Love Thy Neighbor

by vivilove

Summary

Sansa Stark has not had much luck in the romance department but she has been quite content living in her apartment building with her wonderful friends who are like a second family to her.

Jon Snow is a young doctor who is new to town and happy to find a place where his large dog, Ghost, is welcome. He's looking for a fresh start as he beings his career.

There is immediate chemistry between them that the neighbors all see. But will Jon and Sansa ever recognize it and have the courage to act?
“Hey! Could you hold the door?” the handsome man called to her.

His arms were filled with a huge moving box and he was heading up the sidewalk towards the building. Sansa had just got home from work and she had her own arms full with her purse, water bottle and messenger bag but she pushed her rear up against the entry door and backed up to stay out of his way.

He smiled as he passed her and said, “Thanks.”

“You’re welcome. Are you my new neighbor then?” she asked taking in his brilliant smile, curly, dark hair all in disarray and the flannel shirt and fitted jeans…my very handsome new neighbor.

“I guess I am,” he answered as he sat the box down in the hallway and stuck out his hand. “I’m Jon Snow, apartment 3.”

“I’m Sansa…Sansa Stark. I’m in number 4. Loras said he’d found us a new neighbor.”
“Yeah. Are you the teacher then?” he asked and then looked uncomfortable for a moment. “I don’t mean to sound, uh…well, Loras mentioned…”

“Fair warning…Loras is a bit of a gossip,” she sniggered. “Keep that in mind. But, yes, I teach 2nd grade at the elementary school two blocks away,” Sansa said as she went through her mailbox. “Loras told me you were a doctor.”

“Yes…okay, I see what you mean about Loras,” he grinned. “I’m starting my internship at the county ER next week,” he continued as he caught his breath for a minute.

“That sounds exciting. So, is emergency medicine your specialty then?

“Yes, I suppose so. I mean, I could always change but that’s what I’m going with for now.”

“I think that’s terrific. And you’re new in town?”

“Yes, I lived in Vermont until I moved down here.”

“Oh…Loras told me you were British.”

“Well, I was born there. My mum and I moved to the States when I was nine though,” he said as he lifted the box back up and started trudging towards the stairs.

“Well, welcome to Columbia. I hope you’ll like Maryland. Do you need a hand with that?”

“Nah, I’m good. Thanks…and thanks for holding the door.”

“Sure thing, neighbor,” Sansa responded with a friendly wave.

He looked over his shoulder and flashed her another mega-watt smile before heading on up the stairs.

Nice smile, Sansa thought. She watched him walk all the way up with her head cocked to the side and a smile on her own face. Nice ass.

“Nice ass, right?” said a voice from the nearby apartment doorway.

“Loras!” she hissed. “He could’ve heard you,” she continued in a whisper.

Loras just laughed and motioned her in for a chat.

That was one of the many things Sansa loved about living in her building. She could walk to work, the place was nice but rent was reasonable and chats with Loras.

Jon heaved the box onto the kitchen counter and looked around at the slew of cardboard boxes staring back at him. It was more than a little depressing honestly. At least he had a few days to get settled in before he started working.

He picked up a local pizza ad Loras had given him and called in an order. If he was going to have
to unpack all these boxes alone, he was going to need some sustenance.

Hours later he sat on the couch in his new apartment dozing to the sound of a late-night talk show. He’d had a wearing day moving and unpacking and was ready to go to bed.

The large 80-year-old brownstone he had just moved into had been remodeled into four apartments ten years earlier the landlord, Loras Tyrell, told him. Loras and his husband, Renly, lived on the ground floor and it was Loras’s family that owned the building.

An elderly woman that Loras had simply referred to as Nan supposedly lived in the other ground floor apartment.

Loras had told him that a teacher lived in the other second floor apartment next to Jon’s. Jon had assumed a woman but had no idea she’d be a drop-dead gorgeous redhead with legs that didn’t quit. *My lovely new neighbor…another plus for this place*.

Ghost, his albino Alaskan Malamute, lay on the floor at his feet. One of the things that had drawn him to the apartment, in addition to being close to the hospital and the park, was that his large dog was permitted there.

He had turned 27 last December and graduated from medical school that spring and the move and the internship were his fresh start after some tumultuous years in his personal life.

He rose from the couch and checked the time. 11:47PM.

He stumbled towards his bedroom and could hear water running in the apartment next door. *Beautiful new neighbor is still up, I guess*.

Several minutes later, he had already started to nod off when there was a knock at the door. He rolled heavily out of bed and put his glasses on. Trudging to the door with Ghost on his heels, he figured it must be her. The building’s outer doors were left locked most of the time and he didn’t know anyone in town that would show up on his doorstep this time of night.

“Hey,” she said when he answered, “I’m really, really sorry about the time but I dropped a candle in the bathroom and the glass broke and I’ve cut my foot pretty badly. I hate to bother you but with you being a doc…”

He looked down to where she was pointing and sure enough the large bandage she had thrown around her left foot was already soaked with blood.

“No…it’s no trouble. We need to get you off that,” he said gesturing to her foot. “Come sit down and I’ll get my emergency kit.”

“Oh, no! I don’t want to bleed all over your floor and furniture. Can you come over to my place?”

“Sure. I’ll be right there,” he said as he headed into the apartment trying to figure out which cardboard box he’d packed his supplies in.

He entered her apartment a few minutes later and found her sitting on her couch in her tastefully decorated and very clean apartment…clean except for the bloody footprints and bloody, wadded up tissues on the floor. He knelt down in front of her and gestured for her to let him take a look. It was
quite a gash and he was impressed she was managing to sit there so still.

“I need to get some water to clean this,” he said next. “Mind if I get it from the sink in your bathroom?” he asked, pointing to the nearby door as he grabbed the small plastic basin he had brought.

“Sure…no, uh…wait a minute…”

“I’ll be just a sec. Keep still, okay? Need to get that bleeding to stop,” he said with a smile as he entered the bathroom.

The overhead lights were on and the medicine cabinet was open where she had apparently tried to take care of her foot on her own. But it was obvious she had planned on a little Friday night relaxation. There was soft music playing in her bedroom that he could see through the adjoining door. The large garden tub was filled with water that was still steaming…and rose petals. There were about a dozen votive candles lit besides the one shattered on the floor and an enormous, neon pink though otherwise anatomically correct vibrator laying on a towel by the tub.

Jon’s eyebrows shot up for a moment but then he quickly looked away to fill the basin with water from the sink. Just pretend you didn’t see it. Just pretend you didn’t see the ten-inch pink silicone cock in her bathroom…shit.

“Here we go,” he said brightly as he knelt back down in front of his lovely neighbor who was blushing rather prettily.

“Um, thanks again,” she said before adding, “So, it’s Friday night.”

“Yes…” he said, busily washing her foot in the basin so he could see the cut better and trying desperately not to look her in the eye.

“I’m kind of a creature of habit and it’s become a routine, you see. Every Friday night…candlelit bath, music and some relaxation…but that, uh, other thing was something my, um, friend gave me as a…and it was a bit…when I tried to turn it on. Damn thing was like a jackhammer in my hand so I was trying to shut if off when I knocked over one of the candles…”

“It’s not my business, Sansa,” he said breezily, trying to summon his most professional I’m-a-doctor-nothing-shocks-me tone. “I’m afraid this foot is though. I need to take you down to County so I can stitch this properly.” That thing was fucking huge! How’s a guy supposed to compete with that?!

“Oh…okay. I’ve never had stitches. Will it hurt?”

“No if we numb it a bit and I do well.”

“Okay. Um, thanks…Jon. And thanks for not making me feel weird about the…that thing in there.”

“Sure thing, neighbor,” he said with a genuine smile this time.
Welcome Waggin'

Chapter Summary

Jon and Sansa get to know each other a little more after thinking about each other during the week. And Sansa officially meets Ghost.

Chapter Notes

I wanted to say thank you to everyone who has asked for more of this. I really appreciate the comments, kudos and all so I wanted to go ahead and post the second chapter. I hope you will enjoy it!

Sansa had spent the following week thinking about her new neighbor more than she cared to admit to anyone. Especially since Loras was already giving her hell about the whole bathtub/candle/vibrator thing once he’d weaseled the details out of her.

She couldn’t help it really. Jon had been so kind and attentive last week while taking care of her.

_He’s a nice man and you’re glad to have such a nice man as your neighbor. He could’ve been a boorish oaf or a stuck-up asshole. But Jon’s very…nice. Nothing at all to do with him being hot as fuck._

He’d driven her to the hospital and then escorted her straight back to a room to stitch her foot. Actually, he’d hustled her down the hall with a borrowed lab coat covering her sweatshirt. It had started to feel like she’d walked into a sitcom…or a spy movie the way he kept peeking around corners. When she finally asked what was wrong, he admitted that he was afraid the Attending might spot him since he technically hadn’t started his internship yet.

“I just…there’s rules about insurance and paperwork but I just thought I could stitch you up without all the fuss. I mean, if I’d had the proper supplies at home, this trip would’ve been unnecessary anyway. But Dr. Baratheon is reportedly quite strict about rules and such.”

“And are you normally such a rule breaker, Dr. Snow?” Sansa had teased as he slipped her out a side door once the stitches were done.

“Not normally,” he’d responded with a sly grin. “I hope you won’t make me do lines or something, Ms. Stark.”

“I’ll allow this behavior to go unnoticed…this time,” she said in her best stern teacher’s voice before she started giggling.

He’d started snickering along with her and they were laughing loudly as they reached his car again. It felt good to share a laugh with someone new. It felt good to be in his company.

He’d driven her back home after that and given her some care instructions before bidding her good
night.

And then she hadn’t seen him all week.

It was ridiculous. He lived right next door. The walls weren’t that thick. But she’d only heard him moving around a time or two.

She’d finally being forced to call for aid though she loathed calling for his aid in this. He’ll figure you out in two seconds flat, Sansa.

“He lives next door to you,” Loras said while he was setting mums out on the front porch when she got home from work Friday afternoon.

“Well, I’ve not seen him all week. I mean, he’s got a dog, right? He’s got to take him out eventually. Come on, Loras. You always know everything about everyone!”

“All right. Keep your panties on…at least until the good doctor is ready to give you your exam,” he said with a wink.

“Loras…” she sighed while attempting to pass off her blush as annoyance.

“He started work Monday. He takes the dog out around 5AM. He jogs home to take him out again during his lunch break which is when you’re at work, by the way.”

“I know when I’m at work, Loras.”

“He works long hours. He’s a doctor, an intern. He’s probably lucky they don’t just make him camp out there 24/7. And the dog is super quiet which Renly loves. He was afraid it’d howl all night or something.”

Sansa scoffed at that and said, “Okay, thanks.”

“So, are you going to shag Dr. Dreamy, Miss Stark? Are you going to ask to see his pencil?”

“No!” she protested hotly.

“The lady doth protest too much, me thinks,” Loras said as he raised his eyebrows.

“I just wanted to thank him for helping me the other night, that’s all. You really should get your mind out of the gutter, Loras.”

“I’m not the one spending my evening with the Thumper XXL.”

“Low blow, pretty boy. God, that was embarrassing…even though Jon was so sweet and cool about it.” Loras started smirking. “Shut up.”

“I didn’t say anything,” he said.

“Stop thinking it then. And please remind me to kill your sister.”

“You see her more than I do. You work with her.”

“Well, I failed to kill her this week. I’ll make a note to do it next week.”

The vibrator had been his sister’s little ‘gift’ for Sansa’s 24th birthday and had embarrassed the crap out of her when she’d opened it at Loras and Renly’s place a week before Jon Snow moved in.
“Well, you won’t let me fix you up with anyone so I thought I’d buy you a little friend,” Margaery had said with a coy, little grin.

“Um…I don’t think this friend qualifies as little, Marg,” she said as Loras and Renly laughed until they cried.

Sansa had laughed, too, though she’d been more than a little disturbed by the size of it. Her old vibrator had died a couple of weeks earlier and she hadn’t bothered to replace it right away. But Margaery acted as though Sansa had been left in dire need of a life essential when she found out.

So, Sansa’s old Hi-Ho Silver Bullet had been replaced by a newer model…that freaked her the fuck out. The sad thing was this wasn’t her first mortifying vibrator story. The first was when her parents had been helping her move into the apartment last year and her mother had mistakenly pulled it out when they were emptying Sansa’s underwear drawer and held it up just as her father walked back in the room. She’d never seen her father run out of a room that quickly.

At least poor Dad didn’t see this one. Just your hot, new neighbor…dammit.

Sansa was about to give up on Loras being any help with he said, “He’s off today.”

“What!?”

“Dr. Good Body, MD. He’s off today.”

“He is?”

“He’s been home all day, other than taking the dog out to play.”

“Oh! I mean…oh. That’s nice to know. I’ll try to stop by and express my appreciation for his help last week. You know…if I find the time.”

“Riiiight.”

“Thanks…and shut up.”

Two hours later, Sansa stood uneasily outside Jon Snow’s door with a covered dish in one hand a bottle of wine in the other.

Why’d you bring wine, Sansa? He might think it’s more than a neighborly ‘thank you’ now. Well, would that be such a bad thing? Maybe not but you could’ve just dropped off the food. Now, it’s like you’re trying to barge in on him. Christ, I don’t know what the hell I’m doing here.

As she stood there nervously debating if she was getting ready to make a fool of herself, the door opened before she could bolt. His face broke into a stunning smile when he saw her and she knew then that she wouldn’t be bolting.

Nope, going to be staying right here.

“Hey! I made a lasagna for you…as a thank you for last week. I hope you like Italian food.”

“I love Italian food, Sansa. Thank you,” he said taking the dish from her.

He was wearing tight-fitting jeans and a t-shirt which nicely displayed what must have been hours of hard work at the gym. His curls were hanging loose and he was wearing glasses which Sansa thought added the right amount of adorable sweetness to his hotness.
“Um, I brought you a bottle of wine as well. We can call that a welcome gift, I guess.”

“Thanks, Sansa. That’s really kind of you. Would you like to come in?”

Yes! “Oh…sure. I mean, if I’m not interrupting your night.”

“No, there’s nothing to interrupt here,” he said with a rueful grin. “How’s the foot healing?” he asked as he escorted her into his apartment’s open living room/kitchen area and put the dish and bottle on the counter. See, Sansa…if your apartment was laid out like his, he never would’ve went into the bathroom.

“Pretty well. My doctor is taking the stitches out on Monday. Oh goodness! There he is. He is just gorgeous,” she exclaimed as his dog came from the bedroom to check out Jon’s company. He gave her a sniff and then she quickly got down on her knees to love on him with a child’s delighted smile on her face.

“You like dogs I take it?”

“Yes! We had a Malamute when I was a kid. I love dogs but Mal’s are still my favorite.”

“Well, you’ve obviously won Ghost over,” Jon said.

It was true. He was huge but he was currently rolling around on his back like a puppy begging for a belly rub. She gladly gave them to him at once.

“Ghost. That’s a good name for him,” she said, laughing when Ghost in his exuberance knocked her off her feet and onto her ass in his eagerness for more belly rubs.

“Ghost!” Jon scolded. “Sorry.”

“It’s fine. I’m fine,” she laughed. “Who’s a good boy? Oh, you are just the sweetest,” Sansa cooed as she scratched his ears and got lots of kisses.

“Thanks. He’s a big baby most of the time but he doesn’t usually take to new people so quickly.”

“He just knows I’m a dog person.”

“Well, I always knew he had good taste in people,” Jon said before biting his lip. Sansa saw a flush break out on his cheeks and he reached up and scratched at his beard for a moment. “So, uh…your doctor, is he going to charge you a co-pay or something for that? To take the stitches out?”

“Probably,” she answered as she loved on Ghost some more.

“You don’t have to do that…I mean, I could take them out for you. Unless, you needed to see your doctor for something else.”

“Really? Wow, that’d be great plus save me the trip to his office. If it’s not too much trouble…”

“It’s no trouble. I can do that here. I’m off Monday anyway so just pop by when you get home from work.”

“Sure you don’t have plans?”

He looked uncomfortable for just a split second before he said, “No plans.”
Jon couldn’t believe she was standing in his doorway with a covered dish and a bottle of wine in her hands when he opened the door. She was gorgeous. Her fiery red hair was hanging loose down her back. Her lips had just a hint if color to them as her blue eyes sparkled with a mix of uncertainty and interest.

_Surely, I am dreaming._

He’d invited her in and she’d agreed. She was in a loose lilac t-shirt and black leggings. There was just a slight smear of sauce from where she’d been cooking apparently that Jon doubted she was aware of. Somehow, he found the small stain comforting, a reminder that she was a real person.

But that she was here…willingly spending time with him. That seemed like a dream.

_Nope, not dreaming_, he concluded as they sat at his table eating the food she’d brought and sharing the bottle of wine while Ghost laid at her feet gnawing on his favorite toy.

The past week had been intensely busy once he’d started work. He was prepared for it from his experiences as a med student but still…this was the real deal now and he wasn’t just a student now.

But no matter how hectic or frustrating or rewarding work had been at various points during the week, he hadn’t forgotten about his lovely new neighbor.

She’d been so easy-going and funny at the hospital last week. She’d asked if he’d remembered his invisibility cloak so Filch wouldn’t catch them out after hours when he was worried about Stannis catching him there treating a patient who wasn’t officially a patient while he wasn’t officially working yet.

Then, he’d teased her about doing lines and she’d dropped into that stern but husky voice…like she might _reprimand_ him.

_Fuck, she has no idea what a naughty boy I would be for her._

He’d always had a bit of a hot teacher kink. Not that he’d personally had any teachers that were hot but he’d watched enough porn over the years to admit he had a thing for it.

_Mind out of the gutter, Jon. She’s sweet. She’s your neighbor. She seems like a very nice young lady…with a very large vibrator._

And here she was bringing him food and loving on his dog and being the beautiful, wonderful girl next door.

So, it would hardly be appropriate to admit that he’d fantasized a time or two about her playing with her vibrator while he watched…and while he’d imagined doing other things.

“Okay, that was incredible. Where’d you learn to make lasagna like that?” he asked as he poured them another glass of wine.

“My mom took all sorts of cooking classes when she and my dad were newlyweds. She swears it’s the foundation of their happy marriage.” The loveliest blush touched her cheeks and she said, “Not that I…well, she taught me a lot.”
“Well, I guess I’ll be waiting for more injuries to treat so you can pay me in food.” She laughed and Jon enjoyed the jolt of pleasure it sent through him. “So, are you from here?” he asked.

“No, I went to college here and wound up accepting a teaching position after I graduated. I grew up in Ardmore, Pennsylvania…it’s kind of on the outskirts of Philadelphia. All of my family still lives there.”

“How do you have a large family?”

“Yes, three brothers and a sister, plus Mom and Dad.”

“That must be nice. It’s just me since my mum died. Well, it’s me and Ghost.”

“Oh, I’m sorry.”

“It’s alright. I’m used to being alone.” He saw the pity in her eyes and suddenly wished he didn’t sound so…pathetic. “I mean, having a small family is okay. You just don’t miss what you never had…with siblings and such.”

“Well, I’ll have to take your word for that but there were times growing up I could’ve done without a sibling or two. If you prefer a loner lifestyle though, you may regret living here. Loras doesn’t allow any of us to keep to ourselves too much. We normally do a monthly dinner all together, too, so be warned. It’s actually quite fun though. He and Renly are really wonderful and Nan is a sweetheart.”

“I’m sure I’ll enjoy getting to know you all.” Especially you.

When Sansa left and Jon had put the leftovers in the fridge, he sat down on the couch. Ghost walked over and stood in front of him, watching him silently like always.

“You like her, don’t you?” he asked his dog.

Ghost thumped his tail on the floor.

“Well, I like her, too. But what kind of relationship are we talking about here? I mean, after everything we went through with mum and Ygritte. It’s okay, you can say it…I’ve been broody and no fun at times. I don’t know who’d even want to hang out with me honestly.”

Ghost cocked his head to the side.

“Except you, buddy. And the way Ygritte left us? Are we really ready to…you know, try again? You were down for weeks. So, was I.”

Ghost gave a derisive snort.

“Yeah, I know. I’m over it too now. But…we’ve just moved here and I’m trying to get settled in the job. And she’s my neighbor. How awkward would that be if things don’t work out, right? I’m not even certain she’s single.”

Ghost came over and laid his head on Jon’s knee.

“See? I knew you’d understand,” he said as he patted his dog’s head. “Still, she is nice and really sweet…and hot, right?”

Ghost gave a whine.
“Don’t give me that. She had her hands all over you tonight, you lucky son of a bitch.”

Ghost gave a low growl.

“Alright, I didn’t mean that about your mum…calm down. Good talk, boy. I think I’m going to head to bed. You coming with me?”

Ghost followed Jon to the bedroom, wagging his tail.
‘You know nothing, Jon Snow.’

Jon woke with a start. He hadn’t dreamed about her in months but there she was again, teasing him like she always did, making him feel like an idiot as soon as he thought he had understood her.

_I never really understood her._

He had met Ygritte as a freshman at Norwich University. They had dated for barely two weeks before they’d started a sexual relationship. Jon had been far less experienced than her, much to her infinite amusement it seemed.

He’d been shy as a teenager in general and shy of girls in particular. And though he’d dated a few girls in high school, he seemed to perpetually stumble over his words and get flustered so easily that he didn’t typically make it past a couple of dates before he got let down easy and told what a good friend he was.

He did manage to lose his virginity his senior year of high school in the backseat of his car but the resulting pregnancy scare had been enough to frighten them both off from continuing the relationship once the girl got her period.

So, he’d been bowled over by Ygritte’s assertiveness in her pursuit of him. Within minutes of meeting in class, she asked for his number. Two weeks later, she was inviting him into her bed.

At first, it had been exciting. Sex as often as they pleased. He’d had no complaints about that. And, he was enough of a romantic to think that perhaps they were fated to be together and that’s why things had taken off as quickly as they did.

But the longer they were together, the more he realized they didn’t click all that well. They were just too different in some elemental ways.

And before long, they were more like kerosene and matches. To say they fought often would be an understatement. And, she was forever teasing him for his naivete which got very old, very quickly.

So, it had lasted about six months before they were both ready to call quits.

Jon moved on but found he was a little gun-shy of romance, preferring to keep his dating fairly casual for the remainder of his undergrad years.

He had moved to Burlington to attend the University of Vermont for medical school and, once he got settled, he decided to finally get a dog like he had always wanted. Ghost had been his best friend since he’d picked the pup out at a rescue drive near campus. He was happy pursuing his
field and bonding with his dog. He had friends. He was content enough and told himself that he was young and love might be out there someday for him.

But a month into medical school, life threw him a curve ball.

His mum had called unexpectedly asking him to come home for the weekend. He knew she missed him and thought maybe she just wanted his company. They only had each other for family as his father had never been a part of his life and her parents were deceased. He thought she might have some things she wanted help with around the house as well.

But that Saturday when he made the drive back home to visit his mother and walked into the house he’d lived in since he was eleven, he knew something was wrong. And if he lived to be a hundred, he would never forget the expression on Lyanna Snow’s face as she was perched up on the kitchen counter waiting for him. His stomach fell to the floor with dread before she ever opened her mouth.

She had been a strong woman; a loving, single mother, an excellent physical therapist who loved helping people and just an all-around compassionate human being. He had never seen her so frightened and uncertain-looking in his life as she did the day she told him about her test results.

So, his first year of med school was a struggle. His mother was ill and needed him but she refused to let him give up his studies. He tried to withdraw but she talked him into sticking it out. But the irony of his mother dying of cancer while he studied medicine, especially once it became apparent that there was absolutely nothing more modern medicine could do for her, had left him bitter and angry for some time…long after she died.

Ygritte had moved to Burlington for work about a year after he had started school there and she called him after she had learned of his mother’s death. Whether it was his grief or desire not to be alone, they were soon making another go of their relationship. She moved into his apartment with him and Ghost.

Jon was still shattered by his mother’s death though and, while he found comfort in Ygritte’s company for those months while he tried to heal, he knew he wasn’t being everything she needed. And Ygritte didn’t quite know what to make of this older, sadder Jon and she grew resentful of his broodiness. She still enjoyed teasing him for misunderstanding her at times but there was a hostility underneath the teasing now.

And Ghost was an issue of contention between them as well. She didn’t care for the big dog in the apartment. And in all honesty, his dog didn’t seem to care much for her either.

Which will it be? Me or the dog?

Umm…do you really want me to answer that?

Of course, they didn’t truly have that conversation. Perhaps if they had they could’ve gone their separate ways sooner.

As he was trying to finish up school, Ygritte took to staying out with friends more at night. About eighteen months after his mother’s death, he came home to an empty apartment, except for Ghost. She’d cleared out all her stuff (and a fair bit of his) and left his key along with a ‘Dear Jon’ letter.

I wasn’t what you wanted and you weren’t what I needed, she’d written.

She’d admitted, on paper at least, that she’d been seeing someone else from work for a while. She said he understood her better than Jon ever did and she was happier with him. She said she hoped
Jon would find happiness, too.

Drawing himself back to the present, Jon rolled over and told himself to just go back to sleep. But he heard panting and felt the hot breath in his face. He opened his brown eyes to find red ones staring back at him.

Ghost sat beside his bed with his leash in his mouth and an expectant look.

“Christ...it’s my day off. Can’t we just sleep in?” he whined.

He pulled his pillow over his face and heard Ghost give a disgruntled yelp.

“You can get up here next to me,” he offered patting the bed. “I won’t tell anyone. No one cares who I sleep with anyway.”

Ghost whined pitifully.

“Alright. When you've gotta go, you've gotta go. I’m getting up,” Jon sighed, tossing the pillow to the side and running his hands across his face. “Shall we go for a run then?”

Ghost dropped the leash and started panting happily as he wagged his tail.

Jon chuckled and scratched his friend’s ears. “Who loves you, Ghost? That’s right...me. You’re my best friend, boy,” Jon said before he got up and went to pull on his running clothes.

The autumn morning was invigorating and the dream and sadness from the past burned off like fog in the sunlight as they ran together. The park was bustling with early morning joggers out by themselves or in pairs or with their canine companions.

He passed an attractive red-head and his mind immediately drifted to Sansa Stark. Sansa...not Ygritte. Interesting...and today is Monday, he realized as a fresh smile bloomed on his face. She’ll be coming over after work.

They were just returning from their run when he spotted the very young lady who had been occupying his mind. She was coming out of the apartment building on her way to work.

She was wearing skinny jeans, cowboy boots and a light blue tee that read ‘2nd Grade Superstars! Miss Stark’s Class’. The tee was fitted along with the jeans and Jon sighed at the vision that was his neighbor...my very sexy neighbor. I like those boots on her. She just needs a hat...and nothing else. Her hair was up in a ponytail and she was dragging an enormous tote behind her.

“Casual Monday?” he asked as he and Ghost got nearer.

“You could say that,” she grinned, stooping to pet Ghost and getting licked in return. Lucky SOB. Ah, to be a dog. “We’ve got a pumpkin patch and farm field trip planned for 2nd grade today.”

“Oh? That sounds like fun. Makes me miss being a kid.”

“Yeah. Well, let’s hope it’s fun for them. It’s usually exhausting on this end though. You try wrangling twenty-two 7-year-olds in the great wide open sometime and see what you think. I may need a nap more than they do by the time I get home,” she finished as she absently tucked a stray tendril of hair back behind her ear that had come loose from her ponytail.

Jon gave an involuntary gulp as he stared at her...for too long.

Her hair looks so soft and silky. How weird would it be if I reached up and tucked that bit...
back for her that she missed? Wonder what it smells like. Can I casually get close enough to find out without being creepy?

“You alright, Jon?”

“Uh…yes,” he stuttered and was pleased when Ghost gave him a distraction. He’d been circling the two of them as they talked and now their legs were bound up in his leash. “Shit…I’m sorry. Ghost! Stop it, buddy.”

“It’s alright,” Sansa laughed as they worked together to get free. She wound up with her hands on his shoulders as she stepped clear of the leash and Jon could smell her hair. Mmmm…citrusy. Good job, Ghost. “I, uh…I cancelled my doctor’s appointment today. Is it still alright if I come by after work?” she asked shyly as she moved back again.

“Absolutely. Ghost will be looking forward to more of your devoted affection,” he said as Ghost was busy sniffing Sansa’s boots again.

“Great. Thanks again, Jon. I made some lemon chicken last night. I could bring some over for payment…only if you’d like it though,” she said uncertainly.

“I’d love that. You don’t have to feed me though.” He saw the way she raised her eyebrows at that and simply said, “Thanks.” Sansa smiled then and went to lift her heavy tote with a grunt. “Can I give you hand with that?”

“Oh, it’s filled with water and snacks for the kids. I can manage,” she said airily as she was clearly struggling to lift the damn thing.

“You said it’s two blocks to work. Let me carry it for you.”

“I can’t ask you to do that.”

“What else am I doing today? I’m off. Ghost and I went for a run. You’re bringing me food later. I think my schedule has just enough room in it to help you lug that two blocks.”

“Thanks, Jon.”

“Don’t mention it.”

Jon was smiling all the way back home. Sansa was very talkative on the way to the school. He enjoyed listening to her talk and she didn’t seem to mind that he was quiet most of the time. It was soothing somehow and made him feel less alone.

She didn’t just talk to fill space though. She had things to say about the school where she worked, the neighborhood and Columbia and Baltimore. She made observations about teaching and life in general that were humorous and profound by turns.

Over the course of those two blocks walking next to her, she made him feel comfortable and at ease in a way no other woman had in a long time barring his mother.
When he reached his building again with a very tired Ghost, he found Loras replacing the front porch light.

“Hey, just the man I was looking for earlier,” Loras said. “Renly and I are doing our monthly ‘Good Neighbor’ dinner at our place this coming weekend and want you to come. Sansa and Nan will be there as always but we definitely want you to come as our new addition. You got a night off?”

“I might be on call Saturday night but I could probably be there. I’m working Friday and Sunday.”

“Saturday night it is then. 7 o’clock okay?” Loras asked as he dusted off his hands and climbed down from his step stool.

“Sure, thanks. Shall I bring anything?”

“Just your sense of humor. Renly usually likes to get everyone to play party games or something after dinner. Consider yourself warned.”

“Okay. Hey, Loras…who lived in my place before me?” Jon asked as he held the door open for Loras to carry his stuff back inside.

“Oh, nice girl named Arianne. She moved to Florida with her boyfriend.”

Jon nodded and started to head upstairs but curiosity finally won the battle over his hesitance.

“Loras, is Sansa…do you know if she’s seeing anyone?”

Loras’s smile suddenly reminded Jon of the cat that ate the canary.

“Nope, she’s single,” he grinned.

“Okay, thanks. Uh, Loras…would you mind not mentioning that I asked…to Sansa at least?”

“No problem, neighbor.”

Chapter End Notes

Next chapter will include some Sansa backstory as they have dinner together that night.
Sansa's POV for most of chapter. This will give some backstory for her to explain her own fears about getting involved with someone and also their developing interest in each other.

This is a long chapter that was originally two but I decided I didn't want to cut it.

And...there's three Baratheons in this but I'm making Joffrey a Lannister and Renly and Stannis won't be related. Just go with it please;)

When Sansa was still a little girl, she had been obsessed with fairy tales and princess stories. Her mother had indulged her beloved daughter with all manner of dress-up clothes, usually made by Catelyn Stark’s own hands. Her father would call her his princess and would wear the paper crowns she made for her ‘king’ and herself. Even Robb, as an indulgent big brother, had been willing (at least until he reached the age of 9) to play her knight, rescuing his ‘princess’ from dragons and their evil queen.

Sansa cherished those times, especially in the summer when there was no school and only Robb’s little league games interrupted their free time. Those were the carefree days of childhood, halcyon days of pleasure when play was all that truly mattered.

But as she grew older and sadly accepted that Arya would rather pretend to be an ogre than be a princess with her, Sansa’s love of such things waned. And, as boy bands, nail polish and gossiping with friends started to become a priority in her life, Sansa put the dress-up clothes away while secretly nursing a wish in her heart that perhaps someday there would be a little daughter to wear the dresses that her grandmother had made.

It didn’t stop her from longing for a knight or a prince charming though. A man who would love and cherish her, who she would love and cherish in return. Someone who would make her feel like a princess, just like her parents and brother always had.

As she walked beside Jon Snow that morning, something fluttered in her stomach and up towards her heart. Something that reminded her of that childish delight in play, unhampered by the troubles of adulthood and not haunted by unpleasant memories.

Nerves. You always talk too much when you’re nervous. Sansa, you are talking his ear off! He doesn’t seem to mind though.

He didn’t. He was smiling. Ghost was walking along on her other side, panting happily. She was flanked by Jon and Ghost, like they were her…
Don’t say it. Don’t think it. You’re being silly.

But still, something about the man walking at her side made her think of a knight…or a prince.

He carried the ridiculously overstuffed tote two blocks for her without breaking a sweat. Well, he was already sweating from his run but Sansa didn’t mind. He walked along quietly and politely listened to her non-stop babble, occasionally making a remark or laughing at something she said. She felt warm and fuzzy inside and hoped she wasn’t blushing.

__My new neighbor, the polite gentleman. My very fit neighbor. His hair looks good up like that…but I think I like it down best of all.__

Jon and Ghost bid her adieu at the entrance. Only faculty and staff were allowed in this early and she assured him she could manage getting the tote to her classroom.

“Was that him?” Margaery asked, rushing up to her as soon as Sansa entered the building.

“Was that who? What’re you doing anyway? Are you spying on me now?”

“Naturally…and ‘was that who’…puh-leaze, Sansa, don’t try and play coy. You suck at it. You know who. Was that Dr. Sweet Ass?”

“Marg…” she sighed in mock exasperation before she betrayed herself with a girlish shriek. “Yes, that was him! But personally, I prefer to call him Dr. Hottie or Dr. Dreamy or Dr. Curls in my mind…or Jon will do just fine.”

“Well, you know Loras. Sweet Ass was his favorite nickname for him.”

“I’ll have to be sure to thank him for verifying that Jon’s single for me.”

“Loras does what he can for you, honey. He should’ve been a cop. His interrogation skills when it comes to garnering gossip cannot be matched and he can be quite persuasive, too.”

Sansa laughed at that comment, remembering when Loras had convinced everyone to dress up as the Village People for Halloween last year.

“Yes, your brother is persuasive.”

“So, what was Man Bun, M. D. doing here anyway? Walking you to class, Miss Stark? How very high school of him. He doesn’t have a kid, does he?”

“No. He was helping me with this heavy-ass tote for the field trip. He carried it all the way here for me,” Sansa finished wistfully.

But Marg was not to be distracted by gentlemanly gestures so easily. “You know those kids have parents, right? I don’t know why you pack all this shit for them when they’ll all be marching in with their little brown bags full of juice boxes and snacks.” Marg leaned down to try and lift her tote. “Yeah, that is a heavy-ass tote. So, speaking of asses…when’re you going to start spanking his?”

“Margaery!” Sansa squeaked and then looked around chagrined at the other faculty in the hallway turning to look at them.

“Well, you can certainly let him spank yours if you prefer. I won’t judge,” Margaery smirked.

“You and your brother are absolutely horrifying at times with the way you talk. I just met him. I’m
hardly ready to…”

“Fuck him senseless?”

“Marg…” she said holding her head.

“Yeah, yeah…I know, Sister Sansa. Still cherishing that V-card, right?”

“I am not a…you know I’m not,” she hissed under her breath. “I just don’t want to make another mistake like Harry.”

“Darling…that was two years ago. Did he really break your heart that badly? Are you really ready to hang up your spurs ‘cause you got thrown once?”

“You and your analogies, Marg. You ought to write for an advice column or something. And excuse me for being once bitten, twice shy. I’ve had deplorable dating luck as you well know.”

“I know, honey,” Margaery said sympathetically.

“Sansa Stark and her Dating Disasters…a short comedic tragedy.”

“Sansa…sweetie…”

“Let’s review, shall we? Umm…boring guy that would rather talk about his ex. Check. Sad little fellow that grew orgasmic when discussing his top score on his favorite video game. Check. Man-whore more invested in his personal grooming routine than any other soul on this planet. Check. Oh, and let’s not forget cheating fiancé. Check and check. First man I sleep with, the man I thought I was going to marry, turns out to be a complete cad…”

“A cad? What century is this?” Margaery asked with her nose scrunched up and laughter in her eyes.

“You know what I mean. I’m not the kind of girl that will just jump into bed with every Tom, Dick and Harry. Don’t laugh.”

“Won’t jump into bed with every…oh, that’s good,” she laughed before continuing, “And his name is Jon so you should be good.”

Not deterred, Sansa meant to finish her list. “Wait, I went in reverse order so I could be sure and save the best for last!”

“Sansa,” Margaery said sadly now, “let’s not talk about him.” Sansa nodded and took a deep breath. “So…I guess it’s the Man in a Box for you then?” Margaery asked with a grin.

Sansa smiled. Marg was always good at coaxing her out of her melancholy.

“Yes…no. You know I want more than that. And, just for the record, I bought a new ‘friend.’ Yours scared the shit out of me.”

Margaery snorted and said, “What? I thought you might enjoy the Big Daddy Thumper. Besides, if it weren’t for my gift you would never have got him over to your apartment so quickly or be making plans with him already. I expect to be your maid of honor.”

“For a woman who likes to talk so much about sleeping around, you are hopelessly romantic, Marg,” Sansa said before she thought of something else she wanted to mention. “He seems…sad in a way. He told me his mother was gone and he didn’t have any other family. And I have a hunch
there may be a painful relationship in his past.”

“Well, there you go, Detective Stark. You can figure out the mystery of why a hot as fuck young doctor is still single. You can be the girl to lift his spirits. Put some pizazz back in his life and let him put some back in yours. You can bake him a cake and brighten his day. Or just suck his cock…same difference.”

Sansa slapped her friend’s arm playfully before she said, “No, I’d rather give it a little time. I don’t want to just be some fuck buddy.” She ignored Margaery’s faux gasp at her language and continued. “He’s my neighbor. I could barely stand to look at Harry after what happened and we lived in different buildings. Imagine if Jon…”

“Sweetie…they’re not all assholes. Give him a chance. You know I love you and I’m partly teasing about having sex with him right away.”

“Partly?” Sansa asked.

“Yeah…partly.”

“Well, I can start with trying to be his friend for now. We’ll see if there’s anything else there. Now, go on…your 5th graders are waiting, Miss Tyrell.”

“Alright, but you have to tell me how the stitch removal and dinner goes,” she said in a sing-song voice as she drifted on down the hall.

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Sam: So you’re hot for teacher then?

Jon: You’re so annoying. Why do I talk to you again?

Sam: Just like that Van Halen song. Do you know that one?

Jon: Yes.

Sam: It’s about time honestly.

Jon: I don’t know. She’s so nice. If I fuck up, I’d have to move.

Sam: Then, don’t fuck up. Just fuck her.

Jon: Such sage advice, Dr. Tarly. No wonder you’re in psychiatry.

Sam: Okay, Gilly just got home. We’re both looking forward to you seeing at the wedding.

Jon: Why does she want a December wedding in Vermont again? It could be a travel nightmare, you know.

Sam: Gilly loves snow…Snow. So, shut up about it, Best Man.

Jon: Alright.

Sam: So, Gilly wants me to let you know that she did invite Ygritte.
(silence)

Sam: Jon? Did I lose you?

Jon: No.

Sam: She’s sorry but they do work together. She broke up with that guy, Gilly said.

Jon: It’s not that. I’m not interested in getting back together. I just dread seeing her again is all, especially alone.

Sam: So, bring your new redhead to the wedding.

Jon: She’s not mine to bring.

Sam: Not yet, you mean.

Jon: Piss off.

Sam: Such hostility. You need to talk to your shrink more. Keep me posted.

Jon laid down his phone and caught himself smiling at the thoughts of taking Sansa with him to Vermont.

Two months…could you even work up the nerve to ask her out in two months? Let alone ask her to go to a wedding with you…in Vermont…at Christmas…when she no doubt has better things to do. Ah, for fuck sake…there’s no way.

Jon ran a hand over his face and groaned.

He kept checking the clock, telling himself it had nothing to do with wishing for it to be time for her to come home…to come over. Ghost came over and playfully nipped at his elbow.

“What is it, buddy?”

Ghost paced around the apartment, shaking his head.

“You got water in your ear or something?”

Ghost picked up Jon’s dirty scrubs from last night off the floor with his mouth and carried them over to him.

“No, I’m not going to work today.”

Ghost sat on his haunches and Jon would almost swear the dog rolled his eyes at him.

“What is it? What are you…oh!” He finally noticed the wreck his apartment had become over the weekend. “Good point, buddy!”

Jon started tidying up his dirty clothes and cleaning up the mess he’d left in the sink from where he’d demolished the rest of her lasagna when he’d got home from work late the night before. Next, he broke out the vacuum to try and rid the apartment of at least a little of the white dog hair that was on every surface it seemed.
“You’re a lot of work, Ghost,” Jon said to his dog as he had to clean out the bag before he was even half done.

Ghost gave him a small whine from his doggie bed and covered his eyes with his paws.

“You’re totally worth it though!”

It was nearly 4PM and he knew she’d be home soon. He opened his door a crack so she could hear the vacuum and kept working. He finished about 20 minutes later and realized she might have decided to come over closer to dinner time since she said she’d bring food. He was felt a bit down at the thought of waiting longer but then again, dinner with her in his apartment would be ample reward for the wait.

He grabbed a beer and started looking for something to watch. He felt his eyelids getting heavy as soon as he found a match replay. He drifted off before he finished half his beer.

He was having the sweetest dream. Her hair was so shiny and soft and…she smells so good. She was smiling at him as they walked and talked. He reached out to touch her face when suddenly someone was touching him and calling his name.

This isn’t part of my dream.

“Jon?” she said again as she lightly tapped his shoulder.

Her face was a bit bleary so close but he could smell the citrusy scent of her shampoo as she leaned over him and her hair brushed his face.

It is like silk. I knew it.

Her blue eyes were inches from his own…such lovely blue eyes. He blinked a few times and then instinctively pulled back.

“Hey,” he said, rubbing his eyes and reaching for his glasses. “What time is it?”

“Nearly 8:00PM. I’m sorry for barging in but your door was cracked open and Ghost greeted me as soon as I knocked. I saw you were asleep. I meant to come sooner but I was filthy from the farm and took a shower and then I was so exhausted I laid down and fell asleep. Apparently, I’m not the only one that needed a nap,” she finished with a smile.

“Yeah…I worked 24 hours over the past two days. I’ve been keeping busy all day. I guess when I finally decided to sit still, it caught up with me.”

“The place looks great,” she said as she stood up and looked around the apartment. “Arianne was a bit of slob,” she laughed. “Is it still alright if you take out my stitches? If it’s not a good time…”

“No, it’s a great time. You bring my fee?”

“Sure did,” she grinned, holding up a casserole dish.

Such a sweet smile…such soft, full lips. She had changed into a clean tee and some yoga pants. Jon thought he might like those as well as the skinny jeans. Well, her ass would probably look good in anything. A gentleman, Jon. At least pretend you’re a gentleman.

When she pulled the lid off the casserole dish, Jon uttered a groan of longing. Lunch had been nearly eight hours ago.
“That smells amazing and I’m famished.”

“I heated it up in the oven before coming over. So, dinner first?”

“Nah…stitches first, then dinner. I’ll be good for nothing once I’m done gorging myself.”

“So, then what’d you do?” he asked.

“I told them they could spend the rest of the day on the bus with me or they could shake hands and apologize to each other and enjoy the rest of the field trip. What?!” she asked as he started snickering.

“I’m sorry. Just the thought of you trying to pull two wrestling students apart in a pig pen is…” he laughed more fully and she decided she liked the way his eyes crinkled up in merriment. She liked it very much. Such soft and expressive brown eyes my new neighbor has. He wiped his eyes and cleared his throat before he asked, “So, the boys agreed to be friends then?”

“Who said anything about boys? It was two girls!”

He dissolved into a fit of laughter once more and Sansa laughed with him now.

The lemon chicken had long since been devoured and Ghost had his head on Sansa’s lap as she gently scratched his ears. Jon noticed and said he was afraid he was going to lose his best friend to her.

“I don’t think so. He’s obviously devoted to you. I can tell you have a very close bond. He reminds me of Lady. She was my Mal. We got her when I was eight. She loved everyone but my dad always said she was definitely my dog.”

“I’ve had Ghost about four years, since he was still a pup. I had always wanted a dog but growing up my mum was…well, we didn’t have all that much when I was little. I can’t imagine not having him now though. I guess it must’ve been rough when…”

Sansa swallowed hard and looked up from Ghost and into Jon’s eyes. He was a nice and caring man. She could share this.

“Yes, it was very hard. It was worse than that really. See, I…um, I dated this boy back in high school. I thought he was my prince charming at first but he wasn’t. Well, it turned out he wasn’t charming or princely or nice at all.”

Jon looked confused for a just a moment and then his eyes narrowed. “Did he hurt your dog, Sansa?”

“He killed my dog,” she said in a choked voice.

The tears threatened just like always when she thought of coming home from volleyball practice that night and finding Lady lying on the front porch. She had looked like she was asleep at first.

Sansa’s eyes welled up with tears and they spilled down her cheeks, hot and wet. Then, the whole
The story was pouring out of her mouth before she could stop herself.

“The day I broke up with him he showed up at my house that night. He started yelling all kinds of vile things at me. My father came out onto the porch to run him off and Lady followed him. She was so gentle, Jon. She was the sweetest thing but that night…she knew he was threatening me and she bit him. The next night I came home and she was on the porch, dead. She’d been poisoned the vet said. I know he did it. The way he smirked at me the next day at school…I’m sorry…” she gasped as her voice cracked into a whine and the tears flowed again.

He cursed under his breath before taking her hand and saying, “Don’t be…I’m so sorry. I’m sorry that happened to you, Sansa. I’m sorry he did such a thing and…you lost your dear friend.”

Ghost whined and looked up at her with sad puppy eyes. She stroked his soft fur and repeated her calming mantra inside her head. She wiped angrily at the tears and waited until her breathing returned to normal before speaking again.

“He was part of the reason I decided to go away for college. Philadelphia is huge but our town isn’t. I always saw the same kids wherever I went. I didn’t…I never wanted to be near him or run into him again.”

“Did he…did he hurt you, too? Besides, obviously, the horrible thing he did to Lady.”

“Yes, he hit me once. It was why I broke up with him. I’m sure it would’ve escalated if I’d stayed with him. My older brother beat him up after what happened and got into trouble over it. Robb was arrested but luckily it was a misdemeanor and after a year he was able to have his record cleared. But Joffrey was still a juvenile and all he got was some court ordered counseling for hitting me and no one ever did anything to him about what he did to Lady.”

“Did he just leave you alone after that? After your brother…”

“Uh, no,” she said uncomfortably. She started picking at her fingernails. I like you but how much do I wish to share? He had shown her nothing but kindness. And there was something about Jon that made her want to trust him…enough to share this anyway. “He started following me sometimes. He had some friends send me messages. But he was just smart enough to not get caught doing anything.”

“And that was when you were still in high school?”

“Well…yes and no. He continued for a while. But I’ve not seen him since I moved in here.”

“Here? You mean to the building? How long has that been?”

“About sixteen months.”

Jon’s nostrils flared and he looked furious. She could hear a rumbling sound building in Ghost’s chest.

“Sansa…you dated him in high school and he was still stalking you a little over a year ago?”

“Yeah…it’s okay now,” she said dismissively. “He’s not contacted me or shown his face for a long time. Anyway, sorry to be such a downer,” she finished sadly, feeling like she’d ruined their pleasant evening.

His face relaxed back into a concerned and caring expression once more and Ghost licked her hand.
“No, not at all. I’m sorry for your pain but I’m happy you felt comfortable telling me that. I’m… well, I’m glad to get to know you,” he said. He suddenly looked bashful and Sansa couldn’t regret sharing anything with him now.

“I’m glad to get to know you, too. Thanks for everything with taking care of my foot. Thanks for listening to me ramble this morning, too. Harry always said I talked too much.”

“Harry?”

“Oh, he was my boyfriend…back during college.”

“I see. Well, I don’t think you talk too much. I’ve really enjoyed your company. And, permit me to say that I really love your cooking. Are you sure you don’t have any more medical needs I can treat for more free food?” he asked with a sweet smile.

She laughed and said, “Not yet but give me time. I’ve been known to be clumsy, especially when I’m trying to turn off Vibrators from Hell.”

He was laughing again now. “Yeah, I was honestly a bit intimidated by that thing.”

“You’re not the only one! Marg…that’s Loras’s sister, she thought it’d be funny to…well, anyway…she’s far more concerned about my sex life, or lack of, than she really needs to be,” she said, annoyed that she automatically started blushing. He was still smiling though. “So, are you coming to Loras and Renly’s dinner?”

“Yes…I’ll be there.”

“Great. Well, it’s after 10PM and I should probably…”

“Yeah, my shift starts at 6AM. Ghost needs a walk before bed so I’ll just grab his leash.” He jumped to his feet and the three of them headed out his door. Jon carried her casserole dishes back for her. “I’ll see you, Sansa,” he said with a fond smile as she stood at her door when he and Ghost headed out for their walk.

“Good night, Jon.”

She locked her door and leaned back against it. She stifled a giddy little yelp and felt like giggling and wondered if it would be too late to call Margaery.

How could he make her heart pound like this? How could he possibly be this sweet and still single?

She wondered if he could possibly be real. Her experience with guys had not been good. She liked guys but it was hard for her to trust them. Other women, her family, children, Loras and Renly…she was comfortable around them. But men that might be interested in her beyond friendship? It was a struggle.

She’d been attracted to him at first sight. He’d been nothing but sweet and kind and courteous. The kind of man you’ve always hoped to find. She shook her head. Friendship first, Sansa. See where it goes from there.

But as she thought of his smiles and their evening together when she laid down for the night, she couldn’t help but hope.
Chapter Summary

The neighbors enjoy Loras and Renly's hospitality. Sansa might enjoy the wine a bit too much and Jon gets to know Nan.

When Saturday night arrived, Jon gave Ghost a scratch behind the ears and promised to see him later before heading downstairs.

“Wish me luck, boy. You know how abysmal I can be at this sort of thing.”

Ghost licked his hand before returning to his chew toy.

He paused outside Sansa’s door, tempted to knock and ask her to walk down with him. He wasn’t exactly sure why he felt so nervous. They all seemed nice and it wasn’t a large gathering. He’d adapted to the hospital easily enough. But he thought he’d feel more at ease if Sansa was by his side.

*It’s a flight of stairs, Jon. Don’t pressure her to hurry if she’s still getting ready. And if we arrive together Loras will be giving me those looks again. You’re a grown man. You can arrive at a dinner party on your own.*

Loras and Renly’s apartment was like something out of a magazine. Not all that surprising considering Renly was an interior designer at a firm in Baltimore. Loras was the manager/handyman of the building so he was home most of the day, thus he knew everyone’s comings and goings. The two men had been together for seven years and were obviously as happy as any couple Jon had ever met.

“You want a beer or some wine, Jon?” Renly asked.

“I’ll have a beer for now but then I think I’ll need to switch to water. There’s rumors that our attending might call an impromptu meeting tonight.”

“Lovely,” Renly said sarcastically.

“Yeah, he’s a really fun guy,” Jon replied with equal sarcasm. “So, how did you two meet? College?”

“Yeah. Fencing club,” Renly said. “I sucked at it but Loras was amazing so I started showing up at their competitions and got invited to join them. I think the team captain might have had a soft spot for me by then.”

“What? We had an open spot and I was only thinking of the team,” Loras exclaimed from the kitchen.

“Sure, you were, honey,” Renly chuckled.

Jon took his beer and moved into the living room to sit down next to Nan who lived in Apartment 2. They had only met once briefly by the mailboxes before then so Jon wanted to make an effort to
get to know his other neighbor.

She was a friendly octogenarian with a wry sense of humor which eased his natural tendency to be reserved with new people. She also had plenty of stories to tell so he was not pressed to make small talk which made him comfortable as well. Nan in turn was absolutely delighted to have a doctor living in the building which she told Jon repeatedly as he sat next to her.

As she talked, she would often reach over and clasp his hand. She had the dry but papery, soft hands of the elderly and Jon, never knowing his own grandparents, was more than a little fascinated to spend time with a woman her age that he wasn’t seeing in a hospital bed…usually near death.

She’d immediately latched on to the news that he was single and said she’d made some divinity this morning and he needed to come by and get some.

*What the hell is divinity?* he wondered as he nodded politely.

“It’s a chewy candy made with lots of sugar and pecans. It’s more of a Southern thing, I guess,” she said as though she had read his mind. “My husband was from Georgia and would ask me to make it at least a couple of times a year, especially at Christmas.”

“Oh…well, I’d love to try it. Thanks, ma’am.”

“Please call me Nan. We’re neighbors.”

“Of course…Nan.”

Jon looked over at Renly setting the table and Loras dishing up the Chicken Marsala and then discreetly looked at his watch. *Where is she?* he thought, not for the first time.

As luck would have it, he’d not managed to run into Sansa all week since Monday night when she’d come over. He’d spent a ridiculous amount of time checking his mail box though.

“She’s coming,” Nan said quietly in his ear, giving his hand another quick squeeze.

“Excuse me?”

“Sansa. She’s coming, dear. Don’t worry. Probably getting gussied up a bit for you, I’d wager.”

“Oh, no…I’m sure she’s not…” *Can this lady read minds or something?*

“I’m old, dear. I remember what it’s like to be young though. I don’t read minds or anything.” Jon took a gulp of his beer to hide the incredulous expression on his face. *Holy shit… “Is Margie coming, Loras?”* Nan asked before giving Jon another grin.

“No, not this time, Nanny Love.”

“Good, can’t have Miss Tyrell trying to steal my Sansa’s thunder. This one is quite taken with her,” she said pointing to Jon.

Jon choked on his beer and started sputtering. “I’m not…I…”

Loras and Renly started laughing, just as there was a knock at the door. Jon was still struggling to compose himself when Renly answered.

There she stood, looking far more like the epitome of divinity than any tooth-rotting dessert ever
could. She’d worn her hair down but the ends were curlier than usual. She was wearing a bit of make-up, just enough to bring out her natural beauty without seeming over done at all. And her dress…the cornflower blue short-sleeved dress was fitted at the top and fell to her knees with a swirly, flirty sort of skirt and it was covered in little yellow flowers. It was demure and yet alluring as well.

“You’re late, doll face, and you can’t blame traffic,” Renly said as he kissed her cheek and took her yellow cardigan.

Sansa went over and kissed Loras on the cheek and then proceeded to come over and kiss Nan on the cheek. Jon leapt to his feet, hoping for one of those greetings as well. She stood uncertainly for just a moment before she kissed his cheek as well. He kept still and enjoyed the brush of her soft lips against his cheek. He knew he was probably blushing when she pulled back but at least she was, too. He felt a distinct zing of enticement from her kiss though it was innocent and innocuous enough. He started wondering when she’d turned him into a 12-year-old boy.

“I’m sorry I’m late,” she said once she’d kissed her way around the room. “My mom called as I was trying to finish getting ready and just kept talking.”

“That’s alright,” Loras said as he carried a final serving dish to the table. “But, since this one,” he said pointing towards Jon, “is threatened with being called in tonight, let’s start eating.”

Sansa moved to sit at Renly’s right. Nan moved to sit at his left. There was a chair between Loras and either one of them.

Fuck…are they going to start laughing if I choose to sit by Sansa?

Jon started to move next to Nan when she said, “Oh, I’m a leftie, dear. Don’t want to bump elbows with me all night do you?”

She smirked at him as Renly held out her chair. Jon moved over to sit by Sansa and held out the chair for her.

“Thank you, Jon,” she said sweetly.

“You’re welcome,” he said, trying to avoid the eyes of the other three. God…it’s like I’m in high school again and all my friends are teasing me about the girl I like.

“Oh, this is going to be such fun,” Renly said with glee, rubbing his hands together. “I can’t wait till we play charades later.”

“Movie!” Loras shouted as Jon and Sansa pretended to hold an old-style movie camera.

They nodded encouragingly to the players and then stared awkwardly at one another again. Sansa had an idea and leaned in to whisper it in his ear. She couldn’t help breathing in his cologne.

Next, she held up three fingers for the players.

“Three words!” Renly shouted next.

They nodded again. Then, Jon was shaking his head at her whispered suggestion.

“Oh, come on,” she coaxed softly as she held her arms out.

He relented and started to twirl her around the room.

“Musical!” Loras shouted. They nodded enthusiastically at him and he made a guess. “Oh…oh… um, *The Sound of Music*!”

“How in the hell is that three words, Loras?” Renly asked, chuckling to himself as he grabbed another beer.

Jon and Sansa shook their heads and started snickering.

“Pretend to play the piano,” she said in his ear next.

She felt the most delicious little flutter standing so close to him like this and realized she was still holding his hand from where they’d pretended to dance. Jon smiled down at their joined hands and back up at her before he broke contact and started pretending to play the piano. Sansa, not knowing what else to convey, continued to dance and hummed. She liked the expression on Jon’s face as he watched her move.

“*Mary Poppins*,” Loras shouted out next.

Jon and Sansa gave him a completely perplexed look, as Renly was laughing and holding his head.

“God, you suck at this, honey,” Renly said. “Is it *My Fair Lady*?” he asked next.

They shook their heads. Sansa had seen the movie with Marg but Jon had not. He was looking at her for guidance of what to do next.

*Okay…we’re supposed to be a couple. Umm…okay. We could just…shit.*

Sansa leaned in to whisper again and didn’t know if she was more annoyed or thrilled by his wide eyes and clearly embarrassed expression. She put her hands on her hips and tapped her toe at him until he gave in. His face was redder than she’d ever seen it and he covered his eyes for a second before pulling her into his arms. He raised his eyes brows and gave her a questioning smile.

“Just do it,” she whispered, hoping he couldn’t tell how violently her heart was pounding at the moment.

Jon nodded and leaned in to kiss her…on the cheek.

“*Debbie Does Dallas!*” Nan shouted.

Now all four of them burst out laughing. Sansa clung to Jon till she could make her way to the couch where he collapsed beside her and declared time was up. Her head was spinning and she felt flush all over.

*Too much wine or too much of him?*

“What? Three words, music, dancing, sex…it had that, right?” Nan said.

“Nan, I don’t even want to…first, that’s porn, not a musical. And please explain to me how a kiss
on the cheek becomes sex?” Loras asked through his tears of laughter.

“It all begins with a kiss, dear,” Nan said knowingly.

Jon started turning red again and Sansa was certain her face matched her hair as Nan turned and winked at her.

“So, what was it then?” Renly asked.

“La La Land,” Sansa said still giggling.

“That was my next guess,” Loras said with a sage little head nod.

“Sure it was. Okay, good game! More wine? More water, doc?” Renly asked.

“No, I’m still working on this one,” Jon answered, holding up his bottle.

Sansa leaned into Jon’s shoulder to grab her wine glass from the coffee table before lifting it up for Renly to pour. She’d had two glasses with dinner and one after already but she was having fun and it was keeping her nerves at bay a bit.

At least I only have to manage a flight of stairs to get home. She looked over at Jon sitting next to her on the couch.

Why do you have to be so incredibly handsome? I’m already attracted to you and now I’m buzzed and want to put my hands on you again in your button-down shirt all untucked and those fitted jeans. How do you get into those jeans? Or how do you get out of them? I’d really like to touch your curly hair. I never imagined I’d get so turned on by a guy’s hair. And, I really need to stop drinking now…

Sansa bit her lip and was glad she’d managed to not utter any of those thoughts aloud before she started sipping her wine again.

The conversation returned to an earlier dinner topic. Jon’s best friend in Vermont was getting married in a couple of months and he’d be traveling up there to be the best man.

Goodness, I’ll bet he’d look so hot in a tux. Sansa…get a grip.

“So, when will you be going to Vermont?” Renly asked.

“Not until December. The rehearsal dinner’s the day after Christmas actually…which happens to be my birthday,” he mumbled out the last part.

“Aww, Jon…does that suck? Birthday right after Christmas?” Sansa asked with a little pout.

“Yes,” he answered, laughing at her pouty face before giving her one of his own back. “Promise to feel sorry for me?”

Oh. My. God. Look at those lips…kissable, bitable…damn. Sansa sat back and put down her wine glass, willing herself to stay calm.

“The day after Chris…Jesus, they must be insane,” Loras said coming in to sit with Renly on the loveseat.

“They’re young and in love, Loras,” Renly said. “I’ve heard of crazier wedding plans. Underwater vowel exchanges for one.”
“You would’ve loved it! It…well, it would’ve been really cool.”

“No, honey, I really, really wouldn’t have loved it…but I do love you. So, you got a date for the wedding, Best Man?” Renly asked next, ignoring Loras’s continued protests.

“Um…no,” Jon answered. Sansa felt a little thrill of excitement when he glanced her way.

*He looked at you. He was thinking about you when he was asked about a date. Sansa, you are just wishful thinking…or drunk thinking. Make some conversation, you idiot.*

“Speaking of Christmas,” she chimed in, “that was what my mom was calling about earlier. She said that she and my father have decided to take a cruise this year. First year in history that Catelyn Stark is not throwing a huge Christmas shindig and expecting all her little chicks to fly home. Well, Rickon’s still at home. Wonder what he’s doing?”

“Celebrating if he’s a normal 18-year-old, dear,” Nan said.

“Maybe he’s going to Robb’s,” Sansa said suddenly concerned for her youngest brother.

“What about you then?” Loras asked.

“I…well, I guess I’ll be here. I could keep Ghost for you while you’re gone, Jon.”

“Oh…uh, thanks,” he said. “That’d be really great if you don’t mind.” Something in his tone made Sansa wonder if he didn’t like the idea though.

“Why don’t you take Sansa to the wedding?” Nan blurted out then. “Since she’s not got any plans for Christmas.”

Both Loras and Renly’s mouths flew open and their eyes widened in perfect unison. Sansa knew her cheeks were flaming yet again and she would’ve pinched Nan if a) she wasn’t seated too far away and b) she didn’t love her too much to do that. Jon looked like Nan had just kicked him until…

“Oh, wow…that’s work calling,” Jon said with an audible sigh of relief as he reached into his pocket.

He headed out into the hallway to take the call and returned shortly to report that he’d have to head in to work. Sansa suddenly thought she might like to call it a night herself.

*I’m drunk, I’m tired…good time to leave is all. No ulterior motive here at all…nope, no way.*

“I’m kind of tired,” she said as she hiccupped, “and tipsy.” She giggled and then smothered it. *God, they are all staring at me now.* “Jon? Would you mind helping me…up the stairs?” she asked as she got unsteadily to her feet.

“Sure thing, Sansa,” he said shooting looks at the others. *Almost like he’s daring them to make a comment…*

They thanked their hosts and said their good-nights.

As Sansa leaned in to hug Nan, the old lady said, “Smooth move, girlie.”

Sansa shook her head and wagged her finger at Nan before stumbling a bit to stand back up. *Oh, shit…I am really drunk. Don’t say anything stupid…don’t say anything stupid.*
She had kicked off her shoes during charades and held them in one hand while she let Jon hold her steady as they climbed up the stairs.

“I’m sorry. I’m not much of a drinker. I guess I’m a lightweight.”

“Four glasses of wine is a good deal for your body weight, especially if you don’t have much of a tolerance built up. I wouldn’t call you a lightweight. Not that you’re…I mean, when it comes to alcohol. You’re perfect…uh, a perfect weight, I mean. Sorry,” he said cringing at himself.

“How much did you have again?” she snickered. *You just said I’m perfect*, the eight-year-old inside her sang.

“Very funny. One beer and no buzz. Four glasses of wine would be more than enough to give me a decent buzz though.”

“Okay, that’s good to know ‘cause I honestly don’t ever drink this much and right now the whole room is spinning and I feel like doing cartwheels. *Tambourines and elephants are playing in the band, won’t you take a ride on the flyin’ spoon? Doo doo doo,* she sang before dissolving into giggles and spinning around in circles. “I wish Renly had wanted to do karaoke tonight!” *Somewhere, Sensible Sansa is shaking her head at you, girl.*

“Big CCR fan, huh?”

“Who?”

“Uh…never mind,” he said with a grin.

When they reached her apartment, she dropped her keys trying to unlock the door and when she bent over to get them, she started to stumble.

His strong arms were there though wrapped around her waist and he pull her back up.

“Hold still,” he said as he propped her up against the wall and retrieved her keys.

His body was up against hers for just a breath or two as he held her up. She had her hands on his arms bracing herself for support.

“How much do you work out?” she said a bit breathlessly as she squeezed his biceps. *Oh, shit! You said that out loud!*

He just snorted with amusement though before unlocking the door and helping her inside. “Couch okay?”

“No…bed. Take me to bed, Jon,” she said before the blood started rushing to her face. “Oh, shit!” she nearly wept with mortification now. “That sounded bad!”

“It’s okay…I know what you meant,” he laughed.

“Jon…don’t let me drink that much again,” she said as she laid her head heavily on his shoulder.

“Oh, Sansa…let’s just get in bed now. I mean, let’s just get you in bed now! Jesus,” he muttered to himself as he kept an arm around her and guided her to the bedroom. She flopped down face forward and started moving her arms, like she could swim across her soft comforter. “I’ll be right back,” he said and she heard him rummaging in her kitchen.

“You in there looking for food to steal?” she called.
“No. Water,” he answered coming back in. He set a bottled water down on her nightstand. “Try and drink what you can of that tonight, okay?”

“Okay. Mmmm…I love my bed, Jon,” she said as she rolled over and writhed against the comforter some more.

“Yeah…uh, it looks nice, Sansa.”

“It is…it’s lovely. I may stay in it all day tomorrow. Thank you for helping me. You’re such a gentleman, Jon.”

“You’re welcome and thank you for saying that. Okay…so, I probably should head to my place to get changed.”

“Changed?”

“For work, Sansa.”

“Oh…right.” He was almost out of the room when she asked, “Do you like me, Jon?” He hesitated a beat or two but finally answer, “Yes.”

“Are you just being nice?”

“No, I like you, Sansa.”

“But do you like me or do you like me, like me or are you just saying that to…”

He came back over to the bed and she smiled up at him with what was certainly a goofy, drunken smile.

“I like you, like you,” he said softly as he touched her arm. “Drink your water and get some sleep, Sansa,” he said as he headed back out of the room.

“Yes, doctor!” she shouted to him.

Sansa heard him chuckle before the front door closed and then closed her eyes to let sleep take her.

He likes me, likes me…

He’d beaten everyone else who was not already working tonight to the hospital but couldn’t help the bitterness he felt when Dr. Stannis Baratheon coolly told everyone in the lounge, once most of the others had arrived, that he was merely testing their readiness to respond in case of a disaster or something. He then proceeded to harp on a few points of procedure that the residents were failing to follow through with and reminded the nurses that there would be changes to their shifts soon.

I’m not here enough hours? You could hold a staff meeting anytime and run your disaster drill some other night, couldn’t you?
Jon sat there silently fuming at his boss but keeping quiet since he was ‘just the intern’ as everyone from the residents to the guy that manned the triage desk liked to remind him.

When Stannis was done, everyone started filing out of the lounge. Jon hung towards the back and was surprised with Stannis stopped him as he reached the door.

“I noticed you were the first one here, Jon.”

“Yes, sir. I live close by.”

“Oh? Well, that’s good. I like to see my interns are dedicated and respond quickly when I call.”

“Yes, sir.”

“Are you working tomorrow?”

“Yes, I’ll be in at 6 tomorrow morning.”

“Well, it’s past 11 already so I’ll let you go get some sleep. Good night.”

“Good night.”

Jon walked the five blocks back to the building as the last of his resentment burned off. He admitted that most of it was due to the fact that he really hadn’t wanted to leave Sansa or the dinner party for that matter.

She’d looked so sexy and yet adorable laying on her bed grinning up at him and asking if he liked her.

_Oh, I like you, like you alright. I’d liked to have stayed with you and maybe kissed you._

Jon shook his head and grinned to himself. He’d never take advantage of any woman who was so obviously intoxicated but he was certain he’d be thinking of her sweet expressions all night. The pouty face she made when he mentioned his birthday, the way she’d put her hands on her hips and tapped her toe at him to get him to kiss her during charades, her singing and spinning in the hall.

_God, I am completely infatuated, aren’t I?_

“What you grinning at, doc?”

Jon looked up and saw Nan sitting on the front porch steps smoking.

“Nothing. What are you doing out here?”

She held up her cigarette. “I don’t ever smoke inside. Willard didn’t like it. He’s been dead for eighteen years but I still like to honor his wishes when I can.”

“You know those are bad for you, right?”

“Yes, they may kill me someday. Oh, look at that! I’m 86 years-old… I think I’ll take my chances,” she said with a grin.

“Can I bum one then?”

“You smoke, Dr. Snow?”
“Not anymore…well, just once in a while now.” She handed him the pack and her lighter. He thanked her and took a drag before he continued. “I had a girlfriend that smoked in college and I guess I thought I would, too. I stopped when we broke up but when my mum got ill, I started again as a stress release. I kept smoking after she died but finally stopped about a year ago. Ghost didn’t like it.” She started laughing at that. “Yes, I heed my dogs wishes and quit smoking for him.”

“Well, he is a beauty, doc. Can’t blame you for wanting to keep him happy. So, what happened to your mother?”

“Breast cancer. She died…almost two years ago.”

Nan shook her head sympathetically and patted his hand. “I’m sorry, dear. She must’ve been quite young.”

“She was 45.”

“Far too young.”

Jon looked over at Nan and wondered how many of her loved ones she had buried. Losing his mother had been so hard.

“What happened to your husband?”

“Heart. He had such a big heart but it wasn’t strong enough to keep beating past 70, I guess.” She gave a little sniffle but then said, “He was the best thing that ever happened to me though. I’d take the pain of that day a thousand times over to have another day by his side.” What can I possibly say to that? “It’s worth it, Jon. I promise you that. It can hurt like hell…that’s for sure…but it’s worth it. Help an old lady up now, will you?”

They put out their cigs and he helped her into the building. He walked her to her door and she ushered him in to get some of the divinity she’d spoken of earlier.

Her apartment was filled with dollies, embroidered throw pillows and crocheted afghan blankets. It was a riot of different floral patterns and soft colors. There was a distinct old-lady feel to the place and it smelled like White Shoulders perfume and potpourri.

There were dozens of framed photos all around. Black and white photos of older people, of a young couple, of a baby…color photos from the 70s and 80s of little kids long since grown into adults, probably with kids of their own…a couple of more recent ones of young couples. Dozens of faces staring out of the pictures, people Nan cared about. Jon thought of the few framed photos in his apartment and wondered if he would ever have that many people in his life to love.

The kitchen counter was almost completely covered with older small appliances, an accordion-style folder filled to the brim with coupons and packages of sterile syringes and test strips.

“You diabetic, Nan?”

“Yes, insulin’s in the fridge, doc. Make sure I don’t keel over yet, okay?” she answered cheekily as a large gray Persian stalked out of the bedroom and meowed loudly at them. “Yes, yes…I’m coming to bed soon, Kit Kat,” Nan said as she handed Jon a small Tupperware container with the candy inside. “I’ll want that back,” she said, motioning towards the valued Tupperware.

“Yes, ma’am. You always up this late?”

“Usually. I don’t sleep so peaceful anymore. Now, don’t look like that…I’m fine, just old,” she
said when she saw his frown. “If I need your medical expertise, I’ll let you know.”

“Okay, Nan,” he said as she walked him to the door.

“You didn’t make any moves on my girl tonight, did you? She never drinks that much and poor thing wasn’t handling her liquor so well.”

“Of course not.”

“Good. I knew you were a gentleman but I have to look out for my Sansa. Poor girl has some shitty luck when it comes to guys. I think you make her a bit nervous.”

“Why? She’s not got any reason to be nervous,” he said as he walked out into the hall.

She just smiled and said, “She’d be worth it, Jon.” Then, she nodded and closed the door.
Take a Deep Breath

Chapter Summary

The day after the party, Sansa worries what she may have said to Jon while intoxicated and then gets a phone call that triggers an unpleasant reaction. And our pair move beyond being just neighbors as a friendship begins to form.

“You don’t understand! I got drunk and acted like a dumbass. I probably said something really stupid! How am I going to face him again?” Sansa moaned into the phone.

“Honey…calm down. Stop fretting over this. Um…any chance he fucked you?” Margaery replied.

“What?! No!”

“Okay, good. Any guy that would take advantage of a girl wasted on Chardonnay is a total ass.”

“He was a gentleman! I was the idiot…”

“What’d you do that makes you an idiot?”

“I don’t know! I fawned all over him like some teenage girl with a crush! Oh, why did I drink so much?!”

“Most guys don’t mind a bit of fawning, Sansa. You’ve got to calm down. Just talk to him.”

“I can’t! He’s at work. I don’t know when he gets off and he’ll probably be tired…”

“Why don’t you take him some cookies or something?”

“Pfft…I couldn’t do that. I mean…could I do that?”

“Well, I wouldn’t because my baking skills suck but he likes your cooking. He told you so. What would Catelyn Stark say?”

“The fastest way to a man’s heart is through his stomach. You do know that’s just an old saying, Marg?”

“It’s an old saying for a reason, honey. Besides, he did something gentlemanly again. It’s a plausible excuse to feed him. One step closer to…well, whatever it is you’d like this to be.”

What do I want this to be? Something…something special. “Marg,” she sighed into the phone. “You are…absolutely brilliant. I’m going to try it.”

“Really?!?”

“Yes, I’ll call you later.”

“Okay! I want details and…”

Sansa hung up and snickered. Okay, maybe not sweets. Save that for another time. Lemon chicken
and lasagna...hmmm, wonder if he likes Mexican food? Enchiladas, coming right up! Sansa sat up quickly and then grabbed her head with a moan. Right after I vomit and take some ibuprofen.

It was an unusually warm day for so close to Halloween. By late afternoon Sansa had her windows open as she cooked as well as her front door propped open to hopefully tempt him to stop by with the smells.

She’d went to the market for peppers, tomatoes, tortillas and chicken.

She’d found the song she was singing the lyrics to last night after a little internet research and was singing along while she put the ingredients together. Dad used to sing this to us when we were little, she realized, smiling to herself.

The phone rang and it was her older brother calling.

“What’s up, handsomest brother?”

“That’s handsomest and favorite brother, you mean.”

“Nope, you’re the handsomest. Bran’s my favorite and Rickon’s the sweetest.”

“I’ll have to work harder to take those titles away from those two, I see.”

“Fat chance…and I’m cooking, Robb.”

“Alright, alright…Janina and I wanted to invite you to our house for Christmas…since Mom and Dad have dumped us all.”

“Oh, sweetie, that is so nice but I may be stuck here.” Or in Vermont...maybe.

“Stuck there? You’re a school teacher, Sans. Work’s not an issue so what gives?”

“Uh…I might have agreed to dog sit for my neighbor.”

“Sansa…”

“We’ll see. I might make it but it’s only October. I don’t have to decide today do I?”

“No, sweetheart. You can show up on my doorstep on Christmas Eve if you like. You’re always welcome here. I wish you’d come visit us more often. The girls miss their Aunt Sansa.”

“I know. I’m sorry. I just…”

“Yeah, I know. Shithead is still around. I understand. I’ll let you cook. Love you, Sans.”

“I love you, Robb,” she said as she hung up.

She walked back over to the counter and put the casserole dish in the oven. She rolled her neck and felt it starting.

No.

She tried to ignore it but there was no ignoring this...ever. It always started with a tingling sensation through her neck, shoulders and upper arms. Then, her breath would get short.

Not now. Please not now.
Her hands started shaking.

*I need to close the door.*

She felt the fear overtaking her, paralyzing her and it just made her more panicked to think it was going to happen and there was nothing she could do to stop it.

*Close the door…don’t let them hear you.*

She stood frozen in the doorway between the kitchen and the living room though. Her heart was pounding in her ears and she leaned against the doorframe. She slid down to the floor as the sobbing started. She was dizzy and the room got dim.

Then, strong hands were on her and she pushed at them and cried for him to stop.

"Don’t touch me!" she gasped.

“Sansa? Sansa…”

She looked up and saw him kneeling uncertainly in front of her, still in his scrubs and running shoes.

“I’m okay,” she lied.

“No, you’re not,” he scoffed. “You looked like you were having a panic attack.”

“I’ll be okay,” she said then.

“Of course, you will,” he said sitting down across from her in the doorway. "May I?" he gestured towards her wrist. She nodded and let him take her pulse. He let out a whistle. “That heart is working really hard right now. Do you want to talk about it?” he asked.

His hand lingered in the air between them like he wanted to touch her shoulder but he seemed to think better of it and rested it on top of his knee.

“Maybe later,” she said putting her head down on her own knees.

She was still crying and wished she could just get the tears to stop. She felt weak after an attack and her eyes would keep up the waterworks for a bit.

“Okay,” he said simply.

They sat there for several minutes like that. Just the two of them in the doorway between her kitchen and living room. Sansa found it hard to look at him but that wasn’t his fault.

“You don’t have to sit here.”

“I can leave if you like.”

“No…I don’t want you to leave. I just don’t want you to feel like you’ve got to stay.”

The oven beeped then, warning her that there was only a minute left on the casserole.

“What are you making?” he asked with a smile, sniffing the air.

“Chicken enchilada casserole…for you.”
“Well, guess who won’t be leaving?” he smirked. “So, are you psychic?”

“What?”

“Did you know you’d be having a medical emergency and decided to go ahead and cook me something?” he asked as he scooted over next to her on the floor.

“No,” she laughed, wiping away the last of her tears. She nudged his shoulder with her own and was pleased when he gently nudged her back. “I made it for you as a ‘thank you’ for last night. And a panic attack isn’t exactly a medical emergency, is it?”

“It looked pretty scary to me. And, you don’t have to make me things just for being neighborly.”

_Is that all it is? Are you just being neighborly?_

“Well, I wanted to… for you. I’m crying because my brother called… well, not that it’s his fault. He wants me to come home for Christmas and I don’t really want to because I don’t want to see stupid Joffrey ever again. But my nieces miss Aunt Sansa and I started getting sad thinking how that asshole makes me afraid to go home. And then I had a stupid panic attack. Ridiculous, right?”

“No, not ridiculous, Sansa,” he said solemnly. “I’m sorry though. I can kind of understand about not wanting to go home… well, in a small way. I’m dreading going to my friend’s wedding and being his best man because my ex-girlfriend will probably be there and I don’t want to see her, especially not alone. It doesn’t really compare though. She’s not a crazy stalker or anything. I just…”

He clammed up and Sansa reached over to take his hand. “Just what?”

He leaned his head against the wall and said, “It just wasn’t a healthy relationship. And… she dumped me for some guy but she’s broke up with him now and I don’t want to make the mistake of trying again.”

“No second chance romance?”

“No, it’d be the third chance and that’s not going to happen.”

“You sound pretty confident. What are you worried about?”

“Alcohol and weddings and seeing a bunch of people again I’ve not seen in a good long while… it’s an excellent recipe for doing something stupid. My chest is getting tight just thinking about it.” She laughed and batted at his arm. “I’m serious. This might be a coronary coming on. I can think of only one cure,” he said with wide eyes and a grin.

“Oh really? And what’s that Dr. Snow?”

“Chicken Enchilada casserole.”

They had ended up at his apartment because he needed to change and Ghost needed a walk. Then, they’d eaten their fill of her enchiladas.

She’d apologized for getting drunk and acting ‘stupid’ the night before.
“You weren’t stupid.” *You were absolutely and irresistibly gorgeous, sweet and sexy.*

“Well, thanks anyway,” she said. She cleared her throat and met his eyes. “It’s hard...for me to trust guys...but I trust you, Jon,” she said with a sincere and reticent smile that made his heart ache.

“I...I don’t know what to say to that, Sansa. I’m honored that you think I’m worthy of your trust.”

After that she’d smiled a bit brighter and changed the subject but Jon couldn’t forget what she had said. *She trusts me. She’s had some bad experiences with guys but she trusts me.* It made him happy to think that he made her feel comfortable and safe.

But at the same time, it made him feel a bit sad. He liked her. He really did. *I like you, like you.*

He couldn’t see himself making a move on her though if she had trust issues...not just yet anyway. She trusted him. He didn’t want to spoil that. He just hoped that more could come of it in time.

They were watching TV on his couch together when she’d nodded off. She’d wound up moving closer to him when they’d watched ‘The Walking Dead.’ He’d sat there nearly an hour getting a cramp because he didn't want to crowd her at first and then because he didn't want to disturb her slumber. He found that he did not give a rat’s ass about who met Lucille while Sansa shrieked and hid her eyes and finally fell asleep nestled up against him rather than face any more of the show.

And Jon had spent that time reveling in the feel of her arm wrapped around his, and her head buried in his chest with her breasts pressed up against his shoulder much of the time while reminding himself of how he’d found her this afternoon. *Don’t push,* he told himself for the twentieth time tonight.

When she’d still been awake, he’d liked the sweet way she’d have her face hidden and ask if it was over yet when something violent was happening and the way she kept telling him it was fine when he offered to just watch something else.

“We really don’t have to watch this, Sansa. I’m recording it anyway.”

“No, no...it’s fine...I love um, ‘The Waking Dead.’”

*Right...sure you do.*

He sat there smelling her citrusy shampoo and enjoying the sound of her soft snoring, trying hard to ignore the fact that he was...well, getting hard.

“How?”

“Hmmm?” she said, lifting her head up off his shoulder to look at him.

“Would you...” *like to go out with me sometime...* “want to watch something else?”

Sansa smiled at him and stretched...like a cat. “Oh, gosh! Did I fall asleep? Is it already over?”

*A while ago...* “Yeah, it’s over,” he smiled.

“Nah, I should head home. I’ve got an early meeting tomorrow.”

“Sure, Sansa,” he said, as he brushed her hair out of her face with his fingers before he could stop himself. Her blue eyes were wide with...*Interest? Desire? Uncertainty?* Her lips had parted and he hoped it was desire. He could smell the spearmint on her breath from the gum she had chewed after dinner. “I’ll, uh, see you out then,” he stammered suddenly.
“Oh…okay, Jon,” she said, clearly trying figure out what his intentions had been. She turned back to him at the door though and said, “Thanks for everything. I’m sorry about earlier…”

“No, Sansa…you shouldn’t be sorry. There’s someone that should be sorry for that but it’s not you. You can always…if you need me, I’m right here, okay?”

“Okay, thank you.”

“Would you want to hang out again? With me? Maybe Thursday night? I can't cook like you but I can order delicious take-out like a champ.”

“Sure, Jon…I’d like that,” she said with a sweet smile as she told Ghost good-night.

He leaned out the door and watched her walk into her apartment. She gave a little wave before heading on in.

Jon closed his door and banged his head against it a time or two before looking over at Ghost.

“Oh, Ghost…what the fuck? Why didn’t I just kiss her?”

Ghost gave him an extremely disappointed look and let out a whine.

“I know. I just couldn’t though…not after earlier.” He ran his hand through his hair and then pointed emphatically to the air while looking at Ghost with a dead serious expression. “If I ever meet Joffrey the Fuckhead, I’m going to kick his ass.”

Ghost snorted derisively.

“I’m serious! Look…I know you think I’m pathetic with women but I really like her, Ghost. I just…I don’t want to fuck up, buddy,” he said collapsing back down on the couch and holding his head.

Ghost walked over to him and nudged his knee with his nose, giving him sad puppy eyes.

“I know and thanks. I love you, too.”

When Sansa knocked on Jon’s door Thursday night, she was more than a little annoyed. He had been the one to suggest hanging out tonight. He'd offered take-out...but she’d been home three hours and he’d not let on to her at all.

She had heard him moving around in his apartment a time or two so she knew he hadn’t got called in. She’d thought about him a lot since Sunday. She wondered if maybe he was going to kiss her that night. She thought she’d really like for him to kiss her but she still felt hesitant at times.

But now, he’d said he wanted to hang out but he’d not come over or anything.

*Might be nice to have his number. I mean, he is my neighbor. What if the place caught on fire while he was at work? Maybe he wouldn’t deserve a call. Well, you’d have to save Ghost. He almost asks you out…well, to hang out…and then he stands you up…well, doesn’t let on anyway.*
The door opened just a crack and she saw a blood-shot brown eye peeking out at her.

“Shit,” she heard him mumble.

_Shit? Gee, thanks…what the hell?_

She drew a deep breath and was about ready to ask him what the hell was going on when he opened the door just a bit wider and the smell of vomit overwhelmed her.

“Sansa, I am _so_ sorry. I completely forgot…”

“You’re sick!” she said with sudden concern; all angry, hurt feelings completely forgotten.

“Yeah…stay back, okay? We’ve been swamped with some intestinal virus at the ER all week. I wash my hands constantly and wear gloves and such but I…oh, God…guess I managed to catch it,” he said over his shoulder as he fled towards the bathroom.

“Have you been like this all day?” she called through the door when he had stopped heaving at last.

“_Unnn_, oh fuck…since about noon when they sent me home,” he answered, holding his head as he came back out. “It usually only lasts about 24 hours…I hope. Hey…what are you doing?” he asked as she lifted her hand up to feel his forehead. She shook her head. She cupped his face and kissed his forehead next. “Sansa…you just kissed me,” he said with a sweetly mystified smile.

“If you weren’t so green right now, I’d swear you were blushing, Jon Snow. And I was just testing your temperature…old tried and true mom-teacher method. You’re burning up. I’d say you’re running about 101,” she said knowingly.

“You’ve only been a teacher a couple of years.”

“Yeah, and I’ve been a big sister for a lot longer than that.” Ghost was laying by the couch and whined at her. “And he needs a walk,” she said pointing to the poor dog. She next surveyed the couch with the throw blanket and pillow on it. She put her hands on her hips and continued, “Why are you still in your scrubs? You should change into your pajamas. And what are you doing sitting in here? You should be in your bed.”

“I…it doesn’t really matter what I’m wearing or where I’m being miserable does it? I’ll just be heading back to the bathroom to puke my guts up some more in a few minutes anyway.”

“I’m taking Ghost for a walk. You get in bed and I’ll come check on you shortly. Take a bowl to the bedroom if you don’t feel like getting up.”

“Sansa…you don’t have to be here for this. I don’t want you to get sick or be grossed out…”

“I teach 2nd grade, Jon. I can handle vomiting. Now, go lay down.” She watched him shuffle into the bedroom, grumbling under his breath, and she grabbed Ghost’s leash. “Come on, boy.”

The chilly October evening was pleasant after the stuffiness and stench in Jon’s apartment and Ghost seemed to be in better spirits as they walked along, too. It was dark out but with Ghost at her side, Sansa wasn’t afraid.

“Is he always so stubborn?” she asked Ghost.

Ghost gave a little yip.

“I thought not. When they get sick though…they can be so pig-headed, right?”
Ghost knocked his head into her thigh.

“Okay, okay…I’m not complaining, you know. I think he’s really great.”

Ghost panted then.

“Ghost? Do you think…is he interested in me? You know…” she started to say as she stopped and looked at him.

Ghost stopped and sat down with his head cocked to the side.

“Yeah, I’m not really sure if he’s just nice or…oh, holy shit! I can’t believe I’m trying to have a conversation with a dog. I’m like Kristoff in ‘Frozen’ talking to Sven,” she laughed to herself...and then looked around to see if anyone was around to observe the crazy lady. "But you are the best, Ghost,” she said patting his head affectionately.

Ghost nuzzled her hand.

They walked three times around the block before they returned to the apartment. Sansa took the leash off and walked quietly into the bedroom. The only light came from the bathroom.

Jon was laying on top of the covers, on his stomach. He was in a pair of pajama pants now and had changed into a black t-shirt. His hair was a mess and his eyes were closed but she knew he wasn’t asleep. She sat down by his side and felt his forehead again.

“See, was that so hard? Aren’t you more comfortable now?” she asked.

“A bit,” he mumbled into his pillow.

“Have you kept any fluids down?”

“Yes, doctor. I’ve sipped some water every 10 minutes or so.”

“Are you always such a smartass when you’re sick?” she asked.

“Are you always so pushy when you’re taking care of a sick person?”

“Yes.”

“Well…yes, to your question then.”

“I’m staying for a bit. I’m going to clean some and hose it this place down with Lysol. You got any?”

“Yeah, under the kitchen sink.”

“Okay.”

“Sansa…thanks.”

“No problem,” she said with a smile. “What are friends for?”

She got up off the bed and was nearly out of the room when he said, “Sansa, I’m glad you’re my friend.”

“I’m glad you’re mine, too.”
Friends

Chapter Summary

Jon and Sansa's friendship flourishes though Jon would like more. Jon faces a difficult anniversary. Sansa suggests some plans.

Chapter Notes

Changed Robb's wife's name in the previous chapter. I guess we've got Robbina now. Love you, Janina ;)

Sansa: What are we doing tonight?

Jon: Ladies choice.

Sansa: Ice skating?

Jon: Please say you're not serious.

(silence)

Jon: You're serious. Okay, but if I fall and get injured, you're making me dinner for a week.

Sansa: Agreed.

A couple of weeks had passed since Jon’s illness and they had spent every evening that Jon was off together.

They’d spoken no words of dating or a relationship. They shared no kisses at the end of the night. Sometimes they would hug. Hugging was enough…maybe.

When they went anywhere or ordered take-out, Jon would offer to pay. Sometimes she’d let him. Sometimes she wouldn’t. Sometimes she’d insist on paying for him.

They were friends…and that was good enough for now. At least, Jon tried to tell himself that.

But, friendship with an attractive, single woman was something new for Jon Snow. He was coming to see that maintaining the proper boundaries was a challenge at times, too.

He tried to tell himself at first that he’d had other female friends like Sansa but then realized most of them were either like Gilly, a woman he was friends with but mostly because she was with Sam, or like his old friend Val from high school, a woman who was very much involved with another man and thus would only ever be Jon’s friend.
Mostly, they spent time at one apartment or the other with Ghost.

Her friendship was a positive thing in his life and he needed positive things after so many negatives. So, did she.

Jon knocked on her door with Ghost by his side with his ears perked up and wagging his tail. His friend still gave him disappointed looks when they would part for the night and Jon did not kiss her. Well, maybe I’m imagining that.

He looked down at Ghost and whispered, “We’re just friends, you know. So that means no kissing tonight…probably.”

Ghost’s ears drooped and his tail ceased its wagging.

“Shit,” he sighed.

Sansa opened the door and without preamble said, “You know what? I think I’ve gained ten pounds since I met you.”

Jon was distracted from her words though as she was busy adjusting her sweater with a pair of ice skates hanging over her shoulder.

She had her purple, tunic-style sweater hiked up to her belly button and she twisted this way and that as she fought some sort of battle with the petal pink chemise that she was wearing under it. Jon could see at least two inches of the creamy skin of her stomach. Ghost gave his head a toss and Jon felt like doing the same to stop himself from staring at the bit of skin that he wanted to lick. Holy shit...look away.

His eyes moved downward as she turned away for a moment to her skin-tight gray leggings that looked like they were painted on. This is worse. Her long auburn hair was braided in a pony tail that hung down her back.

He tore his eyes from her exposed torso and legging-clad ass and looked down at her feet. She was wearing her black FMBs. Not helping. Those boots had already featured in a dream or two since she’d broken them out last weekend.

He looked up at her face which was flushed from her efforts at sweater-adjustment/Jon-torment. Her blue eyes met his for a second as she was biting her bottom lip. Fuck me.

He glanced up to her fluffy white stocking cap she’d started wearing since the weather had turned colder. Okay, that’s safe enough…and fucking adorable. Good God.

Wondering if his eyes were bulging out of their sockets like some cartoon wolf, Jon swallowed hard and cleared his throat…then he noticed the skates.

“Wait…you have your own pair of ice skates? You’re going to make me look like a fool, aren’t you?”

“You’re from Vermont,” she replied, finally getting the sweater back in place over her ass. Such a pity. “Don’t you know how to ice skate?”

“Barely. And there’s no way you’ve gained ten pounds…maybe five,” he finished with a wry grin.

“Thanks,” she said, giving him a playful shove.
"I’m kidding. You’re just perfect.” *Really, really perfect…dammit.*

He wanted more from this. He was happy to be her friend but the more time they spent together the more he wanted from her.

The fact that he’d not had sex in nearly ten months wasn’t helping. But even if they were dating, he knew he would wait however long she wanted for that.

But, she seemed comfortable keeping whatever they had at just this for now and so he was willing to take that. He was willing to take whatever she was willing to give.

Nan had been right he was certainly learning. She’d had shitty luck with guys.

Joffrey, the stalker asshole, who Jon already hated with a passion sight unseen, had scared her off from dating for a good long while.

When she’d moved to Maryland for college, she hadn’t known anyone and while guys had hit on her and asked her out, she’d been hesitant to get too involved with anyone.

Loras’s sister, Margaery, had been Sansa’s roommate their first two years of college and Jon could tell from what Sansa said that Marg had sort of taken the frightened girl from Pennsylvania under her wing. She’d made Sansa brave enough to date again. Even if none of those guys had turned out to be lasting romances, it was a start.

But then Harry, the plain old asshole, had arrived on the scene. He was the man she’d lost her virginity to at 20 after a couple of months of dating. He had been a grad student, five years older and far more experienced. Sansa had assumed they were exclusive when she’d committed to a sexual relationship with him. He’d then proceeded to cheat on her and make her feel like trash just because he refused to be monogamous. He’d laughed in her face when she’d confronted him for cheating the first time.

She’d stayed with him for nearly a year thinking that maybe she could change him, that the fault must lie with her somehow. But assholes like that don’t change and there was nothing wrong with her to begin with.

The handful of dates she’d been on since then had done nothing to buoy her self-esteem.

It made Jon sick to think that a wonderful, loving and kind-hearted person like Sansa had had such a rough go of romance because she was such a romantic at heart.

After Sansa and Margaery had finished their Education degrees, Loras had called and told the girls that an apartment would soon be available in his building. And that was how Sansa had ended up living there.

“Shall we go?” Sansa asked, drawing Jon back to the present.

“Sure. Come on, Ghost.”

The three of them walked down the sidewalk together till they reached his SUV. Ghost hopped in the back, excited that he was being included in this outing. Jon drove towards the shopping square where the ice skating rink was located at Sansa’s directions.

“So, are we going to watch an episode tonight when we get back?” Sansa asked excitedly.

“If I don’t end up on crutches, we certainly can,” Jon chuckled.
He had introduced her to ‘The X-Files’ last weekend. He’d offered the pilot just to see what she thought of it and they ended up binge watching half of season one on Sunday. It had been one of his mum’s favorite shows and she later introduced him to it when she thought he was old enough to watch it with her. He was happy to share something kind of special to him with Sansa.

He had feared that she might not like it for the more frightening elements but she seemed okay with it compared to TWD…or ‘The Waking Dead’ as she still mistakenly called it much to Jon’s secret amusement. She’d still yelp at the scary parts and cover her eyes occasionally but she clearly enjoyed it.

And he found that he loved the way she immediately shipped Mulder and Scully…right from the first episode. He hadn’t given the pair much thought romantically-speaking as a teenager but Sansa, just like his mother, would sigh at every longing look and squeal at every touch of their hands…and blush at any of Mulder’s double-entendres.

Her romantic heart wanted to believe in true and lasting love every bit as much as Mulder wanted to believe in aliens. He found a ‘I Want to Believe’ t-shirt for her on ebay last night and had ordered it for her as a Christmas present.

Besides watching TV together at the apartment, they were talking and sharing more about themselves. If Sansa was sharing her past relationship woes with Jon, he was certainly talking her ear off about his mother, her illness and her passing. It felt cathartic to have someone to talk to about these things now that he was finally able to talk about it.

That had been a big issue when he was with Ygritte. He’d been hurting but he didn’t know how to talk about it. Ygritte’s attempts at grief counseling were straight out of a fortune cookie and irked him more than anything. And mostly, she did a poor job of hiding her irritation when he was sad and depressed.

“Why are you being such a moody fuck today?” Ygritte had asked harshly last November when she’d come home and found him curled up on the couch next to Ghost with the blinds drawn.

“Today was the day she died,” he’d answered, hurt that she had forgotten after he’d mentioned it a few days earlier.

“Who?” she’d asked carelessly while flipping through the mail on the counter.

Three beats later she’d apologized and come over to console him…after she shoved Ghost roughly to the floor.

He’d cried on Ygritte’s shoulder that afternoon but at that point, he wasn’t certain if he was crying over his dead mother or at the realization that they would never be any good together.

Now, he found himself sharing things with Sansa about his relationship with Ygritte that he never imagined discussing with another soul…except Ghost. He admitted all the ways he felt he’d failed there and all the ways it was doomed from the start. Sansa was as good a listener as Ghost. And, she could actually talk which was a plus…not that he’d say that to Ghost.

The ice skating rink was busy on a Friday night. It was the first Friday night Jon had been off since she’d brought the lasagna the first time she’d brought him food. It was mid-November and while they still had occasional days in the 60s it was cold tonight.

The outdoor rink had just opened for the holiday/winter season. They found a place of Ghost to watch from a nearby tree and had just paid and got out on the ice when a little girl came skating up
“Hi, Miss Stark!” she said, swishing to a stop on her skates right in front of Jon and nearly causing him to go down hard. “I didn’t know you could ice skate, too!”

“Hi, Marianne,” Sansa responded with a friendly wave to the girl’s parents. “Yes, I love ice skating.”

“Is this your boyfriend?” the girl asked giving Jon a once over.

“Um, well…sort of…” Sansa said, looking over at him with a strange little smile. When the child skated away, she looked uncomfortable. “I’m sorry if that was awkward, Jon. I should’ve just said…”

“It’s alright…I wouldn’t have minded if you’d just said ‘yes’ though.” She still looked uncertain and he wanted to have a conversation without all the skaters whizzing past them. He tugged at her hand and asked, “Sansa, can we talk about this?”

She nodded and helped tow him over to the side of the rink. They got off the ice and he clunked awkwardly across the matted flooring to fetch them some hot chocolate while she found them a small table and brought Ghost over to sit next to them. She was tracing her gloved finger along the coffee and cocoa rings that had permanently stained the little table when he returned several minutes later. He sat down the hot cocoa and took off his gloves. She wasn’t looking at him.

“So…what are we doing?”

“We’re ice skating…or we were,” she said still not looking up.

“Sansa…you know what I mean.” She finally looked up and he saw tears in the corners of her eyes. Shit…this is not how I wanted this to go. She took a deep breath and said, “I’m not sure what we’re doing. I like you…you’re my friend. We spend a lot of time together but I’m…”

“No, it’s not like that…and don’t put words in my mouth please.” He symbolically zipped his lips and put the imaginary key in his jacket pocket bringing a smile back to her face at least. “I really care about you, Jon. Maybe I could see this being more in time but for now…is this okay? Is it okay to just be friends for the time being?”

“You don’t have to be sorry and I’m…” he started to say.

She immediately reached over and pretended to zip his lips once more. Her finger was warm through her gloves as it brushed his bottom lip. She then acted out hammering a nail with her hands and gave him a warning look. He kept his mouth closed though he was struggling not to laugh now at the ridiculousness of this little game.
“Let me finish,” she said with a grin. “I suck at relationships…with men, I mean. I don’t want to ruin this before it even gets started. I trust you. I like you…a lot. I enjoy spending time with you. I’m attracted to you…I’m really attracted to you,” she said looking down at the table again and blushing.

He raised his hand in the air for permission to speak and she started laughing. *She’s a teacher. I guess she would find that comical.*

“Yes, Jon?”

He made a show of unzipping his lips before he said, “I really like you. I doubt you suck at relationships. Two assholes don’t mean that you suck at relationships. I love spending time with you and I am incredibly attracted to you. But…I’ve not exactly had a great track record with relationships either so I can wait for you…if and when you feel like you’re ready.”

“Thank you, Jon,” she said with a radiant smile that made his heart swell. “Thanks for understanding. So, can we skate some more?”

He rolled his eyes at her and acted like a man being led to the gallows while she laughed before standing up and escorting her back to the ice.

The day before Thanksgiving, Sansa had stopped by Loras and Renly’s to finalize their meal plans. It had been a half day at school in preparation for the long weekend break.

“I’ll make salad, broccoli casserole, sweet potatoes and corn,” Sansa said.

“Alright then,” Loras said adding those items to his menu. “Nan’s got tea and desserts. We’ve got the turkey, dressing and ham.”

“And mashed potatoes,” Renly added coming over to sit next to Loras on the loveseat.

“How many starchy foods do we need?” Loras asked, poking Renly in the gut.

“And macaroni and cheese.”

“Seriously?”

“Put butter on the list, honey. I like to make my mashed potatoes with lots of butter,” Renly added.

“Should I reserve a room at the hospital for your angioplasty?” Loras snarked.

“I want to use heavy whipping cream to make them, too.”

“Jesus, Renly…”

“Rolls?” Renly asked ignoring Loras’s scoff.

“Margie will bring rolls,” Loras said.
“Store-bought rolls? Please say she's not making them again.”

“She’s getting them from Hobb’s Diner so hopefully they’ll be, um...better,” Loras sniffed.

“Well, we had a pretty good game of kitchen-floor hockey with those ones from last year.”

“My sister tried,” Loras said in defense of Marg.

“Hear, hear,” Sansa agreed.

“Alright, I’ll leave Little Sissie alone. As long as she’s bringing wine, I won’t say a thing,” Renly snickered.

“No wine!” Sansa shouted. Both men glanced up at her and started laughing. “Um...sorry,” she said blushing. “I just meant me. I, uh...don’t want to...”

“Drink too much and jump the doc on our couch during football?” Renly asked.

“Renly!” she squeaked.

“When are you going to hit that, Sansy Pants?” Renly asked next. “You two are always together and he’s pretty fucking hot.” Loras shot him a look. “What? For a straight guy, I meant.”

“Well, you’ll both be sad to know he’s not coming,” Loras said primly while still giving his husband the side eye.

“What?” Sansa asked. “I thought he said he wasn’t working till tomorrow night.”

“He switched his schedule around so he’s working all day tomorrow.” Loras shifted nervously in his seat then and muttered that he thought she might have known why.

“Spill, Tyrell,” Sansa said.

Loras always had the best intel of course. He’d cornered Jon that morning at the mailboxes when he realized he was off...and acting a bit off.

Sansa was a little hurt that he hadn’t told her but that was perhaps understandable considering some of the things he’d shared about Ygritte. And she felt a bit embarrassed that she hadn’t found out the exact day. She knew she’d died in November but she hadn’t thought to ask the day.

None of that mattered right now though. Right now, Jon was what mattered. Her friend was hurting and she couldn’t just ignore that.

It had taken a little coaxing to get him to let her in his apartment. But once he had, he admitted he’d not know how to come out and tell her when they’d been on his couch watching TV last night.

“I’m sorry. I dunno why I didn’t just say,” he shrugged.

“It’s fine...two years today?” she whispered as she pulled him into a hug.

He nodded and then held onto her tightly. She felt him shudder in her arms and she kissed his temple.

Two years ago, his mother had died. He couldn’t travel to Vermont to lay flowers on her grave like he wanted so he asked his friend Sam to do it for him. He’d spent nearly the entire day inside being depressed and feeling like he’d let his mother down somehow by not being able to visit her grave.
Sansa hated seeing him like this. She hated that he was hurting and trying to manage it alone.

“I thought it’d be easier by now,” he murmured into her hair.

“Only time will make it easier. And easier doesn’t mean easy.” Ghost plodded over with his leash in his mouth. He passed Jon and came straight to her, knocking his head into her thigh. “I think Ghost is asking for a walk,” she giggled. Jon smiled softly at his friend. “Want to come with us?”

“No…I mean, you don’t have to do that. I’ll walk him.”

“We can walk him together,” she said. “Come on, Jon, maybe the outdoors will do you a little good.”

He rubbed his hands across his face and said, “Okay.” He slipped on his shoes and Sansa attached Ghost’s leash.

They headed towards the park. It was cold and Sansa gently bumped his shoulder as they walked along before she nudged his hand with her own. He looked down and grasped her hand. His hands were so warm through their gloves.

Ghost happily sniffed every tree and bush along the walking trail. Jon stayed quiet but his spirits seemed to be improving. He held her hand as they walked the mile-long trail.

She suggested stopping for some coffee on the way back and he’d acquiesced. Ghost sat outside waiting while they got their orders but they were soon walking back to the building with coffee to keep their hands warm. Sansa thought she’d rather have his hand again.

She wasn’t sure what she was waiting for here. She cared about him. She loved him as a friend. She wasn’t certain she was in love yet but she knew it was the closest she’d ever been to it in truth.

He asked to come over to her apartment once they returned.

“I’m tired of sitting in my apartment today. Being outside was nice but maybe just a change of place…”

“Of course, Jon.”

They sat on the sofa talking for over an hour about his mother and his memories of her...and about his father and his family back in England that had let Lyanna Snow and her young son drop out of their lives without a word.

Sansa was not distressed or bothered by his tears when they came…and they came. She could tell he didn’t like crying in front of her though so she kept a hand on him and let him cry without speaking any platitudes that she hated hearing when she was sad.

It struck her suddenly that not once had he ever made her uncomfortable when she cried in his presence…that somehow his presence was comforting without making her feel awkward or burdensome.

Once he’d dried his eyes and was obviously seeking a change of topic, Sansa finally felt brave enough to ask him what had been on her mind a couple of weeks now.

“Jon…I’m sorry if today is a bad day to ask this but I was wondering something.”

“Okay.”
“Would you want to spend Christmas with me? In Pennsylvania? And then, if you’d like, I could go to the wedding with you in Vermont.”

“Really?” he asked with an incredulous expression.

“Well…I…” she said, suddenly feeling like a fool for suggesting this at all. “If you don’t want to…”

“No, I do. Sansa, I’d really like that. I was afraid to ask you to go to the wedding with me but I would really love it if you would come. It’d really mean a lot to me to have you there…just as a friend if that’s what you want.”

“I…I’d like that. And would you be opposed to going to my brother’s house with me for Christmas?”

“No, I wouldn’t mind. Well, maybe it makes me a bit nervous to meet your family. I’m supposed to have Christmas Day off but I’m working Christmas Eve. Is that alright?”

“Yes, that’s perfectly fine,” she said feeling lighter by the moment knowing that he would come with her to Robb’s and wanted her to go with him to the wedding.

“I’ll board Ghost and we can…”

“Don’t board Ghost. I mean, if you think he could handle the trip. Can’t we just bring him with us? I’d miss him. I couldn’t stand the thoughts of him alone on Christmas.”

“What about your brother and his wife? I wouldn’t want to impose.”

“I’ll double check with Robb and Janina but I don’t think they’ll mind. I’m sure we could find a place to stay in Vermont that allows pets.”

“Those places don’t usually accept dogs the size of Ghost.”

“Well, I could fudge a bit when I tell them his size,” she said with a grin.

“Okay, I’d like that,” he said before he wrapped her in another warm embrace.
Thanksgiving

JON: It was bad but not as bad as last year. At first it was but then Sansa came over and everything got better after that like I said. Thanks for taking care of the flowers for me btw.

SAM: Of course. I can’t wait to meet Sansa.

JON: She’s looking forward to meeting you and Gilly. You both will love her. So, do you think we’ll be able to find us a place to stay that’ll allow Ghost?

SAM: Don’t worry about that. I’ll find you something and reserve it.

JON: Thanks. We’ll need two rooms.

SAM: Are you sure you’ll need two rooms? ;)

JON: We’re friends. We’re not dating and we’re certainly not sleeping together.

SAM: Have you kissed her?

JON: No.

SAM: :( 

JON: We’re good like this for now, ok?

SAM: Is that what you tell you cock at night?


SAM: lol. OK, I’ll stop. See you in a few weeks.

JON: See you then.

Jon tossed down his phone and tied back his hair before slipping on his shoes. He picked up the key he’d had made and put it on a spare keyring.

“Sansa’s coming over in a bit, Ghost. Be good for her, okay?”

Ghost wagged his tail and nuzzled Jon’s hand.

“Love you, boy. I’ll see you tonight.”

Jon grabbed his keys, phone and jacket and headed out but stood in front of her door for a full two minutes debating.

It’d just been him and his mum growing up. She’d had no family in Vermont when they’d moved there. It was work that had drawn her to Northfield…and a desire to put an ocean between herself and his father. Her parents were gone and the rest of their family was still in England. His mom made friends with neighbors and co-workers but nothing lasting. Not the kind of friends that were like family.

All through his high school and college years when he would fill out paperwork at the beginning of
the year, he’d puzzled over who to list as an additional contact in case of an emergency. He’d often wound up leaving the space blank.

Once his mum was gone, he didn’t even have her to list. Sam had become his ‘emergency contact’ then. He was that friend you felt comfortable listing to maybe come claim you at the hospital if you were in an accident and got amnesia…or at least give your spare key to so your dog wouldn’t starve to death. Somehow, he’d never seen Ygritte as that…even when she’d lived with him. But Sam lived 500 miles away now.

He raised his hand and knocked, jumping when she immediately flung open the door as though she’d been standing there waiting for him.

“Hey!” she said brightly. “I thought it might be time for you and I was about to crack open the door. I’ve got to get the sweet potatoes in the oven,” she called over her shoulder as she headed back to the kitchen.

Jon followed her inside and his stomach started growling from the delicious smells of Sansa’s cooking. She had the Macy’s Day Parade on in the living room but the sound was low. He watched her put the casserole dish in the oven but mostly was busy checking her out.

She had her long hair up in a messy bun and hadn’t put on any make-up yet. She was wearing an enormous Philadelphia Eagles tee which hung down to her thighs. She was wearing leggings but the shirt almost looked like something she might’ve slept in. There was a smear of something orange across one cheek.

In other words, she looked adorably disheveled.

“I really wish I wasn’t going in now,” he said with a grin as he inspected the broccoli casserole she’d obviously just removed and then figured out what the orange smear on her cheek must be. “Save me some of those sweet potatoes, yeah?”

“I’ll do my best for you, Dr. Snow. Renly is a bit of a savage when it comes to sweet potatoes casserole though. It’s practically a dessert considering how much butter and sugar is added; two cups of butter, one cup of regular sugar and a cup of brown sugar.”

“Mmmm, sounds heavenly. Not sure you want to wear it though,” he said softly as he swiped his finger across her cheek.

Sansa’s eyes widened when he touched her. Her lips parted and her skin was soft and warm. Something like desire flashed in her eyes but he could see a bit of tension and unease beneath the surface. She wasn’t ready for more…not yet.

But, she giggled when she saw the sweet potatoes on his finger. Without thinking he popped it into his mouth and sucked off the buttery, sugary mix that was supposedly part vegetable. She laughed but she flushed a lovely pink as well. Jon felt his own cheeks growing hot in response.

Holy fuck…why did I do that?

‘Cause you’d lick her clean anytime and anywhere if she’d let you, another part of him whispered.

“Oh…so, here’s my key!” he said, slamming it down on the counter, ready to bolt.

“Okay, Jon.”

“Ghost has already had a walk and been fed. Thanks for agreeing to hang out with him. I hate
leaving him alone for so long but Stannis mentioned no one leaving during lunch since we’re short
staffed.”

Sansa shook her head and grumbled angrily at that but took the key. “I’ll return it to you later,” she
said.

He turned back around and shoved his hands in his pockets. “No, don’t return it. I’d, uh…I’d kind
of like for you to keep it. You know…in case there was ever an emergency or something. It’d be
nice to think that you were my…well, someone that I could call on if…”

He felt stupid saying it out loud now. Loras had a key of course if there were truly an emergency.
He had just liked the idea of Sansa being his ‘emergency contact’ so to speak.

She seemed to understand him perfectly though and she didn’t give him the pitying smile he
feared. She gave him a genuine smile, looking radiant despite her messy hair and too-big shirt.

“Yes, Jon. Thank you for…well, I’d be happy to keep it. You can always count on me.”

He nodded, grinning like an idiot before he said goodbye and thundered down the steps of the
apartment building.

The biting November winds were refreshing and he hoped they’d help clear his head. As he walked
towards the hospital, he started whistling to himself without realizing it.

Sansa was going to go with him to the wedding. Sansa and Ghost. They were going to visit her
older brother and his wife, too. Jon was nervous about that. He took his pulse out of curiosity.
Sansa always seemed to send his heart racing.

Calm down. It’s one night at their house and then the hotel for two nights for the wedding. You’ll
be good. She’ll be by your side. Ghost will be there. We’re friends…good friends…no matter how
many times you jack off while thinking of her.

Jon groaned as he entered the ambulance bay. It was time for work now. Time to take his mind off
Sansa and the smear of sweet potatoes on her cheek…no matter how sweet.

“And you’re going up there with him?” Nan asked as they were the first ones to sit down at the

“Come on, Nan. I thought he could come with me for Christmas dinner at my brother’s and I could go to the
wedding with him.”

“That’s sweet,” Nan said with a sly smile.

“Spit it out, Nan,” she said though she couldn’t keep a straight face.

“Nothing. You two just seem to spend a lot of time together anymore and now you’re taking a trip
together. It’s very sweet.”

“We’re not dating.”
“Of course not…not yet,” Nan said. “And in my day, we’d have called it courting.”

Sansa groaned and sipped the overly sweet tea that Nan had brought.

Once everyone else joined them, Sansa tried to enjoy her large meal but her eyes kept straying to the empty seat next to her. Ghost sat at her feet. Renly was very particular about their place and not the biggest dog lover but he’d agreed that Ghost could hang out while they ate. Sansa was glad of that. It was kind of like having Jon there in a small way.

She slipped Ghost bits of ham and turkey when no one was noticing. She didn’t think Jon would mind. Ghost’s big, wet tongue and mouth nibbling at her offered treats was much different than the gentle touch of Jon’s warm, dry finger on her cheek but every time she felt it, she was drawn back to the memory of Jon in her kitchen that morning. She stroked Ghost’s soft fur under the table and he laid his head in her lap.

Ghost whined softly.

“I know. I miss him, too,” she whispered when Renly and Loras were arguing over Renly’s third helping of mashed potatoes and Nan’s pumpkin pie.

Ghost’s red eyes looked up at her and he licked his mouth.

She gave him another morsel of turkey. “Big spoiled baby,” she teased as he laid his head back down.

She missed Jon being here with everyone…even more than she would’ve imagined. But, she understood why yesterday had been a difficult day for him and why he’d wanted that day off instead.

After dinner, Sansa and Margaery volunteered to help Loras with the kitchen as Nan and Renly settled down on the couch to watch some football.

“So, tell me about this trip with Dr. Man Bun,” Marg prompted eagerly.

“Oh…well, we’re going to leave Christmas morning. We’ll spend the afternoon at Robb’s. He said Bran and Rickon will be there for dinner. Arya’s elected to drive into New York and spend Christmas with her boyfriend. Then, we’ll hang out the Robb, Janina and the girls that evening, spend the night and from there, we’ll drive to Vermont the next morning for the rehearsal dinner.”

“How big is your brother’s house?” Loras asked just as Marg squealed, “And you’ll be sharing a hotel room in Vermont!?”

“Uh…Robb’s got four bedrooms. But we’ll have separate rooms at the hotel.”

“So, you’ll be sharing at your brother’s place at least!” Marg exclaimed. “Oh, Sansa!”

“Well, there’s always the couch if Jon doesn’t feel comfortable…but it’s not that big a deal to share the room, right?” The Tyrell siblings stood there smirking at her. “It’s not, okay? We’re perfectly capable of sharing a bed without…doing anything in it. Right?” Oh, God…are we?

“Uh huh,” they both said in unison while continuing to smirk.

“Shut up,” Sansa huffed. *Fuck this. I’m tired of being teased about Jon. I’d rather see Jon.* She squared her shoulders and made a decision. “Give me those containers I brought, Loras.”
“Sure. You getting your leftovers already?”

“No, I’m getting these for Jon.”

“I was going to make Dr. Sweet Ass a plate later,” Loras argued.

“Well, I’d like to take him something now. He’s not able to leave for lunch and I hate the thought of him eating dried up cafeteria turkey, okay? Ghost and I can drop it off there for him to eat when he gets his break.”

“That’s very sweet of you, Sansa Stark,” Loras said, not able to hide his Cheshire Cat-like grin.

Marg had an identical grin on her own face. “You want to go to the ER on Thanksgiving and take him food while he’s a work?”

“Yes, I do.” She hesitated. “Is that a bad idea?”

“No…not at all.”

“I’d do the same for the man I love,” Loras added.

“I’m not in love… I don’t think.” Am I? Shit… I think I am.

Marg had pity on her and said, “It’s a very nice thing to do for your friend. Loras and I will lay off. But you do realize he might be busy? Don’t be crushed if he can’t stop to chat.”

“I know.”

“I’ll walk with you if you like.”

“Thanks, Marg. I’d appreciate that. I’ll text him to make sure it’s not a problem.”

Sansa had Ghost on the leash. He was delighted to be outside and going in a different direction than his normal trip to the park. New smells! Sansa could practically imagine him thinking. That and ‘Squirrel!’ as he started tugging her along again. Marg carried the food for her so she could focus on Ghost. He was a very good dog but he could drag a person along handily when he was excited.

He kept looking back at her, panting happily. He loved the cold weather but she suspected he knew where they were headed, too. Marg had agreed to keep him with her outside since he wouldn’t be allowed inside. Sansa hoped that maybe Jon could come out to them for a minute or two but she wasn’t expecting it since he’d not replied to her text. He was likely too busy to visit.

The ER was crowded with the doctors, nurses and other personnel moving to and fro. Sansa craned her neck around trying to spot Jon with no luck. She walked up to the reception area and asked for him and was told that he was with a patient. Sansa started thinking this had been a bad idea.

Why am I always trying to feed him anyway? It’s not like he’s going to go hungry. I could’ve just waited until tomorrow morning to bring him this.

She liked it though. She liked feeling like she could take care of him in a way…just like he took care of her at times. There was a healthy give and take in their friendship. They supported each other. They were friends who loved each other and took care of each other. She loved that. She loved what they had…but every day she knew she was creeping closer to wanting something more.

The doors to the ambulance bay crashed open just then causing Sansa to jump. She heard shouts
and saw several people in scrubs rushing to help the paramedics wheel a gurney in with a crying child on it. There was a mother following them, talking and trying to keep up.

That’s when Sansa spotted Jon running down the hall to help. He was in blue scrubs, his manbun from earlier had come down. He had a stethoscope casually thrown around his neck. She didn’t think she’d ever found him more attractive.

He didn’t see her. He, along with another doctor and a nurse, were questioning the paramedics using a barrage of medical terms while the mother desperately tried to ask questions of her own, finally grabbing his arm to gain his attention. Whatever was wrong with the child, Jon turned towards the woman as the others disappeared into an exam room. She kept hold of his arm but he didn’t seem to mind. He talked to her. Sansa could see his gentle, dark eyes focused on this stranger, this woman who was frightened for her son, and she could imagine how soft and compassionate his deep voice would sound as he spoke. She couldn’t hear him but she knew that look. The same look he’d had when he found her in the midst of her panic attack a few weeks earlier.

The woman seemed to let out a relieved breath before she nodded to him. He asked another nurse to escort her towards the waiting area where Sansa was standing.

Sansa childishly hoped he’d look up and notice her even though he had more important things to do. He didn’t disappoint. He never did. He glanced at her, his eyes widening in surprise. She saw concern forming on his brow and guessed he wondered if she were ill or hurt. She smiled at him to try and convey that she was fine. She raised the plate and winked at him. He gave her a grateful smile. He waved and then jogged back down the hallway to where the gurney and young patient had disappeared.

Sansa asked the attendant at the reception desk if she would put the plate of food in the fridge after she’d taped a note to it.

If you want to hang out when you get home, I’ll be up.

-Sansa

He hated that he hadn’t got to visit with her when she came by. He’d devoured the leftovers when he finally got a break, thankful to enjoy the delicious meal instead of the hospital cafeteria’s version of turkey and dressing.

He’d sent her a text thanking her for bringing it and learned that Ghost and Margaery had come with her and been waiting outside.

JON: Now, I feel even worse.

SANSA: Don’t. You were dealing with more important things. I just wanted to bring you something to eat. I hope you don’t mind.

JON: Not at all. I really love that you did that for me. It was very thoughtful.
SANSA: I missed you today at dinner.

JON: I missed you. I missed being there with you. I’d like to come over tonight but if you get tired and change your mind about having me, I understand.

SANSA: I won’t change my mind.

Once he was off for the night, he grabbed a quick shower at his place and pulled on some sweatpants and a t-shirt. He could’ve thrown on jeans and a nicer shirt but he was home and it was nearly eleven. Okay…technically, it’s her home. He decided to stay as he was though and hoped she wouldn’t mind his extremely casual attire.

She didn’t. She was wearing another large tee, this one a Flyers tee…and nothing else but some thick socks. The tee covered her ass…barely. When she bent down to pick up one of Ghost’s toys off the floor, he caught a glimpse of blue undies. Oh, shit.

He wondered if he was going to make it through this night without saying too much…or without an awkward hard on at the wrong time. He shoved his carnal desires aside though as she started popping popcorn and chatting.

Ghost was sitting by the couch looking extremely drowsy. He thumped his tail when he saw Jon though. Sansa had brought his bed over from his apartment at some point.

“Making yourself at home I see.”

Ghost panted happily.

“Sorry. I’m not trying to steal your dog but I thought he could hang out with us…I wouldn’t mind if he stayed the night though,” she said shyly.

Her hair was down around her shoulders. Her blue eyes held his intently. She was delicately biting at her bottom lip.

“Uh…” Jon started to make a joke and ask if they could all have a sleepover but thought better of it. “He can stay…if you’d like for him to.” I can stay, too…if you’d like for me to. “I’m not sure I can carry his heavy ass back to my place tonight and he’s already passed out.”

Ghost farted loudly just then and Jon’s eyebrows shot up.

“Uhh…sorry about him,” he laughed.

“It’s probably my fault. He might have had more than a little turkey and ham today…and again tonight,” she admitted, ducking her chin.

“Oh? No wonder then. It’s fine,” he added when he saw her concerned look. “He can handle a bit of gorging on Thanksgiving like the rest of us, I’d say.”

“What time do you go in tomorrow?” she asked as he sat down next to her.

“Not till tomorrow night.”

“Oooh…we could go Black Friday shopping,” she said with a grin.

“Well, if you wanted to, we could, I suppose,” he said uneasily. It reminded him that he would need to find something to get her for Christmas. Something better than an X-Files t-shirt.


“We don’t have to,” she said next clearly mistaking his unease for unwillingness.

“No. I wouldn’t mind going with you. I’m not much of a shopper is all. But I always enjoy spending time with you.” **You make everything enjoyable.**

“Great. But for tonight, I thought we could watch some movies together. There’s a holiday movie marathon playing if you don’t mind that. And I nabbed more leftovers from Loras in case you were still hungry for something other than popcorn.”

“Excellent. It’s still technically Thanksgiving so I need to do some more gorging,” he said solemnly, making her laugh.

As he sat next to her eating, they talked about their day. Jon found out that Renly and Nan had made a bet on the outcome of the Cowboys/Lions game and Nan had won. Then, he learned that Marg had indulged in too much wine after they’d returned from the hospital and sang karaoke until Loras had finally driven her home to bring peace and quiet back to the building. Ghost had met Nan’s cat and thankfully not made a snack of Kit Kat.

“Oh, he’s the best boy!” Sansa said in Ghost’s defense when Jon expressed his surprise that he’d been nice to the feline.

Sansa asked about the child that had come in. It took him a minute to figure out which child he’d been treating then but he didn’t say that to her. He told her he’d fallen out of his backyard tree fort while playing with his cousins and lost consciousness. He’d also broken his arm but he reassured Sansa, much as he had the distressed mother, that he would heal up just fine.

They started discussing the trip. It was still a month away but Jon couldn’t help but feel a building excitement about it now.

“So, I guess we need to reserve our hotel,” Sansa said uncertainly at one point.

“Oh, yeah. I talked to Sam this morning. He offered to handle it for us.”

“Oh…great. And he’ll get us…um, two rooms, I suppose.”

“Sure.”

“Not that it would matter to me if…”

“I’m sure Sam will manage it. And I suppose at your brother’s place I can sleep on the couch.”

“They’ve got a spare bedroom. We can share it.”

“And it’s got a…bed,” he said feeling flustered and too warm now. **Of course, it’s got a bed…idiot.**

She snickered. “Well, most bedrooms do.” He smiled at her. “I figured we could share it…if that’s okay. It’s just the one night. It’s no different than when we fall asleep watching TV on the couch, is it?”

“Right,” he agreed, not certain if his heart rate’s increase was more from the idea of sharing a bed with Sansa at her brother’s house even if they weren’t doing anything or the idea of sharing a bed with Sansa at her brother’s house and possibly doing something.

“We’ll have Ghost with us. He can be our chaperone,” Sansa said jokingly.

“Uh…yeah,” Jon said as he eyed his sleeping friend. “Ghost will be with us.” **Ghost might need**
some turkey and ham. It’ll be Christmas after all.

‘Elf’ was showing as he put away the containers from the food and he settled back on the couch. Sansa had poured herself a glass of wine and brought him a beer.

She snuggled up against him as she often did now when they watched TV together. It seemed like there was something more intimate about it tonight though. But more comfortable, too.

Well, not completely comfortable, Jon thought as he felt his cock twitch with interest as she nestled down and laid her head against his chest.

He put his arm around her and smelled her shampoo. She felt so right next to him. She made him feel whole and happy and holding her like this was bliss. She was his friend but he liked thinking that maybe she’d be his girlfriend in time. He was falling in love with her. Honestly, he was already in love with her. He hoped that maybe she might feel the same way about him in time.

It only took one glass of wine before her head drooped and she started snoozing. He caressed her back lovingly once she was asleep. He held her close and kissed the top of her head, hoping she wouldn’t be upset if she woke up and realized what he was doing.

Ghost lifted his sleepy head and cocked his head to the side. He gave a little whimper.

“Yeah, I missed you today, too…big baby.” But I missed her more.

He yawned and pulled his feet up on the couch next to him, settling Sansa careful against him again once he was settled. He stroked her hair and listened to her breathing in and out. He was asleep too before Buddy the Elf even got to kiss Jovie.
December brought colder weather but it wasn’t as cold as Vermont would likely be. Sam had told him it’d snowed a foot the day after Thanksgiving. Maryland was still balmy by comparison and the only precipitation Jon had seen was rain. He fretted over travel conditions for their trip…that is when there was time to fret at all.

He’d been covered over at the hospital of late but managed to avoid Round Two of the Intestinal Virus from Hell and the flu. Unfortunately, many of Miss Stark’s Second Grade Superstars did not and Sansa and Margaery both succumbed to the flu. The school district was forced to close for a few days due to the rampant illness and the number of students and teachers that were out sick.

When he caught wind of her illness (thanks to Loras), he immediately rushed to her door to take care of her. That’s what she’d done for him when he was sick and he wanted to do the same for her. They were friends, good friends who lived next door to each other. He was supposed to take care of his friend when she was sick, right?

Sansa, however, didn’t see it like that.

“You can’t come in! I’m disgusting!” she shouted hysterically through the door. Well, it was more of a croak.

“Sansa…I’m a doctor,” he argued. His hands were braced against the door. His right index finger started tracing a pattern on the wood…a heart. “I promise you won’t disgust me, sweet girl.”

“No! I’m all sniffly and snotty and…wait…did you just call me sweet girl?”

Jon’s cheeks grew hot and Ghost looked up at him.

Did I just do that?

His dog nodded his head at him as if to say, “Yep, you sure did.”

Jon heard the chain on her door rattle and he felt a childish urge to bolt before she could see him. But he stood right there. When the door opened a crack, her lovely blue eyes looked out at him. They were glassy and a bit bloodshot. Her hair was pulled back in a ponytail.

“Did you just call me sweet girl?” she asked again with a soft smile.

Her voice was scratchy and deeper than normal. Jon thought it sounded sexy as hell even though he probably shouldn’t. It was kind of raw and his mind flitted to the gutter for a moment wondering what she might sound like as she writhed beneath him while he had her screaming his name.

Ghost looked up at him again and growled softly.
Yeah, I know. Down, boy! Right?

“I did,” he sighed. “Was that bad?”

“No, I liked it.” Half a smile appeared on her lips. She was in old sweatpants and a blue t-shirt. She was pale and wane looking but still beautiful to his eyes. “I just...my dad used to call me something like that.” Her cheeks turned the slightest pink and she said, “Never mind.”

He was halfway in the door now. She wasn’t going to get away from him completely yet. Jon laid a hand to her brow. “You seem feverish. Have you taken your temperature?”

“I have and I am. Therefore, I should be considered contagious and you should step back,” she said firmly though she smiled at him.

“That didn’t stop you from taking care of me. I’m sorry that I don’t have magical lips to take your temperature the way you can,” he grinned, remembering her kissing his forehead and making the immediate guesstimate that he was running a fever around 101. She’d been right.

“Oh, I’ll bet those lips are plenty magical in their own way,” Sansa smirked...before she turned red as a beet. “Holy shit...I’m...” She was adorable as she covered her face. “That sounded so dirty,” she whispered in mortification.

Yes, it did and now I’m picturing all kinds of dirty ways to use my ‘magical’ lips on you. Fuck me.

Ghost barked in annoyance.

Oh, for fuck sake, buddy. You had to know I’d go there when she said that.

Jon couldn’t help the cheeky grin that spread across his face but he quickly tried to hide it. To save her any further embarrassment, he asked, “Can I get you something from the store at least? Ghost and I were on our way out for a walk when Loras told me you were sick.”

She tilted her head to the side and looked at him as if she was deciding something. “I could use some sports drinks or something like that. Something to stay hydrated with that has a fruity taste would be nice. I’m tired of tea.”

“Sure thing. Flavor?”

“Lemon lime.”

“You got it. We’ll be back in thirty. If you don’t feel like coming to the door, I’ll just leave them outside, okay?”

“Okay. Thanks, Jon.”

“No problem.”

Sansa didn’t answer the door upon their return so he left the Gatorade in the hall by her door and headed to his place.

Ghost flopped down on his bed and Jon pulled out the can of chicken noodle soup he’d bought. It was one of the fancier, more expensive brands. Surely, that meant it’d be good.

“I’ll text her and say I’m bringing her a thermos of soup. Think that’ll be okay, Ghost?”
Ghost ruffed out an agreement and started chewing on his tennis ball.

Jon tapped out his text and then heated the soup on the stove. He stirred it and then opened the box of lemon cookies he’d bought in the bakery section. He sniffed the cookies. They smelled delicious. He’d noticed her preference for citrusy things so he hoped these might be welcome. He took a sniff of the soup next.

“It doesn’t smell all that great but maybe it’ll be okay.”

Ghost panted and rolled to his back.

“Yeah, yeah…you’ll get your belly rub in a minute,” Jon said. He tried some of the soup once it was hot. “Bleh! It tastes awful.”

Ghost came over to see for himself.

“Trust me, buddy. It’s not good.”

He left Ghost sniff the soup. His dog turned his nose up and started to return to his bed just as there was a knock at the door. Jon prayed it wasn’t Sansa coming to get the promised soup.

I can’t serve her this crap. I mean, she knows I’m not much of a cook but this is completely unacceptable.

To his surprise, it was Nan at the door…holding a large pot with two oven mitts.

“Hot stuff coming through, doc,” she said as she shuffled past him and set the pot on top of the stove with a grunt.

Ghost wagged his tail and followed Nan to the counter. He waited for her hand to drop down to give him a pet and then licked it daintily before heading back to lay down.

“Hey, Nan. What’s that?”

“Homemade chicken noodle soup for my girl,” Nan said brightly before she glanced at the empty soup can Jon had left on the counter to be recycled. She gave the canned soup on the stove eye a disdainful glance. She took a sniff. “Oh, dear,” she tutted and shook her head. “This won’t do at all.” She saw the box of cookies on the counter and took a bite of one. “Well, these aren’t so bad. And she does love lemon treats.” She grinned at him and said, “You must have it bad, boy.”

“Uh…why are you bringing homemade chicken noodle soup to me if Sansa’s the one that’s sick? And how exactly do I have it bad?”

Nan crossed the distance between them and took one of his hands in both of hers. “You’re in love with my girl.” Jon started to deny it but she said, “Don’t lie to Old Nan now. I know a man in love when I see one. Loras said you literally sprinted up the stairs two at a time when he told you she was sick. And, any man that tries to fix a lady chicken noodle soup when he’s obviously no chef must be in love. I was making this anyway because I like it when it’s cold out. But I brought it here because I figured you’d be taking care of her…and I got no answer at her place when I knocked.”

“Oh…well…” What do I say? Do I admit how I feel to Nan? Hell, she knows anyway. “Nan, what if…hypothetically speaking, I am in love with Sansa? It doesn’t necessarily mean she’ll ever be in love with me, right?” She had been smirking at him but her eyes went soft and she gave him a sympathetic look. He rubbed at the back of his neck and looked down at the floor. “It’d be kind of embarrassing to say anything and her not feel the same and then us live next door to each other
and...well, I don’t want to blow our friendship. She’s the best thing that’s happened to me in a long time.”

It was his biggest fear, that she’d never see him as anything but a friend and he’d ruin that if he pushed.

Nan wasn’t but about 5 feet tall. Maybe she’d been taller once upon a time but she was old and hunched now. He towered over her…and Jon didn’t really tower over anyone most of the time. But, he felt like a little kid again when she reached up and patted his cheek in such a grandmotherly way. He wanted her to tell him that Sansa loved him too and everything would work out beautifully…and then maybe she’d bake him homemade cookies.

“I can’t promise you anything, Jon. But I think she cares about you very deeply. She'd never want to hurt you. You’ve been giving her space to work through some things, stuff those shits did to hurt her self-esteem and her trust. But, you’re good to her…and I promise she’s attracted to you.”

He knew that. Sansa had said it herself. But attraction was not love...just like sex wasn’t love. He’d learned that from Ygritte well enough.

“But you’re more than two good looking people who are attracted to each other. You both have loving hearts and pure souls. Rejoice in your friendship but don’t be afraid of expressing your feelings when the time feels right. Eventually, one of you will have to make a move if you’re ever going to work towards something more. And if you two aren’t meant to fall in love and make gorgeous babies together someday then that will be a shame...but at least you’ll know you tried.”

She smiled and patted his cheek again and he smiled back, wondering when his neighbors had become his family. He’d never had neighbors like any of them. He was glad to have them now.

“Thank you, Nan.”

His phone dinged with a text from Sansa.

SANSA: I took a nap. Sorry I missed you but thank you for the Gatorade. If you don’t mind, I’d like that soup.

JON: I’ll be right over.

Jon watched her sip the last of the broth from the bowl. She sat on the couch and the lights were dim. How does she make sipping soup look beautiful? She’d already laid down her spoon. She glanced his way and gave him a smile, one of the ones that melted him in an instant.

“This is good soup,” she said.

“Yeah...well, Nan’s a good cook...like you.” She grinned at that and he said, “I, uh...bought a can of soup for you but Nan saved you from that disaster. Hers is a hundred times better.”

“You bought a can of soup...for me?” she asked.

Something about the way she looked at him then, like he’d done something special when it wasn’t really all that special, filled his heart with quiet hope.

“I would do so much more than that...for you, Sansa,” he swore.
Her eyes looked glassy again but more like with tears than fever now. He thought about kissing her then, thinking her lips were probably as soft as they looked. But then she started coughing and hacking and he remembered she was sick and he was supposed to be taking care of her.

So, he awkwardly cleared his throat and took the bowl from her to put in the dishwasher. He refilled her Gatorade and brought her some Tylenol. She sipped her drink but then started shivering. She gave a pitiable moan and pulled a blanket over her shoulders.

“Are you chilled now?” he asked. She nodded and shivered again. “I could hold you,” he offered, hoping she wouldn’t take it the wrong way.

She nodded again. He leaned into the corner of the couch and she leaned back into him. He wrapped his arms around her and helped her adjust the blanket over them both.

“Comfy?” he asked.

“Yes,” she sighed softly.

She fell asleep once she stopped shivering. He could’ve carried her to bed soon after and went home. But he sat there holding her...something that was becoming more and more familiar to him. He liked to think she enjoyed him holding her as much as he enjoyed it.

And tonight, as he held her and listened to her congested breathing even out, he whispered three little words into her hair.

“I love you.”

It didn’t matter that she didn’t hear. It didn’t matter that he didn’t hear her say them back. He needed to say it. It needed to come out. And maybe someday soon he’d say them out loud when she was awake. Someday, he might ever hear her say them back.

But for tonight, this was enough.

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Sansa woke early the next morning still cuddled in Jon’s arms. Her fever had broken at last and she sighed with relief before shifting a bit.

*Poor man. He can’t be comfortable,* she thought as she saw how his neck was crooked awkwardly to the side.

*I trust you.*

He might not ever understand what it meant to her, to know that she could lay in his arms without fear. She loved him for it.

*As a friend, right? Or more perhaps?*

“More,” she whispered.

It was then that she became aware of something hard poking her in the back. She thought it was his
belt buckle at first but then remembered he was swearing sweat pants.

*Oh! Hello there…*

She smothered the girlish desire to giggle and started to ease herself off him. But she hesitated. She didn’t feel uncomfortable with this development, she was just curious about it. Maybe he was just hard because it was morning and he was a man. Maybe it was because his body realized there was a woman lying against him and it wouldn’t really matter who the woman was. But she really wanted to believe it was because it was *her* in his arms.

Sansa stared at his sleeping face. He was handsome of course but he looked so sweet and peaceful as he slept. It made her heart pound a little harder and clench almost painfully. She lightly stroked his bearded cheek and her hand moved from his face down his chest. She could feel his slow, steady heartbeat. *Thump, thump…thump, thump.*

She laid her ear against it and listened some more. Something about lying in Jon’s arms early in the morning and listening to his heartbeat stirred those feelings that had been creeping up on her. Those feelings that wanted to move from friendship to something more. And sexual desire was roused as well. She’d not had sex in so long but then there hadn’t been a man in her life that she’d wanted in a long time until she’d met Jon.

Her hand strayed from his chest across his abs. She wondered what he looked like without his shirt on. The temptation to move a little further downward, to touch him ‘down there’ was strong. But, she wouldn’t. She wouldn’t touch him intimately while he slept without his permission when she’d been the one to ask that they remain as friends for now. It was one thing to touch his cheek or listen to his heart…those things were intimate and loving in a way but innocent enough. Still…the temptation was strong.

He mumbled in his sleep and started to move. She quickly moved her hands away from his stomach. She rose and went to the kitchen to start some coffee. She was breathing heavily and flushed but didn’t think her illness was to blame.

“Sansa?” he called sleepily from the couch.

His voice was like gravel and a primal sort of ache shot through Sansa at the sound of it. She rubbed her legs together and tried to keep her tone light.

“Making coffee,” she said from the kitchen.

She peeked out and saw his face. His eyes were wide and his hand darted down to his lap for half a second, likely hoping to relieve the ache that she shared and probably fearing that she would discover his aroused state. His sweatpants wouldn’t hide it very well.

“Uh…I’m gonna…check on Ghost. I’ll see you later,” he said, rising swiftly without turning her way. He was already to the door before she could stop him.

“Okay,” she said, already feeling bereft at the thought of his absence.

It was best to let him go just now. This morning wasn’t the time just yet. But, she wanted him. She wanted Jon. And not just because he was an attractive man who had slept with her on the couch. She wanted him because she loved him.

*Oh, Sansa…what are we going to do on this trip? He’s interested in more but you told him you need time. Has it been enough time? Am I ready?*
She wasn’t sure…but she hoped that maybe she was.

Chapter End Notes

So, I have a thing for them taking care of each other even when there's nothing truly romantic happening between them yet. Next chapter will bring them to Christmas Eve and possibly the start of their road trip.

Thanks for reading!
Twelve days till Christmas and the flurries whipped and swirled outside their garland-bedecked living room window into the yellowing grass of the small patch of lawn that stood between their brownstone and the next.

“Magical,” Loras whispered wistfully to himself. “I hope it snows six inches.”

“Six inches, huh?” Renly said coming up behind him for a hug and his morning coffee. “You’re so adorable.”

“What?”

“You look like an enchanted child whenever we get the tiniest little fart of a flurry. It’s quite endearing,” he said.

“I just like snow,” Loras huffed.

“I know you do, honey,” Renly replied before leaning in for a kiss. He tilted his head slightly to deepen the kiss when a knock at the door interrupted their domestic bliss. “Are we expecting someone?” Renly asked, only slightly annoyed.

“Yes,” Loras said eagerly. “Hold all dirty thoughts till later. We’ve got plotting to do.”

“Plotting?” Renly asked walking over to answer the door. “I’m not much at plotting. You’ll need your sister here for any Tyrell schemes and plots.”

“That’s precisely why he called me,” Marg snarked as she strolled through the door.
She gave Renly a quick peck on the cheek and then strode across the room to where Loras waited for his hug. Nan was right behind her.

“Hey, Nanny Love,” Loras said. “Are we all clear?”

“What’s going on?” Renly asked.

“Yes,” Nan replied. “I just saw them heading out to walk Ghost. We’ve got thirty minutes at least despite the cold.”

“Excellent!” Loras said rubbing his hands together and mimicking Mr. Burns from ‘The Simpsons.’ “So, my little elves…Christmas is not too far away. Now, I know in the past I’ve been a bit more focused on me and my wants…” Renly gave a faux gasp and Loras flipped him off. “But…this year, I’m being altruistic for a change.”

“Is that why there’s a shitload of floral boxes and craft supplies here? You said we’d be making ornaments tomorrow for the…”

“And what I want,” Loras said loudly over Renly’s interruption, “is for Sansa and Jon to admit their feelings for each other and stop tap-dancing around when it’s clear to everyone they are perfect together.” Renly opened his mouth only to be silenced by Loras again. “And orgasms. I want them both to have lots and lots of orgasms together. Loud, freaky, horny sex like animals really because the doc seems hard pressed and poor Sansa’s just…”

“There’s been a definite drought,” Marg interjected with a thoughtful look.

Renly scoffed and looked at the collected band of plotters in his apartment.

“And how are we supposed to bring this completely altruistic wish of yours about?”

“Operation Mistletoe, my darling husband.”

The ladies smiled and nodded in agreement and Renly just covered his face. He really hoped Loras and his little elves didn’t wind up embarrassing the doc or Sansa. Sure, they were clearly heading towards something more in their relationship but Renly doubted they needed Loras’s help to get there.

However, Loras had that same childlike delight all over his face, just like he got over snow falling so he simply said, “Alright. Tell me about Operation Mistletoe.”

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_A blustery Saturday morning in the park taking the dog for a walk...just like any couple._

Sansa smiled secretly to herself at the thought. The wind whipped the loose tendrils of her hair around that had escaped her braid and the flurries flew in their faces. Sansa adjusted her stocking cap a bit and looked over to where Jon was lacking any sort of hat at all. His curls were blowing freely and dotted with little bits of ice.

_It’s too cold for no hat_, she thought as she tried to rub some feeling back into her hands._At least someone doesn’t mind it._
She grinned at Ghost strolling ahead of them both. He kept snapping at the snow as though it was a tasty treat. Sansa wondered if the Malamute would blend into the scenery completely once they got a decent snow. Probably... except those red eyes.

“He likes the snow, doesn’t he?” she giggled as Ghost nearly did a backflip in his eagerness to catch every single flake.

“He loves it. I knew he’d miss Vermont’s snows when we moved down here... but it’s not like it never snows here.”

“Yeah, we get some at least. And how about you? Do you like the snow, Dr. Snow?” she teased.

His eyes crinkled at the corners as his lips curled into a wide smile that lit up his whole face, her very favorite of his smiles.

Maybe. I like that sweet, uncertain smile he gives me sometimes with wide eyes and no teeth. And that sexy little smirk he gets when he’s...

“Sansa?”

“Oh... I’m sorry. I wasn’t paying attention.” Focus, Sansa... God.

“I just agreed that I like snow and then asked if you wanted to head back now. It’s pretty cold out here.”

“Sure thing,” she said as she subconsciously rubbed her frozen hands together.

Jon looped Ghost’s leash into the crook of one arm and took her hands in his. He rubbed his gloved hands rapidly over her own creating enough friction to bring some feeling back into her fingertips.

“You need better gloves,” he said.

They were very thin. They matched her stocking cap which was why she’d chosen them but they really weren’t good enough for winter weather.

“Maybe Santa will bring me a new pair,” she said looking up from where his hands were still covering hers and into his eyes that were staring at her... lips?

“Yeah,” he said. “I’m sure a good girl like you will get everything you want.”

It came out soft... like a caress. She glanced at his lips now. Full and still curled into half a smile, slightly chapped from the cold winds. What would it be like to kiss those lips?

Oh, Sansa... I’m pretty sure you could find out if you want.

“Ghost!” Jon shouted just then as the leash slid from the crook of his arm and he unclasped her hands. She missed the warmth at once.

The Malamute had spotted a squirrel and it was off to the races for them all. Once they caught Ghost, who was suitably repentant for his escapade, they faced each other once more sharing an easy laugh over his dog’s antics.

“I’m ready to go home. I think Ghost has got his exercise now.”

“Yeah, I’d say so,” he said as he gave Ghost another scowl. “Us, too.”
Ghost whined and his tail drooped.

“Oh, don’t be too hard on him. That squirrel was asking for it.” Jon chuckled and when he looked up at her she saw it. “Wait…you’ve got a…” She gestured towards his face. Jon frowned, uncertain what was the matter. “It’s just a snowflake,” she said.

She removed her glove and barely brushed the lashes of his right eye dislodging the flake that had settled there. How could any man be blessed with such lovely lashes with no effort required on his part? And he probably could care less about such things. One of life’s bitter ironies.

Jon blinked several times and sucked in a deep breath.

“I didn’t get your eye, did I?” she asked, afraid she might’ve done just that.

“No,” he said, barely audible now. “Um…let’s go.”

They strolled along the sidewalk with Ghost still in the lead. The flurries were dwindling now. Perhaps they’ll return next week. Perhaps we’ll get a white Christmas.

Their shoulders bumped against each other as they walked. It was such a habit now. It was kind of like their thing, the shoulder bumping as they walked side by side, a comfortable intimacy…though there was certainly a heat and tension lying beneath the surface.

A year ago, would you have felt this safe with Jon? I don’t know. Jon is Jon. He’d never hurt you but would you have been ready then?

Sansa reflected on the fear that had gripped her back then, that gripped her still in a way.

The few months that they’d dated Joffrey had kissed her and managed to feel her up a few times. They were just high school kids though and aside from a few handsy fumblings under the bleachers at games or in his backseat a couple of times, they hadn’t managed to go all the way before his true colors started to show.

Thank God for that.

But after he’d killed Lady and grown bold enough to start stalking her…she imagined she could still feel his hands on her body at times. She shivered at the memory. That was when the panic attacks had begun. When she could feel his eyes on her even when she couldn’t see him, even if he wasn’t there at all. When she could practically smell his wintergreen gum on his breath and hear the filthy words he growled in her ear even when he wasn’t there or calling her on the phone.

“Sansa?” She jumped at his touch and he took a step back. They were already standing on the front porch of the building. She hadn’t even realized they’d made it that far. “I lost you again,” he said gently. “Are you alright?”

She started to say ‘yes.’ She wanted to brush it off and be cool. But this was Jon.

She shook her head and instead said, “‘Hold me please.”

He spread his arms wide and let her lean into him as Ghost started circling them. He came to stop and sat heavily on Sansa’s foot with his warm, furry body pressed against her leg.

Jon didn’t ask questions. He stood there holding her, the warmth of his arms and chest surrounding her. Sansa sighed deeply and was amazed to feel so safe in the arms of a man.
Harry had never made her feel safe. He’d never made her feel much beyond even more insecure once they’d started sleeping together. What she wore, how she did her hair, how much she ate, the things she said…everything was open to scrutiny and often followed by belittlement.

And when he slept around, he’d always managed to twist it. It was always her fault somehow. She’d put up with it for far too long because she thought maybe she could change him, be worthy of Harry’s love. And she’d started to fear that maybe the Harrys of the world were the best she could ever hope to have. Anything was better than Joffrey. It had to be.

But one night, Joffrey had called late when she was alone and Harry was God knows where, between some other girl’s legs more than likely. She knew it was him. He didn’t have to say a word. The number he called from was always different. She knew it was him all the same. And that night, he actually spoke.

“He doesn’t love you,” he’d said in that mocking tone that might’ve made her angry, except instead it made her quake with fear. “It’s why he fucks those other girls. How could anyone love you the way I do?”

She squeezed her eyes shut tight and buried her face in Jon’s neck, breathing in the soft piney fragrance of his cologne and the pleasant musk that was just him. That smell…it calmed her. It was the scent of Jon and safety. When had those two things become so irrevocably linked?

Ghost whimpered at her feet and she looked down at him. He stared at her with pleading red eyes.

“I’m alright now,” she said to the man and the dog both.

Jon’s eyes were kind and loving as he gazed at her…her eyes this time. Her own flitted away uncomfortably though. She felt safe with him but she felt vulnerable too and needed a moment to regain some composure.

She spotted something new hanging above them both. Mistletoe. Hanging from the porch ceiling at the top of the steps. Loras.

She smiled and pointed up. Jon looked up, perplexed at first.

“Oh!” he exclaimed when he realized what it was.

“Oh,” Sansa said with a smirk in return.

Jon was considering his options. She could just tell. Sansa didn’t want to consider. She leaned in, thinking to kiss his cheek but darted towards his mouth at the last second. Quick and dry. A peck on his lips. A friend’s kiss. It sent a jolt of longing through her all the same.

His cheeks were already tinged pink with the cold but they flushed a brighter hue and Sansa felt hers heat in response.

“Sansa…I…”

“Come on. Let’s go inside and warm up,” she said breezily as though a peck on the lips was nothing.

It was nothing…and it wasn’t. But, she didn’t want to talk it to death right now. She hoped he could understand that.

He nodded. He always seemed to understand.
They extracted Ghost from where he’d managed to tangle them up with his leash again and walked into the building. They took off their coats by the entryway and Jon unleashed Ghost. Sansa gasped softly when she noticed the interior of their building causing Jon to look, too. Their eyes both widened in unison before they burst out laughing.

The building had already been converted into a Winter Wonderland by Loras a couple of weeks earlier. The interior of the building was quite lovely and tasteful with holly wreaths and garland and strands of sparkling lights.

And the outside…well, Renly had said Clark Griswold came to mind when Loras had given them all the grand unveiling a couple of weeks earlier.

“It’s crap-tacular, honey,” Renly had said of the thousands of lights blinking at them all, the blow-up Santa and cheap, plastic reindeers. But they could all tell he loved it as much as Loras.

But now…something new had been added to the twinkling lights and holly that covered the bannister along the stairwell and hung along the hallway.

It was everywhere…Mistletoe. Dozens of bunches all tied with red, velvet ribbon hung from the ceiling, above the mailboxes, along the stairs and over the entrance to Loras and Renly’s place and Nan’s as well.

“They’ve certainly been busy while we were out,” Jon said.

“Yeah…very busy,” she concurred with a knowing smirk.

“Unnn…Sansa…” he moaned as the tingling tightness in his balls reached their highest pitch, bordering on unbearable.

His cock was throbbing and he imagined it was her slick walls grasping him tightly now instead of a soapy hand. He wondered how perfect her tits would look bouncing with every thrust. Pretty fucking perfect.

“Fuck…” he grunted a moment later as he came.

His hand stilled its movement and he sagged heavily against the shower wall. The hot water beat down on his back as he caught his breath. He turned towards the spray to wash himself clean, feeling somewhat relieved and slightly light-headed.

Ghost barked loudly from the other side of the curtain. Jon had closed the door before he’d started the shower but unless he locked it Ghost could get in.

“Seriously, Ghost?! Can you not give me a few minutes of privacy for this?!!”

Ghost snorted at him.

“What is it then?” he asked as he shut the water off and peered out into the foggy space.

Ghost barked again and jerked his head towards the doorway.
Then, Jon heard it. Someone was knocking on his front door.

“Coming!” he shouted towards the door. Well, I was.

Ghost paddled out the door as though he meant to let their visitor in himself.

“Hang on, Ghost!”

Jon grabbed his glasses off the counter and squinted at the clock in the bedroom as he threw a towel around his hips. His hair was still dripping wet but he figured it must be Sansa and it must be important for her to be calling on him before work on a Monday morning.

He was correct; however, when he threw open the door, he started rethinking his decision to not at least throw on some pants first.

“Hey!” she shouted in surprise at the sight of nearly naked Jon in front of her.

Holy shit…just answer the door with your cock in your hand next time, freak.

Her eyes were pinging around like a pinball as they moved up and down his body. Jon moved back to shield himself with the door a bit.

“Um…I was…” she trailed off and her head tilted sideways.

She’s trying to see me…in just my towel. Would you like to see more? Because I would totally drop this towel for you.

“Sorry,” he said in a bashful tone…while not feeling all that bashful in truth.

She hummed to herself and smiled awkwardly. “No, you’re fine. You’re great…you’re, um… very…” She blushed prettily and ducked her head. “Sorry. My car won’t start. Loras said he’d take a look at it later but I wanted some wheels this afternoon. I usually walk to work but I wanted to go Christmas shopping after work and I was wondering if…”

“You can borrow mine,” he said at once.

“You sure you don’t mind?”

“Of course not.”

“Thanks.”

“I’ll get you the keys,” he said.

As he turned, his elbow knocked painfully into the door. He winched and his hand loosened its grip on the towel just enough for one end to fall to the ground. He quickly snatched it back up but not before anyone standing behind him would’ve got an eyeful of his ass.

Holy fucking shit.

He darted a glance over his shoulder but she’d already studiously averted her eyes to stare at the mistletoe over his entrance. Mistletoe. Loras had put that shit everywhere.

“It’s just festive!” he’d claimed when Jon cornered him on Sunday before he stopped by Nan’s.

“Festive? Come on! I see you, Loras. I see what you’re doing.”
“Are you telling me you don’t want to kiss Sansa, Jon Snow? Because if so I’ll take every last bit of that shit down and eat it in front of you.”

Jon had rubbed his hands over his face and muttered, “Of course, I want to kiss her. You know that. Nan knows that. Ghost knows that. I think Sansa even knows that.”

“Well?”

“She kissed me when we came back from our walk yesterday.” Loras had clapped giddily and started bouncing on his heels at that. “It was just a peck.”

“Cheek or lips?”

“Lips.”

“Ah ha! Peck on the lips…then pecks elsewhere soon enough.”

“Loras…”

“What are you getting your friend for Christmas?”

“Um…I’m still, uh…thinking about that.”

“Oh, my God!” Loras had cried and punched his shoulder…hard. “Christmas is in eleven days. Are you telling me you’ve not got her anything yet?”

“I got her a t-shirt,” Jon had huffed defensively.

“A t-shirt?” Loras had pouted. “Does it say ‘His Queen’ on it?”

“No!” Jon had laughed in a slightly nervous way.

“Alright,” he’d said throwing up his hands. “I swear you straight men are a piece of work sometimes. Come on. Get your sweet ass in here. Margie’s here and we need to talk gift buying strategy before Sansa joins us.”

Thus, a 30-minute discussion had ensued and Jon had left Loras’s feeling more uncertain than ever about what to get Sansa. Not that their ideas were bad…they just had so many.

But then, he’d headed to Nan’s. He’d plastered on a smile for his friend but she wasn’t fooled for an instant.

She’d taken one look at him and said, “I made cookies. Come on in and tell me all about it.”

Drawn back to the present, Jon handed Sansa his keys and they made plans to get together after he got off work later that night.

He leaned against the doorframe now, no longer thinking about his state of undress until he realized that Sansa’s eyes were wandering again. Eye fucking was a better term.

“So…I’ll see you later,” he said with a slightly sensual smirk. At least, he hoped it came off that way. I may just look like an idiot.

“Yeah…later,” she said breathily. “I’ll see more of you…later.”

Jon closed the door and checked the clock. Time enough.
“Ghost…I’m going to need a few more minutes in the shower. You stay here.”

Ghost whined and covered his eyes with his paws as the waters started running again.

“Ohhh…Jon…it’s so…good…” Sansa cried over the sound of running water and the buzzing of her battery-operated friend.

She pictured his perfect ass in her mind’s eye as she teased her clit some more before sliding the vibrator back downward. She imagined that ass pumping up and down as he fucked her slow and sweet. Then, she thought of the little droplets of water than had been dripping from his curls and running down his sculpted torso. She thought how nice it would be to chase those droplets down with her tongue and lap them all up.

“Unnn…fuck, Jon.”

She laid back in the tub a few moments later, flushed and panting from her climax. She smiled and could hear Ghost barking loudly on the other side of the wall.

Hope he’s okay. Jon’s not due back for a bit.

Whatever was wrong, he soon grew quiet again and Sansa lazily circled her areolas with her fingertips. Her clit was still swollen and tender from the rush of blood her release had brought along with hot water. The release was good but it left her wanting more…and with Jon instead of the vibrator and her imagination.

She drained the tub soon after and threw on her silky robe she preferred after a hot bath. She walked by her bed and realized she’d carried all her shopping bags in and laid them down on the bed without putting them away…including Jon’s gifts. She’d need to put them away in case he dropped by her place first.

She’d been stumped over what to get him but she hoped she’d done well.

Sunday afternoon, they’d all hung out at Loras and Renly’s place. She had helped Loras and Nan decorate ornaments for the Children’s Hospital Fundraiser. Renly’s firm was a major contributor to the black-tie affair every year and the hand-decorated Christmas ornaments were one of the popular and less-expensive items that were sold to help raise money for the charity.

Marg was there as well but her and Jon didn’t claim any special artistic talents and had volunteered to fetch take out for the group when dinnertime rolled around.

“Nan,” Sansa had asked once Marg and Jon were gone. “What do you think would make a good gift for a man who’s a friend…a very close friend?”

“I gave you a suggestion!” Loras had objected from his place at the table.

“A gift for a man who’s a friend?” Nan had asked, looking up from her delicate brush strokes. For a woman her age, Nan still had a steady hand and those hands were always busy; whether she was knitting, baking or painting. “What kind of man friend, dear?”
“A straight one…and one that she’d like to bang,” Loras had snickered.

“Lay off Sansa, Loras,” Renly had said from his place on the couch. “The doc, Nanny. Sansy Pants needs to get him something for Christmas.”

“And his birthday,” Sansa had chimed in.

“And his birthday,” Renly repeated. “I liked Loras’s suggestion to be honest.”

“I am not letting myself into his apartment and waiting in his bed naked for him, Renly.”

“With a ribbon tied around you, I said! The ribbon makes it tasteful,” Loras had laughed.

“Renly, what are you getting Loras?” she’d asked next, ignoring Loras.

Loras had covered his ears and started shouting “La, la, la, la…”

“Same thing he wants every year, monthly trips to the spa for a massage.”

“Oh, I hope he’ll get me monthly trips to the spa for massages!” Loras shouted before he started chanting again.

Sansa had giggled and asked, “So what does he get you?”

“Things chocked full of butter and sugar…and chocolate. Anything that’s bad for me so he can then nag me to death the rest of the year. And, dress up clothes.”

“Dress up clothes? Like for work?”

“No,” Renly had said blushing like a boy for once.

“For the bedroom, sweetie,” Loras had added with a wink. He had then pretended to crack a whip.

“Oh…right,” Sansa had said with wide eyes while Nan cackled at the table. “Well, those suggestions are probably out for Jon.”

“I’d pay good money to see that ass in nothing but leather chaps.”

“Loras! Um…Nan? Can you give me a decent suggestion?”

“What does he like?” Nan had asked. “What do you two do together?”

“Well, we eat, watch TV, talk…we take Ghost for walks and…we uh, cuddle on the couch and just hang out,” she’d finished with a tender smile.

The three of them had sat there staring at her with knowing grins and Sansa had started to chew at her bottom lip.

_This is just great. I spend tons of time with him and I have nothing more to offer than his love of food, TV and his dog. What is wrong with me?_

She wanted to get Jon something special, something to show him how special he was to her. She didn’t have any idea what that was.

“Sansa,” Nan had said, “don’t worry too much over this, honey. Jon will love anything you get for him. It’s a Christmas present…”
“And a birthday present,” Renly added.

“And a birthday present. Get something that you think he’ll like and give it from the heart. That’s really all any of us can hope for, right?”

“Right. Thanks, Nan.”

“So, what did you tell the doc to get her then, Nan?” Loras had asked.

Sansa had laughed and started to say that surely Jon hadn’t asked Nan about a Christmas present for her.

But, Nan had shocked her by replying, “Jewelry.”

Sansa’s mouth had fallen open and Loras whistled in agreement as Nan calmly returned to painting her ornament.

A knock on the door brought her back to the present as she shoved the last of the gift bags in her closet. Must’ve got off a little early.

"Coming!" she shouted. Well, I did.

Sansa glanced down at her silky robe. She wore nothing under it. Could I be that bold?

She started towards the door and then quickly ran back to her bedroom and threw on panties and a bra. She pulled the robe back on though and tied the sash tight.

I can be this bold anyway.

"Hey," she said nonchalantly as she answered. "I didn't expect you just yet."

"Uh..." Jon gulped and then started again. "Ummm...sorry. I got...it was...slow...yeah, slow." His eyes had raked her from head to foot more than once. He was trying to be covert. He failed miserably.

Sansa grinned inwardly and said, "Sorry about this." She gestured at her robe. "I just took a bath. I'll get changed."

"Sure! Or don't. Or...whatever you like. I'm gonna just...you know what? Work was kind of nasty tonight and I'm still in my scrubs. Let me grab a quick shower and change and we can eat, okay?"

"Okay, Jon," she said.

He literally ran from her doorstep. She heard his shower running soon after and then Ghost started barking again a few minutes later. By the time he returned, they were both in their usual comfy clothes. Jon certainly seemed relaxed after his shower. She'd turned on the TV and started dishing up the pot roast she'd put in the slow cooker that morning.

Jon's hair was still wet when he sat down at the table and Sansa stared hard at those little droplets clinging to his curls. She licked her lips and let Jon pour her some wine.

"So...how was your day?" he asked.
Chapter End Notes

I meant to get to Christmas Eve and the gift exchange this chapter but failed. *hangs head* We'll have that at the start of the next chapter though and then they'll begin their road trip :)  

Thanks for reading!
Chapter Summary

Fluffy fluff-fluff. Can you die by fluff? Christmas Eve and gifts are exchanged before Jon and Sansa leave town.

Christmas Eve had arrived and Sansa had been off for a few days already. She’d been feverishly finishing up her last-minute Christmas shopping and wrapping on top of finding a suitable dress to wear to the wedding.

*I’m the Best Man’s date. I should look…datable, right?*

Plus, his ex was supposedly going to be there and a small, somewhat petty part of Sansa really wanted to make an impression, to dazzle the folks up in Vermont so they’d see Jon Snow was maybe doing A-OK for himself down in Maryland.

So, the sleeveless, silver, shimmering lace cocktail dress with the illusion tank bodice and sweetheart neckline with the crystal-beaded sash that fell just above the knee had been a bit of a Christmas present to herself and an unacknowledged Birthday gift for Jon.

Today though, she’d spent most of the afternoon working on treats and appetizers for Loras and Renly’s Christmas Eve party that night while Jon napped on her couch in preparation for his all-nighter. Ghost had stayed at her feet the entire time she was in the kitchen acting as her official dust buster the moment any stray morsel or crumb fell to the floor.

They enjoyed an early, light dinner and a Secret Santa gift exchange at Loras and Renly’s with Nan and Margaery before the other guests were due to start arriving. Sansa had drawn Loras’s name for the exchange which was easy.

“A spa gift card and my favorite lemon-herb tea?! You’re the best, Sansa!”

Jon had drawn Margaery and begged Sansa for help…which she gladly gave.

“Oh, Jon! My own copies of Sun Tzu’s ‘The Art of War’ and ‘The Drunken Botanist’ by Amy Stewart! Now I can combine my dearest passions; world conquest, alcohol and gardening.”

Other guests started to arrive soon after and Renly broke out his ‘special’ eggnog. It wasn’t exactly special but it did contain a great deal of Brandy, bourbon and rum. It was rather a favorite holiday indulgence of Sansa’s.

Jon took a glass unknowingly and, when he took a sip, nearly sprayed poor Nan with it.

“I’m working tonight,” he reminded his host as he wiped his mouth with a napkin.

“Sorry, doc,” Renly laughed. “I’ll get you a water or some soda.”

Jon started to pour his serving out but Sansa was seeking a little liquid courage and took it off his hands. She downed it…and then her own glass.
An hour later though, Sansa was only slightly tipsy and still a bundle of anxiety. Around nine o’clock, Jon mentioned it was about time for him to get ready for work. He was due in at ten to work a twelve-hour shift before he could enjoy four glorious days off. Most of which they’d be spending together.

*Oh, shit*, Sansa thought when she noticed him making his way over to thank Loras and Renly for dinner and their hospitality. *It’s time.*

“Um…I’ll walk up with you,” she said as smoothly as she could manage. Naturally, her face started getting hot at once.

Jon didn’t take it amiss though. He just grabbed their gifts from Nan and Marg and wished the others goodnight and Merry Christmas. Loras and Marg gave her encouraging smiles as she headed to the door.

“Jon? Do you think you’d have a few minutes before you leave? I’d like to give you your gifts tonight…if that’s okay,” she said once they were trudging up the stairs.

“I’ve got some time to kill. But, opening gifts early? Wouldn’t that be breaking the rules, Miss Stark?” he asked with a twinkle in his eyes.

“I’ll have you know we Starks have made a tradition of opening our presents on Christmas Eve,” she said with her hands on her hips once they reached her door.

Sansa briefly eyed the mistletoe hanging above them but she hadn’t kissed him again since that day Loras and his elves had decked the halls with it. And Jon hadn’t tried to kiss her beneath it either. She felt her heart skip a beat at the thought.

“Presents on Christmas Eve? Utter anarchy,” Jon scoffed. She rolled her eyes at him and he laughed.

“I know you’re not normally a rule breaker, Jon Snow, but I thought Santa Claus might forgive us this once since we’ll be busy hitting the road in the morning after you get home.”

“Well, that is a good point.” He scratched his beard for a moment while glancing around the hall, a slight nervous tic of his she’d noticed. “Alright…but you’ll have to let me grab your presents,” he said next.

“Bring Ghost over. I’ve got some things for him, too.”

“Okay.”

Sansa hustled in the door, figuring she had all of 90 seconds.

*Okay…a little ambiance is needed.*

She flipped on the Christmas Tree and the strands of lights she’d hung around the living room. Then, she started her carefully selected playlist of soft, instrumental carols.

As ‘Silent Night’ played, she made a swooping pass through her bathroom to give her hair a quick brush and reapplied her lip gloss…cinnamon flavored.

Jon had mentioned liking cinnamon flavored things the other morning when she’d been baking mini loaves of cinnamon bread for her co-workers on the last day of school for the semester. And so maybe she’d happened to notice the lip gloss that came in that flavor later that afternoon at the
pharmacy and decided to give it a try.

She swept back into the living room and started to turn the lamp on by the couch but then decided to just leave her bedroom light on. She tapped her toe, scratched her head and took in the effect. The glow of the Christmas lights and soft music were romantic…too romantic.

*Shit. This is overboard. Don’t want to freak him out. Or make him think I want to have a two-minute shag right before he heads off to work for our first time.*

*First time? Is there going to be a first time, Sansa?*

*Ugh…not prepared to answer that yet.*

As she stood debating with herself and before she could sprint over to the ipod to switch it to some peppier Christmas tunes and flick on the overhead light in the kitchen, Jon and Ghost walked in.

Ghost immediately came over to receive his required scratch behind the ears.

Jon was holding three gifts and looking more than a little nervous. Sansa felt the same.

“So…would you care for some non-alcoholic eggnog or a soda?” she asked as she wiped her palms down her festive plaid skirt. Her fluffy hunter green sweater was making her sweat now…or maybe it was nerves. *Definitely the nerves.*

“Uh, no…I’m good,” he said shoving one hand in the pocket of his tight grey pants. The sleeves of his navy v-neck sweater were pushed up to his elbows and clung to his muscular frame very nicely. Sansa caught herself staring.

*So, about that two-minute shag…*

*Shut up, shut up, shut up!*

“So…” they both said at the same time and then chuckled nervously.

“You first,” Sansa said.

“No, no…ladies first,” Jon insisted.

“How about dogs first?” she said. “Come here, Ghost.”

Sansa went over to her small tree and pulled out one large and one medium-sized present.

Ghost trotted over happily wagging his tag.

Sansa patted his head and gave him a hug. “So, this first one is just because you’re such a good boy and someone might have mentioned that you like these.”

Jon grinned and seemed more at ease as she ‘helped’ Ghost unwrap his favorite variety of dog treats. While he was happily chewing on one of them, Sansa asked Jon to help her with the other present, the large one.

“Okay, so…I wouldn’t want to be accused of stealing your friend,” she began, “but…we are taking a trip so this could come in handy. And since he is always welcome over here at any time, I thought he should feel at home wherever he is.”

Jon unwrapped the box and found a large doggie bed inside along with a travel-suitable water and
food bowl and a rubbery toy squirrel.

“Sansa…this is so sweet of you,” he said with an endearing gaze that could make even the most hardened heart start pounding.

Ghost came over to inspect. He put his paw on the doggie bed and gave the squirrel a sniff.

“I think he wants to check out his goods,” she said, unable to keep looking at Jon when he stared at her that way.

Ghost gave the toy a few bites to check that it had the right squeak level.

*SQUEAK*

“Oh, goody. It squeaks,” Jon said sarcastically.

“Is that bad?”

*SQUEAK*

“Well…he’s certainly…”

*SQUEAK*

“…fond of them. You’ve got to…”

*SQUEAK*

“…take them away at night…”

*SQUEAK*

“…to have any hope of…”

*SQUEAK*

“…sleeping. Here, buddy. Check out the bed Sansa got you.”

Ghost sniffed that down and immediately curled up in it once Jon had removed the tags.

“I think he approves,” Jon said. “Your turn.”

The first gift made her laugh but also reminded her of how comfortable he made her feel. All those evenings and lazy afternoons of watching ‘The X-Files’ with him on the couch at his place, cuddled up together under a blanket sometimes, falling asleep against him at times…not once had he done anything to make her feel threatened, forced, uncomfortable or question her trust in him in any way.

*I want to believe*, she thought wistfully as she held the shirt up to herself. And she wasn’t thinking about aliens.

Once she’d laid the shirt aside, Jon handed over the second gift. It was slim and about the length of a shoe box. When she lifted the lid, there was a hand-written note in his messy doctor’s scrawl on top of the suede and leather gloves lined with micro-fleece that perfectly matched her winter stocking cap.
For Sansa- these are for any time I can’t be there to warm your hands.

Sansa wondered if he knew all the ways he warmed her heart with his words, just as his hands had warmed hers more than once.

“Jon…they’re perfect,” she said, slipping one on to try it out.

“The color’s alright?”

“It is.”

“Great,” he said. He cleared his throat and looked down at the last gift in his lap, the smallest box. Miss Stark would’ve told her students it was a rectangular prism…but she also knew it was a jewelry box. “So, this is…shit, Sansa. This one…I’m a bit nervous about giving it to you. I know we’re friends and that’s all we are right now but I wanted to get you this and I hope it comes across the right way.”

He handed over the box and Sansa’s sweaty palms needed wiping again. She was pretty certain her brow did, too. Jon was scratching at his beard again…and even rubbing the back of his neck. At least, he’s nervous, too.

‘White Christmas’ was playing in the background and Ghost was already snoring in his new bed as Sansa took the gift from his hands. As she carefully unwrapped the fancy gold foil paper, she could feel Jon’s eyes on her, watching for her reaction.

She opened the hinged lid from Tiffany & Co. and gasped at the sterling silver charm bracelet. There were four charms attached; a key, a heart engraved with the word ‘friends,’ an apple and a dog.

“Jon…this is…”

She couldn’t even say. It was bound to have been far more expensive than any normal friend gift but that wasn’t what she was thinking at the moment. All she could think about was the man sitting next to her and what he meant to her.

“So, the dog is perhaps meant to be a Husky but we’re going to call it a Malamute. It’s to represent Ghost…but also Lady,” he said as he looked her in the eye. He drew a shaky breath and spoke more rapidly. “The apple is ‘cause you’re a teacher obviously. I just thought that’d be…well, I hope you don’t think that’s dumb.”

“Not dumb at all,” she croaked as she fought an urge to break down and cry at the sweetness and thoughtfulness he’d put into all of this.

“The, uh…heart is because you’re my friend…that I love. And the key is…well, we’re neighbors. And I know I gave you my key in case of emergencies but it’s also about trust. I trust you and you’re…uh…special to me and…the key sort of symbolizes that and, um…”

He stalled and looked helplessly at her. She bit her lip and let him off the hook from admitting any more than that just yet.

“Thank you, Jon,” she said taking his hand in hers. He looked up at her, his eyes filled with hope and she wanted to fulfill that hope…but he had gifts to open and time was ticking away. “Would you mind?” she asked holding out the charm bracelet and her wrist.

“Of course.”
His fingers were warm as they brushed her wrist. He deftly fastened the clasp and Sansa gave it a flick to admire it for a moment.

“I love it,” she said, fighting a battle between gushing like a teenage girl and bawling like a baby over it. He heaved an audible sigh of relief. “My gifts can’t compare, I’m afraid,” she said.

“I’ll be glad to receive them whatever they are,” he replied.

Sansa handed him three boxes to open. The first was a dark heather grey sweater that she thought he’d look nice in. The second was a wooly cap for winter weather because she’d yet to see him wearing a one. The final one was an assortment of treats she’d learned he liked; among them his favorite chocolates, his preferred brand of coffee, the gum he liked to chew after a meal or when he was tense and a loaf of homemade cinnamon bread she’d made that morning.

“No, I know what I’m eating during my break tonight,” he said happily as he sniffed the cinnamon bread. “Thank you, Sansa.”

“You’re welcome. But there’s one more,” she said as she went back to the tree and retrieved a small package. Here we go.

‘The Christmas Song’ by Nat King Cole was nearly done playing as she sat back down next to him…a bit closer now. She turned towards him and their knees were touching. She handed over the small square box, the size of a softball, and really wanted to stand up and start pacing with the nerves. But that wouldn’t do right now.

Jon gave her a questioning glance but dug into opening the package at her encouragement. She’d half buried it in candy cane-covered tissue paper. She’d borrowed some of Loras’s red ribbon to give it some extra flair.

His eyes widened as he realized what she’d wrapped for him.

“It’s…mistletoe,” he whispered as he gingerly removed the sprig from the box.

“Yeah, mistletoe,” she said as she slowly raised her hand to cup his face. His eyes darted from the mistletoe to her, his eyes full of hope yet again. “Yeah,” she repeated before she leaned in to kiss him.

Her eyes fluttered closed and his heart was beating like a drum in his ears when Sansa’s soft lips met his. A sound suspiciously close to a needy whine escaped before he could help it and his own eyes closed of their own accord. He felt her lips close over his bottom lip, applying a bit of pressure, almost like a gentle nip. His hands flew to her shoulders to hold her there, afraid the kiss would be over before he could savor it.

No tongue for this kiss though he was hopeful that might come later. Just a gentle, slow kiss on the lips. Sweet…like Sansa.

‘The Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy’ played in the background now and Jon couldn’t stop thinking how delectable her sugar-plum lips had looked all night.

She pulled back a moment later. Her crystal blue eyes opened and she searched his face intently…
and anxiously.

Were you really afraid I wouldn’t like that, sweet girl?

“I liked that gift the best of all,” he murmured, as his thumb came up to stroke her soft cheek. A relieved grin broke out across her face and his heart felt like the Grinch’s growing three sizes at once. “May I kiss you back?” he asked, looking back at her lips and hoping she’d agree.

She nodded and said, “You may.”

His hands moved slowly down to her waist. He watched for any signs that this was unwelcome. Sansa only smiled and put her hands on his shoulders. Her waist was small in his hands and he could see her bare knee where her plaid skirt was rucked up just a bit. He could feel that bare knee against the inside of his thigh but mentally focused on the upcoming kiss rather than letting his mind wander too far.

One step at a time.

He waited for her head to come forward just a touch before he dove in to kiss her with the pent-up passion he’d held onto for weeks and weeks now. She gasped at his eagerness and he closed his lips over her own. His tongue traced her bottom lip. Her tongue darted out to greet his and Jon moaned into her mouth.

Cinnamon, his mind vaguely registered. Fuck me…Sansa Stark tastes like cinnamon sticks…and Renly’s eggnog…and high-dollar booze.

Jon was certain he’d never taste anything so sweet as her ever again.

He slanted his mouth to kiss her more deeply and her hands clutched tightly at his sweater, pulling him closer, right up against her soft, fuzzy sweater and full breasts that were right there against his chest now. He stifled a second moan but Sansa answered with one of her own. One of her hands crept up to his hair. It sent tingles across his scalp and down his spine.

He was already getting hard and he wondered if she could make him come just by kissing him like this. When he heard a little mewling sound of pleasure building in the back of her throat, he was almost certain that she could.

“Sansa…Christ…” he growled when they broke apart to draw breath. “Please tell me I’m not having an eggnog induced dream.”

She laughed merrily against the side of his mouth. He thought it might be the sweetest thing yet in five heavenly minutes filled with sweet things.

“It’s not the eggnog,” she assured him.

He leaned back in to capture those luscious lips once more when the alarm on his phone went off like a nuclear weapons facility had just been breached.

Fuck!

Ghost’s head popped up and he barked once before he decided to squeak his new toy some more.

SQUEAK

“No,” he whined into her mouth.
“Ghost…please, buddy,” he said wearily.

“Time for work, huh?” she sighed.

“Yeah. God, I don’t want to go, Sansa.”

“I know. I wish you could stay. Can Ghost spend the night?” she asked.

“Yeah,” he said with an envious glance at his dog. Lucky son of a bitch. You get to stay here with her. “And we are definitely not taking that toy on the trip.”

“Agreed,” she said before kissing him lightly on the mouth and letting him go.

Jon went next door and quickly put on his scrubs. He looked longingly at his shower, wishing he had a few more minutes to see to a certain ache because he was hornier than he could ever remember being just from kissing Sansa.

She’d thrown on her puffy jacket to walk him down when he came back into the hall and they walked down the stairs hand in hand. The party was in full swing at Loras and Renly’s and Jon asked if she was going to rejoin them.

“No, I think I’ll just enjoy the night in with Ghost. They won’t miss me.”

“They may talk. You walked me up and never returned.”

“Let them talk then,” she said with a mischievous wink.

Under the mistletoe on the front porch, he kissed her softly once more.

“Jon…I know I kissed you first and we’re leaving in the morning but I’m not…” She twisted her hands together and looked miserably at a loss.

“I understand,” he said sincerely. He drew her hand up over his heart. “I really care about you, Sansa. If all you want to do is kiss… I swear, you’ll hear no complaints from me. I’m just happy being with you. I’m not pushing for anything more until you’re ready, alright?”

“Alright. Thank you, Jon.” She cupped his cheek and ran her fingers along his jaw. He leaned into her until their foreheads were touching. “Have a good night at work. Merry Christmas.”

“Merry Christmas, sweet girl. I hope you have sweet dreams.”

He kissed her again, on the forehead this time, and headed down the steps to the sidewalk. He glanced back to see her watching him leave. He waved and smiled at her before heading off down the street to where work awaited him.

And he may have… just maybe… wished everyone he spoke to that night ‘Merry Christmas!’ as exuberantly as George Bailey at the end of ‘It’s a Wonderful Life.'
Feelings of awkwardness and uncertainty had descended by the next morning but, thankfully, Ghost was there to alleviate some tension and keep it from becoming too unbearable.

Sansa was busy packing, her open suitcase on the bed and her garment bag with the dress for the wedding laid next to it.

“He’ll be home soon, Ghost. Then, we’ll hit the road. You got any packing you need to do?” she teased.

Ghost gruffed and left her bedroom as though he truly meant to go pack.

A few seconds later, she heard it.

*SQUEAK*

“No. Jon said you can’t take that,” she called into the other room.

*Jon will be home soon. And then we’ll leave…and spend nearly four days together. And tonight, we’ll be at Robb and Janina’s and we’ll…share a bed.*

Sansa gulped and started twirling her hair around a finger, her own nervous tic.

She had kissed Jon last night. She had been the one to initiate a change in their relationship status with her gift of mistletoe but now she was nervous as hell because they were leaving together for three nights away.

*Why am I like this? I wanted to kiss him. I wanted him to kiss me. Honestly, I’d really like to do much more with him. But I’m scared shitless right now.*

Sansa sighed and continued packing.

Jon wouldn’t push her for more than she wanted to give. She knew it already which was part of why she’d felt comfortable making this move from just friends to something more at last. But she hated that things from her past, things that Jon had nothing to do with, made her afraid to act as most women her age would.

He got home a little after 10 and they had about a three-hour drive ahead of them. That same soft look was in his eyes despite his obvious exhaustion from his twelve-hour shift.

“Good morning! Merry Christmas!” she said brightly…like a skittish cat in a room full of rocking chairs. *Stop shouting at him, idiot.* “I was just going to take Ghost for a walk. Do you need a nap before we leave?”

“No, Sansa. Just a shower and a change of clothes,” he said, picking up on her nervousness. “If you’ll give Ghost a walk, I should be ready to go by the time your return.”

“Okay…great.”

She started to walk past him but stopped and turned towards him for a kiss. It wasn’t a long kiss. It wasn’t charged full of rampant desire like their kisses last night. It was just a simple kiss. But when she pulled back from the kiss and her thumb gently swept his lower lip just because she wanted to touch his lips, he sighed and gave her a sweet, more relaxed smile.
Forty-five minutes later, they loaded up his SUV and Ghost and hit the road. He’d tried arguing that he would drive but Sansa had set him straight on that.

“No arguing and no macho man must do the driving crap either. You worked all night and we’re driving to my brother’s house. I know the way and you don’t. So, sit over there and nap or watch the road roll by. Your choice. But I’m driving today.”

“Alright, alright. Geez, I won’t argue with Miss Stark,” he chuckled.

“A wise decision,” she said primly.

“I can’t sleep in the car most of the time though.”

“Well, we’ll just work to keep each other entertained then.”

Sansa fiddled with the radio until she found some jolly Christmas tunes and proceeded to serenade Jon with Andy Williams, Bobby Helms and Brenda Lee.

“You’re adorable, you know?” he smiled from the passenger seat as she rocked around the Christmas Tree.

“No, I’m not,” she said shyly

“Yeah, you really are,” he said.

She felt his hand on her shoulder and glanced over to see his dark brown eyes glowing as he smiled at her.

_Oh, help. Mind the road, Sansa. You’re driving._

“I guess I won’t argue with Dr. Snow,” she said.

“Now that is a wise decision, Miss Stark.” He looked back out the window. “Look, it’s starting to snow.”

“Yep. Janina said they’re expecting a couple of inches tonight.”

“Sam said there’s a good chance they’ll be getting half a foot or more this weekend for the wedding. He says Gilly’s thrilled.”

“That much? Are we going to get stuck in Vermont?”

“Nah…I shouldn’t think so. I’m used to driving in it and I’ve got chains in the back for the tires if needed. Six inches is nothing up there.”

“Okay.”

“Don’t worry, Sansa,” he said as he stroked her upper arm. “Hey…will you sing some more for me?”

She grinned and launched into ‘All I Want for Christmas is You’ and Ghost woke up from his nap and started howling along.

“Shut up, buddy,” Jon said amiably. “I want to hear her sing, not you.”

_SQUEAK_
“Are you fucking kidding me?” Jon said pivoting around to look in the back. “I thought we said…”

*SQUEAK*

“I didn’t pack it!” Sansa protested.

“Then how did he…”

*SQUEAK*

“Oh, my God,” Jon groaned as he covered his eyes.

Sansa just laughed though and kept singing while Ghost and his squeaky squirrel accompanied her.
Christmas with the Starks

Chapter Summary

Sansa and a sleep-deprived Jon arrive at her brother Robb's house in Pennsylvania and Jon is introduced to the chaos of a Stark family get-together. Later, they both find themselves being quizzed about their relationship until they finally have a little time alone together.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Two pitstops and countless cups of coffee later, Jon was regretting his decision to try and stay awake for the entire ride as he stifled a gaping yawn.

It was true that he didn’t normally sleep that well in a car but then it’d been years since he’d made a lengthy road trip where he wasn’t the driver. And, in order to survive med school, it had become imperative that he adapt to sleeping whenever and wherever opportunity allowed.

He’d worked all night and they’d been extremely busy in the ER with everything from food poisoning to stitches after family get-togethers-turned-fist-fights. Now, he was faced with the very real possibility of meeting Sansa’s family and snoring at them all afternoon. Plus, Sansa had assured him that there would most certainly be turkey. As a bonafide lover of turkey, he could not pass it up but he knew the effects of tryptophan all too well.

Sansa pulled into the driveway of a large two-story and Jon’s sleepiness was forgotten as anxiety blossomed. He gave her a nervous smile and went around back to unload the gifts she’d brought for her family along with their overnight bags.

Ghost was snoring in the backseat when he opened the door to usher his friend out. Before waking him, Jon deftly took the squeaky squirrel from between the slumbering dog’s paws and tossed it in the back.

*squeak*

Jon cringed at the muffled squeak expecting the big white head to pop up looking for his beloved toy…but Ghost snoozed on.

*Maybe I should just let him have at it. He’ll chew a hole through it before long and then it’ll lose all its squeakiness.*

But Jon knew what would happen then. Ghost would forlornly carry the broken squeaky toy around in his mouth for ages with sad puppy eyes and a droopy tail. And, every time Jon sat down, Ghost would bring it to him, set it at his feet and nudge it with his nose as if to say, “*Why doesn’t it squeak anymore? Fix it, please.*”

And Jon being a complete and utter fool when it came to his dog would go out and buy his buddy a new one.

*A vicious cycle.*
So for now, they’d play the out-of-sight-out-of-mind game.

“Come on, Ghost. We’re here,” he said.

The big white head popped up and he was panting at once. New places, new people and new smells awaited. He hopped out of the car with his usual grace despite his hulking frame, wagging his tail expectantly at Jon and Sansa both.

They walked up the sidewalk towards the holly-trimmed front door with Ghost at their heels. There was a dusting of snow covering the front lawn and path. The streets were clear for the time being but it was still coming down. Jon enjoyed hearing the crunch of it beneath his boots. Maryland hadn’t had a real snow yet.

*This isn’t much of a snow…but it’s the most I’ve seen in a while.*

Ghost must’ve been feeling the same way for just as they reached the door, Jon turned to see his dog thrashing around in it on his back, twisting and turning like a contortionist with his tongue lolling out of his mouth.

“Ghost!” Jon said sharply. “Come on now, buddy. Best behavior here. Make a good impression on the Starks.”

Sansa started giggling at him but Ghost immediately rolled back over, shook the snow from his white coat and then sat there with a distinct air of courtesy and refinement…for a dog. He knew what was expected of a guest after all.

Sansa’s mouth fell open in surprise and Jon was the one ready to laugh…until his ears noticed the noise level coming from inside.

“It sounds like there’s thirty people in there,” he said anxiously.

This was Sansa’s family, at least some of it. Her three brothers, her sister-in-law, her twin nieces and perhaps some other relatives or friends.

“Oh, don’t worry. This is nothing,” she said breezily. “If Mom, Dad, Arya and Gendry were here, it’d be louder by far. Last Christmas, my Uncle Edmure and his wife and kids came to Mom and Dad’s along with my Uncle Benjen. Uncle Benjen is usually quiet. Uncle Edmure and the others are definitely not.”

If this was meant to reassure him, it didn’t but he wouldn’t say so to Sansa.

All the time growing up, for as long as Jon could remember anyway, it’d just been him and his mum. No one else really came ‘round during the holidays. Occasionally, a friend or neighbor might drop off some cookies or fruitcake. That was it. Christmases were quiet. Sometimes his mum would cook but most of the time they’d go eat Chinese, just like the family in ‘A Christmas Story.’ Then, they’d watch Christmas movies together and snack on treats the rest of the evening.

He missed those quiet and peaceful Christmases with his mum. He’d like to enjoy one like that with Sansa someday…preferably one that also involved kissing though.

But from inside the house before him, there arose a great clatter. Shouts, laughter and the high-pitched shrieks of over-stimulated children hopped up on Chocolate Marshmallow Santas and consumerism’s annual orgy of excess.

“Oh…Janina mentioned that the neighbor’s kids might be over for a little bit. They’re good friends
with Tess and Emma,” Sansa said.

His heart started pounding with trepidation.

*I am an adult. I am an adult,* he kept repeating to himself. Why *am I so freaked out?*

Though they were holding gifts and had their bags over their shoulders, he awkwardly reached for Sansa’s hand, seeking some comfort in her touch. She was wearing the gloves he’d given her and he was wearing his own but he was glad for the warmth even if he couldn’t feel the softness of her skin right now.

“It’ll be fine, Jon,” she said softly as she squeezed his hand in response, knowing exactly what he needed to hear just then. “It means a lot to me that you came here.”

He started to nod and smile but then jumped when the front door flew open.

“Merry Christmas!” shouted a gangly, auburn-haired, teenaged boy. “Hey, everyone! Sansa made it! She’s here with her friend!” he announced to the other people inside…and the world at large from the way he projected it towards the street…before grabbing Sansa for an exuberant hug.

“Rickon!” Sansa squealed as she was crushed by her little brother. “This is Jon and…”

“Thank God you’ve come,” the boy cut her off with an emphatic whisper next. “Uncle Edmure’s here. Him and Aunt Roslyn had a huge fight at the Frey’s last night and she took the kids to her brother’s house this morning. He’s already drunk and been crying in the guest bedroom for the past hour. The neighbors came over thirty minutes ago with their little monsters and Robb, being the dork he is, invited them all to dinner saying there was plenty to eat. Janina’s about to commit murder.”

They were ushered inside and unburdened of their packages by Rickon. Her brother Bran appeared next and was introduced as he offered to take their bags for them.

“Thank God you’re here, Sans,” Bran said. “Maybe you can calm Uncle Edmure the fuck down.” He gave Jon a quick appraisal, “So, you’re the doctor/neihbor/friend, eh?”

“Umm…yeah.”

“Bran, this is Jon and he’s…”

They were just pulling off their jackets and gloves as Sansa was speaking but she didn’t get to finish as they were immediately set upon by two little red-haired girls in matching candy cane leggings and reindeer jumpers.

Aunt Sansa was hugged, Jon was eyed with suspicion and Ghost was automatically determined to be a good substitute for a horse as both girls tried to climb on his back. Luckily, Ghost had the patience of a saint with children.

“Emma! Tess! Get off that poor dog!” said a lovely redhead with green eyes who could only be their mother. “I’m so sorry,” she said to Jon and introduced herself as Janina Stark. “Sansa…I’m afraid I may have to kill your brother later,” she said as she hugged her before two boys rounded the corner carrying a third child and screeching at the top of their lungs. Her own daughters raced after the boys and joined in the racket. “God, help us,” she muttered before she marched off after the children.

“It’ll be fine,” Sansa said to him with a grin when they were alone again for a few seconds.
“I’ll gladly spring for a couple of rooms at a hotel,” he offered, only half joking. “I’ll get you a suite even if you like.”

Sansa just laughed and hugged him affectionately and Jon knew he wouldn’t be leaving. He pulled her closer to smell the citrusy scent of her shampoo and caught an alluring whiff of cinnamon like he’d tasted last night. His hands moved down to her waist where he could feel her soft, cashmere sweater and fitted blue jeans. She was wearing those damned FMBs of hers and Jon suppressed a lecherous groan.

He pulled back to look at her face, longing for a taste of cinnamon but longing for a taste of Sansa’s sweet lips a thousand times more. Her tongue darted out to wet her lips in anticipation, letting Jon know she wanted his kiss and sending an electric current racing straight to his cock.

Christ, Jon. Don’t get a boner now.

Someone loudly cleared their throat behind him and Jon turned to see Sansa’s older brother entering the hallway sporting a beard, brown felt reindeer antlers with jingle bells attached and the ugliest Christmas sweater Jon had ever seen…along with a scowl. The nieces came racing back after him.

“Um…hello, Robb,” Sansa said, snickering at his outfit.

“Hey, little sister,” he said with emphasis. He hugged her tightly and introduced himself to Jon with a handshake…a bone-crushing handshake. “Don’t you love the sweater my girls picked out for their dad?”

Sansa looked at the two little upturned faces and said, “Oh! Well, I think it’s the, uh…nicest sweater I’ve ever seen your dad wear. It’s really a shame Christmas is just once a year.”

The twins beamed at their aunt.

Yes…one day a year. Such a shame, Jon thought as he flexed his throbbing hand.

“Robb, this is my…this is Jon Snow. Jon, this is my brother, Robb Stark.”

“It’s nice to meet you,” Jon said.

“Yeah, very nice to meet you, Friend Jon,” he said with a piercing look at his sister.

Sansa’s cheeks turned pink but she said in a firm voice, “Don’t be a caveman, Robb.” Her brother instantly took his overprotective-big-brother act down a notch and she said, “We’re starved. When’s dinner?”

Two hours later, Jon was stuffed and sleepy from an excess of turkey amongst the high calorie goodies. There weren’t thirty people there…just fifteen. They still managed to kick up a credible din throughout dinner and gift giving time.

But, as Sansa snuggled up next to him on the loveseat of the large living room as naturally as she would’ve done back at home, Jon couldn’t really complain. He put an arm around her as she laid
her head on his shoulder. He could practically feel the eyes of the others on them at times though.

Poor Ghost was snoring loudly at his feet from sheer exhaustion. He was quite envious in truth as he could feel the sand in his eyes.

Sansa and Jon had both been slipping Ghost bites of turkey under the table without realizing the other was doing so. And since their arrival, he’d been the center of attention of little Tess and Emma and the neighbors’ three rowdy boys.

At least until the presents came out from under the tree.

“I thought you said Starks opened their gifts on Christmas Eve,” he whispered in Sansa’s ear.

“We did at Mom and Dad’s. Robb must be rebelling. Plus, the Umber kids brought some over to open.”

“I’m surprised those three boys didn’t just get lumps of coal.”

She giggled and swatted his arm.

Jon watched in wonder at the furor with which small children could tear through present opening. He’d had no siblings or cousins to open gifts with on Christmas and his mother had never said a word if he was over exuberant at times. He enjoyed watching the kids but with his long night he did begin to dislike the loud shrieks that accompanied each new gift.

Bran came over and handed him a beer. “Here. Take the edge off a bit,” he said with a smirk.

“Thanks.”

Janina offered Sansa some rum punch. She gave an appreciative purr with each sip and Jon was tempted to start nuzzling at her neck. Instead, he held her hand and looked down at the bracelet he’d given her the night before. It was inordinately pleasing to see her wearing something he’d bought her. When he glanced back up again, she was staring at him…at his lips.

Naturally, Sansa’s uncle decided it was a fine time to come and visit them both. He sat down across from them, nursing a beer and seeking his niece’s sympathy whilst wallowing in his misery. Sansa finally convinced him to give his wife a call and apologize for whatever it was he’d done wrong.

“What makes you think I’m the one that did something wrong?” he balked.

“Because it’s you, dear uncle. And Mom would say the same if she were here.”

Edmure grumbled his assent and soon left the room to make his call.

The Umbers left with their hellions soon after and the remaining family heaved an audible sigh of relief. Tess and Emma were quiet in the floor now…decorating Ghost with tiny, doll-sized ribbons.

“I’m so sorry,” Robb said in a stage whisper to his wife when he returned from seeing their guests out the door.

“Oh…I’ll make you pay later, Robb Stark,” Janina replied with an impish grin. “Sansa, Meera… care to help me in the kitchen?” she suggested next.

Jon felt the urge to tighten his hold around Sansa’s waist, to keep her here with him but he didn’t and she rose to join her sister-in-law and Bran’s girlfriend.
“Time for my interrogation,” Sansa whispered in his ear before she walked away.

It was then that he realized he’d been left alone with Sansa’s three brothers who were all staring at him.

And time for mine.

After an awkward twenty minutes of question and answer while acting under the guise of cleaning up the mounds of wrapping paper from the floor, Jon decided Ghost needed a walk…almost as much as he did. He made his excuses and grabbed Ghost’s leash and his jacket, cap and gloves. He almost swore he heard Rickon say jokingly, “Ten bucks says him and the dog don’t come back,” as he reached the hallway.

He drew a deep breath as he was greeted by the blustery night air and the gently falling snow. He reached for a piece of gum to chew. Ghost wagged his tail and Jon suppressed a laugh at the pink and purple ribbons attached to his collar.

“You doing alright?” he asked before yawning loudly. Ghost wouldn’t care if he yawned.

Ghost ruffed amiably.

“Yeah. Me, too. They’re all fine. It’s just more than we’re used to, right?”

Ghost gave his leash a tug.

“Yeah, let’s stretch our legs, buddy.”

They’d barely made it ten feet from the front door when he heard it crack open and out came Sansa.

“Hey,” she said shoving her hands in her front pockets, “Mind if I join you and Ghost?”

“Of course not,” he replied and waited for her to grab her own jacket, cap and gloves.

“I wasn’t sure if you’d maybe had your fill of Starks yet,” Sansa said as she came back out.

“No, they’re all fine. And I never seem to get my fill of my favorite Stark,” he said, nudging her shoulder. God, that was corny. Well, she already knows you’re an idiot.

She didn’t look at him like he was an idiot though. She just grinned at him happily and took his hand.

They strolled along the snowy sidewalk in companionable silence for several minutes. The new-fallen snow glowed in the moonlight and it was quieter in the neighborhood than perhaps it normally would’ve been on a Thursday night.

Jon felt the surfeit of his Christmas dinner starting to subside with every step they took and his nerves about this trip and everything attached to it from sharing a bed with Sansa to giving the toast at Sam’s wedding was easing as well.

It was nice to escape the confines of the crowded house for a few minutes though. It was even nicer to spend that time with Sansa.

It’s not as though he was afraid of crowds or people. He spent his work days surrounded by people and activity. But interacting with strangers on a personal level was different that hiding behind the aura of his profession. And making earnest, small talk with Sansa’s relatives was different than
sharing a quip or a bit of gossip with a co-worker or two over the breakroom’s stale coffee.

And in truth, he’d grown used to being alone over time. Even when Ygritte had lived with him, he’d often felt alone. Their schedules were often at odds…and they were often at odds. So, other than Ghost, Jon had become most comfortable, most able to be himself when he was by himself.

That had all changed when he’d met Sansa though. He had started to realize that he did crave human fellowship. He just craved it more on a one on one level and with the right person.

It wasn’t that he was one of those pathetic sorts that was jealous of any attention she gave to others. It’s not that he couldn’t share her with her friends or family. He just dearly wished to have her company as often as she was willing to give it.

She broke the quiet of the December evening when she said, “It’s nice here. I’ve not been to Robb’s in a while.” Jon knew why that was but he wasn’t sure how much she wanted to talk about it tonight. A minute or so later, she continued, “It’s a nice town. It’s just smaller than…well, everyone seems to run in the same circles here.”

She shrugged like she didn’t know what else to say. He put his arm around her shoulders.

“You said you didn’t want to see him again.”

“I don’t but…I don’t know.” She tugged a loose strand of hair back behind her ear and smiled sweetly. “It’s like with you here…I’m not scared.”

“I’m glad if I can make you feel safe, Sansa.”

She stopped walking and gave him a quick kiss. “Thanks for coming here with me.”

“Thanks for sharing your Christmas with me and Ghost. And, thanks for being my date to the wedding.”

“You’re welcome. I’m kind of excited to have an excuse to dress up.” He nodded and she said, “It’s cold out here.” As they turned back to the house, she turned the topic back to family. “So, tell me the truth…how awful were my brothers?”

“Not too awful,” he chuckled.

“Are you lying to me, Jon Snow?” she asked with a raised eyebrow.

“Well, they did ask for a urine sample and mentioned running my fingerprints.” She laughed and gave him another kiss. “No. They just wanted to know some more about me and…well, how much time we spend together.” She relaxed until he added, “And what my intentions were towards you.”

“No!”

“That was Bran. He asked about the bracelet.”

“He didn’t.”

“He did. Robb asked if I minded sleeping on the pullout in his home office tonight.”

“That ass…”

“Rickon said we were probably already shacking up to save on rent.”
“Oh, my God!”
They both started laughing and Jon felt the remaining tension from earlier completely seep away leaving him pleasantly content.

“What about you? Did you get quizzed in the kitchen by Janina?”
Sansa’s cold-weather reddened cheeks flushed a bit darker and she said, “She had…questions.”

“Oh yeah?”

“She’s a good sister-in-law. She knows about all the stuff from my past. She was just concerned.”

“Well, I can’t fault her for that.”

“She also wanted to know if we packed some protection.”
He gulped and his eyes widened. “Uhhh…did you answer, um…never mind!”

Janina had whistled at the charm bracelet. “Damn, Sansa…lucky girl.” Sansa had smiled widely and then admired the bracelet like a besotted girl with her sister-in-law for a full minute. “But, he’s good to you? Cares about you? Not creepy or anything?” Janina had asked next.

“Yeah, he’s wonderful. He’s really the sweetest man, Janina.”

“And you care about him?”

“I do. I really do,” she’d replied.

“But you didn’t kiss for the first time until last night?”

“No, not real kisses…not till last night.” Janina had given her that knowing look and Sansa rolled her eyes. “We’re getting there. He’s okay with going slow for me.”

“Okay then,” Janina had said as she finished drying her hands. “Slow is fine, Sansa. But allow me to say…based on the eye fucking you two were doing at my dinner table, I hope you packed some protection for this weekend.”

That might’ve been a good idea, Sansa thought now as one of Jon’s hands carded through her hair. The other held her firmly by the hip as their kisses became less tentative and more passionate.

They were sitting side by side on the bed, the bed they were going to be sharing tonight. Their hips and thighs were touching and Jon was pivoted towards her, one hand in her hair and the other on her hip. Sansa’s own hands were cautiously placed on his shoulders for now.

He tasted of the beer he’d had earlier and the stick of gum he’d chewed as they walked. She found the combination pleasing.
Uncle Edmure had ended up with the pullout in Robb’s home office downstairs needing to sleep off his excesses before heading back home in the morning. The girls had been sent to bed hours ago and Bran had left with Meera around ten.

Rickon had agreed to stay the night rather than return to their parents’ empty house. He was camping out in the living room. He was currently making use of the upstairs guest bath for a quick shower before returning to his Christmas Night of the Living Dead movie marathon. He’d tried to get Jon to watch with him but it was clear to everyone that Jon was barely keeping his eyes open on the loveseat.

They’d headed up to their room just ahead of Robb and Janina and that’s when the make-out session began.

Ghost was snoring in the corner on the doggie bed Sansa had given him…once he’d had his fill of squeaking his squirrel which had magically been retrieved from the SUV at some point during the afternoon. Sansa had tried to blame her brothers but Jon wasn’t fooled.

“He’s such a good boy…and it’s Christmas, Jon,” she’d finally pouted when he’d given her that look that told her to go ahead and confess.

“Alright, alright,” he’d laughed. “It’s nice to know I’m not the only one that caters to his every wish.”

The kisses had started sweet and chaste. But now they’d heated up. They were both still dressed and this was…lovely.

It is lovely, Sansa thought as she grasped his strong shoulders with more confidence and deepened the kiss.

But she wasn’t ready for sex…not tonight. She was but she wasn’t. The more she thought about it the more convinced she became that she wanted their first time to be somewhere besides the double bed in Robb and Janina’s guest room.

First time, huh?

Yeah. I’m pretty sure there’s going to be a first time.

“Jon,” she whispered against the side of his mouth when he leaned back and pulled her on top of him. “I’m not ready to…”

“We’re kissing, Sansa. Just let me kiss you tonight, sweet girl.”

She nodded and permitted herself to enjoy the experience of kissing Jon, of getting to know him intimately without being completely intimate.

She splayed her hands across his muscular chest to brace herself. His body was so warm under hers. Her knees settled on either side of one of his legs. She could feel his erection at her hip but she didn’t focus on that. She focused on his soft, full lips and tongue and his dark brown eyes that were locked on her.

The way he stared at her…it was something different than anything she’d known before. It was intense but not frightening like the way Joffrey would look at her. It was full of desire but ran deeper than the lust in Harry’s eyes. It was like…love.

She enjoyed the feel of his strong hands at her waist again, the way he held her to him. He ducked
his head and started kissing along her jaw towards her ear, murmuring sweet nothings against her flesh and making her tingle with delight.

And speaking of delight…she felt his thigh shift slightly between her legs and was suddenly very aware of the delightful friction that brought at just the right spot while he kissed her.

“Oh, Jon,” she cried softly as the ache began to build within her.

His thigh shifted again and was soon moving against her, up and down, applying a sweet, sweet pressure between her legs. Her eyes fluttered closed and her mouth hung open.

She was flushed a bright red at the realization that she was humping his leg…like a dog might. But it felt so damned good and there was no way she’d stop when it was everything she wanted tonight and not nearly enough.

Her hips found a rhythm and Jon made no mention of what she was doing. His mouth was far too busy kissing, biting and sucking at her neck, just behind her ear.

*Oh, fuck. I’m going to come,* she realized when the delicious tension hit that taunt, desperate moment right before climax.

“Jon, I’m…*unnn,*” she moaned right before…

**BANG! BANG! BANG!**

They jumped apart like two teenagers being busted in the backseat of a car with fogged up windows.

“Bathroom’s free!” Rickon shouted through the door.

“Fuck,” Jon sighed as he collapsed backwards on the bed.

Sansa’s face felt hot as an oven. *That’s not all that’s hot as an oven,* she thought with irritation at pleasure deferred by her little brother’s untimely interruption.

“Do you want to…” she panted a few seconds later as she lay beside him and her heart rate started to return normal.

“No, you first. I’ll get changed while you’re in there,” he said resignedly while he rubbed his eyes and stifled another yawn.

“Okay.”

He rolled to his side and gave her a sexy grin. “See you in a bit?”

“Yeah,” she said with a very girlish giggle.

Sansa grabbed her toiletries bag and padded down the hall to the guest bath. She went through her nightly routine of washing her face, brushing and flossing and brushing out her hair. She didn’t think she’d taken all that long but when she returned to the bedroom, it was silent…except for the snoring.

He was going on about three hours of sleep in the past 48 hours so she couldn’t really blame him though she’d dearly wanted to return to what they’d been doing.

*Perhaps it’s best tonight,* she thought with a sigh. *And tomorrow night we’ll be in our own hotel*
She smiled to herself at that and patted Ghost on the head.

Jon was in his standard bedtime clothes that she’d seen dozens of time by now, lightweight sweatpants and a tee. She was wearing something similar. She pulled back the covers and climbed in. She put her lips to his neck and kissed him right under his beard. He mumbled unintelligently but she thought it was a ‘goodnight.’ She breathed in the lingering hint of pine on his skin and the scent of his laundry detergent. She nestled up against his back, spooning him for a change instead of the other way around.

“Goodnight, Jon,” she whispered in his ear. “I…”

He mumbled again and she stopped talking. She just thought it instead.

I love you.

Chapter End Notes

Darn that Rickon...

*evil laughter*

Seriously, I hope you all enjoyed the update. The next day will be Jon's birthday where they'll say goodbye to the Starks and head to Vermont for the rehearsal dinner.
'Love is Patient, Love is Kind...'

Chapter Summary

The morning after Christmas and Sansa wants to give Jon a Birthday Morning Kiss. Will she ever get to? The Starks and Jon head out for breakfast before its time for Jon and Sansa to leave town.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

There was a whimpering noise coming from somewhere in the bedroom but nothing seemed quite right. It was still early but appeared brighter than normal even with his eyes closed. Did I forget to close the curtains?

The sheets felt different against his cheek. The blanket was too hot. The pillow was too soft. And there was a warm body pressed up against his back…and a knee wedged in the crack of his ass. Not uncomfortably. It was just there.

His sleepy mind flitted to the old apartment in Burlington and Ygritte. His eyes flew open and a wave of heartache and denial washed over him…until he realized that was the past and not real.

It’s Sansa. I’m with Sansa.

He didn’t turn his head to look at her yet. His hand found hers wrapped possessively about his waist. He knew the feel of her hand in his in an instant and all was right with the world once more.

She’s spooning me, he realized. His heart glowed with renewed joy. Did she do this all night? I slept so hard I don’t even remember…oh, holy fuck!

Memories of their kisses and caresses from the night before came flooding back and Jon’s dick immediately started to get hard.

Kissing Sansa, their tongues eagerly exploring each other. Sansa’s hands on his shoulders, his chest. His own hands holding her waist, pulling her on top of him. Sansa grinding against his thigh as he kissed and sucked at her neck. That hitch in her breath, the way she said his name, the low moans she tried to stifle against his neck as she sought her release. He’d wanted to give her that release so badly.

And then her brother Rickon had banged on the door scaring the shit out of them both and effectively ending what had been the best make-out session of Jon Snow’s entire life.

He had laid there after she’d gone to the bathroom waiting for her to rejoin him. He’d still needed to brush his teeth but he was already in his bedtime clothes and the bed was comfy, especially to an exhausted man operating on too little sleep and a bit too much tension in the past 48 hours.

Ghost had been snoring in the corner. Ygritte had always complained about Ghost snoring but Jon hadn’t minded it. In fact, once she’d left them, Jon found it a somnolent sound.

I fell asleep, he thought sadly. I fucking fell asleep when she was coming back and…and what? She
didn’t want to have sex last night.

Maybe this was best. It was a small comfort in a way at least. He had wanted her. He wanted her still. But he wasn’t going to fuck her like some random hook-up in her brother’s guest bedroom with Ghost watching them in the corner and random family popping by to bang on the door.

*Our first time…whenever that is…should be special.*

He loved her. More than that, he was *in* love with her. He loved her heart and soul. He knew it all the way down to his bones now. There was no more room to question it. He was in love with Sansa Stark, his neighbor and best friend. And, Sansa deserved nothing but the very best first time for them he could give her.

His first time having sex had been a fumbling, awkward mess in the backseat of a car with the girl whispering that he’d have to pull out before he came while he worried about someone knocking on the fogged-up window and how much trouble he’d be in if he broke curfew.

His first time with Ygritte had been rushed and awkward in its own way. She’d tasted of cheap beer and cigarettes. She’d shushed his protests about waiting till they were truly alone with aggressive kisses and pushed him down on her dorm room twin bed. Her roommate was lying in the next bed less than eight feet away, supposedly asleep. Jon dearly hoped she had been but he doubted it. Ygritte had hated the girl and it seemed like the sort of petty triumph she’d enjoy.

It wouldn’t be like that with Sansa. She meant too much to him.

“Good morning,” she said groggily in his ear. “Sorry,” she added as she moved her knee.

“You’re fine…and good morning,” he replied anxiously. “I, uh…never brushed my teeth last night!” *What the fuck?! Why did you say that?!* She giggled in his ear and kissed the nape of his neck though. “I’m sorry I fell asleep, Sansa,” he said a bit less hysterically.

“Don’t be sorry. You were tired,” she said as she laced their hand together more tightly. He pulled her hand up to his lips for a soft kiss. “Happy Birthday, Jon.”

He scowled in confusion for just a moment. He’d completely forgotten. His birthday was forgettable to most people being the day after Christmas but this was the first time he’d forgotten it. Sansa remembered though.

“Thank you,” he said with heartfelt appreciation.

*Arrr-oooo,* Ghost howled pitifully just then.

“Ugh…Ghost. I’m sorry, buddy,” he said. The whimpering whine from earlier had been ignored too long. “Let’s take you for a walk. You coming?” he asked Sansa.

“No…it’s cold out there,” she said with an adorable grin as she snuggled back down in the covers. “You two go. I’ll wait for you here and warm you back up.”

“That is a deal.”

“And Jon?”

“Yes?”

“Brush your teeth before you come back to bed,” she said with a wink. “I need to give you your
He nodded a dozen times like a goof and threw on his boots and jacket before grabbing Ghost’s leash, eager for this walk to be over before it had even begun.

He whistled tunelessly as he and Ghost followed the same path from last night, the new-fallen snow around four inches total. Their tracks from last night were still visible though softened and filled in a bit. He walked in Sansa’s footsteps and looked forward to being warmed back up with a Birthday Morning Kiss to celebrate 28 years on this earth. He couldn’t have felt any giddier at the thought if it’d been his 8th birthday and his mum was baking his favorite cake.

When he got back to the house with Ghost, he could hear Janina cursing to herself in the kitchen. He slipped up the stairs before any other Starks could detect him. He made a pass through the bathroom to clean his teeth and gargled mouthwash for three minutes straight to rid himself of any morning breath.

Ghost cocked his head to the side and watched the procedure with curiosity.

“Yeah, I know you don’t worry about your breath but just trust me on this,” he said to his friend.

His heart was already beating erratically at the thoughts of climbing back in bed with Sansa, of being kissed by Sansa and kissing Sansa silly in return. He paused right outside the door to take his pulse and heard them. Little voices…two of them.

_Ah, fuck…_

Ghost’s ears were alert and he gave Jon an apprehensive look. At least, Jon thought it was apprehensive.

“Don’t worry, buddy. I’ve got your back today. No more ribbons…unless you like that.”

Ghost whined.

“Right.”

Jon plastered on a smile and cracked open the door.

“We’re not supposed to know,” Tess was whispering in her aunt’s ear.

“Tess and I wanted a dog but I heard Mommy on the phone with Daddy when he was out of town last week telling him about the baby that would be coming this summer,” Emma said.

“Where’s the baby staying now if it can’t come till summer, Aunt Sansa?” Tess asked.

Sansa was smiling widely at her nieces who were curled up in the bed beside her and apparently sharing their parents’ big news that they hadn’t shared with anyone else yet.

She gave him an apologetic look. He shrugged and smiled at her. Kisses could wait for a bit.

He sat down on the edge of the bed to join them. Ghost jumped up on the bed to the delight of the four-year-olds and received the love and attention he was owed. And, Jon was made to solemnly swear…a pinky promise…not to share the secret.
“I’m so sorry about this,” Janina said as they all filed out of the house to load up into two vehicles and head to the local pancake house for breakfast. “That stove has been on the fritz for three weeks now. I should’ve known it’d go out when we have family staying.”

“It’s fine, Janina,” Sansa said. “Nothing like a stack of pancakes to fill you up for a seven-hour drive.”

“That sounds like a recipe for misery,” Rickon chimed in.

“I’m sorry, Jon,” Janina added. “Sansa said it was your birthday and I wanted to make you a nice breakfast at least.”

“That’s very kind of you. I wouldn’t want you to go to any extra effort though. We’ll be that much closer to getting on the road this way, too.”

Sansa and Jon had already packed their overnight bags and loaded Ghost’s things into his SUV. Rickon made the decision to ride into town with them which put a damper on her plans to finally give Jon his promised Birthday Morning Kiss. Rickon had always loved dogs though and he was busy enjoying some one-on-one time with Ghost in the back.

Hobb’s Pancake House was always a popular spot in Ardmore and it was packed with people looking to have breakfast out this morning after Christmas. Lots of large parties were waiting for the very few tables that could accommodate them and Robb put their party of seven down on the wait list.

Sansa noticed Jon glancing at his watch. It was a long drive and there was snow on the roads and more expected further north…and the rehearsal dinner was set for 8 o’clock tonight.

*At this rate, I’ll be lucky if we squeeze in a decent kiss before noon.*

However, the delay did give Sansa a little more time with her family. They kept exchanging seats in the cramped waiting area as all took turns entertaining the hungry and impatient children.

Jon kept ducking out to check on Ghost in the SUV…and maybe avoiding the awkwardness of some of Rickon’s questions.

“Sansa mentioned you stitched up her foot the night you moved in. How’d that come about?”

She gave Jon a very grateful look when he mentioned the broken candle holder and left out the vibrator bit.

She was thrilled when Robb sat beside her and sweetly held her hand while telling her she’d be an aunt again by August. She hugged her brother and sister-in-law both as Jon had taken the girls out to check on Ghost with him.

“We’re not telling the girls just yet,” he said quietly. “Soon…but they’re so young.”

“Of course,” she said barely suppressing her giggles at what the parents didn’t know.

At long last, they were all seated and enjoyed their high-calorie breakfast. Sansa chose her beloved lemon crepes and recommended the cinnamon apple spice pancakes to Jon. He tucked in with
relish but they both feared it would feel like an extra-long ride afterwards.

Rickon managed to embarrass Jon thoroughly by telling the server it was his birthday knowing full well that it would lead to everyone at the table and a gang of Hob’s servers singing to him. Sansa would’ve been mortified if it was happening to her and she felt some sympathy for him but she was too much of a Stark to be surprised.

And truthfully, despite the blaze of color on his cheeks, he didn’t seem to mind all that much once the singing was done.

“I’m still looking forward to my Birthday Morning Kiss more,” he whispered in her ear afterwards making Sansa’s cheeks flame with color now as Janina smirked at them both.

Robb insisted on treating everyone and got in line to pay. Sansa headed out to see Ghost as Jon dashed into the restroom. They’d agreed to take Ghost on another walk before they pulled out of the parking lot and Sansa decided to go ahead and get him out to stretch a bit before Jon joined them. She left Janina, Rickon and the girls lingering on the front steps of the restaurant. They were discussing the day’s agenda while waiting to say their goodbyes to Jon, Sansa and Ghost.

Ghost hopped out of the SUV and she knelt to attach his leash. She smiled brightly at him and nuzzled his ear and got a lick in return.

“Who’s my good boy?” she cooed.

Ghost licked her once again to tell her ‘it’s me!’

“What a nice-looking dog,” said a voice from behind her…and Sansa’s blood ran cold.

No. Please, no.

She didn’t want to look. She wanted to pretend she’d imagined that voice.

I’ll turn around and it’ll just be some friendly stranger. A dog lover. Someone. Anyone but him.

She couldn’t quite bring herself to turn around.

Ghost looked over her shoulder. There was a low rumble emanating from his chest now. His red eyes suddenly looked menacing.

“No, Ghost,” she whispered.

“Reminds me of another dog I once knew,” he said next in that tone, that same tone he’d used at school the day after Lady had been killed.

“Shame about your dog, Sansa.”

And, he’d smiled then, a gloating, hideous leer that had made her knees buckle.

She stood and turned to face him now, keeping herself firmly between him and Ghost. He’d never get to hurt Ghost.

He looked the same, just a couple of years older than last time she’d seen him. Same blond hair, same emerald green eyes that shimmered with mischief and cruelty by turns.

“Hello, Sansa. Lovely seeing you here.”
Her heart started fluttering wildly, like a bird trapped in a cage. Her breath was already growing short. *Please…don’t panic. Don’t do this now.* The tears were already forming in her eyes. That was the last thing she wanted. She didn’t want him to know he could still make her cry. She didn’t want to let him see her weak and shaken by nothing more than his voice and a greeting.

“Joffrey,” she said, his name slipping so quietly from her lips on the breeze that she scarcely heard it herself.

But then, something curious happened.

She felt Ghost nudge the back of her leg gently and a sense of calm came over her. The fear flew away and the blinders that fear had shuttered her eyes with for so long were pulled off. She saw him for what he truly was. A stalker perhaps but ultimately just a bully. A bully and a coward…for all bullies are cowards in the end. He was always rather pathetic, she decided.

Jon washed his hands and left the restroom to join Sansa and Ghost for their walk. Robb was nearly to the cashier now to pay for breakfast and he stopped Jon briefly to talk. He’d mellowed the big brother act since yesterday and they chatted about things like college and their jobs.

Once the bill was paid, they joined Janina and Rickon on the steps. The girls were walking along the benches out front with their arms out to the side as though they were gymnasts on balance beams.

He looked for Sansa and spotted her in the parking lot, standing beside the SUV with Ghost. There was a man facing her. He could only see the back of his blond head but immediately noticed the way Ghost seemed crouched…tense and ready to attack.

“No fucking way,” Robb hissed under his breath.

“Who is that?” Jon asked as Janina’s head whipped around to see what her husband was looking at.

“Hey!” Janina shouted darting down the steps with her husband on her heels. “You, get the…get away from her!” she yelled.

Realization dawned then. He’d never seen a photo of him. Sansa had never given him a physical description but Jon just knew in that instant who was standing there. Right there in front of Sansa. Robb had grabbed his wife, his pregnant wife, by the arm to stop her from getting into a violent altercation apparently. And their little girls were there.

No one would stop Jon though.

He ran past Janina and Robb to reach her, to remind her she was safe. He remembered the fear he’d seen in her eyes, what he’d witnessed in October when he’d found her crumpled in a heap on her apartment floor in the midst of her panic attack. This asshole did not get to hurt her or frighten her anymore, he vowed.

He grabbed Joffrey by the shoulder and roughly spun him around. The man’s green eyes widened
and he yelped in surprise.

“Stay away from her,” he growled at him.

Ghost started barking and growling with rage. Everything about his normally sweet and docile dog spoke of aggression; his tail was hanging low, the fur around his neck was bristled and his muzzle was pulled back in a snarl.

Jon couldn’t agree more with the way Ghost was behaving.

But he remembered what Sansa had said about Robb being arrested for beating this shit up as a young man, not yet twenty, and getting arrested for it. What good would it do Sansa if Jon attacked this man unprovoked and wound up getting hauled to jail over it?

And if Ghost attacked him, would this guy try and say he was a dangerous dog? Would he try to use the authorities to press charges and even try to have him put down?

“Ghost…sit,” Jon said sternly.

Ghost sat. He might not have liked it but he sat.

He looked to Sansa next. “Are you alright he asked? Has he hurt you or threatened you?”

He was surprised to see her blue eyes looking clearly back at him, no fear in sight. She did look relieved though. “I’m fine, Jon. I’m just fine,” she said with a genuine smile at him.

“You leave her alone,” he said as he let go of Joffrey’s shoulder.

“Why so hostile? I’m just meeting my mother for pancakes, man,” Joffrey said with a smirk. “I didn’t do anything wrong.”

“Not today maybe,” Sansa said. She walked over to Jon and took his hand. “But you’ve done enough in the past. I’ve not heard from you in a year and half. Let’s go for a longer stretch this time. Come on, Jon. This good boy needs a walk,” she said before she patted Ghost on the head.

Hot, sweet and hungry were the kisses they shared in the front seat of his SUV once they’d bid their farewells to her family and finished walking Ghost.

She’d seen Joffrey watching her from the window of the restaurant once where he sat having breakfast with his mother. She’d turned her back on him and focused on telling her loved ones good-bye and promising that she’d be back to visit before long…by August at least.

“Sansa…are you certain you’re alright?” Jon had asked as soon as they climbed into the vehicle.

“Positive,” she had answered before she leaned over the center console towards him.

She raised her hands to cradle his face and he did the same to her. She kissed him tenderly at first and then more passionately. Desire coiled in her belly just as it had the night before…and the night before. She had to fight the urge to climb into his lap in the middle of Hobb’s parking lot.
They parted to catch their breath, Jon’s pupils were blown with need and his breathing was ragged. He was flexing his hand against his thigh. His jeans looked distinctly tight. She’d never wanted a man so much in her life. She’d never felt so wanted in return.

“That was, um…your Birthday Morning Kiss,” she whispered as her fingers still toyed with his curls.

“That’s the best birthday gift I’ve ever received,” he said with an endearingly besotted smile.

“Oh…just wait till I give you your Birthday Night Kiss.”

He groaned and leaned over the steering wheel with dramatic flair making her laugh. “How am I supposed to drive for the next seven hours with you next to me and…Christ, Sansa. I want you so badly. I promise I’ll wait for you to be ready but I have to say it.”

“I like hearing you say it,” she replied quietly, feeling a rush of excitement mixed with her nerves. He leaned towards her but she cleared her throat and said, “We do have a long ways to go.” He groaned again until she added, “But there’s a hotel room waiting for us at the end of the night.” He whimpered, sounding just like Ghost. Ghost raised his head from the backseat and whimpered in response. “I’m not saying that to…I wouldn’t want you to think I’m a tease. I meant that…”

“Sansa,” he said, taking her hand in his, “our first time is going to be special because it’ll be us, alright? And it’ll be special because we’ll both be ready. Whenever that is…we’ll know it’s right for us. No pressure, no expectations for tonight…except I want more of your spectacular birthday kisses.”

“Agreed,” she said grinning at him.

He kissed her chastely on the lips before starting the engine and then pulled out of the parking lot.

By the time they reached Trenton, the snow was coming down steadily and Jon had to focus on traffic and the road conditions.

Sansa climbed into the back seat, saying she might take a nap with Ghost.

“My best boy,” she whispered sweetly while stroking his soft white fur. “You were with me today, Ghost…and I wasn’t afraid anymore.”

Ghost laid his head in her lap and gave her puppy eyes.

She caught Jon glancing at her through the rearview mirror and she smiled at him while continuing to pet Ghost.

Dumb luck or fate. It really didn’t matter. She’d never wanted to see him again. But Sansa supposed one couldn’t run way from unpleasant things forever. So naturally, of all the places to run into Joffrey in Ardmore or anywhere, they’d meet at Hobb’s Pancake House the day after Christmas.

I wasn’t alone though…and I wasn’t afraid like before.

The things Joffrey had done to her, the way he’d made her fearful and uncertain for years hadn’t gone away. But things were different now. She might still wake up short of breath in the middle of the night. The sound of his voice might always make the hair on the back of her neck stand up. But something had shifted inside of her now. And, he would never have the power to make her avoid her hometown and her loved ones again.
She leaned against the window with the warm body of Ghost beside her. The glass fogged up from her breath and she traced a heart. Then, her finger traced a J and an S inside the heart. Ghost nudged her hand and she added a G.

She glanced at the back of Jon’s head, the riot of inky curls she had run her fingers through earlier now stuffed under the cap she’d given him. He’d donned his glasses for the long drive. He looked like the hottest dork imaginable and she couldn’t be happier.

*I love you, Jon Snow,* she thought. *Someday soon...I'm going to say it to you.*

She and Ghost were both asleep before they reached New York.

Chapter End Notes

I know some of you violent types will be saying you wished Jon or Sansa had hit Joffrey or that Ghost had ripped his arm off but I'm trying to be realistic here and those actions, especially without any clear threat, would result in more trouble than they needed. Is this the last of Joffrey? Possibly but I won't say for certain just yet.

Sam and Gilly's rehearsal dinner and Jon and Sansa's first night in Vermont will be coming up in the next chapter.
Let's Rehearse This

Chapter Summary

Jon and Sansa arrive in time for Sam and Gilly's rehearsal despite the weather and get a little carried away when they find themselves alone for a moment. Then, Sansa has an emotional roller coaster of a response when Jon admits something to her.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The weather was far worse than he’d hoped but he was doing his best to hide that from Sansa. Snowfall in Burlington averaged around 18 inches for the month of December. Jon hadn’t anticipated that happening all in one day though. An unexpected blast of Arctic Air had swooped down out of Canada and blown across Lake Champlain leading to a heavy lake effect snow for the entire region.

When they’d stopped for gas, Jon had texted Sam to check on things and tell him they were making slow progress but should make it to the rehearsal alright. He’d also taken the opportunity to remind Sam of his earlier concerns about the late December wedding. It’s terribly tempting to say ‘I told you so’ after all. He even went so far as to attach a screen shot of a portion of their conversation from months earlier.

SAM: Don’t say it.
JON: Don’t say what? Travel nightmare? Too late. I said it months ago.
SAM: You suck.
JON: Is Gilly ok?
SAM: Apart from the fact that our wedding is bringing a blizzard with it? She’s fabulous.
JON: Is she upset?
SAM: No, she’s eerily cheerful. Honestly, I’m a bit frightened. I suspect she's borderline manic the past two days.
JON: I wouldn’t recommend psychoanalyzing your bride the day before her wedding, Dr. Tarly.
SAM: You’re right. This is why I need you here.

The roads were treated and the snow plows were staying busy. He’d put the chains on his tires south of Montpelier but it was extremely slow going for that last stretch along I-89.

And, he still had another issue to broach with Sansa after texting with Sam. He glanced over at her
and thought maybe that conversation could wait until they reached their destination.

Sansa’s hands were balled into fists in her lap. Her face looked grim and her shoulders were tight with tension. Ghost could read her well, too. He kept sticking his big snout over the passenger seat to lick her cheek. Jon didn’t think his wet tongue and doggie breath was really helping matters but Sansa would absently pat his head and smile. Then, she’d return to staring anxiously out at the road ahead…not that they could see much past ten feet in front of them now.

The sun had set before 5PM on one of the shortest days of the year. They’d went from dark grey, overcast skies and snow all day to nothing but blackness that yawned before them punctuated by the swirling snowflakes in his headlights and the headlights of other fools out on the road tonight.

“We’re okay,” he said for probably the hundredth time and cringed when he realized how often he was saying it now. Every five minutes at least.

“I know. It’s beautiful,” she commented half-heartedly.

“We should be at the college in twenty minutes. I’m sorry there’s not time to go to the hotel first.”

“It’s okay. You said the rehearsal and dinner wasn’t dressy.”

“It’s not,” he confirmed.

He was wearing black jeans and the dark-grey sweater Sansa had given him for Christmas. She was in skinny jeans, boots and a soft, cream-colored sweater. She’d braided her hair so that it hung over her right shoulder a little while ago. She looked like an angel.

The Champlain Room & Terrace at Champlain College where the wedding was being held was fancy enough but Sam and Gilly were very down to earth. The rehearsal dinner was just immediate family and the wedding party so Sam’s mother and sisters had said they’d keep it simple and denim was welcome attire.

Gilly’s step-father was springing for the wedding though and since Gilly was the first of the girls to get married, the family had pulled out all the stops for the ceremony itself.

Could’ve just eloped to the tropics though, Jon thought when he felt the tires skid a bit when he turned onto campus.

Sansa suppressed a yelp and clutched the arm rest for dear life.

“We’re okay,” he said automatically and briefly squeezed Sansa’s hand before putting it back on the wheel.

She nodded her head and said, “I know.” She didn’t sound convincing at all.

They arrived at last and walked on stiff legs through the deep snow to the entrance. Ghost was coming with them of course. It was bitterly cold. He couldn’t leave him sitting in the SUV. Plus, his poor friend needed a chance to take care of business and eat a bite.

There were a few people milling around the hallway when they entered the venue but Jon didn’t recognize anyone at first. A young lady in a UCONN Huskies sweatshirt and jeans approached them with a smile.

“Hey. Are you here for the Blizzard Wedding?”
Jon chuckled and said, “We are.”

“I’m Lily, Gilly’s sister…one of Gilly’s sisters,” she informed them cheerfully as she shook hands with him and Sansa.

“Nice to meet you, Lily. I’m Jon Snow and this is Sansa Stark.”

“Oh! You’re the Best Man!”

“I am,” he said. “Sansa and I drove up from Pennsylvania today. This is Ghost by the way,” he said next introducing his dog.

“He’s gorgeous. Dogs aren’t really permitted in here unless they’re service animals.” She chewed on her lip before saying, “But with this weather and your drive, we’ll see if we can skirt the rules tonight. Sam’s inside the main ballroom. The rehearsal is not supposed to take more than 20 minutes and then we’ll be eating.”

“Great. I’ll see to Ghost and be in shortly.”

Sansa stayed in the hall making small talk with Lily while Jon walked the dog in the snowstorm. After Ghost’s needs had been met, he led him to an empty coat room that Lily had pointed out and saw him settled.

“So…best behavior while we’re here and all that, right?” he asked his dog.

Ghost gave an annoyed ruff in response.

“Hey, I’m not trying to insult your intelligence here. I just thought a gentle reminder…”

Ghost started to growl softly.

“Alright. I’m shutting up. And as soon as we finish here, we’ll go to the hotel.”

Ghost wagged his tail twice.

“And we’re sharing a room with Sansa since the hotel screwed up our reservation.”

Ghost wagged some more.

“Or Sam’s fucking with me. Would he fuck with me that way, you think?”

Ghost shrugged…at least Jon thought it looked like a shrug.

_God, I need a beer_, he thought as he rolled his tight shoulders and heard his neck crack. “I’ve not told Sansa yet.”

“You’ve not told Sansa what?” she asked unexpectedly from behind him.

He jumped and spun in mid-air to face her as he shouted, “Oh, holy shit!”

She laughed and Ghost barked.

“Sorry! I don’t know anyone here so I thought I’d see how Ghost was doing. Didn’t mean to startle you.”

“Yeah…um, sorry about that,” he said, rubbing at the back of his neck. “I guess I’m still a bit tense
from the drive.”

“Me, too. Wait…I thought you kept saying ‘we’re okay.’”

“Well, we were okay but conditions were worse than I expected. I didn’t want you to know that I was keyed up, too. You were freaked out enough for the both of us.”

She smiled in agreement but then her eyes narrowed. “So, what else haven’t you told me, Jon?” she asked with her hands on her hips and that look in her eye, the one that told him to fess up now.

“I, uh…Sam texted me earlier and said there was a problem with the rooms reservations. There’s only one reserved now. He tried to keep checking with them today but with the weather and holidays, they’re all booked up.”

“Oh,” she said quietly. She shrugged next and said, “That’s not really a problem. We shared a room at Robb’s.”

“I know. I just…I didn’t want you to think that…I planned it this way.”

“Planned what, Jon?” she asked with a twinkle in her eye as she stepped closer.

Oh, nothing. Just having you next to me in bed at a hotel on top of everything the past 48 hours when I desperately want you but I’m trying to make this special because I love you and you deserve the best and I don’t really want to give the dog a show. Speaking of the dog…it’s just you, me and the dog in this coat closet.

She was standing so close now. He could smell the cocoa-butter hand lotion she’d applied right before they’d stopped. He could practically taste her lips and that damned cinnamon-flavored lip gloss he’d seen her apply earlier.

“I didn’t want you to think I planned on getting just one room so you’d be, um…forced to share a bed with me again.”

“Who says I’ll be sharing the bed with you?” she asked. She smirked when he started babbling out apologies for presuming they’d share and how he could certainly sleep on the floor with Ghost…or in the lobby if she preferred. “I’m kidding, Jon. I know you’d never do that. And anyway…those Birthday Night Kisses will be all the sweeter if we’re in bed together, won’t they?”

“Oh…yeah,” he replied and swore his voice climbed an octave. What the fuck? I must be dizzy from her scent. Wonder what my pulse is right now…never mind. “You know…” he began, feeling a bit brazen now, “it is my birthday and I did manage to get us safely here in the Blizzard of the Century so I was thinking maybe we could rehearse those Birthday Night…”

“A rehearsal, huh?” she laughed right before she closed the closet door behind them and kissed him.

He groaned with need as his hands went to her waist, pulling her close. Sansa put her hands on his shoulders and fisted his sweater. She moaned into his mouth when he slipped his tongue in to taste hers. There was no mistaking the tightness in his pants as their tongues battled for dominance.

Her hands slid down from his shoulders to grasp his ass and pull him even closer. His eyes widened in surprise.

“I’ve always thought you had a nice ass, Dr. Snow,” she teased.
“Yeah? How long have you thought that, Miss Stark?” he asked smugly.

“Since the day we met and I watched you walk up the stairs.” She squeezed his ass again and started sucking on his neck.

“Oh, fuck me,” he muttered as he walked her back against the closet’s wall.

“That sounds nice,” she whispered in his ear as she lifted one of her long legs and wrapped it around his waist. “But we’d need a condom for that. How about we call this a dress rehearsal of sorts though? A little tension breaker from that long, (a teasing thrust) hard (another) ride?”

“Sansa,” he said weakly before he ground himself against her in response. “You’re killing me.”

Part torment and part delight, Jon had to admit this was a good tension breaker all the same.

There was barely any light in here but he could see her eyes were shining. He loved that hitch in her breath as his hungry mouth sought that sensitive place right behind her ear. He bucked into her and feared he’d come in his pants if she kept moaning his name that way.

His hands traced her ribcage and then cupped her breasts. Even with her bra and sweater on, he could feel her nipples stiffening as his thumbs deftly tweaked them.

“Jon…right there, please,” she whimpered. His cock was rubbing against her clit, giving it the proper stimulation even through their clothes. His hands were on her breasts and his mouth found her pulse point. “Oh, yes. Jon, I want…”

“What do you want, sweet girl?” he begged. “Tell me. I’ll do whatever you want.”

“I want to come. It’s been so long and…ohhh!” she cried when he nipped her ear and started grinding into her harder.

“Fuck, yes,” he growled in her ear. “God, I wanted to get you off last night so bad. I wish I could see your face better right now. I get so hot just thinking about how pretty you’d be coming for me.” She moaned louder in response to his dirty talk so he took that as a sign she didn’t mind it. “I’m going to make you come in this closet, Sansa. I want to know your panties are soaked from wanting me the whole time we’re here tonight. No one here but us will know that I…”

“Oh, God…Jon! Don’t stop. Ohhh…FUCK!” she cried out before she sagged heavily against him.

He could feel her heart pounding as he held her and he kissed her brow. She shuddered one final time and whispered, “I can’t believe we just did that here.”

“I can’t believe we just did that here, either,” he laughed softly in response.

He didn’t care though. He couldn’t think about where he was or wedding rehearsals or Ghost snuffling at their feet. Nothing existed outside their darkened hideaway. It was just Sansa and him and their bodies pressed together as she sighed his name again.

Until it wasn’t just them and their bodies pressed together…

“Yes, Mother!” he heard Sam call out irritably over his shoulder as he flung open the coat closet door. “I’ll hang up your bloody coat,” he started muttering under his breath right before Sansa shrieked at him.

Sam dropped the coat in question to the floor and shrieked right back at them.
“Eeeekkk!”

“Gah-ahh!”

“God damn it, Sam!” Jon cursed in frustration.

*Are you fucking kidding me? Yeah…okay…maybe dry humping her in a coat closet wasn’t exactly the ideal place to make her come for the first time but…*

“Sorry!” Sam shouted with his hands thrown up in front of his face. Sansa buried her own face in Jon’s neck when Sam lowered his hands a moment later. Jon just held her tighter and shot daggers at his friend when he said, “Um…hi, I’m Sam. Sam Tarly. Lovely to…I heard a rumor that my Best Man had arrived. Oh, look! It’s Ghost. Hello, Ghost.”

Ghost rose to his feet for a pat.

“Sam…” Jon grumbled.

“So, this must be Sansa. I’m so glad to meet you at last. Jon talks about you constantly, you know,” Sam tittered on nervously. Sam had a habit of talking nonstop when he was embarrassed or didn’t know how to extract himself from an uneasy situation. “Please, don’t kill me,” he whispered next. “I mean, you seem very nice but Jon might kill me. I’m getting married tomorrow though. She’s a lovely girl. I’d hate to disappoint her by dying tonight. Would you like to…when you’re decent…I mean, not that you’re not…”

And just like that, Sansa was laughing.

Jon wasn’t though. Perhaps a dozen years from now when he’d finally lost count of the number of times he’d made Sansa come, he’d forgive his friend and laugh about this night.

“It’s nice to meet you, Sam,” Sansa said warmly as she emerged from the cocoon of Jon’s arms.

“Oh, my!” Sam blinked at her like an owl a few times. “She is quite…well done, Jon. Um…so, I take it no one’s too upset about that mix up with the room reservations then, eh?”

Her hands were clasped in Jon’s under the poinsettia, mistletoe and holly covered altar while they stood face to face in front of the assembled group of onlookers. He’d managed to fix his hair from their escapade in the closet and Sansa had re-plaited her braid.

Jon pulled her hands up to where they were at heart level and she would almost swear she could feel his heart pounding with the same intensity as her own. They were barely six inches apart.

“Could you maybe step back half a foot?” the minister asked.

“Um…yeah,” Jon said sheepishly as he took one tiny step back. He grinned at her like a besotted fool.

“Now…do you, Jon, take this woman…um…”
“Sansa,” she whispered.

“This woman, Sansa?” the minister intoned solemnly.

“I do,” he said.

“Right. And do you, Sansa, take this man, Jon… you know…” the man said while twirling his wrist at them.

Sansa stared into Jon’s eyes and felt like her own would soon be filling with tears of joy.

She gulped and started to answer. “I…”

“And then we do the rings,” the minister cut in breezily, talking over them to where Sam and Gilly stood observing. “Your best man will hand over hers and then her maid of honor will do likewise. Thank you both for being my props,” he added to Jon and Sansa as he beckoned Sam and Gilly up to take their places.

“You bet,” Jon said, his cheeks a rosy red that no doubt matched her own.

Sansa sat down on the second row of seats while Jon moved to his spot by Sam’s side.

“Let’s practice the recessional once and then we’re a go for tomorrow,” the wedding coordinator chimed in next.

She paired off the wedding party and Sansa only frowned slightly as Jon took Lily’s arm to escort her to the back of the room.

Sam and Gilly were lovely people. Sansa figured they must be for Jon to speak so highly of them. And despite the mortifying way she’d met Sam, she decided to take it as a good omen since she’d been mortified the night she met Jon, too.

_Vibrators from Hell. Getting drunk at a dinner party and making pathetic advances towards him. Nearly busted by Rickon last night. Caught grinding in the coat closet by his friend. I guess when we have sex, we’ll be lucky if the bedroom wall doesn’t collapse or it doesn’t wind up on some security camera footage or make national news._

Looking back though, she didn’t find herself all that bothered. Not when Sam was so sweet.

And that orgasm… _God, that was needed._

After the run-in with Joffrey in Ardmore and then the tense drive through the snow tonight, added to the fact that she’d not had an orgasm induced by another human being in over a year and a half, she’d needed that release. In fact, the past several weeks with Jon had her quite desperate for it.

Furthermore, Sansa couldn’t name a single time with Harry that compared to that one session of passion with Jon in the coat closet. There was just something about Jon. The sexual attraction had been there from the first. But friendship and trust had grown between them and into something more. Maybe that was the difference.

She’d been tentative with Harry, too emotionally scarred from Joffrey’s stalking and then Harry’s cheating to ever gain much confidence in the sack.

She doubted it would be like that with Jon.

_I’d say not. If there’d been a condom on hand, you might’ve fucked him right there in the coat_
And as she’d climaxed there in the coat closet, the last of Sansa’s hesitation melted away. She wanted Jon as much as he wanted her.

And God, was he ever making things difficult at dinner tonight.

“Sansa?” Gilly said with a smile.

“I’m sorry. I beg your pardon. I was daydreaming,” she said as Gilly looked at her attentively from the other side of Jon and Sam and Sansa suspected she’d missed something.

It wasn’t completely true. Jon was staring at her and he’d just asked her something as well.

“Are those panties still wet, sweet girl? I want to make you wet again when we get to the hotel tonight. Will you let me do that to you, Sansa?” he’d rumbled in her ear.

“Yes,” she’d squeaked and subconsciously shifted in her seat to alleviate the keening ache he’d brought about with just those words.

Fuck me...that mouth. Actually...fuck me with that mouth. Would he do that? Harry never liked to do that but Jon might not mind if...

She’d never known she could be so turned on by dirty talk until it was coming out of Jon’s mouth. Joffrey had said vile and threatening things. Harry sometimes said stuff in bed. It usually made her feel degraded. Not Jon though. He knew what to say and how to say it and...oh, help.

“Oh, you’re fine, Sansa!” Gilly said with a laugh, drawing her out of her lust-filled thoughts again.

“I was just asking how you enjoy teaching?”

“It’s good...good. Really good. I like teaching. I like kids. Kids are good. Teaching is...I like teaching a lot,” she rambled like an idiot as the flush crept up her neck.

“Is it rough when you have rowdy students though?”

Sansa started to answer when she noticed he way Jon’s lips curled into a strange little smirk at Gilly’s question. He was sitting very stiffly…and his pupils had darkened.

Interesting.

“Well, sometimes...I don’t like it but I sometimes I have to get...firm with them,” she said as she leaned into Jon’s space ostensibly to answer Gilly without shouting but mostly so she could slide her hand down to Jon’s lap under the table cloth. She gave his thigh a squeeze through his jeans, close but not quite there.

“Firm, yes...” Gilly said. “How do you punish them at that age?”

“Punish?” she repeated, rolling that word around in her mouth.

Jon grasped his beer and drank it down as his other hand tightened around the armrest of his chair desperately. He shot her a pleading look and she took pity. He hadn’t got to come earlier and she didn’t wish to make him miserable.

“Oh, we normally just redirect at that age,” she said lightly. “Positive reinforcement, lots of reminders about the expectations. I might make them write a paragraph about what they did wrong
occasionally.”

Gilly nodded politely and returned to her chicken and rice.

“Do you have a teacher kink, Jon Snow?” Sansa whispered in his ear.

“Maybe, Miss Stark,” he grinned wickedly.

“Oh…so, your good boy act is all an act then?”

“Well, I might…bend the rules from time to time.”

“Bend the rules? You don’t think making a mess of a girl’s underwear in a semi-public place is a bit more serious than bending the rules? I’d consider that rule breaking behavior. One of these days, I just might need to discipline you...if you'd like.”

His eyes were the size of quarters when he gulped. “Em…yes, please,” he whimpered just as Sam started chatting in his other ear again.

The hotel where they were staying was just a few blocks from the event location so even creeping along at ten miles per hour along the snow-covered streets, they were still there quickly.

Sansa’s stomach was a ball of anxiety. All the teasing at dinner, the action in the coat closet…it’d been so long since she’d felt this way.

*I’ve never felt this way*, she realized. She wanted Jon but was tonight going to be *the* night?

As though he could read her mind, he shut off the car’s engine and said, “Remember what I said this morning. No expectations on this end beyond more Birthday kisses.”

“Okay,” she said. “But, Jon…if I wanted to…”

“I’m sure the pharmacy across the street has what we’d need,” he answered gruffly before lifting his eyes to hers.

His eyes were glassy looking. He’d only had one beer with dinner. She suspected that wasn’t why his eyes were glassy.

He took her hand in his and kissed it. He drew a deep breath…and then another. His smile was sweet and nervous and she had a pretty good idea what he was about to say now.

“Sansa…I love you,” he said in a low but soft voice. “No matter what happens tonight, I need to say it now. I want you to know it’s not tied to whether or not we have sex tonight or tomorrow night or six months from now. But please…I hope you don’t want to wait for six months from now. I mean, I’ll wait if you do but I’m hoping…anyway, I’ve wanted to say it for a while now. I fell in love with you a while ago and now I just…I love you. I’m in love with you, Sansa Stark.”

She sat there unblinking for a few moments, staring at him. He loved her. She loved him, too. She wanted to say it, too. For the first time in her life, Sansa Stark was actually in love and the man she was in love with was sitting right in front of her and needed to hear it, too.
But things just don’t always go the way one might wish so instead of a soft sigh and a gentle reciprocation, Jon saw her face crumple as she gave in to a pathetic sob.

“I…”

Her voice broke into a whine. His eyebrows shot up in concern and she wanted to assure him that she wasn’t truly upset by what he said, just emotional. Yet another humiliating moment in the life of Sansa Stark.

She giggled at the thought and then another sob came out…and another.

Ghost’s head popped up from the back and he howled along with her sobs.

“Sansa…are you…” Jon began in clear terror that he’d fucked everything up.

“I’m…good. I’m…I’m in love with you, too,” she managed to get out in the highest pitched whine that human ears could make out before she succumbed to more sobbing.

Ghost whined in response and howled again.

“So, you’re saying you’re happy that I love you…and you love me, too?” Jon asked in a doubtful tone.

“Absolutely!” she wailed. “I love you so much!” she shouted next.

Jon laughed and pulled her close for a kiss. “Good,” he said with an affectionate kiss on the tip of her nose. “Let’s go check in then, okay?”

“Yeah, let’s go,” she answered as Ghost licked her face free of tears.

Chapter End Notes

Yeah, we're getting closer to them banging...lol. Thanks for hanging in there :)


Jon held Sansa’s hand as they entered the lobby of the hotel with Ghost and he had to resist the urge to check his pulse. He wasn’t sure when that had become such a nervous habit of his. It had started in Med School when they’d first been taught how to do it properly. He got in the habit of checking it before and after a run. Then, he’d started checking randomly for various things; a fight with Ygritte, a tense or frustrating moment at the hospital during his days as a med student, when Ghost would get too excited and make a mess on the floor...

And since he’d met Sansa…well, he was checking it a lot now.

*There’s no need to check it. The woman you love loves you back. And she might even be willing to have sex with you tonight. Your pulse is likely through the roof right now.*

He took some calming breaths and looked around the lobby. There was a large group of kids, maybe a dozen of them between the ages of 11 and 15, watching TV and talking loudly in the common area. Despite the kids though, he noticed the fancy décor and thought it looked a bit posh for a pet-friendly hotel. Sam had vaguely mentioned a weight limit. Sansa had been confident they could make it work though.

“May I help you?” a young guy behind the counter asked.

Jon scratched at his beard with the hand that held Sansa’s…another nervous habit.

“Sorry,” he muttered and kissed her hand to try and play off his nerves. He turned his attention to the clerk. “Um, we’re supposed to have a room reserved. We were supposed to have two but I believe there’s just one now. It’s under the last name Tarly.”
“Yes, Dr. Tarly had a few rooms reserved with us for his wedding. Your name, sir?”

“Snow, Jon Snow.”

“Yes, Dr. Snow…Dr. Tarly called several times today and said you’d be arriving late. We’re terribly sorry about the mix up with the reservations,” the man said glancing bashfully at Sansa. “It’s a king. There’s, uh…only one bed, I mean.”

“It’s fine,” Jon replied politely.

More than fine, his cock added.

Shut up, you! Don’t get ahead of yourself.

“Dr. Tarly mentioned that you would be bringing a pet,” he said next peering over the desk at Ghost.

“Yes…this is my dog, Ghost.”

“Oh, dear,” he said with a frown. “He’s quite a…I’m sure he’s a very good dog but we do have a 50-pound weight limit on the…”

“Oh, Ghost is 50 on the nose so we’re good,” Sansa chimed in as smooth as silk.

“Well, I wouldn’t wish to contradict you, Mrs. Snow, uh…miss,” the young man said uncomfortably. “But our manager keeps a pet scale in the back and…”

Jon’s cheeks flushed and so did Sansa’s. Not only from the clerk’s uncertainty of what to call her and hearing her called Mrs. Snow but from the simple fact that Ghost was 80 pounds if he weighed an ounce.

More like 90 pounds. We’re screwed. And now I’ll have to sleep in the SUV with Ghost and hope we don’t freeze to death…or on Sam’s couch. Or we could go back to that coat closet if the building hasn’t been locked up.

Jon looked down at his dog.

Ghost whimpered and gave him sad puppy eyes. "I'm sorry I'm so big, Dad."

"Hush. You're perfect, my precious boy."

But, Sansa gave the clerk a brilliant smile and tossed her hair back over her shoulder. She shrugged off her coat and handed it to Jon before she leaned across the counter. Her fitted sweater did little to hide her…natural allurements. The guy's eyes boggled...along with Jon's. She glanced at the clerk’s name badge.

“Listen…Hobert? Is Hobert your name? That’s an interesting name…very manly,” she said with perfect sincerity as she batted those beautiful blue eyes at him.

Hobert’s formally professional demeanor disappeared in an instant and he gazed at her like a moon-struck calf.

He can’t be more than twenty, Jon realized. And she’s gorgeous and…is she really doing this?

“God, it’s been a long day for us…Hobert,” Sansa sighed dreamily. She puckered her lips in the most tantalizing fashion when she formed the ‘B’ in Hobert. “I can’t wait to fall into bed and sleep.
I love hotel rooms at the end of a journey, don’t you? I love getting out of my clothes at long last and sinking into those clean, white sheets. I love to stretch and just…well,” she giggled like a girl and drew a finger up to her lip flirtatiously.

Fuck me.

Precisely, his cock added.

“Oh…listen to me running on and on, Hobert, when I know you have rules to follow. I like rules. I teach 2nd grade. I’m very fond of rule followers. But sometimes…we can bend those rules just a teensy little bit. Today is Dr. Snow’s birthday, you know. Isn’t that nice?”

Sansa walked her fingers across the desk and patted Hobert’s sleeve. His eyes went from her face down to his arm…as if she’d seared him with her touch, just touching the sleeve of his blue button-down. Hobert licked his lips as Sansa leaned a bit closer. She twirled her free hand through her hair.

Ghost growled softly but Hobert paid him no mind.

If Jon hadn’t know what she was doing, he might have growled, too. He was already starting to wish he’d been named Hobert.

“We’ve been on the road all day and I’m simply exhausted, Hobert. Poor baby Ghost has been miserable in the car. It’s been a rough ride. And, it snowed on us, Hobert,” she said with the most bewitching little pout. “The whole drive. It snowed all day. Can you believe that?”

Hobert shook his head sadly as though he’d never heard of anything so wretched as driving and it snowing all day.

*You live in Vermont, kid. Jesus Christ…I know she’s hot but can you maybe not drool all over the fucking counter? I’m right here!*

“We were supposed to have two rooms but…well, there was that little mix up with the reservations. I’m sure it’s not your fault but…can I tell you a little secret?” Hobert nodded rapidly and Jon would swear there was spittle running down his chin. “I’m kind of an old-fashioned girl. That’s why we wanted two rooms. But if there’s only the one…I’ll need my Ghostie there to protect my honor,” she said with a cheeky wink.

Ghost ruffled out an agreement.

*You little minx. I never would’ve thought you’d...*

“It’d be so sweet if you could just go ahead and maybe make an exception. Just this once… please?”

“I’ll, uh…ahem…can you just sign this, sir?” Hobert said as he absent-mindedly shoved some paperwork over the counter towards Jon. He put his elbows on the counter and rested his chin on his hands as he continued to stare at Sansa.

“Oh, thank you!” she said, clapping her hands together. ”I can’t wait to take a hot shower! I want to wash all the grim off my body,” she said next as Jon signed the papers whilst trying not to laugh…and hoped some less-hormonally charged hotel employee didn’t bust them.

*Uh-huh,* Hobert said in a voice about an octave higher than earlier.
“Hot shower and bed…right after we get sweet Ghost settled. Does that sound alright with you, Dr. Snow?”

Do I get to shower with you? “Uh…yeah,” he responded, tugging at the collar of his sweater as Hobert nodded at Sansa’s suggestion.

Jon watched the boy’s hands clumsily reach for two plastic room key cards. How he managed to activate them while staring at Sansa the entire time with the goofiest smile on his face, Jon wasn’t sure.

Ghost snorted loudly.

“Room 407, sir,” he said as he handed them the keys.

“Thank you so much, Hobert,” Sansa said with her sunniest smile yet as she turned to go.

Jon caught Hobert leaning over the counter now and staring at her ass as she walked away.

Ghost barked.

Jon cleared his throat irritably and gave Hobert a pointed look and the clerk flushed crimson now.

“Um…have a good night, sir.”

“I plan on it, Hobert,” Jon said with a cheeky wink of his own before he and Ghost followed Sansa back out the door.

He caught up to her on the sidewalk and she started giggling. It was infectious and he was soon laughing with her. Ghost paced back and forth between them eagerly, panting happily.

“Was that horrid of me?” she asked, slipping her coat back on as they reached the SUV.

“No,” he chuckled. “I just didn’t expect it.”

“I’ve never…that’s not me. That’s much more like Margaery but…well, I couldn’t let them refuse our boy a room for the night just because he’s larger than they like. I’m very anti-weight discrimination.”

His heart fluttered strangely at hearing her say ‘our boy.’ “Me, too. I suppose we should go in the side door though.”

“That might be a good plan. I’m not sure I’m up to flirting with any more hotel staff tonight.”

They gathered their bags and headed up to their room. He turned on the bedside lamp which gave the room a soft rosy glow as it reflected off the burgundy comforter of the king-sized bed.

Sansa excused herself to use the bathroom and he set down the luggage and removed Ghost’s leash.

It was warmer than outside obviously but not as warm as he expected. He checked the thermostat. It was set on 50. He groaned and cranked it up to 70 knowing that Sansa liked to be warm.

Next, Jon set out the doggie bed. Sansa came back out of the bathroom and immediately grabbed her toiletries bag and headed back in there. Ghost whined on his bed until Jon gave him his squeaky toy.
“You don’t get it all night,” Jon warned his friend.

He quickly emptied his bag and then sat down on the bed to test it out.

Squeak

Ghost raised his head and ruffled.

“That was the bed, buddy.”

Jon bounced a time or two.

Squeak, squeak

“It’s still less annoying than your toy,” he added.

Ghost snorted and proceeded to squeak his squirrel some more.

“You two getting settled alright?” she asked when she came back out again. She was still in her jeans and sweater.

“Yeah.”

He sat on the bed watching her move around the room. She was nervous. He was, too.

She hung up his rented tux and her garment bag that held the mystery dress in the closet and said she’d steam them before the wedding tomorrow evening.

“You don’t have to…” he started to say. She gave him a pitying smile and he laughed again. “Of course, that would be very nice.”

Jon went to put his own small bag of toiletries in the bathroom and then sat back down.

Squeak

Sansa was quickly running out of things to put away and he could see the panic flaring in her eye.

Okay…what are we doing? What should I do? Do I make a move or…

You know what to do, his cock said. Go over to that pharmacy, get a box of condoms and then bang her all night long. The weather outside is frightful. You’re not expected to be anywhere before noon tomorrow. You could make a marathon of it.

God…please, shut up. You’re going to reduce me to Hobert like that.

“Jon?” Sansa said. He looked over his shoulder to find her staring at him. She was biting at her bottom lip and looking adorably sweet and unsure. “I didn’t just callously flirt with poor Hobart for Ghost. I wanted us to have this room tonight…together. I wanted…I want you to go to the pharmacy and then…”

He rose from the bed (squeak) and crossed the distanced between them.

“You’re sure?” he asked, his heart pounding in anticipation and joy. She nodded and he gathered her into his arms. “I love you, Sansa.”
She sighed happily and said, “I love you, too.”

He kissed her hungrily, savoring her cinnamon-flavored lip gloss with every nip at her lips. Her hands fisted his sweater like earlier and she started kissing her way across his cheek. She stopped at his ear.

He could feel her hot breath and it made him shudder when she whispered, “I want to make love to you tonight.”

He breathed deeply and buried his face into her soft skin, kissing and nuzzling her sweet-scented flesh. He raised his lips to her ear and asked, “You want to walk over there with me?” She shook her head and said she wanted to take a quick shower to unwind and warm up. “Alright. I’ll be back soon.”

He kissed her softly once more and headed out the door.

And yeah…as soon as he reached the hallway, he checked his pulse.

*Whoa. You may just have a heart attack once you get inside her,* his cock said.

*Fuck you. And maybe.*

Three tweens ran past him as he walked down the hall towards the elevator, shouting and laughing. His phone chimed and he looked down to see a text from Loras.

*Loras: Happy Birthday!!!*

*Jon: Thanks.*

*Loras: You made a condom run yet?*

*Jon: WHAT?!*

*Loras: Just checking. Be good to our Sansa.*

__________________________

Loras cackled at Jon's shocked response. *Okay, maybe not yet but they're getting there. I'd bet money on it. Otherwise, I really need to have a talk with that man when they get back.*

“Loras…I swear to fucking God,” Renly groused from across the room. “Come to bed and leave them both the hell alone.”

“I am just giving them a nudge,” Loras argued.

“They don’t need a nudge. They’re doing just great. She never came back on Christmas Eve. Ten bucks says she shagged him then.”

“No way. Right before his shift? She kissed him at most. But now? Well, we’ll see.”
"The dog's there with them," Renly said. "He might be a deal breaker for sex."

"So? It's a dog. I mean...he seems like a nice dog but he still licks his own ass. I'm sure he won't be bothered by humans rutting and grunting."

"Sansy Pants might be. She's my prim and proper doll."

"I've got a good feeling she'll get past that with Jon," Loras argued.

"Yeah...I've got a good feeling she'll get under Jon before long if she's not already but it's not our business. Would you put that phone down?! I'm gonna tell Nan you're bugging them."

"Leave Nanny alone."

"Come to bed, honey," Renly pled again.

“Just one sec…”

Sansa stood under the hot spray of the shower enjoying the warmth. It was nice to feel clean after the car ride and it was relaxing. She needed it. She'd not had sex in a long time and she was nervous. She loved him and he loved her but this was a huge step.

Plus, the hot water was welcome as the room was cold and the heater didn’t seem to be making much difference.

Once her skin was a glowing pink from the shower, she stepped out and towel dried her hair. Jon was not back yet and she opened the bathroom door. She wrapped a towel around herself and started to grab her pajamas but then hesitated.

You sent him to buy condoms and you're going to put on your old t-shirt and sleep bottoms?

Ghost was happily squeaking his squirrel still.

There was a loud knock on the door. Her heart nearly leapt from her chest and she gasped.

Ghost barked aggressively in response.

Is he back already?

But then she heard raucous squeals and shrieks. She peered out the peephole just in time to see them run off.

Kids. Go to bed for Christ's sake. What is it about hotels that makes all kids want to run around like banshees? And their parents are probably all hiding at the bar...or in their room.

Sansa returned to fretting over what she should be doing when Jon returned. She started trying to think up some sexy way to greet him. She wondered if she should just be naked and sprawled across the bed.
Maybe Loras’s red ribbon idea would’ve worked after all. Argh! Why do I worry so much over presentation and such?

She wasn’t sure. She just did. She tried conjuring up images from romantic movies.

No time for rose petals or champagne. I could go full porno and have my hands down my panties and tell him I was fantasizing about him while he was gone.

She shook her head at that notion.

“Fuck,” she sighed. “He’ll be back soon and I can’t think of one enticing thing to do to make him mad with desire as soon as he opens the door, Ghost.”

Ghost gruffed at her in…disbelief? Annoyance?

“What?” she asked.

Ding!

Sansa walked over to her phone to see a message from Loras.

LORAS: How’s the Birthday Boy? You two managed to make the beast with two backs yet?

SANSA: Jon is fine. You could have just text him. I am not even responding to that other question.

LORAS: I did text him. I’m the soul of thoughtfulness. And you just answered my question.

SANSA: I did not!

LORAS: No, you didn’t…but maybe he did.

SANSA: ...

LORAS: Ok. He didn't. Will you?

SANSA: Goodbye!

“Grrr!” Sansa growled and tossed her phone back down. "Sometimes, Ghost...I'd really like to strangle Loras."

Ghost bobbed his head in agreement. Then, he got up and walked over to the dresser. He nosed the drawer she’d put her things in.

“Hey, Ghost. What are you…OH!”

Sansa walked over and pulled out the lacey black panties she had packed. She’d packed them on a whim of maybe.

Looks like maybe is now a go. And Loras is none the wiser...for now.

“Ghost…you’re a little scary sometimes,” she said in wonder.

Ghost’s ears perked up.
“I’m just kidding. I love you, my sweet boy.”

She knelt next to him to hug him and rub his belly.

Ghost started panting happily and rolling around on his back. His tail hit her side and the towel fell open. She snatched it back up with a squeal.

*He’s a dog, Sansa. Does it matter if Ghost sees you naked? You’re getting ready to let Jon see all of you…and Ghost will get an eyeful of...shit.*

“It’s cold as hell in here. I’m going to slip these on and get on the bed. If he doesn’t hurry, I’m going to be under the covers. Cover your eyes a bit, okay? I’m not sure I want you to see Jon and I, uh…when we’re…” Her cheeks grew hot.

Ghost whined and returned to his bed. He lay down and put his paws over his eyes.

"Thank you," she said gratefully as she pulled the towel back off.

Sansa slipped on the undies and brushed out her hair at the bathroom mirror. She eyed herself critically...the way Harry might have.

*Jon's not Harry so stop worrying about every little imperfection of your body and your face and...everything.*

She applied a bit of lip gloss and smiled at her reflection. *He thinks you're pretty...beautiful. Stop beating yourself up and enjoy him, enjoy loving him.*

Then, she turned down the lights and propped herself up with the plethora of pillows in her best ‘come hither’ pose. Then, she tried another. The bed squeaked softly with her every move. She moved into another pose. She settled on lying on her belly with a pillow under her chest and her legs crossed at the ankle as she had them raised. Just her in her black panties and lying on the bed waiting.

*This should be good. Sexy Sansa...yeah, that’s right. He won’t know what hit him...I hope.*

Ten more minutes passed and her legs dropped back down to the bed.

**SQUEAK! SQUEAK!**

“Ghost…Jon’s probably going to take that away when he gets back.”

**SQUEAK!**

“Ugh…”

Twenty minutes passed and Sansa flopped down on her pillow, resting her chin on her arms. She kept checking the time.

“Could something be wrong? Should I text him?” she asked Ghost.

**SQUEAK!**

“I’m starting to regret buying you that,” she whispered.

Ghost whimpered pitifully and gave her his sad puppy eyes.
“I didn’t mean it!” she said.

Thirty minutes and Sansa was chilled thoroughly by now. She checked the thermostat. It had crept up to 58. She shivered and climbed under the covers.

*Is he stuck in line? During a blizzard? Who’s out shopping this late during a blizzard? Was the pharmacy sold out of condoms and he had to find another one? It’s a blizzard. What else is there to do? I’ll bet condoms sell out right after beer, cigarettes and sliced bread.*

*I’m sure there’s plenty of rubbers out there, Sansa.*

*Then what is taking this long? What if he’s just...is he...could he be having second thoughts about this...about me?*

Tears started to form in the corners of her eyes as she indulged in all manner of self-pity and doubt.

*You’re ridiculous. He’s your best friend. He loves you. And he was horny as hell earlier in the closet.*

*Then, why’s it taking so long to run across the street and buy a pack of condoms?*

*Maybe he got hit by a bus.*

She heard the faint sound of a siren outside.

*Oh, my God! What if he really did get hit by a bus?!*

She checked her phone again. Forty minutes had passed since he’d left to buy condoms.

“Where is he?!” she cried aloud a few minutes later.

And just like that, her phone chimed with a text.

“Thank you, doctor,” the pharmacist said with a huge sigh of relief as the paramedics pulled up to the front of the store. “I shudder to think about what would’ve happened if you hadn’t been here to help Mr. Jenkins.”

“It’s no problem,” Jon said as the EMTs took over.

*It’s a problem here, pal,* his cock said.

*Shut up. Sansa will understand...hopefully.*

He’d spent the last fifteen minutes monitoring the elderly man’s vital signs after doing chest compressions and rescue breaths for the previous ten.

Mrs. Jenkins kept kissing his cheek and hugging him and telling Jon he was heaven sent. Then, she told both him and the pharmacist for the umpteenth time that she’d told George they should’ve picked up his prescription sooner and that driving in the blizzard was a terrible idea and it got his
heart rate up and then his chest pains had started.

“He tried to leave me at home but I just knew better. I said to myself, ‘Gladys, if you let him walk out the door in this mess considering how tense he’s been all day and without his medication, you may never see him again.’ So, of course I insisted on riding with him even though I hate getting out in a storm like this. And he drives too fast in these conditions for his age which I kept telling him. And if he’d just come this morning to pick up the pills like I’d told him…”

Jon couldn’t help but wonder if it was his heart medicine that Mr. Jenkins had needed most or a break from Mrs. Jenkins. She reminded him of Nan a bit.

No, Nan is much cooler even if they wear the same fragrance.

“Yes, ma’am,” Jon said as the EMTs loaded Mrs. Jenkins’s husband up on a stretcher. “Well, I wish you both the best and I’ll call the hospital tomorrow if you don’t mind and…”

“Heaven sent! You were heaven sent, Dr. Snow,” she said for the twentieth time in the past twenty minutes as she patted his cheek.

“Uh…yeah…thanks.”

Heaven sent is waiting in my hotel room and probably wondering where the fuck I am.

The Jenkins couple left with the ambulance and Jon pulled out his phone to text Sansa.

JON: I am so sorry! Long story short-elderly man at pharmacy suffered a heart attack but I'm hopeful he'll be ok. I'm on my way back. Please forgive me!

SANSA: OMG! Of course, I forgive you. You're busy saving lives and I'm lying here feeling sorry for myself. I thought maybe you'd had a change of heart.

JON: I promise there has been no change of heart and I'm dying to see you!

No immediate response so Jon started towards the door and then smacked his head.

What did you come in here for in the first place, dumbass?

He grabbed a box of Trojans and headed to the check out. The blond girl behind the register gave him a wistful look but he didn’t really notice. He’d always been a bit oblivious to the way women saw him which may have been why he was so bowled over by Ygritte’s aggressive attentions.

He laid down his phone on the counter and reached for his wallet.

“Oh, no,” the pharmacist said, coming over to the register. “This man doesn't pay. Anything he wants is on the house. Poor Mr. Jenkins would’ve died right here if not for him, Karen.”

“Thanks. I just needed, uh…these,” he said sheepishly as the clerk and the pharmacist glanced at his box of Trojan Ultra Ribbed Ecstasy.

The clerk smirked and started to put the box in a bag when Jon’s phone dinged. He smiled to see Sansa’s name and swiped it open where it laid on the counter. He tapped the message without a second thought.
SANSA: I can’t wait to see you either. Or maybe I can’t wait for you to see me, Dr. Snow.

And she’d attached a selfie…a nearly naked selfie. Sansa lying in bed with all that glorious red hair cascading around her. Sansa wearing nothing but a smile and a pair of black panties with one arm covering her breasts…barely.

Holy fucking shit.

His mouth hung open. His eyes were wide in shock. His dick twitched. Remember me, Mr. Busy Saving Lives?! You could be getting busy in other ways!

He quickly snatched his phone up…but not before the clerk and pharmacist caught a peek at Sansa's pic.

“Um…thanks!” he said as he ran to the exit.

“You have a good night, doc!” the pharmacist called out enthusiastically as the clerk giggled hysterically.

Do I tell her that two strangers just saw her nearly naked or do I book it back to the room so I can suck on those gorgeous tits and spare her that detail?

Spare her that detail and run, man! his cock said.

Right!

JON: You arE KILLINg me! And I’ll be right there!!

Sansa giggled and snuggled down in the covers after her impulsive decision.

“I sexted, Ghost. At least, I guess that’s what you call it. It was a first for me anyway. Getting off in coat closets, using my womanly wiles to get us our room, sending naughty pictures via text...I am just a wild woman tonight.”

Ghost snored in response.

He had fallen asleep and she considered stealing his toy away. She stuck an arm out from under the covers and changed her mind.

“Brrr!”

We should probably call down to the front desk and complain about the heat.

Peals of laughter in the hallway and then a shout.

And those kids...but then they’d want to come check on the heat maybe. Nah, I’d rather stay warm another way tonight and I can ignore the kids.

She felt her panties growing a bit damp at the thought of Jon keeping her warm. He would be here
any minute. She took a deep breath and snuggled deeper into the blankets.

She heard thundering feet running down the hall and thought of Jon racing to her. Her heart pounded rapidly...until she heard more shrieks and laughter.

_Fucking teenagers._

In less than three minutes, there was a tentative knock on the door. “Sansa...it’s me,” she heard Jon call.

“Come in,” she replied. He opened the door and she peeked out at him from under the covers. “I got cold waiting for my hero to arrive,” she said with a teasing pout.

“I’d really love to warm you up,” he said, locking the door and shedding his coat and hat.

“How fast can you be naked, Dr. Snow?”

“Time me!” he shouted before he threw off his sweater and started unbuttoning his jeans.

He stumbled kicking off his boots and then yanked off his socks. She laughed and then her eyes busily roamed his body. He was perfect...and he definitely worked out a lot.

When he was down to his boxers, he approached the bed. Sansa pulled back the covers and his eyes roamed over her body now.

“You are so beautiful,” he murmured, climbing in next to her.

His eyes flitted from her breasts, to her face, to her belly and down her legs, back up to her panties and then to her face once more. It was like he couldn't decide what part he liked best. Sansa's heart glowed and all those pesky doubts about herself melted away again.

She opened her arms to him and he moved to be on top of her, propped awkwardly on his elbows to keep from crushing her. He pulled the covers back over them. He started kissing her jaw and throat. He smelled like...White Shoulders Dusting Powder? Nan?

"Jon? Have you been...making out with an old lady?" she teased.

He groaned and said, "Mrs. Jenkins was extremely grateful. I got hugged a few times. She kissed me on the cheek a time or two."

Sansa laughed and said, "The nerve of some people...making a move on my man while he's out on a condom run."

"Am I your...your man, Sansa?” he asked with a sweet hesitancy, his brown eyes soft and loving.

"Yes. Is that okay for me to say?" she replied, equally nervous.

"God, yes, sweet girl. That's...that's perfect." His smile was brilliant then. It rivaled the rising sun and warmed her heart every bit as much as Earth's closest star.

Sansa smiled in return and ran her hands through his curly hair. It was still cool to the touch but his scalp was sweaty from his hat, his run across the street or his efforts to save a life. It didn't matter. He was here now and he was perfect.

“I like the feel of you on top of me,” she sighed as she caressed his strong shoulders and arms next.
He eased down a bit more and she could feel him through his boxers. He was hard. And he kept staring at her like she was the most beautiful woman in the world.

"You're perfect," he said as his hand carded through her hair.

"So are you."

"It’s cold in here…but you’re warm."

"Yeah. I’ve had time to get cozy," she laughed.

"I’m sorry that I was…"

"Saving a person's life? Don’t apologize for that."

He started kissing her again and she could feel him pressed against her belly. She was wet and wanted him so badly. She needed to feel him inside her. She spread her legs further apart. They needed...

"Um...Jon?" she said as he kept kissing her, working his way towards her breasts. Yes, I want you there. Yes but first... "Did you get what you went for?"

"Yeah," he said dazedly. He grimaced next and said, "Fuck! Hang on. They’re in my coat pocket."

He jumped off the bed and rumbled through his pockets before bringing the box over. He started to open the box but she stopped him.

"Wait. We’ll get that in a minute. It’s nearly midnight,” she said. "I still need to give you those Birthday Night Kisses."

He grinned broadly then and she leaned forward to kiss him. “I love you, Jon,” she whispered right before their lips met.

They moaned in unison as their tongues met and Jon squeezed her tightly in his arms. She ran her hands down to his ass as she kissed him deeply. She started to tug his boxers down his hips...just as the fire alarm started blaring.

Ghost barked.

Those fucking kids!

"I may have to kill some teenagers," Jon groaned.

"Me first," Sansa sighed.

Chapter End Notes

*hides behind hands*

I'm so sorry! I meant to get to the sexy times! I really did! It's coming, I swear! (And they will be, too ;D) Please, don't hate me!!!
*runs away to cry in a corner*
The Beast with Three Backs

Chapter Summary

Jon, Sansa and Ghost brave the cold a bit before finally being allowed back in their room. Sansa learns some things from Dr. Snow. Ghost has some concerns.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

There they are…the little fuckers. I’ll tear them limb from limb. I’ll…

A certain part of Jon’s anatomy ranted on and on as he noticed the three cowering teens that were being read the riot act by their chaperones, the hotel’s management and two extremely burly firefighters.

Oh, hush. We’ll be back inside before long.

And then inside of Sansa, right?

Behave…and yes, Jon told his cock as he brushed the snow off one of the hotel’s benches.

He sat down and opened his coat. He pulled Sansa down into his lap and then did his best to wrap her up like a burrito. She was already wearing his hat.

“Thanks,” she shivered, burrowing her face under his chin.

Every breath she expelled and every word she spoke tickled. He wasn’t complaining. It made him a bit light-headed honestly.

Her coat wasn’t cutting it. She’d thrown on her regular pajamas over the delectable black panties and grabbed her coat when they’d finally been forced to admit the fire alarm was not an unwanted delusion. But her coat wasn’t designed for wind chills that dipped to 15 below.

Of course, not all of her luscious, long legs would fit inside his coat. And that’s where Sansa’s Knight in White Fur came in. Ghost was pressed against her legs, nearly wrapping himself up like a pretzel to keep them as covered as possible. Jon was sure his friend was probably feeling the cold too despite his fur but his focus was on keeping Sansa’s thinly covered legs warm.

That’s my boy, he thought proudly.

“What else?” she prompted, drawing him back to the little game they’d been playing to pass the last 20 minutes and making him squirm a bit with her hot breath at his throat.

They’d been milling around outside with the other hotel guests and employees while the firefighters cleared the hotel, floor by floor, and Sansa had suggested they think up ways to get warm.
“Hot cocoa,” he said.

“Mmmm,” she sighed.

“Not to drink. A bathtub full of it to soak in."

“Well, that’s down right kinky, Dr. Snow,” she teased. “With marshmallows?”

“No, whipped cream. I’ve always preferred it with whipped cream.”

“Madness,” she scoffed. “We’d need marshmallows.”

“It’s my imaginary bath,” he chuckled. “And if I want my bathtub filled with hot cocoa and whipped cream, then that should be acceptable.”

“Oh…did you not plan on sharing this bath?” she asked in a playful tone.

Again, that warm, ticklish sensation from her speaking and her lips right there at his throat…

Marshmallows, idiot, his cock said. Marshmallows are good.

Mum always made hot cocoa with whipped cream, Dumbass Jon argued.

Oh, really? Isn’t that sweet? Were you wanting to share a bathtub full of hot cocoa with your mummy or the hot as fuck woman in your lap? The one you’re in love with? Dumbass.

You make a valid point.

“Why not both?” he suggested.

“Both,” Sansa agreed, nodding her head and brushing the skin beneath his beard lightly with her lips. “Both are good.”

Oh, for fuck sake. My ass is frozen to this bench and you’re getting hard now?

Hey, pal…she initiated the launch sequence. What’d you expect?

“Alright, folks,” one of the firefighters announced then. “You’re all free to head back inside.”

Jon could feel Sansa’s huff of breath against him and felt her arms tighten around his waist right before she moved away. He gulped in anticipation…and stealthily adjusted himself when she stood up.

“Are you ready, sweet girl?” he asked.

“Yes,” she replied.

He stood and she kissed his cheek now and gazed at him with those sparkling blue eyes and her perfect pink lips drawn up in a bow.

I know I’m ready! an inner voice shouted.
Jon held the door open for her and she was the first to walk through with Ghost right behind her. She was grateful no one had commented on his size while they waited. She’d seen Hobert across the way with some of the other employees. She wouldn’t want him to get in trouble over Ghost. Of course, the managers on duty were more interested in the fire alarm that had been pulled by the teens.

“So…here we are again,” she said nervously as she pulled off Jon’s hat and her shoes.

“Here we are,” he replied as he latched and bolted the door. He shrugged off his coat and kicked off his boots.

Ghost sat down on the floor and stared at them. He was wagging his tail.

“It’s still chilly in here but much warmer than out there,” she said, worrying at her bottom lip with her teeth.

Her fingers were numb and she fumbled as she tried to undo the buttons of her coat. She glanced at the bed and the box of condoms on the night stand and quickly looked away.

Don’t be shy, girl. This is Jon. It’s going to be okay, part of her was saying.

What if the fire alarm was just the start? What if this isn’t meant to be? What if…

You worry too much, Sister Sansa.

Jon’s eyes were darker than normal and staring at her lips. He took a step towards her. He looked a bit…ravenous.

“I wonder what the thermostat says now,” she said edgily as she took a step away.

God, Sansa…lame small talk about the temperature. Why do you have to be so nervous? Horny Sansa asked.

Well, excuse me, Sister Sansa answered. We’ve not done this in a couple of years…and only with Harry. Jon understands.

Yeah, he’s a sweetie and very understanding. Now, strip off those PJs and tap that. Get your hands back on that ass and let him wear you like a belt.

Jon reluctantly turned towards the heating unit and said, “It’s at 60 now. I can call down front and…”

“Jon…I’m nervous,” she interrupted. “I love you and this should be special because it’s us. But what if it’s not special enough? What if I’m…what if you’re disappointed? What if Harry was right and I’m too frigid and…”

“Don’t you dare think that,” he began heatedly. “He’s the world’s biggest asshole after Joffrey as far as I’m concerned and…”

“I’m sorry! I’m sorry to be so ridiculous,” she said as she tried to will herself not to cry again…like the world’s biggest baby.

“Don’t be sorry, love,” he said more softly. “Be you. Be the woman I fell in love with; my brilliant, brave, kind and loving friend.”
He opened his arms, letting her come to him. She rushed into his embrace and Ghost barked with approval.

She breathed in deeply, inhaling the lingering bit of his pine-scented cologne along with the cold, snowy night. Smells that led her to think of being safe, secure, loved…all the things that Jon made her feel.

*See? You know you want this girl*, Horny Sansa said.

*I’d have to agree*, Sister Sansa chimed in.

“Sansa, we don’t have…”

She cut him off with a kiss, a blistering hot kiss full of desire…an I-want-to-fuck-you-here-and-now kind of kiss.

His brown eyes looked like melted chocolates as he sighed into her mouth. His arms wrapped around her waist more tightly, leaving their bodies smooshed together. She loved the feel of him; hard to her soft, a warm and sweet man with strong arms that held her tight.

The kisses continued and grew more urgent. She bit down gently on his bottom lip and then licked it. Her eyes sparkled with a touch of mischief as she heard him inhale sharply.

“Fuck,” he muttered.

“Yeah…that’s exactly what I was thinking.”

He smiled widely at that before kissing her some more. She didn’t feel anything but love and desire now. This was the man she loved, the man she’d made out with in a coat closet at a wedding rehearsal of all things because she was that crazy for him. He was the one that made her feel safe and desired…and whole.

His lips moved from her mouth down to her throat and Sansa ran her hands through his hair, slowly guiding his mouth down towards her breasts.

Ghost circled their legs, his tail thwacking into them both.

“Go lay down, buddy,” Jon said distractedly.

Ghost whimpered but did go to his bed.

His hands cupped her breasts just like earlier in the night. She could feel her nipples harden with his touch. Her body felt tight like a drawn bowstring.

“Off,” she said softly, tugging at his shirt.

He nodded and helped her pull his shirt over his head and then they worked together to pull hers off in turn. She wore no bra. He’d seen her earlier but somehow, standing in the room and facing each other without their shirts on, this felt more intimate. A slow discovery of one another instead rushing headlong into bed.

She tentatively reached out to touch his chest, marveling once more at all that perfectly defined muscle. His body was like something that should be carved into marble and displayed in a museum.

Their chests were pressed together as they kissed again. Jon’s jeans looked terribly tight and she
brushed her hand across his erection. He groaned and leaned into her.

“Initiating countdown,” he murmured under his breath.

“What?”

“Never mind.”

“Off,” she said again, a playful smirk on her lips.

“Off,” he said in return, his thumbs already looped into the waistband of her pajama pants.

Her loose pajama pants slid right down to her feet. She easily stepped out of them.

His skinny jeans? Well…not so much.

“Jesus Fucking Christ,” he cursed as he stumbled into the nightstand and nearly knocked her over.

Ghost leapt to his feet and started barking.

“Here,” she laughed, guiding him to the bed as he hopped with his ankles bound by the pants.

He fell back on the bed with a grunt and she worked his pants the rest of the way off. They both started laughing and she climbed up the bed, hovering over his body. He circled an arm around her waist and kissed her. His other hand carded through her hair.

“I love you,” he said.

“I love you, too. Are we going to manage to take our underwear off this time?”

“Absolutely,” he said.

He gestured for her to rise to her knees and he did the same. Jon lowered his mouth to one breast and started teasing her nipple with his tongue as his hands pushed her lacy black panties down. That sweet ache began to unfurl low in her belly…lower than that.

His hands grasped her ass and she felt him moan against her nipple. Her head fell back, her hair drifting down loose to where his hands were.

He continued his attention to her breasts even as she used his shoulder to keep her balance while working the panties off. She tossed them over her shoulder. Ghost barked and Sansa could hear his tags on his collar rattling, as though he was shaking something off his head.

“Sorry, Ghost,” she said as she melted under the ministrations of Jon and his tongue. “Don’t stop,” she said to Jon next.

He murmured something in response and she nearly yelped when she felt his warm hand gliding up her thigh.

_Is he going to…_

_Oh, God…yes, he is._

His fingers traced her slit while he continued suckling her breasts. She had a death grip on his hair, she realized with a cringe. She was about to let go when he slid a finger inside her as his thumb teased her clit. Her hands tightened in his hair. She heard his sharp intake of breath and started to
let go with an apology.

“Don’t let go of me,” he said huskily against her flesh.

His fingers continued working their magic as his tongue lapped at her breasts.

“Oh, shit…Jon. Please…” she whined.

She wanted to rub her legs together and relieve her ache. It was such bliss; his mouth and his fingers. She took pity on his curls and moved her hands to his shoulders, squeezing the tight muscles as she held them firmly.

Jon pulled his fingers out of her unexpectedly and he popped them into his mouth.

_Holy shit_, Sister Sansa said. _He’s tasting you and he almost looks like he…_ 

Jon closed his eyes and moaned appreciatively as he licked his fingers with relish.

_Yes, I’d say he likes it_, Horny Sansa said.

He urged her to lay down and removed his boxers at last. Sansa’s eyes moved from his muscular chest down to the V of his abdomen and followed the trail of hair that led to his cock. Long and hard and begging for attention. Sansa licked her lips. She wanted to look longer and to touch him, too. But Jon moved over her swiftly and started slowly kissing his way down from her throat to her stomach.

She laid back but she was eager to feel him inside of her. She enjoyed the kisses but kept expecting him to move back up and get on with it. That’s what he was supposed to do, right?

_Girl…we’ve got some things to learn, I think._

He certainly didn’t seem like he was in a hurry. He kept kissing every inch of skin he came to…and he was working his way ever downward. He nudged her legs apart and she thought he was going to come back up and fuck her at last.

_He’ll come back up here and sink into me now._

That’s what she thought anyway. After all, Harry would dive in and thrust a couple of dozen times and then come with a jerk of his hips and be done. If she was lucky, he’d rub her clit and get her to come, too.

So, when Jon’s lips brushed the hair on her mound, she started to draw her legs together.

“That’s okay, Jon,” she said. “You don’t have to bother with that.”

He looked up in confusion from between her legs. “Bother? Why would I consider it a bother, sweet girl?”

“I know most guys don’t like it,” she said…as if she knew it all. “You can go ahead and…”

She trailed off at the way he was staring at her in disbelief.

_You don't know it all._

His eyes narrowed and then she saw a flash of pity as realization struck. She was feeling stupid now.
What the fuck do you know? You’ve been with one guy. One guy who was a selfish, cheating prick.

Well, it’s probably best not to push for new things. It’s our first time with Jon and we wouldn’t want to presume and…

Presume?! Push?! Push for what you want, girl! Enjoy this! Enjoy something new! He’s willing. I’m willing. Go, Oral!

Jon’s mouth was opening and closing like a fish out of water for a solid minute before he finally stammered out, “Are you saying that Harry never…”

Sansa covered her eyes with shame. “He tried a few times early on…” she groaned, “but I never really…”

She gestured helplessly. *He never got me off that way. He said I was too uptight.* She couldn’t quite say it but Jon read her loud and clear. He was looking…pissed.

“Plus,” she added, “he told me I had to douche first because it’d be cleaner…less nasty. It got to where it burned when I would do that though and…”

Jon huffed and sat up. For a totally naked man, he looked quite imposing and indignant when he said, “I’m going to pull the doctor card and say that is the dumbest, most untrue thing I’ve ever heard. He was not only a selfish, cheating asshole but an utter idiot and, though I never thought I’d say this about another man, I hope his dick falls off.”

Sansa couldn’t help but smirk as he continued, rather like a college lecturer having a field day debunking some outlandish myth or theory.

“There is absolutely no reason to do such a thing before oral sex. Did he wash his cock every time he asked you to go down on him?”

She opened her mouth to answer but he quickly threw up a hand.

“Don’t answer that. I’m going to pretend you never gave him head because that fucker certainly wasn’t worthy of it.”

She covered her mouth to keep from giggling now.

“And as far as cunnilingus goes, I promise you that your body naturally tastes far more pleasing than that bottled chemical crap ever could. And douching can wreak havoc on a woman’s proper pH balance and isn’t really something most women ever need to do.”

“Is that all, doctor?” she laughed.

“Maybe,” he chuckled.

“And yeah…the pH thing. I got an infection. That was why it was burning and the doctor at student health told me not to do it anymore. Harry was happy to know he was off the hook from then on.”

“Oh, my God…” he growled.

She couldn’t help but be touched. He was literally simmering with rage over the fact that her former boyfriend had never gone down on her, that no one ever had.

Apparently, the thought struck him another way soon after though for he smiled wickedly and said,
“Lie back, love. It’s high time someone ate you out properly, Sansa Stark.”

“Oh, my God!” she cried as her hands flew up to grasp her breasts.

They had darkened just a hint and were tight like little pebbles, begging to be sucked. At times like this, Jon wished he had more than one mouth.

**SQUEAK! SQUEAK!**

*Not now, Ghost. Right now, I'm getting her off again.*

She’d already come once like this but he felt her first experience with proper oral deserved an encore.

“Come for me, Sansa. I want to see you come, love,” he rumbled against her folds between licks.

He watched her mouth form a perfect ‘o’ and her eyes roll back. Her hands idly played with her breasts and her hips were bucking into his mouth as he tongue-fucked her.

His fingers and mouth switched places with barely a pause and she shouted, “Jon! Oh, Jon!”

Ghost whined from his bed.

Jon’s fingers kept up their rhythm of pumping rapidly in and out as his tongue flicked her clit again before he lightly sucked on it. He kept his eyes on her face while his other hand reached out to tweak one of those perky nipples.

“Ohhhh…fuck, Jon. I’m going to…” she gasped as though she’d never thought such a thing could happen even after it had happened a short while ago. It was a nice ego boost for him to know he could make her come apart like this. “Jon…oh, shit,” she squealed as her thighs closed over his ears like a vise.

*Best way to keep them warm,* he thought amusedly. He hummed into her core and she moaned loudly in response.

“Bark! Bark!”

*Calm down, Ghost.*

His furry friend moved nearer and Jon caught a glimpse of red eyes staring at him from the side of the bed. Thankfully, Sansa was too close to notice him.

His mouth covered her fully and he relentlessly teased her clit with his tongue. She cried out and jerked into him.

“Jon…I can’t. It’s so good.”

She sounded like she was sobbing…but with ecstasy.
Ghost growled softly.

While his mouth and fingers were busy, his hips were automatically bucking into the sheets, his cock straining and desperate for release.

_Not yet. Her pleasure comes first._

_We’ll see about that_, his cock replied.

Jon feared he might come all over the sheets and the whole trip to the pharmacy would’ve been unnecessary. He rose to his knees to stop himself from rutting into the bedding. He lifted her ass up off the bed with one arm. Sansa arched back beneath him, glorious and beautiful as she neared her peak.

“Unnn…Jon!” she cried, squeezing her tits again.

_And now to shove her off that cliff._

He curled his fingers and she wailed.

“I…I’m coming…JON! Oh, fuck! Urrg-ahhhhh!” she shouted as he felt her pussy clenching around his fingers with her orgasm.

“BARK! BARK! BARK!”

Ghost was getting louder…and more agitated.

Jon was of three minds at present. Part of him was delighted to make her come. Part of him was very eager for his own climax. And part of him was afraid Ghost was getting ready to chomp down on his ass.

_He doesn’t like her crying out. He thinks I’m hurting her maybe._

But Jon liked her crying out. He liked it very much. He loved it. He wanted to hear her calling his name again.

“Oh, Jon,” she said dazedly as he found those clear blue eyes staring at him tenderly.

“Was it nice?” he asked, feeling a touch smug to see her lying there perfectly boneless now.

“Fucking amazing,” she sighed. He licked his lips and moved up over her. He kissed her softly.

“Make love to me now?” she asked.

_As if she’d have to ask._

“Yes. Oh, yes,” he said as he reached for the box of condoms…that suddenly weren’t there.

_What the… Are you fucking kidding me?!

“Ghost!” he shouted. “Drop them right now!”

Sansa turned her head and started laughing.

Ghost sat there looking extremely pleased with himself. He had the condom box in his jaws.

“Ghost, bad dog! Give me those right now,” he said sternly.
“Jon,” Sansa admonished. “He’s just a dog. He’s just playing.”

“He knows damn well what he’s doing.”

Sansa scoffed at him.

Ghost rose to his feet and retreated to his bed with the condoms.

Jon got off the bed and went after him. He tried to grab the box and received a growl.

“Those are not your fucking toy! Here! Take the freaking squirrel! Squeak the son of a bitch all night! I don’t care! Just give me the fucking condoms.”

“Jon!” Sansa said sharply…in that teacher-y tone.

*Have mercy,* he sighed. *If Ghost keeps this up and she keeps that tone up, I’ll go completely mad and die of blue balls.*

He made another swipe for the box and Ghost jerked his head away.

“Oh, for crying the fuck out loud!” he shouted in exasperation. “I’m getting laid tonight, goddammit!”

Sansa stood and joined him…and then swatted at his arm.

“Be nice, Jon. Don’t mind him, Ghost. He’s just horny and I’m very sorry he’s shouting like a bad man. Can I please have those?” she said sweetly, holding out her hand.

Ghost immediately dropped the box into her palm.

“Fucking ludicrous,” he grumbled.

“No, not really. I think he’s just making sure that I want this,” Sansa said. “He’s being my protector and defending my honor.”

“Oh, my God…he’s a dog, Sansa. He doesn’t…”

“Hush, Jon. Go get in the bed and I’ll be right there.” Jon grumpily started to go but grinned when she smacked his ass. Ghost didn’t seem to mind that. “Come on, Ghost. Here’s your squirrel!” she said.

She picked it up and tossed it…into the bathroom. Ghost immediately went after it and Sansa carried his bed in there. Jon heard the water running as she washed her hands from doggy licks and came back out…closing the door behind her.

“We’ll let him out in a bit, okay?” she said as she climbed into bed and handed him a foil packet.

“Yeah,” he laughed. He pulled her on top of him without warning and she squeaked in surprise. “Maybe in a bit.”
Okay…so I’m starting to get the picture.

You mean that Harry was an idiot and an asshole and not remotely good in bed?

Right, she decided before rolling her hips and letting out a long moan…which was swiftly answered by Jon. There was nothing wrong with me. I was just with the wrong guy.

“Fuck, baby,” Jon said, staring up at her with adoration. “God, your pussy is so wet and tight, sweet girl. I just know I’m going to come too soon.”

He knows how to use that mouth in bed.

In more than one way, right?

She loved it when he talked like that. And he made the most delightful sounds, too. Every grunt and groan and whimper he uttered made her feel divine.

She lightly raked her nails along his chest and was pleased at the way he shuddered. She rocked her hips experimentally again as she straddled him. She’d done this position before naturally but this was so much better than she remembered it being. It took a bit of adjustment at first. He filled her so completely and she had to find the angle that really did it for her…but oh, God…once she did, it was heavenly.

His pupils were blown as she rhythmically moved her hips in time with his thrusts. She leaned forward a bit more, urging him to latch on to a breast again.

Magic tongue and lips. He may not be able to take a temperature like I can but he’s definitely got a magic tongue and lips.

His mouth closed over her nipple sending another shockwave of pleasure down to her center as she rode him. Her eyes fluttered closed to savor the sensation.

“Ahhh, Jon…” she cried. “I’m about to come.”

“Then, fucking come, baby…I’m about to, too.”

He grasped her hips unexpectedly. His hands were holding her so tight. She loved it, the way he held her like he would never let her go.

“Sansa,” he chanted. “I love you so much.”

He stopped her movement by locking her hips in place with his hands. And just as suddenly, he was thrusting up into her, hard and fast. A hard pounding; making her legs shake, making her breasts bounce, making her see flashing white spots, making her toes curl and making the world disappear until nothing existed but the pleasure.

“Oh, God! Oh, Jon! Yes! Don’t stop!” she shrieked.

She could vaguely hear Ghost barking on the other side of the bathroom door and hoped he wasn’t disturbing other guests.

Beyond that…she couldn’t concentrate on anything but the way he was bucking into her at a frenzied pace with his hands clamped down on her hips, hard enough to bruise. She didn’t fucking care so long as he didn’t stop now.

Like a tidal wave, her orgasm crashed down on her again and then reverberated around inside her
body. She screamed his name…at least she thought she screamed. She wasn’t sure.

When she opened her eyes, she saw his eyes glued to her face. His lip was caught between his teeth. His hips stuttered in their movements right before he called her name and grunted loudly.

He fell back with a sigh and she collapsed across his chest as they laid their panting. Their hands didn’t still though. They were busy with gentle touches and caresses that neither of them were exactly cognizant of for several minutes.

“Bark. Bark,” Ghost called quietly from the bathroom.

“Think he’ll forgive us for exiling him?” Jon chuckled.

“Eventually,” she said.

They washed up soon afterwards and Ghost was freed from the bathroom. Sansa’s skin was still warm from their activity but she shivered in the cool room. Jon was brushing his teeth when she laid back down. Ghost immediately jumped up beside her.

“I love you, sweet boy,” she said as she stroked his fur.

Ghost wagged his tail and laid down next to her…in the middle of the bed.

“Jon, move his bed back in here, please.”

He came out of the bathroom carrying it. “Here you go, buddy.”

But Ghost refused to budge.

“No matter. Lay down,” she said.

“But he’s…”

“Between us. Yeah, that’s okay for now, isn’t it?” she asked. “He just loves us and wants to be with us.”

Ghost was part of them. He loved them and wanted to protect them…especially her it would seem. And he wanted to feel like he was part of their…family. He was.

Jon’s eyes were glistening when she looked back at him. He turned off the light and laid down without a complaint. Him on one side of the large bed and her on the other with Ghost in between.

In the dark, she reached across Ghost’s large, warm body and found Jon’s hand. They laced their fingers together and whispered long into the night. Ghost was snoring loudly but they kept whispering…sharing things they hadn’t shared yet…discussing the wedding the next day…just talking like lovers do.

They were both growing sleepy and yawning. Ghost’s snores grew louder.

“Ygritte never allowed him in the bed. She always complained about his snoring, too,” Jon said. “Shit…I’m sorry. I guess I shouldn’t be mentioning her,” he added apologetically.

“You don’t have to apologize, Jon. We’re talking and learning more about each other. We’re friends. Being lovers doesn’t change that, does it?”

“No, not at all. You’re my best friend, Sansa. You and Ghost. I like that I can tell you both
anything.”

“I like it, too,” she whispered. “And I don’t mind him snoring.”

“Yeah. It’s better than the squeaking toy.”

“Much better,” she said as she smothered one last yawn.

Ghost grumbled in his sleep…and then farted nice and loud.

“Ghost,” Jon hissed. “Ugh, buddy.”

Sansa was still giggling even as she fell asleep.

Chapter End Notes

It's been 84 years...and they finally banged!

I'm always worry when the build up for sex has been this long and anticipated in a fic so I really hope you enjoyed the chapter :(
Almost Like a Honeymoon

Chapter Notes

A chapter of feels and smut entirely from Jon's POV.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Jon’s eyes opened slowly in the darkened room but he was distinctly aware of the warm body next to him. It was as bare as his own. The chilliness of the room reminded him of his undergrad dorm in winter. But there was no question of place and time this morning. He knew exactly where he was and who he was with.

Ghost was still hogging the middle of the bed. Jon had moved during the night though to lie next to Sansa. Sure…half his ass was hanging off the edge of the bed but he’d wanted to hold her. At least this way Sansa was certain to be warm between them. Like a Sansa sandwich, he thought causing his stomach to rumble as his dick twitched.

He had an arm thrown over her waist. His hand had fallen asleep where she’d rolled to her stomach and had him pinned. He couldn’t care less about that. Circulation could be revived shortly…in lots of places.

He nuzzled into her back and heard a sleepy sigh.

But before any launch sequences could be properly initiated, Ghost’s head popped up from the other side of her and his friend looked at him intelligently.

“Alright, buddy,” he rasped hoarsely. “I’ll pull on some clothes and we’ll go.”

Despite their late night, Ghost would need his walk.

“I’ll be back,” he said in that same gruff, early morning voice before kissing her shoulder and getting a grumpy grumble in response.

He grinned and bundled up before grabbing Ghost’s lead.

It was not even 7:00 yet and even a city like Burlington that was used to winter weather was slow to get moving on a Saturday morning after getting a foot and half of snow the previous day.

His mum would’ve said it was a bit parky out in that dry tone she always used. Nan would say it was colder than a witch’s tit. Jon just knew that it was fucking freezing and he couldn’t wait to get back indoors as he walked along the deserted sidewalk. But to Ghost, the weather was ideal for frolicking. And Jon would indulge his dog despite any condom-snatching shenanigans from the previous night.

You’re going to be stuck in the hotel alone later anyway.

If they were at home, he would’ve taken Ghost for a proper run but with the snow they were forced to trudge along at a more sedate pace. It was still good exercise for them both regardless.
As they trekked along on the snowy morning, Jon ignored the imminent frostbite as long as possible and reflected happily on the previous night. Despite all the frustrations they’d encountered, he couldn’t complain about the outcome. Naturally, getting laid at last had him in a happy frame of mind. But mostly, he was in love with Sansa and she was in love with him. That was the best part.

So, where do we go from here? he wondered.

It was something to think about. He knew he’d never felt like this about anyone and he couldn’t imagine a time where he wouldn’t feel the same way about her as he did right now. He wasn’t ready to go buy a ring just yet. Sam and Gilly had been together for four years before taking that step. He’d known Sansa a few months. They’d gone from strangers to neighbors to dear friends in that time. And now they were lovers. There was time to enjoy this transition and slow and steady was the way to go with Sansa he’d learned.

But still…there was something wonderful about this time away from home and work and their neighbors as they explored this new stage of their relationship. If only we could hide away together all day and night and forget the wedding later today.

After a mile and half walk in the sub-freezing temperature, Ghost had exhausted his urge to frolick and Jon had worked up an appetite. But an appetite for what exactly? he thought to himself with a smirk as Ghost started leading him back towards the hotel and their semi-warm room where Sansa awaited.

He’d placed a call for room service from one of the hotel’s courtesy phones before taking Ghost out. He wanted to surprise Sansa. He also stopped by the front desk and asked about the heat in their room. They’d survived last night but he didn’t want it to be that cold again tonight.

When he returned to the quiet room, he unbundled and pulled back the drapes to allow some natural light in. He fed Ghost next making sure to put his bowl and water in the bathroom…and then he closed the door.

“Sorry, Buddy,” he muttered as he removed the leash. “But you’re going to hang out in here for a bit.”

He’d just left Ghost to his breakfast when there was a knock indicating their breakfast had arrived. He quietly opened the door and tipped the server. He carried the covered tray inside to set down on the table.

“What did you do?” a sweet, husky voice asked from the bed.

“I ordered us breakfast,” he said, pulling his sweater back off and climbing into bed next to her. “Good morning,” he added once he had her in his arms.

He pressed a kiss to her lips. Her hair was a mess and her eyes were a bit puffy. Her skin was flushed the most delicious pink from the warmth of the bed. She was radiant.

“I’ve got morning breath,” she said shyly, ducking her head.

“I don’t care,” he answered before kissing her harder.

A sweetly hesitant hand on his chest though told him to stop. He sat up and allowed her to rise. “I’ll be right back,” she promised before sauntering to the bathroom.

He enjoyed the sight of a naked Sansa walking across the room. He heard her greet Ghost as the
door opened and closed and, while she was busy in there, he filled a plate for them both. He kicked off his jeans and was just in his boxers. He walked across the bed, balancing two plates and his coffee and her juice, before he sat everything down on the nightstand and covered his legs. He propped up the plethora of pillows so they could sit up in bed to eat together under the covers.

Sansa came out a few minutes later in a pair of pink panties and the t-shirt she’d worn to bed the other night at Robb’s house.

“How can you look that sexy in an old t-shirt and panties?” he asked, getting a delighted smile in response.

She darted back to the bed and dove under the covers with a girlish shriek.

And she’s fucking adorable on top of it all.

“It’s still too cold in here!” she shouted as she peeped out from beneath the covers.

“I lodged a complaint. They’ll likely come knocking about that time I’m trying to have my way with you.”

“Oh? Well, we won’t let that stop us, will we?” she said playfully.

“Hell, no. We’ll scare them off with our screams if they knock while we’re busy.”

She giggled at that and peered over at the nightstand from the covers. “What’d you get me?” she asked next looking over at the plates in anticipation.

“Fresh, buttery croissants…at least they claim they’re fresh…and fruit for you, my lady.”

“Perfect,” she squealed as she sat up next to him and planted a kiss on his cheek.

“And juice,” he said, passing her food to her.

“Better and better,” she hummed as she plucked a strawberry out of the bowl and popped it in her mouth. “I never ever eat in bed at home.”

“Well, we’re kind of on vacation, I suppose. You get to do something you don’t normally do at home.”

“Almost like a honeymoon,” she said next, grabbing another strawberry. His eyes widened at her comparison and he saw the way her face fell. “Shit. Was that…too much to say?”

“No,” he answered honestly. “I like having this time with you alone…even if Ghost is here. It’s special. It’s just me and you…just like I’d hoped. It is a bit like I’d imagine a honeymoon…except for all the snow and the dog. I’d rather go someplace warm for a honeymoon.”

She sighed happily this time with that reassurance.

Jon grabbed his sausage and egg sandwich and started eating as Sansa daintily tore little hunks out of her croissant to savor. She’d close her eyes and moan with each bite. Then, she’d take another strawberry and her lips would close around it. Her white teeth would bite into the ripe berry and Jon could imagine the juices exploding in her mouth. She’d lick her lips when she’d finish one.

“Are you trying to make me hard?” he asked when he couldn’t bear much more torment. “Because it’s working.”
“Mmmm…I can’t help it. I love strawberries. I adore croissants.”

“I know. You always order one on the weekends when we stop at that pastry shop near the park after walking Ghost.”

“We’ve only been there two or three times.” He shrugged and kept eating. “You’ve been paying attention to that?” she asked dubiously reaching for another berry.

The melon chunks and grapes would be consumed in time but the strawberries would disappear first. She preferred them, he knew.

“Of course, I have,” he said mildly reaching for a chunk of the honeydew. Those were her least favorite so he knew she wouldn’t mind.

She was quiet so he continued devouring his sandwich. He had plans for her. They were horny kinds of plans and he wanted to last. He thought some breakfast would aid his endurance. He took a sip of the strong coffee but when he turned back to look at Sansa, she looked sad…like she might cry.

“Sansa…what’s wrong?” he gulped. “Did I do something…”

“No,” she said tearfully. “You’re just…you’re just so sweet to me. I can’t believe I found you.”

“I feel the same about you,” he said tenderly as he stroked her cheek. He decided to try and lighten the mood. “It’d be hard to miss me, you know. I live next door,” he said jokingly.

She laughed and put her hand on his knee. “I spent nearly a year with Harry. He never knew I love croissants. I mentioned it several times. I asked him to pick them up occasionally but it was clear that he just never knew or cared. Does that make any sense?”

“Based on what you’ve told me, I’m not a bit surprised. He was a selfish ass, Sansa. And I stand by my earlier declarations that he’s an idiot to blow things with you. It’s not hard to find out about people you care about. You just have to pay attention.”

“Did Ygritte do that with you? Pay attention?”

Did she? He wasn’t sure at first. He tried to think back to their happier times. Why had those times been happy? Because you were doing what she liked and ignoring the things that were important to you.

“I don’t…not really,” he sighed as that old pain coursed through him. “I tried to make her happy. I wanted her to be happy back then. I thought if she were happy that I’d be happy, too. I wasn’t. The things I liked weren’t really on her radar. We…we did what she liked and went the places she felt comfortable. If I did that then we didn’t fight so much and I just…it made things easier,” he finished regretfully.

Easier…and miserable. What a fucking waste.

He drew a deep breath and caught Sansa staring at him. “Hey,” she said, “I didn’t mean to make you sad.”

“I know.”

“I think there’s a lesson we both can take from our past relationships. You tried to please Ygritte at the cost of your own happiness. I tried to please Harry at the cost of mine. Maybe neither of them
cared all that much about pleasing us but we have to remember that our own happiness is important in this, too.”

“You’re right, of course. But I can’t imagine you being that way. You’re always concerned about my feelings, Sansa…just as yours matter to me.”

“And if we’re upset or bothered by something…”

“We talk about it,” he finished for her.

“Exactly. You know…I may have a hard time being nice later when I meet her,” she said with an adorable scowl right before she popped the last strawberry in her mouth.

“I’m having a hard time right now,” he grinned.

He didn’t want to talk about their exes anymore. He wanted to chase that strawberry. She smiled with innocent confusion at his words until he hastily laid aside his plate and hers and crawled towards her.

“Are you full already?” she asked coyly.

“No, not nearly full enough,” he replied as he nipped at her ear. She laid back and he climbed over her body. “I’ve got a craving for strawberries,” he said licking his lips.

“I’m so sorry,” she smirked. “I’m afraid I ate them all.”

“Oh, that’s too bad,” he said before he closed his mouth over her own.

His hand cradled her head as he kissed her deeply, savoring the sweet taste of Sansa and her strawberries. He pressed his body against hers and enjoyed how soft and warm she felt on the bed beneath him. His lips trailed along her jaw and she started squirming and giggling as he nuzzled behind her ear again. She was quite ticklish, he’d learned. Her half-hearted attempts to escape from under him made him rock hard and he moved his other arm to hold her tightly around the waist.

“Where do you think you’re going?” he taunted.

She didn’t reply. She looked up at him with wide blue eyes and lightly traced along his arms from his shoulders to his hands with her fingernails making him shiver. She wrapped her long legs around his waist and he groaned as he rubbed himself against her heat. He still had his boxers on and those really needed to go away.

Sansa seemed to read his mind. She began tugging at the waist band. He sat back on his knees to jerk them downward, letting his cock spring free. He closed his eyes and his breath stuttered when Sansa closed her hand around him and stroked him. He bit his lip and let himself enjoy it for a few minutes. He looked down to see those big blue eyes looking up at him curiously.

“Is this good?” she asked as her hand kept moving.

“Yes…very good,” he said huskily. “But I don’t want to come in your hand.”

He lifted her t-shirt over her head and watched the curtain of long, red hair fall back down around her white shoulders and lovely breasts. He reached for a condom from the box on the night stand but she took it from him. He stayed up on his knees watching as she unwrapped it and rolled it down his length. She laid back and let him remove her panties. He kicked his boxers the rest of the way off and onto the floor.
He crawled back up her body pausing half way to kiss the copper curls covering her sex. He nudged her legs thighs apart and licked up and down her slit.

“Again?” she asked in a teasing tone. “What did I do to deserve you?”

"Deserve? No, this is punishment. You ate all the strawberries, sweet girl. The least you could do is give me some cream.”

“Oh, my God,” she gasped at his words. He smirked at her tone that indicated she was equally mortified and turned on.

“Was that too much, Miss Stark?” he asked laughingly.

“Yes…and no,” she snickered until he swiped her folds again and reduced her to whimpers and mewls. “Such a naughty boy, you are,” she sighed as he continued his attentions. “I love it.”

“Good. For you, I am will gladly be as naughty and dirty as you’ll allow,” he mumbled into her wetness before he circled her clit with his tongue.

Her fingers wound through his curls as he lapped at her. Her moans got louder as his fingers joined his mouth. He felt her legs start to shake and then heard her cry out his name as her arousal coated his tongue at last.

She started tugging at his hair, urging him upward.

“Jon, I want you…please.”

She didn’t have to ask twice. He wiped off his chin and kissed his way up her body just stopping long enough to suckle a nipple…and then the other. She spread her legs wider, beckoning him down on top of her.

Jon moved on up to kiss her mouth again. He made sure she could taste herself on his tongue and then murmured, “Taste how sweet your cream is.”

She flushed bright red but didn’t stop kissing him back.

He was panting from those kisses when he reached between them, rubbing the head of his cock at her entrance, spreading her wetness over the tip of him. He nudged forwards as she drew her legs up on either side of him until he was fully sheathed. He lifted one of her legs and wrapped it around his hip as he started thrusting. Sansa called out softly, clutching his shoulders with every thrust.

She was so wet and tight around him. He moved within her watching her face and enjoying the feel of her.

He carded a hand through her hair as she writhed beneath him. She was seeking her release again. He meant for her to find it.

“Come on, sweet girl. I love how tight you are around me. I live to be buried inside this wet pussy when you come, my love.”

“Ahhh…Jon…fuck…”

He felt her spasms around his cock as she cried out in a high-pitched tone, her fingers digging into him almost painfully now as she climaxed. She bit down on his shoulder and that was it. His balls tightened up and he came with a grunt, following her into that momentary bliss where nothing else seemed to exist.
As he came back to his senses, he could vaguely hear Ghost snoring through the closed door. He rested his forehead against hers as he caught his breath.

The fruit bowl had tipped over during their activity and a few grapes had rolled across the bed towards them. He languidly selected two, feeding her one before eating his own. She nipped at his fingers and laughed when he popped another one in his mouth.

He cradled her face in his hands, grinning at her like a fool.

“I never want to leave this bed,” he declared... just as there was a knock on the door.

“Maintenance!” a voice bellowed after the knock.

“Ah, fuck,” he muttered.

“Considering everything, I think we should be grateful he didn’t show up a couple of minutes ago,” she laughed.

“True,” he conceded. “Uh... just a minute!” Jon shouted next as he sprung out of bed and disposed of the condom.

He pulled on his jeans. Sansa grabbed some clothes and departed for the bathroom.

“Come and join me in the shower,” she called over her shoulder before closing the door behind her.

“Most definitely,” he said before there was another knock. “Coming!”

And I plan to again.

Chapter End Notes

Next chapter will be from Sansa’s POV and involve some more smut but also some angst.

Thanks for reading!
The heater might’ve been on the blink but there was nothing wrong with the hot water. Sansa turned on the vent, blocking out the noise of Jon and the maintenance man talking. She twisted the knob and let the water get hot before she stepped into the tub. She rolled her shoulders as she relaxed under the spray and waited for Jon to join her.

She heard the door to the bathroom open a few minutes later and Ghost barked once before settling back down. He climbed in and Sansa moved to let him enjoy the warmth.

“He says it shouldn’t take long to fix,” he said before giving her a quick kiss.

“Does he need us for anything?” Sansa asked as she wound her arms around his neck.

“Nope,” he said.

“Good. Turn around,” she said with a mischievous grin.

He did as she asked and she picked up the soap and began washing his back. She kissed and sucked on his neck and enjoyed the feel of his smooth skin and taunt muscles under her fingers as the soap made his body slick for her to glide along it. His head lolled back and she heard his contented groan.

“Nice?”

“Very nice. Do I get to wash you next?”

“If you’re good.”

Her hands moved down to squeeze his ass and then slipped around front to suds up his dick. She moved up against him to hold him from behind as her hand moved up and down, cradling his balls before caressing his cock some more. She kept nipping at his ear and licking his neck while her hands were busy.

“You’re making me hard again,” he warned as his hands reached back to grasp her ass.

“Maybe that’s my plan.”

“I like that plan.”

He did grow fully hard under her touch and he turned suddenly to start kissing her mouth passionately. She moaned into him and he pulled her under the spray with him. He took the soap from her but he wasn’t interested in getting her clean right now.

“Let’s get dirty before I wash you clean,” he rumbled into her ear.

The water was beating against their bodies, rinsing off the soap and bouncing off their skin and into their faces. But they just closed their eyes and continued kissing with their bodies pressed together, their tongues eagerly tasting each other as the water wetted their lips.
Ghost was on the other side of the curtain. She did not care. The maintenance man was on the other side of the door. She did not care.

Jon’s cock was pressed against her as they kissed and Sansa felt feverish with need. They’d had sex less than thirty minutes earlier and yet she wanted it again. She wondered how he’d turned her into such a wanton woman but reflected that maybe this was how many couples felt. She’d never felt like this with Harry but Jon was so different from Harry it wasn’t even funny. And she’d never been in love before Jon…not like this, she knew.

Intimacy with Jon was something that deserved to be explored in every way possible but she couldn’t help but feel a little embarrassed when he pushed her against the shower wall and started suckling at her breast.

“Ohhh…uh, Jon? I…I’ve never had sex in a shower before,” she admitted shyly.

“Never?” he asked, glancing up at her. She shook her head and he smiled. “Do you want to?”

“Yes,” she breathed into his hair.

He kissed her sweetly before hooking an elbow under her knee. He lifted it around his hip. He braced his feet apart and she felt his hardness against her belly.

“The condoms are out there,” he murmured. “I can pull out but if you don’t want to take the chance, we can wait. I’ll get you off another way.”

“No, just pull out. I want this, Jon, and I trust you.”

He slid inside of her with ease. “Oh, my God,” he breathed as he began thrusting. “Sansa…you feel so good.”

It was good and yet a little awkward. And she started feeling like she might fall with only one foot on the tub’s floor. It was hard to focus on the pleasure. She felt herself slipping for half a second and screeched but Jon held her tightly. She wasn’t going to fall.

He chuckled and said, “I’ve got you.”

“Sorry.”

“Let’s make this easier so you can have both feet on the floor,” he said. He pivoted her around so that her back was to him. She looked over her shoulder and down towards his cock, her eyes wide in anticipation. “Alright?” he asked.

She nodded and braced herself against the wall with her forearms as she felt Jon’s hands grasp her hips. He entered her again and started moving.

“Oh, God,” she cried. This was better. She was no longer focused on her balance. She could just feel. “Mmm…Jon…” she panted, not entirely sure what she wanted to say.

“Is it good, sweet girl?” She bit her lip and nodded, enjoying the glide of his cock along her slick walls. His hands held her tighter and the water was warm. “Fuck, Sansa…” he grunted as he pounded into her. “You’re so fucking…goddamn…you’re so tight. I love feeling you wrapped around my cock, baby.”

“Jon…Jon…I need…”
One hand moved from her hip and he started teasing her clit as he kept moving within her. He knew just what to do to please her. The bright lights of the bathroom were no match for the flashing white behind her eyelids when she came. She called out his name...loudly.

His chin was against her back and his hips lost their rhythm. She heard his muffled curse as he left her sooner than she would’ve liked. She felt his cum soon after, warmer than the water, spurting across her back and ass as he grunted with his release. He leaned against her for a minute before moving her back towards the spray.

“I think I need to get on the pill so you can come inside me and we don’t have to worry over condoms,” she said once they were facing each other again and kissing once more.

“I’ll gladly write you a script because I would love to come inside you anywhere and everywhere,” he said teasingly.

“Thank you, doctor,” she laughed. “Wash me now, Jon.”

“Gladly...if I can get you dirty again later.”

“Oh, yes...definitely.”

She felt pliant like jelly as he rubbed her lower back and kneaded her shoulders with his strong hands. He washed her hair next and his fingers massaging her scalp had her purring with delight. She returned the favor, enjoying carding her hands through his damp curls and nipping at his neck as he rinsed. He started kissing once he was thoroughly free of soap and suds...and getting hard again.

But the water had begun to cool rapidly and she gave him a gentle push backwards with a promise of later.

“I love you,” Sansa said when they turned off the water and started drying off a few minutes later.

“I love you. I hope he didn’t hear too much,” he said, gesturing towards the door.

“I’m going to tell myself he didn’t hear a thing.”

The room was warm at last and, ironically, they had finally put on clothes. The maintenance man had been gone before they ventured out of the bathroom which Jon was grateful for considering. Ghost happily laid down on the bed, content to be released from the bathroom again.

Jon sat on the room’s small loveseat absently flipped channels until he found a match on while Sansa sat at the table and was busy on her phone replying to texts, checking her email and such. It was still early, just past 9:00 AM. Hotel rooms could be exceedingly dull at times, especially after a snowstorm. He glanced over at the bed and thought of ways it could be much more fun.

*No, don’t be pestering her constantly for sex. Give her a chance to do something with clothes on.*

Nevertheless, he spent more time staring at Sansa than the soccer match whilst fervently praying he wasn’t about to wake up from nothing more than a sweet dream.
Not that he had minded being just friends. He loved her as his friend. But he was head over heels for her and there was no going back from that. And, to have his love returned? Well, he didn’t want to screw anything up. That much was certain.

Which means you likely will, he thought with a sigh.

“So, what’s on the agenda today, Best Man?”

She had looked up at his sigh and caught him staring at her.

Jon shook off his worries and recalled the day’s plans. “The other groomsmen and I are taking Sam to lunch at this greasy spoon we always ate at in school at 12:30. What would you like to do? You’d be welcome at anything I’m doing, I’m sure.”

“Oh, Jon, I couldn’t possibly get in the middle of all that male bonding,” she teased. “You have fun at your greasy spoon though. That’s a total guy thing. I wouldn’t want to intrude.”

“But I don’t want you sitting here alone. You’ve met Sam and Pyp and Grenn already. Dickon, Sam’s brother, hopefully made it in town by now so he should be there…”

“Don’t worry about me. Lily and Gilly and Sam’s sisters were all kind enough to invite me to the ladies’ luncheon that’s being hosted here around that time. Then, I may just hang out with Ghost until we head to the wedding.”

“Alright,” he said, thoroughly pleased that Gilly and the other ladies had included Sansa in their plans. “We’ll need to be there early for pictures but I’d guess I’ll be all yours again by 2 and we won’t need to leave till 4ish.”

“All mine, huh?” she grinned. “Two long hours and all mine?”

Jon grinned back at her thought clothes were definitely overrated this morning. He started to suggest as much when his phone dinged with a text. He glanced down at it and then did a double take. He couldn’t imagine why she’d be texting.

Yeah, you can. This is precisely why you were worried about coming here alone in the first place.

Ygritte: Hey! Heard you made it up here last night despite the blizzard. Looking forward to seeing you tonight at the wedding.

As he stared at the message, the phone dinged again. He looked at Sansa, who had politely returned to looking at her own phone while he read his message.

Ygritte: Sam and Gilly are the sweetest, right? I saved my gift shopping for last minute like always and now I’m dreading getting out in this mess. Wanna come shopping with me? ;)

Jon automatically checked his pulse and recognized his immediate fight or flight response as it kicked into high gear. His finger hovered over the surface of his phone wondering what he should do.

Should I respond at all? Should I ask her who the fuck she thinks she is to suddenly want to make plans after everything? Should I tell her about Sansa? Should I delete this and ignore her? Should I tell Sansa about this?

At face value, the texts were friendly. They had told each other the lie about staying friends a time or two in the past but they weren’t friends. Ygritte had cheated on him and walked out of his life by
leaving him a letter and his key on the kitchen counter. She’d communicated with him exactly three times since then:

‘I’m sorry about everything,’ via text two months after she left him. He’d told her not to worry about it.

‘I found some of your old CDs in my stuff. Do you still want them?’ via a phone call three months after that. He hadn’t wanted them back, not enough to go meet her anyway.

And, six months before he moved to Maryland, she’d texted him one night when he’d been pulling an all-nighter during his surgery rotation and left his phone in his locker. Actually, she’d texted a lot that night…

*Hey, Jon. How’s school?*

*You’re almost done, right?*

*I miss you. I hope you’re doing okay.*

*The past couple of weeks have been awful. Work has been shitty and other things aren’t so great either.*

*How’s Ghost? I’ll bet he doesn’t miss me at all, right? LOL.*

*I’ve been thinking about us lately. I guess that’s obvious.*

*I think I fucked up and made a mistake.*

*Can we talk?*

*I’m drunk and alone. I want to see you.*

*Can you come over?*

*I want you.*

*Fuck.*

*I can’t believe I’m doing this.*

*I’m touching myself and remembering you and wanting you here with me again. Do you want that, too?*

*Are you seeing someone?*

*If you are, I can make you forget her ;)*

*Forget I said that.*

*But if you’re lonely, call me or come over, ok?*

*Aren’t you going to answer me?*

*Fine. Don’t respond.*

*Why do you have to be such an ass?*
YOU ARE SUCH A FUCKING ASSHOLE!

You’re a selfish, closed-off bastard and I don’t know why I wasted so much time with you.

I hope you die alone with just that fucking dog of yours for company!

He hadn’t seen any of the texts till the next morning after she’d sent a follow-up text:

I’m so sorry, Jon. I was drunk and lonely and really stupid. Please ignore all that. I didn’t mean any of it. I hope you’re happy and well.

He’d never responded to her. He hadn’t known what to say then and he wasn’t sure what to say now. He had zero interest in carrying on any sort of relationship with Ygritte even if Sansa hadn’t been in his life. And now, he certainly didn’t want to fuck things up with her over his ex.

“Hey,” he said laying his phone down. “Can we get out of here for a little bit?”

Her head popped back up from where she’d been intently playing a game on her phone. She looked at him with a sweet smile.

“You okay?”

“Yeah. I just…”

It was on the tip of his tongue to tell her but he hated bringing up Ygritte yet again. He didn’t think either of their exes deserved to take up so much of their attention and special time together. He didn’t want to dwell on past pains right now either. He wanted to enjoy his day with Sansa. And, he wasn’t sure he wanted to give Sansa more reasons to dislike Ygritte when they inevitably met later.

“I just…I want to get out of here. I could show you around Burlington. I mean, sure…there’s eighteen inches of snow on the ground and it’s cold as fuck but…”

Sansa started laughing and said, “Okay. Sounds like a blast, Jon. Wanna take Ghost?”

Ghost’s head popped up off the bed and he immediately started wagging his tail.

“Sure. We couldn’t leave our boy behind, could we?”

They loaded up in the SUV with Ghost and headed down the road. Jon wasn’t really sure where he was going at first. He was just driving and pointing out different places from when he’d attended medical school here.

Fight or flight…I chose flight. Except it wouldn’t have been a fight with Sansa.

The roads had been plowed and treated but he still had to be cautious. Sansa didn’t seem as nervous as she had been last night though. The sun was peeking through the clouds and perhaps that made the difference.

After about twenty minutes, Sansa fell silent, looking out the window.

“You falling asleep on me over there?” he asked teasingly. “I know it’s kind of dull compared to Baltimore or Philly and with the snow…”

“No, I’m not falling asleep,” she said in a hushed tone. She fell quiet again and he thought maybe she was just enjoying the snowy landscape…until she spoke again. “Jon…where is she buried?”
He glanced at her, still mindful of the road, but suddenly feeling like his chest was caving in and expanding at the same time. He started blinking rapidly. Of course, she would care enough to ask. There was simply no comparison when it came to Sansa and the way she loved him.

“Closer to Northfield…where I grew up,” he said hoarsely. “I, uh…I could show you.”

“Do we have time?” she asked. “I wouldn’t want to run you late for Sam. It’s his big day after all.”

He couldn’t help the tear that rolled down his cheek. He desperately wanted to hold her hand, to pull her into his arms and bury his face in her hair. He still had to drive though.

She reached out and touched his shoulder. He could feel Ghost’s hot breath on his neck as he stuck his head over the driver’s seat.

“I’m sorry if…”

He cleared his throat and interrupted her apology that he didn’t want or need. She’d done nothing wrong after all.

“We’ve got time,” he said as he gave her a teary smile.

Forty-five minutes later, they pulled off the main road into a memorial garden on the outskirts of Northfield. The one lane drive that looped around the cemetery hadn’t been plowed or treated so Jon stopped and said they’d have to walk.

“I promise you can get out soon,” Jon said to Ghost. “Just not here.”

Ghost whined and laid his head down on his paws and Jon affectionately scratched his ears.

They trudged along in their boots and jeans maybe a quarter of a mile up a hillside. The snow crunched under their feet and Sansa could almost believe she was taking a wintery hike except for the large monuments and headstones surrounding them and shrouded in snow. It was still bitterly cold and the wind sounded lonely as it whistled through the evergreens.

She could barely feel her toes by the time they reached the top of the hill. But, she’d suggested this and she was glad she had. Jon looked…well, pleased was not really the right word but she could tell he hadn’t expected the suggestion and was deeply touched by it.

As they’d driven along and Jon pointed out innocuous things back in Burlington like the Olive Garden where he’d worked as a server his first year of med school, she’d remembered last month and how sad he’d been about not being able to visit his mother’s grave on the anniversary of her death.

Logically, they both knew such traditions were simply not possible for most people to uphold year in and year out. And for that matter, there was no shame in not really wishing to visit the graves of dead loved ones. Remembering them anytime or anywhere was what mattered.

But Jon had been depressed on the second anniversary of his mother’s death and wanted to bring her flowers. He had not been able to do what he wanted that day and Sam had done it for him. But
today…while they were this close, they may as well visit.

Only the taller headstone markers were visible along with the tops of the artificial poinsettias some families had placed at their loved ones’ markers. But Jon knew right where she was.

He clasped Sansa’s hand as he pulled to stop. He took a deep breath and then knelt to wipe the snow away. Sansa gazed at the marker and wished she could’ve met Lyanna Snow, the single mother that had raised the wonderful man beside her.

“I…should’ve brought something,” he said guiltily, looking around at the flowers and tiny Christmas trees that some markers had.

The silk flowers Sam had brought on his behalf in November were still in their little holder. They looked like blue roses but they had faded a good deal from the elements.


“Is it?” he asked with eyes as wide and questioning as any of her young students.

“It is. I promise,” she said grasping his gloved hand with her own.

He put his arm around her and kissed the tip of her nose. “Thank you, Sansa. I’m glad you asked about this.”

“Thanks for bringing me with you here.”

They stood like that together for a time. She made no mention of his silent tears until she couldn’t stand seeing him sad any longer and then she held him. At last, Jon wiped his eyes and mentioned not wanting to risk frostbite or leave Ghost too long. They walked back down the hillside arm in arm quietly until Sansa mentioned sledding down it.

“Sorry…it’s just an ideal hill for it,” she shrugged.

“It really would be a faster way to reach the bottom,” Jon laughed.

When they reached his vehicle, they were still snickering together.

They drove a few miles back towards Burlington until Jon stopped at a park he knew to give Ghost a break from riding. The dog happily ran through the snow, delighted to enjoy a bit of freedom. Jon had told her to stay in the SUV.

“No use in getting your toes frozen all over again,” he said with a smile. “I’ll give him ten minutes and then we’ll head back. There’s a place nearby I can get you a hot cocoa, okay?”

“Fine by me,” she agreed and rubbed her hands together in anticipation.

Just as Jon and Ghost were out of sight, his phone dinged. Sansa picked it up and glanced at it in case it was Sam.

It wasn’t.

Ygritte: It’s been over an hour. Are we meeting up or not?
Chapter End Notes

I don't like to write too much angst for my pair so don't panic about this development. This was a good place to end the chapter but the Ygritte issue will be dealt with in the next one.

Thanks so much to all of you that are reading this :)

He climbed into the driver’s seat after wrangling Ghost back in when he heard his phone chime in the center console cupholder. Sansa’s back was turned to him. She was staring out the passenger side window, fiddling with the gloves he’d given her. It was the two-minute reminder notification of a text and he glanced at the lock screen to see he’d had more than one text.

The most recent was from Stannis, short and to the point just as he’d come to expect from the man who was a brilliant physician and capable administrator…and ordinarily displayed all the emotional warmth of a snow pea.

*Dr. Baratheon: Schedule change. Be here at 6AM Monday.*

Jon rolled his eyes but he would not complain. They’d let him have his four days and, considering how fan-fucking-tastic that had turned out for him personally, he had no room to complain at all. So, if it was the early shift versus the midday for his first day back, he’d do as instructed.

He opened the phone and pecked out a quick acknowledgment with his frozen fingers and then saw who the other messages were from. His gut clenched. He should’ve known better than to ignore her and not say anything to Sansa.

*It’s been over an hour. Are we meeting up or not?*

*Hello, is this still the number for Dr. Jon Snow? LOL.*

*Gilly says I’ve got the right number so I guess you don’t want to talk.*

*Or maybe you’re busy since she also said you brought someone with you to the wedding.*

*What’s she like? Have you known her long?*

Twenty bucks and a shot says she’s a redhead ;)

He wanted to throw his phone and maybe scream in frustration. He wanted to call her back and tell her to fuck off and stay the fuck out of his life. He would opt for blocking her number instead…right after he sent her a reply.

*I’m here with someone very special to me and I’m not interested in getting together. Please don’t text me again.*

With a painful ache in his chest, he laid down his phone again. He knew exactly why Sansa was so preoccupied with the view out her window and the cuff of her glove. She’d seen some of the texts as they came through…and she had concerns. She no doubt wondered why he hadn’t mentioned
Ygritte texting earlier and, considering Harry’s cheating, she was likely wondering if he would be hiding other things from her, too.

“Sansa, I…”

“Should’ve told me,” she said still looking out the window.

“I should’ve. You’re right. I should have told you.”

“I’ve been lied to enough by men, Jon.”

“I know. I didn’t…” he began and then shut his mouth. *A lie by omission is still a lie, asshole.* “I’m sorry. I didn’t intend to hurt you. I don’t want to keep secrets. She texted and I didn’t reply. I panicked and didn’t want to talk about it…so I kept it from you. But I shouldn’t have done that after everything you went through with Harry. I shouldn’t have done that to my friend. I shouldn’t have done it at all.”

Ghost popped his head forward between them and whined, picking up on the tension in the air. He gently pushed his dog back and leaned towards her, choking out the words as he sought her hand. “Please…Sansa. There is nothing between me and her anymore. I don’t want her. I don’t want to be with her. I only want you. I ignored her because I didn’t even want to talk to her at all, not via text or any way.”

She drew a deep breath, like she was dying for air after being under water too long. He knew the feeling. She let him take her hand but her body was still angled away from him.

“That’s why you wanted to get out earlier? Out of the room, right?”

“Yeah.”

She finally turned her eyes to him. The brightness of the day with the sun reflecting off the snow was blinding but the piercing, clarity of her blue eyes was all he could focus on. He could never lie to those eyes, he knew.

“Why not just say?” she asked.

“I’m a fool and I got scared about her and the past coming between us and our day together. I didn’t say because…because that’s what I do sometimes when things are shitty or I’m not sure how to handle it. I try and just ignore them and hope they’ll go away. It’s not an ideal coping mechanism, I’ll admit.”

“Neither is hiding from your problems…or your family,” she said softly, turning fully towards him now. “We’ve both got some work to do with those things, I guess.” He nodded and she squeezed his hand. “Has she done this…texted you before out of the blue?”

“It’s been several months, long before I met you, before I moved even. But, she just…she doesn’t let things go easily. She…the last time she texted me I was working all night and she…well, she went on and on. It became nasty and I didn’t even see it till the next day. But I hoped maybe this time she’d take the hint. Instead, she…”

“‘I’m not gonna be ignored, Dan,’” she quoted, eerily similar to Glenn Close with half a smile forming on her lips.

“Something like that,” he chuckled, relief spilling through his chest that maybe Sansa would
forgive his stupidity, that maybe she wouldn’t doubt him or his love or be ready to walk away or...his heart couldn’t even finish those thoughts. “Sansa, I love you so much and…”

“I love you, too,” she replied with simple sincerity. “There was never any question in my mind of that.”

He literally gasped after holding his breath the past minute, so grateful to hear her words. He closed his eyes for a brief second to thank God for bringing Sansa into his life, Loras and Renly for having an available apartment in the building and Stannis Baratheon for hiring him for a position in Columbia and just so many factors that had brought them together.

He leaned forward to kiss her, his heart swelling with joy from no more than a peck on the lips...just like under the mistletoe a couple of weeks earlier.

A devilish smirk appeared. “Is it bad that I wanted to text her back and give her a location and time to meet, knowing she’d be left there waiting?”

“Oh, my God,” he said, his eyes wide with surprise. “I would’ve laughed my ass off if you did.”

“But then you would’ve told her it was a mistake.”

“Well, yeah. I couldn’t do that to anyone.”

“I couldn’t either,” she sighed. “What’s wrong with me?” she asked jokingly, rolling her eyes.

“Not a thing is wrong with you. You’re a good person, Sansa.”

“You are, too. And she doesn’t get to spoil the day, right?”

“Right,” he agreed and then sealed it with another kiss.

The holy rite of a groom and his groomsmen living it up with wild abandon the night before his wedding had been declined by Samwell Tarly in the early stages of wedding planning. Sam was the sweetest and steadiest guy Jon knew. He had no interest in having a stag night that involved getting roaring drunk with strippers...or, God forbid, hookers the night before he was to marry the love of his life.

Actually, Sam would’ve been embarrassed and possibly suffered an apoplexy at just the thought of a stripper giving him a lap dance. And, he likely would’ve spent his evening applying his doctorate in psychiatry to helping any prostitutes cope with their myriad issues that had led them to that life.

Thankfully, he was content with a guys’ luncheon due to the timing of the wedding so close to Christmas and with half the wedding party having to travel to be there for it. Which suited Jon since he wouldn’t wish to organize one of the aforementioned bachelor’s parties. Plus, Gilly would’ve killed him if he had arranged such a thing for his friend.

It was good spending time with Sam and the guys again. Even Dickon, who he didn’t know as well, was pleasant company. Laughing with these men, Jon realized how much he’d missed the fellowship of others before he’d met Sansa and his neighbors. He also realized how many walls he
had erected, the way he had purposely closed himself off to others, even his friends, with his mother’s illness and death.

The one person he’d allowed in during the aftermath out of sheer loneliness had been Ygritte and that relationship had been toxic in many respects.

But Sam had never given up on him and had always been a solid, real presence in the background, never pushing but always there if Jon needed him. Other than Ghost, Jon knew there’d been no one else truly there for him like Sam in those dark days.

But it was Sansa that had brought him out of his shell in the end. His beautiful neighbor that he’d been taken with from the moment he met her but who had wound up quietly leading him from his isolation with her friendship and the fact that she needed somebody, too.

He had loathed the idea of coming up here for the wedding before she’d offered to come with him. **What kind of friend am I? I didn’t even want to come to my best friend’s wedding.**

But his fears had been there and had held him back from focusing on Sam and Gilly’s happiness. Just like Sansa, he’d run away from home too in a way.

**If not for Sansa, would I have come up here alone and wound up in Ygritte’s arms again only to sink back into misery a day later? Would I ever try and make peace with the past that haunts me without Sansa? Would I have never looked back and lost touch with Sam in the end till there was no one left?**

He knew she had saved him in a sense from the path he was headed down when he moved to Maryland, a life of practicing medicine and healing the hurts of others while zealously protecting his heart and keeping it to himself. A life that allowed no one in…just his beloved dog. And, what would he do when he lost Ghost someday? Lay down and die too or go on?

Would he grow cold like Stannis in the end? But perhaps away from work that man was not so cold. Jon could not say.

Would Jon have lived a life of quiet desperation dying with the song in his heart still unsung as Thoreau would’ve put it if there had been no Sansa Stark in his life?

He did not know for certain. He only knew that she was here and real and with him now. He never meant to let her go.

After the consumption of a ridiculous amount of calories, the five men said their brief farewells in the diner parking lot. They would all be due for pre-wedding pictures in a few hours. Jon was eager to return to the hotel and Sansa when Sam took him aside by the arm.

“You happy? Not hating me for dragging you up here in a blizzard now?” Sam asked, looking like a clinician assessing a psych ward patient.

“I am,” he answered, embarrassed at the thoughts of Sam turning psychiatrist on him. “And I could never hate you regardless of the weather.”

“But you and Sansa…more than friends now, yeah?”

“Yes, Sam. We’re more than friends and…I’ve never felt this way about anyone before…never
like this,” he clarified. “I am happy and I hope I make her happy.”

“I’m glad you are happy,” his friend pronounced next. “I mean, I can see why. She’s not only gorgeous and a wonderful woman but…I’ve never seen you like this, Jon. Not since your mum’s illness anyway. I’m glad for you both.”

“Thank you, Sam. She’s…she’s everything I never knew I needed. I’m very happy for you and Gilly, too. I hope that someday Sansa and I can be as…”

“Someday…I’m sure you will be,” Sam finished for him. “Enjoy it…these early days. I love Gilly more with every passing year but I won’t lie to you…it’s not always perfect. Sometimes it’s awful even…but more often than not, it’s wonderful. But there’s something about the giddiness and excitement of those early days in a relationship that you won’t ever forget. Take your time and savor it.”

Jon nodded and stuck his hands in his pockets not certain what else to do. Sam wasn’t having that. He reached out, griping him tightly in a bear hug.

“I’ve missed you, Jon. I hope you and Sansa will come up here again sometimes…preferably in better weather.”

“Yeah,” Jon croaked, trying to avoid crying here of all places as he hugged his friend back. “I’ve missed you as well, Sam. I’m glad we came. Thank you, Sam. You’ve always been…well, the best.”

He stopped in the pharmacy for a moment to ask the pharmacist about his unexpected patient from the previous night before returning to the hotel room a few minutes later. He found Sansa wearing nothing but her t-shirt and underwear singing Elvis Costello to Ghost and steaming his tuxedo. She sounded terrific and looked even better. And the song…and it had been one of his mum’s favorite songs.

_How does she just know?_ he wondered in awe. _She doesn’t know. It’s just coincidence…but maybe a sign of how right this is._

“What are you doing?” he asked, shrugging off his coat, hat and gloves.

“Finishing up so we have time to relax before we have to get dressed.”

“You don’t have to do that.”

“Umm…it needed to be steamed. I can’t have the Best Man looking second best, especially since Gilly showed me a picture of Sam’s brother.”

She wolf-whistled and he chuckled.

“You gonna run away with one of the other groomsmen on me?”

“Not likely,” she said. “And, sorry…I don’t make the rules but you will not show up at Sam’s wedding in a rumpled tux. Not on my watch.”
“What makes you think I couldn’t do that?” he asked pointing at the portable steaming thingy that she’d packed.

“I’ve seen your idea of ironing, Dr. Scrubs by Day, Mr. T-shirts and Jeans by Night.”

“Ouch.”

“It’s not a complaint really. I like my casual guy.”

He grinned widely to hear himself called her guy.

“So, do I get to see your dress yet?” he asked next, peeking behind her where it was still hanging in its garment bag in the closet.

“Nope. The dress was kind of part of your birthday gift. I needed to look the part of Best Man’s Date even before we were…you know. You’ll see me in it when it’s time to go and not before.”

“Like a bride and her wedding gown?”

“Maybe,” she laughed.

He asked about her lunch with Gilly and the other ladies and was pleased to learn that she’d enjoyed herself. Then, he told her about Sam and the guys and the decadent milkshake he’d ordered with his burger and fries. He swore he’d take her there for one on their way out of town the following day.

They chatted about Gilly and Sam’s honeymoon plans and compared notes on what their own preferences would be for the hypothetical honeymoon of their dreams.

“Nothing too tropical for me,” Sansa said. “My hair frizzes in the humidity and I burn easily.”

“Nothing too cold,” he countered. “I’ve spent enough of my life staring at snow. I don’t want to see it while I’m on my honeymoon.”

“I’d want to stay some place where there’d be some privacy. Not a hotel or a bed and breakfast where I’d constantly be seeing other people outside my room. Something where it’s just…”

“But nothing too isolated. I’d want to stay somewhere it’s just you and me but where I could also take you out to eat or dancing or go shopping or to the theater or…what?” he asked as she started smiling at him with her eyes glistening a bit.

“Nothing. It’s just you…” she trailed off with a blush. Their hypothetical honeymoon had become much more real, he realized with an answering blush. “I like this,” she said, “making plans with you.”

“I like it, too,” he answered, pulling her into his arms and kissing her with a restrained passion. The warmth and softness of her skin as he clasped her wrists in his hands and her breathy sigh had him deepen the kiss. Her moan had him walking her backwards towards the bed. “Sansa…I really want to make love to you now.”

“That’s good because I really want that, too.”

He lightly pushed her, letting her fall back on the bed where she immediately propped up on her elbows with a seductive glint in her eye. He pulled off his sweater and undershirt, delighted at the way she licked her lips. He glanced at the clock.
2:45PM. Still early. Plenty of time to just enjoy.

He pulled off his jeans and covered her body with his own. She started to tug her t-shirt over her head but he stopped her before she unclasped her bra.

“Not yet…I’m taking my time to savor you, sweet girl,” he promised before kissing her slow and deep, working his way down her throat.

She sank her fingers into his curls and arched her back, pressing her covered breasts against his bare chest. Her long legs wrapped around his waist. She bucked her hips into him. He still needed to rid himself of his underwear and she still had on her panties. It didn’t matter though. Grinding his erection against her while sucking on her neck and hearing her moan his name was heavenly. Gliding his hands along her smooth, creamy skin and then carding them through her silky tresses was a luxury he wasn’t about to take for granted.

A long and leisurely session of making out and telling her exactly how much she meant to him was what he wanted right now. He meant to savor this day. He would savor every second of Sansa he got.

“What do you think, Ghost?” she asked from where she could see him in the mirror of the bathroom.

She had already finished curling her hair and put it up in a partial up-do. She put in her sterling silver hoop earrings before turning and giving a twirl for Ghost.

He barked and panted happily, bobbing his head in approval.

“Thank you.”

The sleeveless silver dress with the beaded sash and lacy bodice would be terribly impractical in the cold but it’d work indoors and she wanted to look like a knockout for Jon. As she slid on the silver pumps to match, she thought she’d achieved that.

She was a little nervous about tonight but a lot less so than she had been a few days ago. The way Jon had been this afternoon…it was love making on a whole other level from anything she’d experienced in the past. The way they connected and how he put her needs first at every opportunity made her glow from within with happiness. His sweet words would melt away any frost.

His eyes had burned so intently when he pushed his way inside her at last. She’d gasped and he’d thought it was the stretch of him filling her. He’d asked if he’d hurt her and she shook her head and smiled. It had been that look, the way he stared at her. If the eyes are truly a window into the soul, what she saw in Jon Snow’s eyes as he made love to her told her everything she needed to know about him and the way that he would love her from this day until...forever.

Still, she had her concerns about meeting Ygritte tonight. Part of her hoped to be spared that dubious pleasure but she highly doubted this woman would not take the chance to make herself known and stick in a barb or two maybe.
Courtesy is a lady’s armor, Sansa had been told as a little girl. She had always tried to be courteous whenever possible.

But if that doesn’t work…there’s always Arya’s way, she decided as she cracked her knuckles. She laughed then to herself. That wasn’t really her way no more than making out in coat closets was. Well…we’ll see what the night brings, she decided with a final check of her makeup.

She opened the bathroom door to find Jon fiddling with his bowtie in the mirror by the TV…and looking like a knockout himself.

“Wow,” he said, turning to look at her. “You look…radiant.”

She smiled and twirled for him this time as Ghost came out of the bathroom to wag his tail at them both.

“I’m a lucky girl to have such a handsome date,” she said as she walked over and fixed the bowtie for him.

She was taller than him with the heels. Some guys hadn’t liked that about her. She could remember wishing she was shorter when she was younger just so boys wouldn’t dislike her for being too tall. She’d outgrown that and immature guys who thought like that, too.

Jon didn’t care about how tall she was in heels though. He grinned up at her, putting his hands on her waist to lightly kiss her cheek.

“You know, you look like a vision…but I’d really like to mess up your lipstick right now,” he said with an arched brow.

She put her arms around his neck and drew closer. “Marg is always saying a girl should marry a man who messes up her lipstick…not her mascara,” she said.

“Marg is on to something,” he said huskily, leaning back in and kissing along her jaw.

“True,” she sighed before giving him a gentle shove, “but, as much as I like your suggestion, we don’t want you running late for Sam and the pictures.”

He hung his head dejectedly making her laugh.

“You got the ring?”

“Yes, Miss Stark,” he said in a monotone voice like one of her students might use on a Monday morning.

“Good boy.”

“Will I get a reward later?” he asked with that wicked look she loved.

“Maybe. Will you help me with my bracelet?” The clasp was new and a little stubborn at times. He smiled and clicked it in place, kissing her hand once it was done. “Come on, Dr. Snow. Take me to a wedding.”

He pulled on his tuxedo jacket, completing the panty-melting effect for her, and said, “Right this way, Miss Stark. It should be a good party. There’s lobster and filet mignon at the reception, along with all the trimmings and topped off with champagne, fresh fruit and little cheesecakes. I’ll save you a strawberry or twenty.”
She laughed and he continued.

“There’ll be a band and dancing…and apologies in advance for when I step on your toes. There’s an open bar so we can both get good and snockered if you want and make-out under one of the tables like teenagers.”

“Oh, I like that idea, Dr. Snow.”

“I’ll hold you to that, sweet girl,” he said with a squeeze of her hand. “And you can even have the pleasure of watching me sweat buckets and probably make a fool of myself when I have to get up and give the Best Man’s speech.”

“What more could a girl ask for?” she teased.

“Oh, I didn’t tell you the best part. Gilly loves lemon things too so the wedding cake is lemon flavored.” She moaned covetously at that. “Hey, now. Don’t make me envious of a cake, my lady.” She giggled as he offered her his arm before saying, “Be good, Ghost. Don’t wait up.”

“Bye, Ghostie,” Sansa said, blowing him a kiss. “We’ll come cuddle with you later.”

Ghost whimpered a bit but then laid his head down on his paws as they headed out the door. A nap seemed like a good idea as he waited for his humans to return.

Chapter End Notes

I was working on in update for A Match but that will take a bit of research whereas this chapter really clicked for me today. Hope you enjoyed it :)}
They’d arrived early for pictures. Sam wasn’t much for superstition and neither was Gilly so a majority of the photos were being taken prior to the ceremony.

“Leaves more time for celebrating,” Sam explained.

Sansa clung to the periphery, not wishing to be in the way. But when it came time for Jon to be photographed with the bride and groom as Best Man, he pulled her up to join them as she blushed and stammered that she was sure they wouldn’t want her in their pictures.

“I want you,” Jon said…more than a little huskily with a smoldering look in his eyes. *Oh, dear me*, she thought. *And here I thought my undies would be safe until the reception at least.*

“We want you, too,” Sam added. “Not the way Jon does naturally but…I mean…shit. Sorry, that sounded rather…”

Gilly rolled her eyes and punched her groom’s shoulder. “He means we’d love to have you in our wedding memories, Sansa.”

The photographer arranged them in different poses but Sansa thought the last one might’ve been her favorite. Jon had impulsively kissed her cheek making her laugh as they stood between the happy couple as the photographer snapped away.

“I’d like to see that one,” she commented.

“I’ll send you a copy,” Gilly promised them.

Gilly disappeared soon after with her sisters at which point Sam apparently decided it was a fine time to have a complete emotional break down in place of an ordinary case of pre-wedding jitters.

“She just makes me so happy, you know?” the large man wept as Jon and the other groomsmen stood about awkwardly with their hands shoved in their pockets and took turns shrugging helplessly at each other. “I don’t know how a guy like me ever managed to get a girl like her. She is so beautiful. She’s everything I hoped for. She’s everything I need.”

“Are we singing Joe Cocker, man?” Pyp joked. “You…are…so beautiful…to meeee!” he belted out in perfect imitation of the gravelly-voiced singer, complete with the broken high note at the end. “I can do ‘A Little Help from My Friends,’ too! *What would you do if I sang out of tune…*”
“Shut the fuck up, Pyp,” Grenn huffed.

“Aren’t you going to comfort him? He’s your brother,” Jon hissed at Dickon.

“So? You’re his best friend,” Dickon shot back.

“There, there, Sam,” Sansa said affectionately while patting his knee and shooting the useless onlookers in tuxes the stink eye. “You’re a lucky man but I happen to think Gilly’s a lucky woman, too. You’re going to be so happy together and this is such a big day but it’s going to be great. I’m just so happy to get to watch you and …”

“Oh, thank you, Sansa!” Sam bawled and nearly suffocated her with his hug.

“Jesus Christ,” Grenn grumbled.

Time was ticking away so once the groom had finally got his shit back together and Sansa had dabbed the teardrops (and a touch of snot) off her dress, Jon escorted her out front to take a seat partway down the aisle on the groom’s side.

The hall was decked out for the ceremony and a good crowd had braved the conditions to watch Sam and Gilly exchange their vows. Heads were all turned her way as Jon gave her a quick kiss and fled back to Sam. Sansa felt a little conspicuous having been brought out from behind the scenes by a member of the wedding party. She didn’t know anyone out here. The bride and groom’s parents hadn’t been escorted down the aisle yet and they’d be seated up front anyway.

Sansa nervously fussed with her dress and adjusted her charm bracelet. She smiled down at Jon’s gift and took a deep breath. It didn’t matter if she was surrounded by strangers. She was here for Jon…and she felt a connection to Sam and Gilly by this point, too. She truly was pleased to be present for such a momentous occasion in their lives.

And she wasn’t the center of attention for long anyway. Just as the rear doors were closing, a woman entered from the back in an off-the-shoulder, skin-tight red dress with her red hair pilled up high on her head. She was rather short but one wouldn’t know it right away since she was wearing six inch heels. She looked a bit unsteady in them as she scanned the crowd and made her way down the aisle.

Sansa sucked in a breath. Ygritte. Something just told her it had to be her.

The red head started to take a seat on the bride’s side but then turned and saw Sansa. Her thin lips curled into a smirk and she sauntered her way. There was just enough room for another person beside her.

“Mind if I sit here?” she asked.

“Um…of course not,” Sansa answered.

“I’m Ygritte,” she said holding out her hand. “I work with Gilly. You a friend of Sam’s?”

Sansa shook her hand, doing her best to ignore the flutter of nerves in her belly, and suspecting that Ygritte already knew exactly who she was. “I suppose I’m becoming friends with them both,” she squeaked. Shit…get it together, girl. She cleared her throat and said, “I’m Sansa…Sansa Stark. I came with…”

Just then, the organ began to play and Sam and Jon came out from behind the altar to stand beside the reverend. The back doors opened and Dickon escorted Mrs. Tarly and Sam’s sister down the
aisle followed by Sam’s father. Then, Grenn escorted Gilly’s mother.

A hush fell over the crowd as Gilly’s bridesmaids began their stately march down the aisle ahead of Gilly’s six-year-old niece who was acting as flower girl. Murmurs were stirred back up as Gilly and her step-father came into view.

She was a vision in her bridal gown. Even having seen her earlier during the photography session, Sansa couldn’t get over how enchanting Gilly looked.

Sansa glanced up front and saw Sam had started weeping again but at least he was standing on his own two feet as Jon clapped him on the shoulder. The groomsman were all smiling and staring at Gilly. Jon looked her way and frowned momentarily when he noted her companion but quickly returned his attention to the bride. It was her moment after all.

Sansa grinned happily and turned to Ygritte as Gilly swept past them down the aisle on the arm of her step-father with a joyous smile on her face.

“Oh! Isn’t she absolutely…”

“So, you’re his new redhead, huh?”

_Courtesy is a lady’s armor. Courtesy is a lady’s armor. Courtesy is a lady’s armor._ Sansa repeated to herself in the ladies’ room before the reception began. She could practically hear her mother chanting along with her. _Don’t make a scene! Don’t make a scene! Don’t make a scene! Ugh…that bitch._

Ygritte had continued to chatter in her ear throughout the ceremony which was terribly rude. She’d not made any overtly crass comments but the suggestion was implied here and there. Even when she made polite chit-chat, Sansa could sense the jealousy under the surface.

“What do you do?” “How did you meet?” “How long have you known Jon?”

“Since August,” she’d whispered, hoping that would satisfy her curiosity and get her to shup up.

“Hmmm…that’s not all that long.”

Sansa didn’t want to talk during the ceremony. More than one person had glared at them already as Ygritte whispered away without a thought.

“Is he still in love with that dog of his?” she’d snickered.

“Yes. We really shouldn’t be talking right now,” she’d said as Jon had passed Sam the ring.

Ygritte had scoffed at her.

Sansa’s only victory had been when Ygritte mentioned her charm bracelet as the guests were applauding at the end when Sam and Gilly kissed.

“Cute bracelet. Looks pricey.”
“Thank you. I’m not sure what it cost. Jon gave it to me.”

That had shut her up for a minute anyway.

_That’s right. Jon. Gave. It. To. Me._

Ygritte had frowned and then mentioned something about silver being less expensive than gold.

*I prefer silver,* she’d thought but bit her lip.

Jon had rushed to her side as soon as he decently could after escorting Lily back up the aisle.

“Hey,” he’d said anxiously, kissing her quickly and his eyes darting between her and Ygritte. “You enjoy the ceremony?”

“We did,” Ygritte had cut in before Sansa could open her mouth. “Are you even going to say hello to the woman you once lived with?” she’d asked wrapping an arm around his shoulder.

“Hello, Ygritte,” he’d said. “I take it you’ve met Sansa.”

“I have. She’s lovely, Jon. God…she’s definitely taller than you in those heels.” She’d laughed at her little barb and said in a stage whisper, “If you’re not careful, you’ll give him an inferiority complex wearing those, sweetness. Men have such fragile egos, you know.”

“Ygritte…” Jon began. The angry flush on his cheeks was not a good sign and this was Sam and Gilly’s big day. “Don’t you dare start any…”

“You promised me champagne and strawberries, I believe,” Sansa had interrupted, taking his hand.

“I did,” he’d said as a smile formed. He’d ducked out from Ygritte’s arm that was still slung over his shoulder. “And lemon cake. See you later, Ygritte.”

They had strolled over to the room where the rehearsal dinner had been held the previous night which had been expanded and held enough tables for all the guests. A dance floor had been added and the band was warming up. She’d left Jon chatting with Grenn and Pyp while she headed into the ladies’ room to freshen up and regain her composure.

_You can handle this, Sansa Stark. One jealous ex-girlfriend is not going to ruin our evening. You originally came here as his friend but you are lovers now and no one’s coming between you. Let’s make this a magical night to remember._

She squared her shoulders and headed out to find her man.

He’d procured her a flute of champagne and himself a beer which she gratefully quaffed when he handed it over.

“Thanks. I needed that.”

“Careful…I’ve seen you after too much wine,” he teased.

“Afraid I’ll start doing drunken charades for everyone?”

“Or singing Creedence Clearwater Revival.”

“Promise to catch me if I stumble,” she laughed and leaned against him. “You look devastatingly handsome, Dr. Snow.”
He grinned, his cheeks turning pink. “And, I’ll say it again…you are absolutely radiant, Miss Stark. I’ve got the most beautiful date here. Well, except maybe for Sam. I can’t bash a bride on her wedding day.”

“Oh, no! She is so beautiful and this is her day,” Sansa agreed.

“Maybe I’ll have a few beers and start singing Joe Cocker with Pyp.”

Out of the corner of her eye she could see Ygritte sitting at a small table with what must be some of her and Gilly’s other co-workers. She was drinking champagne too and laughing but the laughter didn’t sound entirely genuine. She kept turning to look at them.

“I feel sorry for her,” Sansa whispered.

“Why?” Jon scowled. “I’m sure she was rude to you.”

“Not explicitly…more implied.”

“Humph. Well, you don’t need to feel sorry for her. She’ll be just fine.”

“But, I do. She had you and she lost you. That’s reason enough to feel sorry for any woman when it comes to a man like you.”

“Thank you,” he said with an embarrassed shrug and she kissed him.

“Are you still nervous about the speech?”

“Yeah…I hate standing up and talking in front of a group.”

“Who doesn’t?”

“Well, teachers for one, Miss Stark.”

“Ha, ha. That’s different than standing up in front of a room full of adults. Kids are kids. But you’ve got all these strangers watching you…judging you…waiting to see if you’ll be witty or sentimental or…”

“Are you trying to help me feel better or not?”

“Sorry,” she laughed. “You’re going to be terrific. I’ll be sitting right by your side.” She squeezed his hand and that brought back a smile.

“So, more champagne? Some strawberries for you before the meal perhaps?”

“Yes, please.”

“I’ll be right back.”

Jon grabbed a little plate for appetizers and started making a few judicious selections, mindful of the full-course meal to come and leaving plenty of room for strawberries.
He nabbed another beer for himself. He planned to switch to water afterwards but he wasn’t sure
two beers were going to be enough to bed down the butterflies that started flapping in his stomach
whenever he thought about giving his speech. He’d written and rewritten it five times. He’d put the
final draft in his pocket this morning…the pocket of his blue jeans which were back in the hotel.

I hated that draft anyway.

“Hello again,” she said from beside him.

He sighed and turned to find that familiar crooked grin facing him. “Hello, Ygritte.” He could feel
the tension in his neck and shoulders already building.

“I’m not trying to start anything...” Why does that sound like you’re totally trying to start
something. “…but I’d hoped we could be civil here. I mean, you’d said we were still friends.”

He gaped at her until the pieces fell into place. “I…I didn’t say that exactly. You left me without a
word.” She opened her mouth to argue. “Fine. You left me with a few words written on a piece of
paper. And later you sent a text that said, ‘still friends?’ and I said ok because what else was I
going to say? It’s not like I wanted to start a fight via text and say no, thanks.”

He glanced over at Sansa sitting at the head table. Sam and Gilly had been very welcoming of her
but they were wrapped up in each other right now as they should be. Pyp and Grenn were polite but
they were a bit shy around pretty women they didn’t know well. Dickon was chatting up one of
Gilly’s sisters. She was all alone at their seats and looking more than a little lonely. And he hadn’t
missed how her eyes had darted his way when Ygritte appeared.

“Look, the past is what it is. I’m doing well. I’m happy. I hope you’re doing well and I wish you
happiness. And, I need to get back to my date, Ygritte.”

“Sure,” she said, her eyes downcast and the tell-tell tightening around her lips already starting. “We
had some good times, right?” she asked as he started to leave.

Not all that many, he thought sadly. But he could be kind. “We did.”

“Do you think we ever could’ve made it, Jon?” she asked next. “If I’d tried harder...if you’d tried
harder, do you think…”

His kindness only went so far and he wasn’t going to lie now. “No…I’m sorry but I don’t think
so.”

Returning to Sansa’s side, he sat down, lifted her hand to his lips and kissed it. She grinned and
took a strawberry as he flagged down a waiter for another flute of champagne. They talked
companionably to each other and then with Gilly and Sam, along with members of the wedding
party and other guests. Sansa was becoming a bit giggly by the time she finished her third glass of
champagne. Dinner was served and the reverend asked a blessing before the guests dove into the
their meal.

Jon champed methodically on his slightly overdone filet as his stomach twisted and complained
about his upcoming ordeal.

It’s just a two-minute speech. You can do this, Snow. You tell a little bit about Sam and Gilly and
how you know them and how great they are and then you ask everyone to raise a glass. Not hard.
Sansa stands and talks all day in front of people.

Yeah, but those people are seven-year-olds.
A shadow fell across his plate and Jon turned to find Ygritte standing behind him, swaying a bit on those ridiculously high heels. He could smell the alcohol on her breath when she laughed for no apparent reason and ran her fingers through his hair. He flinched from the inappropriately intimate gesture and he saw her eyes narrow.

“San-sahhh,” she slurred. “That’s a pretty name. A pretty name for a pretty girl. Such a proper little girl, too. You didn’t like me trying to talk to you during the ceremony, did you? Is that what you like now, Jon? A pretty little girl that minds her manners?”

“Ygritte,” he said, standing up, “I think maybe you’ve had enough and it’s time to get you a ride home.” He would escort her out of here if he had to but he was hoping Pyp or Grenn might help him out. Sansa looked down at her lap as Ygritte wound her arms around his neck. He shrugged her off and she laughed louder. “Stop it. You’re embarrassing yourself and making a scene at Sam and Gilly’s wedding.”

He tried to grasp her arm but she eluded him and leaned close to Sansa’s ear. She didn’t lower her voice any though.

“Does he talk dirty in bed with you, San-sahhh? He was always fond of talking dirty in bed. I’ll bet a little princess like you wouldn’t like that though. So prim and proper. Maybe he uses his mouth in other ways, eh? You can thank me for…ahhh!”

Grenn had appeared and grasped her by the waist. “Hello, Ygritte. Long time, no see. How ‘bout having a smoke with me outside? You still smoke, don’t you?”

“Let go of me,” she hissed at Grenn.

Jon could see more heads turning their way. Sam was looking wretched and Gilly appeared to be considering assault. He had to get Ygritte out of here.

“Jon?” Sansa said unexpectedly, standing up next to him but looking right at Ygritte. “Are you still nervous about giving that speech?”

“Um…yeah,” he said utterly confused by the change of topic.

She spoke quietly then. Only Ygritte, Grenn and himself could hear her. “Well, I’ve got an excellent cure for the jitters.” She wrapped her arm around his waist and said in a sultry tone. “It’s not at all proper of me, Dr. Snow, but it’s something that might relax a man.” She playfully nipped at his ear. “Something I’d only do for you, baby. Come on.”

She tugged at his hand and he followed, casting one more perplexed look over his shoulder at Grenn who was grinning at him. He was oblivious to the whirl of faces that they swept past. He focused on following Sansa, her red hair swinging as she walked purposely across the room.

“I’m supposed to give the speech in a few…”

“This won’t take long.”

She led him to the coat closet.

“Sansa…I’m sorry about that. I was afraid she’d drink too much and start something but I should’ve…”

She gave him a devilish smile and pushed him inside.
“No more talking about her,” she said.

She slammed the coat closet door shut behind her before roughly pushing him up against it.

“Sansa! What are you…”

She cut him off with a kiss. It was possessive, hot and needful. They both moaned. He felt that kiss all the way down to his toes. A searing, fiery kiss that went straight to his cock.

_Hello, there! How are we doing this fine evening?_

“This isn’t about her,” she said, pulling back.

He was panting and leaned in to kiss her some more.

“Her who?” he muttered.

He had honestly lost track. Were they talking about something? Why were they in this closet again? Why were they still wearing clothes?

“Well, it is a teensy bit about her but it’s more about us. I love you, Jon. You make me very happy and I am crazy about you. But not only that…since you came into my life, you’ve brought about a change in me…a confidence I lost or maybe never quite had. Fuck,” she sighed and leaned into him, holding him close and sucking on his neck. He nuzzled into her forehead and hair, not caring if it was getting messy. “Jon, I’m more than a little tipsy right now and maybe not making much sense.”

He groaned as she gently bit at his lips and then slid her tongue back into his mouth before she pulled away again.

“No…” he whined. _Stay where you are._

“This is dirty and probably sinful and all kinds of out of character for me but I’m doing it because I love you and I want you and I want you to relax and enjoy this evening and stop worrying about the past.”

“Sansa…what are you…oh, God,” he said as she sank to her knees and unzipped his pants.

“Jon…I want to suck your cock in this closet and you’re going to let me know if you enjoy it, alright?” she asked with a delightfully wicked glint in her eye...from what he could see anyway. It was sort of dark in there.

“Wha-oh, holy fucking shit,” he cried when her hand darted inside his boxers and pulled his cock out.

“In my mouth, baby…don’t want cum all over this pretty girl’s pretty dress, do we?”

“Ohmygod-ohmygod-ohmygod…fuuuuuck,” he cried as she licked him from his balls to his head.

His cock immediately sprang to full attention and his chin dropped to his chest. He fumbled to his left and right until he found a light switch. _Thank you, God_, he thought as it switched on. They both squinted for a few seconds but he was not missing out on watching this.

“I wanna watch you,” he growled.

“I figured you would, you naughty boy,” she said before she teasingly slapped his ass. He yelped
and she shushed him. “Quiet, Jon…be a good boy and be quiet for me now.”

“Yes.”

“Yes what?” she asked as she licked him again.

“Yes, Miss Stark,” he whispered as her tongue licked the end of his dick before her mouth closed over him.

The initial tasting, licks and kisses were playful…but quickly replaced by more enthusiasm and sucking as she held his hips and bobbed up and down his shaft, her blue eyes often glancing up.

From time to time her eyes would flutter closed and she’d moaned. His stomach muscles would clench when she did. He was could feel his balls tensing up already. He would not last long but he also didn’t want her to stop.

Jon wondered if he was going to get saliva on her from drooling as he stared down at her with his mouth hanging wide open. A hint of red still coated her lips as she pumped his cock with her hand and kept sucking. He swallowed hard and bit his lip, letting the pleasure of her hot, wet mouth on him wash over him.

“Oh, fuck,” he gasped as she hollowed out her cheeks and went down on him farther. He could tell he hit the back of her throat when she gagged for half a second. He instinctively jerked back but her hands didn’t let go of his hips. She just kept going, sucking him in deeper.

His hands were useless by his sides and he itched to feel her hair.

It’s already a mess, he told himself as he gently ran his fingers through those silky locks.

“Yes,” she moaned. “Do that.”

He gripped it a bit harder. She hummed and he was too close. There were slurping sounds as she slid her mouth up and down his wet cock. Up and down, up and down…

He squeezed his eyes shut and his head felt fuzzy. “Umm…Sansa, I’m…uhhh…” he grunted as he came.

She didn’t stop her movements until he’d finished spurting. His head fell back against the door with a thud.

"Did you just mark your territory?” he laughed.

She licked him clean and rose to her feet, wiping at the corners of her mouth.

“I'm afraid I did," she blushed.

"Well, I liked it!"

"Thanks. I think my lipstick needs to be fixed," she said.

“I think I’m going to fucking marry you someday,” he replied before he kissed her hard and desperately, not caring that he could taste his salty release in her mouth.

She laughed softly at his words and tenderly cupped his cheek. “Someday…I just might let you.”
The Best Man’s speech was a bit of a stuttering and jumbled mess. But it was still entertaining to some, Sansa supposed.

They’d returned to the reception hall still adjusting their hair and clothes and Sansa at least was painfully aware that several sets of eyes were on them.

Jon threw up his hand to wave at everyone as the wedding coordinator handed him a microphone, as though he were a celebrity and people were dying to see him…rather than dying for the best man to get on with his speech so the Father of the Bride could give his toast and then there could be cake and dancing.

Jon had a dazed look in his eye as he rambled on for a good ten minutes about Sam and Gilly and true love and finding the right woman…and coat closets and busted heaters and trips to the pharmacy near midnight where old men named Mr. Jenkins had minor heart attacks.

"Oh, he's fine," Jon assured the crowd.

Sansa’s cheeks grew warmer with every remark that strayed off the main topic.

Thankfully, Sam and Gilly didn’t mind at least. They were both laughing heartily at their friend. Gilly was busily recording Jon with her phone in fact. So was Pyp.

When the cake was cut and served, Sansa was moaning once more as she bit into a heavenly slice of lemony perfection.

“I’m jealous of cake,” Jon murmured in her ear. “But tonight…when I get you back to the hotel, I’m going to give that cake a run for its money and make you moan and squirm for me all night, sweet girl.”

“We’ve got a long drive tomorrow,” she smirked.

“We’ll take turns driving. I might even nap.”

As the food and drinks and music flowed freely on the wintry December night, everyone at the wedding seemed to be having a wonderful time. Well, almost everyone.

But, Ygritte angrily tottering out of the hall when Grenn said he’d called her an Uber wasn’t even noticed by either of them. Jon was too busy pulling Sansa onto the dance floor to do the Cha-cha. It was only later when Sansa overhead Lily laughing over it to Gilly that she gave Ygritte a second thought.

And when Jon made good on his promises to make Sansa moan and squirm for him all night back at the hotel as Ghost snored at the foot of the bed, she almost felt sorry for her. Almost.
They will be back home next chapter finally. I could easily wrap this up in a chapter or two but I did originally have some other plans in mind that could make it a bit longer. I suppose it depends on if you guys still want to read more of this story or you're ready for this to be over. Let me know, I guess :)
They’d left the snow behind in Pennsylvania and light rain was falling when they reached Columbia that night. The three of them were exhausted by the long drive and eager to be home again. And in Jon and Sansa’s case, they’d had little sleep the past two nights and were exchanging yawns every five minutes.

Ghost started whimpering as soon as they turned onto their street.

“Almost, buddy,” Jon said tiredly from behind the wheel.

“We’re almost home,” Sansa said in a sing-song voice for Ghost as she reached back to pat their good boy.

Jon pulled into his spot and Ghost hopped out as soon as his door was opened. He grunted from the stiffness of being cooped up for hours and headed straight over to water the bushes.

Jon grabbed their suitcases, whistling for Ghost to come along. Sansa took her suitcase and they clasped hands before he spied Loras sitting on the front porch.

“Were you waiting up for us, Dad?” Jon asked Loras with a lopsided grin.

“That’s Daddy to you, Dr. Sweet Ass,” Loras snarked as he hugged Sansa. “And yes, I’ve been waiting. I figured you’d be back much earlier. Renly, Nan and I have been fretting. Well, Renly was fretting but then he downed a pint of the Chunky Monkey and passed out. He’s going to be my chunky little monkey if he doesn’t watch it,” he sniggered as he turned to hug Jon next.

Jon grinned a little wider. Was it ridiculous that he liked the idea that they’d been fretting over them? Or that Loras wanted a hug just because he’d been gone a mere four days? It didn’t matter, Jon decided as he hugged Loras back.

“Traffic was terrible with the conditions getting out of New England,” Sansa yawned.

“If you were worried, you could’ve just texted Sansa,” Jon pointed out.

“What fun is that? This way I get to make you feel guilty for not texting me first. Plus, I get to see with my own eyes,” he added as he took Sansa’s suitcase from her.

“See what?” Jon asked.

“Whose apartment you both go into.”

“What makes you think we won’t be going into our own apartments?” Sansa asked.
She was trying to keep a straight face…and failing in Jon’s opinion. Loras just smirked at her as he followed them up the stairs with Ghost at his heels. Sansa looked at Jon and shot him a sneaky wink.

When she reached her door, she slid the key into the lock as Loras dutifully held her bag.

“So, I’m working tomorrow but I guess I’ll see you?” Jon asked nonchalantly as he passed them, heading to his own door.

Ghost was pacing back and forth between the two entrances, clearly confused about where to go.

Jon nearly lost it at Loras’s look of utter shock and consternation.


“But…” Loras sputtered.

“Goodnight,” she said before she went inside and closed the door.

“But…” Loras sputtered again. “Are you…and didn’t you…are you really not…” He bit his lip and then glared at Jon before pacing over to him and jabbing him in the chest with a finger.

“Ow!”

“Are you going to stand there and tell me you’re still not sleeping together?!!”

“We visited her brother and his wife and then attended a wedding, Loras,” Jon said with what he thought was a convincing eye roll. “What did you really expect to happen? And…if something had happened, what makes you think I’d kiss and tell…Daddy?”

Ghost barked.

Loras’s mouth opened and closed a couple of times as his ears turned red. “Straight people,” he muttered irritably before whining. “Well…you don’t have to tell me…but I really need you to tell me! I don’t need details but…I mean, I only ask out of love here and…”

Just then, Sansa popped her head back into the hallway. “Oh, Jon? Could you check your suitcase for my black lace panties? They’re missing from my bag. And once you get squared away, don’t forget the condoms when you come over. Come on in, Ghostie,” she cooed at his dog.

Ghost panted and happily followed her inside before she closed the door again.

“I guess you have your answer now,” Jon smirked at Loras as he opened his own door and went inside.

He could hear Loras clapping and shouting, “I knew it! I knew it! I told Renly you’d do it this weekend!” before he closed the door and started laughing.

Jon quickly dumped out the contents of his suitcase. He spotted the lacy undies Sansa had mentioned but those would never be returned.

*It seems you must’ve left them in Vermont. Tragic.*
He grabbed his scrubs for tomorrow and a few essentials and headed next door. He knocked and heard her call for him to come in.

Ghost greeted him with his tail wagging wildly as though they hadn’t just spent over ten hours in his SUV together. He patted his dog’s head affectionately.

“Hey, Buddy. Did you get some dinner?”

“I fed him. About time you joined me.”

He looked up to see Sansa standing in her bedroom doorway wearing a t-shirt. More specifically, wearing his old Ramones t-shirt and no pants.

“Where’d you get that?” he gulped.

He’d meant to pack it for the trip but thought he’d left it at home by mistake. Didn’t matter now. He’d never looked that good in it. In fact, he never wanted to see that shirt again unless it was on Sansa. It hung off her just right, emphasizing all the curves she had that he lacked.

“I may have swiped it from your bag,” she confessed with a guilty little look, her blue eyes peeking out from under her lashes like she expected to be punished for her crime.

*Who’s Daddy now?*

“Swiped it from my…when?”

“At Robb’s.”

*At her brother’s house…before we even had sex.* Somehow that pleased him beyond belief.

“Do you even like the Ramones?” he asked skeptically. He had a hard time picturing Sansa as a Ramones fan.

“Not especially,” she admitted as her fingers traced the hem of the shirt where it grazed the top of her thighs. He wondered if she was still wearing underwear or was bare beneath his shirt. He intended to find out. “I just saw it in your bag after you passed out that night. It smelled like you and…I took it, thinking I’d surprise you when we got home. You look good in black, you know?”

He stalked towards her, enjoying the giddy grin that was spreading across her face the closer her got. “Stealing my clothes, using your feminine wiles on hapless hotel desk clerks, committing sex acts in semi-public places…I think you’re a bit of rule breaker, Miss Stark.”

“Maybe I am.”

“It was naughty of you to take my shirt,” he rasped as he lightly ran a finger down her arm. He loved the way she shivered when he did that.

“It was,” she said coquettishly. “I’m very sorry, Dr. Snow.”

“I might have to spank you for it.”

He wondered if there was a record for how quickly pupils could dilate with no change in lighting as she gasped and the bright blue was obscured by black. He also wondered if her panties were wet yet…assuming she was wearing panties. His heart was pounding and he was dying to know the answer to that second question.
“I might deserve it,” she breathed.

Oh, fuck yeah. His palm itched to give her firm ass a smack…and then rub it.

He pretended to consider her words but then she broke him with her sweet, sincere question, “Do you really mind, Jon? I’ll give it back if you want.”

“No, I don’t mind,” he said as he placed his hand on her hips. He cupped her ass…no panties. He could weep tears of joy over this hot as fuck woman that he loved. “In fact, I may have found a pair of black lace panties in my suitcase which I have no intention of returning.” Her eyes widened and she giggled as he kissed her neck. “You can keep the shirt, sweet girl,” he murmured before he leaned in to kiss her on the mouth. “You’re welcome to my entire wardrobe as long as I get to keep you.”

The alarm blaring at 4:45AM on Monday morning was most unwelcome. Sansa groaned and covered her ears as Jon fumbled to shut it off. He kissed her softly and climbed out of her bed to shower. Sansa stretched happily as her hand slid across the sheets seeking to hold on to his warmth. She heard the water running but was too sleepy to get up and join him.

They’d got in late and then stayed up later and he had to be at work at six. Sansa had another week off before school would be back in session.

She’d nodded off but heard the water cut off. Jon came out of her bathroom with a towel slung low across his hips. She stared at him wantonly as he finished drying and dropped the towel before pulling on his scrubs. She wished he had more time this morning.

“You sure you don’t mind taking care of Ghost today?” he asked as he leaned in to kiss her goodbye.

“Of course not,” she answered. She could hear the now-familiar snores coming from the doggy bed she’d placed in her bedroom last night before Jon had come over. “I love you.”

“I love you. I should be home a little after six.”

“We’ll be here.”

She heard her apartment door open and close quietly and fell back asleep.

An hour and half later she woke up to the sound of panting and doggy breath in her face.

“Ghost,” she whined. “Already?”

Ghost sat back on his haunches and whimpered.

“Okay, okay…I’m getting up.”

Ghost stood again and yipped.

“Ready for a walk, huh?”
Ghost panted.

“Alright. Let me get dressed and find that leash.”

She dressed for the chilly, rainy morning and led a happy Ghost downstairs. They returned 45 minutes later to find Renly coming out of his apartment on his way to work.

“Hello, Doll. Hey, Dog,” he said, giving her a kiss on the cheek and Ghost a pat on the head. “The doc gone to work already?”

“Yeah, hours ago,” she said glumly. She loved being with Ghost but, after so much time with Jon the past few days and the significant change in their relationship status, she was missing him terribly this morning.

She realized she’d been standing there pouting when she caught Renly smiling at her.

“I’ll bet he’s missing you, too,” he said gently. He gave her a warm hug. “I’m happy for you, Sansypants.”

“Thank you, Renly. I’m happy, too.”

“What nights does he have off this week? New Year’s Eve?” he asked hopefully.

“No, he’s got to work. He’ll be off Friday night though.”

“Okay. We’ll do our neighbor dinner then if you guys are free.”

She liked the idea of them having a dinner all together. They’d not had one in December. “That sounds great. Can we do karaoke?”

“Definitely,” he grinned and headed out the door.

Sansa checked her mailbox and Jon’s. Neither of them had all that much with the holidays. Jon had some medical journal, junk mail and what appeared to be a bill from Tiffany & Co.

_I’m curious but not curious enough to pry_, she decided.

She had a late Christmas card from her Uncle Benjen, a craft magazine and some other junk mail.

But she smiled to see a postcard from her parents sent from Jamaica a few days ago. She blanched when she read the message though.

_Sansa-

We are so sorry to miss you for Christmas! Robb said you were coming to his house and bringing a friend. We’d love to meet him! Text me when you’re back home. Your father and I will be back on the 4th and are supposed to have a layover at Dulles. We could come visit you though if you don’t mind and rent a car to drive back home.

Love, Mom

_Sansa_ stood there gaping at the card. Of course, they would be curious. She’d not brought a man
home in…well, ever. She’d avoided going home for one thing and Harry had not been a man she was eager for them to meet. They’d finally met him when they’d come down to visit her one time. Her father had hated him on sight…rightly so.

She’d only mentioned going to Robb’s the last time she’d spoken to her mother and failed to mention Jon.

Robb must’ve spilled the beans…the traitor.

It’s not that she was ashamed of Jon or expected her three brothers and sister-in-law to keep Jon’s presence a secret. Her nieces would certainly want to tell their grandmother about Ghost. But, she’d been working her way up to telling her mother more about Jon and then things had went from friendship to more rather quickly. She’d planned on having a nice long chat with her parents about it when they got back in the country.

"We’d love to meet him!"

She was glad of that. It wasn’t that she was worried about them disliking Jon. They’d love him. She was sure of it. But she had not anticipated springing her parents on him quite so soon. She hoped he wouldn’t mind.

Ghost nuzzled his head into her thigh and gave her sweet puppy eyes as if to say, ‘It’ll be okay.’

“Thank you, Ghost,” she said gratefully, scratching behind his ears. “It will be, right? Who wouldn’t love him? And they’ll see how wonderful he is and how happy we are and they’re going to love him. And Dad won't make his shovel and gun joke…will he?”

“Oh, my,” she heard a voice say from behind her. “Are you talking to that dog too now? That’s an interesting development.”

Sansa turned to find Nan standing behind her. “Nan,” she said, hugging her surrogate grandmother and kissing her cheek. “I’ve missed you. How was your Christmas?”

“It was fine. But you’ve missed me?” Nan said with a doubtful expression. “You’ve been off with that handsome young man for four days and you’re telling me you’ve missed me? Forgive me if I call bullshit, dear.”

“Nan!” she gasped.

“Oh, I know…such language for sweet young ears. Well, since you’ve missed this old lady so much, come in and have some tea with me. Good Morning, America’s on. I like that Michael Strahan,” she added with a wolf whistle.

Sansa laughed and followed Nan inside.

Ghost laid down on Nan’s living floor and thumped his tail loudly as Kit Kat came into the room to meow loudly and let it be known that this was a cat place and Ghost was merely being tolerated out of courtesy.

“Go on, Kit Kat,” Nan grumbled as she filled a kettle and fiddled with the tea bags. “Let sleeping dogs lie…or tired ones anyway.” She set the kettle on the stove to boil and sat down next to Sansa, taking her soft, young hands in her old, wrinkled ones. “So, tell me…is this love?”

“It is,” she nodded happily. “Oh, Nan, it is.”
“Oh, goody,” Nan hummed. “I’m not surprised though. I’ve been praying on it.”

“You have?”

“Of course, I have.” She stroked Sansa’s cheek in a motherly fashion. “I prayed for my girl to find a good man. He moved in three weeks later. I prayed for two sweet but lonely kids to find friendship and they did. ‘They’re good people, Lord,’ I said. ‘They shouldn’t have to be all alone.’ I prayed for them to find love and here we are,” she finished with a shrug.

“Nan…” Sansa said as her eyes filled with tears and a lump formed in her throat.

“What more could I pray for?” she said and squeezed Sansa’s hand.

The tea kettle whistled and she rose to fetch their tea, leaving Sansa a moment to compose herself.

When Nan sat back down, she passed over a cup of tea. “Ooh, there’s that handsome Strahan! I do love a good tight end.”

“I thought he was a defensive end when he played.” Sansa did pride herself on a certain amount of football knowledge thanks to Robb and her dad.

“His end looks good either way, dear,” Nan said with a mischievous wink.

“Oh, my God…Nan,” Sansa snorted.

The rest of her day passed happily as she did the laundry and prepped for dinner. She grabbed lunch with Margaery to get caught up and discuss the trip.

“How’s your big brother still devastatingly handsome?” Margaery sighed.

“Yes…and still very happily married, Marg. Time to move on.”

“Pooh,” Margaery whined. “Why are all the good ones taken?”

“Not all the good ones,” Sansa blushed.

“True…but I suspect Man Bun, M.D. is already off the market based on the gleeful text I got from Loras this morning. So, tell me how it went.”

Sansa was happy to tell Margaery about them sharing their first kiss on Christmas Eve and the bracelet he’d bought her and Christmas at Robb’s house…and running into Joffrey.

“You ran into that creep?! Thank God that Jon was there.”

“Yes. Well, he was but he wasn’t…not when I ran into him.”

“Oh, honey…was it awful?” Marg asked.

“No…not really. Ghost was with me and I came to realize that…well, he doesn’t get to scare me anymore.” Margaery pursed her lips. Sansa supposed it was hard to believe after everything. She could hardly believe it herself. “It’s just…I’m different Margaery. I’m not the girl I was before I met Jon. He’s good for me.”

“I can certainly believe that,” her friend smiled.
She went on to tell a little about the rehearsal dinner and meeting Sam and Gilly. She told about them admitting they were in love while skimming over their intimate activities that night and the next morning. Margaery wanted details but she wasn’t going to give them.

Okay…she might have mentioned giving Jon a blow job in the coat closet during the reception after finally losing her patience with Ygritte.

“You did not, Sansa Stark!” Margaery shrieked with laughter, making the patrons around them turn and stare.

“Will you shut up?” Sansa hissed. “I figured you’d be proud of me anyway.”

“I am, honey! I’m swelling with pride just thinking of it! Sansa Stark gives head at a wedding! I’ll bet he was a befuddled mess giving his speech.”

Sansa laughed. “Well…you could say that. His friend Pyp sent me a link to a video he posted on YouTube of the speech. I’ve not told Jon yet. Want to see it?”

“Oh, my God…yes! Let me see!”

The ER had been hectic all day and Jon was already worn thin from too little sleep the past three nights.

He had received more than one cold glance from the residents. He figured as the intern him getting four days off at Christmas wasn’t very appreciated but Stannis had agreed to the time off for Sam’s wedding when Jon had interviewed for the position.

Dr. Thorne, the Chief Resident, was especially frosty but that seemed to be the guy’s normal demeanor, at least towards Jon.

He was barked at more in one day than he had been since med school but he kept his head down and did his work while minding his temper and focusing on his patients.

Besides, Sansa had sent him a text saying she was making him dinner and that Nan had baked some cookies for them to share for dessert. He couldn’t wipe the smile off his face for ten minutes after that.

Plus, she’d also sent him a selfie of her wearing his Ramones t-shirt with Ghost photobombing the shot. He could tell she was laughing in the picture even as Ghost was apparently trying to push her completely out of view. He stared at the picture anytime he had a free minute, wondering if she was wearing pants or not. He could still remember last night quite vividly and finally had to force himself to keep his phone in his pocket if he didn’t want to be adjusting himself all day.

So, it didn’t matter how many rectal exams he was told to perform or how many intestinal viruses he saw. He just smiled and nodded at every single less-than-thrilling to down-right nasty procedure Thorne told him to do. Just knowing that Sansa was there waiting on him to come home made everything better.
When he had only about an hour of his shift left, Stannis strolled in to observe him working up an auto accident victim with a cracked ulna and radius and possible concussion. Stannis wasn’t the sort to hover but Jon couldn’t help but be aware of the man at his shoulder as he looked over the x-rays.

“Have you ordered a CT scan yet, Dr. Snow?” Stannis asked, flipping through the chart.

“Yes, sir. They’re backed up but should be able to take Mr. Rivers soon.”

“And the arm?”

“I’m going to stabilize it and we’ve called for a surgery consult.”

“Very well. Proceed.”

“Is that going to hurt?” the patient asked.

“No, Mr. Rivers,” Stannis said smoothly. “You’re already being given pain medication through the IV. And Dr. Snow is an excellent physician. I wouldn’t have hired him otherwise.”

Jon smiled briefly at the compliment and began realigning the broken bones before applying a temporary splint to hold it in place. Stannis watched him closely but made no corrections.

“How are you doing, Jon?” Stannis asked when he had finished and someone from CT had come for Mr. Rivers.

“I’m good, sir.”

“Did you enjoy your time off?”

“I did. Thank you again for…”

Stannis waved away his thanks. “We all pay our dues here. We should be able to enjoy any time we get away. I believe you said your mother was gone?” He nodded an affirmation. “Do you have any family around here?”

“Not exactly, sir…but I have a girlfriend now. She’s…” He couldn’t help but smile at the thought of Sansa. She’s my family now, her and Ghost. And Nan…and Loras and Renly, too.

“Hmm…that’s good. I hope she’s tolerant of your hours.”

“She is, sir. Sansa…she’s very…” He fumbled and trailed off. Dr. Baratheon was not the sort of man one just naturally wanted to confide heartfelt sentiments in. “She’s great,” he finished self-consciously at the Attending’s knowing smirk.

“It’s always good to have someone to go home to at the end of difficult shift, Dr. Snow. But we’re like a little family here too in a way.”

“Yes, sir.”

“And families are loyal. We have to have each other’s back,” Stannis said with a curiously piercing look in his blue eyes.

“Of course.”

“It seems poor Dacey’s come down with the flu.” She was a second-year resident…and was
supposed to be on call tonight.

“Yes, sir,” Jon said as a knot formed in his belly.

“Thorne suggested having you take her call.”

“Yes…of course, sir. I can take call tonight if you need me to.” Jon tried to mask his disappointment. Taking call didn’t always mean staying all night…but it might. He wanted to go home to Sansa but he wasn’t in any position to tell his boss no.

Stannis gave him half a smile…the most you were ever likely to see from Stannis. “Well, I appreciate your team spirit. However, I told Thorne I thought Harry Strickland was eager for some overtime. He’s always whining about his ex-wife bleeding him dry.”

“Yes, sir,” Jon said, releasing a pent-up breath.

“Get some sleep tonight, Dr. Snow. Another busy day tomorrow,” Stannis said as strolled down the hall.

“Yes, sir. I will. And, thank you.”

An hour later, Jon was whistling to himself on the walk home. The chilly rain of the late December night could not oppress his mood as he headed home to her.

Home. Not so long ago, home was a word that hadn’t meant much more than four walls around him. But now it did.

Her door was cracked as he came up the stairs and he ducked his head in to see Ghost chewing on a brand new squeaky frog. He rolled his eyes but couldn’t help but smile.

“Looks like I’m not the only sucker when it comes to you, boy.”

Ghost barked, drawing Sansa from the kitchen.

“Hey! It’s almost ready.”

“Great. It smells amazing in here. I need a quick shower and change of clothes. If you knew about my day, you probably wouldn’t want to touch me right now.”

Her nose scrunched up adorably. “Okay. Come on back when you’ve cleaned up and we’ll eat.”

“Sansa?” he called as she turned to go back into the kitchen.

“Yeah?”

“I missed you all day.”

“I missed you, too,” she said, walking back towards him. God, he wanted to put his hands on her so badly. But if he did, he’d never be able to leave.

She stopped right in front of him, so close he could smell her sweet scent. He leaned forward and lightly touched his lips to hers.

She sighed and he said, “This might be the world’s fastest shower ever.”
“Go get cleaned up,” she said. He nodded. “And Jon? Once you’re clean…come get me dirty.”

“Oh, yes…yes, yes, yes,” he sang, running down the hall with the sound of her laughter echoing around him.
Happy New Year...Daddy

Chapter Summary

The neighbors celebrate New Year's Eve while Jon is at work. While on the phone, Jon and Sansa discover a kink that interests them both before Jon gets called away for an emergency. Later, they share a special moment in the new year but also reflect on some less pleasant auld lang synes (times long past.)

Chapter Notes

This story is very positive overall but these two have had some rough times in the past which I'll be touching on a bit in this chapter. So here's a warning-Sansa tells Jon an upsetting memory of an unwanted kiss from a previous New Year's.

Also, there's some Daddy Kink (mostly just talk) in this chapter in case that makes you uncomfortable.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Nan did not complain when the young folks came into her place and took over meal preparations. She was glad to get off her feet. She’d baked cornbread and the lemon cookies Sansa loved earlier and was feeling a bit tuckered.

They were all like her kids and she loved them. She just said she wished Jon was off as well. That poor boy worked such long hours. Sansa hugged her and said she and Ghost agreed.

As the three of them ducked and darted around each other in her small kitchen, Nan sat on the sofa flipping channels, trying to decide which New Year’s Eve special she should watch later.

“Not the same since Dick Clark died, Ghost,” she said, patting Jon’s sweet dog.

Ghost bobbed his head in agreement before gently resting his head on her knee.

“Not the same since Dick Clark died, Ghost,” she said, patting Jon’s sweet dog.

Ghost kept licking her fingers and whimpering ever so often causing her to chuckle and sneak him another bite of the bacon she’d swiped off the counter when Sansa had arrived with her casserole ingredients.

Kit Kat meowed irritably and Nan asked Renly to fetch her another slice of bacon if Sansa
hadn’t put it all in the casserole. He came over carrying three slices; one for her, which was really for the animals, and two of him.

“You okay in here, Nan?” Renly asked after swallowing the bacon in two bites and sitting down beside her.

“You okay in there?”

“We are,” he said and kissed her cheek. “Love you, Nan.”

“I love you, too,” she said, grasping his strong, warm hand in hers. Renly was the quieter and steadier of the two. He didn’t make her laugh so hard as Loras with his antics but he was just as dear to her. “You and Loras going out tonight?”

“Yeah. Central’s got a big New Year’s Eve bash and Loras is getting to sing.”

“I’ll bet he’ll sound great. Be careful out there.” She worried over the boys when they’d go out drinking.

“He always does and we always are.”

“I’m glad you kids decided to waste some time with an old lady tonight.”

“Being with you is never a waste of time, Nan.”

“You’re sweet. But, we only have so much time to waste, right?” she said offhandedly. Renly’s face fell. She supposed he worried about her same as she worried about them. “Oh, now…don’t look like that. I’m right here and just fine. I plan on seeing them ring in as many new years as possible. I’ve still got a ways to go to reach a hundred, you know?” Renly nodded and smiled again. “Go and see what I made for you in the fridge.”

“What’d you make?” he asked excitedly now, his eyes lighting up like a child’s.

“Go find out.”

He kissed her cheek again and rose to go see. She’d made his favorite indulgence, Holy Smoke Pie, chocked full of chocolate pudding, sugar, cream cheese, Cool Whip and pecans. Loras had been nattering at him for eating so much fatty foods during the holidays but the holidays were almost done. She figured Renly could have a treat tonight before tackling the diet resolutions Loras had made for them both.

Besides…it pleased her to make them all sweets.

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Sansa hummed happily under her breath as she sprinkled shredded cheese over the top of her Tex Mex Black-eyed Pea casserole. She set it in the oven to bake as Loras stood at Nan’s kitchen counter pouting at her.

“Oh, come on, Sansa,” Loras whined under his breath. “We’ll eat with Nanny but come out with us tonight! New Year’s Eve won’t be the same without you! Margie will be so disappointed.”
“Marg was completely fine with me not going. And, I’m sorry, Loras. I just don’t want to go into Baltimore tonight when Jon’s getting off at midnight. And, I want him to give me my New Year’s kiss this year.”

“Ugh…you’re being disgustingly sappy and ruining my fun.”

“You won’t even notice my absence.”

“I will, too. Who will cheer for me when I sing tonight?”

“Marg and Renly.”

“That’s two people. And Renly never shouts and screams for me…at least not in public,” he added with a wink.

“I don’t shout and scream either,” she said, dusting off her hands. *In public*, she amended in her mind with a sneaky grin.

“Do you know how pitiful two sets of hands clapping sounds? You need at least three for a decent clap.”

“You’ll get more than three, Prima Donna,” Sansa said, cupping his cheek. “You’ll be fabulous like always.”

“Thank you, sweetness,” he said, giving her a hug. “Couldn’t you could come for a little bit? We’ll even spring for an uber to send you home early, Cinderella.”

“An uber on New Year’s Eve? From Baltimore?” Renly interrupted, coming back into the kitchen. “Were we hijacking one for her?” He ducked his head in the fridge and let out a whoop. “Nan, you’re the best!” he shouted as he pulled out a covered dish.

“Oh, you shout for dessert of course,” Loras said, rolling his eyes. “Come on, Sans. I promise we won’t let some creepy old sugar daddy wannabe kiss you before you get home to Jon.”

“Unlike last year when that creepy old sugar daddy wannabe kissed me, huh? I need a shower anytime I hear the name Peter now.”

“Renly decked him for it at least.”

“Sure did,” Renly said around a mouthful of chocolate and Cool Whip. “The nerve of that guy kissing my Sansypants without permission. I knocked him flat on his ass.”

“My hero,” Sansa sighed with her hands clasped together as she batted her eyes at Renly making him snort.

“Why are you eating that now?! You’re going to spoil your dinner! And what is it anyway?” Loras asked. Renly fed him a bite. “Fuck me up, that is awesome. Something so sinfully good must be sinfully bad for your waistline, I’m sure. Gimme another bite, babe.”

“I don’t want Renly to deck anyone this year,” Sansa said, ignoring the pair of them. “I just want to stay home with Nan and wait for Jon to get home.”

“But I’m singing on stage tonight…on New Year’s Eve at Central. It’s like a rite of passage in everyone’s life!”

“It is most certainly *not* a rite of passage at any time in anyone’s life,” Renly groaned. “Leave her
alone, honey. She’s happy being Suzy Homemaker tonight, baking goodies and waiting for her man to get home. I wish we could do the same.”

“Are you saying you’d rather stay here, gorging on fatty foods and watching that wretched Ryan Seacrest than go out?”

“Um…honestly?”

“I guess you don’t want to spank me and have me call you Daddy later either.”

Renly gulped and the tips of his ears turned red. Sansa decided it was high time to check in on Ghost and Nan.

Jon was thoroughly sick of the holiday season by New Year’s Eve and quickly losing his patience with the drunk in Curtain Two. Granted, the poor guy had fallen out of a tree at Merriweather Park during the fireworks festivities. He’d been brought in by the cops. Dacey had said he was a regular around the ER but this was the first time Jon had treated him.

Jon didn’t take issue with his inebriated state. He was just doing his best to assess him for injuries. The man didn’t appear to be feeling any pain but that didn’t mean he wasn’t injured.

What he did take issue with was the guy singing ‘Auld Lang Syne’ in his face while reeking of cheap liquor…and then pissing all over his shoes.

“Mr. Thoros, I need you to sit back down.”

“Sorry, kiddo. Daddy’s gotta go,” he said as he unzipped his fly.

Jon grabbed a urine collector from the counter. “Please use the receptacle if you need to…” He wasn’t fast enough.

“AHHHHHH!! Oh…sorry about that there,” the patient said before he hiccupped…and farted for good measure.

“Holy fuck,” Jon muttered, staring at his shoes. “I just bought these.”

“Hope you didn’t pay too much. Need a towel, doctor?” the nurse behind him snickered.

“Yes, thank you, Yaya,” he snapped as Thoros started bellowing ‘Jingle Bells’ next.

Jon closed his eyes and counted to ten…twenty…okay, thirty…before he was calm enough to talk Thoros into a blood draw. When he was satisfied that the man was no worse off than before his fall, Jon promised him some dinner if he’d behave.

“Take that to the lab and call social services to speak with him, okay?” he asked Yaya before heading to the locker room to change.

*And burn these piss-soaked shoes!*
In old sneakers and fresh scrubs, he checked his phone. He grinned to see a text from Sansa sent about an hour earlier with a picture of her and Nan holding up champagne glasses. He could make out a pointy white ear as Ghost had apparently attempted to make his way into the picture.

Sansa: Happy New Year a bit early! Hope you’re having a good one.

He checked his watch. It was 11:11PM and he hopefully be off in an hour. He glanced around the empty locker room. He wasn’t needed right this second so he sent her a reply.

Jon: It’s busy here and about as good as can be expected on a night like this. I hope you and Nan are having fun.

He started to put his phone down when it started buzzing. She was calling him back. His smile widened so much his cheeks hurt and his pulse picked up at the thought of hearing her voice.

“Hey,” she said softly when he answered. “Ghost and I just got home. Nan kept falling asleep. She said the special sucked, all the music sucked and Kit Kat was ready for bed.”

He snorted and asked, “Did you save me any of that casserole?”

“Of course I did but it was a near thing. Renly was insatiable. Nan made you some goodies. Renly ate all of his. Oh! Excuse me,” she said as she hiccupped. It was way cuter than when Thoros did it.

“How much champagne did you drink?”

“Two…no, three glasses.”

“Somebody’s going to be tipsy.”

“Somebody already is. You know what a lightweight I am.”

Jon laughed but heard her heavy sigh. “You okay, sweet girl? Are you sorry you didn’t go out tonight?”

“No. I just miss you, Jon. And, Ghost misses Daddy,” she said playfully.

“Daddy misses you both,” he said jokingly.

He heard her inhale sharply. He pictured her sweet mouth parted and the way her chest would heave when she drew a deep breath. Her eyes would be wide.

Oh…what have we here?

“Do you miss Daddy, too?” he asked carefully.

Is it weird that I really like the idea of you calling me daddy? I’m just testing. If she doesn’t like it, I’ll apologize and we can…

“Yes, Daddy,” she said in a rush. He could almost feel the hot gust of her breath that would wash over him if they were face to face. “Your good girl misses you terribly. She’s all alone on New Year’s Eve and a little drunk.”

Fuck me! Is it midnight yet?!

“Um…so, you didn’t want to go out with Loras, Renly and Margaery tonight…baby girl?”
Is that too far? Will she…

“No, Daddy. I’ve been out with them before. Tonight, I wanted to wait for you to come home.”

“And give you a New Year’s kiss?”

“Yeah, Daddy…a very special sort of kiss,” she giggled. “Will you give me one of your very special kisses when you get home?”

“Fuck yeah,” he whimpered, sounding astoundingly pathetic and not caring one bit right now.

“Do you want to know what else I want when you get home, Daddy?” she purred next.

“Uh…yeah…” he squeaked. He cleared his throat and tried again. “Tell me, baby girl,” he managed in a deeper voice.

“Oh, I couldn’t say! It’d be too naughty to say it over the phone. I’d have to whisper it in your ear.”

“Well, you could whisper now if…but yeah…I am here and…”

“I want to ride your cock, Daddy. I want to straddle your lap and ride you while you…”

Jon switched the phone from one ear to the other, making a subconscious adjustment with his free hand. He started pacing the locker room with his phone glued to his ear as Sansa told him in vivid detail all the things she’d like for him to do to her when he got home. He was already well aware of how champagne could loosen her up. Not that she wasn’t fantastic in the bedroom already, but he doubted she’d be talking like this over the phone if she was stone cold sober.

“It’s not nice to tease Daddy when he’s stuck at work,” he rasped when he couldn’t stand anymore teasing.

“I’m sorry, Daddy. Maybe your bad girl needs a spanking.”

Fuck…I just made it worse.

“Sansa…” he whined.

The door to the locker room burst inward unexpectedly causing Jon to yelp and drop his phone.

“Dr. Snow! Dr. Mormont needs you to take a possible cardiac arrest that’s rolling in!” Yaya shouted before exiting again.

“Coming!” he shouted back before grabbing his phone. “I gotta go. I love you, Sansa.”

“Okay,” she laughed. “I love you, too. See you later, Jon.”

“I cannot fucking wait,” he said before ending the call.

He put his phone away and hurried out to the hustle and bustle of the ambulance bay where EMTs were bringing in a gurney.

“What’d we got?” he asked, pulling on a fresh pair of gloves.

“Thirty-four-year-old male complaining of chest pains and…”

Jon missed the rest of the run down as he was blind-sided and nearly tackled to the floor. He was
vaguely aware of light brown curls in his face and strong arms around him…along with a whiff of lime, mint and rum.

“Oh, thank God, it’s you!”

“Loras?” Jon blinked and took a step back. “What are you…”

“You’ve got to save him, Jon! Please, don’t let him die!”

“Loras…I’m…” He glanced over at the patient on the gurney and did a double take. “Oh, Sweet Jesus. Meribald,” he said to the male nurse at his side, “please escort Mr. Tyrell to chairs.” Loras started to argue but Jon brusquely interrupted. “You have to let us do our job.” He clapped him on the shoulder gently though and said, “I promise I’ll come find you in a bit,” before following the rest of the team and Renly down the corridor.

“No, Sansa…you don’t need to come down here,” Jon said into the phone.

Jon rubbed his eyes and grimaced at the time. 3:02AM. He had chosen to drive to work for a change. He was glad of it now. Otherwise, he probably would’ve been forced to ask her to come fetch Renly and Loras.

Renly had driven into the city and they’d been on their way home early after he told Loras he wasn’t feeling well. When he was finally forced to acknowledge the severity of his symptoms, Loras had called an ambulance knowing he was too intoxicated to drive.

Sansa had been frantic earlier which didn’t surprise him after Margaery had called her, crying hysterically after Loras’s hysterical phone call from the waiting area. She was calmer now but still worried.

“He’s okay, I promise. I’m going to drive then home once Renly gets discharged. Loras is…well, he’s kind of a mess still.” New worries and offers to come down and help followed. “No…no…he’s just had one too many,” he said as Loras started humming ‘Send in the Clowns.’ “I’ll be home as soon as I can. But I can just go to my place if…okay…yeah, I’ll use my key. I’ll text before we leave but don’t stay up for me…okay, I’ll tell him. Try and get some rest.”

He hung up and groaned, leaning back in the terribly uncomfortable visitor’s chair.

“Sansa loves you and she’s worried but glad you’re okay.”

“I’m sorry to worry her. I’ll talk to her tomorrow. Speaking of which, when do you work tomorrow? Or I guess it’s today?” Renly asked from the bed.

“Oh…twelve again. I’m supposed to be back here at noon.”

“I’m sorry, doc.” Jon shrugged indifferently. He was well acclimated to his hours by now. “No, I mean I’m sorry about you being stuck here all night because of me…and this guy,” he said nudging Loras who was now sprawled across his lap and still humming.

Jon rose to his feet and walked over to the bed, giving Loras’s head a pat. “Don’t be ridiculous,
Renly. I could wind up stuck here anytime. At least, I’m stuck here taking care of…”

Family.

He hesitated to say it out loud. He was too much of a guy to easily say those kinds of things maybe…at least to another guy who wasn’t Sam.

“Don’t think I don’t know you’d rather be home with Sansa than stuck here taking care of an idiot with self-control issues when it comes to his favorite foods.”

“You’re hardly alone in that, especially this time of year. Let the scare be a lesson to you and be grateful it was just heartburn, okay?”

“Yeah. Okay, doc. Thanks for everything, Jon.”

“It’s my job but I’m happy to take care of you. You guys are…like family,” he admitted. He was glad he’d managed to say it when Renly’s lips twitched into a smile. “But since I am missing out on being with Sansa right now, I’m going to call in a favor and demand a free pass when it comes time to sing karaoke at your next dinner.”

“Sansa will be disappointed,” Renly smirked.

“I’ll make it up to her and the rest of you will not be missing anything by not hearing me sing…except a headache.”

“Okay, you’ve got a deal.”

An hour later, Jon pulled up to the brownstone and saw Sansa standing on the front porch wearing her fluffy bathrobe and boots. He’d texted to say they were on their way but foolishly hoped she’d be asleep.

She rushed down the steps to hug Renly and Loras when they got out of his SUV but didn’t ask questions. They were plainly exhausted and ready to get some rest. They saw them to their door and wished them goodnight.

Then, it was just the two of them in the hallway. Sansa stood there when he tugged at her hand and started to climb the stairs.

“What is it?” he asked.

She cleared her throat, a blush staining her cheeks. “It’s a bit silly but…do you realize this is where we first met?”

He did of course but it hadn’t been on his mind. “Yeah, it is, isn’t it?” She stood there looking at him and suddenly he realized what she was hoping for. “Would you like your New Year’s kiss here, sweet girl? May I kiss you here in the hallway, the place we first met?”

“Yes,” she sighed, grinning so wide and clearly pleased that he’d caught on. “Is it silly of me?”

“God, no…not at all. Silly is not a word I’d use to describe you, Sansa Stark.”

He took the two steps forward to close the distance between them before wrapping his arms around her waist. He started to lean in but paused when his lips were mere inches from hers. Her eyes, which had started to close, opened again when she noticed he wasn’t kissing her yet.

“Give me a second,” he said. “I just want to remember this moment.”
Jon thought back to last New Year’s. He’d had the night off but sat alone with Ghost at his apartment in Burlington, not wishing to intrude on Sam and Gilly’s plans and not knowing how to reconnect with Grenn and Pyp or any of his old friends after spending over a year pushing them away.

That night was the only time he’d been tempted to reach out to Ygritte after their break up. He’d even gone so far as to pick up his phone. But his hands had shook and he couldn’t do it. She’d been with someone else then anyway. Even if she hadn’t been, it would’ve been a huge mistake…one he was grateful he’d not made.

Instead, he’d eaten a bowl of Ramen, drank too many beers and watched horror movies till nearly dawn. He’d spent the night trying not to feel too sorry for himself as Ghost whimpered and laid beside him, sensing his loneliness and unhappiness. He’d slept twelve hours straight once he finally fell asleep.

When he woke up that next night, feeling like a failure for having spent the entire first day of a new year doing nothing but being miserable and depressed, he made a decision. He would apply for positions out of state once he finished school. He hoped to find a fresh start somewhere away from all the bad memories. He’d had no idea then how significant that choice would wind up being.

But then, he recalled that hot August day he’d met Sansa right here when he’d been moving in. He’d had no idea then the hot red head in a pencil skirt who had held the door for him and been so welcoming with her friendly smile as she teasingly warned him about Loras loving gossip would become the center of his world.

Maybe it hadn’t been so long ago in terms of time and yet so much had changed since then, for him and Sansa both. And today was the start of a new year…a new year with Sansa. He hoped she knew how much that first meeting meant to him.

But at 4 AM, words failed him. He’d never get if right if he tried to express it now. So, he settled on something simple and direct.

“I love you, Sansa. I’m glad to start this year with you,” he murmured.

“Happy New Year, Jon. I love you, too.”

One hand slid into her hair and held the back of her neck, drawing her carefully towards him. He kissed her soft, pink lips, a long, slow kiss he hoped lived up to what she wanted. It was everything he could desire.

“How was that?” he asked as they parted.

Sansa leaned into him and sighed contentedly. “That was perfect. We can go up now.”

“Oh, and just so you know, I’m only wearing a thong under this robe…Daddy.”

She gave him a wink. Sleep was banished from his mind in an instant. He didn’t care if he had to be back at work in less than eight hours. There was a kink to explore and a gorgeous girlfriend who wanted him. New Year’s was going to be rung in properly tonight. Well, this morning.

He gulped as her fingers traced up his scrub shirt and she cooed, “I was restless earlier while I waited. I simply couldn’t sleep. I tried to distract myself but it wasn’t as good.”
“Distract yourself? Did you play with yourself, Sansa?” he growled as his hand slid inside her robe. He kissed her throat and felt her shiver. He cupped a rounded ass cheek, as bare as promised.

“I did,” she confessed, looking sinful and angelic at the same time. How she managed that, Jon had no clue.

He smirked at her…and then popped her ass without warning. She yelped and then grinned as he soothed the warm flesh.

“Did you come without me?” She bit her lip and nodded. “Naughty girl. Did you enjoy it as much as you would’ve enjoyed riding my cock?” She shook her head. “Good. Go upstairs,” he ordered, blood racing to his cock in anticipation. “Take off this robe and wait for me on your bed. I’m going to take Ghost over to my place because he might not like this.”

She trembled. “Jon, please hurry,” she whined.

“I’ll be there soon enough…but good girls have to learn to be patient,” he taunted as he squeezed her ass and nipped at her throat once more. “You were naughty tonight but Daddy forgives you. I know you want to be my good girl, don’t you?”

“Yes…yes, I do.”

“Go on,” he said and took a wicked delight in watching her race up the stairs to do as he said. He stalked slowly up after her. He wanted to chase her. He wanted to slam her door closed, push her up against it and take her right there while kissing her with all the fierce and desperate passion she’d brought about with her teasing.

But he could patient…maybe.

Kissing deeply, their hands alternately clasped together and then exploring each other’s bodies, they made love in the wee hours of morning. Gasping and breathless, they came together. This was the proper way to spend New Year’s, Sansa decided as she stared into soulful brown eyes that stared back so tenderly.

*Not sobbing over a lady’s toilet in a gay bar while trying to manage a panic attack.*

“What’s wrong?” he asked when she stiffened at the memory.

“Nothing,” she said. He gave her that look, the one that said he was not fooled. “I’m sorry. Just an unpleasant memory.”

He rolled off her and disposed of the condom before pulling her into his arms. “Will you tell me?” he asked.

He didn’t demand. He asked. Jon didn’t demand things in bed. He didn’t make her feel inadequate if there was something she didn’t want to do. And, he didn’t make her feel like a whore for asking for things that she wanted to try.

Was this how it was always supposed to be? She knew the answer to that was yes. And she
couldn’t help but pity the naïve girl she’d been when she’d been with Harry.

And Joffrey? The menacing behavior, the thrill he must’ve got from her fear, and the desire for control. How sick and twisted to thrive off someone else’s fear. She hated to think of the things she had missed out on because of that fear. And she hated to think of all the things she would still be missing out on if not for the man in her bed now.

Jon made her feel safe. Jon loved her, cherished her for who she was. She trusted him. That was the reason she’d felt confident slipping on her thong and initiating their play earlier.

She nestled into his arms, her chin resting on his chest and glanced up at him. He waited patiently to see if she would share. And if she chose not to, he would not press her.

“Last year, I went to Central with Loras, Renly and Marg for New Year’s.” He nodded and she could feel his thumb tracing a circle on her lower back slowly. “There was a large crowd and, although it’s predominately a gay bar, there’s usually a mix. I got tired of dancing and was sitting at the bar. A guy started hitting on me, an older guy…like my father’s age.”

“Uh-huh.”

She could already see the crease forming between his eyebrows. He wouldn’t like this story but he’d listen to it.

“He said his name was Peter. He was very flattering, very polite, you know? He was dressed very nice and smelled like mint. But there was something a bit…creepy about him. Anyway, the countdown for midnight began before we knew it. I kept looking for Marg and the guys. I wanted to be with my friends when the clock struck twelve. They spotted me looking for them and started to head over but there was such a crush of people. So, when everyone started shouting ‘Happy New Year,’ I glanced at Peter next to me…just to see if he was still standing there. Without warning, he grabbed my face and kissed me…quite forcefully. He backed me against the bar. I shoved at him but he was stronger than me. I kept twisting my head away and my eyes found Loras. He must’ve realized that I didn’t want that guy kissing me. The next thing I knew, Renly had jerked him away and hit him.”

“Well, now I have another reason to love Renly,” he said quietly. “Sansa…I’m so sorry that…”

“Wait,” she said. “That wasn’t all. I…there was a lot of commotion. I told Marg I needed to go to the ladies’ room. I locked myself in a stall before it could begin but…”

“You had a panic attack.”

“Yes…the worst one I’d ever had. I couldn’t breathe. I was shaking all over. I bit my fist to try and stifle my sobs. Marg came in asking if I was okay. I lied and said I was fine. But, I thought I was going to die there in that bathroom stall on New Year’s Eve and that unwanted kiss would be the last thing that ever happened to me.”

“Sansa,” he whispered.

He seemed at a loss for words. It was okay. She didn’t need him to talk.

“Please, just hold me,” she said. “I just want to be held and know that this real.”

“It’s real and I won’t let go.”

“I know.”
It was just a small bit but I was really happy to write Nan's POV at the start.

Minor point-There's a gay bar in Baltimore named Grand Central which I used as the inspiration for the bar where Loras and Renly plan on celebrating but I have no idea what they do on New Year's Eve but we're going to say they'd let Loras sing, m'kay?

Next chapter, Jon will meet Ned and Cat and might admit his teacher kink to Sansa ;)
“Come on…tell me!” Sansa giggled, lying in his arms on Sunday morning.

“No,” Jon said stubbornly. “You’ll laugh.” He tried tickling her as a distraction which led to squeals and shrieks.

Ghost growled from the side of the bed.

“I’m not hurting her, buddy. Tell him I’m not hurting you.”

“He’s not hurting me, Ghost! But tell him to answer my question!”

Ghost barked.

“Shhh…I’m not sure I can say it in front of Ghost. He’s innocent,” Jon said in such a serious tone that Sansa snorted.

“Innocent?! How many times has that dog watched us…”

Alright, alright! You’re right,” he conceded. “But can I ask you something first?”

Of course.”

“What we did on New Year’s…was that okay? Did I make you uncomfortable or…”

“You didn’t make me uncomfortable. I liked it, Jon. I liked it a lot,” she added as her cheeks grew warm.

She’d never expected that calling her boyfriend ‘Daddy’ and having him spank her ass would give her such a thrill but life is full of little surprises.

“But Ghost was not amused,” he said.

It was true. Jon had taken him over to his apartment before he’d come to her. He’d returned and took his time stripping out of his scrubs and showering. She had been writhing on the bed with need when he’d stalked out of the bathroom and started telling her what he planned to do to his naughty girl.

He’d ordered her to get on all fours for him to fuck her from behind. She was squeezing her legs together in anticipation and to relieve the ache that was nearly overwhelming by that point. When he’d smacked her ass unexpectedly the first time, she’d yelped in surprise and ecstasy. From then on, they had heard Ghost howling and barking through the wall, not at all typical for him.

When Jon had gone to get him for his walk a few hours later, he’d said he thought his beloved friend was about to take a chunk out of him. It was only after he’d been led to Sansa and decided for himself that she was unharmed that he’d forgiven Jon, it seemed.

“I never explored that kind of thing…role playing, I mean. Harry never asked. He was kind of a…”

“An asshole.”
“Well, that,” she nodded. “The sex was a bit...lacking, to say the least. I didn’t really know how lacking then because he was my first but...well, his idea of foreplay was for me to go down on him. Or he’d squeeze my tits like they were playdoh and he hoped to mush them together to make one big one.”

“Oh, good God,” Jon huffed in annoyance.

“After that amazing build up...go ahead and insert sarcasm,” she said with finger quotation marks, “he’d ask if I was ready.”

“He really is out there giving all us guys a bad rep, isn’t he? He’s not just an asshole. More like a supreme asshole.”

“It’s alright. Well, it is now anyway,” she said, nestling against his chest. “I wasn’t confident enough to ask for anything different after the way he acted about giving oral.”

“I haven’t either,” he said, dropping a kiss on her nose. “Explored much role-playing, I mean. She never expressed any interest in, um...that sort of thing.”

Was there a small part of Sansa that took satisfaction out of knowing she’d done something with Jon that Ygritte had not? Why, yes...yes, there was.

“Alright, I answered you. Now, answer my question. What other things might you enjoy exploring with me?” He snickered and buried his face in her hair. “Come on...”

“It’s, uh...something that you could do pretty naturally, I think. We’ve kind of skirted around it a time or two.”

“We have?”

“Sort of. See, I’ve always had a thing for, um...the idea of...a hot teacher and...”

“Her naughty student?” she smirked.

“Yeah.” He scrubbed at his beard. “I may have watched my fair share of porn in the past. Don’t judge me.” His face was redder than she’d ever seen it but he was grinning at her.

“Oh, I see,” she said sternly with a sniff of disapproval. His grin faded instantly. “So, you wasted hours staring at pornography when you should’ve been attending to your studies? Well, I always knew you were a rule breaker, Jon Snow.” She gave him her best Miss-Stark-is-disappointed face and lightly scraped one of his nipples with a fingernail as she really got in character. “I’m not sure where this inappropriate behavior came from but it’s clear to me that you need more discipline. I’ll have to get my ruler out and remind you of our classroom expectations, young man.”

“Please...oh, fuck, please do,” he whined.

“Such deplorable language!” she shouted before busting out laughing again at his titillated expression. “Oh, we’ll have to explore that soon, Jon!”

“Yes, Miss Stark,” he said in the barest whisper before adding, “Just not when your parents are here, right?”

“Definitely not!”

She sighed as their laughter waned. It seemed miraculous that she was laughing at all considering
she’d awoken with her heart pounding and short of breath. It had been the beginning of a bad one, spawned by a dream.

‘Are you alone?’ his voice had asked. She couldn’t answer. She could barely breathe. Then, he’d said, ‘No, you’re never alone, are you?’

She could hear Lady howling in the distance and the click of the line going dead, then the sound of retreating footsteps on the stairwell outside her old apartment.

She’d woke up panting, clutching her chest and feeling like her throat was closing up.

But it had all faded when she’d heard Jon stir sleepily beside her. And then Ghost had nosed her elbow.

“What is it?” he asked, drawing her away from the memory of the nightmare.

She smiled and stroked his face. “Nothing that can hurt me anymore.”

She had plenty of reasons to be anxious today but Joffrey wasn’t one of them. He might creep into her subconscious, dreaming mind but he no longer haunted her waking hours.

No, today Sansa was only nervous about one thing…the arrival of her parents.

Ned and Catelyn Stark were wonderful people, loving parents and perfectly good company. But she’d not spent as much time with them since leaving home as she should’ve due to her desire to avoid Joffrey back in Ardmore. They’d come down to Columbia a few times but not been to her current place since she moved in.

And, as unnecessary as it was when it came to her folks, Sansa was a pleaser and wanted her parents’ approval for everything in her life, from her career to her jambalaya to her decorating choices.

Well, they say daddy kink is a praise kink so…

Ghost started whimpering. He was ready for his walk.

Sansa stretched and checked Jon’s phone.

“Holy crap! Is that the time?! We’ve got to get up! I’ve got to prep our luncheon! I’ve got to clean the apartment! Mom and Dad will be here in three hours!”

“Were we going to be cleaning for three hours?!” Jon asked, the horror plain on his face.

“YES!!!”

“But, Sansa…your apartment is already clean. It’s so sterile I could operate in there.”

She shook her head and climbed out of bed, ignoring his placating words and pleas for her to get back in bed. She needed a shower. She needed to boil a chicken, chop veggies, peel and devein shrimp and fix a dessert. She needed to make sure her place was spotless before her parents laid eyes on it.

And, she needed to have a minor freak out.
His gut had been churning for the past two hours and it wasn’t any intestinal virus doing a number on him this time. It was nerves, pure and simple. Today, he’d be meeting Ned and Catelyn Stark.

He’d never met Ygritte’s parents. She’d not been on good terms with them.

*Shocker.*

So, this was something out of the ordinary for him, getting introduced to mom and dad as the boyfriend. And based on the inquisition Sansa’s brothers had given him on Christmas, he had his concerns.

*Meet the parents. Meeting Sansa’s parents. They’re just coming back from a cruise. Bound to be in a good mood, right? Or not. Cruises can wind up being very disappointing, I’ve heard. They might be tired and exhausted from their holiday. Or depressed that it’s over. What will they think of me? Will they resent my presence when they came to see her? What do I say even? ‘Hi, I’m Jon. I’m a doctor and have a dog. Your daughter saved my sad sack of a life and I’m head over heels in love with her. I also enjoy spanking her ass while I’m balls deep inside her and hope maybe she might spank me, too.’ Shit, shit, shit…*

This was more than just meeting any girlfriend’s parents…not that he had all that much experience with that. This was Sansa’s mom and dad, the people that made her, raised her, cherished her and her siblings. What would they think of him? What would they think of the guy raised by a single mother who was gone with no siblings? Or the next-door neighbor who was banging their daughter?

“Sansa…I feel queasy,” he said as he brought Ghost back in from a second walk.

“I’ve got ginger ale.”

“How big of a guy is your dad anyway?”

“Stop worrying. I just know they’re going to love you!” Sansa repeated for the sixteenth time as Jon watched her scurrying around her apartment; feather duster in one hand as she deftly moved candle holders, knick-knacks and picture frames out of her way. “Grab my carpet rake from the closet, will you?”

“Your what?”

“Carpet rake,” she replied as though he’d asked what two plus two equaled.

“What the fuck is a carpet rake?” he asked, his fingers itching to check his pulse. *Stop it. You and your little nervous habits. What will they think if you walk around with two fingers pressed to your jugular? You do not need to…*  

Sansa huffed and retrieved the item in question and started…*raking the carpet?*

“Whoa…that’s weird,” he snickered. She didn’t laugh. “Are there imaginary leaves on the carpet?” She rolled her eyes at him. “Why would you do that if you just vacuumed? I literally just watched you vacuum the rug an hour ago, sweet girl.”

“Thank you, Captain Obvious. The purpose of the rake is to remove the lines or streaks left in the
carpet from vacuuming.”

“It’s not exactly deep-pile carpet. I can barely see any lines. And who gives a shit about lines?” he said…and then wished he hadn’t from the glare she shot him.

“Can you help me finish dusting?” she asked in a very put-upon tone.

“Um…sure,” he said, looking at the bookcase and end tables she’d already dusted and polished…twice. “Will your mum have on her white gloves?” he asked jokingly.

“Oh, for fuck’s sake! Can you just do it for me?!” she exploded.

Okay, so Hot Teacher Disciplining Naughty Boy ticks off all my kink boxes. Obsessive Compulsive Clean Freak before the parents arrive does not. I wonder what Sam would make of this behavior.

He knew better than to voice that thought out loud. He just stood there staring at her, his shoulders slumped with a growing sense of anxiety and melancholy.

Ghost whimpered and let out a great slobbery sneeze.

Jon cringed at the ring of drool his sneeze left on the floor.

Sansa stopped her dusting and sighed. “I’m sorry, Jon. I know I’m being…”

“It’s okay,” he said stiffly. It wasn’t but he didn’t want to fight. “I’m, uh…I’m gonna take Ghost back to my place so he doesn’t mess anything up.” Anything else up.

“No. Please, don’t. I want them to meet him, too. And I’ll get that,” she said, pointing at the drool. “It’s fine. Hey…would you mind checking on the jambalaya for me?”

“Sure,” he shrugged.

“It’d be great if you could do a little taste test. Make sure it’s alright?”

She smiled at him then, that brilliant, loving smile that made him light up inside. He perked up at once.

“Yeah, sure. I’d be happy to.”

He stole a kiss before heading to the kitchen with Ghost following him. He hummed as he removed the lid where the pot was simmering on the stove. Savory and spicy, the aroma made his mouth water.

“Jambalaya, crawfish pie and fillet gumbo!” he sang.

He could hear Sansa’s laughter from the other room. Maybe he didn’t want to sing in front of the neighbors but he’d sing for her.

“Now, this is more like it, Ghost.” He grabbed a fork.

Ghost whined and pranced back and forth.

“Just a bite,” he said. “Don’t want to spoil your appetite.”

He tossed his friend a bite of the plain, cooked chicken Sansa had set aside for Ghost and got his own forkful of the dish…and another.
“Oh, God…it’s so good!” he called to Sansa. “I’m gonna fucking marry her, Ghost,” he whispered to his friend. “I’ll probably gain 50 pounds but I don’t care.”

Ghost head butted him and licked his jaws.

“It’s too spicy for you, buddy. Just take my word for it that it’s horrible.”

Ghost tossed his head to the side and huffed.

“Yes, I am lying to you. Here’s another bite of chicken.”

When he returned from the kitchen, he found Sansa down on all fours raking ‘lines and streaks’ out of the rug under her arm chair. Much as he liked the view of her down on all fours with her ass sticking up in the air, this was getting out of hand.

“Sansa, stop,” he said gently. “I’m 99% positive that no one will be getting under the chair to check for embarrassing carpet lines.” Her brow was furrowed and her face looked pinched as she stood. She was clearly as uptight as he was. “All this cleaning…it’s a scaring me, love. I’m nervous about meeting them but why are you so nervous? They’re your parents. They love you. If you’re really convinced they’ll like me, what are you worried about?”

She gave him a long, shaky sigh as her eyes began to tear up. He guided her to the sofa and bade her to sit.

“They’ve met two guys I’ve dated…Joffrey and Harry. The first was a psychopath in the making who killed our family pet and then stalked me for years. The second was a…well, you said it earlier.” He chuckled but gave her a sympathetic look. “Mom and Dad, they always look so worried when they ask about my love life. Once when I was complaining about Harry, Arya said, ‘Sansa sure knows how to pick ‘em.’ She didn’t mean it to sound so bad. I could tell by the way she looked at me after she said it. My brothers laughed though. Mom and Dad didn’t but I worry that maybe they all think that about me. ‘Poor Sansa and her horrible taste in men.’ But, you’re as far from Joffrey and Harry as anyone I’ve ever met. I just hope they’ll see it, too. I just want them to know I’m okay and I’ve found a good man.”

“I think they’ll see it, sweet girl,” he said. He hugged her tight and felt her soften in his embrace. He scooted behind her and got on his knees to start massaging her shoulders and neck. “You’re way too tense right now and just need to relax.” She nodded and leaned back into him. “When will they get here?”

“Oh, about an hour, I’d guess. Traffic from D.C. could be horrible.”

“It’s Sunday. Might not be too bad.”

“Mom said she’d text when they were in the rental car. Mmm…that feels good, Jon. But I can think of another stress relieving activity,” she added with a wink over her shoulder.

“Does it involve cleaning?” he asked, already closing the distance between their lips.

“No.”

“Then, I’m happy to explore that,” he said right before she kissed him.

One kiss led to another…and another. He would never tire of kissing her, he thought. Hot, sweet kisses, her honey tongue and full lips, it stirred his blood and made him long for more.
Ghost sat on his heels beside the sofa, watching them and whimpering softly.

“Go lay down, buddy,” he said gruffly, his eyes on Sansa’s.

Ghost ruffed at them and started pacing.

“Lying down sounds good,” Sansa said.

Jon kissed her neck and laid her back on the sofa, bracing himself above her as they continued making out. He carded his fingers through her hair and nipped at the ticklish spot behind her ear. She raked her fingernails along his t-shirt covered back, giving him goosebumps. He groaned when she bucked under him. He was already hard.

“Are we just making out?” he asked, hoping against hope that she’d say no.

She shook her head and he thought he might kiss her feet in gratitude. “I think making out might only get me more stirred up. I might need to relax a bit more.”

“What you need is a good tension breaker, Miss Stark. A release for all this pent-up stress.”

“Oh, really?”

“Yeah…doctor’s orders.”

She giggled and he hurriedly removed his t-shirt before helping her out of hers.

She was unbuttoning his jeans when Ghost started whimpering again.

“Lay down, boy!” Jon ordered before sitting up to pull Sansa’s yoga pants off.

He tossed her panties away and swept her thighs over her shoulders.

“Jon…you don’t have to do that. Just fuck me, baby. We shouldn’t press our…oh, shit…” she moaned. “Unnn…fuck, don’t stop.”

Jon enjoyed her babbling as he gently sucked her clit and fingered her. Sansa grasped her breasts and ground her pelvis against his mouth, shamelessly crying out for more.

Neither one of them heard Sansa’s phone chiming repeatedly where she’d left it lying in her bedroom.

“Where’s my bra…and my panties?” she asked when she sat up several minutes later.

“Uh, not sure and don’t care at the moment,” Jon said with a shit-eating grin.

“Stop grinning!” she said but then she couldn’t help but grinning back at him.

She pushed her mussed hair back out of her face and padded into the bathroom for a moment while Jon disposed of the condom. Her face was flushed and her lips were swollen. There were a few red marks on her neck and chest from his beard but they’d fade in a little while. She might look a mess
but she was blissfully happy.

Sweaty, breathless but thoroughly sated, Sansa decided not to worry about cleaning the inside of her microwave before her parents arrived.

*The tension breaker was needed.*

However, there were a few things that needed to be done. She needed to finish getting dressed and they needed to fix the cushions on the sofa.

She came back to the living room as Jon was pulling his jeans back on.

Ghost came trotting over with her bra in his mouth.

“Oh, Ghost! I need that,” she said. She went to reach for it and he jerked his head away. “Come on, Ghostie!” Jon started laughing. “He’s your dog, you know. You could help me.”

“Alright. C’mere, boy. Give that to us.”

Ghost ruffed playfully and hopped back and forth. This was going to be a fun game.

“It’s not one of your toys! Come on, Ghost! Sansa, get his squeaky frog.”

“I’m still trying to find my panties!” she groused as she pulled her t-shirt back on at least. “Where’d you put them?”

“I tossed them that way,” he said vaguely as he and Ghost began a round of tug-o-war over her bra.

She was inclined to laugh at the sight even if it likely meant the end of one of her favorite bras. “Just let him have it.”

“I’ve almost got it,” he said through gritted teeth as Ghost continued his antics. “And as much as I don’t want you freaking out again, this place smells like sex. Where’s your air freshener?”

“Ugh, under the sink. I’ll get it,” she said, tromping towards the kitchen.

**KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK**

She froze and pivoted in disbelief.

Ghost barked, dropping her bra and wagging his tail, eager to meet their visitors.

Jon’s head whipped around to face her, his eyes round with terror.

She felt the blood draining from her face. *This might be a fine time to faint.*

**KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK**

“They’re heeeere,” Sansa whispered just like Carol Ann might’ve in ‘Poltergeist.’

“I’m a fucking dead man,” Jon breathed.

**KNOCK, KNOCK**

“Sansa? Are you there, love?” she heard her father say from outside the door.

“Coming, Dad!” she shouted as she threw on her yoga pants and urged Jon to put on his shirt. “I’m
coming!” She put her hand on the doorknob and looked back at Jon. She may have sounded more than a little hysterical when she said, “I just know they’re going to love you!”
Meet the Parents

Chapter Summary

After Jon and Sansa's passion on the sofa, it's time to meet her parents who have arrived unexpectedly early. Good thing Ghost is there...

Chapter Notes

I make no apologies for this. My only excuse is I like having fun with this fic.

Well, this seems about right, folks. Fuck her on the sofa seconds before the parents show. Sofa cushions are still a mess. Don’t mind that little spot there. Just imagine if I hadn’t used a condom. Okay...now my mind is heading to the gutter.Fuck...

Jon Snow, M.D.

Awkwardness Level: Expert

Holy shit...

Of their own accord, Jon’s fingers were already checking his pulse as Sansa opened the door.

“Mom! Dad!” she shouted...hysterically. “Wow! You’re here!”

Jon could feel the corners of his mouth turning upward but feared it might be more of a grimace than a smile as he stepped forward to be introduced.

Wait...did I zip my fly?

I don’t know. Check!

NO! Don’t fucking check yet. Wait till they’re not looking!

They’re hugging her! Act now! Act now! Now or never!

OKAY! SHIT!!

The fingers that had been at his throat darted downward.

*zip*

Whew! Close one.

He turned his attention to Sansa’s dad. He was ruggedly handsome and tall with greying hair and
grey eyes. Though well into his middle years, Ned Stark still looked remarkably fit.

_and remarkably capable of kicking my ass._

At the moment though, he was smiling happily at his daughter.

Catelyn Stark was lovely, an older version of Sansa, same blue eyes with hair that was a few hues darker.

Both sets of eyes turned his way. He watched their faces go from delight to see their daughter to expectant anticipation to slight confusion as they took in his appearance and then glanced back at their daughter’s.

His hair was likely a mess. Sansa had barely patted hers down. Her throat was slightly red from his beard and he might have been sucking on her neck a touch much given the obvious hematoma forming already. He looked down and realized with a pang he’d put his t-shirt on inside out.

_Jesus Fucking Christ. Why don't you just confess? Yes, sir. I just fucked your daughter._

He could almost hear the man asking him, _‘Fire or knife?’_

Within the space of fifteen seconds, their confusion was replaced with beady-eyed certainty. It was, hands down, the most awkward fifteen seconds of Jon’s life.

But whereas awkwardness and uncertainty normally rendered Jon a mute, a withdrawn one at that, it apparently turned Sansa into a magpie. He recalled some of their initial conversations when she’d chattered away at this same clip and realized belatedly that she’d been nervous then. It had been a while since she’d been this nervous when talking with him about anything. The difference was startling.

“So, come in, come in!” She was still shouting. “It’s so wonderful to see you!” Another quick hug for each followed by some twisting of her hair, the classic Nervous Sansa tell. “I was so busy cleaning I didn’t hear my phone! You did text, right? You said you’d text! This is Jon by the way! Sorry. This is Jon Snow, my neighbor and friend who came with me to Robb’s. Only now, he’s my boyfriend and we’re in love and we’re really quite happy and you’re just going to love him, I know and…”

She was nervous, adorably nervous, introducing him to her parents but she shouldn’t have to be so nervous with them or with him, he thought.

And, she loved him. She’d just let him eat her out and fuck her on her sofa in the midst of cleaning like a whirling dervish. She knew it. He knew it. Unfortunately, it was extremely likely her parents had a strong suspicion of it as well. But, she’d just openly declared her love for him to them. For some reason, that gave him the boost he needed to stop gaping at these people like a moron and speak.

“Hello, Mr. and Mrs. Stark,” he said. “It’s a pleasure to meet you both.” He wrapped an arm around Sansa’s waist. “Sansa’s said such terrific things about you but I figured you must be great to have raised this amazing young woman.”

He gazed at his sweet girl then who was blushing at his words. His heart swelled with love for her all over again. When he looked back at the Starks, the narrowed eyes had widened and the smiles had reappeared. Jon grinned and held out his hand.

Ned Stark shook it and greeted him affably. “Call me Ned.”
Sansa’s mom was smiling. “Sansa has mentioned you over the phone but it’s lovely to meet you in person, Jon. Please call me Catelyn.”

Sansa sagged against him in relief. He’d managed to turn the awkwardness around. He was rather proud of himself in that moment.

*Jon Snow, you are smooth as fuck,* he thought smugly.

But they say pride cometh before a fall and it was then that Ghost made himself known, butting his head against the back of Jon’s thigh.

“Oh, this is my dog Ghost. Ghost, c’mere and meet Sansa’s mum and dad.”

Ghost wagged his tail excitedly. New people, new smells were always favorites for Ghost. But he had something in his mouth…something navy blue and vaguely familiar.

He nuzzled Mrs. Stark’s leg and got pats and ‘good boys’ and then reared up to greet her father. Her father laughed as he jumped, resting his paws on his chest.

“Down, Ghost! I’m sorry. Sometimes, he gets excited and forgets his manners.”

“Oh, it’s alright,” Ned said with a huge grin. “I’ve always loved dogs. What’ve you got there, boy?”

Ghost immediately dropped the item in his mouth into her father’s hand. Ned held them up and the narrowed eyes returned.

Jon heard Sansa and Catelyn both gasp before he shouted, “Those are mine!”

‘*Those are mine?!’ Are you out of your fucking mind?*!

But Sansa didn’t give him a chance to come up with an amusing story to explain why he might own a pair of ladies’ undies. She shrieked, snatched her panties from her father’s hand and bolted to her bedroom, slamming the door shut behind her.

He turned to face the Starks again, his face already flaming. “So, uh…I’m gonna…check on the, um…jambalaya. Go ahead and make yourself at…right…” he squeaked before darting to the kitchen.

Ghost just sat there at Ned Stark’s feet, wagging his tail some more, hoping for more affection and praise.

*Who’s a good boy?*

*Who’s a dead man?*

“*What are you doing?” Renly groused as he shuffled into the living room.*

Loras’s head was buried in their wine cabinet searching. “*Where’s the Sauvignon Blanc, babe?”*
“The…it’s a bit early for wine, isn’t it?”

Loras’s head popped back up and his nose crinkled in distaste at Renly’s Sunday attire; sweats and a scruffy tee. Granted, they normally enjoyed lazing around on Sunday mornings till noon but they had a mission today.

*Operation: Jon Snow Meets the Parents aka, protect him from his own awkwardness*

“We’re on a mission from God,” Loras said and then shouted with delight when he located the bottle he wanted, “Found it!”

“Jesus Christ,” Renly laughed. “Not this again. I’m sure Jon can handle meeting Sansa’s parents without our help.”

“Jon can handle…have you met the man? Don’t get me wrong. I will love him all my life for saving your life the other night…”

“He didn’t save my life exactly. I had…”

“Sure…whatever, Mr. Big Mac Attack Myocardial Infarction.”

“It was indigestion for fuck’s sake! And I do NOT eat McDonalds…much.”

“Anyway…” Loras said, rolling his eyes, “He’s a sweetie but do you remember how nervous he was at our first neighbor dinner he attended? And this is meeting the girlfriend’s parents. It’s DEFCON 1 for a guy like Jon. So, I figured if Mr. and Mrs. Roper pop in to say hi…”

“Which one of us is Norman Feld? You know what…never mind. That’s a horrible comparison for us by the way.”

“…it might help disburse any initial awkwardness for them both with the whole ‘meet the parents’ thing. We’ll roll in, drop off a bottle to go with their lunch and the snickerdoodles I made this morning…”

“Snickerdoodles?” Renly asked, looking around eagerly.

Loras smacked his hand. “None for you!”

“Ow!” Renly whined but Loras didn’t allow the interruption to divert him.

“As I was saying…we’ll roll in, say howdy-do-dee and then, when we’ll leave, it’ll be like the real guests have left and the four of them will feel more relaxed together.”

“That’s actually not terrible logic.”

“Yup. And I’ll get to see Sexy Beast again.”

“What?!”

“Um, I let them in the building a few minutes ago. I remembered Mr. Stark from when our girl moved in and I’m calling it…Ned Stark, Sexy Beast.”

“Oh, my God.”

Four minutes later, with Renly still tugging a sweater over his scruffy tee, they stood at Sansa’s slightly opened door with their bottle and cookies. But there was already an air of awkwardness
radiating from the place. It couldn’t be more obvious and Loras feared they were too late.

Shit...has he totally fucked it up this quick? There’s no way they couldn’t love him unless they were heartless, unfeeling animals. But Catelyn 1.0 seemed as sweet as Catelyn 2.0 and Sexy Beast was friendly so...

Ghost nosed the door the rest of the way open when he realized they were there.

“Hey, folks!” Loras said, giving Ghost a pat. “Renly and I just wanted to bring up a little welcome gift to…”

He stopped talking and frowned. Mr. and Mrs. Stark were alone in Sansa’s living room and looking more than a little uncomfortable. Sansa’s bedroom door was closed and Jon was no where in sight. His quick eye took in the mussed-up sofa cushions.

Intuition started filling in the blanks after Mrs. Stark had told him downstairs that they were about an hour early because their flight had arrived ahead of time. “Can you imagine?” she’d said as Loras chatted with them both. “We were so thrilled to have more time with Sansa. And then the rental car took no time at all so I said to Ned, ‘Sansa’s going to be so surprised!’ But then I thought I’d better text her so I wouldn’t catch her completely off guard, but she never responded to my texts and I’m so glad you were down here to let us in.”

Loras shook his head. Jon, you ignorant slut. No cumming when the parents are coming.

Loras handed the cookies and wine to Renly. Wait...scratch that. He grabbed the cookies from Renly and handed them to Sexy Beast and then handed the wine to Catelyn 1.0. Then, he clapped his hands together.

“Okay, people. Obviously, our two love birds have committed a slight faux pas but love wins and all that. Huddle up.”

“Sansa? It’s Mom. Please let me in, sweetheart.”

“It’s not locked,” she called.

She rolled over and sat up from where she’d had her face buried in her pillow. It was time to act like an adult about this even if part of her still wanted to cry like a little girl over it.

She could hear murmuring outside her door and her mother barking, “Just do it, Ned!”

Then, her mother came in wearing that same patient, loving smile she’d always given her children when they’d screwed up. Sansa felt like such an idiot for running away already. Now, it was worse. And she’d abandoned Jon without a backwards glance over a pair of panties.

Could’ve claimed Ghost got them from my hamper. Idiot.

Well, the milk is split and it’s not like Mom thought you were still a virgin.

“Mom, I’m so sorry. Wait...where’d you get the wine?”
“Your neighbors, Loras and Renly. They’re very kind.” And the mortification increases, Sansa thought with a shudder. Her mom sat the wine on her dresser. “What are you sorry for, Sansa? For being in love?”

“No! I just meant…well, we…”

“Yeah, we kind of figured that out. Your father and I have five children, you know. The Stork didn’t bring you. We’ve not forgotten what passion is like.” She sat down next to her on the bed. “And I’ve not forgotten how tense I used to get before our parents would come over when we were first married or when you and Robb were little.” She reached over and gently swept Sansa’s hair back behind her ear. “He’s very handsome but more importantly, he seems like a good man.”

“He is. He really is. I shouldn’t have run off. It was just so embarrassing. It was like the vibrator incident all over again except worse.”

“Oh, that…I’d forgotten about that,” her mother laughed quietly.

“I haven’t,” she grumbled.

“‘How embarrassing it is to be human,’” her mother quoted. She nodded in agreement. “Such is life. It doesn’t diminish our love or esteem for you, Sansa. Now, why don’t you come out of here and let’s have lunch together?”

“Okay.” She leaned into her mother for a hug and said, “I am sorry for running off. I’ll tell Jon and Dad I’m sorry for that, too.”

“Alright. I sent your dad into the kitchen to talk with Jon after Loras and Renly left.”

Sansa felt the blood drain from her face again. “You what?! God, Mom! Please tell me you told him not to do his De Niro impression!”

“‘…I will bring you down, baby. I will bring you down like Chinatown,’” Ned Stark snarled.

“Wow…you sounded just like him!”

“Thank you. I’ve always been a big fan of his. Can I have one of those?”

“Sure,” Jon said, snatching them both a cookie. He stirred the jambalaya some more and tossed Ghost another bite of chicken.

“Mmm…these are excellent,” Ned said. “Cat hasn’t made snickerdoodles in ages. I might have to request a batch when we get home.”

Okay, so he’s a good guy and I’m not about to die.

But then those steely grey eyes narrowed. “So, about earlier…you and my daughter…”

Never mind. I’m about to die.
“I’m sorry about the, um…impression you must’ve been left with but believe me when I say I love your daughter with all my heart, Ned. She’s the best thing to every happen to me and I’d do anything to make her happy. I’ll admit we may have gotten a bit carried away with our, uh… feelings earlier. The tension with the cleaning and…”

“God, the cleaning! I remember Cat when my mom would be coming over…or hers for that matter.”

“I was frankly spooked. I mean, she’s always been big on tidiness, but it was down-right…”

“Scary?” Ned chuckled when he nodded emphatically. “She’s her mother’s daughter in that certainly. Anyway, fair enough on the, um…state of things when we arrived,” he said, chugging him awkwardly on the shoulder for good measure before he snagged two more cookies. “But, we will never speak of this again, right?”

“Right!”

“Reminds me of when she moved in here and the whole vibrator incident…” He shuddered for a moment and added, “except this was worse.”

“Vibrator incident?”

“Yeah…not anything a dad wants to think about.”

“That’s funny because the day I moved in she…” SHUT UP, YOU IDIOT! “Oh, hey!” he said as Sansa and her mother came into the kitchen. Saved by the belles.

“Is lunch about ready?” Catelyn asked. “We’ve not eaten since before dawn and I’m famished.”

“Yeah, it seems ready to me.”

“Ned, have you been eating cookies?” she scowled next.

“A few,” he laughed. “I was hungry, too. We’ll set your table, Sansa.”

Sansa nodded and thanked them. She hugged her dad and whispered something in his ear, making him beam at her before he kissed her cheek and moved over to the table to help her mother.

She’d been crying, he could tell. It was painful for him to know she’d been upset. But, she was smiling at him now. She wrapped her arms around him, hugging him tightly. The pain disappeared.

“I’m sorry for running off,” she said softly in his ear. “I was a big coward and I’m sorry if my dad said anything awful to you.”

“Nah, you were fine. I might’ve done the same. Actually, I did jet to the kitchen on them. I may have stirred your jambalaya more than strictly necessary. But, your dad is cool. I’m sorry we… well, I’m not sorry about what we did. Just sorry for the embarrassment all around.”

“Yeah,” she snickered. “But as first impressions go for any guy I’ve ever introduced to them, you’re doing alright.”

He kissed her forehead and clasped her hand. “Good. Let’s eat.”
Cat had been hopeful ever since Robb’s message at Christmas about Sansa’s ‘friend’ who’d come to visit. And while their initial meeting had got off to a bit of a bumpy start, she was fully prepared to forget all about that. Her daughter was an adult and, if she was in love and Jon was treating her right, Catelyn would only wish them well in all aspects of their relationship.

He was polite, intelligent and very obviously in love with her daughter. Why wouldn’t she love him? Even Ned, before he passed out in the arm chair with a belly full of jambalaya and snickerdoodles, had been clearly impressed by Jon Snow.

And a doctor in the family is always welcome, she told herself.

She enjoyed learning more about him over lunch. It was sad he’d lost his mother so young and had no father in his life. Her maternal instincts kicked into overdrive and pretty soon it wouldn’t have mattered if Jon had scratched himself and farted at the table, he was in Cat’s good books.

After the meal was done, he kindly said he needed to take Ghost for a walk and see to some laundry. Cat was pleased he was sharp enough to realize the parents might like a little one on one time with their daughter and that he would find a clever way to excuse himself without being too obvious.

Ned had promptly fallen asleep though so Cat and Sansa were cleaning up in the kitchen.

“So, you’re still liking it here then?”

“I love it here, Mom. I love my job and my friends and neighbors but now…” Sansa trailed off with a shrug, a hopeful sort of shrug. Cat knew what all that shrug was trying to convey.

“I guess I’ll never get you to move back to Ardmore then,” she sighed.

“Well, we’re, uh…I’m happy here.”

“I caught that,” she smirked Sansa’s cheeks turned pink and she toyed with her hair.

“Jon’s just an intern right now. Let’s just say it would depend on lots of things but…never say never. I’ll be coming to visit more often anyway.”

That was a pleasant surprise. For so long, Sansa had avoided coming home all because of that dreadful Joffrey.

“I’m very glad to hear that. Mind telling me what has changed in regards to that though?” As if I couldn’t guess.

An hour later, Jon had returned with his dog and Ned had slept off his cookies. They prepared to make the drive home in the rental. There was much waiting for her at home after their extended vacation but Cat was very glad they’d decided to take the time to visit.

“I hope you’ll come up and visit us when you can,” she said to Jon as she hugged him good-bye.

“I’d love to visit.”

He seemed rather touched by her hug and she smiled and cupped his face. “Keep being good to my girl and I know she’ll be good to you.”
“Yes, ma’am,” he smiled, glancing at Sansa.

In the car, Ned asked what her and Sansa had talked about while he slept.

“Lots of things but a good deal of it was about Jon and what his friendship and love has meant to her. Did you like him, Ned?”

“Well, yes. Despite the, um…” He grinned and changed his mind from saying anything else about that. “I liked him very much. Did you?”

“Yes. I can see why Sansa loves him. I’m very happy for them.” Ned reached for her hand, giving it a kiss before putting his back on the wheel. “He’s very handsome. He reminds me of you a bit when we were young.”

“Do you mean because he’s obviously head-over-heels for our girl?” he asked with an arched brow and a roguish wink.

She grinned like a girl and said, “Well, there’s that, too.”

“Oh, my God…oh, my God…oh, my God…” she breathed, her hands at her face.

“Sansa…”

“Oh, holy shit!! That was…oh, my GOD!!”

“Sansa…”

“NEXT EPISODE!” she shouted.

He chuckled as he switched off the television. “No, no…I’m afraid it’s already after 10 and a school night for you, young lady.”

“But…but…the creepy tumor eating guy just told Scully she has something he needs, Jon! ‘I’m sorry…but you’ve got something I need.’ What the fuck, Jon?! Does Scully have cancer?!”

“Sansa, calm down…”

“I will not calm down! I need to know!”

He kissed the tip of her nose. “All good things to those who wait. Speaking of waiting…” he added as he put his hands on her hips. “I’m dying to make love to you in my bed tonight.”

They were back at his place after a long day of cleaning and visiting over at hers. With a speedy fuck in-between. Now, he was looking forward to taking his time and savoring his girlfriend.

Ghost was at their feet snoozing. Jon had already had a man to dog talk with him on their walk about Sansa’s undergarments not being toys. He wasn’t completely sure Ghost had got the message yet.
“How am I supposed to sleep when I’m worried about Scully?” she grumbled.

“I’m not planning on letting you sleep yet.” He meant it playfully but didn’t want to come across as a pushy dick. “That is…if you want to.”

She grinned then and pulled her shirt off. She’d foregone putting her bra back on. “I didn’t say I didn’t want to. I could use a good distraction. But I don’t know if I’m allowed to sleep over on a school night,” she finished with a coquettish flutter of her eyelashes.

“You’re allowed,” he gulped. He pulled her close, stroking her soft skin and kissing her tenderly. “Please stay the night.”

Later as he held her in his bed, they talked quietly about the day. He was happy that the initial impression hadn’t ruined things.

“And just glad your dad didn’t kill me, too.”

She laughed and snuggled up closer. “Dad liked you. They both did. I could tell.”

“I liked them.” He stroked her hair and considered his words. “…I’ve never spent any time with my dad. He’s never been in my life. And Mum…you know I miss her a lot. I guess I’m saying I’m glad I met your parents. Maybe we can get closer and…”

He didn’t say anything else. It was sort of hard to talk when a huge lump had formed in your throat. Sansa understood anyway. She kissed him softly and the lump eased up some.

“Sansa?”

“Yeah.”

“I’d like to be like them someday.”

“Mom and Dad?”

“Yeah.”

She blinked a few times and her eyes grew misty but he could tell by the way she was smiling he’d not fucked this up at least.

“I’d like that, too.”

Chapter End Notes

Trivia Time for those of you who possess nimble minds filled with useless information! Who can correctly answer these questions first?? Or google them, I guess...

1. Jon’s thoughts about Ned asking him ‘Fire or knife?’-anyone know what American television show that’s from?

2. There’s two Dan Akroyd nods in Loras’s POV of this chapter. One from ‘The Blues...
Brothers' and one from 'Saturday Night Live.' What are they?

3. Cat quotes 'How embarrassing it is to be human.' Who's the famous 20th century American writer she's quoting and can you name one of his/her novels?

4. What popular American sitcom did Norman Feld first appear on as Mr. Roper in the late 70s?

5. What Robert De Niro movie was Ned quoting?

6. Which episode of 'The X-Files' did Jon and Sansa watch?

What do you win if you answer all the questions first and correctly? I don't know.

What do you want?

Trivia player or not, I hope you enjoyed the update!
Hot for Teacher

Chapter Summary

So, this chapter was originally supposed to revolve around an event but instead I just wound up setting that up for the next chapter along with a little future plot point because someone insisted on being a naughty boy to get Miss Stark’s attention. What can I say? Jon and his teacher kink had to be addressed at some point, right?! But if you don't care for teacher kink, just skip along to the next section once Jon mentions recess ;)

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

January had faded into February and the three of them sat in companionable silence in Sansa’s apartment on a blustery Tuesday evening. The Groundhog had seen his shadow a couple of days ago and six more weeks of winter lay ahead. Jon couldn’t complain though considering Maryland’s idea of winter, while cold and snowy at times, couldn’t compare to Vermont’s. And, he could tell the days were already longer than they had been a month earlier.

After dinner and a bundled-up walk for Ghost’s sake, there was something very satisfying about sitting in the warm apartment and listening to the howling winds outside.

Nan had proclaimed it a fine day for chicken and dumplings and made enough to feed everyone. Loras had politely declined saying Renly probably shouldn’t deviate from his diet. Little did he know his husband had been snuck a serving (just one!) earlier in the day to take with him for lunch the next day.

Pleasantly full and cozy, it was an ideal evening for snoozing in front of the television. Ghost was already snoring. The two humans, however, were toiling away.

Jon sighed and set his laptop aside, taking off his glasses and rubbing his eyes.

“Are you done?” Sansa asked from where she sat at the table grading papers.

“No. Just giving my eyes a few minutes. Sam texted earlier today by the way. He’s got a conference in Baltimore in March and said he might bring Gilly down with him.”

“Oh, I’d love to see them both again!”

“He said he’d send me the dates once he’s sure.”

He stood from where he’d been on the couch the past thirty minutes looking over his notes from the IABP he’d performed a week ago. He’d done well considering he’d never performed the procedure on his own before and the cardiologist who had been called down after had expressed his surprise that a first-year resident in the ER had not only managed the procedure but not killed anyone in the process. So, yeah…Dr. Royce had been more than a little insulting for someone who was supposedly paying him a compliment.
In retaliation, Stannis, who was rather proud of his department and could be a bit tetchy in matters of pride altogether, had seen to it that Jon was invited to present his notes and the case at the next cardiology meeting which was tomorrow.

“We'll show those stuck-up cardiologists what we're capable of in the ER, won't we, Dr. Snow?” Stannis had asked with a gleam in his eye.

“Uh…yes, Dr. Baratheon.”

Naturally, Jon was freaking the fuck out over the upcoming ordeal.

He strode over to watch Sansa checking for mistakes on her second graders’ subtraction worksheet. “Can we switch?” he joked, as he leaned over her shoulder and placed a hand on the table. “I'll do yours if you'll do mine.”

“Sure, if you want to make a fool of yourself in front of all those heart doctors. But since I haven't the foggiest notion what to say about inter-balloon pulses…”

“Intra-aortic Balloon Counter Pulsation.”

“Don’t be impertinent, Dr. Snow,” she said as she rapped his knuckles with her pen. “Rest your eyes a few minutes and then get back to work.”

“Yes, Miss Stark,” he said in a monotone voice. She laughed as he picked up a pink sheet of paper with her other work which was covered in hearts. “What's this?”

“Just instructions for the kids to take home in preparation for our class Valentine’s party.”

“Bring a shoe box or gift bag for us to decorate in class to be your ‘mail box,’” he read. “Aw… that's cute. 'If you wish to hand out Valentine’s, be sure to bring one for every classmate. See our class list below.' Yeah, don't let any poor kids be like Charlie Brown. That's just too sad.”

“Were you ever like poor Charlie Brown?”

“Yeah, one year. The girl I liked didn’t give me one. I was crushed.”

“Oh, poor Jon. I'm sorry.”

“It's alright. I wound up falling madly in love with a little red-haired girl like him in the end anyway.”

“You did?”

“Yup, the beautiful one sitting right here in front of me.” She grinned as he leaned forward to ask, “Miss Stark, will you be my Valentine?”

She blushed as he kissed her cheek. “Yes, Jon… I'd love to be your Valentine.” He started to kiss her again, with more passion, but she gently pushed him away. “We've still got work to do.”

“Isn't it time for recess yet, ma'am?” he asked in a huskier tone.

Her eyes widened and he heard her inhale sharply. She grinned for just a moment before she swiftly wiped it off her face to be replaced by a look of stony disapproval.
“Back to work,” she commanded as she made a little shooing motion with her hand.

Just that initial grin, the instruction and the hand motion.

*Fucking-A. Recess it is!*

“Can’t I do it tomorrow, Miss Stark?” he pleaded whilst nipping at her earlobe.

“It’s due tomorrow. Now, don’t be a disruption, Jon. Please, return to your seat,” she said coolly, dismissing him like a gnat that was buzzing at her ear.

She had this tone she used during their play. That tone did things to him. She’d also ignore him at first...until he made enough of a disruption. Miss Stark had to discipline her naughty boy when he was a disruption.

He sauntered back over to the couch and plopped down with an audible huff. He put his laptop back over his lap but instead of working he grabbed his earbuds and plugged them in as he googled what he wanted. The opening drums and guitar riff soon filled his ears and he tapped his foot and mumbled along, shooting glances her way every once in a while to see if she had noticed yet.

Nothing. She was still focused on her papers.

Obviously, he needed to be a bit more disruptive.

He got up and snagged two of her red pens off the table in front of her. Her brow arched in displeasure. Then, he sat back down. This time, he wouldn’t use the earbuds. He started drumming on his laptop and singing along loudly now.

‘Maybe I should go to hell, but I’m doin’ well

*Teacher needs to see me after school*

*I think of all the education that I missed,*

*But then my homework was never quite like this*

*Ow, got it bad, got it bad, got it bad...*’

“Jon!” she barked.

“Yes, Miss Stark?” he asked, wide-eyed and innocent. Okay, secretly doing a fist-pump.

“What are you doing?”

“Nothing, Miss Stark.”

“It doesn’t sound like nothing to me. You’re not staying on task, are you?”

“No, Miss Stark,” he said, hanging his head to hide his traitorous lips that were twitching.

She rose from the table, stalking towards him like a predator about to pounce. He half-heartedly attempted to close the lid of his laptop. She stood before him, tall and regal looking, and gestured for him to hand it over. He turned it around for her to see with glee, uh...shame.

“Oh, Jon. I’m so disappointed. Watching mindless and suggestive videos instead of doing your work?” she tsked. “I think it’s time we went back over our classroom expectations, don’t you?”
“Yes, Miss Stark.”

He said it with the straightest face he could. He wanted to leap to his feet and click his heels together but he was trying to play a part. Sansa was so much better at this than he was though.

“I’ll need you to report to my office in five minutes.”

“Yes.”

“Yes what?” she said sharply.

“Yes, Miss Stark.”

She nodded and headed into her bedroom, closing the door behind her at which point he actually did leap to his feet and click his heels together.

*Five minutes. Okey-dokey. Stay cool. Five minutes. Ah, fuck it. I’d better set a timer.*

He set her microwave timer for four minutes 20 seconds. He figured he’d already been pacing for 40 seconds. He watched that fucker tick down with all the speed of molasses in wintertime. He was practically tap-dancing by the time the timer beeped. Ghost barked when he heard it but Jon just gave him a quick pat before heading to her bedroom door.

He was inclined to just barge in but Miss Stark wouldn’t like that. She’d scold him…which was good. But she also might torture him longer…which was good but also bad because he didn’t know how long he could hold out tonight. Plus, he’d have to get back to work eventually.

*Meh…I can fudge my way through tomorrow.*

He knocked on the door and heard her call for him to enter. The bedroom was darkened with only the glow of her small bedside lamp illuminating the room. But, his eyes were drawn to her at once.

She was sitting on the bed with her legs crossed, wearing a tight black pencil skirt with a slit half way up her thigh. She wore black heels and stockings…he was already praying she’d pulled out her black garter belt and matching thong to go with them. Her white blouse wasn’t quite buttoned up enough for decency and he could see her lacy bra peeping out at him, hugging her creamy breasts. Her hair which had been loose and down earlier was up in a tight bun. She’d applied some red lipstick. And she was holding a wooden ruler.

She rose from the bed. She was taller than him in those heels. She walked towards him, lightly tapping the palm of her hand with the ruler.

“Come in please and close the door behind you, Jon.”

Ghost didn’t seem bothered by this game like the other one. *He prefers it when it’s my ass getting spanked.* But they had both agreed better safe than sorry.

Jon did as she instructed. He turned to face her again, his sweatpants already noticeably tented from his burgeoning erection.

“I’m very disappointed in you, Jon,” she purred as she came close.

She was lightly smacking her thigh with the ruler now.

*whap…whap…whap*
He felt dizzy. He wanted to grab her and kiss her so badly. But if he did, the game would be over before it really got started.

She walked the fingers of her free hand across his shoulder. He shivered at her touch. She raised the ruler and the edge traced down his torso and across his aching cock before she withdrew it again. He bit back a whimper.

“We have rules, don’t we, Jon?”

“Yes, ma’am.”

“Why can’t you seem to remember our rules?” she asked, her breath whispering against his ear.

“I try, Miss Stark. I get, uh…distracted.”

“Distracted? What’s distracting you from your work, Jon?” He shook his head, biting his lip to keep from grinning. “Can’t you tell me, Jon?” she asked sweetly. His eyes were fixed on the ruler. Her hand tightened around it just a touch. “I know you want to be good for Miss Stark, don’t you?”

“I do. I do want to be good for you, Miss Stark.”

“Then, what is keeping you from staying on task?”

“You are, uh…it’s you, Miss Stark,” he whispered.

“Me?”

“Yes.”

“How am I distracting you, Jon?”

He raised his eyes to her lovely blue ones. “I can’t keep my eyes off you, ma’am. I keep staring at you and…imagining things.”

“What sort of things, Jon?” He remained mute. His eyes darting between red lips and blue eyes. His chest was heaving in anticipation. “Are they naughty things, Jon?” He nodded imperceptibly.

“What was that?”

“Yes, Miss Stark, they are.”

“Like what?”

“I couldn’t say.”

Her eyes betrayed nothing but, faster than a cobra, her hand moved.

*thwack*

The flat of the ruler made contact with his ass. The impact was muffled by his pants. He barely felt it. But she wouldn’t stop with that, he knew. He didn’t make a sound in response. She paced behind him and gave him three more whacks, each one harder than the last. He still wanted more.

“Umph,” he grunted out at the last.

“Alright?” she asked tenderly. He nodded vehemently. She gently caressed his face, leaning close…close enough to kiss. “Now, will you tell Miss Stark the naughty things you imagined doing
“I wanted…I imagined seeing your tits, Miss Stark.”

“These tits?” she asked as she undid another button and cupped one.

“Yes, ma’am.”

He licked his lips in hopes of putting his mouth on them soon. She pulled away.

“What else?”

“I want to…” She started to smile, sure she already had him. But a little more disobedience was called for. “I can’t, ma’am.”

“Oh, I see,” she said, frowning at him. “You leave me no choice I’m afraid. Pull down your pants, Jon. I’m going to need to get your full attention, it seems.” He jerked them down in record speed, his cock jutting out before him, eager for what would come after Miss Stark finished disciplining him. “Now, I don’t want you to think I’m going to enjoy this, Jon. That comes later. But you need to learn.”

**THWACK! THWACK! THWACK!**

The ruler stung on his bare ass. “GAH!”

Her hand replaced the ruler, gently rubbing the flesh. “Now, tell me what else you imagine, Jon.”

“I want…I want you to suck my cock, Miss Stark.”

Cool as a cucumber, Sansa looked unmoved by his plea. She merely stood there staring at him. “And?”

“I want you to suck on my cock until I come all over your pretty tits, Miss Stark.”

“That’s very naughty, Jon.”

“I know. I’m a naughty boy.”

“I’ll need to teach you to be sweet. Can you be sweet, Jon?” she asked, her tone sultry and stirring.

“Yes, ma’am. I can be sweet for you.”

“I like sweet boys.”

“I’ve imagined other things. I’ve imagined giving you a kiss to show you how sweet I can be, Miss Stark.”

“A kiss?”

“Yes, Miss Stark. I’ll give you a sweet kiss.”

“Hmm, I like the sound of that,” she said.

She pulled off her blouse and then unzipped her skirt, letting it puddle about her heels. She stepped out of it, wearing nothing but the matching bra, thong, garter belt and stockings. If she touched his cock now, he knew he’d shoot his load in an embarrassingly short amount of time. But she didn’t
touch him. She walked around him a few more times, smacking her palm with the ruler again before tossing it back on the bed.

“Get on your knees, Jon. After you give me a sweet kiss, maybe we can explore these other things you…imagined.”

Really?” Margaery snickered as they sat alone together in the teacher’s longue the following afternoon when school was over.

“Please, don’t tell anyone! Especially your brother!” She’d overheard her winding Jon up a bit over the phone before his presentation. He was tense and nervous and said he needed a reminder of last night to help him relax. “It’s just our little fun.”

Thus, Margaery had sworn not to say a word…so long as Sansa gave some details.

Well, not too many details. She doesn’t need to know everything!

“Oh, my God,” Margaery sighed as she collapsed into the sofa in another fit of giggles. “I am so jealous! I never would’ve guessed you two would be such little freaks.”

“We are not freaks! At least, I don’t think we are. Shit…are we?” she asked concernedly.

Margaery stopped laughing and said, “No, honey. Not really. You’re both precious and I think it’s great that you’re enjoying exploring these things together. There’s nothing wrong with enjoying a little role play if you both find it pleasurable. And I’m not gonna lie…I wouldn’t mind spanking that fine ass. Frankly, I’d kill for a man who’d eat pussy like a champ without even having to be asked.”

“Margaery…”

“I’m serious. If you go missing, the police should check my place for evidence first. But, even if someone’s not getting spanked, the sex is good, right?”

“Yes…oh, yes,” Sansa answered, blushing madly. “The role play is only a small part of it. But the rest…I never knew how good it could be.”

Margaery gave her a quick hug. “I’m happy for you both,” she said seriously. But then she started giggling again. “You deserve all the orgasms, Sansa Stark! Long may the good doctor reign at getting your rocks off!”

“Would you shut up? Someone could walk in any…”

“Clearly, Harry didn’t light any fires or have a clue how to please you…”

“Or care much about that.”

“Exactly. So excuse me if I’m pleased to hear you’ve got yourself a man who not only loves and
cherishes you but also happens to know what he’s doing in bed. It’s truly a tragedy how many ladies suffer the selfish or inept in silence…or God forbid, put on an act just so it’ll be over quicker. Let’s bow our heads in a moment of silence for those sad little beans.” She hung her head with dramatic effect. There was never any question that she and Loras were siblings.

“God, Margaery…”

“Here’s to a proper lay with no batteries required!” Margaery chirped, raising her soda in a toast… just as Mr. Hightower, the principal strolled in.

“Batteries, Miss Tyrell? There’s some in the supply closet, I believe,” he said. He was getting a bit deaf with age.

“Oh, thank you, Mr. Hightower,” she said without a pause as Sansa sank into the couch cushions, wanting to disappear. She walked over to the closet and cried with a wicked grin, “Oh, right there! Yes…Yes…YES!”

Mr. Hightower looked bemused and confused by Margaery’s behavior. “You ladies have a nice evening,” he said before grabbing his umbrella and walking back out.

“I’m going to kill you!” Sansa hissed.

“We went over that, Sansa,” Margaery laughed. “If anyone is killing anyone here, it’ll be me killing you in a fit of jealous rage.”

Sansa tried to keep looking annoyed but the grin kept breaking through. “God, let’s go have a drink.”

“Oh, goody! You’re buying.”

“I am?”

“Yes, this poor little bean deserves a free drink without any expectations of any cocks getting sucked.”

“Margaery,” she said sympathetically. “I just know you’re going to find…”

“No matter!” Margaery said briskly. She was not fond of feeling sorry for herself for long. “My Thumper XL awaits my commands. And, he never works nights away from me, so there! To the bar, Stark! Let’s get snockered.”

“It’s 3PM on a Wednesday.”

“Mildly buzzed then.”

“Buzz, buzz,” Sansa teased.

“Yes, indeed-y-do-di.”
This is what a possum feels like when the headlights are closing in, Jon decided as he picked up the notes he’d just dropped.

The stupid portable projector had refused to recognize his laptop.

*Recognize? You’ve never met!*

He’d spent ten minutes fiddling with that as the cold sweats from earlier came back in force with every impatient throat clearing or meaningful cough he heard. He finally gave up on technology.

*Dammit, Jim! I’m a doctor not an AV technician!*

He had pulled out his hand-written back-up notes that Sansa had suggested as they lay in a sweaty tangle of limbs on her bed last night after 'recess.'

*Fuck…don’t start thinking about last night right now.*

He couldn’t help it though. The images immediately started flickering through his mind like a movie. Sansa clutching his curls tightly as he buried his nose in hers. Sansa getting weak in the knees as he made her come. Then, Sansa sinking down and taking his cock in her mouth with those red lips closing around his hard dick and those blue eyes staring up at him and telling him he was her good boy and she wanted to reward him as she unfastened her bra and started sucking. His cum spilling across her tits as she giggled while he sank to the floor to kiss her before carrying her to the shower to wash her off and fuck her again.

“Ohem…”

He glanced up at the throat clearer and realized he’d been standing at the front of the meeting room with a lecherous grin on his face for the past several seconds.

“Right,” he said, looking back down at the papers in his hand.

The notes were hopelessly out of order now.

*Welp…time to wing it.*

Deciding to plunge ahead, he was surprised to find Stannis had snuck in and was standing towards the back of the room. Ordinarily, that probably would’ve made this much worse but somehow, it made him feel like he had at least one person in his corner.

He closed his eyes for half a second. He recalled practicing in front of Sansa and Ghost last night after they were both dressed again and took some comfort in that memory. He could do this.

Twenty minutes later, he felt like a huge weight had been lifted from his shoulders. He could breathe. He was a free man for the rest of the day and he’d survived his trial by fire. Sansa would be so proud.

After answering a few individual questions, he checked his phone. She’d sent a text inviting him to join her and Margaery at Union Jack’s. Drinks with his girl and Marg. Why not? It’d be fun. Jon Snow, footloose and…

“A moment, Dr. Snow,” Stannis said as Jon packed away his laptop.

*Shit. “Yes, Dr. Baratheon?”*

“I’m impressed. You did really well, better than I’d expected for your first time.”
I did? Whew! “Oh, yeah…thanks.”

“Which brings something to mind. The hospital fundraiser is being held later this month. It’s a
good place to meet other physicians as well as the administration.”

“Uh huh.” Obviously, this had nothing to do with him.

“Unfortunately, it’s usually a very stuffy affair with rich donors rubbing shoulders with the old
fogeys of admin. It can be rather tedious making small talk while eating dried-out fish or tasteless
chicken the uppity-ups pay $1000 a plate for.”

“It sounds, um…thrilling, sir.”

Stannis cracked half a smile. “I assure you, it’s not. However, Dr. Arryn had suggested the
fundraiser might benefit from having some of the younger members of our staff present. Some
enthusiastic and eager young minds to handle the pesky, uh…the questions from donors and such.”

“Oh.”

“So black tie and you can bring your girlfriend of course.”

“Black tie? My girlfriend? Wait…are you asking me to come?”

“Well, of course,” Stannis shrugged.

Jon stood there with his mouth opening and closing. He didn’t want to go to a fancy fundraiser but
he supposed maybe it wouldn’t be so bad. And maybe Sansa would enjoy getting to dress up again
like for Sam and Gilly’s wedding. He sucked at small talk but she didn’t. Maybe they could make
the best of it.

“It’s February 14th.”

“But that’s Valentine’s Day.”

“Is it? Well, you won’t have to worry about making reservations anywhere then, right?”

“Right but…”

“Oh, and Dr. Arryn has asked that the ER put on a little presentation for the donors. You know…
give them a run-down of what we do from day to day…”

NOOOOO! he wanted to scream. He stood there nodding like an idiot instead.

“I think you’ll do an excellent job, Jon.”

“But…but…Dr. Baratheon, I really should tell you that public speaking is not really my…”

“Nor mine,” Stannis cut him off before patting him on the shoulder. “But, you’ve got a week and a
half to come up with something. I’m sure you’ll be brilliant.” Jon was already checking his pulse
as Stannis started to turn away but then he paused and added, “And be sure you don’t make us look
bad.”

Total Freak-out commencing in FIVE…FOUR…THREE…TWO…
Again, my medical knowledge comes from reruns of 'ER' and google, plus chocolateghost dropped a little knowledge on me as well. Thanks, Brad!

Lyrics from 'Hot for Teacher' by Van Halen.
My Valentine

Chapter Notes

So apparently two months have passed since I updated this last. Sorry. I've been sort of tied up with other fics and then I was struggling and feeling rather rusty with this one. But, today was my birthday and I wanted to spread a little happy. I hope you'll enjoy it *hides behind hands*

Here goes nothing...

When Jon arrived at Union Jack’s that Wednesday after his presentation, Sansa thought she’d have an assistant to help her get Margaery, who was good and buzzed, safely home.

Her friend had been in a Margarita mood and was humming to herself in between grasping Sansa’s hands and telling her how much she loved her. She tended to be a very affectionate drunk. Not that she was drunk yet per se but she was getting there. And there was nothing wrong with being a bit affectionate while tipsy.

For instance, one of the navy guys over in the corner playing darts with his pals seemed to be amused by her at least. More than amused. More like interested actually. He was rather handsome Sansa thought with dark eyes and a confident smile.

“Someone’s checking you out,” Sansa whispered out of the corner of her mouth as she sipped her second Margarita.

“Who?! Where?!” Margaery shouted, causing Sansa to cringe.

“Not so loud. And over there.”

“Oh, the sailor?” Marg grinned at him and received a bigger smile in return. “Shit. He’s kind of hot. How’s my lipstick? Wonder if he’s on leave and looking for a good time?”

She gave him a rather bold wink and tossed her hair flirtatiously. Yeah, okay. She was drunk… and Margaery.

He said something to one of his friends and looked ready to head their way. Sansa thought she might need to make herself scarce. Just for a couple of minutes though. Margaery was in no state to make clear-headed decisions at the moment.

“Norfolk’s three hours away but I suppose it’s…” she said as she rose to grab refills they didn’t need yet. She stopped talking though as Jon walked in. She was distracted by the sight of her own handsome man. He was still wearing his scrubs and made a bee line straight for their table.

Something about his expression reminded Sansa of a cat in a room full of rocking chairs. “What’s wrong?”

“JON!” Margaery shouted, standing up and throwing her arms around his neck. “Oh, Jon…I’m so
happy to see you!”

“Um…hey, Margaery.” Without a word, he gulped down her drink. He smacked his lips and sat it down. “It’s official. Dr. Baratheon hates me.”

“Don’t tell me the presentation went badly!”

“No, it went great. Your notes saved my ass by the way. No, the problem is it went too great.”

“You’re losing me.”

“I’m already lost,” Margaery sighed.

“I guess you could say he doesn’t hate me. Maybe he just lives to torture me?”

“He’s always seemed very amiable towards you from what…”

“I’ve got to do another presentation but this time it’s a charity event. I’ll be standing in front of around five hundred people…on Valentine’s Day. Oh, yeah…Surprise! We’ll be spending our Valentine’s at a hospital fundraiser. How fun will that be, dear? Black tie, dried out fish and tasteless chicken. Nothing but the best for my girl,” he grimaced. He polished off Marg’s 3rd (4th?) Margarita which earned him a smack and then flagged down a server to bring him a beer whilst ordering them another round.

“Jon…” she began again. “I’m sure it will be…”

“I just love your hair,” Margaery purred, as she started running her fingers through his curls. An affectionate drunk… “Sansa, how much do you love playing with his hair? If he was mine, I don’t know if I could ever keep my hands to myself.”

You’re not doing such a bang up job at that right now either. Sansa glanced over at the sailor just in time to see him turning back to his darts with a shake of his head.

“Margaery,” she sighed. “You just scared off your sailor. And, get your hands off my man!”

Margaery murmured an apology and stopped grooming Jon but, forty-five minutes later, Sansa had two buzzed companions on her hands.

Jon was not what one would typically describe as a happy drunk. The time or two he’d had too much to drink in her presence Sansa would’ve described him as reflective, occasionally sinking into melancholy but more often than not simply asking the really deep questions, such as ‘who invented the cheese puff and why?’

So when Sansa ducked out to the restroom to call Loras to drive Margaery home, she had been thoroughly shocked (along with the rest of the patrons of the neighborhood pub) to find the pair of them kicking off Karaoke Night upon her return. It wasn’t Karaoke Night though. Actually, Union Jack’s didn’t host a Karaoke Night. And Garth Brooks was definitely NOT what most folks came there to listen to.

Still, Jon and Margaery singing to each other (terribly off-key but quite adorable none-the-less) was not something to be taken for granted, Sansa decided. She raised her glass to encourage them.

“So, bring (bring!) bring

Bring me two piña coladas
Loras arrived just as their second (and equally unrequested) encore finished, giving them a slow clap and ushering them off stage before they got themselves thrown out.

By the time they’d walked the four blocks back home, Jon was already bemoaning his life choices. Sansa supposed the cold air had brought him back to his senses...along with his sense of impending doom.

"I can't believe I did that! How could you let me do that?"

"I, uh...didn't exactly. You were already doing it."

"It's all Margaery's fault. She acts all sweet but she's the devil to say no to."

"Tell me about it."

“If I wanted to get up and talk in front of people all day, I could’ve just gone to law school!” he said, changing the subject as they entered the building.

“I know, Jon.”

“I wanted to be a doctor to help people and because it’s mostly one on one, you know?”

“I know.”

“I did not go to medical school to give presentations!”

“I know.”

“I hate public speaking!”

“I know. But...you did just sing in front of a group of strangers.”

“Please, don’t tell anyone!” he whined.

Loras saw you. You're really worried about me telling anyone?  She didn't say it though.

As they reached his apartment, Ghost came trotting to the door with his leash in his mouth.

“Shit. I’m sorry to keep you waiting, buddy. Just give me a few minutes.”

Ghost gave Jon a baleful look of disappointment causing Jon to groan pitifully.

“I’ll walk him. You take some ibuprofen and drink some water. We’ll be back with some pizza. Then, assuming you're sober enough, we’re going to draw up an outline and take some preliminary notes about this presentation you’ll be making.”

“God, I love it when you talk about outlines and notes,” he said as he sank onto the couch. "Gets me all hot and bothered."

“I know,” she smirked.
“You are the best girlfriend in the whole wide world. I shit you not.”

“How eloquent. And, I know.”

“I love you.”

“I know.”

“We just did the bit from ‘Empire Strikes Back,’” he said with a delighted, boyish smile.

“I know.” She ran one hand through his curls before stooping to kiss the top of his head. “I do love playing with your hair.”

“I know,” he winked.

“Ghost and I will be back. Do what I said so we can get started.”

“Yes, Miss Stark,” he said with a cheeky grin and a waggle of his eyebrows.

“No funny business, Jon. Ten days. We have work to do. My ruler will remain in its drawer for the time being.”

“Yes, Miss Stark,” he grumbled.

Jon awoke to the familiar sound of Ghost snoring at his feet and a chilly apartment. He wasn’t chilly though. He was quite snug. Instead, he was aware of something that had become as familiar as Ghost’s snoring to him over the past six weeks. Sansa curled up beside him, snoozing peacefully in his arms.

Then, it hit him. V-Day had arrived. Hearts and flowers…and the hospital fundraiser.

Don’t freak out! he told himself as soon as his hand moved to check his pulse. Everything’s going to be fine. And this time tomorrow, it’ll be over either way. Give her the day she deserves instead of her having to hold your hand all damn day.

Sansa had a very good idea by now of how much he hated public speaking. Hadn’t the wedding been a prime example? So, she’d spent the ensuing ten days prepping him for the big night. And he really did feel prepared. They’d done outlines and notes. She’d patiently worked him through every little scenario they could think of, even hitting him up with potential questions his audience might ask. She’d made him practice in front of herself and Ghost and then Loras and Renly and Nan. If he didn’t make a total jack-ass of himself tonight…oh, and that’s still a good possibility…it’d be all thanks to Sansa.

So, he thought the least he could do was give his girlfriend a nice Valentine’s Day to show her how much he loved and appreciated her.

He’d always been a bit of a Charlie Brown when it came to Valentine’s Day. He liked the idea of it but the reality had often left him disappointed.
And though it might be a bit embarrassing to admit to anyone else except maybe Sansa, his happiest memories of Valentine’s up until this point involved his mother. She had known very little pampering in her life from the time she became a mother at a young age. But she’d had a romantic heart which he’d picked up on even as a boy. He’d always tried to please her with paper hearts made out of construction paper and later with whatever little gifts he could afford from the corner store with his allowance money.

It didn’t matter what he gave her. Whether it was paper hearts or costume jewelry, Lyanna Snow’s eyes had always lit up with pleasure when her son gave her something for Valentine’s Day. Knowing he’d made his mother smile, made her feel special for the day made Jon happier than any box of candy or chocolates she might give him in return.

Ygritte had never been big on the holiday. She had never been all that drawn to romance. And some people would believe the same of Jon…but they’d be wrong.

He might not spout off Shakespeare at the drop of a hat or think to buy flowers every day but he did enjoy making Sansa smile just as he’d enjoyed pleasing his mother. And unlike Ygritte, Sansa was very big on romance just as his mother had been. He was struck again by the wish that they could’ve met.

You would’ve loved her, Mum, he thought with a sigh. And she would’ve loved you, too.

Making certain she was still asleep, he eased his way out from under the covers. That was when he realized how chilly the apartment had grown over night.

Ghost raised his head but Jon motioned for him to stay. “Keep her warm,” he whispered. “I’ll walk you after I make breakfast, okay?”

Ghost bobbed his head and crawled up the bed next to Sansa and nestling up against her before settling back down.

He heard her sleepy sigh as she snuggled closer to Ghost and his heart started thumping madly. He loved her so much. Sometimes, it didn't seem possible to love a person so much but he did.

He snuck out of the bedroom, quietly pulling the door closed behind him, and bumped up the thermostat before he headed to the kitchen.

He grabbed the pancake mix from the cabinet and the blueberries from the fridge. Then, he pulled out Nan’s carefully hand-written instructions.

Add a touch of ground clove and cinnamon to the mix. It’ll give a bit more flavor and smell terrific.

Okey-dokey…cinnamon and cloves.

He reached into his cabinet and pulled out the cinnamon. There was no tin of cloves. Funny enough, spices didn’t just appear in one’s cabinet. You had to go buy the darn things.

Okay, I’ll just add extra cinnamon. A bit more…perfect!

Nan had kindly given him some cooking lessons the other day when Sansa had been at work and he’d had the day off. She’d offered to make him pancakes but, when he explained what he was doing and why, she’d grinned and patted his cheek. She’d also asked if his fire extinguisher needed to be inspected.
“I’m old. I don’t move too fast so try not to burn the place down on me.”


The blueberries were a last minute decision when he’d gone shopping but that was just one more ingredient. Surely, he could manage this one thing in the kitchen, right?

Maybe…

His pancakes were far from perfect even with Nan’s lesson and notes. The first batch were too light and very wet in the middle. Don’t go there, he told his dirty mind. The next batch were too dark and dry. They weren’t exactly round either…more oval-shaped.

Oval is a good shape. Nothing wrong with oval. Why exactly are humans obsessed with circles and spheres anyway? Maybe a good question for Sam.

Half-way through blending the last of the mix, he reread Nan’s instructions and smacked his forehead.

Don’t overmix the batter. It makes the pancakes tough. Just blend it till it’s the right consistency.

Shit. Well…I mean, how tough can pancakes get?

Last second, he remembered the blueberries and tossed them in. He then decided to sample one. They were rather sour. February was not exactly peak time for blueberries.

I’ll add a bit more cinnamon.

He wound up with six acceptable looking pancakes though. They smelled awesome, too. Nan had been right about those spices.

He pulled the bacon out of the microwave. It was the right level of crispiness. I can do bacon, at least. If Jon Snow knew anything, it was how to operate the microwave.

Next, he plated the pancakes and bacon, dumping a ton of butter in a small dish and grabbing two little bottles of maple syrup he’d swiped from the hotel where they’d stayed in Vermont, and put it all on a breakfast tray he’d bought especially for today.

The coffeemaker beeped and he quickly silenced it. He’d picked up her favorite Bavarian Cream flavored coffee from their favorite café by the park when he’d walked Ghost yesterday morning. He poured her a mug and set it along with some cream and sugar on the tray. As he wouldn’t dream of touching that sugary confection masquerading as coffee, he downed a cup of straight black before pouring them both some juice.

He opened the front door and, as expected, there sat a dozen red roses in a vase which Loras and Renly had kindly been keeping at their place since he’d bought them last night. He placed the large vase on his table before selecting one and trimming it to place it in small vase covered with blue roses. It had been a favorite of his mum’s.

He then set it on the tray and surveyed his handiwork.

Perfect.

He lifted the heavily-laden tray…and nearly tossed it into the air when Sansa spoke, scaring the
living daylights out of him.

“What’s all this?”

“Holy shit! Get back in bed!” he shouted, causing her to jump. “Um…sorry.” He looked down at the tray, which he had managed not to drop (Thank God) and glanced sheepishly back up at her. “I’m sorry. Would you please go back to bed?” Her eyes were wide and she looked adorable as her cheeks turned pink upon seeing what he’d done. “Please?” he prompted again.

She was chewing at her bottom lip and looked a little misty-eyed but scurried back to the bedroom. He could hear her giggles as he followed her and his minor disappointment over having his surprise spoiled a bit early completely dissipated. He saw her throw the covers back over her head and she started pretending to snore, making him chuckle.

Ghost, who’d been looking at them both and panting happily, got the hint and laid his head back down.

Jon set the tray down on his dresser and sat down on the edge of the bed beside her, rubbing her arm gently as though he was trying to wake her.

“Good morning, sweet girl. Happy Valentine’s Day.”

She yawned and stretched, making a convincing appearance of having just woke, and reached for him. “Happy Valentine’s Day to you.”

He pulled her into a hug, nuzzling her ear as he said, “I made you breakfast.”

“For me?”

“For you.”

Her smile rivaled the rising sun as he presented her with the tray. “Thank you, Jon. This is so sweet.”

She insisted he get under the covers and share it with her. He enjoyed feeding her bites of what he’d made. The pancakes might’ve been on the chewy side and the cinnamon was really a bit overpowering. Also, the blueberries were making them both pucker over their tartness. But they did enjoy licking syrup off each other’s fingers and cheeks…and other places.

When they’d had their fill, Jon sat the tray down in the floor. Ghost happily took care of licking the plate clean for them while they busily celebrated their first Valentine’s morning together in other ways.

It had been the loveliest day and Sansa was grateful to have spent it together. From the moment she’d awoke to find him making her breakfast and then serving it to her in bed, Jon had kept surprising her.

After holding hands as they walked Ghost in the park, he’d suggested movies for the afternoon and insisted on her choosing what they watched.
“I’m going to pick romantic stuff,” she warned him.

“I can’t wait.”

“I may feel the need for some Jane Austen.”

“Bring it on. Miss Woodhouse, the Dashwood sisters…the Bennett family…Anne and Captain Wentworth? My body is ready.”

“Are you a closet Austen fan?”

“I’m a fan of making you happy.”

“What about *Sabrina*?”

“With Bogart or Ford?”

“Jon Snow…you know far more about romantic movies than I would’ve predicted,” she teased.

But his smile turned bittersweet. “My mum…she really liked movies like that. She’d beg me to sit down and watch with her once in a while. Sometimes, I would.”

“That was sweet of you.”

“Well, when I was little, I’d watch whatever she wanted but when I got to be around ten or so, I would roll my eyes and complain about how much I hated them…loudly. But the truth was, they weren’t bad. They weren’t bad at all really. By the time I was twelve, she stopped asking me to watch those sorts of movies with her.” He shrugged as if it didn’t matter but she could tell it did. “I never told her that I didn’t mind them…that I enjoyed watching them with her.”

“Oh…”

She didn’t know what else to say to that. She only regretted that sometimes the people we love are gone before we can tell them everything we wished we’d said when they were still alive.

So instead, she pulled him into a hug and held him close. Then, she asked if he’d like some hot cocoa while they watched. He nodded and sat down on her couch with Ghost at his feet. When she returned with the cocoa, he was dry eyed again.

Much as Sansa loved *Sabrina* and *Pride and Prejudice*, movie watching eventually became a make out session on the couch which in turn became a trip to the bedroom.

“I wish we could stay like this all evening,” he said afterward, still panting as he held her so close it made her heart ache at the sweetness of just being with him. She could hear snippets of P&P in the background. It was cold and drizzly out. She wished they could stay here, too.

“We’ll have fun together tonight. You’ll see,” she said, lightly stroking his beard before kissing him once more.

She knew he was upset that his commitment to attend the fundraiser had spoiled any big plans for their first Valentine’s evening. He didn’t need to be bothered. This was the best Valentine’s she’d ever had.

She’d been taken to fancy dinners at 5-star restaurants by Harry a time or two. They always felt like more trouble than they were worth to Sansa. Plus, Harry always expected to be thoroughly compensated for the expense which usually meant a sore jaw for her and him passing out
afterwards without so much as a hand job in return.

She infinitely preferred Jon’s blueberry and cinnamon pancakes in bed to that, no matter if they were a touch rubbery and a taste bud adventure of the tart and spicy combined.

Everything he’d done today had demonstrated how invested he was in making this day special for her. She adored him for it.

So, she pulled out all the stops with her choice of dress for this evening. She’d be lying if she didn’t admit she’d been giddy about dressing up for him again.

At a quarter till six, she ushered him and Ghost out of her apartment to allow her time to get ready. She curled her hair before sweeping it up into a bun with a few tendrils left loose. Her red crepe dress stopped just above knees and fit her like a glove. It left her shoulders bare and gave a hint of cleavage without being too risqué for the fundraising crowd.

He knocked just as she slipped on her heels and grabbed her clutch.

“Wow,” they said in unison as they looked each other up and down.

He looked terribly handsome in his tuxedo. She thought it should be a law that Jon Snow be forced to wear a tuxedo at least three times a year.

She gave him a twirl to show off her dress and gasped when Jon took her in his arms. “I have terrible news,” he said gruffly as he walked her backwards inside her apartment. “The fundraiser’s been canceled and since we don’t have any reservations anywhere, I’m afraid we’ll just have to call in some yummy take-out and stay here all night.”

“Oh, no you don’t, Jon Snow,” she laughed as she started pushing back. “We’re going. You promised me dried-out fish and tasteless chicken.”

“I’d prefer to dine on something that’s neither dried-out nor tasteless,” he said wickedly.

“Behave. We’re going and you’ll be brilliant.” He whined. It was rather adorable. “You could do this with your eyes closed.”

“I don’t want to close my eyes,” he said, looking her up and down with a devilishly grin.

“Thank you. So, am I driving tonight?”

“No. There’ll be champagne and I remember my girl likes champagne. I called an Uber for us. I’m not planning to drink much but I figured it would be best to be prepared in case I need to drown my sorrows later.”

“Does that mean I might get to hear more Garth Brooks?” she teased.

“God…please don’t ever tell anyone about that,” he shuddered.

“I won’t...”

“Thank you.”

“But Loras was there.”

“I’m aware. I’ve already promised him our first born child if necessary.”
She playfully swatted his arm. “You did not!” Did he have the slightest clue how happy he made her mentioning a child…their child, even in jest? Judging by the way he was blushing, she thought maybe he did.

“I did not,” he swore. “But, I plan on remaining sober tonight so I don’t make a complete idiot of myself.”

She placed a hand over his heart. “You’d be my idiot at least.”

“I’ll always be your idiot.” He leaned in for a quick kiss. “Here…your idiot did something.” He pulled a small wrapped box from his pocket.

“What’s this?” she asked with her head tilted to one side. “I thought we agreed no purchased gifts. You already broke the rules with the roses.”

“You said no gifts. I merely nodded and hummed in response.”

“Jon…” she huffed.

“I’m a rule breaker, remember?” She put her hands on her hips. “Won’t you accept a gift from your Valentine?” he pouted. He was ridiculously impossible to refuse when he pouted.

“Of course,” she relented. She tore the gold foil paper and sighed when she saw the Tiffany’s logo again. “Jon Snow…”

“I may have set up an account,” he said with a bashful look.

She opened the hinged box to find a pair of pearl earrings inside…real pearl earrings. “Jon Snow…” she said again but this time she was tearing up. “You’ll spoil me,” she sniffed as a tear rolled down one cheek.

“I want to spoil you, Sansa Stark,” he replied, catching her tear with his thumb and swiping it away. “You deserve a bit of spoiling.”

He kissed her lightly on the lips and then urged her to put them on. They went very well with her dress.

“They’re beautiful. Thank you.”

“Not nearly as beautiful as you. And you are very welcome. Do you know what they symbolize?” She shook her head. “Purity, generosity and integrity. At least, that’s what the jeweler I dealt with said. She may have been feeding me a line.”

“And you think those things apply to me?”

“I know they do,” he clasped his hand in hers and squeezed. “So…ready for that tasteless chicken, My Darling Valentine?”

“And dried-out fish? You know it.”

She kissed him then, a kiss full of passion for her love, molding her lips to his as they held on tight. It was enough to make her dizzy. He groaned when she pulled away at last.

“I did say it was cancelled, right?”

“We’re going, Mr. Valentine.”
“Alright,” he grumbled.

Chapter End Notes

I decided they deserved a bit of Valentine's sweetness to themselves but the next chapter will involve some hijinks and surprises as they attend the hospital fundraiser together.

And FYI-the navy guy checking Marg out at the pub will reappear but later in the story ;)

They had ridden past the palatial homes where the wealthy of Baltimore lived, marveling like two country mice come to town over the size of them. Granted, Sansa had seen plenty of fine homes around Philadelphia and elsewhere but it had still been fun to gawk and chatter about them with their driver. It had appeared to put Jon more at ease, too.

But as soon as they had pulled up to the enormous country club where the fundraiser was being held, she noticed Jon checking his pulse. When they’d first been getting to know each other, she’d not known what to make of the habit when she would see him with two fingers on his throat and a look of concentration in his eye. But once on a walk with Ghost, they’d encountered an older man having chest pains during his jog and, as she watched Jon taking the man’s pulse while talking with him, she realized what it was he was doing. She didn’t mind it. She had her own nervous habits. Her most usual was fiddling with her hair. She wondered if Jon had picked up on that. Probably. She was not surprised he was nervous. She was nervous for him on his behalf but confident he could do this.

Despite his nerves, he offered her his arm and she noticed their steps were in sync as they walked towards the entrance. She got the strangest little thrill at the way they fell into that so naturally as they walked. They had not known each other but around six months and they’d only moved from friends to lovers around six weeks ago but she loved the way they were so often in tune with each other’s moods. Not that there wasn’t still some mystery, things to discover so to speak, but often times they noticed things about the other without having to be told.

“I can do this,” he said under his breath like a prayer.

“You can do this,” she repeated in his ear, squeezing his hand.

They checked their coats, sadly finding that this coat closet was manned, and headed to the large ballroom where the event was being held. A waiter immediately came up to them offering a tray with glasses of champagne on it. Sansa considered the timing ideal as she grabbed two.

“Here, this will take the edge off but no more alcohol until after you’re finished.” He nodded and peered into the glass with a scowl. “Would you rather have a beer?”

“No,” he said before he quaffed the glass down. “I just always find the bubbles sort of fascinating.”

“Me, too.” She sipped her own glass and then giggled. “Actually, I used to imagine what it would be like to take a bath in champagne. Would it be like a jacuzzi or…”

“Now, you’re giving me naughty thoughts, Miss Stark.”

“I’ll stop.”

“No, don’t stop,” he said wolfishly. “In fact, I’d gladly invest in a couple of cases of champagne to test that…”

A man bumped into him passing through the crowd, cutting off Jon’s words. “Ah, Dr. Snow, I beg
Jon’s eyes widened as he recognized the voice. He may have emitted a slight yelp when he spun around to face the older man. Sansa had not met him yet but she’d seen his picture. Tall and sinewy, he had dark blue eyes and a rather intimidating countenance. He also appeared distracted despite having spoken to Jon first.

“Dr. Baratheon! Sansa…this is Dr. Stannis Baratheon, the ER’s Attending Physician and my supervisor. This is my girlfriend, Sansa Stark, sir.”

“It’s very nice to meet you,” Sansa said politely.

“Mmm…yes,” Stannis replied disinterestedly. He was looking over her shoulder as though he was searching for someone else. Sansa would’ve consider his behavior quite rude except he explained when he noticed her frown. “I’m sorry. I’ve misplaced someone, I’m afraid. It’s nice to meet you as well, Miss Stark. Jon has spoken fondly of you.”

She grinned to think Jon had mentioned her to his boss. “Thank you.”

Unfortunately, after the introduction was dispensed with, both men appeared to be at a loss. She knew Jon said they got along well enough at work but most of their conversations there revolved around patient care or administrative business. Neither seemed comfortable making polite chit-chat with each other in a setting outside of work. However, Sansa had anticipated such a possibility. She’d not been studying the hospital’s website and reading staff bios for nothing after all.

“That is quite a handsome ring, Dr. Baratheon. Harvard Medical, yes?”

Stannis blinked at her, pleasantly surprised, and then held up his hand to show off his class ring. “Why, yes, Miss Stark, and thank you. I am attached to it though I confess I mostly wore it tonight to flaunt our basketball victory over Yale to Yohn Royce this evening. He was quite insufferable after our football defeat in November so I thought it only right. But these things must be done subtly, you understand.”

“Of course, sir.”

“Did you attend…?”

“Oh, no. I attended the University of Maryland but my brother Bran is a student there. He’s studying Applied Physics as well as Philosophy.”

“Excellent. That’s an interesting duo. Jon has mentioned you’re an educator.”

“Yes, sir. I teach second grade.”

“Good…good. Well, I’m glad you’re both here. Jon, I really need to run but now that I’ve found you I wanted to mention that Dr. Arryn has asked that our department kick things off tonight.”

He nodded towards the stage at the front of the ballroom and raised his eyebrows meaningfully. Sansa watched all the color drain from her boyfriend’s face. His fingers were twitching, longing to check that pulse no doubt.


“Yes, I’ll tell him you’re good to go and he’ll introduce you after he gets the rabble to settle at their tables.” Stannis leaned in with a slight frown. “You are good to go, right?”
“Um…yes, sir.”

“Excellent.”

As the man strode away, Sansa was ready with damage control. Or freak-out control in this case. “This is perfect,” she said in a satisfied tone as though nothing could please her more.

“It is?” Jon whimpered, sounding more than a little hysterical.

“Yes! Of course, it is. I always wanted to go first when it came to giving presentations in school. Think of it. People are still settling in. They’ve not had time to get bored yet. They’ll be polite but distracted listeners. Most won’t be ready to fire off questions while they’re still deciding between the chicken and fish and getting their booze ordered. And the best part for you is, it will be over that much quicker!”

“Over that much quicker…yeah. Okay,” he smiled. “Hey, Sansa? Do you think if I tip the coat-check lady she might be willing to take a walk around the block after so we could…”

“No, Jon.”

“Okay,” he said glumly.

“But I may have spied a promising curtained-off alcove near the entrance.”

“Seriously?!”

Sansa ignored that and said, “You’re going to knock ‘em dead.”

“Knock ‘em dead? You trying to put me to work tonight?” he joked. “Have you seen Dr. Rosby?”

“The pulmonary specialist? I’ve heard him, poor man.”

“And there’s Old Pycelle. He’s already at death’s door.”

“Head of Geriatrics, right?”

“You really did study that site, didn’t you?”

“I’m a planner, Jon. I prepare. If I were a squirrel…”

“You’d have enough nuts to last five winters no doubt.”

“Exactly. So…break a leg?”

“Not funny.”

“Kiss for luck?”

“Much better,” he replied as he claimed that kiss.

Just then Dr. Arryn appeared on stage to quiet the crowd and urge everyone to find their seats. “We’ll be getting started in about ten minutes, ladies and gentlemen. Dr. Jon Snow with our Emergency Department has been kind enough to prepare a little presentation to start the night off and…”

“Oh, Sweet Jesus…” he breathed, ignoring the rest of the chief’s words.
“You’re going to be fine. I’ll be right there silently supporting you.”

“It’s funny how that doesn’t sound all that supportive. I mean, when you’re giving someone support silently, isn’t that really more like you’re not doing a damned thing. And you’ve been far more helpful than…”

“You know what I mean, Jon.”

“Yeah, I do. Sorry.”

“Deep, calming breath before you begin.”

“Got it.”

“I need to powder my nose but I’ll be right back, okay?”

“Okay.”

Twenty minutes later, Jon frantically peered around the ballroom hoping to spot her red hair and red dress but no luck. Everyone was seated and Dr. Arryn was speaking one-on-one with some donors before calling him up to the chopping block podium.

She’d said she needed to powder her nose but where was she?

*Do they really powder their noses in there? What would that involve?*

His mum had told him once that it was just a gentle euphemism for ladies hitting the head but one never could tell.

*Did she fall in? Is she sick?*

He pulled out his phone to see if she’d sent a text…or if there was a ransom demand from her kidnapper.

Nothing.

He had already ordered one fish entrée and one chicken. He figured she could have whichever she preferred since he had zero appetite at the moment.

The two dishes arrived looking remarkably similar, the only difference being one was sitting on some bland-looking rice and other was on top of some over-cooked asparagus. He’d also ordered a glass of wine for Sansa and water for himself. He was going to order something stronger as soon as this ordeal was over.

*But not too much. Don’t want to survive the speech only to make a fool of myself later in some way.*

He was still reeling from his karaoke madness the other day. The music at this event was piped in Muzak.
More like Snoozak, he decided as ‘The Girl from Ipanema’ began to play. *If I got up and sang along to this and Loras ever caught wind of it, I’d be forced to emigrate to another country.*

“Hey, Jon,” Dacey Mormont said as she sat down at the ER’s table.

“Hey, Dacey.”

“Where’s Sansa?”

“Ladies’ room. Well, I think so anyway. She left about twenty minutes ago so…I’m hoping she’s not part of an elaborate hoax and I’m about to find out my entire life if really ‘The Truman Show’ or something.”

Did he really think that?

*No!*

Was he starting to freak out?

*Definitely!*

“Riiiight,” she said with a strange look. “Are you all set?”

“I think so. Sansa helped me a ton with preparing this. I’m hoping this gets me off the hook for the next year or two…or ten.”

“Don’t count on it. Stannis hates this sort of thing. But if you do well, you’ll be in Stannis’s good books which is a coveted place to be. However, he might ask you to attend anything that involves him having to speak in the future.”

“Oh, God.”

“Don’t sweat it. You’ll do fine. Besides…Thorne bet me $50 you’d fuck it up.”

“He did?!”

“Yup. I backed you and said you’d do great. So don’t fuck up.”

“Thanks…I think.”

Five minutes later, Jon was up on stage in front of a roomful of people. Sansa had not returned. He knew in his heart that she would not abandon him tonight unless it was something important. Honestly, at this point, he no longer gave two shits about the crowd out there. This was all kinds of awful but not the worst. The worst was worrying if Sansa was okay. He needed to get through this and find out what the hell had happened to his girlfriend.

The lights from the stage were shining in his face while the rest of the ballroom was darkened. So in a way, it was like he was talking to himself, barring the occasional cough or clatter of cutlery.

He took a deep calming breath and signaled for the AV guy to start his PowerPoint.

*I am not taking any chances with fricking technology.*

Okay, it did sort of suck when half way through his three minute speech, he spied Dr. Arryn pointing at the microphone. He’d apparently lowered it too much when he was fiddling with his hand-written notes. It was currently aimed at his belly button.
Pycelle, who was seated right below the stage and therefore one of the handful of people who were visible to Jon, had both ears cupped as he leaned in. He looked like a grizzled, old rat, champing at his dentures and peering myopically up at him. Like someone had just farted in a quiet church, Jon suddenly had the horrible urge to start laughing like a loon at the image.

He bit down painfully on the inside of his cheek as he adjusted the microphone and received a hideous blast of feedback before it sorted itself out.

_Fucking AV technology!_

Regardless, he bulled ahead with his speech. He’d be damned if he was starting over. _Three minutes is a fucking eternity when you’re on stage and don’t want to be!_

At last. _AT LAST!!!_ The speech was done and Jon scurried off stage like Ghost with his tail tucked as the crowd politely clapped. He hurried back to his seat hoping Sansa would be there but still no sign. He did feel a huge wave of relief that the speech was over at least as he collapsed into his chair. Dacey and a couple of the other folks from his department clapped him on the back.

“Here you go, Dr. Snow,” Dacey grinned as she pushed a glass his way. “Have an Old Fashioned on me. I can’t wait to rub this in Thorne’s face.”

“God, yes,” he hummed as he downed the drink.

He pulled his phone out and was relieved to find a text from Sansa. He was however baffled by the message.

_Sansa: I am sooooo sorry! You won’t believe what happened but it really isn’t my place to talk about it right now. I’m at the pharmacy down the road. I’ll be back soon! I love you!!_

Jon stared at his phone trying to decipher the cryptic message.

_At the pharmacy? How the hell did she get to the pharmacy? Can’t tell me about it right now? Can’t tell me about what? What does that mean?_

The last time they’d had a pharmacy ordeal, he’d been shopping for condoms in Burlington during a blizzard as Sansa waited for him at their hotel room when an old man started having a heart attack.

_But she’s on the pill now even if she was serious about that curtained-off alcove. What the fuck is going on?!_

---

_Thirty minutes earlier…_

Sansa flushed the toilet and stood, adjusting her garter belt and stockings before pulling her dress back down. Stockings were far easier than pantyhose when it came to more than just trips to the ladies’ room.
You’re damned right I’m prepared, Jon Snow, she thought with a wicked grin.

And if a blowjob or a quickie had been necessary to keep him from having a full-fledged freak out tonight, she’d been ready. Plus, she’d only been half-teasing when she’d mentioned the curtained-off alcove. Apparently, Jon brought out all the kinks she’d never realized she had.

You were intimidated by that damn vibrator Marg bought you and now you’re getting worked up at the thoughts of semi-public sex acts. Who’d have thought it?

She started washing her hands and noticed the stall at the end was occupied. It had been since she’d entered. She was drying off when she heard a quiet sob. She froze. This was always awkward. There had been more than one occasion back in school and then later as a teacher when she’d overheard another female having a cry in the ladies’.

It was one thing if it was a friend but a stranger? She hated to think of someone hurting and being all alone. She’d been there enough, hadn’t she? But she also respected that sometimes misery doesn’t love company.

She smoothed down her hair and reapplied her lipstick as she puzzled over what the best course of action was.

I’ll just go. Whoever she is, she’ll be fine. She’ll probably be grateful to know she’s alone again.

But here was the thing…she heard another quiet sob and then a shaky breath and suddenly didn’t think leaving was the best idea as she became more and more convinced of something. From the sounds of it, this wasn’t a woman having a cry in the ladies’ for whatever reason. It sounded like a girl, a lonely, frightened child.

Sansa bent over. The crier’s shoes were classic Mary Janes in rose-petal pink. The feet weren’t much smaller than her own but she was certain when she saw those shoes.

“Hello?” she called. “Are you alright in there?” There was a gasp. The girl in the stall must’ve thought she’d already left. “I don’t want to bother you but…do you need some help, sweetie?”

“I…I don’t know if…I’m okay,” the girl lied. She had to be older than her students, Sansa was sure but maybe not yet a teenager.

“My name’s Sansa,” she said, figuring that if a stranger was talking to her through a bathroom stall door, it’d be nice to know their name. “I’ll leave if you like but if something’s wrong, maybe I can help?”

“Uh…I’m Shireen.”


“Kind of. No, not really. I think…I’m pretty sure I’m having my period.”

“Oh! Is it your first?” She didn’t really have to ask that but wanted to keep the girl talking.

“Yeah.”

“Is your mom…”

“My mom isn’t here!” the girl said hotly. There was more anger than sorrow in her voice.

“Okay,” Sansa said lightly. There could be lots of reasons the girl was at this fundraiser and her
mother wasn’t. That didn’t matter right now. “Are you here with your dad maybe?”

“Yes.”

“Okay. Well, I know this is probably scary for you but…”

“I’m twelve and my dad’s a doctor. I know about periods, okay?” the girl snapped. Sansa didn’t mind her snapping. She understood the range of emotions she was probably feeling right now. She wasn’t surprised when Shireen’s voice dropped next and was soft and scared sounding again either. “I just…I didn’t expect it to happen like this…or here,” she sniffled.

“They do have a way of sneaking up on us, especially the first one. My first was an unpleasant surprise.”

“It was?”

“Yeah…sleepover at a friend’s house. The sheets on the sleeper sofa were bloody when I woke up. My friend cried which I couldn’t understand what she was crying about when it was happening to me. Her little brother saw the blood and freaked out about it, too. Her mom was nice at least but I just wanted to go home as soon as possible.”

“Me, too. That’s how I feel. I want Marya.”

Sansa didn’t know who Marya was but that didn’t matter. That’s who Shireen wanted but she was stuck with a stranger named Sansa. She’d do her best to get Shireen back to Marya though.

“Do you have anything? You know…”

“No.”

“Okay. We can…” She had an emergency tampon in her clutch but that was far from ideal for a girl’s first period. Sansa looked around the restroom. The feminine product dispenser was busted. Of course. Aren’t they always when you need something? “I’m going to get you what you need but it may take me a bit.”

“My dad’s probably freaking out. I’ve been in here for at least twenty minutes.”

“I’ll go find him. What’s his name?”

‘Tiny bubbles
In the wine
Make me happy
Make me feel fine…’

Jon heard snickering from beside him and promptly shut his mouth. He’d thought he was just humming but the words might have slipped out as he recalled Sansa’s statement from earlier about
taking a bath in champagne.

“Hey, Don Ho,” the guy beside him said, “want another?” He pointed at Jon’s empty glass.

“Yeah, sure. Thanks,” he answered as the man flagged down a bartender.

He’d escaped to the bar when Harry Strickland and Dacey had started bickering over some old case, Dacey cursing Harry for a coward and Harry calling her as grouchy as an old bear.

Considering how nice their Valentine’s had been up till now, he was feeling decidedly low now. He missed his girl. He wished they were home on the couch watching some TV, snuggled together with their good boy at their feet. This sort of event wasn’t his thing and it was certainly no fun at all if he couldn’t have Sansa by his side. And he still didn’t know exactly why she’d gone to a pharmacy or when she’d be back.

And then, even Stannis had apparently bailed. From what Dacey had said, she hadn’t even seen him during Jon’s speech. He’d at least thought the boss would stick around to see that. He’d made him do it after all.

Maybe the fish or chicken disagreed with him, Jon thought as he stomach growled. He hadn’t eaten and he was up to four drinks now. He needed to eat or he’d really be feeling them soon. Hell, I’m feeling them already.

He turned to observe his companion who’d ordered his drink. He was ruggedly handsome with sandy blonde hair and blue eyes. He also seemed to be swaying to stay upright on his stool. Jon would wager he’d had more than four drinks.

“Didn’t you speak a while ago?”

“Yeah, I…”

“You did good.”

“Thanks, I…”

“I couldn’t really hear you but I’m sure you did good,” he laughed.

“Um…”

“Sorry. I’m just messing with you.”

“Right. Well, I’ll be…”

“Nah, nah…I got you a drink. Least you can do is hang out a minute.”

It’s an open bar. “Sure.”

“You wouldn’t believe the shit night this has been.”

“Try me,” Jon smirked as he took a sip of his drink.

“See, I’m seeing this pediatrician…nothing serious, you get me, but she needed a date for this thing so I figured I could be a sport, right?”

He let the stranger drone on for a solid five minutes as Jon became convinced that this guy was a complete douchebag. He apparently considered himself quite the player as he listed off six
different women he was currently ‘seeing.’ He wondered if any of the women were aware he was ‘seeing’ five other women and somehow doubted it.

“…but then, they were all flapping their gums about shop talk so I snuck off to have a drink…or six. And I saw this girl I used to bang back in grad school. She was really pretty back then but inexperienced. Not that I minded breaking her in. But now? Man, she is smoking hot! But she was clingy, you know? I probably should’ve cut her loose but I told her we’d get married someday. I mean, it’s possible, right?” he snorted. “Maybe we would’ve if she’d not broken up with me. Plus, once I trained her up…God, she gave the best head.”

“Oh, alrighty then!” Jon said as he rolled his eyes and stood. He’d rather be at the ER tonight working than listening to this idiot. He might even prefer Thoros pissing on his shoes again over this guy… maybe. Regardless, his tolerance had officially run out when the guy grabbed his arm.

“Holy shit! There she is! And she’s with some older dude! Guess she landed herself a rich doctor but looks like he brought along some baggage.”

Jon looked around to see none other than Sansa speaking with Stannis as some girl was hugging her. Ordinarily, he would’ve been curious about the kid and the situation but at the moment a startling revelation was dawning.

Sansa spotted him and smiled brightly as an ungovernable rage filled him. Sansa, Stannis and the kid were heading his way as he turned back to the douchebag.

And you really are a douchebag! The World’s Biggest Douchebag! It should be tattooed on your forehead! And I still hope your dick falls off, you lying, cheating asshole!

“Is your name Harry Hardyng by chance?” he growled.

“Yeah. Have we met before?”

“Nope,” Jon answered…just before he punched him square in the mouth.

Chapter End Notes

Aw, the dreaded first period...poor Shireen. There are worst instances though of course and we'll continue with the rest of fundraiser next chapter.

And while legally speaking Jon could be in very hot water for punching Harry in those circumstances, things will be resolved next chapter without law enforcement being involved.

Also, I enjoy naming chapters in some of my longer fics because honestly it helps me if/when I need to go back to refresh my memory as I write stories this length. But this chapter title was kind of fun for me since all the teachers at my daughter's school have t-shirts with that slogan and since Sansa is a teacher in this and sort of the hero of the chapter (in my opinion) I wanted to use that :)

Lyrics from 'Tiny Bubbles' by Don Ho.
Spin Doctors and Deal Makers

Chapter Summary

After Jon's hasty punch, Sansa has to do some quick thinking to save face. Later, Stannis offers them a ride home.

Chapter Notes

Quick note for any who might not have read the books or may have read them but forgotten this tidbit. Jon Arryn's first wife was named Jeyne and I've used her here instead of Lysa.

“Miss Stark, I really can’t thank you enough for coming to my daughter’s aid,” Dr. Baratheon gushed.

*Perhaps gushing isn’t the right word.*

Stannis Baratheon didn’t seem much like a gusher. But Sansa would admit she felt decidedly heroic as the man who was reportedly quite taciturn at times continued to thank her politely and walk with her towards the country club’s bar where she hoped to find her boyfriend.

The trip to the pharmacy had gone smoothly. She’d rode up front in the limousine Stannis had rented for the night chatting with the driver before purchasing the necessities. Then, she’d jetted back to the ladies’ room which Stannis had been standing anxiously outside of until she returned and got Shireen squared away.

Now, Shireen was glued to her side and whispering in her ear about her favorite books and movies and her passion for horseback riding. She also asked if Sansa liked teaching second grade and if she ever thought about teaching seventh grade instead.

Stannis had called the mysterious Marya who turned out to be his housekeeper. Her husband Davos worked for the Baratheons as well and he was coming to pick Shireen up and bring her home with promises of hot cocoa and a heating pad to ease the cramps from Marya.

“Hello, Jeyne,” Stannis called as they neared the bar area. “Is your husband around?”

Sansa gulped as Jeyne Arryn strode towards them, the wife of Dr. Jon Arryn, the hospital’s chief of staff. She wasn’t listed on the hospital website obviously but she was in the society pages often enough for Sansa to recognize her.

“He’s still diving into the pockets of the biggest fish but he promised me a dance once the live music gets going. How are you, Shireen?”
“Oh…I’m okay, Mrs. Arryn,” Shireen said, scuffing her shoe along the floor.

“Long night, hun?”

“You could say that.”

The older woman clucked sympathetically and then looked at Sansa. She gave Stannis a meaningful glance, prompting him to make the introduction. Stannis awkwardly cleared his throat.

“Jeyne, this is Sansa Stark. She’s here with my First Year, Jon Snow.”

“The young man who spoke on behalf of your department earlier?”

“The same. I missed him speaking because of a slight personal emergency. Did he…do alright?” Stannis asked with an anxious look.

“He was fine…what I could hear of him. Some issue with the microphone.”

“Oh, no!” Sansa said. Blasted technology! She knew he was worried about something going wrong with the AV equipment.

“It wasn’t so bad, dear. He did well. I’m Jeyne Arryn,” she said, holding out her hand.

“It’s nice to meet you, ma’am.”

They promptly fell into a discussion and before long the reason why they’d all missed Jon’s speech came up. Within the space of a minute, Mrs. Arryn had gone from polite civility to giving Sansa appreciative looks of admiration.

“You were very good to help her,” she whispered at one point when Shireen was looking at pictures of Ghost on Sansa’s phone.

“Anyone would’ve done the same, I’m sure.”

Jeyne smirked skeptically. “Perhaps. But it was a very kind act all the same. Poor Shireen,” she said with a motherly look of concern. “I suppose you know about her mother.”

“No, ma’am. Jon’s never mentioned anything.”

“Call me Jeyne, dear. Well, it’s possible he doesn’t know. Stannis can be very tight-lipped about personal matters. You see, Shireen was very ill as a baby. She’s perfectly healthy now but her mother had a bit of a breakdown afterwards.”

“That’s so sad.”

“Yes. Unfortunately, Selyse got wrapped up in a rather odd cult in the midst of Shireen’s illness. Stannis filed for divorce when she moved in with one of the members. So, you see…I have a soft spot for Shireen and therefore, I’m doubly glad you were here for her tonight.”

“I’m glad I was, too.”

“Stannis,” she said, turning back to him. “I’d love to meet Dr. Snow. If you trust him enough to have him speak for you at an event like this, he must be something else. And obviously, he must be quite a young man to have gained the affections of this lovely lady.”

Sansa felt herself turning red at the praise but would agree that Jon was something else.
The four of them reached the bar at last but Mrs. Arryn fell behind a pace as some acquaintance called to her.

Just as Stannis was stating his gratitude once more and Shireen was giving her another hug, she spied Jon. Her heart started going pitter-patter at the sight of her handsome lover in his tuxedo after having been parted for over an hour.

But then, Jon did something completely unexpected.

He turned around and sucker punched the man sitting next to him. The blond-haired guy’s head snapped back and he oozed to the floor like something out of a Wile E. Coyote cartoon.

“JON!” she shouted as others around them were gasping in shock.

She raced to his side as Jon was busy shouting at the poor sot on the floor, “…IN FACT, AFTER IT FALLS OFF, I HOPE YOU CHOKE ON IT! AND NO ONE TALKS ABOUT MY SWEET GIRL THAT WAY!”

“What the hell are you doing?!?” she shrieked. He didn’t even seem to notice her at first. His chest was heaving like he’d just gone for a sprint that wound up lasting a mile. She grasped him by the shoulders and shook him. “JON!”

“He…I…that fucker!” He was so enraged he couldn’t seem to form sentences.

“Jon…” she said more softly.

Like she’d flipped a switch, he seemed to shake off whatever had come over him as he really looked at her this time.

_Rage Murder Button Deactivated._

“I’m sorry,” he murmured. “Sansa…I’m sorry. I…I never expected to meet him…not like this. I can’t believe I…”

She kissed his brow and rubbed her hands up and down his arms. Whatever had gotten into Jon, she knew it must have been exceptional to trigger such a reaction.

“It’s okay. It’s…” She gave the man on the floor a second glance…and then did a double take. “Holy…” She stopped herself from finishing the phrase as Shireen was avidly watching the whole exchange. “Harry?! Is that you?!”

As if her saying his name had roused him, Harry’s chin lifted off his chest slightly from where he was still slumped against the bar. He looked at the small crowd that had gathered in confusion.

“Sansa? Oh, hey! This is Sansa,” he said to Jon. “She’s Sansa. Smoking Hot Sansa Stark in her red dress,” he grinned.

“Don’t talk to her,” Jon snarled. “Don’t look at her either.”

“Yeah, I’m Sansa, Harry. How many fingers am I holding up?”

“Three. Three lovely, long fingers.”

“Ass,” Jon muttered under his breath.

Sansa rolled her eyes and knelt beside Harry. “How are you feeling?”
“Well, I was sitting up there,” Harry said pointing to his bar stool. “But now…I’m down here. Not sure how that happened. So, Sans…how you doin’?” he asked with that ridiculous wink he’d pull when he meant to be charming.

“Dr. Snow,” Stannis was seething as he joined them, “what the devil has gotten into you?” Sansa noticed Shireen had been sent back to stand with Mrs. Arryn as Stannis began haranguing Jon for his violent and embarrassing behavior. “Is it your intent to shame our entire department at the hospital’s largest annual fundraiser with this display? Is it your temper or your liquor you can’t hold?”

“No and I’m not drunk,” Jon growled.

Knowing Harry, Sansa could just about guess what had happened to provoke Jon. But no one else here would understand.

This looks terrible. And I don’t want his career hurt by someone as worthless as Harry. Nor, do I want him to wind up in trouble like Robb did over Joffrey.

Jon’s eyes were glittering dangerously again. He did have a temper and that would do him no credit here. His shoulders were slumped and her wore a mulish expression on his face. He knew his behavior was outside the acceptable code of civil conduct no matter what Harry had said but he would only damage Stannis’s opinion of him further by acting resentful and unapologetic now.

He needed someone capable of quick-thinking to do a little public image spin-doctoring for him right now.

I solemnly swear that I am up to no good that I am doing this with good intentions even if my methods and ethics are questionable. May God forgive me.

“Oh, Harry!” she cried. “I can’t believe you’d ask how I’m doing after what you did to me!”

“Sans…babe…” Harry stammered as he clamored to sit up. “I was an idiot when I was younger but…”

“You still are,” Jon huffed.

“I know you were hurt and shit but I thought we’d…”

“What? Get married? Oh, you said we’d marry and I believed you like the fool I was! But then, you destroyed all my hopes and dreams with the way you treated me!”

“Wait…how did this man treat you, Miss Stark?” Dr. Baratheon asked.

“I’m so sorry about all this, Dr. Baratheon,” she said…with a hitching sob for effect. “I’m sure you don’t want to hear the sordid tale.” Although just about everyone else standing around seems curious. “I should’ve known that one day fate would bring this man back across my path again to ruin a perfectly lovely evening.”

She grasped Stannis’s hand and was pleased that it seemed to garner her all of his attention.

“It’s such a long story, sir. Sir. That sounds so formal after everything we’ve been through tonight, doesn’t it? May I call you Stannis, please?”

He nodded numbly at her.
And the Academy Award goes to…

She kept hold of Stannis’s hand but turned towards Jon. “Jon, you enormous but loveable idiot, you are the sweetest man ever to attempt to defend my honor but you simply can’t solve everything with your fists. All those years of distress and emotional turmoil this man inflicted on me with his cheating and his lying and…”

She sighed dramatically and Stannis turned with a huff to look at Harry again, clearly no longer feeling much sympathy for him.

“No, it doesn’t matter what he did. I was just a stupid girl who allowed her heart to get entangled with the wrong, older man back in school. You can’t endanger your career over me, Jon. I’m simply not worth all of this.”

“Like hell you’re not worth it, you poor girl!”

When Sansa realized it was Jeyne Arryn who’d spoken, she had to stifle a giggle. They were going to be okay.

Mischief managed:

Jon wasn’t sure what he’d done to deserve Sansa but he was damned glad of whatever it was.

Sansa had spun a web of tragedy like a pro and suddenly everyone in the bar was giving Harry Hardyng dirty looks. The guy he’d decked was the one getting scowled at.

Stannis hadn’t said anything further about the punch after Sansa was done. He’d clapped Jon on the shoulder and said he’d see him Monday. Dr. Arryn’s wife had had a few choice words for Harry as well…and then spit on the floor at his feet! And Shireen Baratheon looked ready to kick him in the shins until her father’s man came to take her home.

“Oh, Jon,” Stannis said. “I’m going to leave with Shireen and Davos. She’s had quite a night. But, I rented a limo. You’re welcome to take Sansa home in it if you like. Here’s the driver’s number.”

Jon stared at the digits dumbstruck. “Thanks, sir.”

“You can call me Stannis.” Toto…I don’t think we’re in Kansas anymore. “Outside of work, that is. At the hospital, I’m still Dr. Baratheon or sir, got it?”

“Yes, sir-Stannis.”

All in all, it was a pretty damn good night. He’d survived the speech, met and then punched Harry Douchebag Hardyng and somehow Sansa had made him look like a hero in his boss’s eyes over it.

And we’re riding home in a limousine…

Grand Funk Railroad was already playing in his head.

‘Hey, Mr. Limousine Driver,
I know you know where it’s at.

Too late will be later, you just read your evening paper,

And don’t worry 'bout what's goin' on in back…'

In the meantime, Jon was enjoying listening to Sansa give Harry an earful even as she handed him an ice pack for his mouth. They’d moved to a corner table in the bar area and Jon was looming over them like some mobster’s hired muscle daring the ass to say one rude thing to her.

Okay, I won’t hit him again but he doesn’t know that…

“I didn’t like myself for a long time because of you, Harry. Does that make you feel good to know you damaged my self-esteem with all your lies and cheating? Not to mention the way you’d make your comments about my weight, my height, my hair first thing in the morning, my make-up, what I wore and all the other things that were NEVER WRONG WITH ME! You made a young woman loathe herself. Good job. As if society and the media don’t do enough to us. Does that make you proud?”

“No, Sansa. I’m sorry.”

“By the way, you’re horrible in bed.” Harry winced. Whether that was from her words or the ice pack, it didn’t matter. Jon enjoyed hearing her say it. “I didn’t know it then because I’d not been with anyone else but now…after Jon? Dear God,” she said with this sexy little moan. “You’re awful and you made me think sex was supposed to be good for you and just kind of meh for me. You never gave me one decent orgasm from what I can recall whereas Jon can get me half way there without even laying a finger on me. And when he does put his hands on me…oompah! It’s so fucking hot!”

“Well, I’m, uh…happy that you…” Harry rambled with a pained look on his face.

“And you’ve not changed a bit, have you? Here with one woman but already thinking about making moves on the next two, no doubt. A serial philanderer. A misogynistic womanizer. But really just a loser. That’s all you are. Does it keep you good company at night? Think it’ll be fun to grow old with all that?”

“Well…no.”

“Do you know what keeps me company at night? That man right there. He’s the best, the most loving, sweetest, most affectionate friend and lover any woman could ever hope for and I feel sorry for the women who date you when there are other good men like Jon out there.”

“But he hit me,” Harry whined.

“And you didn’t deserve it, huh?”

Harry shrugged sheepishly. “I’m sorry, Sansa. And I’m sorry for the stuff I was saying earlier, man.”

Only Sansa could make the douchebag apologize to him…after he’d hit the douchebag.

An hour later though, Jon had Sansa in his arms on the dance floor. As much as he wanted to take his sweet girl home, she loved dancing and he would gladly dance with her till they were kicked out of the joint if it made her happy.
“You alright, sweet girl? Seeing Harry didn’t dredge up too many bad memories, I hope.”

“Yeah, I’m good actually. It was a shock but kind of cathartic to face him again and get all that out. Quicker and cheaper than therapy, too.”

“Good. You were amazing and I love you.”

“I love you, too. And while I appreciate you wanting to protect me and stand up for me, please don’t hit anyone else at hospital functions on my behalf.”

“You got it.”

“Hey, Jon…do you know the story with Shireen and her mother?”

“Not exactly. Just rumors.”

“It’s pretty sad. I showed her pictures of Ghost earlier. You should’ve see the way her eyes lit up. She said she loves dogs but never had one. Do you think Stannis would mind if I called her? Maybe she could come spend some time with me and Ghostie. And we have very similar interests in movies. I’d be fun to have a…well, a little sister type around if you or your boss don’t mind.”

“You got it.”

“Hey, Jon…do you know the story with Shireen and her mother?”

“Not exactly. Just rumors.”

“It’s pretty sad. I showed her pictures of Ghost earlier. You should’ve see the way her eyes lit up. She said she loves dogs but never had one. Do you think Stannis would mind if I called her? Maybe she could come spend some time with me and Ghostie. And we have very similar interests in movies. I’d be fun to have a…well, a little sister type around if you or your boss don’t mind.”

“Yep,” he smirked, framing her face with his hands and looking at her with what was undoubtedly a completely besotted expression. “I think that would just about prove it.”

“Prove what?”

“That you’re an angel, Sansa Stark.”

“I am not.”

“Try and tell Stannis otherwise…or Jeyne Arryn. Try to tell Ghost that.”

“Flatterer. You’re just trying to get in this red dress.”

“No doubt about that. It’s still true. You look radiant by the way.”

“It must be these lovely pearl earrings someone gave me tonight.”

“Nah…no jewels can compete with you. I told you as much earlier.”

“You did,” she sighed, wrapping her arms around his neck. “Can we get out of here?”

Jon nodded enthusiastically and put his arm around her waist. He called the limo driver and they moved out front to wait for him to pull up.

And if it so happened that Harry Hardyng was also waiting out front (apparently alone) for a taxi while Jon was busy nuzzling into Sansa’s neck as he was pressed against her backside…well, that certainly didn’t bother either of them.

“Can I confess something?” he rasped in her ear as she reared back against his already hard cock again.

“Of course,” she moaned, making his cock pulse with longing.

“I wish I could fuck you in the back of the limo tonight.”
“Really?”

“Uh huh. I’m picturing it now. I’d mess up that tidy little bun of yours and then pull your dress up your hips.”

“Mmm…”

“I might be tempted to tear it off you,” he said, fingering the crepe along her shoulder and making her quiver. “But I won’t. You look so beautiful. Maybe I’ll claim your panties instead before I taste you.”

“Oh, yes…”

“Would you like that?” She nodded. “I’m thinking about using my hands first though. I can already imagine you dripping wet, covering my knuckles as I suck on your neck…” a nip there “and then pull down the front of this dress.”

“God,” she sighed, biting her lip.

“But when I finally fuck you, there’s no question about it. I want you to ride me. Straddling my thighs as you ride my cock in the back of that limo. Surrounded by other cars but nobody would know what we’re doing behind the dark glass. I wonder how many times I could make you come before we get home, baby girl.” She spun around and kissed him then, fierce and needy. She was already yanking at his bowtie and making a mess of his curls. “One question though.”

“What?” she whined.

“Could you keep quiet so the driver wouldn’t hear us?”

“I…”

“Or maybe I’ll make sure you can’t keep quiet. Maybe I want you to be loud for me tonight. But maybe it could be our little secret. I can’t decide.”

“Jon,” she whimpered. “Please…”

“Lord Jesus, just shoot me,” Harry grumbled at last, giving up on his taxi before he started walking down the country club’s lengthy driveway.

“Have a nice walk, asshole,” Jon snickered.

“Hey, Jon?”

“Yeah, sweet girl?”

“I have a confession, too,” she said all sweet and doe-eyed.

“You do?”

“You can’t have my panties.”

He gulped audibly. “Why is that?” he croaked.

“Because I’m not wearing any.”

“Oh, fuck me,” he groaned before he dove in to kiss her, grinding against her in the hopes of
finding some relief for his hard-on and carding his fingers through her silky locks, making a mess of her hair now.

“There’s Bronn!” she squeaked, pulling away suddenly.

The driver pulled up and got out to open the door for them while looking curiously at him. *As I try and adjust my regretfully obvious boner.*

“Wait a second,” the middle aged man with slicked back hair and a Cockney accent said. “You’re not Dr. Baratheon. Sansa, what happened to Dr. Baratheon?”

“Hello again, Bronn. Dr. Baratheon left earlier with his daughter.”

“You got the poor girl all fixed up, eh?”

“Yes.”

“And he gave you the car for the night?”

“Yes.”

Bronn gave them both the once over. “Alright then, luv. In you go,” he said, ushering Sansa into the limo. But when Jon started to climb in after her, Bronn threw an arm out in front of him. “Hold up, mate.”

“Is there a problem?”

“Is there a problem, he asks. More than one, I’d say.”

“I’m not following you.”

“Allow me to make it clear then. Number one-Baratheon didn’t tip me in advance when he made the rental. Did you know when you rent a limo it’s customary to tip the driver 20% of the fee by the night’s end?”

“Uh…no. I’ve never actually ridden in a limo before so…”

Bronn rolled his eyes. “Christ, did I say 20? Silly me. I meant 30.”

“But…”

“So, now you learned something new, didn’t you? Number two-those seats are leather but I’d ‘preciate you giving ‘em a wipe down once you’re done.”

“I’m, uh…”

Bronn jerked his chin over his shoulder towards the interior of the limo. “Are you gonna stand there and tell me you’re not thinking about fucking her in the back of my limo?”

“No! I mean, yes! I mean…sh! I am not going to stand here and tell you that I’m not…God, I’m confused now.”

Bronn chuckled. “Alright then. You know the rules. So, if you want the partition to remain up and me to be singing ‘Hey, Diddle, Diddle’ to myself while you’re busy playin’ your fiddle in the back, you’ll give Old Bronn a nice fat tip when the night’s done, yeah?”
“Um…”

*This is extortion. You can fuck her as soon as you’re home. All night long if you like.*

*Sansa isn’t wearing any panties,* his cock whispered.

“You’ve got a deal!”

Chapter End Notes

If you want a laugh (or to cringe), check out this video of Grand Funk Railroad performing ‘Mr. Limousine Driver’ in 1969 on the ‘Playboy After Dark’ variety show. Dear me... https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tF_mgIQRWwU

As for this story, we are entering the homestretch, folks. Which probably means 10 more chapters with me...lol. Seriously though, I am heading towards the conclusion. I wanted Jon and Sansa to have a chance to face their exes in the story and we’ve done that. So, the next chapter will be focused on the five neighbors and Ghost as Nan celebrates her birthday before I start on the final leg where Jon and Sansa will be making some future decisions and they'll spend a weekend with all the Starks as a new Stark is getting ready to join the pack.

Thanks so much to those of you continuing to follow this story! It really is my comfort fic to write :)
The Gift of the Present

Chapter Summary

Jon has a rough day at the hospital. Sam and Gilly come into town and Sansa finds herself unexpectedly jealous.

Chapter Notes

This one's got a few somber moments compared to the last few chapters but I hope you'll enjoy it all the same :)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Jon sat on the front steps of the building waiting for Sansa to return on a pleasantly balmy Thursday evening in late March. She'd taken Ghost with her to visit Shireen who was completely in love with the Malamute and asking her father for one on a daily basis.

“I’m blaming you for that,” Stannis had grumbled the other day when they’d been looking at lab results together.

“Me? Sansa’s the one who…”

He’d shut his mouth at the glare his boss had given him. No one spoke ill of Sansa in Stannis Baratheon’s presence. Not that Jon would ever really speak ill of his girlfriend.

He took a long drag of his cigarette, watching the headlights of cars rolling slowly down their street and hoping they’d be home before long. It had been a difficult day, a very difficult day. He was sure to have plenty of those in his career but he’d not yet developed that professional detachment, bordering on callousness, that many of his colleagues seemed to have.

Today would’ve been a good day to have a heart made of stone, he thought.

Loras had come out on two occasions in an attempt to check on him but he just wanted his sweet girl right now and pretended all was fine…not that Loras had been fooled.

“We were planning on hosting dinner Sunday if you two are free.”

“My friend Sam and his wife are coming into town to visit over the weekend so I’m not sure.”

“They’d be more than welcome if you’d like to bring them. Maybe you could sing for them,” Loras had smirked.

“Yeah…maybe.”

Loras had left him be after that.
He decided to smoke a third cigarette even though he was disappointed with himself for buying the pack on the way home in the first place.

The front entrance to the building opened behind him. “Those things aren’t good for you, I hear.”

He grinned despite himself. She had that effect on him. “You heard right. They’re horrible.”

“Can I bum one?” she asked, sitting down beside him with a slight groan.

“I don’t know, young lady. I should probably say no.”

“Young lady? Are you trying to butter me up? Contrary to what you might think, I’ve not got a fortune stashed in my mattress or anything.” He shook his head and offered her the pack, lighting it for her once she had it between her lips. “Where’s our girl tonight?”

“On her way back from the Baratheons.”

“Ah. That Shireen’s a sweet little lamb. I’m glad Sansa and her are friends.”

“Me, too.”

“But you’re eager for her to be home.”

“Yeah,” he said staring at another set of headlights turning up their street. It wasn’t her car. “Sansa said your birthday’s in a couple of weeks.”

“It is. Shall we put 87 candles on my cake and call the fire department to come put it out?”

“I’m sure we wouldn’t need the fire department.”

“Oh, poo. Some of those firefighters are handsome devils,” she teased. She blew out a smoke ring and looked pleased with herself. “So, what’s up, Doc?”

“Is that a Bugs Bunny reference?”

“Of course, it is.”

He snorted and put his cigarette out. It was hard to keep things from Nan. Besides, maybe getting this off his chest would be best.

“A shitty day at work.”

“Those happen. I guess when you’re a doctor though that could spell bad news for someone.”

“Yeah. I lost two patients today.” Nan shook her head sympathetically but didn’t say anything. She was always a good listener. “The first was a woman. Forty-three. Car accident. There was very little we could do but she was a wife and mother and it was my case. I had to tell her husband.”

He recalled the poor man’s look of total disbelief after he’d shed his bloody gloves and gown and found him in the waiting room. He’d escorted him to a curtained off area and listened as the man told him they had two teenagers waiting at home and this could not possibly be real. He’d stayed with him until another family member had thankfully arrived. It was by far the absolute worst part of his job, telling people their loved ones were never coming home again.

“It’s not the first time I’ve had to do it but it was the first time Stannis made me do it alone. It’s hard…harder than I thought it’d be even, you know?”
“I can only imagine, Jon.” Nan patted his shoulder before extinguishing her own cigarette. “What about the other one?”

Jon sighed and lowered his head. “A homeless man that I’d treated before. His name was Thoros, Red Thoros. At least, that’s what we all called him. He was a regular around the ER but I…I feel like I failed him.”

“How’d he die?”

“Multiple ongoing medical problems but cirrhosis of the liver from years of alcoholism will be the official cause of death.”

“I’m not seeing how that’s your fault.”

“It’s not. He’s probably been an alcoholic since I was in grade school. But he was in on New Year’s Eve and drunk. He pissed all over my shoes and I was annoyed by it to say the least. I had the nurse call social services for him but he ducked out before they got to him. He showed up today in bad shape, confused and…he slipped into a coma. We didn’t even get him fully admitted before he passed.”

“That’s sad.”

“Yeah, it is.”

“You’re a good man, Jon. You’re on your way to being one hell of a doctor. And what happened to those people wasn’t your fault.”

“I know.”

“Did you become a doctor thinking you’d save everyone?”

“No,” he chuckled. She gave him a wry look. “Okay…deep down, I want to save them all but I also acknowledge that it’s not possible.”

“Do you wish you’d chosen another specialty?”

“No.”

“Okay then. So, it’s fine to be down but stop blaming yourself. I know you did what you could.” She bumped his shoulder with her own. “I made some ginger snaps but this handsome, young doctor I know is getting on me about not eating too many sweets. Want some?”

He laughed and nodded. “You always know how to make me feel better.”

“By baking you goodies?”

“No, Nan. Just by being you.”

“That’s what us grandmotherly types are for.”

“I never knew my grandparents, any of them. I’m glad I…even if Sansa and I had never become anything more than friends, I want you to know I wouldn’t trade living here and knowing all of you for anything.”

She patted his hand. “This is a special place,” she said glancing over her shoulder at their building. “We have something special here, the five of us.”
“It is. We do.”

“It’s worth remembering that. There’s always room for more though.”

“More?”

“More neighbors to love. Our hearts have an amazing capacity for love, Dr. Snow. Don’t forget it. Even when you’re heartsick and exhausted or old and jaded in your profession, there’s no limit to the amount of love we can allow in. Maybe someday there’ll be someone else here we can make part of us. Come on…those cookies should be cool enough by now.”

He didn’t question her any further but pulled her back up to her feet and escorted her inside.

When Sansa and Ghost arrived a little later and found him at Nan’s eating ginger snaps and drinking milk, she didn’t say a word. She just dropped a kiss on top of his head and joined them as Ghost laid his head in Jon’s lap and licked his fingers clean.

“Sorry we were so late getting back.”

“It’s okay,” he said, grasping her hand. “You’re here now. That’s what matters.”

“He sang?” Sam asked incredulously. “Jon Snow sang Garth Brooks?”

Loras nodded. “I swear he did! I should’ve recorded it!”

“Oh, you should see the video of his Best Man’s speech from our wedding,” Gilly chimed in. She started pulling out her phone. “It’s on…”

“YouTube! We saw it. I subscribed to Pyp’s channel because of it.”

“I’d just like to say that all of you suck,” Jon grumbled. “Except you and Nan,” he added, kissing Sansa’s cheek.

Sansa was laughing along with the others but she laid her head on his shoulder in sympathy.

Sam and Gilly had come into town last night and the four of them had met for dinner. Then today, Sam and Jon had gone to some Sci-Fi convention in Baltimore while Sansa had offered to take Gilly sight-seeing. The two women had got along very well and Sansa wished they lived closer. Jon liked Loras and Renly but it was clear that Sam was like a brother to him in many ways.

Once they’d grown tired of museums and such, Sansa had suggested they go to a nearby spa for some pampering.

“How about a facial?” she’d asked as they were driving there.

“I don’t know. I’ve never had one.”

“Oh, they’re really lovely. I’ve only done it a couple of times but it’s a relaxing treat.”
“Okay…I think.”

“We don’t have to if you’d rather not. We can find something else to do.”

“No, it’s just that…Sansa, I’m not sure if Sam’s thinking about telling Jon this today or not but I’m pregnant.”

“Oh! That’s wonderful, Gilly!”

“Thanks. I’m only about eight weeks so we’ve not told anyone except my mom.”

“I won’t say anything, I promise. Are facials a no-no?”

“I wasn’t sure.”

“I suppose texting Jon with such a question would be suspicious…or might cause him to have a heart attack.” Gilly had laughed. “I’m sure we could ask at the spa and, if they are a no-no or if you’d just rather not, we could get manicures instead.”

“Okay. That sounds good.”

It turned out that a basic facial was considered perfectly safe and the two of them had indulged in manicures as well. Fresh faced and relaxed, they’d returned to Sansa’s apartment where Gilly had taken a nap while Sansa fixed a dish for their neighbor dinner which Sam and Gilly had agreed to attend with them.

As her friend had napped, Ghost had lain on the floor where she slept as though he sensed this was someone to watch over. Sansa had wondered how Ghost might behave if she were pregnant.

Getting ahead of yourself, she’d thought with a sigh.

But now, Sam and Gilly were seated on Loras and Renly’s loveseat and Sam had an arm wrapped around his wife’s shoulders. They shared a sweet, private sort of smile and Sam placed his hand on Gilly’s flat stomach for a moment. Gilly turned towards him with a radiant glow that had nothing to do with her facial.

“Excuse me a sec,” Sansa said politely as all the air seemed to leave her lungs in a gush. “I’m…I should check on Ghost.”

Jon looked up but she was already out of his reach before he could stop her or suggest joining her.

Standing in the hallway alone, she pressed her hands over her own completely non-pregnant stomach and tried to rationalize with the little green monster who’d decided to pay a visit.

They’ve been together for years. They’re married. They’re ready for this step and Jon and I aren’t yet.

Will we be? Could we be?

Of course…someday.

When though? Babies are so beautiful and sweet. Our sister-in-law’s due in August. Gilly’s pregnant. We want a baby, too!

I’m only twenty-four! Jon’s getting established at the hospital. We don’t even live together.
“Sansa?” She whipped her head around to find Jon coming out of Loras and Renly’s place. “What’s wrong?”

“Nothing. I’m just heading up to check on our boy…I mean, your boy…the dog.” She barely got the last two words out before she started crying. *Like a big old baby.*

“Oh, sweet girl,” he murmured, wrapping her up in his arms as she wept. “What is it?”

“It’s stupid and childish and I can’t tell you,” she whined.

“Sansa…if it’s your period or…”

She pushed herself out of his arms and angrily wiped away her tears. “NO! It’s not that!” she shouted before storming up the stairs.

She reached her door without him following and collapsed on her sofa. It only took a few minutes for her to get her cry out while Ghost paced anxiously around her, occasionally licking at her face or hand. She was embarrassed by her jealousy and her behavior. She wondered what Jon must think of his psycho girlfriend. She was also wondering what he’d tell the others about her absence. It was bad enough to bail on Loras, Renly and Nan but to bail on Sam and Gilly…

“I’m okay, boy,” she said at last when she felt Ghost’s warm, wet tongue on her cheek again.

Ghost sat back on his haunches to stare at her. She could tell he didn’t believe her.

“I really am. I love you, Ghost,” she added, scratching behind his ears. “I’m sorry to worry you. That was…” She glanced over at the bag from the convention Jon had brought back. “…highly illogical of me.”

“Maybe Spock would say that but I never would.” Jon closed the door behind him and came to sit down beside her.

“What’d you tell them?”

“That you weren’t feeling well.” She grimaced. “It’s the truth. If you’re feeling like crying, you obviously aren’t feeling well. They all said they hope you feel better soon. If they were skeptical, they didn’t act like it. Sam and Gilly are heading back to their hotel for the night. I told them we’d try and see them again Wednesday night when I’m off before their flight on Thursday.”

“I’m sorry, Jon.”

“Why? I spent all day with Sam. It was getting late anyway. I’m right where I want to be.”

She leaned towards him and let him hold her again. It was comforting to know he wasn’t frightened off by her emotional display. *And, we have time for all those things you want.*

“Want to tell me about it now?”

“I do but I’m sort of sworn to secrecy.”

“So, Gilly’s pregnant.”

“How’d you know?!”

“Stealth…thy name is not Samwell Tarly,” he chuckled. “He bought a onesie at the convention today that said, ’I Just Boldly Went.’ I swear, did he really not think I’d notice that?”
“Oh, my God,” she laughed. “Will Gilly really let him dress their child in that?”

“Hey! I bought a ‘The Truth is Out There’ one for us!”

“You didn’t,” she gulped.

He started scratching the back of his neck and gave her that adorably sheepish grin of his. “What if I did? I mean, it’s not like it’s gonna happen anytime soon but I thought maybe someday we might…”

She cut him off with a kiss before he could finish.

Later, as they laid together in her bed with Ghost snoring away on his doggie bed, she nestled up against him with their fingers intertwined. He slowly dragged the fingertips of his free hand along her stomach and hip, leaving goosebumps in their wake as he dropped kisses along her shoulder and upper arm.

“I love you.”

“I love you.”

“Sansa…I want us to move in together.”

She propped up on an elbow to look at him. “Did my little meltdown bring this on?”

“No…maybe a bit but not really. I’ve been thinking about it lately. We’ve been practically living together between these two apartments for three months now.”

“And I’ve not scared you off yet?”

“Nope. Not even the carpet rake could scare me off.” She huffed out a laugh. “The only thing that’s changed about my feelings for you is that they’ve grown stronger. I feel like I’m ready, like we’re ready. I guess the question is, do you?”

Did she?

_I do. I do, I do, I do._

She’d never lived with a man before but Jon wasn’t just any man. He was the man she loved, the man who she wanted to marry and make babies with someday.

“We don’t have to decide tonight,” he added since she’d not spoken yet. “But the extra money from rent could go towards our future and…well, it’d free up an apartment for anyone who needed a good place to live.”

“It would,” she smiled in the dark.

“I don’t think Ghost would mind. He seems happy at either place.”

“He does.” She laid back down beside him and let out a contented sigh. “I think we’re ready, too. It’s just...logical.”

“Spock would approve then. Obviously, if you come to your senses and decide to dump me, it might make things a bit awkward. Think Loras and Renly would mind me bunking on their couch
for a few weeks until I find another place?"

She laughed and kissed his forehead. "You're not going anywhere, Dr. Snow."

"No, I'm not. This is where I want to be…always."

Chapter End Notes

There is indeed a Trekkie onesie available online with that phrase. Dear me...
'It's no bad thing celebrating a simple life'

Chapter Summary

Jon shares a not-so-sexy secret with Sansa. The neighbors gather to celebrate Nan's birthday and Margaery meets someone. Ghost has a decision to make.

Chapter Notes

If you've never heard of Texas Roadhouse, it's a casual dining, family-friendly restaurant (with a bar) in the US offering steaks, ribs, burgers and country vittles. They have a bucket of peanuts on the table at all times (woe be any folks suffering from peanut allergies who enter), play country music (the servers used to line dance to certain songs but don't know if they still do) and have a penchant for taxidermy as décor...

Chapter Title from JRR Tolkein.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Don’t stop, Jon…oh God, Jon…oh God, Jon…oh God, Jon…” she chanted as she approached her third orgasm of the night.

Fifth actually.

True. This was her third since he’d slipped his cock inside her. The first two were brought about by his hands and mouth.

Sweat was beading on his brow. His forearms were getting a bit tired and strained. His knee was a touch sore. But, those things were irrelevant he decided when he hitched her leg higher around his hip again to pound into her harder as Sansa was singing out his name along with the Almighty’s.

Ghost had woken up around Numero Quatro. He’d decided to sit beside the bed and thump his tail on the floor to encourage them perhaps as his humans engaged in their mysterious mating rituals.

Jon glanced his way briefly to see his furry head cocked to the side as he panted in time with them.

“Looks like fun.”

It is. Eternally sorry about the neutering, buddy.

Luckily, Sansa wasn’t noticing the dog as her eyes closed and her mouth fell open once more with her shattering crescendo that had her cunt clenching around his cock in an attempt to milk him dry…except he’d not come yet.

Let’s break our record and go for Number Six!
“God, it’s so good, baby…but you’re wearing me out.”

*Five it is,* he accepted before he thrusted half a dozen more times and gave in to his own pleasure at last. “Unnn-ugh.” He rolled off of her and collapsed with a delighted grin on his face. *Five. Not fucking bad after pulling sixteen hours if I do say so myself.*

Sansa snuggled up beside him and kissed his jaw. “Jon…that was…wow.”

“Yeah?”

“Oh, yeah. I missed you last night.”

“I missed you, too.”

“I can’t believe you’re even still awake honestly. I’d be dead on my feet after working that many hours. We had Field Day today and I was dead on my feet. I took a nap when I got home.”

“You forget that I’m allowed to lay down and nap here and there.”

“Yes but how do you…” She blushed and looked up at him from beneath her lashes.

“How do I what?”

“How do you hold out like that? Unless you were having some…you weren’t having trouble getting there, were you? I mean, it’s perfectly fine if you were and I’m not saying…”

“No trouble, I promise,” he chuckled. “I was holding out for you. I enjoy bringing you pleasure…repeatedly.”

“Mission accomplished. Repeatedly.”

“Actually, I do have a secret.”

“Really?” She pulled the sheet up to her chest and rolled towards him, curious to hear.

“I…this will probably sound completely unromantic but please allow for the fact I’m a doctor.”

“Well, now I’m doubly intrigued.”

“When I start to think I’m about to shoot my load…”

“Is that a medical term, Dr. Snow? Will I find it listed in *The American Journal of Medicine*?” she asked with a cheeky grin.

“Very funny.” He swatted her ass for good measure and got a giggly yelp from her and a warning growl from Ghost. “To be professional then…if I’m concerned I may ejaculate before you climax, Miss Stark, I distract myself.”

“Distract yourself?”

“Yes. I, uh…walk through the steps of different ligation techniques in my mind.”

“Ligation techniques?”

“For vascular injuries…methods of tying off arterial bleeding.”

Her nose crinkled up in disgust even as she snorted back a laugh. “You’re right. That does sound
completely unromantic. And yet, I do reap the benefits.”

“That’s the plan.”

“Good plan, Dr. Snow. But now, I think we need some sleep.”

“Definitely.”

Ghost barked and then whimpered softly.

“Right after I take this very patient boy for a walk around the block.”

He got up and threw on some pants and a t-shirt, patting the dog’s head and grateful no squeaky toys had come out earlier.

Sansa awoke late the next morning, happy to have the day off and to have Jon lying next to her. Today was Nan’s 87th birthday and the five residents plus Marg were taking her out to celebrate tonight. They were going to dinner and a play.

Her husband was gone and her oldest son had passed two years ago but she still had a daughter and another son living along with plenty of grandkids, great grandkids and even a couple of great-great grandkids. Unfortunately, they all lived out of state. Nan didn’t begrudge them for having their own things to do these days and had said it was just another day anyway.

However, Loras, Renly, Jon and Sansa didn’t see it that way and all considered themselves her family as well. So if their resident grandmother was turning a year older, none of them planned to let the event pass unnoticed.

Not for the first time, Sansa was very grateful to live in this building. She’d lived in dorms and another apartment for a brief spell where she’d barely had more than a nodding acquaintance with her neighbors. This reminded her more of a true community where they all knew and cared about each other.

She’d grown up with something like that back in Ardmore where the kids all played together, the neighborhood moms kept an eye on everyone’s kids and the dads all stood around talking about lawn mowers and high school football games at the occasional block party. But she knew those things were dying out across America’s Suburbia. She felt it was something that should be lamented more often than it was.

Maybe someday we’ll find it somewhere else, she hoped.

A one bedroom apartment was all well and good for now but someday, her and Jon might want their own little piece of suburbia along with the requisite picket fence and Ghost running free in the backyard along with their 2.4 children.

She admittedly had done some serious daydreaming in the past couple of weeks.

‘Our house is a very, very, very fine house
With two cats in the yard
Life used to be so hard

Now everything is easy ‘cause of you…’

Ghost padded over to the bed with his lead in his mouth.

“Poor boy. We’ll get our lazy butts up.” Shaking off her little Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young revelry, she nudged Jon. “Our good boy wants a walk in the park.”

No response.

“Well, I can walk him alone. Would you want to take a shower with me when I get back?”

Jon’s face scrunched up like she’d just told him it was time to get up for school. He grunted and kept his eyes closed.

“Paging Dr. Snow?”

A whimper.

“Jon! Jon! The building’s on fire! Save me!”

A fleeting grin followed by a muttered scoff.

“How about a blow job?”

His eyes popped open and his lips quirked into a smile. “Now you’re talking,” he said, his voice all gravelly from sleep. Sansa had to admit that his voice was enough to make her want to act on that offer but Ghost was waiting.

“I guess I won’t be talking long if my mouth’s going to be busy,” she smirked.

He grinned before kissing her brow. “We’ll walk Ghost first. But then I certainly wouldn’t be opposed to that other thing you mentioned either before or after the shower.”

“I am a bit hungry for breakfast, too,” she said coyly.

“Breakfast first. Got it. Then…”

“Yes, you horn dog.” He panted at her, making her laugh and prompting Ghost to do the same.

“Come on now. Get up.”

“Oh, sweet girl…part of me already is.”

Four hours later, they were returning from the Baratheons’ house. It was a glorious Sunday in April despite allergy season gearing up and it seemed a shame for Ghost to spend most of the day indoors when they were off from work. However, since most of their celebration plans with Nan didn’t involve pet-friendly places, Sansa had come up with another idea.

Shireen had asked a few times if she could spend a whole day with Ghost. “I’d be an excellent dog sitter,” she’d promised. Today seemed like a great time to indulge her young friend.
Sansa hoped Stannis didn’t mind the dog coming over so often.

“You will be picking him up promptly?” Stannis had asked Jon with a stern look as they’d dropped him off.

Jon hadn’t answered. He’d been too busy looking forlorn as he stared after where Shireen had already disappeared with his fur baby.

“Of course, we will,” Sansa had chirped in response.

As they drove back, they discussed the impending move. Well, only one of them would be moving but the decision as to who was moving where had not yet been reached. Plus, they’d have to adapt to not only spending all their time together but sharing one place as equal partners. Jon said she would miss her large garden tub too much if she moved into his apartment and he’d just move into her place. But, Sansa worried that Ghost might prefer Jon’s apartment. It was silly but she hated to think the dog might resent their choice.

When they reached Loras and Renly’s apartment, Nan and Margaery were already there.

“About time!” Loras squawked as Jon handed Nan a bouquet of flowers and Sansa gave her a hug.

“We’ve got to get headed if we’re going to make our reservations.”

“Reservations?” Nan asked as Renly put her flowers in one of their vases for the time being. “What reservations? Where are you taking me?”

“Tersiguel’s,” Loras replied as Renly gave her an apologetic shrug. Nan cocked an eyebrow at the pair of them. “It’s a lovely French place in…”

“But I told you I wanted to go to Texas Roadhouse and see ‘Hello, Dolly.’”

“Oh, we’re not missing ‘Hello, Dolly!’ But Renly and I…don’t you dare shake your head at her behind my back! Renly and I wanted to treat you to something extra special for your birthday dinner.”

Nan patted his hand. “That is so sweet and I appreciate it, Loras. However, considering my advancing age and the fact that I really can’t say how many more birthdays I’ll be having, I’m going to shoot it to you straight. I’m the Birthday Girl and the Birthday Girl wants to go to Texas Roadhouse for dinner.”

“The Birthday Girl hath spoken,” Renly clapped. “Ah, honey…we can go to Tersiguel’s some other night.”

“Well, of course. It is your day, Nan,” Loras said with a slight whine.

“I also want all those servers to come sing ‘Happy Birthday’ to me. Any objections?” All five of them shook their heads. “Great!”

An hour later, their party of six was shown to a large corner booth amidst the taxidermy décor, peanut shells on the floor and blaring country music.

“Why does she like this place exactly?” Jon whispered in Sansa’s ear.

“Because I like their hot rolls with cinnamon butter and don’t tell me how bad they are for me…”

“Amen, amen,” Renly hummed as Loras rolled his eyes at his husband.
“I wouldn’t dare,” Jon declared and Sansa felt embarrassed on his behalf that he’d been overheard.

“It’s the only place I’ve found that can make Chicken Fried Chicken the way I like it without me having to make it…”

“Praise Jesus and that white gravy,” Renly nodded like a recent convert.

“And, I’d hoped you’d sing for me when the next Garth Brooks song plays, Doc.”

“Those are excellent reasons…except the last. And I see there’s not a thing wrong with your hearing,” Jon laughed.

“Exactly,” she winked.

Loras ordered everyone a round so they could toast the birthday girl and they dove into peanuts and hot rolls while waiting for their entrees. Sansa sipped her cocktail and enjoyed listening to Nan and Renly discuss which of the indulgent desserts they planned on ordering as Loras bit his lip and glared at Renly.

“It’s one freaking meal,” Renly huffed.

“And I’d rather not wind up at the ER again anytime soon,” Loras sniffed. “No offense, Jon.”

“None taken. I’d rather there be no need for my expertise with any of you if it can be helped. But, I’m sure Renly won’t mind going for a run with me in the morning to make up for it.”

“Yes, Doctor,” Renly said sourly but Sansa knew he would if it meant mashed potatoes smothered in gravy and an enormous chocolate brownie à la mode.

Their entrees arrived and Sansa felt Jon’s hand move from her knee where it’d been the since they’d sat down so he could dive into his steak. But just as both of Jon’s hands were above the table again, she felt another hand on her other knee.

“Sansa,” Margaery whispered and Sansa realized it was her friend’s hand. “Isn’t that…is that my sailor over there?”

“Your sailor?”

“You know! The navy guy! The one from Union Jack’s who left before we could meet back in February!”

“You mean the one you scared off by draping yourself all over my boyfriend in your inebriated state?” Margaery scoffed. “Well, you did. Where is he?” Sansa asked, craning her neck to look.

“DON’T LOOK!” Marg hissed.

“Who are we talking about?” Loras asked, folding his hands together with his patented Cheshire Cat grin as he turned to look now.

Sansa’s jaw dropped when she spied who Marg meant. Sitting in the bar area were six navy guys in their Service Dress Whites with a couple of pitchers on their table. Sure enough, there was the dark-eyed, handsome man Sansa had noticed checking Margaery out at Union Jack’s the day she’d gotten tipsy and sang with Jon a couple of months ago.

“Oh, it is him, Marg. I’m sure of it!”
“Shit, shit, shit…what do I do?” she squeaked.

“Well, hello there, sailor! What do you mean what do you do?! You go talk to him!”

“I can’t just go over there to a table full of men I’ve never met and start chatting him up, Loras! Even I’m not that bold!”

“Damn, he’s not bad,” Renly added once he’d spotted who they were talking about.

“Sissy, this might be kismet. Perhaps God led us to this Texas Roadhouse tonight so you could finally meet your soulmate.”

“I believe I led us to this Texas Roadhouse tonight,” Nan interjected.

“Maybe Nan is God,” Renly whispered. “I always said your desserts are heavenly.”

“Shut up, you sweet dork.”

“Would you all stop staring?!” Margaery cried. Loras kept staring but Jon and Renly dropped their eyes back to the table…and started laughing. “Shut up! Shut up! Sansa, how’s my hair? I need a mint or something!”

“Your hair is fine.”

“Here, honey,” Nan said, pulling random things out of her purse and setting them on the table.

“A Jitterbug, Nan? Seriously?” Renly asked incredulously as he picked up her phone. “I know what we should have bought her for her birthday, Loras.”

“It suits me fine, Techie,” she said, smacking Renly’s hand and passing Marg some Tic-Tacs once she found them.

“Don’t look now but he’s making his way to the bar…alone,” Sansa urged.

“shit…shit…okay…I’ll just…”

“I have no idea who this guy is but you go, girl!” Renly said.

“Anchors aweigh! Ramming speed, Sissy!”

Margaery took a swig of liquid courage, tossed her hair and slipped from the booth, making her way towards the bar. She glanced back at them and received an enthusiastic thumbs up from the table. Unfortunately, she was still looking back at them as a waitress with a tray full of drinks turned from the bar and the two women ran right into each other.

“Holy shit. I didn’t mean for her to literally ram into anyone,” Loras chortled as drinks went flying and everyone in the place turned to look.

Sansa was already on her feet to go to her friend’s aid but someone beat her to it.

The handsome sailor helped both ladies to their feet. Other employees swarmed the area to clean up the mess as Margaery, red-faced and flustered for once in her life, stammered out apologies to the server and thanks to the gentleman in uniform.

An officer and a gentleman, Sansa thought with a sigh. She decided to hang back so she wouldn’t interfere.
But then most unfortunately, just as Margaery and the man had exchanged a word or two, a large cake was carried over to the table where he’d been sitting and his friends were hollering at him to come and join them.

“Just a sec!” he called to his friends. “Are you sure you’re alright, miss?”

“I’m perfectly fine even if I’m drenched in booze. I’m Margaery by the way.”

“Margaery,” he repeated. “This probably sounds crazy but I feel like maybe we’ve met.”

“We’ve never met but I live around here. Maybe we’ve seen each other somewhere.”

“I’m stationed out of Norfolk. Well, I was but I’m…”

“Will you get back over here, Greyjoy?!” one of his friends bellowed. “You can pick up chicks at the titty bar later. Get her number or bring her over here but this cake’s for you, asshole.”

Sansa glared at the jerk who was obviously three sheets to the wind already. Marg’s sailor flushed and Margaery, despite being thoroughly soaked from her mishap, bristled at his rudeness. She had zero tolerance for guys like that.

“You should get back to your friends and I need to get back to mine. Thank you again for your kindness…”

“Theon. Theon Greyjoy. I’m sorry about Mallister. He’s not exactly a friend and he can’t hold his liquor.”

“I can see that. Well, it was nice to meet you, Theon.”

Margaery turned towards Sansa but she couldn’t quite hide her satisfied smirk when Theon stopped her.

“Hey, uh…Margaery. Not to sound like too much of a self-assured prick but could I get your number? I’m going to be moving into the area and maybe we could meet again.”

She pretended to think it over for a few seconds before saying, “Sure. I’d like that.”

“It only takes a moment
For your eyes to meet and then
Your heart knows in a moment
You will never be alone again…”

“My girl is such a romantic,” Jon teased as he opened her door when they returned back home several hours later with a tuckered-out Ghost. “Will you sing ‘Ribbons Down My Back’ next?”

“Hush. Wasn’t that the sweetest thing earlier? I’ve never seen Marg so excited to give her number
to anyone. Oh, I hope he’ll call her. Do you think he’ll call, Jon? Don’t men normally call when they ask for a lady’s number?”

“I was never any good at asking for numbers from women I’d just met.” Her shoulders slumped with disappointment and the corners of her mouth turned downwards. “But, I’m sure he’ll call her!”

The rest of Nan’s birthday celebration had gone well. Margaery had been on Cloud Nine which meant Sansa was happy which was what mattered most to Jon.

“Do you think Nan enjoyed the rest of her big night?”

“I’m sure of it. What did your mom want earlier?”

Cat had left Sansa a voicemail during the first half of the play and Sansa had ducked out during intermission to call her back.

“She was asking if you might be able to get some time off in July so we could get together with them.”

“At your parents’ house?”

“No. They’ve booked a vacation home at Carova Beach in North Carolina."

“The Outer Banks? Never been.”

“Me, either. They’ve been a couple of times though. Since they were away at Christmas, they thought this would be a fun way to get the family together.”

“Wait…the whole family?!" He may have whimpered that bit.

“Yes.” Sansa looked down at their joined hands. “We don’t have to, Jon. I can always claim you can’t get off work or…”

“No, no, no. I’ll check with Stannis and see, okay? It’s not that I’d object. I really liked your parents and your brothers and sister-in-law when I met them at Christmas. I’m just a bit nervous at the prospect of vacationing with them all.”

“I can understand that. I’m a bit nervous, too. I stayed away for such a long time over Joffrey and my fears. Sometimes, I feel like an outsider…like I don’t belong anymore.”

She didn’t feel like she fit in with her own family, her family who obviously loved her, all because she’d been afraid to go home thanks to one terrible guy the past few years. That was just so wrong in Jon’s opinion. Even after confronting her fears and the confidence she’d gained, he knew how much she regretted staying away for so much of the time. She deserved every opportunity to reconnect with them all and his own minor trepidations over being the relative stranger in their midst were inconsequential compared to what this might mean to Sansa.

“You belong and we’re going,” he said decidedly as they climbed the stairs.

“We are? But you’ll have to check with Stannis.”

“I’ll bet it won’t take too much arm-twisting for me to get a few days off if Ghost were allowed to stay with Shireen while we’re gone.”

“Oh! I love that idea. I know Shireen will be so happy! But do you really think Stannis won’t
mind? He seemed very relieved when we actually came back to get him.” She whispered out the last part, probably concerned that Ghost’s feelings might be hurt.

“I think when it comes to his daughter and her happiness there’s a lot Stannis wouldn’t mind.”

They reached the top of the stairs and Jon thought it was a high time to make a decision about something else.

“So, which one?” he asked Sansa, pointing at the two apartment doors.

“Whichever. Both beds are comfy and I’m sleepy.”

“No…which one?” He lifted his eyebrows meaningfully and she caught on. She started to demure. He knew she’d agree to whatever he wanted but he suspected what her real hang up was. “Ghost,” he said.

His dog’s ears perked up and he gave Jon an intelligent look.

“Which one, boy? Which one is home?”

Ghost padded over to the door of Number 4 and sat down. He barked once and waited on them to let him in.

“Well then,” Sansa smiled. “I guess we have our answer. Welcome home, boys.”

“Thank you, sweet girl.”

He pressed a kiss to her lips and allowed her to unlock the door to their home.

Chapter End Notes

I used Theon's book canon description but go ahead and picture Alfie Allen in Service Dress Whites if you like :)

Song lyrics from 'Our House' by Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young and 'It Only Takes a Moment' from "Hello, Dolly!" written by Michael Stewart.
Three months had passed and July was already half gone. Jon, Sansa and Ghost had settled into their new shared living space with minimal issues.

Well…almost minimal.

“Jon Snow! Must you leave your stinky, sweaty running things lying on the bedroom floor every single morning?!”

“Sorry! I’ll pick them up as soon as I finish showering.”

“Please get good and clean. Be sure to wash everywhere.”

“I know how to take a shower, Sansa.”

“Of course, you do. I’m sure you don’t need me to help suds you up or…”

“Would you look at that? I dropped the soap. Whatever shall I do? I need help!”

***

“Sansa? It’s 93 degrees outside! Why’d you turn the air conditioner off?”

“It felt chilly to me!”

“I’m sweltering. I can’t believe you’re wearing a sweatshirt. Wait…is that my sweatshirt?”

“It is. Do you mind, Jon?”

“No, of course not. I might like it better on the floor though…”

***

“Why are there crumbs all over the sofa cushions? And what happened to the snickerdoodles I
baked?! They were right here on the counter!"

“I’ll get the carpet rake.”

“Jon!”

“I mean the dust buster! And I was hungry when I got home. Were you saving those for something, sweet girl?”

“No. I baked them for you anyway. I just thought they might last till dinnertime is all.”

“But they’re your snickerdoodles. They’re almost as irresistible as you are.”

“Flattery will get you everywhere, Dr. Snow.”

“Will it get me more cookies?”

***

“Why is there slobber all over my new shoes?!"

A whimpered whine from Ghost.

“It’s alright, Ghostie. Look what Mama got you at the store.”

*SQUEAK*

“Aw, shit! Did you buy him another freaking squeaky squirrel?!”

Yeah…no one was regretting the move.

Loras wanted to repaint and change out the carpets in Apartment 3 so it was sitting empty but Jon didn’t miss living there at all. He was right where he wanted to be.

School was out for summer but Sansa was occupied helping at the Boys & Girls Club’s summer reading program down in Laurel and visiting Shireen fairly often as well. And Jon was busy with the last bit of his internship before starting his 2nd year at County.

But he had a vacation coming up soon and was looking forward to the time away with Sansa…even if he was mildly panicking about it. Eleven people other than themselves would be staying at the beach house Ned and Cat had rented for a week in the island beach town.

Lots of opportunities to bond with her family…or embarrass the hell out of myself.

Today though, he was headed to work. Well, it was sort of like work.

“What do you think of this tie?”

Her head popped up from the magazine she’d been perusing. Her lips curled into a grin and she rose from the bed to saunter over his way. Wearing nothing but one of his t-shirts and panties, his girlfriend was the sexiest damn thing in existence and he did not want to go to some boring seminar
“I think my boyfriend is going to be the handsomest doctor there today.”

That brought forth a grin of his own. “A seminar on sinusitis. Sounds positively stimulating, doesn’t it?”

“I can think of some more stimulating topics for certain,” she said coquettishly as she started tying his tie.

He’d much rather be yanking that tie off, along with his button-down. And then, I’ll push her back on the bed and...

“I saw what you bought while you were showering earlier.”

His eyes flew open and his voice shot up an octave when he said, “You did?!”

*How could she have found it? It isn’t even here! Did Ghost tell her?*

*No, that’s crazy!*

He was shit at keeping things from her though and lately he felt like he was walking around with a sign over his head—‘Whatever She Doesn’t Claim is Owned by Tiffany & Co.’

“Yeah, it’s really cute that you’re sending Sam a Star Wars t-shirt for his birthday.”

*Oh, that! Yeah. Calm down, idiot. “Um…Star Trek but yeah, okay.” Her eyes narrowed. “He’s a huge fan of Bones and I thought the, uh shirt would…’He’s dead, Jim.’ Classic.” He laughed nervously and gave her a quick peck on the cheek. “See you tonight!”*

“See you tonight, Doctor,” she purred. Then, she grasped him by the tie and pulled him in for a slow, wet kiss. His toes curled in his dress shoes and his breath was short when she pulled back and batted her eyes at him so prettily.

“Minx,” he rumbled.

“I did nothing. I just wanted to kiss you goodbye.” Oh, she was good at acting all innocent. He knew better. “Nurse Sansa will be waiting up in case you need her help with anything later though.”

*Seminar, Meminar…some things take precedence. “Oh, I think Dr. Snow is going to need Nurse Sansa’s help with something right now.”*

“You are?” She gave a slight shriek as he walked her back towards the bed and pushed her down.

“Oh, yes,” he said, yanking off the tie she’d just carefully tied. “It’s been a while since I’ve given you a thorough physical.”

“You’ll be late,” she said wagging a finger at him.

“Dacey says these things always start 45 minutes late while everyone stands around gorging on stale bagels. I’d rather eat here,” he said with a devilish grin.

Her pupils dilated and her teeth sunk into her bottom lip as he swiftly cast aside his shirt. She knew exactly what he meant by that.
A sunny Friday morning in July and no particular place to be, Renly woke and realized he’d rolled past his allotted half of the king-sized bed. Loras would often bitch about Renly’s admitted proclivity to hog the covers and the bed and sometimes there’d be a great huffing and puffing and fitful yanking of sheets and the duvet during the night…all of which Renly would usually be oblivious to as a very deep sleeper.

“Sorry, honey,” he mumbled, reaching out to touch the warm body that would normally be right beside him. His fingers met empty sheets. “Loras?” he called in a gravelly morning voice.

He heard sounds of life coming from the kitchen and, with only a few grumbles and groans, rose to his feet.

He was not expecting the sight that met his eyes.

Jon was holding out a ring box to Loras who had one hand drawn up to his mouth and tears in his eyes.

“I do!” Loras shouted happily and Jon laughed.

Maybe I’m still asleep. “What is going on in here? I hate to break it to you, Jon, but this man is already taken.”

“Hey, Renly.”

“Morning, babe. Jon’s just coming to fetch the engagement ring we’ve been holding for him.”

“Since when were we holding an engagement ring? And what the fuck?! An engagement ring?!” He crossed the room to hug Jon while Loras said he was afraid he’d blab if he knew. “You were afraid that I would blab?” he asked incredulously. “Loras…you are the biggest gossip anyone has…”

“Am I nuts to do this now?” Jon interrupted. “I mean, on our trip with her family all there.”
“Absolutely,” Loras nodded. Jon’s face fell. “You’re nuts because you should do it here in front of us and Nan!”

“I’m not actually proposing in front of the family. God, that’d be a surefire way to guarantee I’d fuck it up. I figured we’d take a walk on the beach or some other romantic opportunity might present itself.” Jon shook his head. “Who am I kidding? I am awful at grand gestures and I’ll probably blow my load. I mean, blow it! Jesus Christ!”

He and Loras both laughed but when he saw Jon’s troubled expression, Renly laid a hand on his shoulder. Jon was part of them all and he couldn’t have him doubting what the rest of them all knew. “Look, Doc…there are very few certainties in life but I am certain of this: however you do it, Sansypants is going to be ecstatic and say yes.”

“You really think so?”

“I know so.”

“It’s just good-bye for a little while, okay?” he was whispering. “Daddy loves you so much. You’re my special boy and I’ll call and check on you every single…”

“Jon? We really should get headed.”

She gave Ghost one more loving pat and shot Stannis and Shireen an apologetic look. When Jon had kept mentioning how he’d never left Ghost for more than a day since he’d adopted him, she really should’ve paid better attention to that.

Shireen, sweet girl that she was, came over and knelt next to Jon and with the sweetest doe eyes said, “I promise to take the very best care of him, Jon.”

“Yeah…I…I know you will. Thanks, Shireen.”

They drove to the airport in relative silence. They’d had a late night and their flight was pretty early. Jon seemed content to listen to the radio playing and Sansa was content to sit in the passenger seat…and fret. She’d been trying to ignore the butterflies which were rapidly taking roost in her tummy.

The whole family. When was the last time all the Starks had been in under one roof? It seemed like ages ago and even though Jon had repeatedly assured her she was part of them all, she still felt like the black sheep returning to the fold after being gone for too long. She didn’t like feeling like that. She’d always been the good girl but now she was the stranger.

No, you’re not. Robb and Janina were so welcoming at Christmas. Bran and Rickon love you. Mom and Dad were great when they came to visit. And Arya will…

She sighed and started twirling her hair. She loved her sister very much but they’d always been so different. When Sansa had been a little girl, she couldn’t wait for the baby to be big enough to play with her. They’d share dolls. They’d play House and School. They’d have lovely tea parties and line up their stuffed animals and have secrets games that only they knew.
Then, she’d discovered the reality of it. That wasn’t who Arya was and it never would be. As children, it had led to lots of tension. However, with a bit of maturity, Sansa had come to see that her sister was wonderful in her own way. There’d been girls her own age to play those things with anyway.

But they’d seen so little of each other the past few years. Arya was bringing a man of her own along for this trip. She’d not even met him yet. Well, she’s not met Jon either. Sansa wanted to reconnect with her sister but she was terribly nervous, too.

In an attempt to distract herself, she decided to text Margaery. Since school had finished in early June, Marg had been in a funk. Actually, she’d been in a funk for the past three months now. Sailor Theon had never called and, although Marg acted like it was no big deal, it was apparent to everyone (including Ghost) that it had been a big deal to her.

Receiving rather dismal, one-word text replies though, Sansa decided to put her phone away and do something nice for Margaery when they got back home.

*Spa Day? Brunch and shopping? Double date? Ooh…*

“Jon?”

“Hmm?”

“Are there any eligible doctors or nurses at the hospital who might be…”

“No, Sansa.”

“What about Dr. Turnberry?”

“The ophthalmologist? He’s an idiot.” He reached over and kissed her hand. “I’m sure she’ll find someone, sweet girl.”

“I know. I just want her to be happy. If only Sam’s brother lived here.”

“Dickon? She’d eat him alive.”

“She would not!” She smirked. Margaery could be rather rapacious based on the stories she liked to share. “He was awfully sweet. Maybe he wouldn’t mind being eaten?”

“Sansa Stark!” he gasped. “Yeah…with Marg, maybe he wouldn’t mind. But he lives in Denver for now and Sam says he’s been busy calling up Gilly’s sister regularly since the wedding.”

“Oh, Lily? That’s wonderful! Imagine if they got married and…”

“Yeah, so you’re SOL at the moment on lining up a date for Marg, Miss Woodhouse, and we are nearly to the airport.”

Sansa scowled at him but decided to let the matter drop. She could try when they got home again.

Secluded with no paved roads, Carova was located on the northern most tip of the Outer Banks. The Starks’ rental was only accessible via boat or four-wheel drive, they’d been told. Sandy
beaches lay ahead and Sansa’s eyes boggled at the wild mustangs roaming along them.

“It’s like a fairy tale,” she whispered on the ferry boat as they drew closer to shore.

Jon smiled indulgently, thrilled to see his sweet girl so excited as they neared the dock where Ned Stark was waiting to give them a ride the rest of the way.

He squeezed her hand, recalling his mum’s love of horses and wishing she could’ve seen this place and wishing she could’ve met Sansa even more.

“Jon?”

“The sun’s blinding on the water,” he said gruffly as he blinked rapidly.

She’d been so nervous all morning though she’d tried to hide it. He wanted her to enjoy this week. He had his own nerves to deal, not only nerves about staying with these people for the next week but his own plans…but that would come later. Today and tomorrow at least would be about Sansa reconnecting with her family and him getting better acquainted with them all.

The boat docked and they were the first ones off, Sansa racing to her father’s arms as Jon gathered the luggage. He shook Ned’s hand and swallowed hard. He wanted to talk to him alone at some point. He did not need his permission but he’d still like the chance to express something of how deeply he loved her…to the best of his ability. They piled into the rented Jeep for the drive to what would be their home for the next several nights.

“Is everyone already here, Dad?”

“No, love. Robb and Janina flew in with the girls early this morning Rickon came with us last night. The others are arriving later today.”

“Okay.”

Jon could feel a bit of the tension leaving him. Everyone all at once might’ve been overwhelming but he knew Ned and Cat and had stayed with Robb and his family for a night.

“Where’s Ghost?” Tess and Emma demanded as soon as Jon climbed out of the back of the Jeep.

“He’s still in Maryland staying with a friend.”

Two little faces scowled in disappointment before they quickly turned away from him to hug their aunt.

“Well, that was polite, girls,” Robb Stark said sardonically as he shook Jon’s hand. “It’s good to see you again, Jon.”

“Good to see you, too.” The house was huge and amazing. Eight bedrooms, a private pool, private beach access and a breath-taking view of the Atlantic. He already never wanted to leave. Sure, it was hot but there was a constant breeze by the shore. Sansa already had her hair braided in anticipation of the wind but he didn’t mind it blowing through his curls. He was eager to take his girl for a walk on the beach. He spied a small gazebo off to itself near the dunes. The setting was idyllic.

_Hmmm…maybe so. Sunrise or sunset?_

They followed Robb through the house as Jon kept plotting.
Cat was already in the kitchen. “I’m making burgers for a late lunch,” she declared by way of a greeting before hugging them both. “Rickon, show them to their room so they can get settled.”

“Top of the stairs, down the hall, third bedroom on the left,” Rickon said as he shoveled some chips in his mouth.

“Rickon.”

“Ugh. Yes, Mother,” he groaned as he hopped off the counter. He snagged three carrot sticks next.

“I’ll be back shortly to help you with lunch, Mom.”

“Go get settled, Sansa. Go see the beach with Jon. I can handle this and you can help me with dinner tonight.”

“Where’s Janina?”

“Lying down,” Robb answered. “She was exhausted and complaining of a backache after the flight this morning.”

“She’s thirty-four weeks now?” Jon asked with a slightly furrowed brow.

“Thirty-five but don’t worry. Her OB said everything was still closed up tighter than a clam at her visit yesterday.”

“Oh, my God…I’m trying to eat, Robb,” Rickon wailed.

“Then, stop eating and show them to their room.”

“Anyway, I don’t think we’ll be needing to set up a labor and delivery ward here,” Robb finished.

“It’s still good to have a doctor in the house…especially with this one around,” Cat said playfully as she ruffled Rickon’s hair.

“Mom!” Jon felt his cheeks starting to ache from smiling so much. He wasn’t a bit nervous now. This was family.

She didn’t know what she’d been so nervous about. The instant she’d seen her little sister getting out of the Jeep, Sansa had gone straight to her for a hug. No matter their differences, they were sisters always.

“He’s easy on the eyes,” Arya had said with a wink when she’d spied Jon.

“So is he,” she’d laughed in response and nodded at Gendry.

Gendry was sweet and clearly had his own bout of nerves to cope with as he was being greeted by the entire family at once. And, Sansa decided he might need a bit of looking after given his shy smile. She would do her best to make both Jon and Gendry feel like they were truly part of House Stark for this week.
And Meera, too.

But Meera and Bran had been sweethearts for years so she was not remotely nervous over a week at the beach with them all.

It turned out Gendry was a veterinary student so he and Jon had the medical field in common even if they treated different species. Of course, Jon immediately started showing him pictures of Ghost which were soon being shared with everyone.

“He’s a Malamute, huh?” Arya said, turning a sad smile Sansa’s way. “Just like…”

“Yes, he’s…he’s very special,” she said and hoped no one would hear the hitch in her voice.

Arya came to sit beside her and put an arm around her shoulders. “I’ll bet he’s a good dog,” she whispered with a hug.

“He is. He’s the best boy.”

“She was the best girl.”

“She was,” Sansa gulped and hugged her sister back.

“I’m sorry for everything that happened back then, Sansa. I’m sorry for the stuff that you’ve probably put up with on your own since then.”

“None of it was your fault.”

“No but I wished we’d been closer. I wish you wouldn’t have been alone.”

“Me, too. I’m not alone anymore but I’d like to be closer to you all now. I know you’re happy in Philly but…if you ever wanted to see Maryland…”

“I’d love to come and meet your best boy, Sans.”

It had been an admittedly magical day, as much as Jon Snow would admit to any day being magical at least.

They’d played down along the water’s edge and collected seashells with Robb and Janina’s girls, spent time with all the family that afternoon, filled their bellies with a delicious meal that Cat and Sansa had prepared together…and were currently about to engage in a fast and breathless fuck in their bedroom during an early evening thunderstorm before rejoining the family for game time downstairs.

“We can’t be too loud,” Sansa moaned as he pressed her up against the locked door for a kiss…with his hand between her legs. Her panties were already around her ankles.

He smiled wickedly and put his hand over her mouth before urging her to put a leg around his hip.

There was a perfectly good bed right there which he was planning on fucking her in later but at the
moment he wanted his girl like this. *Right here, right now.*

A loud knock on the other side of the door made Sansa yelp though and had him cursing under his breath.

“Charades in ten minutes!” Rickon shouted.

“Twister against the door first,” Jon murmured causing Sansa to snicker into the hand that was still covering his mouth.

Fifteen minutes later (and looking remarkably innocuous in his opinion), Jon and Sansa rejoined the family just as Cat was setting out bowls of popcorn and little fruit and cheese kabobs while Ned and Robb were setting up two large easels.

“Your mom realizes she just fed us an enormous dinner, right?” he asked Bran as he plopped down on the sofa where he was sitting with Meera.

“It’s best not to question these things, Jon.” The younger man smirked and looked him up and down. “Pretty ballsy,” he chuckled.

“I’m sorry?”

“Your hair is much messier than it was at dinner twenty minutes ago.”

"I forgot my comb."

"My sister is flushed scarlet."

“And you think we…she could be, uh…catching a cold or something.”

“Do you think so, doctor?” Bran asked wryly as Meera gave him a shove and hissed for him to shut up.

“Doctor…yeah, a doctor. Is there a doctor in the house?” Janina asked in a half-joking tone from behind them.

Jon turned to smile at Robb’s wife but she wasn’t smiling. She was grimacing. She’d just exited the downstairs bathroom. She was holding her back and looked white as a sheet.

“Honey?” Robb rose to go to his wife. “Are you okay?”

“I’m super, Robb. Pregnancy is so awesome and I volunteer to let you try it next time. No, I’m not okay. My back hurts like a…” She eyed her daughters. “…like a really bad ouchie. Eating anything gives me heartburn. Drinking water gives me heartburn to be honest and now I…” She winced and clenched her fists. There were tears forming in her eyes. “…I think my water just broke.”

Oh, shit.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you so much to all of you who’ve been sticking with this story. It’s going to be
hard for me to let it go :'}
Sansa stood frozen in place in the midst of helping her mother set out snacks for charades. The reality of Janina’s words took a moment to register. Between the door sex a short while ago, her family’s knowing looks (except for her father’s carefully constructed and totally purposeful oblivion) and the very noticeable love bite she could now see forming on Jon’s neck, she had been wondering if it was possible to actually die of embarrassment and yet be glad about it.

Bran, however, was quick on the uptake and a few beats ahead of his siblings with the snark.

“Welp, there goes your damage deposit, Dad.”

“BRAN!”

“Sorry, Mom.”

She could almost hear the gears turning in her mother’s head as she looked at the twins while Janina stifled a gasp of pain. “Tess? Emma? Why don’t you girls take Uncle Rickon to look for more of those wild ponies.”

“But it’s raining outside, Grandma.”

“Yes but…it’ll be like you’re swimming.” Two sets of little eyes narrowed suspiciously.

“Mom, it is raining,” Rickon supplied unhelpfully.

“Would you rather stay in here, Rickon?” her mother asked with emphasis as her eyes darted towards Janina.

“Let’s go, girls! Let’s find some ponies!” Rickon said practically dragging his two little nieces out of the door.

“Are you having contractions?” Jon asked.

“I thought it was just a back ache but…”

“How far apart?”

“Five minutes…maybe less,” Janina said as she gasped again.

“But…we’re in North Carolina,” Robb said dumbstruck. *He’s even less helpful than Rickon, bless him.*
“Yes, we are. So astute of you, brother,” Arya snarled. “I’ll bet they have babies here, too.”

“But…but…your doctor said you were closed up tighter than a…”

“Will you let that go for fuck’s sake!” Janina shouted. “Are you guys going to help me or what?!”

Thankfully, Jon was already on his feet, ready to act as he started issuing orders. His professional competence in the face of the unexpected was reassuring to behold. And, Sansa at least felt more than a bit of pride at that.

“Robb, help your wife to the bed. Ned, go get the four-wheeler ready. Gendry, can you assist me?”

“Well, it’s not the same as horses and cattle but I, uh…sure!”

“Cat, I might need you, too.”

“Okay.”

Sansa followed her mother and Gendry into Robb and Janina’s room. Jon’s professionalism slipped momentarily and his ears turned pink when he stammered that he’d need to ‘check’ her labor’s progression.

“How far is it to the ER at Nags Head?” he asked the room in general.

“About an hour and half according to my phone,” Sansa answered, having already anticipated the question.

“Call the local fire station. Tell them there’s a woman in active labor here.”

“Four wheeler’s ready, Jon,” her father said from the doorway.

“Never mind. Shit. We’re…you’re 80% effaced and at 6 centimeters. How quickly did your labor progress last time?”

“Pretty quick,” Janina gulped. “But, it’s too early…”

“37 weeks is considered full term. He might be a bit on the small side at 35 weeks but there’s an excellent chance he’ll be just fine. Ready or not, your water broke and the baby’s coming. I don’t want to put you in a four-wheeler on unfinished roads to drive 90 minutes away.”

“Yeah…I understand. But you can deliver this baby, right?”

“Definitely.”

“Did you happen to pack an epidural?”

“Unfortunately not.”

“Robb?” she said, grasping his hand. “I’m going to scream at you a lot.”

“Scream at me all you want, honey.”

“I might break your hand, too.”

“As long as you don’t break my heart,” he said kissing his wife’s forehead.
Jon had delivered James Robert Stark three nights ago. The volunteer firefighters and a paramedic from the local fire station had arrived shortly after his birth and helped check him over...not that Jon had really needed the help. Two of the guys had returned the next day and kindly driven Robb, Janina and the baby to the hospital down in Nags Head for a brief stay. Sansa had been very busy along with everyone else keeping Tess and Emma occupied and answering their dozens of questions about their new little brother.

Robb had said he’d rent a car to drive his unexpectedly expanded family home once the week was done since his wife needed rest. Her brother was beside himself with joy (despite his bruised hand) and declared Little James the best souvenir anyone could ever bring back from the beach. Actually, he’d said enough times now that everyone would finish the sentence with him (in monotone voices and with rolling eyes from all save the happy grandparents and Sansa.)

Arya and Meera had made the trek to the Wal-mart in Kitty Hawk to buy them diapers, a car seat and some other essentials to see them through till they could get back home.

For now though, the family still had a few days ahead of them.

Sansa awoke early just as there was a faint lightening in their bedroom as dawn approached. She stretched languidly and rolled towards Jon who was still snoring.

“Good morning,” she said softly, caressing his face till he started to stir.

“Good morning, sunshine,” he replied in his gravelly morning voice that never failed to give her a thrill. “Big plans today?”

“Just another lazy day at the beach.”

“With two five-year-olds, a newborn and a house full of family, right?”

“The girls are going with Mom and Dad on a little sight-seeing tour. Mom said they wouldn’t be back until later this afternoon.”

“Sounds fun. So, what do you have in mind for me?”

“More sleep if you like.”

“Nah...I can sleep late at home when I’m off.”

“Well, I don’t have any plans,” she said, teasingly running her fingers across his chest.

“Good because maybe I do.” As if to confirm his statement, his phone began to chime with an alarm.

“Like what, Jon Snow?” she asked suspiciously.

He evaded her query. “Let’s take a quick shower.”

“How quick?” she smirked.

“Quick. We’ve got places to be.”
Dressed in a flowing floral skirt and yellow tank top, Sansa had asked what she should wear and he’d told her whatever she was comfortable in. She’d opted for both pretty and comfortable. She was glad of her choice when he’d emerged from the bathroom in a white button-down rolled up at the sleeves and khaki pants.

His eyes lit up when he saw her. “You’re beautiful.”

“Thank you. You sure dressed up…for a day at the beach.”

“I dressed up for you.”

She felt a rush of nervousness at his statement and started fiddling with her hair. “Where are we going?”

“However far you’ll let me take you,” he replied enigmatically. “Come on. Let’s go watch the sunrise.”

He took her by the hand and they left the quiet house behind them. Barefoot, they strolled along the wooden planks of the walkway that led to the beach. The sea breeze was cool this early before the break of dawn but still carried the tang of salt water to their nostrils. Sansa breathed in deeply and relished this gorgeous place as the greying sky began to turn golden and the first hint of a fat lemon began to rise out of the dark waters of the Atlantic.

Before they reached the beach though, Jon steered her towards the little gazebo on the house’s property. Painted white but weathered-looking, it was picture-perfect amongst the sand dunes and sea grass.

“I’d thought twilight but sometimes you just get a feeling, you know? Sunrise seems right,” he said, chuckling as he pulled her along the sandy path.

“I’m sorry?” she said not sure what he meant.

“You’ll see.”

Her bare feet went from the packed sand to hardwood planks when they entered the gazebo but she wasn’t even aware of it as Jon flicked a switch and twinkling fairy lights came on overhead in the rafters above them.

"Did you..."

“The lights were for this evening. Bran and Gendry helped me string them up. Your dad figured out how to rig the switch. Tell them they were pretty this time of day too, okay?”

“Jon?”

He turned to face her and she could see his hands were trembling. “The moment we met, I thought you were absolutely gorgeous. That night when you came over after you cut your foot on the broken votive, I’m not sure I’d ever been happier that I’d chosen a career in medicine because it brought my gorgeous new neighbor knocking on my door.”

He stepped closer and took her hands in his. Her hands were trembling, too.

“A week later, you showed up on my doorstep with lasagna and a bottle of wine. We talked and... no one…” He took a deep breath. Her chin was quivering and her eyes were growing moist. “No one had reached out to me like that in a long time. I think I was already half in love with you by the
time you left that night. My mother’s illness and her death and then those miserable months afterwards…I tried shutting everyone and everything out except Ghost. I buried myself in learning my profession, seeing people every day but afraid to let them in. But then you came along like this little ray of sunshine in my life. Even though you had your own sorrows, you brought me joy and hope with every breath you drew. Your friendship…Sansa, your friendship has meant the world to me.”

He got down on one knee and she couldn’t quite believe this was real. Tears were already sliding down her cheeks.

“But loving you is by far the sweetest thing on Earth. I love you and I want to spend the rest of my life with you, showing you how very much I cherish you, Sansa Stark. So, I hope you’ll do me the honor of…”

He reached into his pocket and pulled out a diamond ring…which he promptly dropped.

They both watched in horror as it bounced across the wooden planks, the rising sun catching the diamond just right for it to wink at them before it disappeared into one of the surrounding sand dunes.

“Oh, holy fucking shit!” he yelped.

Tears of joy streaked her face though. Nothing truly bad could happen when the sun was coming up and Jon Snow loved her.

She started giggling and Jon looked at her incredulously.

“Thank goodness you chose sunrise. Plenty of daylight hours for our search.”

A grin spread slowly across his handsome face. Soon, he was laughing, too.

Ned had been grilling steaks on the back porch yesterday evening when Jon had approached him with the lights and his plans.

“I’m asking Sansa to marry me,” he’d said, his palms sweaty and his pulse racing but his resolve firm.

The older man had turned towards him like he hadn’t quite heard him at first. He’d smiled and pointed with his tongs. “What’re the lights for?”

“I wanted to string them up in the gazebo to make it…special. I asked Arya to find me a set when she went shopping.”

Ned had smiled then and clapped him on the shoulder. “Let’s get to work, son.”

Son. He’d been called that a time or two by older men in his life but never had he loved the sound of it more.

But now, there was a different sort of work to do.
Needle in a haystack. Actually, it’s like the freaking Pit of Carkoon or something, Jon thought as he used the children’s shovel and sand sifter to carefully work through the plot of sand before him.

“Maybe we should rent a backhoe,” Rickon suggested.

The entire Stark clan along with Meera and Gendry had appeared to aid in the search for the missing engagement ring.

“NO!” a chorus of Starks shouted.

“Janina, go back inside and rest with the baby,” Jon urged as he sat back on his heels for a minute to wipe the sweat from his brow “We’ll find it. Christ, I hope we find it.”

“Jon, you delivered my baby. I can be here for moral support at least.”

“Is it purple, Uncle Jon?” Tess asked sweetly as she held up a purple bottle cap.

Uncle Jon. Where had that come from? And why did he absolutely love it so much?

“No, sweetie,” Sansa said. “It’s shiny with a big diamond on it. Let’s put that in the garbage.”

The girls had wanted to help. They’d been set to search a patch of sand further away for fear of trampling the ring further into the sand that seemed to have swallowed it whole. Sansa was doing a good job of keeping them there.

“How big of a diamond?” Robb asked curiously from his own little quadrant of sand. It looked like an archaeological excavation was going on. They’d probably be in deep shit of getting on the sand dunes, too.

*Jon Snow, MD. Rule breaker and butter fingers…that’s me.*

“Two and a half carats,” Jon mumbled.

“Holy moly…we’ll find it.”

“This makes me think of Return of the Jedi…and maybe Indiana Jones,” Gendry said from where he had his own shovel and sifter. “I like Harrison Ford by the way.”

“Me, too.” Jon couldn’t help but snort. Gendry was alright.

“Eureka!” Bran shouted triumphantly as he held up three months of Jon’s salary. “Told you my section would have it!”

There was a chorus of cheers from everyone but Jon’s heart was pounding even more than it had been when he’d told Ned his plans last night.

“Bran? Can I have that?”

He clasped the ring tightly in his hand as he walked towards Sansa. She was blushing as he pulled her back into the gazebo. He was sweating in his button down and pants from the sun that was much higher up than earlier and his labor. He had an audience now whether he wanted one or not but all that really mattered was getting the chance to finish asking her and her response.

He knelt and looked up at those pure blue eyes which were smiling down at him. “Sansa, will you marry me?”
He’d had high hopes of a positive reply based on her reaction this morning. Still, his heart stuttered to a halt once the question was out…until she gave him an enthusiastic, “Yes!”

Carefully sliding the ring on her finger, he stood. He cupped her face with his hands and kissed her passionately as the family all clapped and cheered around them. It might not have been how he’d pictured it but, in the end, he couldn’t have been happier.

That night, Sansa admired the platinum and diamond ring on her finger and sent Loras a text with a picture of it. He was sure to be shocked and delighted.

_Loras: So, he managed to actually go through with it._

_Sansa: You knew?_

_Loras: Duh. You happy?_

_Sansa: So happy._

_Loras: Good. I’m going to show Nan and Renly the pic._

_Sansa: Please do._

She tossed her phone aside and looked out the bedroom window at the darkening beach and the gazebo lit up with twinkling lights. It was quite romantic but she was not remotely sorry to receive an early morning proposal instead.

Jon was on the phone and she snickered at his conversation.

“Yes…we definitely could’ve used your help with the digging. Yes, she did say, ‘yes.’ That’s right. Who’s a good boy? That’s right, you are. Mama and Daddy are coming to get you in just a few more days and…oh! Uh…hi, Shireen. Yeah…sure. Okay, goodnight.”

He ended the call and gave her a sheepish shrug.

“I just wanted to, um…share the news with…”

“Our best boy,” she finished for him.

“Yeah.”

He kissed her lightly on the nose and then glanced out where she’d been looking at the gazebo.

“It’s pretty,” she commented.

“Yeah, it is. Come on.”

“Where to now?”

“I didn’t propose under the twinkly lights but maybe we can dance under them.”
“Are you serious?”

“Of course, I am.”

Sansa’s heart swelled with love as he led her back outside. She had once feared that romance was something that was for other people and not her. After Joffrey and after Harry, she wasn’t sure if she’d ever know this kind of love. She was more glad than she could ever say to be proven wrong about that. She would always be thankful for the day that Jon Snow had moved in next door.

“I didn’t think to bring any music,” he said with a scowl once they reached the gazebo. “I should’ve thought of that.”

“I don’t need it. My heart is full of songs for you.”

“You have a lovely voice. Maybe you’d sing for me?” he prodded.

He took her into his arms and they started to sway with just the waves crashing in the background for music at first.

She could think of plenty of romantic songs but then thought of the first song she’d ever sang to him, the one she’d sang in the hallway outside her apartment after one too many glasses of wine as she’d wondered if he liked her or if he liked her, liked her.

“‘Tambourines and elephants are playing with the band, won’t you take a ride on the flyin’ spoon? Doo, doo, doo...’”

“Hey, I know this song,” he grinned. “I recall getting to tuck you into your bed after you sang this to me the first time.”

“That’s right. You did. You were a perfect gentleman that night.”

He kissed her hand and murmured in her ear. “What if I didn’t want to be a perfect gentleman tonight?”

She wrapped her arms around his neck. “Oh, I’m counting on it.”

Chapter End Notes

One to go :)
Our New Neighbor

Chapter Summary

Jon, Sansa, Loras, Renly and Nan are getting a new neighbor.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“It’s somebody’s moving day!” Loras announced as he swept into the kitchen first thing on Friday morning.

“A new tenant…wahoo,” Renly said irritably, adjusting his tie and pouring the coffee before leaving for work.

“Excuse me?” Loras said as he came over to fix the disaster Renly was calling a Windsor knot. “Since when are we not excited to gain a new neighbor?”

“Since no new neighbor will ever compare to Sansa or Jon,” he huffed before he tipped his chin up to let Loras work.

He did have a point there. Loras had already known Sansa through Margaery and adored her. The instant he’d met Jon he’d immediately taken a liking to the poor sad sack and started thinking that maybe this guy would be alright for their Sansypants. Was it too much to hope they’d be fortunate yet again?

_Not in this case_, Loras thought with a cagey grin. “My poor little grumpy morning muffin. Have some toast, babe.”

“Bleh! This is dry…and whole wheat.”

“It’s good for you.”

Renly scowled. “I’m just planning to be disappointed by the new guy. That way, maybe I won’t be so disappointed.”

“Oh, Eeyore…so good of you to pop by today. ‘Could be worse. Not sure how, but it could be.’”

“Shut up,” Renly grinned. “This bread would be tastier with honey.”

“You don’t need any more honey, Pooh Bear. You’ve got me. And I think you’ll like this guy.”

“A mechanical engineer? I’m sure he’ll dominate when we host karaoke night again,” Renly scoffed.

“Well, maybe there’s more to him than meets the eye. Maybe he’s got a wild side. Maybe he’s got a wild side that hides what a big marshmallow he is underneath the surface.”

“Loras?” Renly said suspiciously. “What are you not telling me about our new neighbor?”
“You’ll see!”

“Have you rented the apartment to some poor, unsuspecting octogenarian that you intend to set up with Nan?”

“No! I mean, I could’ve but…no.”

“Then, what’s so special about our engineer? And what’s this guy’s name anyway?”

“Oh, shoot! Is that the mailman? I need to ask him a question.”

“The mailman? It’s 7AM. Loras…”

“Have a good day at work!” Loras chirped as he fled the apartment.

Nan sat down in her favorite chair with a grateful groan. She took out her crochet needles and the soft green and yellow yarn while Kit Kat slurped at the bowl of cream she’d given him. He’d been purring and winding himself into a pretzel all morning around her legs, begging for his treat.

“You sure know how to manipulate an old lady but you’re going to get fat from all the indulging, Mister.”

Kit Kat gave her a plaintive meow before returning to his cream.

A knock at the door brought the smile back to her face. “It’s open!”

It was Friday. The doc was off and school wasn’t back in session yet. They had said they’d drop by for lunch and a visit.

Jon had returned from the beach two weeks ago with a sunburn and Sansa had come back with a rock on her finger. The sunburn had faded but Nan knew the rock never would.

It had brought her such joy when Loras had shared the picture Sansa had sent him. She’d felt even more when they’d come home so she could hug them both tightly.

Sansa kissed her cheek and asked how she was feeling while Jon started opening up his medical kit.

Loras and his big mouth.

She couldn’t really be cross though. She knew they loved her just as she loved all of them.

“You making house calls now, huh?”

“Just for my favorite people.”

“If I promise I’m fine, will you put that away?” she asked, eyeballing his stethoscope and the blood pressure monitor.

It hadn’t been anything but a little dizzy spell when she’d looked at Jon’s old apartment with Loras
before their new neighbor arrived today. The fumes from the paint were still a bit strong, she’d told him. She was 87 for Pete’s sake. She’d had more than a few dizzy spells since she’d passed menopause decades ago. She wasn’t planning to live forever but she wasn’t down for the count yet either. *Not by a long shot.*

But Loras had been alarmed and obviously blabbed to Jon.

“No, I won’t,” Jon said with that stubborn jut to his jaw he sometimes got.

“Please, Nan,” Sansa added, those pretty blue eyes so imploring. *That girl could give Kit Kat lessons in how to get your way.*

“Allright, alright,” she grumbled giving Jon her arm instead of the finger. When he pulled the Velcro sleeve back apart with a satisfied nod, she pertly said, “See? I’m as healthy as a horse.”

“Healthier,” he grinned. “You staying hydrated?”

“Yes, doctor.”

“Checking your blood sugar regularly?”

“Yes, doctor.”

“The paint fumes were strong. Sansa and I could smell them through the bathroom wall.”

“Thank you.”

“Speaking of smells, what do I smell in here?” he asked with a boyish smile that left her tickled pink.

“Banana nut bread cooling on the counter. You can call it your fee if you’re interested.”

“Have I ever turned down your baked goods?”

Sansa sat down across from her as Jon started ‘testing’ the bread. She watched her making her chain stitches. “My grandmother used to crochet. I never learned how.”

“I’ve seen you sew,” Jon said around a mouthful of banana nut bread.

“Sewing and crocheting aren’t the same, doc. It’s not that hard though. Would you like to learn how, Sansa?”

“Really, Nan?”

She patted her hand. “Of course, dearie. I’d love to share something with you.”

“Thank you. What are you making anyway?”

“A gift. It’s going to be a baby blanket, a cap and some booties.”

“Oh, that’s so sweet. I love this shade of yellow, too. It’s like sunshine. Is it for someone in your family?”

“Yes…you could say that.”

Whether it was a year or five years from now, she figured they could put it to use one day. She’d
love to get to hold their little bundle if God allowed but no one is promised tomorrow. Regardless, she prayed that someday they’d be able to tell their sweet child that their neighbor Nan who loved them dearly had made it just for him or her.

“She still loves you, you know?” Jon said after their afternoon run. “Stannis may have bought her a puppy but that doesn’t mean she won’t still want to see you and play with you from time to time.”

Ghost cocked his head to the side, the skepticism plain on his furry face. Well, it was plain to Jon at least.

“Of course, I’m sure. But, you know, school will be starting back in a couple of weeks. Shireen might be busy with studying and friends and all those other things kids her age are into anyway.”

Ghost gave him sad puppy eyes.

“Aw, come on, buddy! She’s a sweet kid but who loves you best?”

Ghost started thumping his tail and panting.

“That’s right. Me and Sansa, that’s who!”

He got down on his knees to receive some sloppy doggy kisses and heard female laughter coming from behind him. “I’m surprised Sansa doesn’t get jealous of him.”

He turned to find Margaery, glistening in her running gear with her hair up in a pony tail.

“Hey, Margaery. Fat chance of that. I’m usually the one who winds up jealous of Ghost.”

Ghost barked in disagreement.

“Ohkay…sometimes, he gets jealous of me.”

“I see,” she laughed. “So, are you ever going to let me have some quality time with my friend again?”

Jon felt a twinge of guilt. Sansa had been talking about having her friend over for dinner and he’d selfishly been putting her off, too wrapped up in every second he had alone with his fiancée since they’d returned home again. Not that Sansa had complained but he knew as well as she did that Margaery had been a bit down all summer. She’d worked past the guy who’d never called. She was a strong woman and it’d take more than some loser not calling to really bring her down. But, still…it sucked to see a friend feeling low.

“You have a good run?” he asked.

“Yes. All those endorphins.”

“Good mood stimulators.”

“That’s what I’m telling myself.”
“Yeah, Renly says I’m full of shit when I say that.” They both shared a laugh and Jon decided maybe Sansa wouldn’t mind him springing a surprise on her. “So, Marg…you got any plans tonight?”

“Hey! Could you hold the door?” the man with an armload of boxes called as Sansa was returning from her shopping.

She backed up against the building’s entrance since she had groceries for the impromptu dinner with Marg tonight after Jon had called to say he’d invited her over spur of the moment.

“Do you mind, sweet girl? I’m sorry if I’m putting you out. I could try and cook if…”

Sansa had been trying to help him learn his way about the kitchen a little more but it was still a work in progress. “No, I don’t mind. No big plans here and I’ve been wanting to see her. Tell her to come on over. She loves Indian food so maybe she’d want to hang out and cook with me.”

Sansa watched as the stranger who could only be her new neighbor approached. If his forearms were anything to go by, this guy worked out regularly.

As he reached the door to pass her, he turned towards her grinning and said, “Thanks!”

Sansa’s mouth fell open in surprise. She recognized those dark eyes and that handsome face at once. It was Marg’s sailor. Theon Greyjoy. Theon-Can-I-Have-Your-Number-Greyjoy. Theon-I’m-Never-Calling-You-Greyjoy. What the hell was he doing here?

Her mother had been big on courtesy and Sansa had followed her teachings. However, she was half tempted to stick her foot out and trip this guy.

Instead, she stammered, “You’re welcome.”

He set his box down on the corner of the bannister. “Whew. It sure is a hot day for moving.”

“Yeah…sure is.”

“I’m Theon, by the way. New tenant in number 3. Theon Greyjoy. U.S Navy until recently and now trying to find my way in the private sector.”

He stuck out his hand and she forced herself to shake it. He had a friendly smile and soulful eyes. Who would suspect he was a total prick?

Remember your courtesies, Sansa.

What if I don’t want to?!

“I’m Sansa, Sansa Stark. I’m a teacher and my fiancé and I live in number 4 with our dog Ghost. Welcome to the building.”

You hurt my friend and I might bake you some Ex-Lax brownies as a welcome gift.
But then it occurred to her that Loras had seen this guy that night at Texas Roadhouse and certainly would’ve met with him before he’d leased him Jon’s old apartment. Had Loras forgotten what he looked like? Or maybe his name? That didn’t seem like Loras.

*There’s something fishy going on here.*

Her father was fond of saying that when plagued with doubt, sometimes asking direct questions is the best approach.

“Why didn’t you ever call Margaery?” she demanded just as he hoisted his box up again.

“What?!” He spun on his heel and dropped his box. Sansa grimaced when she heard something that sounded like glass breaking. “How do you…wait! You’re the redhead from the bar and the restaurant! You’re her friend, right?”

“Yes, that’s right. I’m Margaery’s friend. Why didn’t you ever call her?” she asked, folding her arms over her chest to hide how nervous she felt about confronting him like this. But maybe Margaery deserved some sort of an answer and he was going to be living here!

“Oh, my God.” He rolled his eyes and started laughing.

Sansa wondered if Jon would be home with Ghost soon. Maybe Ghost would be hungry. Then, she recalled that he was bringing Margaery with him.

“What is so funny?! And will you please answer my question? Why’d you ask for her number and then never call? Do you make a habit of doing that to ladies? My friend was very hurt and…”

“No, no, no. It’s not funny! I’m sorry for laughing. And, I don’t make a habit of that at all! It’s just about my luck though. See, I was out for a celebration with my Navy buddies that night. I didn’t re-up. They all wanted to take me out to get drunk one last time. I got a job in Annapolis and started in May. I found an apartment but then the damned place got condemned three weeks later.”

“So you’re saying you were too busy? For nearly four months?” That didn’t sound any better to Sansa.

“No! I was just…let me back up. When I got home that night, I was pretty drunk. But I was happy because your friend…she’s gorgeous. I couldn’t believe she’d given me her number. I knew I couldn’t call her until the next day but when I went to pull the number out of my pants pocket, it wasn’t there anymore. I found out later one of the dickheads I was with took it as a joke.”

“Told it?” Sansa thought back to that night and the group of men with Theon. “The loud, obnoxious drunk?”

“Yeah. He’s not a friend but he’d come along to drink with everyone else. He said he was going to give it back to me the next day but then the dumbass washed his clothes. The ink on the napkin ran.”

“You must’ve been very angry.”

“Damn right, I was. I kicked his ass.” He gave her a sheepish grin and added, “Sorry.” She nodded for him to keep talking. “Anyway, I tried every combination I could think of from what was still legible but none of them were Margaery. I didn’t have her last name.”

“Oh,” Sansa said, suddenly feeling sorry for her new neighbor who maybe wasn’t a prick after all.
“Yeah. There’s some guy named Gregor in Fort Meade who threatened to squish my head if I ever call back.”

“Oh, my!”

“I really did mean to call her, Sansa. I… I’ve not forgotten her or stopped thinking about her. After we left that night, I remembered that I’d seen her before… both of you. At that pub? Union Jack’s? I’m sure you don’t remember me.”

_I remember and she certainly did._

“I went there a few times after the phone number disaster but the bartender gave me a surly look when I asked if he knew a girl named Margaery.”

They hadn’t gone to Union Jack’s since that day when Marg and Jon had got drunk enough to sing karaoke. Sansa gave him an appraising look and decided she believed him. She glanced towards the door in time to see Margaery and Jon coming up the walkway with Ghost.

“Theon? Do you have any dinner plans tonight?”

“Uh… I was planning to order pizza. Why?”

“How do you feel about Indian food?”

He grinned broadly. “I love it.”

“Why don’t you come over and have dinner with us? Six o’clock?”

“I’d love to. Thanks… Neighbor.”

“You’re welcome.” _And you may want to thank me again later._

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Later that night, it was just the three residence of Apartment 4 again after Theon and Margaery had left to ‘grab coffee.’

“Do you think they meant anything else by grabbing coffee?” Jon asked as they started cleaning up the kitchen.

“I don’t need to know about it if they did.”

“Agreed. There was some pretty intense eye fucking happening over the Chicken Biryani.”

“Oh? I thought they both seemed a bit shy after the initial burst of talking when we cleared up the mystery. It was quite sweet really.”

“I wasn’t referring to them,” he said in a husky tone. Sansa’s mouth formed a sweet little ‘O’ and he could see a blush appear as he wrapped her arms around her waist. “I’m ready for dessert by the way.”
“Dessert? You already ate all of Nan’s banana nut bread.”

“But, she gave it to me and...it was good.” Plus, Theon had mentioned being allergic to walnuts when they were chatting. Obviously, he wasn’t going to let it just sit there and tempt the poor guy, right?

Sansa rolled her eyes and asked, “What did you want for dessert then, Dr. Snow?”

“You.” He nipped at her neck and inhaled that sweet citrusy fragrance of her shampoo that still got under his skin in the best possible way. “You, my beautiful, amazing girl, who I still can’t believe is going to be my wife someday.”

“Well, Mom always said to land a rich doctor so...I guess you’ll do.”

“Oof, my heart.”

She giggled and he swatted her ass for good measure, earning himself half a growl from a drowsy Ghost.

They hadn’t set a date yet but Jon was already dreaming of spring. Not too hot and not too cold. No snow and no sand. Big or small, he didn’t care so long as he got to introduce her as his wife to everyone they met from that day until his last day.

Where will we go?

Wherever they went, they’d go there together.

“Do you think they stand a chance at being as happy as us?” Sansa asked as they headed towards the bedroom. Kitchen cleanup could wait a bit.

“Margaery and Greyjoy? I suppose it’s possible.”

“Whatever happens, I hope they’ll give it a little time to really get to know each other.”

“Maybe become friends first.”

“Yes,” she sighed. “Friends first.”

“So what do you want to do tonight?”

“Well, it is Friday night.”

“Bath time then?” he asked with a devilish grin.

He knew Sansa was secretly glad Ghost had chosen her apartment. She would’ve missed her Friday night relaxation routine of a hot bath with scented candles and soft music. She did love her enormous garden tub.

And, Jon loved the fact it was big enough for two. He also liked showing Sansa all the ways they could do more than relax in it.

And Ghost liked that they’d occasionally forget to lock the door and he could pretend it was big enough for three. His humans didn’t seem as pleased by that when it happened though.

“Bath time,” she concurred.
“I’ll get the scented candles out.”

“But no glass votives.”

“Got it! Then what?”

“Curl up on the couch next to you and watch X-Files till I fall asleep and you carry me to bed.”

“Sounds good to me. I could download the more recent episodes if you like.”

“Are they any good?”

“Meh,” he shrugged.

“No, thanks then. I think I’d rather start from the beginning and fall in love all over again. Is that alright with you, Jon?”

He kissed her softly and said, “That sounds perfect to me, sweet girl.”

Chapter End Notes

I know some of you probably expected a big epilogue of Jon and Sansa and their half a dozen kids but this really felt right to me for this particular story.

I've been blown away by response to this story and it's made sharing it worthwhile. Thank you so much to all of you who've kudo'd, subscribed and bookmarked this story. And extra huge thank you to you lovelies who have commented!! Some of you have been with me from the very start of this fic and probably know how hard it is for me to let it go :) I hope you've enjoyed reading it half as much as I've enjoyed writing it!

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!