from the amount your father and I set aside to rebuild your hold and get you settled.”

Gendry shook his head. “Jon Arryn left me a sum as well. Quite a bit actually.” He said wringing his hands. “It was only delivered to me a few weeks back from a messenger from the Eyrie. Tobho paid five gold dragons for the crest and I gave him fifteen. He could’ve crafted at least three greatswords from the metal and made thrice that so I certainly made out.”

“You did.” Ned finally gave a small smile before walking over to where the axe was propped up. “The Direwolf and the Bull it seems.” He remarked as he held up the blade in front of the larger weapon, noticing a theme between the shaft handle and spike tip of the axe to the pommel weights of the sickle blades. “Will that be your new sigil then?”

“Mayhaps.” Gendry nodded his head coming to stand next to Ned. “I plan to see what Arya makes of it when I gift the weapons to her in a couple days time. I intend to mirror the etching and inlays on my axe on her blades as well before they’re ready.” He motioned feigning flippancy though still obviously apprehensive.

Ned stepped closer to inspect the gilding and what he saw made him smile and grunt out a disbelieving laugh. “Five Direwolves on a hunt with a sixth trailing and nipping at the heels of a bull.” He shook his head in wonder. “Fate has found my daughter her perfect match it seems.” He chuckled and clasped the larger man’s shoulder fleetingly. “She’s going to love these Lad.”
Gendry’s pride welled up and he beamed in relief, but then suddenly he remembered there was more and hoped for further approval to ease his nerves. “I fashioned her these as well.” He said fussing around and coming back to unroll an oilcloth housing fifteen throwing knives. “There wasn’t enough steel left for Tobho to craft another sword so I made use of what was left and forged these.” He offered as explanation. “Half of the crest made me my axe and the other half made her the swords and knives.” As an afterthought he added, “I’ve got the tanner crafting her holsters with measurements Margaery gathered from her seamstress, and a carpenter making both of us weighted wooden practice replicas.”

Ned stood there stunned unable to do anything but run his hands over the knives. After a moment he found himself chuckling thinking what her brother’s were going to have to say about their sister possessing such fine weapons.

Gendry fidgeted feeling slightly odd in the silence and found himself clearing his throat and apologizing after a long moment. “I’m sorry to have distracted you Lord Stark, I’m sure you didn’t come simply to see my work.” He told his Good-father.

Ned’s head whipped away from the knives and he drew his hand back to his sword belt. “No, you’re unfortunately right lad, though these are all finely crafted” He offered, looking less eager about the imminent conversation than even Gendry.

Gendry moved to roll the knives back up in the oilcloth. “Is there something I can help you with?”

Ned nodded. “I have hope.” He said before looking up and down the Street of Steel soberly and stepping closer, voice much softer and a weighted frown on his lips. “I told you before about Jon Arryn’s wish to speak to me on some matters before his death.” He began.

When Gendry’s own expression darkened and he nodded with a frown, Ned went on.

“I mean to figure out the source of your Uncle’s concern,” He divulged looking vexed. “I’ve been going through his correspondence as well as the books he read prior to his passing.” He paused solemnly, a troubled look overcoming his features. “Most of it admittedly seems of no consequence, the only thing that puzzles me and appears to be of import is a sole sentence written hurriedly on a discarded scrap of paper.” He glanced briefly up at Gendry and stepped closer. “‘The seed is strong’…” He whispered the words, brows furrowed and eyes troubled as he once again searched the ground. “Does this have any significance to you?” He inquired soberly, turning to look up at the taller man gravely.

Gendry’s brow furrowed as he tried to think back on anything Jon Arryn might’ve said to him that
could have a connection to those words. Coming up short he exhaled heavily with a grimace. “Sorry, can’t say they mean anything to me.” He confessed miserably, wishing he could be of more assistance.

Ned bobbed his head with thin lips as he took a step back, hand grasping his sword belt disappointed. After a moment he shook his head dismissing it, “It’s of no matter lad. The truth has a way of surfacing only when the cruelty of fate wishes it. Need and convenience never seem to be of concern.” Of this he spoke from experience, unwelcome memories of a last promise to his sister following revelations that might’ve prevented the death of his father and brother, an entire uprising even, troubling his thoughts.

Gendry could offer only silent sentiments of agreement and expressed as much before Ned changed the subject entirely, seemingly rather affected.

“Your father leaves on a hunt in the morn, are you to go with him?” He asked.

Gendry shook his head and motioned back towards his work. “I mean to have the blades finished in two days time, and if I’m honest, I’ve no interest in spending time with the King overindulging on women and wine.” He stated plainly, though with a hint of bitterness.

“Aye.” Ned offered a small consolatory smile. “It seems very little of our King’s vices have effected his sons.”

Gendry grunted unhappily, “There’s years yet to see if your statement rings true, but I do hope so.” He paused before reflecting with an odd look on his face. “Sometimes it feels as if I’m more at risk of inheriting our father’s iniquity than my half brothers. I envy that they don’t have to look upon themselves and see him staring back.” He confessed. “As far as anyone can tell Jofferey and Tommen are all Lannister.” He supposed with a dispassionate chuckle and shake of his head. He frowned however when he felt Ned grasp his forearm abruptly and looked down on his goodfather’s white knuckles where they grasped his musculature. Looking back up questioningly he met an intense stormy gaze.

“What did you say?” Ned asked eyes uncharacteristically sharp, boring into Gendry.

Gendry’s frown deepened. “That I see my father when I look at myself?” He repeated brows furrow, now concerned with the Hand’s fit of strange behavior.
“After that.” Ned urged with a quick sideways nod of his head, his grip unknowingly tightening further.

“About Jofferey and Tommen?” He asked with a skeptically lifted brow, now beyond puzzled and seeming apprehensive. “That my half brothers favor the Lannister’s?” He questioned hesitantly, thinking he spoken too freely. When the grip on his arm was gone he looked to his good-father. “Are you feeling alright Lord Stark?” He felt compelled to ask.

Ned nodded. “Yes, yes. I’m fine.” He said turning away and heading for the exit. Gendry watched him go completely befuddled and frowned when the man turned around brusquely and quickly strode back to him looking anxious. “Remind me again son, what color hair did your Lady mother possess?”

Gendry, completely at a loss, searched Ned’s face for some type of clue as to the reasoning behind the stoic man’s sudden melancholy determination. He couldn’t find one. “She had yellow hair.” He finally told him, finding it strange that his Good-father suddenly looked like the weight of the world was bearing down on him and he dreaded inevitably being crushed.

As he watched Eddard Stark’s steely grey eyes darken grimly with stoic resolve, Gendry unexpectedly felt very wary and frowned finding himself watching the man’s retreating back. It took him a moment to gather himself enough to return to work, and as the hours churned on so did his sense of urgency.

For reasons he could only feel in his bones, finishing his work was of paramount importance.

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Arya didn’t know what to make of the fact that Syrio had suddenly put a second sword in her hand and told her she wasn’t suited to the Water Dance. At first she’d taken it as insult and was hurt by his lack of confidence, but then as they began anew and worked side-by-side, her view began to change.

He would show her movements she’d never seen before and that looked foreign and forced even as he made them. He’d have her mimic him only to tell her, “Yes, good. Do this like you, not me”.

After that first day she returned to spend the next helping him drag the largest mirrors out of unused rooms about the Keep and into their practice space. Watching her own reflection, he’d
make her repeat what she’d learned at deliberately slow paces, and then faster until she did it accurately and consistently, until it was second nature and the memory had been etched into her muscles.

Day after day she spent facing the mirrors, two swords in hand scrutinizing herself as she leapt and spun, listening to Syrio’s comments about what maneuvers would be useful to counter and to advance, where each one left her weak, how to protect herself from it, as well as how they could be used in tandem with those moves she favored from the Water Dance.

He had abandoned attempts to make her into a Water Dancer for true, but now they worked together to develop her art into a style most suited to the movements that came natural to her.

He’d begun to show her the basics of the Shadow Drift, a fighting style she’d never heard of before, yet which felt more instinctive than any other she’d tried her hand at. It was as if she no longer had to think. With two swords she was working half as hard to draw attention one way while preparing to strike from another.

She was doing as she was thinking, not seconds later, not thinking ahead like she’d always been forced due to disadvantage. She was saving strength, and energy in the process, and there was less of a chance she might somehow let on to her intent—less time for her to show her hand.

Not only that but the slow measured approach she adopted at Syrio’s suggestion and demonstration brought a calm she didn’t know she could possess and helped her improve fluidity from one motion to the next as well as control once she increased her pace.

She would spend hours, muscles tensed, slowly drifting from one move to the next, measuring her control and form in the mirror and listening to Syrio’s stern voice as he reprimanded her for lost concentration, motivation, or weak and lackadaisical movements. And at the moment, with how tired she was now, she was hearing a lot from her dancing master.

“A girl has wet rope for limbs, has your strength escaped you so soon?” He harped at her until she stiffened her arms. And then “Patience eager kitten. Sloppy and fast would have you spitted by your enemy. Slow and practiced now, to be effective and swift later without thought.” He told her when her calm began to evade her as she grew more tired and her mind started to drift as she pictured herself in a fight, her body flowing rapidly through the forms rather than holding herself back and practicing restraint like she was supposed to be doing currently.

Slow and measured was always more of a strain and more involved than letting herself move as fast as her body yearned and felt compelled to. He’d never let her speed up the pace until it looked
as if she was no longer thinking but replicated everything perfectly, which seemed like it was never going to happen at moment.

Frustratingly, Syrio seemed to agree. “Enough.” He finally bit out. “A cat needs its rest if it is ever to stalk and hunt. A girl is tired and careless and would find even a mouse difficult prey in her state.” He smirked seeing her displeased frown. “Tomorrow Arya Stark will return calm as still water, Yes?” He looked to her with a lifted brow. Seeing her nod as answer he turned on his heel and left her to exhaustedly fall to her knees and begin to muster up the will to find her way back to her chambers.

Climbing the many stairs back to her rooms after hours of rigorous training had become Arya’s least favorite part of the day. The burning of lactic acid within her uncooperative muscles always punctuated her frustrations after unproductive sessions, however her disappointment was extinguished completely and she found a sudden burst of energy seeing the glint of steel resting on her bed after tiredly opening the door.

Running quickly over she slowed, mouth agape and eyes unknowingly watery and wide as she found her hands drifting towards the steel laying there in wonder. She almost expected it to disappear, thinking her exhaustion had her imagining things.

Two magnificent sickled blades lay in front of her surrounded by seven matching knives, all of the impressive weapons laden with white, gray, and black enamel and highlighted by veins of gold. It took her a moment to realize all the blades had been etched and inlaid because she was too caught up in studying the magnificence of the iridescent ripples within the folded metal and the realization that what she was holding was Valyrian steel. When she did however, she found herself hiccupping back watery sobs while her fingers traced the drawings reverently.

The hammered fullers along the sickled part of the sword blades had been coated with black enamel bordered with gold into which an image had been etched and then inlaid. Six silver direwolves frolicked along in a snowy scene, the last of which was chasing a golden bull. The seven knives mirrored the blades, six each with a single silver direwolf, capturing the likeness of her sibling’s animals astoundingly well, and the seventh with a menacing golden bull.

She chuckled disbelievingly feeling the first tear fall and felt herself gripping the swords in either hand only to realize they’db been molded perfectly for her with ancillary crescent blades covering the knuckles. Exhaling delightedly she found herself moving into stance on the balls of her feet disregarding her exhaustion. She easily planted her left foot in front of her right, knees bent into a crouch with one sickled blade pointing menacingly forward at a height with her forehead, the other sweeping an arch from the side of her body until it too was piercing the air in front of her extended from her middle.
Holding the pose momentarily she then thrust both weapons forward as she led with her left foot, right blade still at a level with her head and parallel to the one extended near her waist just as she swiveled her wrists and shifted her weight back to pivot on her right foot and essentially swing round with weapons arching one over the other to plant her left foot then lead with her right as she thrust steel forward to mirror her previous posture in the other direction. Holding steady there despite tensed and trembling legs she couldn’t help but marvel at the fact that it’d felt as if she’d truly just sliced through the atmosphere, that the blades assisted in making the movements feel much more fluid.

“They’re to your liking then?” A deep, amused voice startled her from off to the side.

She jolted slightly and turned towards her husband, unable to act affronted at being caught off guard and for once found herself surprised at the fact that she didn’t care to hide her happy tears.

“You made these?” She asked looking down at the swords once more with a smile.

Gendry walked towards her and took one from her hand flipping it over in his and laying it out laterally for both of them to see. “Aye.” He told her running his gaze along its length lovingly, “And my axe.” He smirked, nodding his head behind him to where his own weapon was propped up against the wall.

She glanced behind him briefly, eyes only flickering back to his momentarily as she started off towards the far side of the room, Gendry following silently.

Holding one sickled blade up in front of the ominous looking axe her lips turned upwards of their own accord. “We match.” She said with a grin after a moment of taking in the menacing weapon and comparing it to her own.

His was more black than her own, the gold bordered enamel covering all but the sharpened and shining iridescent edges of the half moon blade, the spade shaped counterweight that doubled as yet another blade opposite the main face, and the spike that jutted up from the head of a golden bull at its top. Gold and silver filigree sprinkled with gilded stags, bulls, and direwolves decorated and wound its way around and down the steel of the five foot pole, excepting where it had been fit with a black leather grip stitched with gold and silver threading, and to which a gleaming silver and grey enamel direwolf head had been attached at its end.

Still, the thing that drew her eye the most was the artistry of the image crafted into the face of either side of the main half-moon blade, a more detailed and enlarged version of that on the fullers of her own blades. The movement and realism with which he’d been able to capture of each of the
Stark sibling’s direwolves was immaculate, and the faintness in the background of the etched shilouette of Winterfell and the surrounding Wolfswood served to demonstrate just how talented her husband really was as a smith—of silver, gold, steel and apparently jewelry, as was made apparent by the enamel work and the ruby inlaid eyes of the direwolf and bulls heads on each of their weapons.

“Ancestral weapons.” He told her finally breaking the silence. “Valyrian steel for our new house.” He explained before adding, “For our sons and daughters”, with a small chuckle.

Arya didn’t think it was possible for her smile to grow any larger, she still had no words, and yet suddenly—and horrifically—she found herself sobbing like a babe despite her own resistance.

Gendry was hoping for a reaction but when his fierce little wife started to unexpectedly bawl he didn’t know what to think or do and so began apologizing profusely, though for what he was unsure.

“Gods, I’m sorry!” He startled unthinkingly. “If you don’t like them we can melt them down and Master Mott can fashion you something of your own design.” He reached for the swords to get the offending gifts out of her sight.

“No!” she screeched, clutching her swords to her and turning her back so he couldn’t steal them away. “Don’t be stupid!” She said protective of her new present. Looking over her shoulder she saw her bewildered husband and tried to get ahold of herself enough to face him. Turning around slowly, she lovingly eyed her blades and turned shining eyes up to his. “This is the single greatest gift anyone could’ve given me…Only you could really though, being a smith and all.” She hiccupped happily, eyes watering against her will while new tears spilled over. “They’re beautiful. Thank you.”

Gendry looked as if he were staring at a particularly difficult puzzle. “You like them?” He questioned in disbelief though there was a hint of relief to his tone. “But you’re crying—”

Arya scowled at him. “I’m not crying.”

Gendry’s eye twitched and his brows furrowed deeper in confusion. “But-“

“I’m not crying!” She cut him off prepared to argue that there were no remnants of tears still
running down her cheeks. She was not some weak kneed maid who shed tears when gallant knights gifted her with presents—even if those presents were the nicest weapons she’d ever laid eyes on. After she saw Gendry gulp she reiterated her point in a much less strident manner. “I wasn’t crying.” She maintained with a nod of finality.

Still baffled beyond belief, Gendry was only able to mimic her nod before there was a loud pounding on the door and Ned Stark stalked gravely into the room giving explicit instructions to his men to bar the way for anyone else, royal or not. Gendry’s bewilderment redoubled seeing his normally calm goodfather’s grim resolve and his own expression twisted in what he could only imagine was a ridiculous way.

“Thank the Old Gods you’re both here.” Ned strode towards them only taking his daughter’s tears and his good-son’s confusion in momentarily before his eyes laid on valyrian steel and he’d worked out the meaning of their expressions. Inspite of himself and the situation he fleetingly smiled, managing to spare a moment to hug his daughter to him fiercely. “Masterful work is it not?” He questioned peering down at her. He was pleased to see her childlike nod and watery smile though it made his heart ache more knowing the reasoning for his intrusion. His expression turned foreboding as did his tone, “You may have need of them shortly, keep them close.” He told them both, watching as the severity of his meaning settled on them both.

“What’s happened?” Arya asked immediately, her stomach now full of knots. The last time her father had looked this perturbed it was because Jon Arryn had passed, and in a suspicious manner no less.

Ned grimaced and looked to Gendry. “You’re father’s been gravely injured son.”

Both Starks looked to him for a reaction but he just stood there trying to process everything. There was so much conflict going on in his mind, so many questions and repressed feelings, but he expressed none. When instead he made to stride solemnly towards the door, Ned hastily grabbed him by his upper arm looking anguished.

“He’s with the Queen lad, I’m afraid you won’t be welcomed.” He informed Gendry looking pained at having to do so.

Gendry just stared numbly at his goodfather until Arya spoke up and they both turned to her. “How?” She questioned, her manner now serious and determined, tears wiped clean.

Ned glanced back to the hulking man in front of him and only then offered explanation, “A boar rushed him.” He lamented finally. “It’s been said the King was well into his cups.” Though
Ned spoke miserably it was without attempt to sugar coat the tale. His goodson deserved to hear it as it happened even if it didn't paint his old friend in a very favorable light.

Gendry grunted out a mirthless chuckle running a hand through his hair and tousling it slightly. “When can I see him?” He ultimately asked.

Eddard gave a slight, unhappy shake of his head. “I’m afraid you can’t lad.”

When Gendry narrowed his eyes questioningly Ned went on, clearly reluctant even though it was vital.

“The Game of Thrones…” He started, irritated that the world and corrupt people in it dictated that a good man had no right to have last words with his father. “With the King dead you’ll only be seen as someone who can usurp Joffrey’s right to the throne. We must get you out of the Keep and King’s Landing—you and my daughter.” He said nodding towards Arya.

Realization dawned on both Arya and Gendry at the same time.

“The Queen wouldn’t—” Gendry began skeptically.

“Don’t be daft, of course that stupid wench would.” Arya interrupted him before heading for the door herself. “I’ll go find Sansa.”

Ned stopped her as well, grabbing her by the arm similar to the way he had Gendry only moments before. She looked at her father questioningly but her gaze turned confused and concerned when he only shook his head.

“You’re coming with us aren’t you?” She half-asked, half-demanded of him.

“No little wolf.” Ned told her grey eyes soft. “If we all leave it’ll appear as if we’ve left to raise an army and challenge the line of succession.”

Even before he was finished she was shaking her head. “But we can’t lust leave you and Sansa here!” She said helplessly, a leaden sense of dread suddenly weighing her down. “It’s not as if they
“Won’t say the same if just Gendry and I leave!” She challenged.

“Aye they might.” Ned agreed. “But with Sansa still promised to Joffrey and her and myself still present in the capital we can assuage those beliefs and say you ran of your own volition—and with good reason.” He asserted with a definitive nod.

She still wasn’t having it. “Yes and then you’ll be as good as hostages!” Arya glared at him incredulously seeing the situation for what it was as her mother’s parting words echoed loudly in the back of her mind. “You can’t seriously think that’s a viable option!”

“We’ve no other choice little wolf.” He insisted soberly.

“No.” Arya shook her head. “I won’t leave you and Sansa in the capital. I won’t leave you at the mercy of the Lannister’s!” She maintained.

Ned looked exasperated. “You must do as you’re told and not argue.” He insisted, volume rising incrementally as he beseeched her, feeling his own desperation creep in. This was for her own well-being and that of her husbands, she must understand that! Frustrated with himself for losing his head momentarily, he sighed deeply hating and admiring his own daughter for her bravery as she stared him down defiantly. “I implore you little wolf. Leave. If you stay it would hardly be the first time a King’s bastard found himself without a head, and though I’m the Hand, I’m no Southroner.” He directed his words at both Gendry and Arya as he continued. “I will play what game I can manage but I can only do that if you’re both safe—if you’re gone. If you remain, we’re all at the Lannister’s mercy, and given the murders they commit in Robert’s name after the last rebellion, I doubt Tywin will balk at the sight of more blood. I won’t give him the chance this time.”

After a moment of consideration Gendry finally spoke up “Gather your things,” he told Arya. “Only what you need and can carry.”

“You can’t be serious!” Arya howled. “We can’t just leave them!” She pled.

Gendry shook his head after a moment. “We’ve no other choice Arya. I’ll not risk you.” He told her. “You’re my wife, wedded and bedded. Everyone’s already speculating you’re with child and Tywin doesn’t leave things to chance.” He finished ominously.

She shook her head vehemently. “I—I’m not with child.” She insisted anxiously. “I’m not.” She
repeated this time more confidently, nodding as if she were certain.

Gendry snorted derisively. “Word around the castle is I’ve already got a child on you by force.” It was true, there were such whispers. He just decided to leave out the part that she supposedly wasn’t showing was because of the Moon tea she snuck from her dancing instructor. He wasn’t sure it was untrue, though knowing Syrio made that highly unlikely and he tried to convince himself it was. Regardless, her safety was paramount. “You’re my wife—a threat to them Arya, we must leave.” He reiterated once more.

After a moment of staring between her husband and father and taking in their concern, it thankfully seemed to register, even the urgency of it. Shaking her head and once again battling tears as well as her own resistance, she whipped around and without thought started stripping out of her clothing, causing her father to hastily turn his back.

Ned cleared his throat and the awkwardness by digging in his pocket and withdrawing a hefty sack of gold. “I thought to bribe the guards to see you safely out.” He told his goodson placing the weight in his hands.

Gendry grimaced shaking his head. “Cersei will have promised a Lannister’s reward already. We’ll have to escape the city. I know a place we can hide and people I can trust until I figure out how.”

“Best I not know Lad.” Ned said. “This is all I can give you. Cersei mustn’t have proof that I’ve helped you and I’ll need my men if I’m to stay in the Capital. Use some of the coin to buy horses and the rest to outfit yourselves for the journey North. Try for Maidenpool and find a ship to Whiteharbor if you can, but even through the Riverlands stay off the Kingsroad, they’ll send Goldcloaks after you. If you must, head towards Greywater Watch, Howland Reed will find you once you’re in the bogs and give you shelter. You won’t be safe until you’re in the North and mayhaps not even until Winterfell.”

“I’ve the coin Jon Arryn left me as well.” Gendry added, “It might be more than we can carry though”

Ned nodded thoughtfully. “Try. There will be no means for me to send it north without drawing suspicion.”

“And Nymeria?” Arya questioned, approaching as she sheathed the last of her new knives in the leather harness that she’d fit over plain trousers, her over-sized gambeson and woven leather brigandine. She had a sack of what appeared to be more clothing thrown over her shoulder, Needle at her waist, and her new swords strapped to her back as well.
Her father grimaced. “I don’t know. I promise to do what I can but you musn’t wait.” He expounded seriously. “We need to get you out of the castle while Cersei is still with Robert. You must find a way out of the city as soon as you can.”

“I can get us out of the keep.” Arya piped up meeting the questioning gazes of both men. “I got lost in the tunnels and found myself in Flea Bottom not long ago. I can find my way again, I’m sure of it.”

“Good.” Ned nodded relieved momentarily before once again feeling guilt bear down on him. There was nothing more he could do but abandon them to fate. He wouldn’t start another war; would do everything he could to stop it. He drew his daughter into his arms as he knelt down in front of her, grey misty eyes meeting quicksilver ones. “I love you little wolf. Keep each other safe.” He told her with a smile, knowing she wouldn’t appreciate being told not to worry and that her husband would look out for her. “I hope you can see fit to forgive me the things I trusted must be done.”

Arya nodded her head trying to stop the tears she felt finally falling. “Of course. Always.” She assured him. “I love you. Tell Sansa I love her too and I’m sorry I couldn’t take you both with me.” She hiccupped as a sob escaped and she threw her arms back around her father. “Are you sure you won’t come?” She tried one last time mumbling into his neck.

Ned grimaced pulling back to look her in the eyes. “War is a terrible thing and the costs too great to fathom.” He began with his characteristic seriousness. “If I saw a way to peacefully return home I would. This is how I'll try to keep all of us safe.”

When Arya once again nodded at him her understanding, he stood and passed off his grip on her hand to her returned and readied husband. Ned raised hands to cup both of their cheeks and gave them a last grimly level look. “Get out as fast as you can.” He told them once more.

The silence was heavy, his ominous words choking up what others they had ready on their tongues as their wills resolved and their minds reeled. Hardship was what lay ahead and they all recognized it, though none of it felt truly real until Lord Stark turned on his heel abruptly, giving them one last furrow browed nod before he took leave into the chaos of the Keep.

After staring at the door for a moment Gendry bent to loop the belts he’d secured around his inheritance chest over his shoulders before offering his hand to Arya for her to take. “Let’s go home.” He told her hefting his axe over his shoulder with the other.
Numbly, Arya grasped her husbands’ hand.

Chapter End Notes

The image at the beginning depicts sort of what I think Arya and Gendry's sigil should be like and it also features a silhouette of her swords too in case my description wasn't adequate--they're sort of a bastardized version of Chinese hook swords meets Egyptian scythes. Probably not the most efficient or functional design but I thought wtf, I'm having fun with it.

EDIT: So I was told the image wasn't showing up? Think I fixed it but let me know!
The Guilt of the Living

Chapter Summary

D-day is here....

Oh and WARNING: major violence is ahead

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

It burned.

Seven fucking hells did it burn!

In all her years, and to her mother’s chagrin, Arya had never been concerned with the state of her hair. That is of course until this very moment, and it was currently really more a concern for her scalp than her unruly locks.

The idiot shit who’d convinced Gendry this godforsaken chemical concoction was a necessity to ensure their continued concealment would be getting an earful as soon as she was able to concentrate on something other than the feel of her skin melting.

She considered herself pretty capable of handling pain, but this was something all together unearthly. Fuck it was unbearable, and the longer it stayed on the worse it became. How did the whores stand it?

Feeling the slurry drip from her hairline and onto her cheek and neck she couldn’t hold back the howls even as she tasted blood on her lips from trying to bite it back.

“Motherless son of a whore!” She cursed, practically crying from the agony and disregarding the significance of her words in the presence of the husband that was holding her back from the water basin across the room, as well as the host that was gracious enough to hide them and just so happened to be the brothel’s Madame.
The skin of her cheek was burning now, the fumes wafting up into her eyes setting them on fire while she could feel blisters bubbling up on her neck. She’d been told to hold out as long as she could in order for the solution to work properly, but if she continued any longer she would pass out.

Wrestling free of her husbands grasp with great effort and a hit to his groin, she rushed over to dunk the top half of her torso into the water of the bronze tub that had been filled in preparation for her torture. Relief was immediate though not thorough, so she began trying to scrub the mess out of her already abused scalp only to screech bubbles still submerged.

Who in all of the Seven Hells would subject themselves to this out of vanity!

She continued to scour, hands coming away with gelatinous yellow-orange clumps of what used to be her hair, the chemicals actually having succeeded in melting it. Running out of air she finally emerged gulping in huge breathes as she flipped what was left of her locks over her head accompanied by a considerable amount of water that spattered noisily to the ground.

She turned around slowly to face the mirror and everyone else, knowing what she was about to see wasn’t going to please her. It didn’t. She was the only one unsmiling however.

“This might actually work.” Madame Evlyn murmured sounding surprised while Gendry nodded his agreement still hunched over and clutching his bits, trying to come to terms with his pain.

Arya scowled angrily, feeling the urge to throttle them both, Evlyn especially. If the woman hadn’t thought this method of disguise would work then why did she intend to subject her to the torture in the first place!

Evlyn came forward inspecting the mess. “You’ve blistered more than any of my girls, I suspect due to your Northern complexion, however the bad reaction may have worked in your favor. You may yet pass for a boy.” She said maneuvering Arya’s head around with hands on either of her cheeks. “Of course we’ll have to shear some of it shorter still,” She grimaced picking up a mat of the inundated mess which somehow still hung to Arya’s shoulder. “But leaving it to fall and hide your eyes I think, and not bothering with a salve to treat these sores…” She trailed off. “They’re not pretty but it would be hard for even your family to recognize you I’d say!”

“You think her clothes are too fine for what we plan?” Gendry asked still a bit breathless while considering his wife and wondering of her silence. Arya looked completely spent and had lain
down on the lavishly furnished daybed disregarding her saturated clothing.

Madame Evlyn shook her head. “With the weapons you carry I’d be worried they weren’t fine enough!” She snorted. “Do you have a story you plan to tell?” She queried curiously.

Gendry shook his head curtly. “None as of yet, if you have suggestion we’d hear it.”

The Madame’s eyes glittered and Gendry couldn’t help but think she was enjoying this too much out of hand. “Brothers.” She nodded. “Freeriders come from Qohor, to explain the possession of such remarkable weapons—Deserters of the Second Sons or another of the Free companies I would think.” She paused pacing slightly, looking thoughtful as she began spinning a tale. “No other companies would take you on so with little other choice you’ve returned to Westeros to enlist in the Night’s Watch. They at least will put food in your belly and have use for your axe.” She turned to Gendry with a soft smile on her face. “This way you can say you’re from Flea Bottom since neither of you possess the look or sound of Essos…You’re orphans that left five years past and are now returned I’d say.” She finished looking entirely too pleased with herself.

He nodded picking up and eyeing the lye mixture that’d marred his wife’s face. “Sounds plausible.” He said off handedly. Exhaling deeply and preparing to deal himself the same pain that afflicted his wife he turned to the older woman first. “Thank you Evlyn, for all you’ve done. I’d hoped we’d only be here a week, I know the danger we pose to you.”

The woman only smirked. “Smart of you to offer your thanks before you’ve experienced what the girl has.” She inclined her head to Arya who stared daggers right back. She just chuckled. “You’re always welcome here Gendry. I promised your mother that much and more before she passed…although she’d have my hide if she knew I was about to assist in helping you mar that perfect black mop of hair she always fawned over.” She stood on tip-toes to reach and muss his hair. “Best you get on with it love. The Black Brother is the only viable plan my eyes have found and from what I’ve been told, after he meets with the jailors on the morrow he plans to leave.”

Grimacing Gendry turned back to the lye mixture. Gritting his teeth, he dumped what was left on his head and began scrubbing furiously.

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Arya couldn’t help that she scowled at everyone who looked their way. Fortunately, it seemed as if that might be in character for the young sellsword she was trying to pass herself off as. No one more than took a second glance before walking on.
She knew she looked ridiculous—she knew they both looked ridiculous. Neither her nor Gendry were suited to the yellow orange splotchy hair color or the way it had been shorn off. Apparently Qohori sailors had passed through Madame Evlyn’s brothel not too long past and she could thank them for the hairstyle she was now sporting.

What was left of the congealed mess after the wretched lye hair treatment melted it down had been shaved closed to her head just above her ears. To deal with the rest of the unruly mop, a bowl had been placed over her head and the remaining length on top cut to its edge. It hung low enough to hide her eyes, and since Gendry had been given a matching style, his blue eyes were guarded as well.

She thought it would be impossible to conceal her husband well enough to remain unrecognized due to his stature, but she was surprised that the hair cut actually had sufficed in transforming him into someone else. His striking blue eyes were covered, the thick dark eyebrows that invited you into their depths were as well, and where he normally walked confidently heads taller than most anyone around him, he now walked slumped over feeling the absurdity of his new look as the big blonde oaf.

Regardless of how they looked and acted—Arya brooding angrily while Gendry tromped along appearing dimwittedly paranoid while truly lost in worry—it felt good to leave the whorehouse after a fortnight of being cooped up.

The whole while Arya’d been stir crazy trying to receive news of her family, but all of the whore’s were surprisingly tight lipped. What little they’d heard from Evlyn was that the Goldcloaks were in fact looking for them, as well as Stark men though as a ruse no doubt. And though she pestered anyone she could to find out more, she begrudgingly admit defeat after the elder woman made a point to say she didn’t think it wise to go on asking less it arouse suspicion and they find themselves a spot on the block.

Living in fear and anxiousness was not something Arya was ready or equipped for, and so for the last two weeks she’d been pacing and waiting. Hoping that someone would find them a way out of the city where she could then ask for word of her family. Now they need only search for the Black Brother to enlist before they could be on their way and get a sense for what they’d be up against on the long journey home. Right now though tensions were high.

The streets were rather busy and with her nerves on edge everyone who brushed past her set her heart racing and her hands flinching towards the scabbards on her back. She had hoped to be moving away from the crowds but there seemed to be some big to do and everyone was headed in the direction of the Sept of Baelor, which was where they had been told the Black Brother would be this morn.
She followed in Gendry’s wake, wishing for nothing more than the strength to ignore the sinking feeling in her stomach and find the means to leave this accursed city behind. Finally breaking away from the crowd filling the square and moving around its perimeter and off to the side, Arya felt a slight bit a relief when she heard her husbands greeting over the growing volume of the crowd as he effortlessly fell back into the coarse vernacular of flea bottom.

“Yoren?” Gendry questioned as they came up to a man dressed in black.

Really there was no need for the question, it was obvious he had to be the man they sought. Stooped over and brooding, he had a gruff look about him and appeared anxiously and uneasily lethal, disdainful almost, as if he wished he could be anywhere else.

Besides his faded black tattered garb, the fact that he was attending a jailors wagon filled with three exceptionally dirty men, and another full of supplies and around which a throng of adolescents and rough hewn men shuffled about, made him easily recognizable as a man of the Watch.

He didn’t answer to the name right away, instead he narrowed his eyes as his hand came to rest on the pommel of his sword. After sizing them both up quickly he spat on the ground next to his wagon, baring his reddened teeth as he switched the mass of sourleaf from the left to right side of his gums with his tongue. “Who’d be asking?” He questioned eyeing Gendry and Arya in turn, chin raised appraisingly and inadvertently exaggerating his marginally warped posture.

Gendry turned slightly towards her as he replied. “Me ‘n me brother come to join the Watch.” He informed the man, managing to sound as arrogant as a person of his stature normally would be.

Arya couldn’t help but grimace and noticed a censorious curling of the Brother’s lip. He didn’t respond for a long moment, choosing instead to let his measuring gaze linger on them until they were both fidgeting sufficiently.

Finally Yoren sniffed and spat. “You want to join the watch?” He queried disparagingly, disbelief clearly written on his features and an eyebrow arched in reaction to such an overzealous and over-confident a proclamation.

What kind of Southroner’s were these to seek out and enlist! It was as if they believed themselves the greatest gift to the Watch since Brandon the builder erected the Wall!
“Aye.” Gendry ploughed on, chagrined at finding themselves not easily welcomed. “We know how to handle weapons.” He tried to sell them now.

The Black Brother only grunted to express his apparent doubt.

“You’re brother’s you say?” He said after a moment, glancing back and forth between them wearing his irate skepticism plainly.

Arya looked up at Gendry and frowned seeing him shift his stance marginally as he tried to figure the best way to navigate the situation and answer the questions.

“Same mum, orphaned.” He begrudgingly offered, seeming appropriately disgruntled at having to explain their parentage.

Yoren ran this tongue over his teeth, unaffected by apparently having given offense. “Merchant guards?” He asked simply.

Gendry shook his head staunchly. “No.” He shuffled unwittingly, once more shifting his weight. “Sellswords, home from Essos, hopin’ to find work with the Goldcloaks. They wouldn’t have us and we’ve no wish to starve.” He offered as explanation.

When Yoren only nodded and spat again, giving away little of his thoughts except his disbelief, Arya felt herself snarling against the urge to smack him and it seemed Gendry was growing weary of his apparent suspicion as well.

“When you have us or no?” Gendry finally grumbled out. “I’ve no wish to waste breath.”

Yoren only snorted. “Don’ know what fool you take me for boy but I’ve traveled these Seven Kingdoms recruiting for the Watch more winters than you’ve likely seen and this isn’t the North.” He started stoically. “Here in the Capital and South o’ the Neck, if Lords don’t laugh me out of their Keeps they only offer up those idiots senseless enough to find themselves in cells, or the orphans and gutter rats which thieve in their streets.” He spat again, expressing his contempt for his own words. “And now, here I stand, approached by a large boy and an apparent mute—both dressed in fine clothing mind ya—wishing to pledge themselves to man the Wall.” He paused briefly before circling them and making a show of sizing them up more thoroughly. “Sellswords you say?” He finally asked, arms crossed over his chest and chin raised challengingly.
“Yes.” Gendry replied, voice now gravelly with dread.

`Yoren nodded at him. “And what’s in that chest o’ yours?” He queried warily.

Gendry blinked in pause. “Armor.” He said simply after a moment, offering no more explanation.

Yoren snorted but let it go, choosing to move onto other questions. “Those are fine weapons for sellwords, where did you come by them?” He asked, wearing his mistrust freely.

“Qohor.” Gendry quietly seethed, becoming annoyed with elder man’s suspicion and glancing about to make sure they weren’t garnering unwanted attention. Fortunately the square was packed and they were only three heads among hundreds now.

“Ah yes, I suppose you’ll tell me Valyrian steel is widely available in Essos—and it is compared to Westeros—but not without substantial cost.” He began before trudging on and voicing the reason for his suspicion. “I suppose you’d have me believe that the coin you earned as sellswords bought you such weapons, but you’d have to be a high ranking seasoned officer for that to be true and the only job the mute here,” he nodded to Arya, “seems suited for is scouting.” He finished.

Arya felt herself snarling and stepping forward at the implication that she was less than capable, but managed to hold her thoughts back after Gendry lay a calming hand on her arm. Yoren however didn’t seem the least bit threatened and sneered at her openly.

Then, sniffing and looking away as the crowd around them suddenly screamed to life, the Black Brother only glanced back to them briefly, eyes now focused elsewhere. “The Night’s Watch cares not at all how you lived before, so you can keep your secrets. Just know I’ve no wish to feed and house thieves who intend to desert on the long ride North.” He warned coolly. “Once you’ve said the words, you’ve pledged for life. You can store that chest o’ yours in the wagon and don’t wander off too far. We leave as soon as the last join us.” He finished, eyes directed towards the Sept as the raucous crowd around them roared and heaved.

Though Gendry still remained tense and anxious, he was immediately moving toward the second wagon and unloading their chest. Arya made to follow after him but froze as crowd opened up, two Goldcloaks escorting a chained and dirtied man through the crowd as onlookers hurled insults and worse at the fellow. It was a man she instantly recognized and who recognized her.
Her mind was moving faster than she could keep pace with, questions compounding as her body remained frozen in place with her heart in her throat.

Father!

Why was he in chains? What were they planning to do with him? How long had he been imprisoned and what for? Had the Lannister’s done this?

The fool lions must believe Gendry had aspirations towards the crown! But under what pretense had he been arrested...

Why hadn’t he just escaped with them?

Unbeknownst to her, she’d begun drifting forward in wake of the Goldcloak’s path, only to be halted by the crowd as it surged forward in front of her and she was jostled into someone’s shoulder.

There was nothing in existence except her father. She was numb to everything but the horror of seeing him be dragged up steps, watching his eyes squint against the sun as he turned to face the angry horde and somehow find her among them.

Seeing his heart wrench at the sight of her, she felt her own expression twist in anguish and her hands clench at her sides as she gulped down fear. When he looked over his shoulder, Arya’s eyes flickered to left the to find her sister standing next to Jofferey and the Queen feeling dread deep in her bones.

As Sansa nodded and gave a small encouraging smile, Arya’s confusion redoubled, but then her father turned back towards the masses, head hung low and looking at the ground in front of his feet as he licked his lips and began to speak, breaking her heart with every word.

“I am Eddard Stark, Lord of Winterfell and Hand of the King. I come before you to confess my treason in sight of the gods and men. I betrayed the faith of my king and trust of my friend Robert. I swore to protect his trueborn children…but before his blood was cold, I plotted to murder his son… and seize the throne for my Goodson, Gendry Baratheon. Let the High Septon and Baelor the Blessed bear witness to what I’ve said. Jofferey Baratheon…is the one true heir to the Iron Throne…by the grace of all the gods, Lord of the Seven Kingdoms and Protector of the Realm.”
Her stomach plummeted.

Treason was the charge. She knew the sentence.

She hadn’t felt Gendry’s presence to know he’d come up behind her, but as she made to step forward and force her way to her father his hand was gripping her shoulder painfully.

“No.” He told her moving to stand in front of her and glancing to the side to find Yoren considering them carefully.

Arya glared up at him murderously completely disregarding and unrepentant of the fact that she was no longer going along with their planned charade. “We have to go to him.” She said breathlessly as she made to push her way around him.

“We’d be dead before you reached him, you musn’t.” He insisted as he tried to wrangle her.

Arya tore free of his grip and tried unsuccessfully to once more push past him as another voice began to speak and the crowd quieted once more.

“My mother wishes me to let Lord Eddard join the Night’s Watch…stripped of all titles and powers he would serve the realm in permanent exile. And my Lady Sansa has begged mercy for her father.”

Arya could feel it in the buggering shitheads tone, could feel the world shifting around her before it actually did.

“But they have the soft hearts of women…so long as I’m your King treason shall never go unpunished! Ser Ilyn, bring me his head!”

As the throng erupted in masse frenzy, so did Arya. She tried to charge right through Gendry, lashed out at him with her fists when he wouldn’t budge. She stepped back to try and feint around him, her mind in panic, but the crowd was too thick. Hundreds of backs were halting her from getting to her father and so she drew a knife into either hand intending to make her own path, watching in horror as he was forced to his knees and Ice was risen above his head.
Arms were around her before she knew what was happening, bear hugging her and rendering her weapons useless without proper reach. She was thrashing and snarling and could feel helplessness overwhelming her as she was turned away from the sight of her father just as his sword sliced through the air towards him, the sound of her sister’s scream somehow distinguishable over the crowd before there was nothing but searing red hot pain blooming and clouding her vision as everything faded to black.

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Gendry couldn’t think. He couldn’t function. Everything was a blur that his mind refused to accept and so shut down.

Eddard Stark was dead.

Himself and Arya would’ve been as well had it not been for Yoren.

Seeing his Goodfather’s own sword poised to take his life, Gendry had been prepared to storm the steps and cut his way through the crowd to prevent it. That is of course until he’d seen his wife already attempting to do just that.

Fear for her life had him moving of his own accord regardless of her wishes or his own. Her safety and wellbeing was paramount and he found himself restraining her and shielding her from the sight of her father losing his head even as she fought fiercely to free herself.

She had knives in either hand by the time he’d hugged her to him, and she had no qualms turning them on him in her frenzied attempt to mount a rescue. He nearly lost hold of her once one of the blades he’d forged imbedded itself in his thigh. Still, he managed to hold on long enough for Yoren to intervene.

“Boy, BOY!” The Black Brother yelled over the screams of the crowd as he struggled but seized the second knife from her hand. “Calm Boy!” He said taking hold of her face. “At the Wall there will plenty of time for you to quench your bloodlust.” He tried.

She didn’t still, she didn’t even hear him, she fought harder though it seemed impossible, her eyes darting this way and that in a frenzy to free herself.
“Calm boy!” He tried one more time without success. “Bugger it.” He said seeing she had no intention of stopping and had managed to squirm her way close to escape. Without a second thought he’d withdrawn his own belt knife and was using it’s hilt to knock the youngest Stark girl unconscious.

When her lifeless body crumpled between them, it was Yoren who hefted her easily over his hunched shoulder as Gendry stumbled in agony with the knife still jutting out of his thigh.

“Alright you sorry sons of whores! It’s a long way to the wall.” He bellowed to the motley crew over the din of the crowd, throwing Arya unceremoniously in the back of the supply wagon where he began to lash her hands and feet to together and secure them to the side. “You’ll be seeing enough blood for a lifetime there, shows over. Stragglers and those with objections are free to join the crazed one in the dark.” He nodded towards Arya’s motionless form before moving to climb and take the reigns to the wagon. “Tall lad, in the wagon with your brother. We’ll see to the knife once out of the city. Everyone else, mount up!”

It had been clear to Gendry through the chaos that Yoren realized who they were thanks to a look from Ned, and he was thankful that the man didn’t dally in the square even knowing steel was jutting out of his leg. He wasn’t entirely trustful of the man, but they didn’t have much other choice given their current state.

There was a tense moment at the City Gates when Gendry had been prepared to rip the knife from his thigh and bury it in Goldcloak flesh when several guard’s curiosity had them asking about the wee boy knocked out and restrained in the back of the wagon. Luckily Yoren was able to spin a satisfactory tale which had them grinning condescendingly down at the ‘pisspots who’d learn their place in the world soon enough’, and they were able to pass out of the city unchallenged.

It was only then that he was able to let himself warily trust the Black Brother, and only once they’d stopped for the night that he was finally able to address steel imbedded in his leg—or rather Arya was.

She’d come to when they were still within sight of King’s Landing and she’d done nothing but groan herself into consciousness, lay her eyes on the Keep in the distance, and go still. One glance down at her lashed hands and she was curling back up into a helpless ball and staring through the gap between wood in the sides of the cart and back towards where her father’s life had been stolen.

She didn’t move except to shy away from the comforting hand he tried to offer, and remained in an outward state of shock until they jostled to a stop not long after and Yoren began yelling out orders, loudly directing her to collect firewood and then halting her as she moved to go.
“I got thirty this time, Men and boys all bound for the wall” He warned her quiet, glancing at Gendry as well to make sure he heard. “And don’t be thinking they’re like that bastard brother o’ yours, Jon. Lord Eddard gave me pick o’ the capitals dungeons, and I didn’t find no little lordlings down there. This lot, half o’ them would turn you both over to the queen quick as spit for a pardon and maybe a few silvers. The other half’d do the same, only they’d rape her first.” He looked back at Arya. “If you have to piss, do it in the woods.” He finished before looking to Gendry again to make sure he took his meaning.

Arya’s only response to either of them was to glare first at Gendry, and then Yoren before grabbing hold of her knife and tersely yanking it from Gendry’s thigh. She made off angrily into the woods without a word while Gendry was seeing stars and gritting his teeth. He pressed the palm of his hand over the flesh of his leg reflexively while Yoren hurriedly produced a clean strip of fabric and pressed it to the wound and assist in staunching the bleeding.

“Hold it there lad.” Yoren told him and so he took over pressing the cloth into his wound. “She’s not like to forgive you easily,” He began quietly as he searched through the wagon and came away with needle and thread. “but you saved her life today.”

Gendry snorted. “I doubt I’ll be getting any gratitude for it.” He said bitterly, already feeling like it would’ve been better to die trying to save his good father than cravenly escaping.

“Aye, not from her you won’t.” The old crow told him. “But Lord Stark would be thankin’ you, and when she’s back with her family, them too.” He continued as he poured liquid from his flask into the wound and began stitching the larger man up.

Gendry hissed against the pain but didn’t speak, choosing instead to brood in silence and watch the skin of his thigh weave back together and thinking he deserved worse.

Yoren seemed to notice but didn’t offer any other words until he was once again pouring alcohol onto Gendry’s leg and the younger man’s jaw was clamped against the burn. “Women are a prickly sort lad, especially those acquainted with knives. I’d give her a wide berth for now if I were you. Wife or no.” He said with a meaningful look before turning back round to see the progress being made in camp and promptly shouting out orders and insults alike.

Gendry wasn’t about to sit and sulk and so gingerly pushed himself to his feet to test putting weight on his leg. There was certainly a sting, well more than a sting, but he couldn’t sit idle even if he wanted to.

First Jon Arryn and now Ned Stark. He meant death for all those who cared for him, and now he
was expected to see that his wife make it back to her family? It seemed a cruel joke, but as stubborn as he was he wouldn’t fail in this one thing. He couldn’t. He’d already failed her once.

Of course Arya had no wish to be looked after, and especially by him. For the greater part of a fortnight she spoke to no one, only went about assigned tasks around camp with a dull look in her eye. And when they settled in each night after a long slow day of traveling, he’d clear a spot to lie in some feet from her only to have her immediately get up, glaring at him and move elsewhere.

It became routine, a stupid dance they performed each night where she’d only relent after he followed her stubbornly several times, though when she finally did lie down she made certain never to face him. It hurt more than he let on.

He caught few rare glimpses of the woman he married, and he supposed it was a good thing considering it boded well for their continued concealment, but waking up panicked to find her no longer within axe reach and instead moving fluidly from form to form with a purpose, silhouetted with the trees against the sunrise, it gave him hope.

The first time he’d witnessed the spectacle he’d watched mesmerized at how focused and deliberate she moved, enchanted by her fluidity and calm. He had to frown however as the fat boy and the rail thin one with blonde lanky hair approached with sneers on their faces. He was moving to stand of his own accord as they began their snide remarks.

“Ya’d get a sword through the neck moving slow like that. Ain’t that right Lommy?” The fat one began, earning chuckles from his friend.

“Aye, right through the neck.” Lommy gestured back lewdly. When they earned no reaction from the target of their gibes they looked at each other and frowned, their sarcastic smiles turning spiteful as they continued on.

“The mute fancies himself a knight Hotpie. Too good to talk ta us lowborns.” Lommy spat, offense heavy in his tone.

“He ain’t no knight. Everyone knows ya ain’t no knight unless you’s got armor, and he ain’t got no armor.” Hotpie snorted. “’Sides, he’s headed to the Wall jus’ like us.”

Lommy grinned and nodded his agreement. “Ya think theys gonna let you keep them swords o’ yours Mute?” He tried. “At the Wall you’ll be no better than us. We should do you a favor and take
‘em from you now.” He looked to his friend. “Go on Hotpie, take the swords.”

Hotpie looked startled momentarily. “Why don’ you take ‘em?” He asked his friend affronted.

Lommy scrunched up his nose. “ ‘Cause I told you to! That’s why!” The taller boy reasoned. “You afraid o’ the Mute?” He chastised. “Don’t think you can steal his sword?”

“What? Of course I could!” Hotpie stammered in outrage. “Actually, I don’t need ta steal it from ‘im, I’ll just make ‘im give ‘em to me.” He said as he puffed himself up and stuck out his hand. “Hear that mute? Give over them swords. S’mine now, ya won’t be needin’ ’em no more.” He told her as he stepped forward.

Gendry was moving to intervene even as he saw his wife take action. Even by his own estimation she’d been moving leisurely through her forms, but now she was a blur. Viper like in quickness, and hard to predict as she spun toward the offending fat boy and only stilled once she had one curved blade at his neck and had him facing his skinny friend, the tip of her second curved blade poised just under Lommy’s chin and forcing his head skyward though his wide panicked eyes were directed solely at her.

“You want it, I’ll give it to you. I’m good at killing fatboys.” Arya rasped viciously in Hotpie’s ear, a voice considerably unlike her own exiting her lips while her furious gaze was fixated on the boy at tip of her other sword. “I like killing blonde boys.” She added maliciously, smirking as the tall one gulped.

Gendry watched terror take over and both boy’s body go rigid. Her sword was pushing up and driving Lommy to squeeze his lids shut and lick his lips as his head was forced further skyward.

“I relish the feel of steel slicing through flesh. Shall I show you how much?” She continued to taunt.

Gendry wasn’t sure she wouldn’t do just that and so decided to put a stop to it.

“Ya stabbed your own brother. I think they already know.” He interjected stoically. Looking back and forth between the two he hardened his look purposefully. “Or they should now.”

With a dismissive sniff, and a sneer directed towards her husband, Arya spun away from her assailants and lithely transitioned back into forms she’d been practicing before the interruption, unaware and uncaring of the two terrified fellows who had begun to breathe again and collect
themselves.

“Thanks.” Hotpie gasped out, directed toward Gendry. He was still eyeing Arya warily and sidestepping smartly away.

Gendry stepped after him growling, feeling his own anger rise. “Oh you like picking on the little ones, do you?” He rumbled at them both, watching Lommy stumble into his friend’s side as he forced them to back pedal away from his continuing approach. “You know, I’ve been hammering an anvil these past ten years and chopping men up in Essos with my axe. I prefer the sing of steel, but I’ve settled for the screams of men before. You gonna sing when I hit you?”

“No” Hotpie stammered, his friend vehemently shaking his head next to him as well. “-I mean yes, I’ll sing if that’s what you want, but I ain’t no good.” He tried, still retreating away and tripping over Lommy in the process. “That is, I think ya’d prefer steel.”

Gendry narrowed his eyes at him. “Aye, I think so to.” He hefted the axe at his side so he was gripping it with both hands in front of him. “That don’t mean I don’t want to find out though.” He warned them forebodingly.

Watching them scramble away he felt marginally satisfied, but looking back at his wife he couldn’t help but feel a heaviness in his heart.

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The pain Arya felt had dulled over the last fortnight until she was numb to almost everything.

Her grief was still there, she didn’t think it would ever disappear, but it was slowly turning to hate, and now purpose.

Her father was dead. There was no bringing him back no matter how much she wished or what she tried, so she must focus on something other than the pain. She turned back to training and occupied herself with honing her skills.

The calm came faster now. She found herself lost in concentration, feeling as if her blades slicing through the air were actually slicing through her enemies; was able to visualize herself felling Jofferey, Cersei, Ilyn Payne, the Hound.
It soothed her thoughts in the moment, but drove her animosity and supplemented her frustrations, frustrations that only intensified due to their glacial traveling pace Northward and the presence of her smothering husband.

Working with her swords could only do so much when she had to turn and find Gendry watching her with that always brooding, always concerned expression plastered across his miserably handsome face.

She wanted to hate Gendry, she wanted to be mad at him as much as she was at her father for not coming with them, but she found she couldn’t and it made her more aggravated.

She would never admit he had as good as saved her life that day in the square, even if she knew it was true, so instead called him coward in her mind hoping she would begin to believe it. She never did, and it grated her more than she like to admit.

Sure she had stabbed him, and yes she had threatened to do it again if he didn’t stay away from her, but even though the stubborn Bull would follow her around camp and sleep next to her when she expressly told him his presence sickened her, it was all lies and she couldn’t bring herself to turn steel on him no matter how much she aspired as to do so as just punishment.

The angry tears she shed each night and morning as she clutched one of the knives he’d forged, trying to convince herself to execute the sentence she strained to believe he deserved, never went away. The remedy of training and the calm it brought with it didn’t seem appealing this morning however, and she’d had enough of her internal battle.

She didn’t want calm, she wanted justice, to lash out, and it was maddening that she found herself troubled; that she was attached to him despite everything. She wanted freedom from feeling, and considering he betrayed her family, *their* family, rather than die for it like they were supposed to, she intended to make it right.

Turning onto her other side on the hard ground in order to face his sleeping form for the first time since she’d left Kings Landing, she felt her stomach drop and her heart clench.

He always looked like an oaf when he slept. His brow forever furrowed and his mouth wide open as he inhaled and exhaled, issuing soft snores as he probably sucked in mouthfuls of insects out here in the wilderness.
In sleep he appeared unguarded, so prone, the only time he wasn’t ever restrained or wary and she meant to take advantage of it; to make him understand what her father must have felt.

To lose his life while those he cared for could have fought or died to stop it.

Her grip on the knife in her hand tightened until she was trembling. She looked down at the shining etched steel marked with likeness of an angry Bull and smiled grimly. How poetic! Of all the knives she could chose to end his life with, knives that he’d made and six of which depicted wolves, only one depicted a Bull—only one was meant for him.

She looked back towards him and sat up quietly until she was kneeling. She paused frowning, feeling dread pool as she forced herself to raise the blade above him.

She glanced at his face and felt her expression twist as her muscles suddenly refused to obey her mind. Resolving herself she inched the blade downward before she met her own resistance and had to take a few sharp inhales and find the means to do what she intended.

Her whole body was trembling, her breathing harsh through her nose and clenched teeth, her muscles rigid with intent as the first tears began to fall.

He deserved to die. He should’ve died fighting by her side the day her father lost his head.

She snarled against her own defiance. Willing herself to do what bloody well should’ve been done by someone else a fortnight ago. The battle raged, her mind telling her what must be done while her body, ruled by the accelerated beat of her heart, refused to follow through.

She was damning herself thrice over as she gulped back sobs, and willed the knife to bury itself deep within the body that somehow had a power over her own, a power she couldn’t even begin to understand.

She felt the steel she gripped moving downward suddenly. Surprise and panic taking over as she lurched backwards reflexively and the blade buried itself in the ground rather than flesh.

She was backing away in shock, scrambling to her feet as she stared where the knife was submerged to the tang in dirt right next to her husband.
Furious and relieved, disturbed and angry beyond measure, she ripped the knife from the dirt only to throw it down to land point first in the ground on the other side of his body, aggravated at her inability to follow through once again.

He was beginning to stir from the commotion she’d made, and she was hunched over, her breathing ragged when she met his confused clear blue gaze and was immediately bring her boot to his side in alarm at being caught.

As he groaned and clutched himself trying to recover, she reached down and grasped the knife once more before sprinting away, making her way through the thick undergrowth while wiping the unwelcome tears from her eyes.

She heard footfalls behind her understanding that he was following and felt her hatred rise up again.

Couldn’t he see her conflict? Couldn’t he see they should be dead—that in the very least they should’ve attempted to free her father so she could die happy knowing she *tried*? He’d taken that away from her! Why must he torment her with his presence when he knew the guilt she must feel—the guilt of living when someone else had given their life for theirs.

It was consuming her and she was determined it would consume him first.

He was only a stride behind her when she stopped and whirled around brandishing the knife. He wasn’t expecting it and tried to stop and jump backwards but she was unholy in her speed and couldn’t get far enough away to avoid it as her blade sliced diagonally up his abdomen.

He had no time for shock because the next he saw her reversing her stroke, the same steel raining down now, his head in its path and only giving him enough time to step back and look to the side, letting the knife’s tip glide along his cheek ushering out blood.

He only just noticed something glinting in her other hand as she thrust it upward towards his jaw and knew there was no time to avoid and so readied himself for death as he stared into the stormy grey eyes of his wife, his heart aching.

It was his look of acceptance that staid her blade and she stared into his blue eyes feeling herself crumbling as the point of her knife only ever pricked his chin.
“Do it Arya.” He told her. “If it will ease the agony of losing him, and I pray it will, do it.”

“We should be dead.” She whispered through tears. “I want to die.” She admitted agonizingly.

“And he would want you to live.” He hurried determinedly; even knowing she didn’t want to hear it.

She turned away from him in disgust, dropping the knife away from him. “Shut up! The Gods take you, you fucking bastard! Y-You coward!” Even as she said it, she knew it wasn’t with conviction.

“It’s not my life I was concerned with losing! You think I give two shits about my life!” He thundered, his look turning agonized. “It’s you—I couldn’t lose you—I—” He stuttered running a nervous hand through his hair. “—I love you Arya.”

She froze momentarily, trying to process his words and feeling anguished. She couldn’t take it. She didn’t want this. She wanted free of the hurt, not tethered to it.

Angry at the universe, angry at him for making life impossible, both of her knives flew from her hands, soared passed either side of his head and sunk in the bark of a tree far behind him.

She was on him in seconds, fists beating at his chest, his face, pulling at his hair, ripping off his shirt, clawing at his skin until she’d pushed him to the ground at the base of a tree.

His words were wind, they couldn’t be more. He couldn’t love her! He stood by and let her father die!

She was in a fury, determined to unleash her wrath upon him and he took it, feeling her body shuddered with grief, watching tears clouding her vision and thought.

She was weary of fighting, weary of the guilt of surviving and of the anger she knew she should feel towards Gendry but which wouldn’t manifest itself properly and so she forced.
She should kill him, she should want to kill him and she did, but that was all she could manage.

The more blows she rained down on him the more she hated herself for it and the more she broke down. Would it bring her father back? Would it bring back the love she felt the world lost?

Yes, she wanted to hurt him for the hurt she felt, but she wanted his comfort as well. So when it transitioned from Arya trying to end his life, to Arya trying to violently consume his being with her own body and soul, it felt natural, right. Neither one of them knew nor cared if it wasn’t because it was what she needed, what they needed.

His nose was bloodied, his eye puffed up, and his lip swollen by the time she was astride him, her hands grasping either side of his face and her mouth finding his, intent on devouring him if she couldn’t take his life.

She was biting his neck, clawing at his back, and grinding herself painfully onto him even as she was withdrawing him from behind laces and he was helping to push her breeches past her knees, then sitting up to reach behind her to pull them off of her legs entirely.

Once free she gripped him painfully and drove herself onto him with a force that took the breath from both their lungs, crying out as his prick hit something deep within her and caused her to jerk in pain, his grip on her thighs sure to bruise.

She was relentless and hurried, taking no care for comfort, intent on turning her decrepit emotional state into a physical one for both of them. She couldn’t erase the pleasure of the feel of his hard length within her, and so brought with it the pain, vigorously hurling herself down onto him, torturing that barrier deep inside of her and battering it with his cock, convulsing slightly at each strike.

She watched him grimace and clench his eyes shut on each downward thrust as the wound in his thigh progressively began to tear open, bracing himself against her efforts; she found she didn’t like it. She ran her hands up into his hair to yank his head back and force his eyes open to look into hers.

She continued the abuse, tormented and watery grey eyes locked on her husband’s helpless and submissive cerulean gaze, seeing his pain there and feeling her heart twist because of it—angered that his hurt, their shared agony, didn’t bring her the satisfaction she needed, didn’t assuage her guilt, and so redoubled her efforts.
Wretchedly gritting her teeth to hold back a sob, she ran her hands down to his neck, twining her fingers around to squeeze the air from his lungs and use her arms for leverage as she crashed their bodies together again and again.

He didn’t resist, would let her do what was necessary, what she thought he deserved. Even as his vision started to spot, he didn’t try to remove the hands strangling the life from him, and contrary though it was, felt the onslaught of his oncoming orgasm thundering through him beside the pain, the sensation like nothing he’d ever experienced.

With each passing second that he tried to draw in more breath without success, the lack of ability to sense most of his body only intensified the feel of where his blood was concentrated and he could feel every inch of Arya around him, velvety, unrelenting, and ungodly.

He felt himself come undone completely, his prick shudder and wildly unleash a torrent of pleasure while he felt himself slipping into unconsciousness.

Arya felt Gendry’s body go completely rigid underneath her as he involuntarily thrust up to meet her one last time, giving her the poignant bit of pain she felt she deserved and so sought out. He went deeper within her than before, striking her harder, physically hurting her inside and giving her the hope that subsequent healing would occur emotionally. She knew it wouldn’t.

She knew the guilt wasn’t going to go away. She knew she would always wonder if she could have saved her father, if Ned Stark would’ve lived if Gendry had fought by her side instead of holding her back. Now though she knew she couldn’t kill him or hate him for it. He was what she had left.

Unable to continue on as the grief built up, Arya’s grip let up as her hands slid weakly down her husband’s bloody chest, her forehead coming to rest on his shoulder while he gulped in air, eyes blinking rapidly as his sight and senses returned only to find his wife sobbing desolately while he was still sheathed and erect inside of her.

She was a quivering mess in his lap and despite the pain he felt from the wounds she’d inflicted and the old ones she’d reopened, his only concern was for her.

His hands slid up her back and into her tangle of short brassy hair as he clutched her to him. “I love you Arya.” He told her hoarsely. Then moving his lips to caress her temple, he grasped her face gently and turned it towards his to begin showering her with hurried kisses and halt her tears.
When she sobbed only harder still he seized her more purposefully, intending to meet her eyes. “I love you.” He insisted again with her eyes focused on him.

He searched her eyes intently, looking for any hesitation before he leaned up to capture her lips in a chaste kiss, and was relieved to feel her collapse weakly in his arms, all fight gone.

She wrapped her arms around him and held onto him tightly as all the emotion she’d held onto since King’s Landing came pouring out and she bawled with her forehead rested against his. She needed this, and so did he.

Sitting up to fully wrap her in his embrace, he inadvertently found himself extending his length into her gently, but immediately stilled when she jerked back to glance his face, her eyes straying to his lips as she hiccupped out a breathy exhale.

Cautiously he plunged into her once more, eyes scanning her face for opposition or displeasure, and was gratified when she crashed her lips to his, desperately seeking affection.

He welcomed her aggressive mouth, slowing down her pace with his own, his tongue gently delving in to tangle with hers, his hips continuing their slow, sensual ascension in to her.

Where she had been full of hate, he was radiating adoration, each tender rock of his hips aimed at emoting just how much she meant to him, how the only place he felt right with the world and worthy of life was with her, within her.

She held onto him anxiously, her lips refusing to part from his, labored breathes shared as she gently ground herself onto him, circling her hips every time he extended himself up to meet her.

She couldn’t lose this feeling, needed to experience something other than the animosity and sadness that consumed her, she held onto it as desperately as she held on to him as he brought her to her peak.

She shuddered once, and twice, then was pulling back from his lips to gasp air as her forehead came to rest against the side of his, her heavenly warmth fluttering around him as he spilled himself inside her for a second time, nuzzling her neck and nibbling her ear.

He watched as she gathered herself and turned her gaze back on him, her lip quivering and eyes
appearing watery and vulnerable once more. He smiled sadly at her and reached to push a stray hair behind her ear, whispering the words again. “No matter what, I love you Arya Stark, I am yours and you are mine.”

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Yoren had spent years beyond the Wall, had ranged his fair share and seen things among the Wildlings that would terrify and baffle most men, and yet what he was witnessing now was even more strange and bewildering.

Truly only the Gods must understand women.

He’d never been a good sleeper and often required the assistance of strongwine to gain any rest at all, so it was no surprise he was usually the first to rise among the pissant lot of beggars he was dragging North. This morn of course he wasn’t, as was confirmed by the sight of the Stark girl hovering over her husband with knife in hand.

He was instantly moving for his own knife, intending to intervene, but slowed and breathed easy recognizing the obvious inner battle she was waging with herself.

She wouldn’t do it, she wouldn’t be able to force herself to kill the lad even if it seemed she wanted to. True she’d taken the death of her father as hard as any child might, and seemed to blame the boy for it no matter it was him who knocked her out. But he knew what it took to raise a knife and take someone’s life, let alone someone you cared about, and it was obvious the girl did care or her anger would’ve been directed properly. The real worry now was that his interference might actually drive her to follow through with her purpose out of surprise, and so he sat back, intending to make certain she learned the hard lesson; the decision to take a man’s life required you to give up part of your own as well.

The expressions she wore as she contended with her own demons were almost comical. She looked to be battling a ghost, the strain in her arms and body making it seem as if something were physically preventing her knife from traveling downward into the boy’s flesh.

Once it did start downward however, she seemed startled, as did he, and he sat up intending to rush over and tend the lad’s wound. Luckily she just managed to jerk backwards and direct the steel into the ground so they could both experience fleeting relief.
He found himself smirking as he sat back on his haunches exhaling, watching her angrily scramble to her feet while grabbing up the knife and glaring down at the boy as if his sleeping form had bodily thwarted her instead of her own mind. He figured she would lash out in frustration but still raised an eyebrow when she threw the steel with no little force into the ground on the opposite side of him.

Seeing her once again purposefully miss her mark, a small snort escaped his lips though he noticed the boy beginning to stir. He was getting up to finally, truly intervene given the expectation of imminent verbal confrontation, which would out her for the Lady she was most likely, but she surprised him again when instead of words she chose further action.

He wasn’t expecting her to immediately bring her boot crashing into the freshly roused lad’s ribs and found himself flinching and grasping his own side as he sucked in a breathe as if she’d kicked him and not her husband.

Thrice damned Northern women!

The boy was up and following her faster than he would’ve thought possible after surely losing his breathe with such a wake up and what with his thigh sewn up from her previously inflicted wound, and so he too got to his feet with a grumble, intending to prevent any needless deaths before sunrise.

He was considerably slower than either the two, but managed to hurry his steps and perceived in the distance the boy sporting a new gash on his face and another across his abdomen while her knife was poised to enter his skull from under his chin.

Well bugger it all. She might actually go through with it.

He was too far away to hear words but felt himself exhale deeply in relief when she turned away and dropped the knife from his neck, though she was immediately turning around and yelling at the poor lad, though it sounded incoherent to him at this distance.

He was just about to bellow at them to quit their bloody yelling when the boy finally grew a backbone and decided to respond, though Yoren could’ve done without the volume. His own jaw shut tight and his mouth set in a grim line as he looked over his shoulder back towards camp.

Mayhaps the fucking whoreson rabble would decide to ignore the commotion the way they usually
did his morning call to break camp, but he couldn’t and wouldn’t count on it, not with the Stark girl’s identity at stake and his hide on the line.

He thought to turn back and make certain everyone steer clear of the area, grunting in disbelief at where he found himself and thinking he had no business serving noble bastards and Higborn girls, but all thought flew from his mind when from behind him he heard an otherworldly shriek and made the mistake of turning back towards it and almost stepped in the flight path of two knives.

He stared blankly at the steel jutting out from the tree next to him, blinking dumbly before snarling and turning towards where the two liabilities insisted on trying to wake the dead, only to once again find himself at a loss for words.

It looked as if the girl was trying to maul the poor lad to death, but almost immediately she was grappling with the laces of his breeches and pushing him onto the ground towards the closest tree and climbing astride him.

At a loss he peeked back behind himself baffled, making sure no one else was approaching. Upon finding no spies come to expose them, he turned back thinking mayhaps he should be more worried about whether the boy was going to live through the ordeal she intended to put him through.

Adjusting himself where it was fast becoming uncomfortable, Yoren couldn’t stop from being fascinated by what exactly he was witnessing—fascinated and bewildered.

The lad certainly looked to be in more than a bit of discomfort, the wound on his leg having assuredly broken open given the way she was hurling herself downward onto his prick, and yet he could recognize the desire and relief expressed on the lad's as well.

He may be a man of the Watch but the feel of a woman around your cock wasn’t something you soon forgot. He remembered it well and he felt the distinct absence of it now given the show he was privy to, even despite the participants being almost fully clothed—a blessing he was thankful for. But Seven Hells! The lad was going to be as raw and chapped as a southern recruit trying to piss off the Wall if she kept at it like that!

He harrumphed bitterly thinking that was preferable to his alternative. He didn’t wager many men could profess to being fucked by a girl who blamed you for the loss of their father, and didn’t think many would wish to. Then again he’d wager not many men had witnessed what he was now, and had to admit to its scandalous allure. The girl had gone from yanking the lads head back with a forceful grip on his hair to strangling the air out of him, her pace up and down his cock only intensifying where he didn’t think it was possible! This one was no dead dispassionate fish to be
fucked on her back!

He palmed himself long and slow through his breeches, gritting his teeth against the desire to do much more as she speared herself one last time only to jolt back up with a squeal and collapse onto her now purple faced but rigid husband as he gasped for air and her hands slid down his chest.

Her body was shaking and it took Yoren a moment to realize she was sobbing. His endeavor to make sure they kept concealed suddenly seeming more of an intrusion as she finally began to let go of the grief she’d held onto like a shield.

He thought to turn around and leave them be but when Gendry began to slowly thrust up into her he had to shake his head in disbelief. He thought mayhaps she would actually stab him now, but no, she held onto him as if she might lose him as she’d lost her father.

He didn’t know why he was surprised that she’d want to fuck the sorrow out of herself after he’d witness just how hard she tried to do the same with her hate. The drastic change in the scene before him would’ve been laughable had it not been so affecting.

Grinding against one another desperately, slowly, lips barely parting to breath, fully consumed in the act and each other. Tyrion Lannister could offer up all the gold of the Westerlands and never find a whore who could drown him in passion the way the Stark girl and the Baratheon bastard did each other.

Spending the majority of his years at the Wall, Yoren had never truly given any merit to the idea of true love or a perfect match, and at the age he was now he never thought he would. Funny what the tides bring.

He turned to leave them in peace. Retreating before he could experience regret for a thing he’d long believed he’d accepted and which had brought him to The Night’s Watch and left him vacant of a chance for a different life.

Brow furrowed, he turn back towards camp, tromping through the undergrowth thoughts heavy in his heart. He almost forgot to be on the look out for nosy bastards trying to find the source of such a morning racket and stilled, his hand instinctively flinching towards his sword, when he came upon a startled group who looked at him uneasily.

“We heard somethin’. Sounded like a wildcat.”
A wildcat indeed!

Yoren snorted and marched right past them. “Wasn’t no wildcat.” He told them crossly. “I’ve had a lively morning shit thanks to whichever one of you foul bastards made the stew last night.” He grumbled over his shoulder. When he didn’t hear anyone moving to follow him he turned back leering at them expectantly. “Well come now, back to camp with ya! Think I’ll be loading everythin’ up me ‘self you pizzpots can think again! On with ya!” He beckoned at them noticing movement behind them, the boy and girl emerging from the trees.

Once the group was trudging back to camp in front of him he turned back to catch the attention of those still hiding in the trees. He met the boy’s eye and jerked his head right, signaling that they should circle round from another direction and breathed a sigh of relief when the boy nodded back and led the girl off in another direction.

He was fussing with the shoes on one of the carthorses when they emerged again.

“Find yourself a new shirt boy before more questions can be asked.” He growled at the larger man and was pleased to see him nod grimly before finding his pack and crouching down to dig in it.

Yoren flashed a look over his shoulder back at the girl. He didn’t intend to speak but found words rumbling from his belly before he could stop them. “That boy loves ya’.” He grumbled softly while fussing with the girth on one of the horses. “And you him.” He glanced at her with a lifted brow challenging her to say different.

When she only looked at the ground he snorted, though hearing his noise she looked back up at him indignantly.

“And whose fault is it that I find myself here?” She spat acerbically.

Yoren turned to her fully, gazing down at her stonily. “Aye it is the boy’s fault you’re still alive.” He deadpanned.

She scowled at him bitterly, moving to pick at a splinter on the side of the cart. “Mayhaps, but he’s also the reason my father’s head now decorates the Traitor’s Walk and my sister is captive in King’s Landing.” She added dourly.
Yoren softened, but had the wherewithal to look around and make sure no one was close enough to hear them. “No boy,” He reminded her where they were. Placing a hand on her shoulder and making sure to catch her gaze with his own he crouched slightly. “That was the fault of Kind Jofferey, no one else.” He attempted to ease her guilt and saw it work slightly as she swallowed back tears and looked to the ground.

He removed his hand and turned back to harnessing the horses and was surprised when she suddenly spoke up.

“How do you sleep?” She asked genuinely, as if wanting to commiserate, “With the things you’ve seen I mean.”

He frowned. “That’s nothing you should be troublin’ yourself with. I made sure you didn’t see. I’d taken me pommel to your head before the sword took his head.”

She looked away bitterly but went on, though meekly, voice waver slightly. “Yes but I still see it. The Queen and Jofferey on the Podium…Sansa, the crowd…Ilyn Payne with Ice.”

Yoren grimaced again and not knowing what to say after a long moment, decided to share though he did so quietly. “You know, we’ve got something in common, me and you. You know that? I must have been a couple of years older than you. I saw my brother stabbed through the heart right on our doorstep.” He paused to let it sink in and was pleased to see her brow furrow sadly. “He weren’t much of a villain what skewered him. Willem, the lad’s name was. He ran off before anyone could spit. And I just stood there, watching my brother die. But here’s the funny part. I can’t picture my brother’s face anymore. But Willem…oh, he was a nice looking boy. He had good white teeth, blue eyes, one of those dimpled chins all the girls like. I would think about him when I was working, when I was drinking, when I was having a shit.” He chuckled mirthlessly. “It got to the point where I would say his name every night before I went to bed. Willem. Willem. Willem. A prayer almost. Well, one day…Willem came riding back into town. I buried and ax so deep into Willem’s skull, they had to bury him with it.” He deadpanned seriously, before his voice became lighter. “Willem’s horse got me to the Wall and I’ve been wearing the black ever since.” He shook his head to himself before glancing back up at the girl. He couldn’t help but snort. “Well…that’ll help you sleep.” He finished cynically with a brusque laugh.

Arya was about to say something in response but was interrupted by the sound of a horn and the approach of horses. Yoren gave her a meaningful look as he started towards the noise. It wasn’t long until a group of Goldcloaks came cantering into camp. Understanding the possible danger, she made her way to far side of the cart and made herself look busy checking the bridle of the other horse.
“You in command here?” One of the Goldcloak’s asked, rearing his horse to a stop after noticing Yoren coming forward.

Yoren continued to approach until he was along side the man’s mount. “You’re a long way from home.” He offered friendly greeting, well as friendly as it got for him.

The Goldcloak narrowed his eyes at the Black Brother. “I asked you a question.”

“Aye you did.” Yoren spat on the ground before looking back up at the officer. “You asked without manners and I chose not to answer.”

“I have royal warrant.” The man sneered, reaching into his cloak and withdrawing a scroll marked with golden wax. “Could be we’re lookin’ for one of these gutter rats you’re transporting. We’d have a look.” He demanded.

Yoren took the warrant to look at the seal but didn’t bother opening it before handing it back. “The thing is these gutter rats belong to the Night’s Watch now. There’s laws on such thing.” He told the man. “That puts them beyond the reach of kings and queens.”

“Here’s your law.” The gold cloak growled, withdrawing his blade from his sheathe marginally.

Quick as she’d ever seen him move, Yoren had his own sword unsheathed and pointed at the man in response. “That’s no law, just a sword. Happens I got one too.” He spat on the ground as the Goldcloak warily eyed the steel that was now resting perilously close to his cock near his thigh. “It’s a funny thing.” He began. “People worry so much about their throats they forget about what’s down low. Now I sharpened this blade before breakfast. I could shave a spider’s arse if I wanted… or I could nick this artery, and once its nicked, there’s no one around here that knows how to un-nick it.” He reached for and grasped the Goldcloaks sword, tossing it to the ground out of his reach. “We’ll be keepin’ that. Good steel is always needed on the wall.” He turned back to the man at the end of his blade. “Seems you have a choice. You can die here at this crossroads a long way from home, or you can go back to your city and tell your masters you didn’t find what you were looking for.” He finished, eyeing the man carefully.

The Goldcloak ground his teeth in fury before turning toward the camp full of wary up-in-arms men. “We’re looking for the usurper.” He shouted disregarding the steel next to his bollocks. “The Bastard Gendry Waters Baratheon and his wife Lady Arya Stark. Anyone turning them over will earn the kings reward. We’ll be returning with more men.” He informed them before turning back to direct his final words at Yoren. “And I’ll be taking your head home if I find you’re hiding them.” He reined his horse around sharply, forcing Yoren to step back as they galloped away.
He watched them go knowing they’d keep to their word and return. Once they were out of sight he turned back, immediately finding Gendry’s eye and holding it significantly. After a moment he was stalking back over to where Arya had been trying to remain unseen.

He grabbed at the horses bridle she was handling and then threw the reigns over the beasts and onto the wagon seat while glancing around discreetly.

“We move off the Kingsroad but they’ll find us soon enough.” He informed her softly turning to look her gravely in the eye. “Keep your weapons with you, and next time you hear horses, you run.”

Chapter End Notes

Soooo thanks are in order to whoever nominated and voted this story into second place in the Fanatic FanFic Multifandom awards!

I read the first place winner, The North Remembers, as a result and my god is it amazing! Such GREAT writing! I never would've found it because I'm a perv and I like explicit themes, but I am SO glad I did. Needless to say I was thrilled to be even in contention and that's because of you guys. Ya'll are the best! But you already know that :)

Anyways, for thanks I got this one out in under a year! :/

Hope you enjoyed the chapter!

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!