Summary

This story will run parallel to the plot of season 7 (GOTtv), so beware SPOILERS will occur. Around the timeline of Episode 4 or 5 it will split off on it's own course, however, the main plots of the season will carry through. A.K.A Night King and a lot of staring into eyes! Relationship will not be sudden. I do not profess to own any material that is the genius of George R.R. Martin or the works of HBO. This will extend into an ulterior version of how season 8 may playout.

Summ: Having traveled from Essos, the rightful Queen to the Iron Throne arrives on Dragonstone Island ready to make alliances and crush her enemies. Despite House Lannister's resistance to submit to her rule, they are not alone. In the desolate snow of the North, Jon Snow, King of the North, presents a new obstacle to Daenerys, one she hadn't confronted since the passing of Khal Drogo. With the honour and morals, Eddard Stark installed into him as a boy, the King of the North must choose between his Kingdom's independence and his own feelings regarding the silver-haired Dragon Queen. Can a Wolf and Dragon come together? Or will the Lion devour them all and the Dead of winter reap what's left?
Chapter One: A Wolf in the Dragon's Den

From behind a masoned arch window of Dragonstone Castle, Daenerys Targaryen, Mother of Dragon's watched curiously as soft gusts of wind stirred the open waters below into calm waves caressing the damp sandy shores of her House's ancestral Island. Her violet eyes tracing the rhythmic rush of waves out from shore until settling on a rather unimpressive ship rocking calmly in the open sea, it's heavy anchor tethering it to the seabed floor. Stretching out across the ships highest mast rippled a stained, unkempt sail that at one time could have been snow white. Embroidered at it's centre, a sigil of a snarling wolves head flickered against the wind.

Despite having never seen the sigil before in person, Daenerys knew the wolves head all to well as she recalled the tales told to her throughout her years in exile. The banner of House Stark, supporters of the usurper, Robert Baratheon. Leaning slightly out the threshold of the window she stood at, Daenerys observed a row boat filled with the small specks of men being lowered from the ships upper deck to the water below, aboard it was the last presumed living male offspring of Eddard Stark, bastard or not, Jon Snow, the proclaimed King in the North.

"Your Grace," came a smooth voice from behind.

Pulling herself from the window, Daenerys turned to meet eyes with Lord Varys, her Master of Whisperer's and a man whose professed allegiance to her she couldn't tell to be genuine or something that merely suited his current interests. "Yes, Varys?"

"The delegation you summoned from the North has arrived, your Grace," said Varys, the plump man spoke softly with his hands interlocked across his belly and hidden beneath the length of his elegant robe sleeves.

"As I've witnessed," replied Daenerys curtly, she began walking and her entourage of Dothraki followed suit a few paces back. "I take it Lord Tyrion and Missandei have gone to welcome them?"

"Yes, your Grace," answered Varys as he shuffled forward to keep pace with her quick stride.

An awkward silence ensued between the two as they traversed Dragonstone's dimly lit corridors before Daenerys broke the quiet. "This King of the North... Jon Snow, what do you know of him? I've heard Tyrion's take on him, but what of you, Varys, Master of Whisperer's. What have you heard?"

Varys seemed to look thoughtful for a moment. "On a personal level, I've never made the acquaintance of Eddard Stark's bastard son, his father however, I did come to know during a stint of my time in King's Landing."

"Eddard Stark, the man who helped Robert Baratheon overthrow my father?" questioned Daenerys, her tone flat and unimpressed by Varys admission.

"Think what you may of Eddard Stark, your Grace, despite his past aggression's to your father, I found that man to be of the utmost honorable sort." Varys said truthfully.
"The honorable sort that breaks his vow of marriage and spawns a bastard son?" countered Daenerys as she and her company rounded a corner that brought her to the throne room of her ancestor, Aegon.

"No one is perfect," Varys conceded as he stopped short of the few steps that lead to the throne. His eyes observing Daenerys graceful seat upon the said throne. "That being said, Eddard Stark did what he could to try and stop Cersei Lannister and her incestuous offspring from taking the throne. Had he succeeded, there could have still been peace in the Seven Kingdom's."

"There would also have still been an illegitimate ruler on the Iron Throne," Daenerys said, she leaned back in her seat with her hands coming to fold atop her lap. "If Stannis Baratheon had been made King after Robert's passing, would you have still come to Essos to lend me your services, Varys?"

"A King or Queen that serves the people is the King or Queen that I would serve, your Grace," Varys replied.

"True to what you said before," noted Daenerys in reference to the questioning of his loyalties she made during the first small council meeting of her newly formed allies a few weeks earlier. "I will serve the people that serve me, that I promise."

"Tis but music to my ears, your Grace," Varys said with a humble bow. "Now if you will excuse me, I must be attending to the chirps of my birds across Blackwater Bay."

"May they be singing a sweet tune," said Daenerys, she raised a hand and gave it a soft swipe through the air as if to dismiss the bald eunuch who in return swivelled on the heels of his feet and silently exited the throne room.

Left to the bleak, silence of her nearly mute guardsmen of Dothraki, Daenerys closed her eyes as she awaited the presence of the summoned King in the North. She knew little of him other than what Tyrion had told her from his brief experience of travelling with the bastard towards the Wall, still the idea of the North's self-proclaimed King intrigued her. That a man whose brother had made the same claim only to be murdered by those he believed allies would then take up the mantle and pursue the same lost cause of Northern independence was strange to her, how could someone with no true legitimate claim to a family House rise to be so prominent that the people would choose him their King?

Daenerys was pulled from her thoughts as she heard the soft click and heavy swoosh of the throne room's main doors flying open, entering first was Tyrion and Missandei with a few more armed Dothraki, behind them came two men of unfamiliar appearance. Both of which stood shoulders squared and appearing apprehensive of where they were.

As Missandei came to stand a few steps from her Queen, the former slave stood as straight as her posture would allow before formally announcing Daenerys to Dragonstone's newly arrived guests. "You stand in the presence of Daenerys Stormborn of House Targaryen, rightful heir to the Iron Throne, rightful Queen to the Andals and the First Men, protector of the Seven Kingdom's, the Mother of Dragon's, the Khaleesi of the Great Grass Sea, the Unburnt, the Breaker of Chains."

With all the titles Missandei had bestowed upon the Targaryen Queen in her introduction, Davos had been left feeling somewhat underprepared for having to introduce Jon. Clearing his throat, Davos held a gesturing hand out to the man he had come to serve. "This is Jon Snow, your Grace."

Daenerys brow raised at the introduction, this was the man who hoped to be keep the Northern Kingdom free from her reign when it should come? She did not find him fitting of the stature Tyrion described him to be.
Realizing his introduction was far from presenting Jon as some grand figure, Davos earnestly added. "He's King in the North and the former Lord Commander of the Night's Watch."

"Former Lord Commander?" questioned Daenerys at once. "I wasn't aware breaking from the Night's Watch was done so freely."

"If you're asking if the King's an oathbreaker, your Grace, I assure you he's not. The man served his oath through and through." defended Davos.

"Excellent, then I assume he has troubled the sea waters to come here and bend the knee as his ancestors did. Honour the oath they made to my own," said Daenayrs, her violet eyes shifting expectantly onto the frigid frame of Jon Snow.

"I've not come to bend the knee." said Jon, his words were simple and his dark set eyes bore heavily into the Daenerys' own.

"Then you are an oathbreaker." stated Daenerys lamely, it was the first the exchange of words to one another and the room seemed to tense up immediately.

"Call me what you will, your Grace, I'm not here to convince you of my honour. I'm here for my people," replied Jon.

"If you are here for your people as you say you are, then taking the knee would be in theirs and your best interest," interjected Tyrion from the side of the room.

Jon's head snapped to where Tyrion spoke. "How is placing the North back under a southern ruler helping my people? The Northern Lord's put their faith and trust in me to lead 'em, I'm not here to toss that out the window cause a girl whose bored of Essos comes to play Queen of the Seven Kingdom's."

"Play Queen?" repeated an infuriated Daenerys.

"I don't mean to be insulting, your Grace, but I will not betray the North simply cause you ask it of me." Jon said, while his voice had been harsh with Tyrion, it softened while speaking to the silver-haired woman before him.

"I do not play Queen, Jon Snow. Bastard of the North. I am Queen, the rightful Queen. I did not live in exile and suffer what I had to come here and be deterred from what is rightfully mine. The Iron Throne and the Seven Kingdoms. All Seven." Daenerys replied, her own voice firm and unwavering, a telltale sign that showed she would not be settling for less than what she saw as hers.

"You'll have to make due with six," returned Jon. "There's freedom in the North. If you truly are a breaker of chains, you won't shackle my people."

Daenerys eyes narrowed as she leaned forward in her seat. "I am not here to imprison or make false claims that I have no right to make. My father, Aerys Targaryen served as King of the Seven Kingdom's, seven Lord Snow, including the North. His kingship and my crown was stolen by the usurper, Robert Baratheon. I am here to reclaim what should already be mine."

"You call King Robert a usurper, where I come from they call him a liberator," responded Jon, he shifted on his feet and squared off against the Targaryen heir. "My father supported Robert Baratheon during the rebellion, hell, he fought alongside him to overthrow your father, the Mad King who tortured and murdered my Grandfather and Uncle. So if your only claim to the Iron Throne and having the North under your thumb spawns from being the daughter of the Mad King. I do not recognize it."
Daenerys could see the ferocity alight in Jon's eyes, the Northerner she noted spoke bluntly and appeared not the slightest bit willing to back down or reverse his opinion on the subject. Rising from the throne she had been gracefully perched on, she slowly traversed down the short set of stairs to where Jon and Davos had staked themselves.

"What my father did to your family was not the actions of a sane man, not that it excuses him for what he did," said Daenerys, her hands coming to clasp together at her front. "All I can do is offer my peace and promise you, Lord Snow, I am not my father. In the interest of building a stronger, and more peaceful Westeros than that of the one left to us by our father's, all Kingdom's must be brought together. Together and United."

"You speak words such as together and united, but what you really mean is surrender and serve," noted Jon, he gave a shake of his head and took a half step back from the Dragon Queen. "My position and resolve on bendin' the knee won't be moved, your Grace."

Daenerys head tilted back as if she were looking down upon the King in the North. "If you did not come here to lend me your sword. What is it you have come for?"

Taking a breath, Jon knew his next words best make an impact upon the Targaryen heir lest he lose any chance of negotiating her assistance in the coming war against the armies of the Night King, or worse, losing the initiative of being able to mine Dragon Glass from beneath the foundations of her Castle.

"An army of deadmen are marching south, they're taking the deceased into their ranks as they go and by the time they reach the Wall, the Northern Lord's, the Night's Watch, the Wildling's, it won't be enough to stop them." answered Jon.

"An army of deadmen?" echoed Daenerys, the expression that graced the beautiful pale complexion of her face was evident to any person within the hall that she believed Jon Snow to be of some mental ailment. Her focus shifted onto Tyrion whose words of praise are what convinced her to summon the so-called King of the North. "Is this some sort of Northern joke?"

"Not that I'm aware of, and I have heard many," replied Tyrion, his own eyes were locked inquisitively on Jon.

"It's no joke, your Grace," interjected Davos as he stepped forward to Jon's side in support. "I've not known the King in the North for long, but in the short time I have, I've come to find him an honest man with good intentions. He's no reason to lie to you, and if you haven't come to realize that yourself through speaking with him yet, he doesn't mince his words."

Daenerys had turned to Jon, her gaze softening as she watched the slightly abashed Northern King listening idly by as Davos continued to speak to Jon's past accomplishments.

"The Lord's and Lady's of the North picked him as their leader, a bastard of all things, I'm told it's been unheard of. He's been Lord Commander of the Night's Watch because people put their trust in him, they're hopes and faith in him. If that's not enough to convince you that what he says is real, you might as well pack your things and return to Essos because you aren't prepared for what's lurking about in that frozen wasteland beyond the Wal--" Davos who had started to get riled up as he rambled about Jon was brought back to normality with Jon reaching over and gripping his forearm.

"What Ser Davos is trying to say is that if we don't work together to fight a common enemy, we're doomed to die. All of us." said Jon, his words few but his point clear.

"You do understand how all of this sounds, don't you? Deadmen are exactly that. Dead. Men. The
dead don't simply return from where ever it is they go." commented Tyrion, while he didn't exactly doubt Jon, he couldn't really bring himself to fully support the former Night's Watchman either.

"If that's so, how is it then that a dagger plunged deep into his heart wasn't enough to keep him dea--" started Davos but once again he cut himself off by a squeeze to his forearm by Jon, the said squeeze told Davos not to say anymore about Jon's miraculous return from death.

But the words had been said and both Tyrion and Daenerys shared a puzzled look amongst one another. Could a man seriously stabbed in the heart and killed really be standing there before them, the near similar expression showed they were speculative of it at best.

"If this Army of the Dead is real, I would be willing to lend you the support you request, but I am certain you already know what I would need in return to do so." Daenerys said at last, being thoughtful she decided to put to use the diplomatic prowess she had come to have through her conquests in Essos. If these deadmen were bound for the south she'd have to face them at sometime, and if for some reason the Northern King was lying, then at least she still had the North among her Seven Kingdoms. "Bend the knee, Lord Snow."

Jon was gratefully saved from a reply that could worsen the situation between himself and the Targaryen heir by the timely entry to the throne room by Varys who rushed towards Daenerys. A quick whisper of words to her ear and a flash of surprised disappointment showed Jon all he need to know that the Targaryen Queen had been informed of some rather disturbing news.

Pushing the thought that Varys had just put into her head, Daenerys gave a small smile to her Northern guests. "You must excuse me, something has come up that I must tend to. You both must be exhausted from your travels. Food and bedding will be arranged."

With that said Daenerys turned to the closest Dothraki to her and spoke in a foreign language that Jon couldn't comprehend. He could however decipher enough from the look the Dothraki gave him after Daenerys had turned to leave the throne room with her advisors, that going to the room she provided himself and Davos wasn't an option but rather mandatory.

"Are we prisoners?" Jon called out after Daenerys who in turn stopped upon the steps she ascended.

"We'll see soon enough," replied Daenerys from over her shoulder, turning to face forward once again she made way for the room her ancestor, Aegon, had made to plot his own conquest of Westeros.

Once inside the chamber, Daenerys was informed by Varys in greater detail of the fate that befell Ellaria Sand, her daughters, and the Greyjoy siblings. A devastating blow of news that severely damaged Tyrion's strategy to retake the Iron Throne without the use of Daenerys children. While a debate between Daenerys, Varys, Tyrion and Missandei then ensued in regards to what their next plan of action was to be, the Mother of Dragon's and her advisors could not form a consensus which left them an undecided group set upon an undetermined course. Frustrated and at a loss, Daenerys dismissed the members of her Small Council bar her Hand who had formed this failed strategy.

Keeping his head bowed, Tyrion while fully prepared to accept the consequences of his failed strategy braced himself for the anger of the Queen. To his surprise, he found it to never come, instead when he raised his head he found Daenerys tracing the rough terrain molds of Aegon's strategy table of Westeros, her hands stilling above the stubby placement on the map that was King's Landing.

"Tell me, Lord Tyrion. Now that I have lost the fleet the Greyjoy's supplied and the support of Dorne, how is it that this King in the North whose unwillingness to bend the knee assists me in regaining the Iron Throne?" asked Daenerys at last.
Her stout advisor rocked on his feet. "While I shall admit the current loss of Dorne and the Iron Islands is a setback to your goals, it also makes an alliance with the North all the more prudent."

"An alliance with a man whose claim to be King directly opposes my own claim to rule over the Seven," replied Daenerys, her feet carried her down the side of the miniaturized table of Westeros to where the Northern Kingdom lay. Her hand reached tentatively out to pick up an ornate stone carved into the shape of a wolf's head from the molded battlement marked as Winterfell. "You would have me sue for an alliance with rebels? Do you think my chances of retaking King's Landing to be that low?"

"Of course not my Queen, we both know full well you could take the Red Keep in a day with the forces you still have," answered Tyrion truthfully. "It's the manner in which you take it that will define your reign. Would you rather be beloved by the people or feared by the people? The smelting of an entire city by Dragon's fire will cement your legacy in history as one of tyranny and brutality."

"I am advised to withhold the use of my strongest military advantage in the hopes that what, someday the Throne will miraculously be turned over to me?" Daenerys asked, a slight tinge of sarcasm hung on every word. "Each and everyday we stay here at Dragonstone my enemies grow stronger and the supplies for my army grow thinner. If we do not make a move soon I fear everything I have strived and struggled for will be lost."

Reaching up to stroke the stubble of hair that surrounded his mouth, Tyrion sighed. "Perhaps you are right, perhaps the correct course of action would be to go out and burn the armies of my sister to ashes. But remember, everything one does for the first time sets a precedent, all the other Houses could be left thinking that if they too do not bend to your will, then they too will face annihilation. It could very well lead to a resistance the likes of which would make Robert's Rebellion look like a peace protest."

Daenerys fixed Tyrion with a hard look. "If they do not bend to my will, then they are my enemy, and my enemy should be met with the end of a sword, not an open hand."

"If the sword is the only thing you use, then you will never know the protection of a shield. A united Westeros is a strong Westeros, your Grace, especially if what Jon Snow says about this Army of the Dead is true." countered Tyrion.

"So you believe him then, you believe beyond the Wall is an amassed army of deadmen that could destroy the world as we know it?" said Daenerys disbelievingly.

Tyrion drummed his fingers on the edge of the terrain table top. "I didn't believe Dragon's could still exist until I saw it with my own eyes, some say seeing is believing. Yet, I've seen stranger things at this point to not count anything as possible."

Daenerys looked to the wolf's head in her hand, her thumb tracing the jagged edge of it's shaped fur. "I will try and make peace with your northern brute, but I will not tolerate his blatant disregard to my rightful title as Queen. Speak to him, Lord Tyrion, and find me common ground on which to stand during this facade you call negotiations."

Tyrion's scar marred face broke into a smile, pleased to see the Queen was not yet completely willing to rule an alliance with Jon out of the question. "I shall do what I can, your Grace."

Daenerys simply nodded while twiddling the figure of the wolf's head between her fingers, observing Tyrion do a courteous bow before exiting from the room. Daenerys vision drooped down once more to the House Stark symbol held within her grasp. Her mind drifting to the moment earlier when she first laid eyes upon Jon Snow, King in the North, and obstacle to her rule over the Seven Kingdoms.
She couldn't dispute the northener had an air of confidence about him, something of which she found oddly alluring on a personal level. It was a rare occurrence during her campaign for conquest did she find someone to deal with that wasn't two faced in negotiations or wrought with cowardice.

Somehow, when Jon spoke to her his words seemed honest and he wasn't the sort to mix words like Ser Davos had pointed out, Jon said what he meant and she didn't doubt he wouldn't do what he said. A man of his word. A man who spoke his mind fully aware of the consequences that could bestow him and yet paid them no mind as if he had an absolute disregard for his own well being. Her mind recalling the man named Davos having stated Jon had taken a dagger to the heart and she idly wondered if it were true. This Jon Snow was a perplexing individual that Daenerys just wasn't quite sure how to handle, she had bent those who had thought themselves unbendable and now she was faced with a man the likes of which she truly believed she could not bend. A brave and stubborn fool she thought.

Placing the wolf's head piece back down upon it's place on Winterfell, Daenerys strode to the open balcony at the rooms end. The fresh air provided from the outdoors helped clear her thoughts and a passing glide by her prized Drogon in the distance comforted her. While Westeros provided Daenerys with it's own unique troubles, her life had never been without it's challenges and if she knew one thing, it was in the face of challenges that she persevered, she knew that outcome to be no different in regards to Jon Snow.
The Lion Endeavors

Chapter Summary

Tyrion having been instructed to find the common ground between Daenerys and the King in the North sets out dutifully upon Dragonstone's windy isle.

Chapter Notes

So I have a real problem with being able to use filler (yadda yadda, this and that happened sentences) to continue the plot, so while this chapter may be relatively unnecessary and not Jon-Daenerys focused, I couldn't help myself. I have a problem, what can I say lol. Forgive me. I must write filler scenes, it is my weakness. Warning! There will be more filler chapters in the future as I can't bring myself to stop.

Also thank you to all the bookmarks, kudos and comments! They really inspire you to try and get the next chapter out and make you feel good, although constructive criticism is always welcome. I do enjoy the writing :). Without further ado, I present, CHAPTER 2: The Lion Endeavors!

Wolf Fangs & Dragon Fire

Chapter Two: The Lion Endeavors

Leaving the Queen's orders to the next morning, Tyrion Lannister slipped from the heavy layered blankets of his bed with a stifled yawn. His arms stretching above his head before pandering over to a round table in the centre of the room that had come to serve as his sleeping quarters since taking up residence on Dragonstone. Reaching for a pitcher topped with wine, Tyrion poured himself a glass and downed it as if it were water, he stared at the pitcher for a long moment as if holding an inner debate to pour himself another.

"The day is young," murmured Tyrion to himself, he placed his cup down upon the table and set off to get proper for the day.

Dressed in a matching set of dark crimson trousers and tunic, the Queen's Hand set out from his quarters dutifully in search for the North's bastard King in the hopes of finding the common ground Daenerys looked to have with him when the two argumentative leaders resumed negotiations. Tyrion didn't know Jon well besides the few days they had spent travelling from Winterfell to the Wall, Jon to take the black, Tyrion to take a piss and see what was considered by many to be the world's end. What Tyrion did remember from those few days spent together was that Jon was a quiet, cautious individual, traits that didn't seem to have left the former Night's Watchman over the years as was evident during the Northman's initial meeting with Daenerys.

Heading for the rooms the Queen had provided the Northern delegation, Tyrion arrived at it's
doorstep and rattled his knuckles against the solid door. Waiting without a reply, Tyrion gave the door another knock, this time firmer. Still no answer.

"Have you tried taking an axe to it?" questioned Davos from behind.

"Ah, Ser Davos, I didn't hear you," said Tyrion, turning to face Davos, he offered the other man a lopsided smile.

Davos pressed his lips thin. "I wouldn't expect you to have, there was a time in my life getting somewhere undetected paid to put food on my table. Now, being that you're lurking outside King Jon's door, I must inquire what is it I can do for you, Lord Tyrion?"

"Straight to it I see, very well, It's but a simple thing. I was hoping to have a word with, Lord Snow," answered Tyrion. "You're seasoned in these types of negotiations from your time as Stannis' Hand, I assume you can see as I that yesterday was not the most fruitful of meetings."

"Stannis wasn't much of a negotiator. As for King Jon, he's a hard headed man, stubborn in fact. I doubt you'll be able to convince him to change his mind on bendin' the knee if that's what this is in regards to," commented Davos.

An impish smirked stretched itself onto Tyrion's face. "I once talked a whore into letting me put my shaft into what she said only things were to come out of, I think I can persuade Jon to see reason. The whore just wanted a few extra coins, I just need to find out what it is that Jon wants. What is it that he wants, Ser Davos?"

"I merely serve the King, Lord Tyrion, I don't dare speak for him. If you want to talk to him by all means talk to him, last I saw he was making his way out to the Island grounds. Said he could use some air after being held captive last night." informed Davos.

"Captive? The Queen offered room and board, I think that's quite hospitable," Tyrion defended. "If Jon's walking freely about the Island as you say, it doesn't sound like you two fit the description of prisoners to me. And trust me, Ser Davos, having been captive before, I would know."

"Maybe that's true, but as your Queen said, we'll see soon enough." Davos quipped, he purposely chose those words from what Daenerys had said to Jon when he openly questioned her about his freedom the night before.

"Precisely, and until then, why not break bread, drink wine and make alliances," proposed Tyrion as he began to drift away from where Davos stood. "The worlds dreary enough with the thought of an army of deadmen wandering about the North, no need for us to contribute to it."

Davos crossed his arms over his chest, unamused.

Tyrion observed the stern faced Davos for a long moment before hastily making his way through a zigzagging hallway that would lead him outside of Dragonstone's bleak halls and onto the grassy knolls that sat above the barren Islands high cliffs. Feet carrying him across the open landscape, Tyrion could makeout a figure in the distance looking out into the sea, it's shoulders bulked by a heap of furs making him easily recognizable as the elusive man he had been searching for. The dwarf of Casterly Rock soon found himself nearing the King in the North who in turn twisted his head to watch his approach.

"You seem surprised to see me, Lord Snow," greeted Tyrion, his voice boisterous and filled with mirth. "Or over joyed? I can never tell what you're thinking with that stoic face of yours!"

Jon remained silent.
"Now you have me thinking that you're angry? You really must try and find a different expression," joked Tyrion hesitantly, he observed Jon closely, attempting to gauge the Northman's current state of mind.

"I'm being held captive on an Island far from where I should be, I'm not in the mood for jokes," spoke Jon finally, his tone showcasing his regret for having made the decision to have willingly come here.

"Ser Davos had said you felt that way, but captive? Really? It's a bit exaggerated, no?" replied Tyrion. "I don't see any chains binding you beneath all that fur you have on."

"The choice to leave this rock is not my own, chains be damned, my ship is gone and I've yet to see the men who arrived with me," stated Jon gruffly, he knew a situation was still a situation, describing it with different words didn't make it any different from how it really was. "If I'm not being held captive, then you aren't a dwarf."

Tyrion rolled his eyes with a flourish. "Your men are fine, they are just been kept elsewhere is all. It's hard enough deciphering what's going on around here with all the Dothraki walking about, a few northmen added to the mix doesn't help bring clarity."

"You say this and you say that, but it changes nothin' of how things really are," growled Jon. "While we're wasting time here, the dead are getting closer every day and preparations still need to be made."

"You couldn't be more correct, it doesn't change how things really are, but you aren't helping yourself either," retorted Tyrion, his own voice strained with frustration from what he was having to deal with in the form of Cersei's refusal to leave the Iron Throne and now Jon Snow's Army of the Dead. "You could have had the devout support of the Queen on your side by now if you just swallowed your damned pride and bent the knee."

"Is that all you can think about, pledges of fealty? There's something bigger going on than who backs which Queen," snapped Jon, his own mind telling himself that Tyrion and the Targaryen girl's trouble with the Iron Throne were second to the threat of the Night King. "The Night King, the White Walkers, they aren't just legends of old, they're real and they're comin'..."

Tyrion observed Jon ramble off into silence, for once he could decipher the Northman's expression and it was clearly evident, Jon Snow, the embodiment of calm, collectedness was resigned to the idea that he was going no where in convincing Tyrion of the Army of the Dead's existence.

Jon looked to his feet. "It doesn't matter what I say, does it. You don't believe a word I'm tellin' you."

"On the contrary," countered Tyrion. "Despite what you may think, I do believe you."

Jon eyed Tyrion wearily as if it were some sort of elaborate plan to try and lure him into bending the knee.

"Oh don't look at me like that, I'm catching onto those expressions of yours," chastised Tyrion. "I admit I may not have been the most forthcoming yesterday, but it's not everyday a man you've met only once before shows up telling tall tales about Deadmen. That being said, I do know the type of man you are and I know that if you are saying it's true, it's most regrettably to be true."

There was a lifting of weight from Jon's shoulders with knowing Tyrion believed him. "Does she believe it as well?"

"I take it you mean the Queen," said Tyrion slowly. "She retains her own opinion on the matter."
She's not a fool to deny the possibility of the dead's existence, but she's not about to give up her claims and march North to fight the dead on the word of a man who refuses to put his trust in her to rule the Seven Kingdom's.

"So this has all been for nothin'."

Giving it a quick thought, Tyrion gave Jon a reply he figured would help the young King. "I would say it's too soon to tell, then again, I've never been in the position of convincing others of something no one in their right mind would believe."

"That settles it then, I need to leave, my people need me. If there's no help to be gotten here, I need to do what I can to prepare my people for what's coming in the time that's still left," appealed Jon.

Tyrion shook his head in disappointment. "I'm appalled you would give up that easy. It's rumored the Northern Lord's call you the 'White Wolf', I didn't take a wolf to tuck tail and run."

"It was the Northern Lord's who also advised me not to come here, Stark men don't fare well in the South they said. I already knew that, as evident by my brother Robb, my father and the rest of the Stark's who went south and never returned North," said Jon, his voice low as if accepting the fact he may never leave the barren Island known as Dragonstone. "I'm welcome to die here if that's what should become of me, I put myself in this place. I accept my fate. But I'd rather die than be branded a coward who bent the knee and betrayed his people."

"Daenerys is more reasonable than you give her credit for, she didn't get to where she is by slaughtering everything that crossed her path. She is fair, caring and far too smart to have let me be her Hand. Ask about her deeds in Essos and I'm certain you will be mortified to have believed she is some callous villain," related Tyrion. "If you were to be more open and reasonable when you meet with her again, I am quite certain you will find she will be more than accommodating in assisting you with your northern woes."

Jon listened to Tyrion without cutting in. To him, it was the first time the Dragon Queen had been humanized into something other than a conqueror of lands no matter the cost of life. Still, as he had thought from the beginning, it changed nothing. "As long as she wants from me what she wants, terms will not be met and the world will meet it's end sooner than it would have if she had offered to lend her support in the fight against the Army of the Dead."

"Is there something else she could lend the North instead, a few horses perhaps?" questioned Tyrion, it was an open-ended question meant to lure Jon into a point of negotiations that would give Tyrion and Daenerys an upper hand of refusing or accepting him instead of having to stand idly by and accept his refusal to bend the knee.

Jon's demeanour changed instantly as he looked to Tyrion with renewed interest. "What do you mean?"

"Don't be dim witted, I've been told you're smarter than that. Negotiations have to start off as a building block, the Queen is willing to lay down the first stone," commented Tyrion, Daenerys had asked him to find the common ground between herself and Jon. He felt this could be it. "I'm asking if there's something we can do to help you?"

"Dragonglass," Jon said without hesitation.

"Dragonglass?" Repeated Tyrion, the words dribbled off his tongue slowly as if he was unsure he was saying it correctly.
"It's rare, we came upon a bundle of it stashed away by the First Men beyond the Wall. A mate of mine in the Watch used a shard of it to kill a White Walker," explained Jon, he chose his words carefully as to not come off as a madman ranting aloud. "I know it sounds like more folk tales, but it's true. Where steel failed to kill the White's, Dragonglass proved true."

"Very well, and how is it the Queen is to provide this to you? Shall we have the Dothraki and Unsullied search out every nook and cranny throughout Westeros in the hopes of finding more of these stashes as you say." drawled Tyrion.

Shaking his head, Jon tapped his foot on the ground and point to the earth beneath him. "Yer' standin' on it."

Tyrion's head dropped to search the ground under him. "I see grass, Jon Snow. Not glass."

"You've got to mine it," divulged Jon, his voice laced with a slight annoyance. "It's why I came here, it's what I need. It's what my people need."

Tyrion seemed unsure. "What makes you so certain that this Dragonglass is even here?"

"The man I told you about, the one that killed the White Walker, he's at the Citadel becomin' a Maester. He found somethin' there in some old book, said it claimed the near foundation of this island is over flowin' with it." Jon said surely.

"And you trust this man, the one who told you about this?" questioned Tyrion.

Cloak beginning to billow from a rising gust of wind, Jon nodded. "Aye, I'd put my life on his word."

"I see. Well I shall speak to the Queen about it, but I can't make any promises," Tyrion said, he held a half cocked smile for a second till his face fell serious. "I will however need one from you."

Jon's brows came together in the middle as his guard went up. "What is it then?"

"I would like you to seriously consider bending the knee. If she does this for you as a gesture of good will, you should already know nothing in this world is free, Lord Snow. It's probably why people have come to believe my family's motto is actually to pay it's debts." replied Tyrion.

"I'll give it a hard thought," promised Jon, his tense posture easing. He would have almost agreed to anything at that point if it secured the North the Dragonglass required to defend itself.

"Excellent, well then, I'll leave you to your assumed captivity and fowl mood set, I can't compete with you there. My face was made for the suckling of fine women's breasts, not sulking like a northener." exclaimed Tyrion jovially, he clapped his small hands together and set off back towards the high reaching battlements of Dragonstone Castle.

Watching Tyrion vanish down a grassy knoll, Jon let his thoughts begin to drift. He had to admit that while the Lannister's hadn't the best track record when it came to dealing with House Stark, Jon did find Tyrion to be drastically different from the rest of his family. Considering Tyrion as more honest and trustworthy, the other Lannister's from Jon's opinion were power hungry, greedy, and opportunistic blood thirsty. Furthermore they played an active roll in the cowardly murder of his brother, Robb. To Jon, having Tyrion has the Queen's Hand spoke highly of the company the Mother of Dragon's chose to keep. Jon also recalled the lengthy list of titles that had followed the Targaryen girls name when they first met, sure he had found them grandiose and over the top, but at the same time, they also showed she hadn't woken up one morning and decided to be Queen of the Seven Kingdom's. She had at least by his opinion proven herself in Essos, feats of which made her
deserving of laying a claim to be monarch.

Pulled from the depths of his mind by a large shadow suddenly cast over him from the sky, Jon ducked as one of the Queen's large Dragon's swept closely overhead, the audible shriek that it emitted whilst passing by sucked the very breath from Jon's lungs as he watched awe struck in fascination as the scaly beast flapped and glided it's way over a vast distance in a short period of time. It was the very sight of the Dragon that also made Jon weary of crossing Daenerys. Was she capable of accepting the North's independence or would she rather see it smoldering and snuffed of life. It wasn't a question he hoped to have proposed to her for consideration but he could see how his stand on refusing to bend the knee the night prior may have put that idea in her head. Rising back to an upright stance from where he crouched, Jon admired the sky sweeping Dragon for a little longer before making his return trek back to the imposing fortress constructed by the Targaryen's of old. While his mind had become full of thought's to digest, Jon carried himself ambly back into the castle. One thing had become crystal clear to him, he knew he best tread carefully in the den of Dragon's lest he be scorned by Targaryen Dragon fire and the North pay for his mistakes.
The Wolf, The Dragon, and Seaworth

Chapter Summary

Trapped upon the Isle he believes himself prisoner of, Jon comes upon an unexpected presence. A meeting of the Wolf and Dragon.

Chapter Notes

In the hopes of getting to a more Jon-Daenerys focused storyline, this chapter is short and constructed in a way to show their different mindset, as I imagine them I suppose. This was to be included in a much larger chapter 3 that involved the caves of Dragonglass, but in the effort to differentiate a space of time I decided to break the chapter down and make this chit chat of chatter it's own chapter. If that isn't a tongue twister, I owe someone some Gold Dragons. Also, as I hope to rework what will now be chapter 4, I will probably not have a new post till next week at some point.

As before, thank you all to the kind comments and kudos, and to those who have bookmarked thus far, thank you and I hope I don’t disappoint. Without further ado, Chapter 3: The Wolf, The Dragon, and Seaworth!

Wolf Fangs & Dragon Fire

Chapter Three: The Wolf, The Dragon and Seaworth

With several day’s having passed since Jon last spoke to Tyrion regarding the extracting of Dragonglass from the island's core, Jon had become a shell of himself. He felt caged, powerless, and above all else, worried for the people of the North who still hadn't a hope to survive the Long Night. The only thing he had to occupy his abundance of time was long walks along Dragonstone Islands expansive cliffs or banter between himself and Davos, the latter of which had become tiresome as he was never one for long chats about things of unimportance. Stalking out from the Castle and into the brash winds that flowed off the sea and cascaded over the whole Island, Jon found his feet carrying him off aimlessly towards the winding pathway that stretched from the beachhead he had arrived at, to the castle the Dragon Queen plotted her conquest of Westeros.

Nearing the top of the pathway, Jon found the Dragon Queen herself looking out over the stone banister that lined the steep, winding path. An opportunity such as this wasn't something he could simply overlook with having made no apparent progress in securing the valuable Dragon Glass. Starting down the path, Jon kept his head held high, he wouldn't let the Targaryen heir see the weakness that had crept into him with having been made to feel unable to control his own destiny, to be able to leave when desired.

"Your Grace," greeted Jon as he dropped from the last few steps to the landing Daenerys stood watching over the endless sea ahead.
"Lord Snow," Daenerys returned, she twisted to meet him. "My Master of Whispers informed me you've been walking the Island daily."

"Not much else to do other than sit in a room and stare at a wall," replied Jon, he took a few steps to close the open space between them to stand at her side. "May I speak freely?"

Daenerys raised one of her perfectly sculpted brows. "If I said no, would that stop you?"

"No, no it wouldn't."

"I figured as much," murmured Daenerys, again she was stricken by his honesty. "Well, go on, Lord Snow. Speak freely."

"I've been here three days, your Grace, three days plus the days spent on the high sea making the journey here. In that time I've accomplished nothin'," said Jon, he may have only been an inch or two taller than Daenerys but his tone of voice and commanding frame made him appear towering over her. "I'm not blamin' you, I came here expectin' nothin' cause I came here offerin' nothin'. That said, I need to return North, my people need me. I have to organize and prepare what I can in the little time we have left."

"You're asking to leave?" asked Daenerys.

"There's no reason to stay," answered Jon.

"You aren't accustomed to diplomacy, are you, Lord Snow," Daenerys noted. "Usually one flatters another before making a request."

"Have I given you the impression that I came here to flatter you?" shot Jon, he fixed her with a disbelieving look. "The dead don't stop their march, your Grace, they don't tire, they don't sleep, they don't eat. While we're down here talking about things that don't matter, they grow closer to the Wall, a Wall that doesn't have the supplies, weapons or the manpower to fend them off. If I've misled you to my reason being here, maybe I've not been blunt enough."

"You've been plenty blunt," snapped Daenerys, she stopped. Took a breath and willed herself to calm her irritation. With the loss of the Greyjoy siblings and Ellaria Sand, it was by Tyrion's opinion that the North was the only viable Kingdom left for her to make a potential ally of on mainland Westeros. "I spoke to Lord Tyrion, he informed me of the Dragonglass you seek."

Jon who had been gearing up for a verbal altercation with the silver-haired Targaryen was taken by surprise. "You did?"

"I did," Daenerys confirmed, now that she saw the Northman put off his game she looked away out to sea. "Does that warrant a reason to stay?"

Jon was at a loss for words, he couldn't tell where it was she was leading him with the talk about Dragonglass, but she had him, hook, line and sinker. "It does."

Daenerys felt a twinge in her stomach, an unfamiliar feeling of being somewhat pleased with hearing the Northern bastard would be staying longer at Dragonstone, at least staying of his own free choice.

"The Dragonglass, your Grace?" asked Jon earnestly.

"In the effort of building trust between our two House's, I will allow you to mine the Island for Dragonglass, it's yours. As much as you and your ship can carry," said Daenerys, she tore herself from the sea and met his gaze, a mistake on her part as she found herself nearly drowning in the
deep, brown, passionate pools of his eyes.

"You want nothin' in return?" asked Jon slowly, he wavered on his feet as she continued to peer intently at him.

Dragging her focus from him, Daenerys chose to stare back out to the open sea. "It's an offer of good will. I will ensure your ship is returned back to you as well as tools, and the men you came with made available to assist you."

Flabbergast at the least, Jon gave a small nod. "Thank you."

"You're wasting time, Lord Snow." Daenerys commented, she didn't look but she could hear Jon begin to walk away and she couldn't resist putting in one more word. "You weren't what I expected."

There was a shuffled stop as Jon halted on the steps back up to the castle. "Your Grace?"

Daenerys turned to him, her eyes raking him over from head to toe. "When the Red Priestess advised me to summon you here and heed what you witnessed in the North, it sounded as though you weren't an ordinary man, but still, I was expecting someone more..."

"Noble? Pompous?" offered Jon, he then caught on to her reference to the Red Woman. "The Red Woman was here?"

"Red Woman? She preaches the teachings of the Lord of Light, in Essos, the title of Priestess would be bestowed upon her. By the way she spoke, she seemed to have made your acquaintance and you left quite an impression on her," answered Daenerys. "And yes, I suppose someone more pompous was what I expected."

Jon disregarded her prior expectations of him, his mindset narrowed in on what Melisandre may have revealed to Daenerys during her visit to Dragonstone, specifically his revival from death's abyss. "What did she say, the Red Woman?"

There was a sense of worried curiosity in Jon's face that made Daenerys curious herself. "She gave a prophecy, one that all of Westeros knows already. She implied you may play a part in it, what was your relationship with the Red Priestess?"

Relief rushed through Jon's lungs like a breath of fresh air. He told himself he wasn't a liar, but a half-truth did no harm. "We weren't close, it was more of a passing acquaintance. The Red Woman and I did not part ways on good terms, your Grace."

"And what were those terms?"

Jon was hesitant to reply. "... If she returned North, I'd have her hanged."

Silence. It followed his words and lasted several moments while Daenerys digested them, they sounded ruthless but for a man of his reputation and honor, they wouldn't be said without due cause. "What did she do to earn your vengeance?"

"It's not my place to say, I gave those terms in the North. They don't apply here." voiced Jon, he wasn't out to make himself appear a murderer of foreign religions, but it was a sensitive topic that involved the only advisor he had with him at the current moment.

"But you did say them, Lord Snow, and if we are to build an alliance in the future. I for one would like to know the man who may come to serve in my fold," replied Daenerys, the Northman had
piqued her intrigue and she wasn't willing to let the topic drop.

Jon looked to Daenerys, the expression that met him was demanding if not intolerant of him not giving a reply.

"She put Stannis Baratheon's only child to the fire, burned the girl in the name of the Lord of Light. Drove Stannis' wife to hang herself. The Red Woman brought pain and suffering along with her Essosi religion."

Daenerys turned her focus back to the open waters, the tale of the Red Priestess plaguing her thoughts with mental images of horror. When she regained her composure, she let a single word escape her. "Trust."

"Trust?" repeated Jon, she caught him off guard and in confusion.

"Trust. By giving you this Dragonglass I have put my trust in you and what you say about the Night King and Army of the Dead to be true, that you will stand in the defense of all Kingdom's. One day, when the time comes and I sit on the Iron Throne, I hope you and the North will place that same trust in me." said Daenerys.

A thoughtful expression held Jon, he couldn't deny the gesture of Dragonglass on her part was a noble, almost selfless move to make and as he promised Tyrion earlier, he would give bending the knee a hard thought. "When that day comes, if you truly are as you are now, kind and just. You may just have it... One day."

Watching her for a moment longer, Jon carried on his way back to Dragonstone, his stride once again filled with purpose and hope, he may still be stuck on the Island and in the company of those who wanted him to surrender the North, but at least now he had a hope for the North, the Dragonglass would finally give them a fighting chance against the forces of the Night King. As Jon climbed the last few steps of the pathway he was taken aback by the sight of a stoic, Davos Seaworth braving the fierce winds that were ravaging the upper Cliffside of Dragonstone Island.

"Ser Davos?" questioned Jon.

"Ah, good afternoon, your Grace, I'm afraid, I've been caught reminiscing. This Island and I share quite a bit of history," mumbled Davos, his hand ran absentmindedly over the coarse stone banister that lined the pathway.

Jon nodded in understanding. "Must be strange returning without Stannis as Lord of this rock."

"Aye, it was a dreary place then, still is mind you, though Princess Shireen managed to breath a bit of life in the damn place when Stannis was running it. The worlds worse off without her," noted Davos solemnly, he bounced his brows up and gave a somber pat to the stone banister. "Well now, I can stand here all day and drive you mad with tales of this god forsaken Island, but I doubt that will do you any good."

"I take it you saw me and Daenerys talking?" questioned Jon.

"Might have caught a glimpse, wasn't intending to snoop. Just came upon you two is all." answered Davos. "Though you don't seem in a foul mood so I take it the talk went well?"

"She's allowed me to mine the Dragonglass, enough to fill the hold of our ship," said Jon, he reached up and pulled a mound of fur hung around his shoulders closer to his face to shield him from the cold winds. "She also said she would return our ship to us along with my men and any tools to get it done as quick as possible."
"I'd say your talk went very well then, congratulations. You may have just saved the North, your Grace." said Davos.

"Dragonglass gives us a leg to stand on, it doesn't give us a victory," replied Jon, his expression morphed from one of leisurely discussion to that of a more serious look. "I need you to assemble my men and have them start rummaging the Island, the Dragonglass is here but we still need to find it."

"I'll have them mustered and surveying the Island at once," vowed Davos, he made to leave but he stopped as Jon clasped a hand onto his shoulder. "Your Grace?"

"You've been loyal to me, I never asked for it, but you gave it," Jon started, he looked as if he were struggling to find the words he wished to speak. "I took daggers by men I'd known for years, killed by men I'd know for years. I knew you as a stranger at best, yet you fought to bring me back from the clutches of death. I never thanked you for it either."

"No, thanks was ever needed."

"I need a man like you at my side, someone with experience in these kind of matters, someone loyal. Now I don't know if there's supposed to be words said or some ceremony given, but Davos Seaworth of King's Landing. I name you Hand of the King." said Jon, he gave Davos' shoulder a firm pat before releasing his hold over the man.

"Hand? Me, your Grace?" Davos asked, his brows furrowed together at having been bestowed the esteemed position.

"It's not as though loyal men come to me by the bundle. You're a good man, Ser Davos. I know you'll do right by me in my stead if ever required. Now get a move on, we're wastin' time," said Jon, he let out a gruff chuckle as he made to go off in search of the Island's Dragon Glass. "Oh, and Ser Davos?"

"Yes, your Grace?" called Davos after him.

"You ever bring me back from the dead again, I'll put you to rest myself." promised Jon once again, and Davos didn't doubt for a second that the Northern King wouldn't keep the promise he administered to him once before at Castle Black.
The Parting of the Wolf

Chapter Summary

A meeting of Daenerys and Jon. A showing of Dragonstone's caves.

Chapter Notes

There have been so many kind words left by those who comment, thank you very much! Also all the kudos and bookmarks, gee whiz. Thanks everyone, it's all greatly appreciated. I like the think of this chapter as the blossoming chapter? Hope you enjoy it, and thanks for giving it a read. Without further ado, I present, CHAPTER FOUR: The Parting of the Wolf

Wolf Fangs & Dragon Fire

Chapter Four: The Parting of the Wolf

Daenerys lay caught in a state of lucid dreaming, it was one she had had many a nights before and recognized it immediatly. Laying naked on her side with a thin sheet draped around her bloated pregnant stomach, a hard body curved in unison against her back. As if on que she felt a hand slide from behind to rest upon the mount of her belly. Her own hand instinctively moved in the all to familiar motion of reaching down to lay it over her partners. Rhaego and Drogo she thought to herself calmly, but suddenly she was jolted by the realization that the hand she held was much smaller and softer than the rough, calloused hand of her former husband, Khal Drogo.

It wasn't the only change either, by looking around the room she found herself in an entirely different setting as well. Gone was the uncomfortable bed stuffed with thatched hay, and in it's place was a plush bed of feathers, her surroundings mimicked the beds in the sense that the Dothraki hut of sewn animal skins was replaced by the strong, stone blocks of what looked to be a room within a Castle of Westeros, the walls of which were lined with dimly lit torches, a small, round table stood a few candles with heaps of melted and redried wax dripped along their sides. While confused, Daenerys found she wasn't to troubled by the changes to her dream, she found it to be much more inviting to her as if this arrangement was made by her choosing, not forced upon her by her brother, Viserys. Her mind momentarily froze as the gruff stubble from the mans chin behind her nuzzled at the nape of her neck, his warm breath tickling her porcelain skin into a series of excited shivers that ran down her body.

"Dany," muttered a husky voice from behind. It wasn't Drogo, that much she was certain of. It sounded familiar but she couldn't place a face to the voice.

There was then a gentle kiss along her neck, then another as the man slowly trailed his way up to her ear, his mouth closed in over her ears fleshy bottom, giving it a teasingly suggestive tug between his teeth before letting go. Feeling a rising heat of lust within her, Daenerys pressed her bare backside
against the man's enlarging member in an attempt to tease him into continuing. Unable to resist seeing
the man who had invaded her dreams, Daenerys rotated to her back only to lay eyes upon the
handsome face of Jon Snow. With half closed eyes that passed him off as tender and caring,
Daenerys blinked as though one of the times she opened her eyes Drogo would be back. It wasn't
fathomable to Daenerys how the King of the North had become King in her bed.

"Your Grace," he whispered.

Unable to tear her eyes from him, she watched as his own eyes open wide and his voice grew louder.

"Your Grace," he repeated.

Daenerys felt an unseen hand grasp her shoulder and begin to shake her, it was then as she jolted
awake that she found herself in the company of Missandei.

"Your Grace," began Missandei, her voice worriedly quiet. "We've received word from the
Unsullied. You requested that you be informed immediately."

Pushing the strange dream from her mind for the moment, Daenerys rolled over and shuffled up so
she rested against the pillows of her bed. "From Greyworm?"

"Yes, your Grace, the raven just arrived. The Unsullied have taken Casterly Rock," announced
Missandei, yet her worried voice let Daenerys know their was more news to share.

"What is it, Missandei?" asked Daenerys concerned.

"Greyworm also reported that most of the Lannister forces weren't present during the attack, and..." 
Missandei said, her sentence drowning out as she hated to be the bearer of bad news for the Queen.

"And, what?" pressed Daenerys, her closest advisors reluctance to inform her of the events that
occurred in western Westeros made her tense and as though she needed to brace herself for the news
to come.

"While the Unsullied took the Lannister homestead, our fleet sat anchored, defenseless. Euron
Greyjoy's fleet appeared, they sunk every ship that ferried the Unsullied." divulged Missandei, she
turned her head unwilling to let Daenerys see her worry for Greyworm.

"Sunk?" repeated Daenerys, her mind slowly coming to grips with the news. "All of them, the
entirety of my naval fleet has been destroyed?"

"Bar the few we still have docked here on the Island," confirmed Missandei.

"And Greyworm?" questioned Daenerys, her most accomplished commander and his lethal forces
taking occupancy of her immediate concern.

"He and the Unsullied have mounted the Castle defenses, they plan to hold the Lannister home until
you've given orders to do otherwise."

Bringing a hand to her face, Daenerys could feel the onset of a headache coming on. As far as she
was concerned this was just another blow to her endeavor to retake the Iron Throne. A crushing
blow at that. Yanking off her blankets, she slipped onto the cold cobblestone floor of her room in the
hopes of getting some air to clear her head.

"My Queen?" asked Missandei.
Daenerys cautiously looked to the beautiful girl who served her every beck and call. "There can't be more, can there?"

"It's your Northern guest, your Grace, he has requested your presence at the beaches," answered Missandei.

Daenerys looked puzzled. "What time is it?"

"The sun has risen, my Queen."

Daenerys looked flustered at having slept to a time she would have normally been awake at. She put blame onto the strange change of her dream. "Lord Snow is at the beaches now?"

Missandei gave a slight tilt of her head. "Varys had said he's been there all night."

"All night, does he not rest?" asked Daenerys, she strode to a series of beautifully decorated garments that hanged over the sides of the rooms long, rectangular table.

"If the dead do not rest as he says, how can he?" suggested Missandei as she tried to relate to the Northern man's mindset.

Daenerys eyes squinted at Missandei, she found her words wise yet at the same time unhelpful to her own understanding of Jon on a personal level. She needed to make an ally of him, not learn his opinion on the fabled White Walkers.

"Inform Lord Snow I shall see him shortly," ordered Daenerys, she picked up a dark grey garment that highlighted the silver of her hair and held it to her chest.

"As you wish, my Queen." replied Missandei, she hid a small smile as she watched Daenerys closely study her chosen attire.

Running her hand over the flawless seamstress work, Daenerys didn't even take notice of Missandei's leave. While fashion had never occupied her waking thoughts for long or at all, today she felt an unreasonable need to look her best, to present herself at her best. The thought of a naked Jon Snow flittered through her mind and Daenerys had to force the image out, it wasn't the type of mindset she needed when entering into negotiations with the Northern King, if that was in fact the reason he sought to see her once again.

Blowing heated breath through gritted teeth, Jon alongside a handful of the guardsmen who arrived with him on Dragonstone struggled as they pushed a frail, two wheel cart loaded to the brim with obsidian shards of Dragonglass from a narrow crack at the foot of Dragonstone's soaring cliffs. As the weighted down wheels of the cart sank into the soft sand as they pushed, Jon and the guardsmen simultaneously collapsed around it as they managed to bring it within a few feet of the small boat. Groaning and heaving labored breaths, the men of House Stark looked exhausted, and disheveled, most of which had ditched their cumbersome leather gambesons long ago in favour of their underlying tunics.

With several beads of sweat trickling down his forehead, Jon ran the sleeve of shirt across his forehead before using the cart to pull himself back up to his feet.

"Your Grace, how much more can we possibly mine?" mumbled one of the guardsmen, one of his hands rubbing at the back of his neck as he sat upon the beaches damp sand.

"Until the ship can't carry anymore, now get on your feet and let's get this loaded." ordered Jon
curtly, to lead the way by example he began picking up shards and placing them into the row boat.

Grumbling to himself, the Stark Guardsman got to his feet with the others and started transferring the black pieces of glass. One of the men stilled as he saw the appearance of a silver-haired figure upon the winding pathway that reached up to Dragonstone Castle.

"Your Grace," huffed the guardsmen, his eyes glued to the beautiful woman flanked by a group of Dothraki.

Jon looked to his guardsmen, then followed his line of sight to Daenerys, his mouth dried at the sight of her. Muttering off instructions for his men to carry on with the loading of the row boat, Jon walked off to greet Daenerys. The dark grey of her overcoat blending her into the shadowy overcast that loomed gloomily in the skies above, her face the only contrast of beauty to the ominous day.

"Good day, your Grace," said Jon humbly, he knew their first meeting to be tumultuous but since then he had slowly grown to respect her fierce determination to hold steadfast to her ideals and goals.

"I see you've found what you came here for, Lord Snow." Daenerys returned, her eyes looking expectantly at him.

Shaking his head, Jon came to the starting post of the stretching pathways stone banister and laid a hand on top in a failed attempt to rest his overworked, aching body. "We have, your Grace, more than my ship can carry but enough to give my people a fighting chance."

"I'm pleased to hear it. And Ser Davos Seaworth, is he not assisting you in this endeavor of yours?" asked Daenerys, taking notice of the Northern King's advisor being visibly absent from the beach.

"I've sent him aboard my ship to handle the stowing of Dragonglass. Given his past profession, he's the best man to ensure we get as much goods stashed away as we can," answered Jon, his eyes glanced over the faces of her accompanying Dothraki. "I see you haven't brought, Lord Tyrion or your translator with you."

"Missandei." Daenerys informed.

"Pardon?"

"My translator as you call her. Her name is Missandei, and she serves more as an advisor than translator these days. She's the one who told me you and your men have been working non-stop through the night. Is this true?"

Jon turned to watch as his men tiredly piled the mound of Dragonglass from the cart onto the boat. "We've been tryin' to make up for lost time. We shouldn't need to mine much else to have the ships hold full up."

"I see, so you've requested my presence to inform me of your intention to leave. Is that it?" questioned Daenerys, her tone came off snappish but after hearing of the loss of her fleet at Casterly Rock she had been placed in a state of irritated misery.

"In part, your Grace. I've somethin' to show you," said Jon, he could hear the irritation in her voice but he chose to overlook it in the effort of showing her what he and his men had found inside the depths of Dragonstone Island.

Surprise graced Daenerys face. "Show me what?"

"It's better left for you to see yourself," said Jon, he pushed off the stone banister and beckoned for
her to follow him.

Fairly certain the man wouldn't do her any harm, Daenerys ordered her Dothraki cohort to wait for her to return as she walked down the few steps to where Jon stood. Leading the way to the narrow entryway in the cliff, Jon retrieved a lit torch from one of his men before disappearing into the darkness with Daenerys. There was a tense silence between the two as they traversed the thin passageway of the cave. She watched as the torch held out in front of Jon became an ambient light source to the blissful darkness of the cave. Daenerys was abruptly taken in awe as she found herself lead into an opening where the light of Jon's torch reflected off the cavern's black glassy walls, shimmering and sparkling in the flicker of flame.

"It's beautiful," she murmured aloud.

Jon nodded, the drooping slabs of sharp Dragonglass shined like a chandelier from the cave's high ceiling. "It's Dragonglass."

"It's prettier than any gem I've ever seen," commented Daenerys, her hand reaching out to feel the smooth obsidian beneath her fingertips.

"The rest of Westeros may not realize it yet, but with what it can do to White Walkers, I suspect it's more valuable than gold dragon's or precious stones." Jon said, he took a step closer to Daenerys so his torch could illuminate more for her to see.

Daenerys tensed as Jon drew closer, his chest brushed against her shoulder and the contact between them ignited a flash of her dream fluttering through her mind once again, sending a flutter of tingles through her stomach.

"Shall we continue on, your Grace?" asked Jon, his adams apple bobbing as a sweet aroma wafted from her hair.

"Continue? Is there more to see?" replied Daenerys, dragging herself from her heated dream.

"As far as I can tell the Dragonglass is endless, but there's more I must show you," said Jon, he pulled away from Daenerys and held out his torch so it shined a glow of light on a crooked passageway on the other end of the cavern. "It's not much further in."

If Tyrion had been with her, he most certainly would have advised Daenerys to not go any farther with Jon or any person who hadn't sworn allegiance to her, but she found herself at ease in his company, as though he would protect her rather than bring her harm. Glancing at Jon for a moment, Daenerys gave the Northman a small smile. "After you, Lord Snow."

Jon felt his breath catch as he saw her smile, it wasn't something she had shown him before but one he noted complimented her elegant wardrobe and perfectly sculpted face in the glow of his torch.

"Lord Snow?" asked Daenerys slowly, her eyes were upon him, watching as he stared at her almost longingly. Whether he was doing it intentionally or not she didn't know, but it was enough to cause her face to warm.

Blinking dumbly for a few seconds, Jon tore himself from Daenerys. "My apologies, your Grace. Follow me."

Daenerys smiled to herself as she followed Jon to the other passageway, just as narrow as the last, yet the jagged stone ceiling grew shorter and shorter with every step they took till they were crouching by the time they came out the other end to another cavern. While there was no Dragonglass clinging to the coarse cavern walls to help enhance the light, Jon carefully lead Daenerys to a
nearby wall, upon it's uneven surface were the remnants of faint drawings that depicted a variety of old, ancient events.

"Are those the First Men?" asked Daenerys, her fingers tracing the drawn image of a group of men walking over what looked to be a bridge of some sort.

"We believe so," answered Jon, he shifted the torch in his hand to light up another part of the rock wall. Daenerys view turned to take in another picture showcasing small children lathered in what she assumed was leaves and twigs.

Jon smiled at the image, it was always presumed the tales of old were just that, tales. But looking to the picture it gave hope they were real. "They're the children of the forest."

"No, they're a myth," voiced Daenerys disbelievingly. "This can't mean they're real."

"I thought so too," Jon agreed, his voice lowered and the smile he once had faded as he treaded a few feet to his right, bringing light to a wall on the far side of the cavern. "Until I saw this."

Being careful as to where she stepped, Daenerys approached Jon with a look of concern and confusion. Illuminated by his torch was a drawing of figures in all white, their faces similarly human, bar their chilling, sky blue eyes and weapons of ice.

"White Walkers." informed Jon gravely.

Daenerys bowed her head, she was still torn on accepting the idea that these apocalyptic creatures were real, yet the image of them before her sent goosebumps over her skin. She was too focused on her own desire to truly fear the threat these necromancing fiends possessed, and there standing at her side was the one man who had the courage to put aside his own desires to protect his people and coincidently the Kingdom's she wished to reign over. Sparing a glance to Jon, Daenerys took in the haunted expression on his face as he stared at the White Walker's picture on the wall.

"You may return, North." she announced suddenly.

Jon's head snapped to the side. "Your Grace?"

"Make whatever preparations you can, Jon Snow. Defend your people," replied Daenerys.

A held breath of relief expelled from Jon's lungs knowing he didn't need to flee Dragonstone under the pursuit of Dragon's. "Thank you, your Grace."

"I hope this isn't a decision I will come to regret, but if there's been one thing I can take away from these negotiations with you, it's you're an honorable man. I regret we didn't come to an agreement, you could have played a large role on my small council." said Daenerys.

Jon took it as a compliment, but lingering at the front of his thoughts was where his unwillingness to bend the knee placed him and the North in her opinion. "Where is we stand now, your Grace? If I'm defendin' the Wall, need I keep checkin' over my shoulders for your Army?"

"For now, as you defend the south from the dead you shall have no quarrel with me." answered Daenerys, she paused for a moment, then continued with the part she knew he would dread to hear. "When the Night King has been deposed. Aegon established my House's rule over the North when he conquered it. I will do the same."

Sucking in a breath, Jon grudgingly nodded his head in understanding. "I suppose we'll meet again on the field of battle someday."
"I suppose we will," replied Daenerys softly, the words almost pained her to say. 

Taking a step back, Jon motioned back to the passageway they had come in from. "We should get back. My men await my orders."

Retracing their steps back through the Dragonglass laden caves, both Jon and Daenerys shielded their eyes from the blinding morning sun as they adjusted back to the fresh open air. There was subtle breeze blowing that tossed and whipped the hems of their attire, and as their eyes did adjust, Jon didn't like what it was he saw. Finding his ship was no longer alone in the Islands watery inlet, laying anchor a short distance away was another large vessel bearing House Greyjoy's fearsome Kraken upon it's tattered sail. But more displeasingly Jon found a small boat coming ashore bearing the all to familiar face of Theon Greyjoy. 

Feeling Jon's body go rigid next to her, Daenerys cast him a speculative glance. "Is something the matter, Lord Snow?"

"Theon," grumbled Jon, his open hand clenched into a fist as he stormed out towards the beached row-boat.

With an unsettling sense of trouble to come, Daenerys looked to the winding pathway where Dothraki guardsmen stood patiently awaiting her return. Giving them a wave, the Dothraki launched from where they stood, hurrying to her side.

Leaving a trail of footsteps in the damp sand, Jon stalked to the unsuspecting Theon who was assisting his own men tie the boat down to the shore. Grabbing the Prince of the Iron Islands by the back of his collar, Jon twirled him about before reaching back and throwing a punch that socked Theon square on the jaw and stumbling back on to his ass.

Theon's armed entourage of Ironborn reached for the handles of their swords but stilled at the sight of Daenerys and the menacing Dothraki coming towards them.

"Jon!" exclaimed Theon, his gloved hand tentatively rubbing at his jaw. It was evident to all that he looked nervous to be in the presence of the man he had grown up with.

"The only reason I don't have my hands 'round your throat, is 'cause of what you did for Sansa," snarled Jon, his anger radiating off him through heavy breaths and flared nostrils. "If it weren't for that, I'd take your life, you fuckin' traitor!"

Theon cowered at Jon's feet, unable to find the courage within himself to meet the eyes of the man whose brother he betrayed.

"You have just assaulted an ally of mine, Lord Snow," stated Daenerys as she came to stand just behind him on the shore. Flanking her on either side stood her Dothraki, their hooked blades brandished for all to see as a warning. "I trust you have good reason for such an action. I need not remind you there is no existing alliance between ourselves."

Jon stood glaring down at Theon for a few seconds more before turning away, in the distance he could see his own men returning to shore after stashing the last boatload of Dragonglass aboard the ship. It was as they disembarked the boat did the Stark men take notice of the Dothraki's unsheathed swords, and the armed Ironborn who surrounded their King. Even though unarmed, Jon watched as the men loyal to his familial House hurried to him in his defense.

Raising a hand to halt his men from coming to blows with any of the Dragon Queen's men, Jon turned to meet Daenerys questioning gaze. "I apologize, your Grace. My actions were unbecoming."
"That's all you have to say?" inquired Daenerys. "I expect an explanation."

"I have none to give," replied Jon, he wasn't about to bring up Theon's past treachery and put him at possible odds with Daenerys after what the man had risked saving Sansa from the horrible fate that had befallen her as wife of Ramsey Bolton.

"And you, Lord Greyjoy, have you anything to say?" asked Daenerys instead, she watched as the man hid from her view and the men with him look disgustedly down on him, as though they themselves were ashamed to be in his company. "I assume then that whatever this matter was, it is finished."

"It is, your Grace." confirmed Jon, shaking the hand he used to punch Theon, he took a few steps to separate himself from the Ironborn and join his men, one of which took a step forward himself to whisper something in his ear.

Turning to her cohort, Daenerys spoke briefly in a foreign tongue, enough so that the Dothraki at her side sheathed, and withdrew their hooked blades from open view.

"Well, Lord Snow, I take it our dealings together here are concluded," said Daenerys.

"They are, your Grace, my men inform me the last load they took has filled the hold of our ship," commented Jon. "There's only one matter to resolve before I depart for the North."

Curious, Daenerys fixed Jon with a puzzled raise of a single brow. "And that is?"

"Upon our arrival, your people took mine and my men's weapons."

"I see, I will have your weapons returned to you at once so you may set sail," vowed Daenerys, her attention setting back onto Theon who had gathered himself up from the ground, his weathered clothes spackled and clumped with wet sand. "I trust you have detailed word regarding the fate of your sister and passengers, Lord Greyjoy?"

Timidly, Theon bounced his head up and down.

"We will speak in the throne room," Daenerys informed, while she didn't care to spare any more words on the King in the North, she found she couldn't resist. "May the faith of the Seven keep you and your ship safe during your journey North, Lord Snow."

"I put my faith in the Old Gods, your Grace." corrected Jon.

Daenerys turned from Jon and began making her way back to the winding pathway up to Dragonstone Castle, oddly amused at his determination to challenge everything she said. It was as she started climbing the first set of steps of the pathway did she stop to cast one more fleeting look to the confrontational King. Despite no alliance being made, there was an inkling of hope within her that this wouldn't be the last time she saw him, or at least not on the battlefield as they had resigned themselves in agreement earlier. Turning forward once more, Daenerys lead her accompanying Dothraki and following Ironborn back up the steep, winding pathway. The White Wolf of the North set to leave.
A Lion's Proposition, A Dragon's Apprehension

Chapter Summary

Jon Snow has left the negotiating table at Dragonstone. Weeks have passed and House Tyrell's demise plague the Dragon Queen. Allies on mainland Westeros have garnered immediate importance to the Mother of Dragon's, while potential allies are few, one stands out. The White Wolf.

Chapter Notes

Hello all, let me first start by saying this chapter is by no means a leap to get hurriedly to a certain connection that at some point will come. However, this is a starter chapter to future plots and such, so to those who are eager to get to a Jon-Daenerys relationship, I apologize, it's still some chapters away, but don't give up hope! Given time, you can skip chapters to where you would like to be lol, once I've reached them?

Also, thank you very much to all the kind comments, kudos and faithful bookmarks to my story. I greatly appreciate them all and like King Tommen, a good writer like a good King heeds wisdom, I take your comments as helpful to me becoming a better writer over time. So, that said, without further ado, I present Chapter Five: A Lion's Proposition, A Dragon's Apprehension.

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Wolf Fang's & Dragon Fire

Chapter Five: A Lion's Proposition, A Dragon's Apprehension

In front of the grand fireplace of Dragonstone's strategy room, a pitcher of wine clasped in one hand, a goblet of the red liquid in the other, sat a slouched Tyrion Lannister. His gaze fixated on the raging flicker of flames within the fireplace, the crackling and spitting of sparked ash mesmerizing him as he relived a moment of unspeakable terror. It had been several weeks since the departure of the King in the North from Dragonstone, and in that time Tyrion had gone from learning of Olenna Tyrell's death, to having had front row seats to the battle waged on mainland Westeros in which a force of Lannister and Tarly men under the command of his brother, Jaime suffered a decisive defeat at the hands of Daenerys' Dragon's and Dothraki Khalasar's. The stench of charred flesh and singed hair from the Tarly Lord's, in particular, stuck to the inner walls of Tyrion's nose, serving as a constant reminder to the brutality in which the Queen he served was capable of.

Despite having already consumed a pitcher of wine and was steadily on his way to polishing off another, it seemed to make no difference as no matter how much Tyrion consumed, he couldn't drown out the sounds of the burned men's screams. Taking a long drag of wine from his goblet, the Lannister dwarf formed a troublesome thought of ponder as the screams of men echoed in his head, reminding him of the tales about the Mad King, forcing the question of whether or not he had witnessed the beginning of Daenerys descent into becoming the Mad Queen. An image of an open
field covered with roasted carcasses of Westerosi men entered his mind and he cringed at the sight of it. Legs dangling over the edge of his seat, Tyrion took yet another swig of wine, his mind clouded but not enough so that he didn't hear the click of the room's door and the soft padding of feet approaching him. Letting his head loll to the side to see who had entered, Tyrion's gaze drew wide at the sight of Daenerys.

"Your Grace!" stammered Tyrion, flopping about his seat like a fish out of water in a failed attempt to stand.

"Stay sitting," commanded Daenerys, her gentle stride bringing her to stand in front of him. The hearth of the fireplace behind her toasting her back, but the Targaryen blood in her veins keeping her cool.

Slouching back down, Tyrion sat perplexed by the sudden unorthodox meeting from the usually courtly Queen.

"We haven't a chance to speak yet regarding our next course of action now that the Tyrell's are no longer in the fold of my allies," offered Daenerys, she did not receive a reply and she knew her Hand to still be sour on the topic of the Tarly's burning. "If the events of the mainland still offend your sense of dignity, Lord Tyrion, you've made your opinion on the matter quite clear, however, you are unable to accept my own opinion on it. Now while I consider this topic to be over with and new ones to be tended to, how long is it my Hand is to be seat ridden and dulled with wine?"

Glancing to the goblet in his hand, Tyrion rotated it in so the wine swished about the rim. "Time cannot rid me of the sorrow I hold for the sight I saw, your Grace, but I am your Hand, I serve despite the disregard for the advice I give."

Daenerys raised her chin, unwilling to relent to her Hand's opinion that her actions against the acting Lord of House Tarly and his son was a needless act. As she saw it, if she were to allow such insolence from every Lord and Lady in the Seven Kingdom's, the strength of her claim to the Iron Throne would diminish, how could she rule if there were no House's willing to be ruled? After all, Tyrion had once said a precedent is made after doing something for the first time, the Tarly's were that precedent. Pledge fealty or face the consequences of her wrath.

"Then, Lord Hand, what advise do you give regarding, Lord Snow, who departed Dragonstone, taking the allegiance of the North with him."

"He had left as expected, no?"

"As allowed."

Tyrion shifted uncomfortably in his seat. "I take it you have grown to be resentful of this?"

Daenerys eyes narrowed. "Since I named you Hand, I have been ushered by your guidance into every ill-conceived plan and move ever to have befallen me. Shall I name them?"

With his better senses having left him after consuming the first pitcher of wine that evening, Tyrion gestured with an open hand for Daenerys to proceed.

"The burning of my fleet at Meereen. The loss of Dorne's support and the Greyjoy siblings fleet... Shall I continue?"

"If you did, I am sure it would only serve to further paint me as an imbecile," replied Tyrion, he took a long pull from his goblet so it emptied his cup, the pitcher in his other hand at the ready to refill it.
There was a flare of anger that shot across Daenerys face but she held herself composed. "It was the Red Priestess that brought Jon Snow's name to this Island, however, it was your advice that brought him here under the pretense of him bending the knee."

Tyrion struggled with the armrests of his chair to prop himself forward in his seat. "He may have not bent the knee, but I like to think he crouched at the very least."

"That wine you drink makes you seem a fool," snapped Daenerys, she had seen Tyrion drunk before, but this was the first time she had to address him in a time of need. "I have my Unsullied stuck on the other side of Westeros defending a castle of little strategic importance, Olenna Tyrell and all the Tyrell's for that matter are dead, and you have had me waste time courting the so called King in the North to no avail."

Tyrion held a finger up in protest. "Perhaps a courting of a different kind would secure the North's allegiance."

"A different kind? I gave him the Dragonglass as a gift of goodwill under your advice and he still refused to pledge his sword. What other courting could I possibly do to change, Lord Snow's opinion?" retorted Daenerys.

"Unlike the Tarly's who you roasted because they refused, you let Jon leave Dragonstone unscathed. I may not be blessed for love in my life, but I certainly recognize it," commented Tyrion. "Perhaps this is why Daario and the Second Sons were left in Essos?"

Daenerys eyes grew large at Tyrion's subtle suggestion. "Marriage?"

"He's a fine man with the support of the North behind him, support you would do well with to gain. At the current moment I can't think of a better suitor for you than him." replied Tyrion.

"We have nothing in common, he and I." protested Daenerys.

"Oh, I wouldn't say that. You share a common foe in this Army of Deadmen."

A simple huff showed Daenerys wasn't convinced on the subject. "And once they're defeated, what do we have then?"

With a pull from his goblet, Tyrion spoke lightly. "You would have defeating the Army of Deadmen in common after that, I suppose."

Rolling her eyes, Daenerys turned to look at the flickering flames of the fireplace, listening as the burning timber cracked from the heat, the simple sounds giving her a brief feeling of serenity from the woeful dilemma her Hand's suggestion gave her.

Tyrion watched Daenerys closely, the warm glow of the fire radiated off her, highlighting her petite frame and curvy figure. While he felt an alliance through marriage would solve any problems he foresaw in avoiding a similar result to that of the Tarly's, he knew it was far-fetched to think Daenerys would go for it openly.

"Do you plan on saying anymore to convince me of this proposal of yours?" Daenerys questioned the more she stared into the flames the more her thoughts delved into a picture of what it would look like with Jon Snow at her side.

"Convincing others is not my forte, your Grace, which is most likely why both trials I've had on the topic of me losing my head I have left to the fate of trial by combat," mused Tyrion, his mind drifting to the memory of his stay at the Vale and his sister's rage towards him for Joffrey's death.
"This isn't an issue to be solved by combat, now is it?" Returned Daenerys, she cast a look to Tyrion that showed her indecisiveness to go forward with the man's suggestion.

"Unfortunately, it is not. The decision to proceed is entirely up to you, your Grace, and if it is not the route in which you wish to go, I shall strive to do all I can to gain you the North through other means." Tyrion answered. "All you need do is say the word."

"If I hope to conquer the south and defend the whole continent from the dead, I will need to make progress in reclaiming the Iron Throne, something I have not done in several weeks. A land war with the southern Houses without the use of my children could drag on for who knows how long and drain the amount of troops under my banner. Making an enemy of the North will make it all the more difficult to defend when the time comes to face the dead. If they're even real." muttered Daenerys, her mind sifting through the cons she faced if she did not wed the Northman.

"You are in good standing with, Jon Snow, as far as I'm aware. He's made it quite known he would be more than willing to have your aide in the fight against the deadmen," voiced Tyrion. "Making an enemy of the North seems unlikely."

"But not impossible. I informed, Lord Snow, before his departure I would come for him and his Kingdom in the future. He knows I will be a threat to his Northern reign soon enough. Furthermore, I find no comfort in an alliance through marriage with him. I risk everything and him very little."

Tyrion looked to the red liquor of his goblet. "Comfort is found in beds and wine. What you seek is a guarantee the North will fall under your rule once you've taken the South and defeated the dead. The clearest means to achieve this without bloodshed is to marry, Jon Snow. He retains the frivolous title of King in the North and in return, the North and all of it's House's pledge fealty to you through him. A fair trade by my account."

"A fair trade is my Dothraki not riding North and tearing down their castles in exchange for their loyalty." growled Daenerys, her voice vibrated with her underlying frustration.

"The Dothraki have never seen the unrelenting cold of winter in their lives, the fields their horses require to graze upon are blanketed by heaps of snow. By the time they reach Winterfell, if they even make it that far, they would have more frostbite on their limbs from the lack of formidable clothing than they would have a sizeable fighting force. A campaign North with the Dothraki would be futile." refuted Tyrion, he let out a sigh and polished off the remaining bit of wine left in his goblet.

There was reason behind Tyrion's words and Daenerys knew it was only her frustration that had her even suggesting a Northern conquest.

"Then it's settled," stated Daenerys, she had resigned herself to the idea. She had married before out of necessity, another time couldn't hurt as far as she was concerned.

Tyrion nearly scoffed in shock. "You will marry, Jon Snow?"

"My hand seems to suggest I do not possess the luxury of other options in which to pursue," replied Daenerys lamely. "It also secures the North without having to spill blood which I am inclined to accept is for the greater good."

A smile stretched across Tyrion's tipsy face. "I can have a raven bearing word to Winterfell as early as tonight if you wish."

Daenerys seemed suddenly unnerved. "That soon?"

"It would be a formal summons of him to Dragonstone, nothing more," explained Tyrion. "It
wouldn't be until, Lord Snow's arrival to the Island that I would propose the arrangement to him and iron out the details of North's fealty to your rule."

"I see," said Daenerys, her voice trailed off as thoughts of Jon entered her mind. "Do you think he would accept?"

Tyrion looked to Daenerys and for the first time since coming to be in her service did he see a chink in her armor, a vulnerability in her usual strong demeanor. "Jon Snow is a bastard, he's not a blind-man. He's seen your beauty and witnessed your kindness with having provided the North with Dragonglass. Asking for nothing in return doesn't go unrecognized. He will accept. I'm certain of it."

Daenerys was hesitant to let herself become as hopefully confident an alliance would be ascertained so easily. "I find based on the traits he displayed while here, Lord Snow's honor will prevent him from accepting your proposal."

"The pretense of bending the knee through wedlock you mean," Tyrion mumbled, his eyes returning to rest on his goblet, his thumb gently caressing it's rim. "Some in the North may protest the idea, but I find Jon to be a keen tactician. He will see the support you can provide and he won't be able to bring himself to refuse. He's a man who cares for his people, loves them even. He'll know the best chance for their survival will be working in unison with you."

Ringing her fingers at her front, Daenerys strolled to a wobbly stack of books resting on the mantle place above the fire Tyrion sat at, her eyes skimming over the faint titles on their spines. Her gaze coming to an abrupt stop as a deeper thought of titles entered the forefront of her mind. Being a bastard Jon was by all means heir to no House, meaning a marriage of the Targaryen heir and the North's bastard King. The Highborn House's of the South would certainly take offense to such an arrangement and cause potential turmoil in her future diplomatic relations with them.

"What is there to be done of his status?" questioned Daenerys.

The thought never having occurred to him, Tyrion brought a hand to his chin, stroking the hair there as he pondered her question. "A bastard as lawful King of Westeros does present some troubles, doesn't it. I suppose some Lord's won't enjoy their own bastards getting the idea they can rise up and be men of great stature and importance."

"By wedding Lord Snow It could alienate several House's of the South who may be considering breaking from your sister's service in favour of serving my cause," mulled Daenerys, she reached up to pinch the bridge of her nose. Realizing that nothing was ever easy when it involved, Jon Snow.

Rattling his knuckles against the armrests of his seat, Tyrion heaved a light sigh as an obvious answer came to him. "You legitimize him, make him the liege Lord of House Stark."

"... Jon Stark," whispered Daenerys, the name felt strange as she said it and there was a part of her that knew right then and there, the man she had come to briefly know would take offense at the mere consideration of his legitimacy to House Stark. "He'll never accept it."

Tyrion cocked his head to Daenerys, his jaw slack with being unable to comprehend her doubts. "Not accept it? Your Grace, since the time of my birth and my travels across the Kingdom's, I've yet to come upon a bastard that hasn't pined for the surname of their father their entire life. He will accept."

"Did you and I happen to meet the same man?" asked Daenerys. "The one I met seemed reluctant to have even been named King by the Northmen, if his father were alive to legitimize him, that he may have accepted. But me? He would take it as an insult."
"It wouldn't do any harm to put the idea forward, what could be the worst possible thing to happen if he refuses?" Tyrion proposed.

"The worst that happens is he refuses, Lord Tyrion. Then what, I marry a bastard and secure the North but make more enemies of Southern House's who already see me as a breaker of their traditions, what was it the Tarly Lord called me, a foreign invader backed by savages?" Stated Daenerys, she sighed and looked to the table carved into the map of Westeros, her eyes lingering on the Southern Kingdoms. "This alliance through marriage serves no greater benefit than the securing of the Northern Kingdom."

Tyrion was growing exasperated in his attempt to convince Daenerys that this proposal was in her best interest, and although the wine had dulled his wits, he wasn't completely out of cards to play. "You wanted to break the wheel."

"I don't follow." said Daenerys, unsure where it was her Hand was leading to with the statement.

"One of the spindles on that wheel you sought to break is the very thing you seek to uphold at the moment, the Seven Kingdom's have emphasized the degradation of bastards for an incalculable amount of centuries. It's an archaic custom used to belittle and supress the offspring of Lord's who wish to keep favour with their wives and disregard their responsibility to the results of their infidelity. Is this truly a spindle upon a wheel you wish to keep? Break the wheel you came here to break, your Grace. Marry Jon Snow. Show the old House's that the old ways are done and a new era has begun," ranted Tyrion firmly, he had risen from his seat with a slight swagger, but he was more determined than Daenerys had ever seen him. "The Lord's of old House's would rather you sail back across the Narrow Sea and never know what a changed world under your rule could be, but I for one know it could be something great, something spectacular. You have that potential, your Grace. You need only show it."

A silence filled the strategy room of Dragonstone. The Hand's spoken speech being digested until Daenerys finally stepped from the mapped table of Westeros to where Tyrion had come to stand, the pitcher and goblet still held loosely between his fingers.

"Send the raven, Lord Tyrion. Summon the King in the North to Dragonstone. We shall issue him the proposal, and if he accepts, we shall offer him the Stark name, and if he refuses..." Daenerys paused, her posture straightening as she prepared herself to commit to a course of action that could very well grow her list of enemies. "I will break the spindle, I will break the wheel and the entire cart it supports if need be."

Tyrion beamed from ear to ear, for the first time since the day of the Tarly's burning he heard silence, the screams of the burned men seemingly put to peace with his initiative to avert a similar circumstance with Jon and the Northmen. His confidence in her ability to achieve goals through peaceful means was restored, and thankfully, put to rest his concern of her descent to being the Mad Queen.
Chapter Summary

Jon having returned North several weeks ago has been busy making preparations for the Long Night. While having spent much time at the Night's Watch Keep's along the Wall, he has come to Winterfell and is faced with a summons from the South, a threat within his walls, and a conglomerate of other things.

Chapter Notes

Hello all, let me first start by saying, this was a tough one to get typed out. It just had a lot of different things to it that I didn't initially intend to include. Such as how could I have disregarded the North for so long, at least regarding whose up there, what's been going for the past five chapters while Jon's been on Dragonstone. That said, this chapter evolved into a lot of filler to kind of stake out sub-plots and characters who will be featured more often in the future.

That being said, to stop this Chapter from becoming a sitcom where characters are popping up non-stop to deliver dialogue which regrettably does occur anyway, the main point was to introduce them to the story. I did have to cut a character I had originally hoped to include in this chapter, but as reparation they will be given their due time of prominence in chapter's ahead. And I know I'm gonna catch some flak for this one, I know it, but check notes at the end. I defend myself as my own Kingsguard, Lord Commander myself and all.

Last, but not least, thank you to all for the kind comments, bookmarks, and kudos. They inspire me to press on. Within the next two or three chapters a relationship should bloom, it all depends if I merge chapter 7 and 8 which don't really have to be their own. Anywho, before I continue getting off topic, without further ado, I present, Chapter 6: A Mockingbird in the House of Wolves.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Wolf Fangs & Dragon Fire

Chapter Six: A Mockingbird in the House of Wolves

"It's said Daenerys Targaryen is more beautiful than any woman alive," came the voice of Petyr Baelish, his voice a near drawl as he appeared from a stairway leading onto the raised wood-plank platform of Winterfell's tall walls.

While having thought he'd seized a moments peace to himself and escaped the reality of preparing the North for the coming Long Night, Jon Snow turned grudgingly to meet Sansa's invited guest. "Lord Baelish."
"Petyr if you'd please, your Grace, I've never been a man for formal titles," replied Petyr smoothly.

Baelish may have intended himself to come off as humble, but Jon cautiously read it as a ploy by Peytr to appeal to Jon's highly held self-sense of humble, honor. "Yet you've managed to come to hold a few titles, haven't you, Lord Baelish? Lord of Harrenhall, Lord Protector of the Vale. For a man not of formal titles, you seem to have acquired quite a few to yer' name."

Petyr forced a smile. "You're right, I concede, that I have. I suppose when you come from nothing as I did, you start yearning for everything."

Turning from the thin man, Jon placed himself between two stone merlons of the fortress wall, looking out to the snow-covered fields of the North that surrounded the old stone bastion of House Stark. "Well, you've yearned and you've achieved, that much can be said, now as I don't take you for a man who simply walks castle ground without intention, what is it you've come to speak to me about, Lord Baelish?"

Taking a few confident steps closer to Jon, Petyr lets his eyes scan his surroundings to ensure he was alone with the King in the North. "It didn't quite suit me how we left off the last time we spoke, my King. Your hand around my throat. I figured it would do me good to show myself as your ally, no matter your opinion on how I feel for your sister. As an old friend of Catelyn Stark, I've come to inform you that I've heard whispers being spread throughout the North. Whispers that claim you bent the knee to the Mad King's daughter during your stay South."

Jon let his head hang with a huff. "You being a friend of my father's wife holds no bearing for me, Baelish, the woman despised me. As for rumors, if what you say holds truth, let them whisper. I know my own truth. I bent no knee to no southern ruler. The North is free and I plan to keep it that way."

"You truly are the son of Eddard Stark, it's almost uncanny, you having the same mentality as him," noted Petyr. "I had tried giving him advice and warning during his tenure as Hand to Robert Baratheon. Implored him to make sensible decisions that may have kept his head upon his shoulders. Your father's pride didn't let him heed the truth of the whispers I told him, the result of which you know already."

Jon's hand palmed into a fist. "Tell me, Lord Baelish, what would you consider my father for disregarding your whispered warnings?"

Petyr was silent for a long moment, he studied Jon, weighing what answer it was the King in the North wanted to hear, it was that thought that made Petyr answer honestly. "I mean no disrespect, your Grace, but I would... And did, consider him a fool."

"A fool," repeated Jon, he shifted on his feet so his piercing eyes met Petyr's firmly. "A fool. Sansa once told me only a fool would trust you. Perhaps my father was a fool, maybe he did heed your whispers, a fool to have trusted you, Lord Baelish? Is that why he's in the crypt below this castle and not here now addressing you instead of me?"

Mouth opening and closing, a dumb expression sketched on his face, Petyr took a self-preserving step away from Jon. "Your father's demise was the doing of the Lannister's, my King."

"The same Lannister's who made you Lord of Harrenhall," replied Jon, he took a step closer to Petyr and the man took an even further apprehensive step back in return, keeping their distance.

Feeling pushed off his game, Petyr side stepped Jon entirely and took a hasty few steps away to regain himself and the cool, calm, collected persona many throughout the Kingdom's had identified
him for having. "Yes the Lannister's made me Lord of Harrenhall, but it was awarded to me for a
task given to me to sway House Tyrell in servitude of the crown. I am the Lord Protector of the Vale
who answered you sister's call, my King, it was I who saved you from certain death during the Battle
of the Bastards."

"You're correct, Lord Baelish, you answered my sister's call, I played no part in summoning you and
the Vale Knights," countered Jon. "She saved me. Now I'll say this one time cause it's all the
patience I have to spare for you, given that honesty and truth was installed in me by my father, I owe
it to him to speak to you in such regards. I don't like you, Lord Baelish. I don't trust you either if
Sansa hadn't summoned you and by extension offered you guest rights, I'd have given you the boot
from Winterfell by now. Yer' a wasel, Littlefinger. A snake in the skin of a man."

Petyr stood tall against Jon's harsh words, it wasn't the first time he'd been treated so disrespectfully
by a Stark before, Brandon Stark, Ned's brother had given him a lengthy scare up his stomach as a
boy, and Eddard Stark nearly choked him to death outside his own whoring establishment in King's
Landing. For Petyr however, he always seemed to overcome the physical barriers by counteracting
the brawn of others through his own cunning, whits. With a write off regarding the appeasement of
Jon, Petyr knew he could still manipulate Sansa to his will and further his own personal gains.

"As I said, King Snow, you are very much your father. I only hope it ends at personality and not...
fate." replied Petyr.

Taking his words as a vague threat, Jon needn't retort with his own as he watched the man in front of
him grow frightfully frigid at the sound of padded paws clicking up the wooden staircase behind
him. Claws tapping against the frosty wood-planks to their own distinct sound, Petyr hesitantly
looked over his shoulder to view the snarling snout of a large, white-furred direwolf.

Stumbling to the side so he could put space between himself and the monstrously large wolf,
Littlefinger's focus drifted over each and every sharp fang shown glistening upon it's gaping mouth.
"I take it that it's the reason you've garnered the name, the 'White Wolf'?"

"Easy boy," calmed Jon, he went to Ghost's side and rested a gloved hand upon the snarling
direwolf's head. With a few short pats that trailed down it's back, Ghost snarls subsided and it's
gaping mouth closed. "Could be Ghost here, could be the pummel of Longclaw, all I know is both it
and Ghost here deliver justice equally, Lord Baelish. Now I suggest you go crawlin' back to
wherever it is you crawled out of this mornin'."

Petyr bowed. "I'll kindly take my leave, my King. I will say this, heed my whispers, you may come
to regret you didn't."

No words were exchanged past Baelish's, but Jon watched as Petyr hastened his way down the
platform to another set of stairs. He couldn't put a precise finger on why he disliked and distrusted the
man, but from the few people whom he had listened to regarding Littlefinger, he'd rather keep the
company of Cersei Lannister than the conniving, back-handed man like Petyr Baelish was made out
to be.

As his hands roamed without purpose over the length of Ghost's body, Jon was knocked from his
current train of thought by the sounds of heavy feet thundering up the stairs Ghost had come up on
only a few short moments ago.

"Your Grace, a girl is at the gates!" wheezed out a rather plump guardsman, the helm on his head
looking a size to small and his leather gambeson knotted barely together by the very tips of strings.
His stomach threatening to stretch through the leather armor and spill out.
Fingers stilling in the thick of Ghost chalky white fur, Jon watched his own out of breath guardsmen struggle to regain his composure. "Many a people come to the gates, you need seek the Lady of Winterfell, she'll greet and give the girl an audience if need be."

"Arya, your Grace. The girl claims to be Arya Stark," heaved the man, his body tumbled against the railing of the stairs as though desperately needing to rest.

"Arya?" asked Jon disbelievingly, he may have disregarded his considered-to-be-dead sister's sudden turn up as nonsense, but after the appearance of his brother Bran during his recent visit to Eastwatch, he couldn't disregard it. "Did you have a good look at her, does she hold any resemblance to her?"

"To who, your Grace?" replied the guardsmen.

"To Arya Stark, does the girl look like Arya Stark?" growled Jon, he pulled his hand from Ghosts fur and started towards the top of the stairway that the obese guardsman of his house blocked unintentionally with his large-set frame.

Shaking his head to and fro, the second chin around his neck jiggling, the guardsmen attempted to press himself closer to the railing to make way for Jon to go down. "I never saw the girl before to know for sure, I was a farmhand up until a few weeks ago, your Grace. I've never laid eyes on any Stark's till Lady Sansa."

"A farmhand who now wields a sword for my name and cause, I commend you, Ser. You do the North a great service," said Jon, his voice a tad bit laced with sarcasm. Squeezing himself past the heavy guardsmen with Ghost closely in tow behind. His mind set itself on reaching the front gates of Winterfell in the hopes of finding the sister he had felt a closer kinship to than any of his other half-siblings.

Storming his way past the crowd of assembled men-at-arm of his House and peasant folk throughout the Castle, Jon reached the gates only to find a scrawny looking guardsmen frantically searching behind nearby barrels and crates scattered around the courtyard. No girl of Arya's appearance to be found.

"Arya!," called out Jon, his voice stern and commanding, so much so it made the scrawny man before him drop to one knee and bow his head as if seeking mercy.

"The girls gone, your Grace!" stammered the slender guardsmen.

"Gone? Gone Where?"

The guardsmen clasped his hands to the side of his helmet clad head. "I don't know, your Grace, one second she was there, then the next... She's vanished."

Growling through gritted teeth, Jon's eyes searched out the courtyard and the encompassing walkways overhead. Not a single soul in sight. "Search the castle."

Getting shakily to his feet, the slender guardsmen reached for the handle of his sword hung at his waist. "At once, your Grace."

"Go on, get to it." snapped Jon, he watched bemused as the wiry guardsmen clumsily drew his blade from it's sheath, frantically running about the courtyard of Winterfell, turning over whatever objects he could in desperate search of the girl claiming to be his youngest sister. Seeing that it would be hopeless to assume the riffraff who had come to serve House Stark in the time after Robb would be able to find the girl, Jon turned to Ghost who had faithfully seated himself at Jon's heels, crouching down in front of the wolf with a hand scratching behind it's ear. "I need you boy, find the girl. Bring
her no harm. Bring her to me."

Nuzzling his wet nose against Jon's cheek, Ghost jerked away from his masters grip, his long legs carrying him away as he sniffed about the ground, tracing whatever remnants of a scent that was left behind by the mysterious girl claiming to be Arya Stark. Observing Ghost as he padded around nearly every inch of Winterfell's courtyard, Jon decided to leave his direwolf and guardsmen to that task of locating Winterfell's intruder. Instead choosing to focus on retaining the peace of mind he nearly had atop the castle walls before Petyr reared his presence, Jon made way for the Great Hall.

His mind raking over the lengthy list of things still needed to be tended to, Jon forced down the thoughts of Arya as they arose, until he could lay eyes on her, prove it truly was her, he wouldn't let himself fall victim to false hope. The memory of him bequeathing Needle to her was among the thoughts he forced himself to disregard. Finally, with nothing but a blank canvass of mind, Jon fell into the Lord's seat of the Great Hall with a soft sigh. The blissful peace he had lasted only momentarily as the Hall gave way to the sudden appearance of Davos Seaworth.

"You've received a missive from Dragonstone, your Grace," announced Davos loudly.

Jon eyed the thinly folded piece of parchment between the stubs of Davos' right hand wearily. Despite a sort of mutual agreement having been struck with the Targaryen heir that she would leave the North be until the threat of the Night King and the Army of the Dead were done, Jon knew all to well the Dragon Queen hadn't entirely put aside her ambitions to reclaim his Kingdom as one of the Seven she professed to rightfully rule over.

Coming to a stop just before Jon at the head table of the Hall, Davos held out the rolled letter for the King in the North to take.

Glimpsing at the three-headed dragon crest of the Targaryen coat of arms that acted as a wax seal on the rolled letter, Jon shook his head. "You read it, Ser Davos."

"It could pertain words privy to your eyes only, your Grace," ventured Davos hesitantly.

Again Jon shook his head. "Whatever may be within that letter, it's best for you as my Hand to be just as informed as I."

Slowly, Davos retracted his offer of the rolled letter. Peeling back the crimson ribbon that encircled it, the Hand of the King split the Targaryen wax seal and unfolded the crinkled parchment. His eyes drifting from left to right as he absorbed the written message.

"It's Lord Tyrion, your Grace," announced Davos. "The imp requests you make way for Dragonstone at once."

Jon snorted. "Is he takin' the piss?"

"Your Grace?"

"Did he not listen to a word we said about what's comin' for us from beyond the Wall?" asked Jon indignantly. "There's no time to pussyfoot about the Dragon Queen's desire to sit on a chair of melted blades, she and Lord Tyrion should know that by now."

"As your Hand, I must say you could be lookin' at this in the wrong light," suggested Davos.

"Is there any other way to be lookin' at this?"

"Well, while we're up here rubbing two sticks together to try and get a fire going, Daenerys
Targaryen's got Dragon's, an Island stocked with more Dragonglass than we could ever need, and a sizeable army to boot. She's practically got a bonfire going and all we need do is reach out and ask for a torch." said Davos.

There was huff from Jon as he stared at his Hand. "For a torch you'd have me bend the knee?"

Davos was hesitant. "... Your father was Warden of the North like his father before him, and so on. Is taking a knee for the lives of your people truly that hard to conceive?"

"The Northern Lord's wont see it that way, a moment of weakness by Robb had House Karstark and Umber withdrawing their support to his cause, House Bolton aided the Frey's in his murder and usurped my House as Warden's of the North," Jon explained, leaning forward in his seat he propped his elbows up upon the table before him so he could cradle his head within his cupped palms. "I've pressed the Lord's already by asking for their daughters to take up arms, their daughters, Ser Davos, a request not made by a Lord of House Stark since the history of recorded time. If I bend the knee, I'd be breakin' the will of the Northmen who see their independence from Southern rule as a reason to risk what they're already willin' to risk against the dead. I won't do it. I won't rob my people of their hope."

"Women have fought for Northern Lord's before have they not? They must've been someone's daughter at some point." Davos pointed-out.

"It's beside the point," chided Jon, he raised his head from his hands so he could view Davos face to face. "You ask any Northern Lord throughout the Kingdom if they'd pledge to a Targaryen after what the Mad King did to the North, they'd consider you a coward, a traitor."

Davos nodded, understanding entirely the reservations Jon held to further any sort of alliance with the Mother of Dragon's. "Very well, your Grace, I can't refute that can I. But now we're left with the question of how to respond?"

"Tell Tyrion and the Queen claimant that preparations are still being made for the defense of the North and all of Westeros for that matter. A return trip to Dragonstone will not happen as long as the Army of the Dead are on the doorstep of my Kingdom's borders." dictated Jon.

"Might I advise we throw in a few respectful remarks so to avoid a similar fate than that of Randyll and Dickon Tarly?"

"There's no need, I've been open and honest with Daenerys Targaryen since the day I met her on Dragonstone. Write the truth. It's all that need be said. I doubt she or Lord Tyrion expect me to write some poets reply."

"I see, I take it then you would want me to toss a 'fuck you' in there at the end as well?" jested Davos. Jon cracked a grin as he finally eased back into his seat. "That won't be necessary, Ser Davos."

"What isn't necessary?" The words came from behind and Jon leaned over the side of his seat to watch as Sansa entered into the Great Hall, flanked by her towering guardian, Lady Brienne of Tarth and the skyscraper of a woman's Squire, Podrick Payne.

"A mere diplomatic correspondence, my Lady," informed Davos shortly, he bent at half to give a bow to Jon before hastily making his way from the Hall to scribe the King's reply to Dragonstone.

"Correspondence with who?" questioned Sansa as she took the open seat next to her half-brother.

"Yer' husband, Tyrion Lannister," replied Jon lightly, coming to the realization that a bit of somber
peace wouldn't be attained today.

"He is not my husband," defended Sansa, a red tinge blossoming on her cheeks. "Lord Tyrion is a friend, that's all."

"Aye, I know, just teasin'," Jon said, he looked up as Lady Brienne lingered over them like a vulture awaiting death in the deserts of Dorne. "There's more than enough seats throughout the hall if you'd care to sit, my Lady."

Taking the hint, Brienne gave a subtle nod and a not so subtle shove to Podrick's back as she led her stumbling Squire to the lower seating area of the Hall where two long tables lined with benches on either side of the room ran vertically across the grand length of the room.

"Not much of a talker is she," noted Jon.

"The same could be said for you," countered Sansa, she then settled Jon with an expecting look. "Well?"

"Well what?"

"Don't play smart, Jon Snow. You aren't very good at it. Now tell me, what is it, Lord Tyrion wants?"

Jon ran a hand through the long black curls of his hair. "He's requested that I journey back down to Dragonstone."

"You can't!" exclaimed Sansa at once.

"I know, don't worry, I instructed Davos to write a reply sayin' as much. I know my place and where I'm needed," stated Jon. "The threat from the Night King is comin' closer and I still have far to much to do in what little time we may have left to muster a defense."

"You don't seem all that hopeful that we can muster a defense," concluded Sansa, making sure to keep her voice quiet to ensure she wasn't overheard. The last thing Jon needed was a knock to the people's morale and how dire the circumstance the North was truly in against the dead.

"We'll have a defense in place, that I'm sure of. If it will be enough to stop the White Walker's and the dead, I don't know," answered Jon truthfully, his eyes were downcast for a moment. "Do you think father would be doing anythin' different if he were here in my stead?"

"I think father would be pleased with everything you've done thus far," assured Sansa. "A lot of people are, Jon. They made you King, that speaks to the type of man you are and what you mean to the North."

"It isn't enough, being King isn't enough to stop the Deadmen," grumbled Jon, he had spent the last several weeks planning and arranging what he could in a last ditch attempt to protect his homeland, and while it came with it's own stresses, he was exhausted of planning and all he wanted to do now was unsheathe Longclaw and swing his sword at his lifeless foes.

Sansa sighed, while a part of her had always wanted the power, respect, and responsibility Jon held in his position, there was also another larger part that did not envy the position he was in and trouble that came with it. "I know there's a weight on you, Jon, but you're the best chance the North has of surviving the Long Night. Do you think Ramsey Bolton would have accomplished everything you have so far, do you think he'd defend the North from what's coming?"
Jon shrugged, his hand clenching into a fist at the thought of Ramsey Bolton, the Dread-Bastard. When he didn't answer, Sansa placed a hand to his forearm and pressed on. "We'll get through this. Westeros counted House Stark out once before, but now look at us and our enemies. The Bolton's? Dead. The Frey's? Dead. The same will come to be said for the Night King."

What could have been more for her than him, Jon nodded and placed a hand over Sansa's, giving it a few reassuring pats. "You're right, we'll get through this."

Sansa held a small smile, an expression so slight yet did wonders to enhance the pretty features of her face which was complimented by the lengthy flow of her auburn hair. Deciding to force the subject of the dead away in favour of a lighter topic, Sansa thought to her full blooded brother. "I saw Bran again this morning in the Godswood, he's asked to see you."

Jon huffed a sigh, the last several weeks had been chaotic, from travelling to Castle Black to make arrangements with the Night's Watch, then off to Castle Eastwatch to discuss plans with Tormund and the Wildlings, in between it all, Bran had surfaced at Winterfell, and though Jon had received a Raven from his old friend, Eddison Tollett who now acted as Lord Commander of the Night's Watch informing him of Bran's appearance outside Castle Black, Jon was still unconvinced, he even cut his dealings at Eastwatch short just to return to Winterfell and confirm it truly was his brother. But from the initial reunion with his younger sibling, Jon knew the boy he remembered was no longer within Bran, in his place was an eerie shell of his former self, so much so Jon actually wondered if the boy claiming to be Bran, was actually Bran at all. He hadn't spoken to him since their brief reunion and Jon wasn't all to welcoming to speak with whatever it was that had consumed his brother, devoured him even.

"Jon?" called Sansa, drawing him back to the present. "You can't keep avoiding him, he's still our brother."

"I knew my brother, what's sitting in that chair made by Maester Wolkan isn't my brother." replied Jon, pained by his own outlook.

"The Three Eyed Raven," murmured Sansa. "Whatever may be going on with, Bran, it doesn't excuse you, Jon. He also seems to have something he thinks very important to tell you."

Jon's brows furrowed together at the ominous name Bran had taken for himself. "I'm sure he does, but I've still far to much to tend to, I need to make way to Eastwatch today and meet with Tormund again, there's repairs needed there and the builders of the Night's Watch have been butting heads against the Wildling's stationed there, repairs have come to a stand still. I need to mediate the situation, get work on Eastwatch resuming."

"You need to stay here and rest awhile, you can't keep going at the pace you've set for yourself," insisted Sansa. "It would also give you some time to meet with Bran again, get to know the person he's become."

Jon couldn't deny he was stretched thin and in desperate need of rest, but the dead wouldn't wait for him while he put his feet up, and the North depended on him. His thoughts drifted further from the conversation of Bran until it lingered onto the remembrance of Arya's alleged arrival to Winterfell. "Did the guardsmen at the gate come see you?"

Sansa gave a few slow shakes of her head, curious as to what this had to do with Bran.

"They said Arya turned up."

"Our sister, Arya?" questioned Sansa, her voice raised to a near squeal and in a second Brienne
having heard the high pitch tone was on her feet, hand gripping the hilt of her Valyrian steel sword.

"My Lady?" offered Brenne, her gaze focusing heavily on Jon.

"Everything is fine, Brienne, thank you." appeased Sansa, watching as the colossal woman sank back into her seat next to Podrick along the running bench and table.

"The woman's got more of a protective instinct in her than a direwolf," commented Jon, he was proud of it though, proud someone of Brienne's stature was there to defend Sansa when he could not.

"She means well," said Sansa, her stomach wrenching at the thought of her sister being alive.
"Where is Arya, did you see her?"

"I went to the gate, if it was her, she was gone before I arrived."

"So, we have an intruder within our castle and we sit here doing nothing about it?" inquired Sansa alarmed.

"I tasked the watchmen of the gate to find her, even put Ghost to the task. The guards might not fair well in locating our guest, but Ghost will sniff her out," answered Jon, the confidence in his voice left no room for argument, he trusted Ghost. The direwolf having been unquestionably reliable on more than one occasion.

"I doubt there'll be need for either of your trackers. If it truly is, Arya, I already know where she is." informed Sansa, without hesitation she rose to her feet.

"And you know this, how? Are you a Three-Eyed Raven as well?" Jon jested.

"We have not always seen eye to eye, or gotten along. But if I know anything, I know my sister."

"Take Lady Brienne with you encase," advised Jon, he too rising from his seat.

Sansa seemed slightly insulted. "You don't intend to come with me?"

"I can task Davos to you if it gives you any comfort, he's not much of a fighter, but he can talk. I need to make for Eastwatch, I'll return as soon as I've managed to get the Night's Watch there back to work on the repairs," returned Jon, he reached up and fasted the clasp of his fur trimmed cloak around his collar so it no longer dangled upon his shoulders.

"Is it not the Lord Commander of the Night's Watch who should be dealing with this?" Sansa challenged.

"Lord Commander Eddison is taken with priorities at Castle Black, I can speak on behalf of the Wildling's, and the builders of the Night's Watch, for the most part, will listen to what I have to say. I'll have the troubles at Eastwatch sorted out quickly and I'll be back before Arya starts pullin' yer' hair."

"And what happens if it isn't Arya I come upon, what if it's one of Cersei's assassins?"

"Then I pray for the poor soul who'll have to tend to your guardian when you come upon them," countered Jon, his eyes drifting over in the distance to where the imposing blonde of Tarth sat, considerably dwarfing the Squire at her side in comparison. "If you truly need me to stay, I will. I don't like the thought of leaving you here in a situation like this anyway, but we're pressed for time. For all I know the dead could be at the Wall tonight."
Shaking her head so the cascading strands of her red hair swayed like the whip of a tail, Sansa offered Jon a smile to assure him she was more than able to take the current situation upon herself. After all, she was Lady of Winterfell. "Just promise me, once you've sorted out the Night's Watch, you'll speak with Bran once you're back."

Jon gave a firm nod. "I promise. That's if the Dragon Queen doesn't roast me first for refusing her request."

"That isn't funny, Jon."

"It wasn't intended to be," responded Jon, he gave her a quick hug and peck to her forehead before slipping away from head table of the Hall and heading for the exit. An immense load of burden hung on him like a sack of stone rubble, from Bran's strange new personality, Daenerys' summons of him, Arya's mysterious return, Littlefinger's intentions, the dispersing of Dragonglass to his allies, the fixing of old Night's Watch garrisons along the Wall were just a few of the every burdening hurdles that had been placed in his path, wearing him down relentlessly, both physically and mentally. The worst of all Jon hypothesized could be the Dragon Queen's reply to his refusal, while he doubted she would rain fire down upon him, he couldn't help but recall the tale of the Tarly's in the forefront of his mind.

Chapter End Notes

Longest Chapter I've popped out yet I think, hopefully it wasn't nails dragging down a chalkboard lol. I just want to say thanks for reading and giving the fic a shot! Also, a cameo by Ghost, come on, you asked and I provided. At least a little bit, I'll include the white furred, fanged direwolf more closely at Jon's side, a King in the North's best friend.

So getting onto the Chapter, I opted to have Jon leave for Eastwatch for a few reasons, mainly because I want to write the meeting of two characters who really have nothing to do but be support characters lol. But that's in the future, I'm not going to get ahead of myself. As for why Jon would leave without seeing Arya or staying at least till she was found, it's more likely he would have, but my Jon's all about those deadmen and preparation cause practise makes perfect, I've been told.

Anywho, I hope you enjoyed and usually I can kind of estimate when the next one will be out, but I have no clue for chapter seven. I'm sure though it won't be long.

Thank you all, take care, and until the next chapter folks!
A White Wolf's Reply

Chapter Summary

Daenerys receives Jon's answer to Tyrion's proposal, a further step is taken to secure the sought alliance.

Chapter Notes

So these were to be two separate chapters, but it would have been pointless and unnecessary so I decided to join them. Thank you to everyone whose given me kudos and comments, they are all greatly appreciated. Also, to all those who've bookmarked thus far, thank you!

Also, threw in the Vale there so I am slowly appeasing. lol, With further ado, I present Chapter 7 A White Wolf's Reply

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Wolf Fangs & Dragon Fire

Chapter Seven: A White Wolf's Reply

Daenerys walked the sandy shore of Dragonstone's inlet, within her immediate company was Missandei and a handful of restless looking Dothraki who trailed a few feet behind them in their wake. It had been several days since Tyrion sent a request summoning the so-called King in the North back to Dragonstone, and in that gap of time there had been no received reply or sighting of House Stark's sigil upon a ships sail. While she was certain to have convinced herself that her Hand's proposal was nothing more than an arrangement of necessity, Daenerys still found herself unexplainably glancing out from the Castle for any would be Ravens or vessels on the horizon. This afternoon in particular, however, Daenerys had towed Missandei to the beach with her for a stroll, making sure to affirm within herself it wasn't to keep an eye out on any approaching ships, despite her drifting focus out to sea.

As Missandei's dark hair tussled against the wind coming off the open waters, the master translator, watched her Queen closely, seeing the woman she served lost amongst her own thoughts. While she tended to give Daenerys time to sort out her own mind, Missandei grew concerned as she took notice of a perturbed expression slowly developing itself onto Daenerys face. "You seem troubled, your Grace."

Daenerys looked away from her closest confidante, hating that she was so easily read by her closest companions. "Lord Tyrion had put forward an initiative to finally sway the North to me as an ally, this was some days ago. I am still awaiting King Jon's reply."

"King Jon?" repeated Missandei, her voice emphasizing Daenerys use of the Northerner's title.
"Lord Jon Snow," Daenerys quickly corrected.

"This man... He troubles you?" asked Missandei.

"Yes," spouted Daenerys at first, but she hastened to clarify. "Not him specifically, it's what he stands for that does."

Missandei was left perplexed, not fully garnering the Queen's worries as she had yet to be informed of Tyrion's plan to wed Daenerys to Jon. "What does this man stand for?"

"Insolence, and an unwillingness to accept my rule over the Seven Kingdom's," explained Daenerys.

There was an uncertainty to the Queen's voice and explanation that made Missandei doubt Daenerys was speaking the whole truth, nor did Missandei's skeptic look go unnoticed by the Mother of Dragon's.

"Why are you looking at me like that?" asked Daenerys when the skeptical expression didn't seem to pass from Missandei's face.

"... Perhaps there is more to it than that, is all."

There was rush of heat to Daenerys face, the rosy tinge of her cheeks encircled by her creamy porcelain complexion. "I don't know what you're inferring."

"Perhaps like Greyworm and I..."

"No!" protested Daenerys at once. "Jon Snow does not see me in that way, I'm just the daughter of the Mad King to him."

Missandei hummed a soft, calculative sound.

"You have something to add?" questioned Daenerys, willing the blush that had graced her to leave.

"I'm sorry, your Grace, but you did not say that you did not see him in that way."

Daenerys faltered in her steps. Did she see, Jon, in that way? No, she told herself. It was just the thought of marriage that Tyrion had put in her head that her even consider Jon in that way. Or so she told herself again. Her mouth fluttered open to refute Missandei's suggestion, but she cut herself off at the appearance of a rather frustrated looking Tyrion Lannister bounding down the twisting pathway that led to her occupied fortress.

Feet kicking up damp sand as he prowled toward Daenerys and her followers, Tyrion could be described as disgruntled at best. After spending a frustratingly half hour or so convincing a Dothraki who killed a raven bearing word from North with hand signs that the raven was infact a messenger, not his afternoon lunch, had probably given him more than a few strands of grey through his untidy mound of dirty golden hair.

"Your Grace," greeted Tyrion out of breath.

Daenerys smiled. "You seem unwell, Lord Tyrion."

"Little man," wheezed Tyrion, gathering his breaths back in order. "Little Lungs. To many stairs."

"Shall I have someone fetch a stool for you?" jibbed Daenerys teasingly.

Waving it off, Tyrion reached into his vest and withdrew a rolled, slightly torn piece of paper held
together by a black ribbon, sealed with the wax crest of House Stark.

Breath catching at the sight of the wolf's head, Daenerys shook the sensation off as quickly as it transpired, choosing instead to take hold of the rolled letter from Tyrion. "I thought it was the Hand's duties to keep his Queen informed."

"The Hand was near to losing his hand from ensuring one of the Queen's master horsemen did not devour the North's reply," quipped Tyrion.

"The Dothraki don't use ravens to communicate," informed Daenerys, pulling the ribbon loose from the scrolled up message.

"Apparently, the same could be said for the Dothraki and cutlery," grumbled Tyrion with a flourish of his eyes to the sky.

An angelic laugh flowed from Daenerys, her fingers unraveling Jon's reply, her laugh was short lived however as she read the scrawled words, her eyes narrowing near its end.

"I take it the message does not hold the reply we expected," said Tyrion, he watched her closely, mentally wagering how enraged she truly was.

"His Majesty, Jon Snow, the King in the North, must respectively decline the summons by, her Grace, Daenerys Targaryen," read Daenerys aloud. "With the impending forces of the Night King on the North, King Jon must tend to his duties to the North. Signed, the Hand of the King, Ser Davos Seaworth."

"I for one found it very tasteful, it's both subtle and respectful." proclaimed Tyrion in the hopes of waging off the inevitable spill of anger assuredly to escape from Daenerys.

"Respectful?" snapped Daenerys, her hand clinched, crushing the paper between her clasp. "The rightful Queen sends for him and he declines, I would consider that treason."

"The man does have a rather hefty problem to deal with in the North," reasoned Tyrion. "Perhaps we can arrange for another meeting when it is more convenient."

"More convenient?" questioned Daenerys, her anger at Jon Snow was starting to heat towards her Hand. "Is that your advice, that once I have established my reign I should summon my Warden of the North only when it is convenient for him?"

Tyrion bowed his head. "There would be a different set of circumstances then, I would presume. With no Army of the Dead getting in your way, I would think the King in the North would be more than open to meeting with you, your Grace."

"Warden of the North." corrected Daenerys sternly.

"Warden, my apologies," Tyrion back peddled. "We could still potentially propose our means of alliance to him through a raven."

Missandei looked between Daenerys and Tyrion with uncertainty of what they were discussing.

"Scrap your proposal, I have new one for, Jon Snow. Take the knee, pledge fealty or face dragon fire." Daenerys proposed.

"May I advise against such a ruthless proposal in favour of the one we had agreed upon, I find it to be much more diplomatic and beholdent of rewards."
"Need I list again what your advice has cost me?" returned Daenerys.

"No, my Queen. I am quite aware of my upsets and downfalls, but please consider the famnifications of a proposal like yours might lead to." responded Tyrion.

"Such as?"

Tyrion tapped a finger to his chin. "Oh, I don't know off the top of my head, but Robert's Rebellion rings a slight bell."

Her appointed Hand did little to change the anger Daenerys felt within her at Jon's refusal to return to Dragonstone, nor did the threat of a rebellion worry her. "I do not fear the Seven Kingdom's, Lord Tyrion. I rule the Seven Kingdom's."

"And your rule over them is something I have never doubted to happen, but as far as current events pertain, if you do not seek an alliance with Lord Snow, you would rule Five Kingdoms," concluded Tyrion, he took a few steps towards the sweeping waves of seawater against the beachhead.

"Five? And where do you get this number from?" inquired Daenerys, her eyes narrowed into slits at Tyrion's insinuation that all Seven Kingdom's would not fall under her domain of governance.

"Well, the North as we are both very well aware, but Varys has recently informed me the Knights of the Vale have yet to pass back through the Bloody Gate. Your Master of Whisperer's has also informed me the Vale under order of It's Lord Protector has pledged itself in the service of Sansa Stark, and through her, Jon Snow," answered Tyrion, he watched as a rabid pack of seagulls squawked at one another as they passed over the inlet. "The North and the Vale, two of the Seven Kingdom's."

With a shuttered breath, Daenerys shook her head. "And how is it do you think I shall come to rule over the other five?"

"I presume you will trample them under your Dothraki's hooves, spear them with Unsullied and burn them by your children." ventured Tyrion lightly.

"And knowing that, what makes you think these two rebel Kingdom's will be able to withstand my rule?"

"I doubt they will be able to withstand, it just simply means more unnecessary bloodshed when you could get two allies for the price of one marriage," replied Tyrion. "Which is why I shall sail North and meet with, Lord Snow. A matter such as this shouldn't be left to ravens anyhow."

Daenerys shot a dagger of a glare at Tyrion's back. "Did you not hear my ultimatum for, Lord Snow?"

"I did, your Grace, but I've chosen to pretend I misheard. You've a habit of ranting in anger only to realize you've no true intention of carrying it to fruition," responded Tyrion, he bowed his head, holding his hands interlocked together behind his back. "Now, as far as I can reason, Lord Snow's an honest man. If he says he can not return to Dragonstone, it must be for good cause. So, in fairness, I will go North to him, present our proposal and bring him back here personally."

Missandei looked between Daenerys' glare and Tyrion's nonchalant attitude before interjecting. "Why is it of such importance to have this man return?"

"Lord Tyrion wishes us to wed," answered Daenerys, slightly easing as she began to rationalize everything that had been said, realizing she was overreacting to the Northman's reply.
"Wed?" blurted Missandei, her wide eyes held a look of astonishment.

"An alliance of beneficial means to further the gains of one another," expanded Tyrion, he swirled around, looking up to Daenerys. "So, your Grace, do I have your blessings to see this proposal through?"

A silence overtook Daenerys. Despite having come to grasp the idea of taking Jon as her husband over the past few days, she was still hesitant to let herself be drawn into such an intimate relationship. And now with Jon's reply, she had an opportunity to back out, nothing was finalized as far as vows being sworn to each other was concerned, and it was what those vows could lead to that worried her. Love made people do stupid things, risk what shouldn't be risked. Had she taken Daario as a husband in Essos, the man would have been at her every beck and call, obeying her every command, Jon on the other hand wouldn't be tamed so easily she reckoned.

That thought alone brought great concern to Daenerys who loathed not being in control, she had lived that life once before when her brother Viserys played puppeteer to the strings he had attached to her, and since the day he had received his golden crown from Drogo, the liberation she felt from being free of Viserys was something she never looked to be rid of. Not that Jon was in any way, shape, size or form, remotely close to Viserys, she knew Jon to hold his own opinions, act upon his own intentions. A man like that possibly in love and capable of doing stupid things would only lead to heartbreak. That was if she let herself fall for him and him for her, and honestly, how could that happen when this was nothing more than an alliance through marriage?

Taking a deep breath, Daenerys looked down to her hand. "Go forth, Lord Tyrion. I shall await your return."

Tyrion's lips curved upwards to a smile. "I will not return empty handed. If it suits you, your Grace, I'll speak to Theon Greyjoy so I may get underway at once."

"Are you certain you want to set sail with a man so broken as he?" asked Daenerys.

"A broken man who holds in his service a crew of the worlds most renowned sailors," countered Tyrion, knowing that if he looked to reach the North as soon as possible, the Ironborn were the best option available. "All I need now is a cask of wine and I'll be on my way."

Daenerys couldn't help but be slightly amused at Tyrion's constant insistence to try and include the topic of wine, or the opportunity of drinking wine into nearly every conversation, granted the man had a serious problem, at least he took it lightly. "Return to me alive, Lord Tyrion."

"I don't plan on dying, your Grace, not yet at least." stated Tyrion as he turned to leave.

Watching in silence with Missandei and her ragged band of Queensguard, Dothraki. Daenerys observed Tyrion clamber his way up the steep, winding path of the Island. Every step the man took she counted, as it was with each distance he travelled, it was the closer he would be to bringing Jon Snow back to her.

Tyron shivered upon the back of an open carriage. Having arrived in White Harbor just a day earlier and welcomed by a few men of House Stark, he had spent more than a day and a half weathering the North's near unbearable cold, travelling it's vast land. The only joy he held throughout the ordeal was the tales the Stark men told him of their King, most of which Tyrion knew to be untrue, but the thought of Jon being able to change into a wolf or be killed and brought back to life were just a few of the tales the Queen's Hand was entertained by.
With nightfall upon him and his entourage, Tyrion could make out the soft glimmer of torch light in the skyline of Winterfell's towers. Counting his blessings to have not frozen to death, he shifted in his seat and took in the grand fortress he had visited only once before. Passing through it's aged gates stood another welcoming party, the familiar faces of Davos, Sansa and of all people he thought possible to see, Petyr Baelish.

"Welcome to Winterfell, Lord Tyrion. I hope you faired well during your travel here," greeted Sansa, her voice soft but laced with a prim tone that befitted her status as Lady of Winterfell.

"It's good to see you again, Lady Sansa. Despite a short bout of sickness on the seas, I faired well," returned Tyrion, his eyes remaining on Baelish as he climbed down from the carriage. "I must say when I heard you had been made Lord Protector of the Vale, Baelish, my first thought was how many men died for you to have achieved such a position."

"It turns out, only one woman, my late wife, Lysa Arryn. I was quite impressed to have heard you had been made Hand to another monarch, Tywin would be oh so pleased if he were still alive, I'm sure," Petyr returned, he let a small smile crease his lips. "You've not journeyed this far North since Robert's reign, have you not?"

Approaching them, Tyrion didn't respond to the remark about his father, instead he rubbed his icy hands together in an attempt to reignite the warmth in his fingers. "To request Ned Stark replace, Lord Jon Arryn, I remember it well. I also remember you being quite absent from my nephews wedding day, in fact, where was it you were that day?"

Unabashed, Petyr looked to Sansa before replying. "I was awaiting to whisk Lady Sansa away to the North."

"A foreknowing to the fate of Joffrey I suspect," Tyrion griped. "I take it you rid the Seven Kingdom's of him then?"

"That I can not take ownership of, regrettably," Petyr announced. "It was by the plot of Olenna Tyrell that the Realm was saved from the years of Joffrey's reign. It never suited me how she let blame fall on you, but I suppose, everyone needs a scapegoat every now and then."

"I see you haven't changed the slightest since we last saw," grumbled Tyrion, feeling somewhat enlightened by the revelation of who killed Joffrey at last, liberating him from the shadow cast over him as Joffrey's murderer, no matter how much the boy deserved it.

"Just as you haven't grown taller," noted Petyr, he took a bow and shuffled to his left as he watched a few Knight's of the Vale enter into the Castle's courtyard, shivering with steamed breaths emitted form their mouths. "If you will excuse me my Lord's," his eyes shifted ever so gently onto Sansa. "My Lady."

"Lord Baelish," acknowledged Sansa, watching as Littlefinger slipped from her side to meet his men. Her focus quick to retain itself back onto Tyrion.

Tyrion however while perturbed by Baelish's presence in the North, turned his own focus to Davos, the former King's Lander stood burried beneath a heavy cloak and furred hood that hid the upper half of his face. "Ser Davos, I see you've become adjusted to the Northern weathers temperment."

The lower half of Davos' face bore a grimace. "I've been a seaman most my life, my Lord, I'd gladly face a storm on the high seas rather than see another snowfall."

Tyrion chuckled at that. "I feel that would be wishful thinking. As Hand of the King in the North."
"I serve at his graces leisure," replied Davos. "With it comes his winter Kingdom."

"It makes me all the more grateful I serve on behalf of a Queen who wishes to rule from the south," commented Tyrion, his gaze settling back onto Sansa. "And I must say, you appear to fair much better here than in King's Landing, my Lady."

"The cold agrees with me."

"That it does," Tyrion complimented just before a frown settled its way onto his face. "I had also heard some disheartening tales regarding your fate since we parted ways. I do hope most were unfounded."

Sansa turned away. "If what you heard was true, it only helped make me stronger."

"You've always been strong, not many could stand in the presence of my half-whit nephew and endure what you did, but you did, and you always held yourself composed. Never letting Joffrey see you break," Stated Tyrion. "And here you are now, the Lady of Winterfell. The musterer of the Vale Knights. I'm pleased you found your calling."

"It's not a calling. It's my duty as a Stark," Sansa replied, she interlocked her gloved fingers in front of her. "Your message said you were coming to seek an audience with the King. From what he had told me of his visit south, I believe he told you and your Queen that he will not bend the knee."

"And while I respect the King's stance on the subject, I'm not the type to give up so easily," said Tyrion, his toes starting to go numb. "Could we by chance continue this conversation in the comforts of your homestead, somewhere that perhaps may hold a fireplace?"

"I couldn't agree more," rushed out Davos, he raised a shaking hand to direct Tyrion to a nearby door along the side of the courtyard's perimeter. "After you, Lord Tyrion."

Shuffling through a few inches of packed snow, Tyrion sighed as he pushed open the door that lead him into Winterfell's kitchen where a fire raged in a cobblestone framed oven and he was quick to be infront of it, warming his chilled hands.

Looking over his shoulder to where Davos and Sansa stood, Tyrion offered them a small smile. "I'm not as well adjusted to the cold as Ser Davos it would seem."

"Please take your time to warm up, my Lord. Jon still hasn't arrived from Eastwatch, he had sent word saying he planned to be back here before you arrived, but the King's Road in weather like this isn't so quickly travelled upon, as you well know coming from White Harbor." replied Sansa.

"Jon Snow isn't here?" questioned Tyrion, an emitted sigh of disappointment escaping his lungs.

Davos peeled back the thick hood from his head. "I don't mean to be a stickler for formalities, but it's, King Jon, my Lord. While you're a guest here in the North, I ask that you give the King the due respect he deserves, even when he's not in your current standing."

"Of course, Ser Davos, I was merely under the impression that, King Jon, would be meeting me here is all, I meant no offense."

"And he will, Lord Tyrion. My brother sent a raven a few days ago saying he was preparing his return to Winterfell to meet you, and if he says he'll be here, he'll be here." countered Sansa, moving to a stool tuckted away in the corner of the room, she took a seat.

"May I ask you something, Lord Tyrion?"
With no Jon to meet with, Tyrion's schedule to ascertain questions opened up tremendously. "Certainly, ask away, my Lady."

"Having come to know you fairly well during our time together in King's Landing, I find it strange you would have travelled all this way North to try without merit to get the King to bend the knee, unless you knew for certain, Jon would accept what it is you came here to offer. What is it you came here to offer?"

"I'm afraid that is something I cannot answer, the offer I come with is meant solely for your brother," answered Tyrion. "I haven't come to issue a threat if that is your concern."

"Aegon the Conqueror was a man of threats. I assume your Queen to be the same, she has come with Dragon's just as he did afterall." noted Sansa.

"Aegon Targaryen burned anyone who did not submit to him. Queen Daenerys would much rather have a peaceful outcome to bringing the North under her influence," Tyrion defended, wiggling his fingers as he felt warm blood coursing back through them to the very tips, he drew away from the cobblestone oven.

Sansa was apprehensive to believe him, but she didn't press him any further. She knew Tyrion to be a good man who had proven to her before he was a man of his word.

"May I ask you a question, my Lady?"

There was pregnant pause, but Sansa nodded.

"Do you know the type of man, Littlefinger is?"

"I've been warned, and in truth, I try to keep him an arms length away when he's not of use." Sansa replied.

Tyrion offered the red haired beauty a gentle smile. "I may not be your advisor, but if I were, I'd advise you to keep him a swords length away rather than an arms. He's not a man to be trusted."

Knowing full well the extent of Petyr Baelish's reputation, Sansa didn't defend the man to Tyrion. How could she when lies would be Petyr's only defence and Tyrion for the most part was an honest man, to a point.

Strolling aimlessly though the kitchen, peering inquisitively at bottles and barrels littered throughout the room, Tyrion paused. "I see there seems to be a lack of wine. Has it committed some injustice to your House that has caused you to banish it?"

Davos snorted. "A pitcher had been poured in preparation for you in the Great Hall, my Lord. But with winter here and the dead approaching, we've had to stockpile our supplies in order to ration, including the wine. I would suggest you make do with what you find in that pitcher, we can't spare anymore."

"I shall sip and nothing more, my good Ser," drawled Tyrion, his eyes shifting to the same door they had entered as it swung open to reveal the disheveled face of Jon Snow in it's doorway. "Ah, at last, the King in the North!"

"Jon!" proclaimed Sansa, shooting from her stool to her feet.

"Lady Sansa, Lord Tyrion," greeted Jon simply, his dark hair speckled with white snowflakes. "I see you made good time from White Harbor."
"The men you had collect me from the port were steadfast on getting me here promptly, I have them to thank for that," praised Tyrion. "Since my arrival here at your keep, Ser Davos has told me that you've rationed off your wine, so the sooner we speak, the sooner I may return south to where there is ample spirit to quench my thirst."

Jon viewed Tyrion closely, cautiously. He knew his rejection to return to Dragonstone would come with it's backlash, he just didn't expect it to come in the form of a reprimand by Daenerys' Hand. "We should get right to it then, what has her Grace sent you here for?"

"I appreciate your efforts to see me back south quickly, alas, the word I carry from the Queen is privvy to you, and you alone," returned Tyrion, his eyes flickering to Davos and Sansa to highlight they were not alone.

Brows linking together in suspicion, Jon nodded and reached behind himself to push open door he had just come in from. "Follow me, Lord Tyrion. We'll speak in the hall."

"As for us, your Grace?" questioned Davos.

"You may remain here. Keep company with Sansa. I will come seek you both once Tyrion and I have spoken," ordered Jon before turning to lead Tyrion from the kitchens.

"Jon!" called Sansa, halting her brother in his tracks.

Turning slowly back around, Jon met his sisters stern gaze while Tyrion and Davos watched on between the two siblings.

"I recieved word from Lord Robett Glover in your absense," informed Sansa as she approached her half-brother. "He's called for you to answer rumours of-" she paused to look at Tyrion before continuing. "Bending the knee to the Dragon Queen."

Jon huffed, slightly angered that besides preparing the Kingdom from the Long Night, it was rumours that fielded his spare time troubles. "Inform Lord Glover or any other Lord for that matter that I've bent no knee, and that the true aim of their focus should be smithing the Dragonglass given to them into weapons for use against the White Walkers. Not questioning my loyalties."

"You need to call a gathering of the Lord's and address their concerns," started Sansa but Jon held a hand up to cut her off.

"We'll discuss this later," stated Jon, his hard tone instructing her to let the subject die for now. The last thing he needed was to enter into diplomacy with Tyrion now knowing their was a growing feeling of dissent from the lower House's pledged to him. "If you'll follow me, Lord Tyrion."

Tyrion warily eyed the doorway that lead back into the cold of Winterfell's courtyard, never the less he pursued Jon's lead. The walk across the open ground wasn't catered to by banter between the two men but sound of their feet crunching the snow beneath them. Whatever inhabitants there were of the castle other the Stark's were stowed away, no doubt huddled closely by some source of warmth.

Pushing past a set of large doors and traversing a short set of intersecting hallways, Tyrion found himself lead into the Great Hall of Winterfell. A large fireplace, burning brightly behind the head table of hall, the size of which a full grown man could comfortably stand inside, breathed life and character to the sparesely decorated Hall.

"You've done wonders with the place," announced Tyrion, his eyes absorbing Winterfell's bleak, stone decor. "It's attained a cozy feeling since the last time I visited."
"The last time you visited, both of us spent the evening in the stables if I recall," Jon said grimly. "Being in the Hall this time around is definitely a step up."

"Going from Bastard of Winterfell to King in the North must be a leap up then," quipped Tyrion, catching sight of the pitcher Davos had forementioned, he beelined his way to the headtable.

"I didn't ask to be King, I was meant to die cloaked in black at the Wall with a name no one remembered. It was Robb who was meant for greater things," declared Jon, defending his own personal belief that he was unworthy to be King in the North.

"And in his lifetime, he did accomplish a many great things. Not many men could say they met my brother in the field of war, outwitted him and won, but your brother did." replied Tyrion, helping himself to a generous pour of wine.

Jon nodded. "My brother was a good man, a good leader. He was everything a Stark's supposed to be."

"And you aren't?" inquired Tyrion.

"I don't hold the Stark name, I'm a bastard. A mistake by my father. I'm nothin' but a man carrying a sword with a title he doesn't deserve," answered Jon, he looked to Tyrion then to the pitcher of wine. "Pour me one."

Tyrion smiled as he lifted the pitcher and filled a spare cup for Jon to take. "You know, I haven't had a decent drinking companion since I left King's Landing. The Queen has surrounded herself with advisors who don't partake in the art of drinking."

"Is drinkin' considered an art where you hail from?" asked Jon, receiving the glass Tyrion had poured for him.

"Anything one excels in is considered an art, isn't it?" proposed Tyrion, his mind toying with the possibility of approaching Jon about the status of his surname. "Take a master blacksmith for example, when he forges an exemplary blade, does one not say 'the man's made a work of art'?"

"A sword is something to be seen, it can hold meaning and a name, a show of craftsmanship," replied Jon, his right hand unconsciously coming to grip the white wolf head pummel of Longclaw at his hip. "Drinkin' is just... drinkin'."

"A sword is still a sword, it's made for killing, not for artistic purposes. I see no difference between a sword and good wine, neither are sculpted busts or elaborate tapestry's, but yet one can could call them art."

There was a moment in which Jon raked over Tyrion's words thoroughly but still didn't comprehend what the dwarf was trying to imply.

Releasing an exasperated breath, Tyrion took a drink from his cup. "In not so convoluted words, what I am trying to say is being a Stark holds the same meaning as art. You and your brother Robb both fall from the loins of Eddard, you both were called King, you both lead great hosts of men to battle, the only difference between you both was that he held the name Stark and you Snow."

"Being a Snow is not the same as being a Stark, you know that as well as I." said Jon, inwardly he was proud to be compared to the likes of Robb, the only other member of his family he idolized more the his father during the time of his youth.

"And what if you were a Stark, you would be the same then, would you not? 'A good man, a good
"leader'." suggested Tyrion.

"By your reasoning, I suppose." Jon conceded.

Tyrion took yet another drink from his cup. "The Queen is willing to give you that name. She is willing to legitimize you as the liege Lord of House Stark."

Jon froze at the offer, his family name being something he'd always coveted throughout his life, and though there was a part of him eager to accept, he knew it came with strings attached, another part of him told him that if he was to be a Stark, his father would have named him as such before his passing.

"Well, King Jon? What do you say, do you care to swap Snow for Stark?"

"... I would be besmirking the name of my father if I accepted. He didn't intend to name me Stark," answered Jon, he sounded torn on whether he believed his own voice. "If I took you up on your offer I would be spittin' on his grave. I can't do that, no, I won't do that."

Tyrion was briefly dejected by Jon's answer, but he knew by Daenerys opinion, Jon's refusal of the Stark name could be expected. "You're a very honorable man, my King. You honor the dead even when they aren't here to take offense."

"My honor isn't what you've come here to discuss," interjected Jon. "Infact, why have you come here, Lord Tyrion, Is this Daenerys Targaryen's way of showin' her displeasure for my refusal to return to Dragonstone? Having you pester me, or did she expect me to bend the knee if she gave me the Stark name?"

"Displeasure doesn't quite cut it when she heard your refusal I'm afraid, and no, for all intents and purposes, I did not come here simply to offer you the Stark name in the hopes of you pledging your sword," Tyrion noted, he threw back his head and downed the rest of his wine, hoping to gain the liquid courage he needed to present and persuade Jon into the proposal. "You need all the help you can get against the White Walkers, and Daenerys is willing to--"

"For a price," Jon interjected. He knew Tyrion was here for more than self-esteem enhancing visit.

"For a price," Tyrion agreed. "Everything comes at a price, lucky for you, your's comes at discount."

"Enough talk, why are you here?" asked Jon, growing annoyed.

"Thing's of this matter are best preceded by small talk and a few cups of wine, the wine especially so. Shall I refill your cup?"

"Out with it, Tyrion. I don't have time for your word games," growled Jon, to prove his point he turned his cup topsy turvy and let the wine spill out onto the floor.

Tyrion looked to the puddle of amber wine at Jon's feet as he topped off his own cup with more wine. "You know, in some parts of the world a man would be killed for wasting good wine."

Jon glared and Tyrion nearly cowered.

"I'm here regarding a proposition of marriage." announced Tyrion at last.

A brief sense of disbelief held onto Jon, but he shook it off. "I've no say in that, not that I don't give my blessings. From what I've heard, you treated her fair."
Tyrion froze with his cup to his lips as he realized Jon was inferring the marriage he was seeking was to be between himself and Sansa.

"If she agrees, I won't stand in the way," continued Jon.

"I am not here to wed Sansa!" gushed Tyrion, his face tinted a tinge red with blush.

Jon raised a brow and brought a hand up to run through his unruly locks of hair. "Who are you here to wed?"

"You truly are dense, King Snow. I'm here to secure you allegiance to the Queen, I am proposing marriage between you and her."

Had Jon not bore witness to walking deadmen he may have let his jaw drop at the preposterous proposal. A bastard and a Targaryen? Never had there been such an arrangement before and the thought of it alone seemed impossible for him to comprehend.

"I take your silence to mean you do not refuse?" Tyrion presumed gently.

Jon stared at Tyrion. "You're serious?"

"Do you not take me for a serious man? Of course I'm serious. With you unwillingness to bend the knee and my sympathy to not see you, Sansa, and all the Northmen burned by dragon fire, I have found this to be a compromise." Tyrion explained, he took a pull of his wine and flopped into the seat usually reserved for the Lord or Lady of Winterfell.

"So, I face Daenerys dragon's if I refuse again?" questioned Jon, he felt as though a dagger was being held to his throat.

"Well what do you expect when you don't bend the knee? Eventually she'll conquer the western lands, the south and the east, which only leaves one direction to go. North. The Queen fully intends to have all Seven Kingdom's under her. Why not willingly assist her in completing this? You become the Queen's Warden of sorts, but you'll save face to the Northern Lord's by retaining the title of King by marrying the Queen, and you gain more influence in Westeros than the North has ever had before. You wouldn't be losing, my King. You would be gaining."

Jon looked to the empty cup in his hand, regretting the spur of the moment dumping of the wine. "I'll need time to consider."

Tyrion emptied the contents of his cup in one fowl swoop down his throat. "You have the night. I leave for Dragonstone in the morning. I expect you will be returning with me, if not..."

With an image of Winterfell scorched to the resemblance of what Harrenhall was said to be, Jon nodded knowing full well the repercussions of what his refusal to the proposal could be. "If I don't accept, you will be the first to know, Lord Tyrion. I'll have room and board prepared for you for the night."

"Ah, the old northern custom. Will I be brought bread and salt as well?" asked Tyrion, helping himself to another cup of wine.

"If you can stomach it," Jon replied, he peered at Tyrion with a thoughtfull look etched as a facial expression.

"You have something to ask me, I can see it in your eyes," commented Tyrion, he leaned back comfortably into the ornate seat of Winterfell's headtable.
"Daenerys... This proposal. Is this by her wishes or have you pressed this upon her as well?" asked Jon, he walked forward and grabbed the wine pitcher from in front of Tyrion and refilled his empty cup.

"While I will admit this proposal was conceived by me, the Queen wasn't fully against the idea. Before we had left Meereen for Westeros she already had the understanding that the best way to secure an ally in this country was through marriage," answered Tyrion.

"She understood the concept, she didn't expect to be marrying me," stated Jon, he took an extra long pull from his cup. "Or did she?"

"Unfortunately, she did not. I think truthfully she would have preferred you to have bent the knee, but at the same time, after speaking to you both I don't truly feel that this marriage would be the worst thing to happen to either of you."

Jon didn't care to admit it, but there was a small, indecipherable something within his heart that told him it truly wasn't the worst thing to ever occur to him, still it was a heavy proposal to consider and he found himself flopping down onto one of the long benches of the hall's lower seating area.

"Despite the obvious benefits that this alliance provides to both of you, I can tell there is some form of connection between you two on a personal level. Whether it's physical attraction, which, with my own eyes would assume to be true, or an emotional one, I am unsure. But there is something there, that much I am sure of." voiced Tyrion.

Taking a drink, Jon paused. He didn't need to convince himself of Daenerys beauty, he had on several occasions during his swift stay on Dragonstone been caught staring at her. Was physical attraction enough to make a marriage? His father and Catelyn Stark were renownedly in love, so much so there were many people across the Northern Kingdom that believed Eddard Stark was incapable of having an affair, the results of which spawned Jon. Would he and Daenerys have that same affection for one another someday? Would he seek love outside of their union as his father did?

Jon took another drink. One thing was clear to him, the alliance it provided would give the North better odds when the darkness of the Long Night were to finally come. He had even heard story's of Robb having promised to wed a Frey girl so that he and his Army could march south across the Twins, sure Robb didn't honor his agreement with the Frey's in the end, but what did it matter anymore when entire upper echelon of the Frey household was said to have been murdered. The main point to Jon being that Robb had done what needed to be done to make progress.

"Your silence unsettles me, a good host entertains his guests," chastised Tyrion, he dropped from his seat and plucked the pitcher of wine up from the head table before joining Jon on the Great Hall's lower floor. "Can I tempt you with another glass?"

Looking down to the half-man before him, Jon held his glass out for Tyrion to refill. "If I were to agree to this... alliance. I would need guarantees that Daenerys will provide men and weapons to fight the Army of the Dead. She may even have put aside her conquest of the Seven Kingdom's to do that. Is she willing to do that?"

Tyrion carefully tilted the pitcher of wine so the red liquid flowed into Jon's cup. "Given the option of conquering the south only to be Queen of the frozen corpses, or go north to defend the realms of man, I would say she would choose the second option."

“You would say, I don’t need what you say. I need her guarantee,” said Jon, he brought his cup to his mouth and let it drain freely down his throat.
“Refill?” asked Tyrion, impressed with the other man's drinking.

Jon grunted but held his glass out once again.

“As the Queen’s Hand, I speak for her. And I guarantee you will have all the necessary support you require and more.” vowed Tyrion as he poured another glass. “Are you happy now, or are you incapable of feeling that?”

“I’m debating entering into a marriage with the woman whose father killed several members of my family, not mention the same woman who just recently burned the father and brother of one of my best mates. Happiness eludes me.” scowled Jon, he looked down to his cup wondering how many he need take to drown out his sorrows.

“The Tarly’s?” ventured Tyrion.

“Yes the bloody Tarly’s,” confirmed Jon, he took a pull from his cup and fell onto one of the long benches that ran the length of Great Hall’s dining tables.

“In the Queen’s defense, she did offer to spare their lives in exchange for pledges of fealty. They refused. She reacted... Poorly.” said Tyrion, he held a somber tone as the burning of the Tarly’s did not sit well with him.

“What happens if one of the Northern Lord’s choose to not bend the knee, will I have to watch as her Dragon’s burn them as well? You can’t demand loyalty through fear,” grumbled Jon.

“It was a terrible thing, there’s no denying that. But if every Lord and Lady in Westeros refuses to bend the knee, what is she to do? An example needed to be made, regrettably it was the Tarly’s bad fortune that it turned out to be them,” replied Tyrion, he put down the pitcher of wine at the table Jon sat at before joining the troubled Northman on the bench. “As for your Northern Lord predicament, I would assume in your position as the Warden of the North once you’ve married, it would fall under your responsibility to maintain the Lord’s of your Kingdom remain faithfully allegiance to the crown.”

Jon closed his eyes, knowing the people of the North would be hard to sell on taking the knee to Daenerys, many of whom had family members who fought for his father during Robert’s Rebellion. Blood had been spilled to rid Westeros of Aerys Targaryen and now Jon was entertaining the idea of having to back his daughters claim to retake it, ignorantly disregarding the sacrifices made by the North to depose the Mad King.

"I have only the night to consider?" asked Jon.

"You have until I reach White Harbor, if that provides you any peace of mind," confirmed Tyrion. "If you don't return with me to Dragonstone, the current offer will be withdrawn and I'm quite positive you won't like what the next one could be."

"Threats won't persuade me to accept," growled Jon.

"That wasn't a threat, my good King, I was simply relating a fact," Tyrion countered, his eyes drifted to his cup and took a swig.

Jon downed his wine and placed his cup down on the table, having been to the Wall several times over the past few weeks he knew just as any other that the defenses there were minimal at best, not even the gallant Knight's of the Vale on their noble steeds would be enough to change the favour in the battle to come. Victory or at least a chance of one, he was fowl to accept relief heavily on the support Daenerys could provide. But in exchange for the North, it wasn't something he truly bring himself to surrender.
"I'll wed your Queen, take her as my wife, I'll do all she asks of me on one condition," announced Jon.

Tyrion grew guarded though he beckoned for Jon to carry on. "The North remains free. I'll keep the title of King and I'll ensure the North maintains its allegiance to the crown so long as I live."

"So long as you live isn't so reassuring, considering word among the men of your House is you've died once already," said Tyrion, willing to indulge the topic of Northman's condition. "Let's say you do by some chance happen to live to the ripe old age of your twilight years, what would occur upon the date of your death? Wouldn't any potential offspring produced during your union with the Queen then inherit your Northern Crown? I don't see any reason to delay the North's submission."

"The North was never meant to be ruled a southerner. We hold our own Gods here, our own customs and laws. The North belongs to the North. Upon my death the crown should fall to Sansa or whoever else bears the name Stark." said Jon firmly.

"You would rob your own children of their inheritance?" questioned Tyrion.

"I'm a bastard, Tyrion. I suspect whatever fruit bore from Daenerys will take the name Targaryen, and Targaryen's aren't Stark's. They can't inherit what they're not entitled to."

Tyrion mulled Jon's condition over, knowing that while in this circumstance he spoke on behalf of the Queen, he knew the condition in which Jon sought was not something he could agree to without Daenerys' consent. "This will have to be raised with the Queen... Also, by my account, if you were to let the Queen legitimize you, your children--"

Jon cut him off. "Send a Raven."

Slightly miffed, Tyrion relented. "That I will. But the time in which we will have to wait for a reply can't be spared. We will still need to depart for Dragonstone in the morning."

"You expect me to make the journey knowin' full well she could refuse my request?" inquired Jon, he gave a shake of his head.

"I traveled all the way here knowing full well you could refuse."

"Why are you so intent on rushin' this proposal through?" questioned Jon.

"You need an ally to fight the dead whom you've persistently been telling us are on your doorstep, now whether you care to admit it or not, you know Daenerys is your best true chance of fending them off when they come," responded Tyrion, he reached for the pitcher of wine and refilled their glasses, Jon's cup receiving the last few dribbles of the red liquid. "Equally, the Queen needs the support of a mainland House to reinforce her claim to the throne, a statement of which to sway the Houses of the south to realize she isn't a foreign invader as my sister portrays her to be."

"She comes from Essos."

"Yet she was born on Dragonstone."

Jon looked to the rafters of the Great Hall, he was unable to refute Tyrion on the subject any longer. He either put his hope in Daenerys accepting the North's independence and take him as her husband or meet the dead alone with the force he had available to him. With the scale of success against the Night King leaning heavily to the latter, Jon knew he had to risk traveling to Dragonstone even if the Queen were only to refuse him.
Bringing his focus back down to Tyrion, Jon grabbed his cup from the table, swallowed the last bit of wine it held and gave his answer. "We leave for White Harbor in the morning."

Chapter End Notes

I may come back to edit this one and touch on a few things later on, but I'm happy with it. It gets me to where I'd like to be for this story at last. :) Hope you enjoyed it, It should roughly conclude all the questioning phase of the proposal. And open Dany and Jon bonding.

Until the next chapter folks, thanks for reading!
A Bear's Greeting

Chapter Summary

Jon returns to Dragonstone to settle the alliance with the Dragon Queen.

Chapter Notes

Well this one took a lot longer to write than I anticipated, the start was easy then I was plagued with writers block, on the bright side while I was blocked on this one I pretty much drafted the next two chapters lol, so those will be out quickly once I've done some editing and a few tweaks. Also I may come back to this one at some point and tweak it, the pace of it feels to much like Stop. Go. Stop. Go. Choppy structure I suppose.

Thank you to everyone who has been kind enough to leave a comment and give me kudos - I take them as high fives- they are all greatly appreciated.

So without further ado, I present to you, Chapter 8!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Wolf Fangs & Dragon Fire

Chapter Eight: A Bear's Greeting

Oars slapping against the surface of black water, propelling their small row boat forward with the soft flowing motion of the inlets waves, the vessels passengers watched as the shore of Dragonstone neared closer with every earnest stroke of the paddle until the bottom of the boats hull skidded against the rough shallows of sand and rock.

Hand gripping the hilt of Longclaw at his waist, Jon cast a look over his shoulder to Arya and Tyrion, both seemingly uneasy at having to sit by one another. Arya's deep rooted dislike for anyone Lannister, and Tyrion's discomfort stemming from having married the young girls older sister, and pressed her brother into marrying the woman all Northener's had taken an angered stance to in light of who her father was.

Feet sinking down into Dragonstone's sandy shore as he disembarked the boat, Jon's vision soared up the islands high cliffs to the towering fortress that perched itself atop. While having been here before, this time around he found it to be all the more intimidating as within it's Valyrian constructed walls lay in wait, his potential future wife. Daenerys Targaryen, Mother of Dragon's.

"It's always a sight to behold, isn't it?" voiced Tyrion, as he tossed himself over the boats rim and joined Jon at his side, his eyes locked upon Dragonstone as well.

"I always thought Winterfell was bleak, but at least it was home... This place is..."
"The home of conquerors?" supplied Tyrion unsurely. "I doubt we'll be staying here much longer, it's only a matter of time before we march on King's Landing."

Jon looked to Tyrion. "Is that so?"

"With your support to her claims, it won't be long before House's throughout the Seven Kingdom's start turning from my sister and pledge themselves to the Queen. Seizing the Red Keep is the next logical step to securing the throne I would presume." Tyrion replied, his eyes drifted from Jon as he took notice of a tall figure stepping from the islands winding pathway. It took a few blinks and a shake of his head to confirm the figure as none other than Jorah Mormont.

"Whose this?" asked Jon curiously, watching as the man drew nearer to them on the beachhead.

"Ser Jorah of Bear Island's, House Mormont. He was a former advisor to the Queen... And a man afflicted by greyscale I was told," murmured Tyrion, taking a few tentative steps to welcome the thinly framed man.

"Lord Tyrion," greeted Jorah briefly, his focus shifting onto Jon. "Your Grace."

"It's been far too long, Ser Jorah," returned Tyrion, studying the open skin of the man before him closely, surprised to find not a single scale upon the Northman's flesh. "When is it you arrived?"

"A fortnight ago from the mainland, the Queen has seen fit to reinstate me in her service," responded Jorah curtly, hardpressed to forget there was a time when the Lannister dwarf advocated for him to be exiled from Meereen and the Queen's service. "Queen Daenerys has instructed me to inform you, King Snow, that upon receiving the letter requesting your Kingdom remain independent from her sovereign rule, the Queen has chosen to allow you your request."

Having just climbed from the boat, Arya came to stand at Jon's side with furrowed brows. "And who gave her the right to allow us our own right to rule, we're already a free Kingdom, she's not conquered us."

Jorah looked from Jon to the stout girl with evident surprise sketched on his face. "And you are?"

"Arya Stark, daughter to Eddard Stark and the King's sister," replied Arya firmly, one hand going to rest on the hilt of Needle just as Jon rested on Longclaw.

"Your father was a good man," noted Jorah.

"He was," confirmed Arya, stepping from Jon's side she went to plant herself infront of the man who'd been dispatched by the Dragon Queen. "So, tell me, Ser Jorah of House Mormont. Are there strings attached to the Queen's acceptance?"

"Arya," Jon warned, he knew her to be brash at times and far from diplomatic. He had hoped to keep her in Winterfell, but she wouldn't even acknowledge the idea after reuniting with him briefly after his return from Eastwatch and his talk with Tyrion.

"It's quite alright, your Grace," intervened Jorah, but he turned from Arya to address Jon in his response. "The Queen has permitted the North's independence on the condition that it will remain independent as long as you hold Kingship over it."

Jon's posture sank as his mind grew troubled. "And if a time should come that I do not hold that Kingship?"

"The specifics of that will have to be discussed at a later time. If you accept these terms as they are..."
right now then proceed on your way up those steps, if not, the Queen is prepared to have the Greyjoy boy and his ship ferry you back North." answered Jorah.

Head lowered for a moment, Jon mused the present terms indecisively. "You are Jorah, son of Jeor Mormont, are you not?"

Jorah gave a slow nod. "I am."

"Then as one Northener to another, what would you have me do?"

"You wouldn't want my opinion, your Grace." replied Jorah.

"I always heeded the wisdom and advice of your father when I served as his squire in the Watch, what reason is there that I shouldn't heed yours?" inquired Jon.

"I've been in the company of Daenerys Targaryen for quite some time. I've watched her grow from a sprout to a flower, I've seen the things she's done, seen what she's accomplished. Knowing all that I know about her, if I were you, I would have bent the knee and surrendered the North to her long ago." answered Jorah, his solemn tone being a tell tale for Jon to see the man's answer as sincere honesty.

Jon mulled over Jorah's words, despite his concerns to what a time for the North would be without him as it's King, he felt reinforced in his belief that marrying Daenerys was the right course of action. "I see you think quite highly of her."

A look closely resembling a pained expression past over Jorah, a sense of emotional agony at having been made host to the man who had come to marry the Queen he loved unconditionally. Clearing his throat, Jorah nodded. "She's a great woman, the Queen. You would be wise to do good by her, your Grace. Many a men would gladly defend her honour if someone were to tarnish it."

"I have no intention of doing her wrong, you have my word, Ser Jorah." vowed Jon.

"Well," Tyrion cut-in after a lengthy moment of silence. "If you two are finished with introductions and Ser Jorah has cleared up any concern you still held regarding the North's independence, might I suggest we continue on our way to the keep?"

Glancing once more to the grand fortress, Jon swallowed hard. Readying himself for what lay ahead. "Aye, let's get this over with."

Tyrion gave a slap to the small of Jon's back before setting off for the winding pathway with the others in tow. The Ironborn men who had rowed them to shore setting back off from the beach for their ship anchored out in sea.

Each foot he put forward on the next ascending step, Jon could feel his nerves start to set in. It didn't help that the usually hard to silence Tyrion and recently acquainted Jorah Mormont had gone deafly quiet, even Arya kept to herself. Suddenly, there was a cringe-worthy screech as two large Dragon's swept in overhead from behind the battlements of Dragonstone.

Flying in a near synchronized motion, Arya's mouth fell open at the sight, a gust of air from a flap of their powerful wings threw her hair into disarray as they soared across the open sky, playfully nipping at one another as they went.

"Direwolfs doesn't seem nearly as impressive anymore, now do they," commented Jon as he dropped down a few steps to where Arya stood in disbelief.
"Those were..." mumbled Arya.

"Dragon's," answered Tyrion lightly. "They don't call the Queen the Mother of Dragon's without due cause."

Looking to have a word with his awe struck sister alone, Jon looked up the pathway to where Tyrion and Jorah stood. "You two carry on, we need a moment to talk."

"We're tardily late as it is," said Tyrion, but the dark glare Jon shot him had the dwarf continuing on his way at Jorah's side, the two men conversing amongst one another as they went.

Observing the winged creatures till they turned to specks amidst the clouds in the far distance of the sky, Arya turned slowly to look at Jon. "Are you certain you want to marry her?"

"Would you rather the North face her Dragon's than have them as their ally?" questioned Jon in reply. "From the short time I spent with the Queen, she seems to have a good heart."

"You're calling her Queen already?"

"She's to be my wife, Arya, and she is the rightful Queen, as good as a man Robert Baratheon was, it was the Targaryen's who made the Iron Throne. Don't think of this as me takin' the knee, it isn't. It's an alliance," said Jon, hoping she could see it from his point of view. "Besides, there are worse people in the world to be married to."

Arya arched a brow. "Such as?"

"Sansa married Ramsay Bolton, I doubt Daenerys can be any worse than that sadistic prick."

"Why marry at all? It's not to late you know, we can still go back down and have Theon take us to White Harbor," tried Arya.

Jon glowered. "I gave my word to Tyrion that I'd marry her if she intended to let the North remain free, she did. I don't plan on backin' out after I've given my word."

"I don't see any difference in you marrying her and us saying we'll fight for her if the North remains independent," Arya grumbled with a sigh.

Jon shook his head. "She wants reassurances of our loyalty, a marriage between us provides her that, and honestly, I don't blame her. She's supplied us with Dragonglass and asked nothin' in return, she's offered us her support against the Night King. This is the right thing to do, an alliance can't be built on all take and no give."

"You sound like father."

"Father knew when to sue for peace and when to raise the sword, there are some things in life just not worth risking the lives of men for," said Jon, he threw an arm around her shoulder and pulled her to his side. 'Come on now, you're the one who insisted on comin' with me and I don't trust you runnin' about this island alone."

Arya's forehead creased as she squinted up at him. "Have I ever given you concern to not trust me?"

Jon chuckled. "No, but maybe that's just not yet."

Huffing slightly, Arya walked with Jon up to the top of the pathway where Jorah and Tyrion waited to lead them through the dark halls of Dragonstone, the walk while largely uneventful still served to
entrench the tangled knot of nerves forming in the pit of Jon's stomach.

Coming to a stop outside the two large doors Jon knew to be the entryway to Dragonstone's throne room. Jorah motioned to the gruff looking Dothraki guarding the door to grant passage, Jon took in one last, deep, nerve calming breath as the doors peeled back to unveil a room packed full of Dothraki, at the top of the short set of steps leading to the throne engulfed by jagged rock stood Daenerys. Her long flowing silver hair pulled back with braids elegantly running throughout, her body complimented in a long, cascading white dress with several three headed dragon motifs embroidered in its design.

At the Queen's immediate side stood Missandei, she herself dressed in a cocktail of red and black Targaryen colours, a stark contrast to Daenerys white. A few feet from her stood Varys, the bald mans hands tucked into his sleeves over his plump belly.

Feeling Jon freeze at his side, Tyrion smiled and gave a tug to the hem of the Northman's sleeve.

"Hmm?" mumbled Jon, looking down to Tyrion.

"Everyone's waiting on you, my King. We best keep moving, no?" asked Tyrion.

Head bouncing in a nod, Jon stepped into the throne room, a few slow steps at first, but it built with confidence as he reached the bottom of the stairs. Climbing them he felt a certainty within him, a certainty that he was doing the right thing, for the right reasons. He stopped at the top, eyes locked with those of Daenerys own.

"Your Grace," greeted Jon cautiously.

"My King," Daenerys returned, her eyes washing over him, taking in the heavy fur cloak that bulked his shoulders.

"Well then," announced Tyrion as he came to stand in between them from behind. "Without a Septon here to officiate, I take it upon myself as Hand of the Queen to lawfully wed you together."

"You know the words?" Daenerys asked skeptically.

Tyrion's face scrunched. "Parts of them. Enough to make it legitimate I should think."

Jon felt his heart begin to pick up rhythm in his chest, a steady drum roll as he lost himself in the violet rings of Daenerys eyes.

"As we are without a Weirwood tree, I take it you do not object to wedding her majesty in the light of the Seven?" asked Tyrion.

Words lost to him, Jon shook his head to and fro. His palms damp and his stomach twisting into a knot.

"Let us proceed then," announced Tyrion. "Seeing as we are not short of a cloak, King Jon, may you cloak the Queen as a showing of your intent to keep her safe and under your protection."

Absentmindedly, Jon reaching up for the clasp of his cloak, letting it slide from his shoulders so he could swing it about to his front. In turn Daenerys pivoted so her back was to him, showcasing the open cut back of her dress, her porcelain skin looking smooth and inviting, his mouth dried and he nearly thanked the Gods when he draped the heap of his fur cloak across her shoulders, hiding the tempting sight from him.
Turning back around Daenerys looked oddly out of place with the dark cloak and its grey fur bunched up around her neck, yet the warmth it gave her in the stone hall and the scent of Jon lingering still on it put her to ease.

Standing in his gambeson with Longclaw strapped to his waist and without his cloak, Jon looked more ready for a battle than a wedding. Making him all the more eager to proceed and be done with the whole thing were the fixated eyes of the hundred or more amassed Dothraki upon him.

The ceremony was a simple affair, relying mostly on what Tyrion could remember of the wedding's he had witness throughout his life, the most recent being Joffrey and Margaery Tyrell. With no truly devoted faith for Daenerys to lay claim to, and no weirwood tree for Jon to be married under in light of the Old Gods, the Faith of the Seven was the reigning religion to their matrimony. Both made their vows, pledging themselves in forever devotion to one another, their hands held together and intertwined with a ribbon made up of both House Stark and Targaryen colours. The ceremony ending with Tyrion calling on them to kiss.

Chancing a glance to where Arya stood by the rooms tall doors, her arms folded over her chest, Jon was comforted when he saw her nod as though giving him her approval. Turning his vision back to Daenerys, he took the initial step toward her, she herself meeting him halfway.

Lowering his head slightly so his forehead rest against hers, Jon brought his lips to her, it was short and simple but a jolt was sent through him, eagerly demanding more while Daenerys broke from the kiss half intending to lean back in for another as she found an inner desire that had laid dormant awoken within her.

Tyrion clapped his hands together, bringing both Jon and Daenerys back from their inner dwellings. "Bring the wine, tables and food, let us celebrate the union of Westeros' rightful King and Queen!"

The ensuing feast was a rambunctious event filled with drunken Dothraki staggering about, and despite Daenerys best efforts to avert the Dothraki custom of making her wedding an eventful one, the wine inevitably led to the death of one Dothraki -still making their wedding by Dothraki standards, a very boring affair-. 

Seated at the headtable in front of the jagged stone carved throne were Daenerys and her closest advisors on one side, with Jon and Arya on the other. Having been preoccupied with speaking to those on their opposite side for most of the evening, Jon finally turned to Daenerys during a break in her conversation with Missandei. Watching her as she toyed around with the ribbon used in their wedding ceremony. His cloak still draped about her shoulder, the fur nestled against her cheeks.

"If it should please you, your Grace, I can retake my cloak," offered Jon, drawing her focus as she raised her bowed head to look at him.

Putting forward a teasing smile, Daenerys couldn't help but stare longingly at him. The desire brought from the brief kiss still fresh in her mind. "Are you cold, my King?"

Jon mouth twitched with a subdued smile. "I've braced colder weather, it's just a shame..." he let his sentence die in hesitance of whether to finish or not.

Viewing him expectantly, Daenerys slipped a hand over his as if to encourage him to continue. "A Shame?"

Jon looked away. "I'm no good at this... The small talk."

Ignoring his defense to not finish his prior sentence, Daenerys gave his hand a squeeze. "What's a
Feeling slightly encouraged, Jon twisted his wrist so hand turned under hers and their fingers could interlock. "... It's a shame that cloak hides your dress, you look... You look beautiful in it."

Flustered from the compliment, Daenerys simply smiled, recalling the conversation they shared during his last visit to Dragonstone. "Seems as though you do know how to flatter one after all."

"I've come for different reasons than I did before," replied Jon, her smile was infectious and he couldn't help but bear one of his own.

Daenerys glanced to their linked hands, curiously wondering if this was the start of something more than a mere strategic alliance.

"Lord Tyrion mentioned you may be marchin' on the capital soon," commented Jon, hoping to keep the conversation alive.

"Is that truly what you want to discuss right now?" asked Daenerys.

Viewing her lush lips, Jon felt his head shake. "I've other things in mind," he admitted.

The newlyweds were knocked from their moment alone as a drunken Tyrion Lannister swaying unstably about his feet, approached them from across the table, his arm held high above his head, cup of wine in hand.

"Has wine been drunk?" asked Tyrion, his words slurred.

"It has," said Jon, for good measure he pushed his cup of wine forward for the dwarf to see.

"Perfect!" exclaimed Tyrion, his brows furrowing together as a deep belch escaped him. "Time to compensate the wedding!"

Shifting in his seat, Jon narrowed his eyes at Tyrion. "Compensate?"

Tyrion brought his glass down to his mouth and took a swig before correcting himself. "Consummate with a bedding!"

Jon nearly choked on wine as he took a drink and watched as Tyrion rally the amassed Dothraki into a series of chants and cheers, ebbing both he and Daenerys to depart and consummate the marriage. While the Dothraki chanted a garbled, broken version of the common tongue, the message was clear and Daenerys was first to rise to the challenge as she rose from her seat, pulling his held hand with her.

Standing at her side, Jon followed her lead around the headtable and down the short set of stairs that led to her throne. A path through the inebriated Dothraki was made by Jorah Mormont, the man escorting them the entire way through the corridors of Dragonstone till they reached the doorway of her personal quarters.

"I can escort the King to a room of his own if you wish, Khaleesi," offered Jorah, eyeing Jon as though he didn't trust him to be in the same room as Daenerys alone.

"The King is my husband, Ser Jorah, I don't expect him to room anywhere but our quarters," replied Daenerys firmly. "Nor will I need you to be guarding my door, you may return to the throne room."

Jorah opened his mouth to argue, but Daenerys cut him off. "That will be everything for this
evening, Ser Jorah."

Grudgingly the lanky man from Bear Island gave a humble bow and left their presence with a heavy foot to his walk, leaving them alone to the stone layed hallway illuminated by the faint flickering of torches posted along the wall.

"Please forgive, Ser Jorah, he's a devoted man," said Daenerys at last.

"I served his father, he was just as devoted to the Watch," replied Jon hesitantly. "But what he said bears truth, I understand our marriage is an alliance, your Grace, if you would like to retire alone, I can find my own quarters."

Daenerys shook her head, running her thumb gently over his knuckles. "That isn't what I wish."

Jon felt his mouth run dry, his eyes falling onto the ornate dragon sculpted handle of her bedroom door. "What is it you do wish for?"

Releasing his hand, Daenerys drifted to the door and entered the room, a subtle sway in her hips as she left Jon in the hall watching after her, his calm disposition shattered as he saw her shimmy his cloak from her shoulders, showing off the low cut back of her dress as the cloak sagged to the floor, the sight luring him into the room and shutting the door closed behind him.

Leaning back against the door, he found his breathing off key as she strode to the end of her bed, pulling on a dragon emblem clasp that unleashed the garment from one shoulder, sending the white gown to a pool around her feet. Even though her backside was to him, his eyes combed hungrily over her milky curves.

Forearm draped over her chest as she half turned to face him, Daenerys felt a rush of self-consciousness hit all at one, wondering if he found her pleasing to the eye. "You aren't joining me..."

Pushing off from the door, Jon fumbled with the buckle of his belt till it and Longclaw fell to the floor with a clunk, his hands quickly moving to the knots of leather holding his gambeson together, yanking and tugging them loose, he pulled the cumbersome armour up over his head, next came his shirt, but as he began to lift, the scars of the Night's Watch treachery made Daenerys eyes widen and he froze, realizing he had never truly divulged his return from death.

Surprised when she saw him motion to lower his shirt back down, Daenerys was at his front in a second, the self-consciousness she had felt was forced aside as she caught the hem of his shirt, pushing it back up to show every pink, indent of a scar on his chest. The tips of her fingers gently tracing the deep grooves of them till she hovered at the one over his heart.

"How..." she whispered.

The memory of Olly's gaunt, lifeless face as he dangled by the end of a noose surfaced and Jon reached to pull her hand away, not yet ready to share that part of his life.

Resisting as he tried to move her hand, Daenerys looked to him a twinkle of defiance dancing in the corner of her eye, unwilling to let him shroud away from her at such an intimate moment. Eventually, she could feel him relent, loosening his hold, freeing her to push his shirt up over his head and assist him in pulling it from his arms.

Her hands sprang up to clasp the sides of his face, bringing him forcefully to her lips, his arms slipping around her waist. They turned and shuffled in a heat of flurried, passionate kisses until Daenerys felt her back pressed up against the cool, coarse stone of the rooms wall, breaking from him in a husky pant.
Kicking his boots off, Jon let his hands roam over her body, learning every curve with a gentle caress as she hastily undid the string holding his trousers up, her hands shoving them down past his hips. Far too consumed in the moment to step free of them Jon cupped her bottom and lifted, feeling her lips coil around his waist as she sank down onto his mast with a shuddered sigh.

Throwing her head back with a soft moan as he began to gain rhythm, Daenerys dragged her fingers through the curls of his hair, knotting themselves in it as he grinded her against the wall, her lips coming to press against his forehead.

His body flexing with every thrust, he kissed aimlessly about her collarbone till he drifted to her breasts, taking the buds of her nipple in his mouth, his hands clenching the soft mounds of her rear, supporting her elevated weight as he worked them to a state of nirvana.

Stumbling backward onto her bed as her legs tightened around him, Daenerys fell on top of him, shifting effortlessly to a mounted position, gliding herself in repetition. Steam formed upon the window panes as sweat trickled over their heated skin, their hands lost to one another's body till her toes curled and his legs shook, both collapsing side by side with heavy breaths.

Rolling so she curled into the crook of his arm, Daenerys rested he head against his chest, a coy smile playing on her mouth. "I see you've done this before."

Head lulled to the side, Jon peered down to the crown of her head, his arm holding her close against his side. "Did you think I hadn't?"

"I thought the Night's Watch had a vow."

"I hadn't always been a crow," replied Jon, absently in the recess of his mind he thought of Ygritte, then to all the arrows that came with her memory.

"Crow?" asked Daenerys, lifting her head slightly to meet his focus, unfamiliar with the nickname of sorts given to the watchers of the Wall.

"It's what the Wildling's call men of the Watch," he answered.

Daenerys took the information in, her fingers going back to tracing the scars of his chest. "Was the one you did it with before, was she a Wildling?"

"She was, but she was more than that, she was... my first, I loved her."

There was a tinge of a feeling that felt something akin to jealousy as she listened to him, but she suppressed the feeling as best she could, knowing full well she didn't know him well enough or long enough to have the right to claim his heart. "Where is she now?"

Jon closed his eyes and let his head fall to the pillow. "A brother of the Watch saw to her end at Castle Black."

While he didn't say it, Daenerys could feel the sorrow and resentment in his voice for the woman's death, but she didn't pursue the topic any further, instead choosing to nuzzle her cheek against his chest with closed eyes, taking in his scent.

Laying in quiet for a moment, Jon began to think of how little in return he knew of the woman he called wife, hoping to hear her story, he found her fast asleep, her warm breath tickling his chest. He watched her for awhile longer before he found himself drifting off to join her.
Oh and Jorah's entered the fic, nobody asked for him, but meh, he's here now. Thanks for reading everyone!
A Brotherhood in the North: Part 1 of 2

Chapter Summary

Jon awakes to a new world than the one the night before, a new bride, and a new task at hand.

Chapter Notes

This could have been a lot longer, as I said before, I am terrible at holding back my filler, and I am afraid to say, but the next few chapters will be quite long and full of things that could be drawn out and somewhat unnecessary. This is a heads up to let you know what you might be getting into by reading this fic.

Thank you again for all the comments, kudos and bookmarks!

Without further ado, I present to you Chapter 9... Part 1 of 2...

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Wolf Fangs & Dragon Fire

Chapter Nine: A Brotherhood in the North: Part 1 of 2

Awaking to the rustling of movement around her, Daenerys rolled from her side to her back, observing curiously as Jon pulled his gambeson over his head, his hands working to tie the knots that would keep it snug to his body. His boots came next, then the belt that Longclaw hung from, the white wolf head sitting on its pummel stood strikingly amiss when compared to the dark brown, grey and black of his clothed attire.

It was only as Jon reached for his furred collar cloak that Daenerys sat up in the bed, clutching the loose sheet to her chest. "You're dressing?"

Slightly startled, Jon turned, his fingers intertwined with the dark fabric of his cloak. "I must return North, your Grace."

Daenerys shot him a disapproving look. "I don't recall giving you permission to do so."

"I didn't ask for it," replied Jon, he stood straight and slung the cloak over his shoulder, clasping it together at the front of his neck. "We may be allies now, your Grace, and while that may include supporting your claims to the throne. My duty as King in the North aren't forgotten to me."

"And what of your duty as a husband?" returned Daenerys, her fingers tightening around the sheet.

Jon let his head drop. "I'm no husband, I'm barely a King. I'm a soldier, I fight, it's what I know. I need to get back North, my fight's there."
"We made vows to one another. We fight together now."

"Aye, we do, but you've got a seat to claim and I a Wall to defend," began Jon, his hands stilling on the buckle of his belt. "Unless your priorities have changed."

Daenerys knew she pledged her support behind him, yet she also knew just as he that the second she set forth on the King's Road heading North, Cersei would seize the opportunity to reclaim the foothold of territory Daenerys had thus far been able to take on the mainland.

Taking her silence as confirmation to her priorities, Jon slid a hand from his buckle to the hilt of Longclaw. "I best take my leave."

"I won't leave you to fight the dead alone, I will come," asserted Daenerys firmly, she had given a promise to him and it wasn't one she was keen on breaking.

Jon held a torn expression. He knew her to be true to her promise, still though he was apprehensive if her support against the Night King would arrive in time to thwart the frozen terror of the Long Night.

Daenerys read him as clearly as a book. "You don't believe I will come, do you?"

"I don't doubt your intentions, I doubt the feasibility of it," answered Jon, he walked to the edge of her bed and sat down at her side. "The taking of King's Landing won't be done without casualties, and what's left of the force under your banner may be to few to even help against the dead."

"Once I have the throne, I'll call upon the Southern House's to muster."

"And these House's will take you word and believe an Army of Deadmen exist?" refuted Jon.

"It won't matter what they believe, I will be their Queen, they will answer my call." stated Daenerys.

"They'll think you as mad as your father," said Jon bluntly. "How many House's fought for him when Robert Baratheon rose up?"

"I will provide them with proof then, show them the threat of the dead is real," Daenerys proposed, slightly irritated by his persistence to shoot down every idea she raised.

"Proof?" questioned Jon.

"I will send men North of the Wall and have them capture one of these deadmen," she said, the idea still formulating as she spoke. "I'll have it displayed to the Lord's and Lady's of the South when I summon them to my coronation."

It was a sound idea as far as convincing the world the Long Night was real, but as for plausibility, Jon wasn't quick to wrap his head around how the Queen planned to achieve the capture of a wight. "How many men do you have in your service that have experience beyond the Wall?"

Daenerys tilted her head to the side, slow to reply. "None, at least that I know of. Why?"

"There's no King's Road beyond the Wall to keep you on course, there's no Inn's to take refuge in during the cold of the nights. More men of the Watch have been lost to the wilderness than killed by Wildling's."

Daenerys moved closer to where he sat, pulling the sheet of her bed with her. "I take it you have something else in mind?"

"I've been beyond the Wall several times, I know my way around enough. I can take some
Wildling's with me for good measure. It'll be the best chance we have of capturin' one of them."

Daenerys frowned. "You?"

"I don't count on sendin' men beyond the Wall to an unknown fate while I sit by," said Jon.

"We have just wed, we have an alliance now. If you die that puts everything in jeopardy. I won't risk it... We can't risk it," she returned, and if Jon didn't know better he'd say she looked sincerely worried for his well being, even so, he wasn't a man to be persuaded differently so easy.

"It's a risk I'm willin' to take," announced Jon, his mind was made and as he moved to get up, Daenerys grabbed his arm.

"We don't know each other well, you and I," Daenerys began slowly. "I don't presume to have you obeying my commands, it's not what I expect, nor is it what you'll do. But if there's anything... Anything you feel for me, You'll reconsider."

Jon knew his stance, but still, as she looked to him, he felt his resolve weaken. "You can't ask me to be a coward."

"I'm asking you to be a King, you have loyal men under you who can carry this expedition out, do you not?" countered Daenerys.

With Tormund in mind, Jon gave a reluctant nod of his head, his resolve weakening further, even going so far as to crumble entirely as he stared into her eyes. "... I'll only go beyond if needed to do so."

There was a short moment of relatable comfort between the two in understanding before Daenerys added, "You'll take Ser Jorah with you," hoping the presence of a man in her service would help persuade him to stay behind the Wall as he promised, when the time should come. "He's a Northman, he knows the cold of winter. He won't be a burden."

Jon's brows knitted together. "Is he to be your spy?"

"If that were the case I'd send you, Varys."

"I gave you my word I wouldn't go beyond unless it's needed," Jon grumbled, shaking her hand from his arm. "I keep to my word, you don't need Mormont or any other of your men at my side to ensure it."

"We are pledged to one another, pledged to fight for each other. Ser Jorah will hold up my end of that pledge." explained Daenerys.

Jon resigned himself to taking Jorah, feeling something within himself compelling him to please her, not that the man wasn't an accomplished warrior, the tales of Jorah Mormont and Thoros of Myr during the Greyjoy Rebellion were that of legend, he simply disliked the thought of having someone reporting South on his every doing. "I'll take him on the condition he follows my command."

"The North is your domain, I won't inflict my rule there. I will inform Ser Jorah he is to act in your service as if it were my own," promised Daenerys.

"It's settled then, I'll send a raven once we've caught one," said Jon, he got to his feet and remembered the capturing of a wight would only be useful once she took the Iron Throne, and by extension, the heavily fortified city of King's Landing. "When do you plan to move on the capital?"
"I don't have a set time in mind," admitted Daenerys. "I hope to consult my council and recall the Unsullied from Casterly Rock first. Your voice at the table of my small council could prove valuable to my future plans."

"I don't have the time to spare," said Jon solemnly, his face turned grim at the thought of Lannister men hailing her with arrows and not being there to shield her from them. "As I've promised to stay behind the Wall unless necessary, I hope you'll do the same when you find yourself outside the capital."

Daenerys could only bob her head, knowing if she refused he would more than likely to lead the way North beyond the Wall.

Jon rose from the bed, turning to see her, an urge took hold as he clasped the side of Daenerys face, pulling her into a kiss. It was long and drawn out, fueled by a passion neither would admit to having for each other so soon. When he finally pulled away, Jon gave her a small smile, his legs carrying him to her door, and past that, the ship that would carry him back North.

"Why is it every time I blink my eyes, you seem to appear. Can't get enough of me, eh?" boomed Tormund as he brought Jon into a bone crushing bear hug, a look of pure mirth shining off his wide grin.

Jon smirked and gave the Wildling a stiff pat on the back before releasing him, his eyes drifting up the zigzagging staircase that stretched up the entire length of the Wall. "Has there been any sightings?"

Grin fading, Tormund shook his head. "None, if the dead are coming this way, they're taking their bloody well time."

"They can't be far off," said Jon, he had received a raven from Sansa informing him that Bran had seen the dead making their way to Eastwatch, still, with the uncertainty he held regarding the reality of his brother's visions, he couldn't bring himself to draw his banners to Eastwatch on the off chance the Army of the Dead might attack elsewhere along the Wall.

"You've been saying that for months, maybe the dead realize they can't get south past this," suggested Tormund, his hand stretched out at the side, gesturing to the towering wall of ice.

"The dead aren't the type to be deterred," replied Jon, he looked from the Wall to take in his surroundings.

The repairs to the old Night's Watch keep had come a long way, the barracks' caved roof had been rebuilt, the lift to the top of the Wall had been brought back into working order after decades of neglect, and even the few Night's Watchmen left tending to the castle seemed to be finally getting along with the Wilding's, or at least not coming to blows with them.

"Whose the tall one and the girl?" questioned Tormund, his eyes searching past Jon to where a stoic Jorah Mormont stood shivering in the open courtyard, Arya at his side.

"Jorah. He's one of the Queen's men, and my sister, Arya," answered Jon.

"Which Queen's this, you southerners seem to have more Queen's and King's than there are Free Folk," grumbled Tormund, he reached for the ragged leather of his belt and hiked it up from it's sagging position on his waist.

Jon lowered his voice and grudgingly answered, knowing full well Tormund was going to jibe him.
"Daenerys Targaryen, the Dragon Queen... My wife."

"Your wife? You fucked the Dragon Queen!?” questioned Tormund, the grin he held before coming quickly back to form. "She let that tiny pecker of yours inside her did she, and here I was thinking you liked to keep the company of men."

Shaking his head, Jon turned away. "It's an alliance more than an actual marriage, I needed her support," he said, the words drawn out as if there was a part of him forcing himself to say them. "We have it now."

"Good, you can tend to other affairs now that you're here," said Tormund.

"Other affairs?" repeated Jon.

"We caught a few southerner's trying to sneak into the castle while you were off slipping between the thighs of Dragon women," informed Tormund, his tone teasing.

Jon, however, appeared fraught with the information. "How many is a few, where were they going?"

"Three altogether, call themselves Brothers of something, one of 'ems a real ugly fucker, face gnarled like a bear chewed on him," replied Tormund.

Jon looked thoughtful, recalling tales of a group of men calling themselves the Brotherhood Without Banners, but why they would be so far North and not raiding Lannister caravans he couldn't fathom. "I want a word with them. Where are they being kept?"

"The Crows here wanted to send them off to Castle Black, but I wouldn't let 'em, we caught 'em, they're our prisoners," boasted Tormund, the mangled thatch of red hair upon his head looking like a great fire against the blank white surroundings around him. "We've got them locked in the castle cells, follow me and I'll take you."

Jon nodded, looking behind him once more to view Jorah and Arya, he motioned for them to wait behind as he traced the steps of Tormund, the Wildling leading him into an aged stone structure that at some point in the history of Eastwatch probably served as an armoury or blacksmiths shop with the plentiful amount of chimney stacks it had protruding from it's shingled roof. Inside was just as lack luster in appearance as the outside with a small fire pit at it's core, the barren open room sat cold and unwelcoming, dimly illuminated by a few lit torches hanging on the walls. On one side stood several stalls that once served to hold spears, swords, and other weapons of the like but instead had been converted into holding cells, the small entryway to each stall sealed off by criss-crossing bars of black iron.

Closing the distance between himself and the stall that bore a few shadowy figures, Jon approached the bars, one hand reaching out grab hold and give it a sturdy shake to draw the attention of those held prisoner within.

"How many times are you lot gonna come in here and ask the same stupid, shit questions over and over again?” snarled a gruff voice, a broad shoulder man emerging from the darkness of the cell, standing several feet over Jon. The right half of his face marred by old, burned skin tissue.

"You were caught trespassing on castle grounds, for what purpose?” started Jon, his eyes narrowing as he recognized the man from King Robert's visit to Winterfell many years ago. "You're the Hound!"

"Doesn't take a man long with eyes in his skull to know that," growled the man, his nose wrinkling as he hacked up a glob of phlegmy mucus from his throat and spat it to the floor before adding.
"Who the fuck are you?"

Peering down to the sludgy gloop on the cell floor, Jon brought his gaze back up to the man who had more than likely had many a men in Jon's position shitting themselves over the years. "I'm Jon Snow. King in the North."

"You're Ned Stark's bastard son?" asked a softer voice from behind the beast of a man, a second later a man with a slanted, weathered eye patch stepped from the shadows. Examining Jon once over with his one good eye.

"Eddard Stark was my father, yes," confirmed Jon, looking to both men, figuring them as a band of injured soldiers. "And you are?"

"I go by Beric Dondarrion. I served your father briefly in King's Landing," replied Beric, taking a few shuffled steps closer to Jon and the bars. "I hope you take no offense to Clegane here, he's a hot-tempered man with a taste for cussing."

"You knew my father?" asked Jon, his curiosity for the imprisoned men further piqued.

"As I said, I knew him briefly. He ordered me during his tenure as King Robert's Hand to seek out and bring a man they call the Mountain to justice for crimes he committed," answered Beric. "That order did not fair well for me, alas, it did set me upon a different course in life than the one I had envisioned for myself."

Jon let his hand drop from the bars to his side. "And what course is that, why have you come to Eastwatch, Ser Beric?"

"He comes because the Lord of Light has asked it of him, his course is the path of divinity," answered the third man to have been captured, appearing at Beric's side. "Just as the Lord of Light has set a path for you to be here, King Jon."

"Do I know you, Ser?" asked Jon.

With a scraggy beard hanging from his face, the man shrugged. "Know me? I don't think so. Heard of me, I'm certain."

"This is Thoros of Myr, he's a servant to the Lord of Light," provided Beric, his hand going up to clasp Thoros' shoulder.

"Thoros, I know the name," mumbled Jon, raking his mind till the name came to recognition. "You lead the breach of Pyke during the Greyjoy Rebellion, my father told me storys of you during my youth."

"You'd have been a babe then," replied Thoros, his spent eyes viewing Jon over. "I've a sense to me, you've been touched by the Lord of Light."

"I met a woman of your religion before... She did me a service," acknowledged Jon, unwilling to go into further detail, his main focus retaining back onto the Hound. "I remember you from King Robert's visit to Winterfell, I also remember being told you were present when they took my father's head."

"I was, and I remember your father well," sneered the Hound. "When his head hit the ground, it sounded hollow, nothing between his ears. Your father was a fool to try and underhand the Lannister's."
Jon's ball'd a fist, yet his better judgment let it release to an open hand. "What've you lot come here for?"

Beric stepped forward into the light. "As Thoros said, the Lord of Light has willed us here. He's set a path for us beyond the Wall."

"The dead?" questioned Jon.

"Aye, the fucking dead." answered the Hound.

"I won't ask how you know of them," began Jon slowly. "Honestly? *I don't want to.* The fact that yer' here, and you're willing to go beyond, I need that."

Beric pressed himself to the black iron bars. "You're going beyond the Wall?"

"I am," confessed Jon. "I need a deadman to present to the southern House's. To show them the dead are real."

"Then we're at your service," pledged Beric, dropping his head to a tilted bow. "You don't trust us and that's fair, but the Lord of Light has seen me and my companions there, we've seen it in the flames. If you'll have us, we will accompany you."

Jon reached up and grabbed the bars of the cell. "I've not come here to force men beyond... If you're willing, I'll take you."

Even with one eye, the pleased look on Beric's face was shown through his slight smile. "We're more than willing... It's our fate."

"So be it," said Jon, turning to Tormund. "Set them free."

Popping a red brow, Tormund stepped to Jon's side and pulled a ring of keys from within his seal sewn overcoat. Plugging a notched key in the cell doors hole, he turned and let an ominous click signal it being opened. Those within pushing free from their confines.

Chapter End Notes

As a teaser to those who actually read my notes, lol, within the next three chapters will be my version of the shows episode 9, where climactic events come to unfold. In a real world, I'd end my fic there and begin anew in a sequel fic just for pretences, which I kind of want to do. But we'll see.

If you are somewhat disappointed by the abrupt ending of this chapter, be thankful, this very well could have spanned on endlessly if I didn't break it in to two parts and switched some writing to what will eventually be chapter 11.

Anywho, I hope you enjoyed this chapter for what it is, and thank you for reading and giving it a chance!

(Upon request, I did write a brief scene in which Arya was there to find the Hound in the cell. I can post it, but its unfinished as i decided to go another way)
"And how is it we'll find the dead?" asked Thoros, his gaze drifting over the scantily drawn map of the north beyond the Wall.

Jon tapped his fingers to a location on the map that appeared a short distance away from Eastwatch. "There. It's the best place to start our search. It's where the dead were last spotted."

"What little bird told you this?" questioned the Hound.

Not wanting to sound like a madman and say his brother's vision, Jon ignored the question, directing his focus onto Tormund.

"Provisions will be needed for the journey, can you arrange it?"

Tormund looked thoughtful. "We received supplies from Winterfell a few days back, we can take from that and load some sleighs. Enough to keep us fed for a few days."

"Good, and what of the dragon glass, have you and the Free Folk made any progress?"

"We've been doing what we can with the glass, had some success with making arrowheads, spear tips and daggers... The crows here tried to forge some in with steel for swords, but it's brittle rock, breaks to easy, don't hold the meld," replied Tormund, he reached behind his back and held out a jagged shard of Dragon Glass, one end of it wrapped in old cloth, acting as a makeshift handle. "This is the best we can hope to make with that glass."

Taking hold, Jon turned the obsidian dagger over in his hands, his thumb running along its sharpened edge before offering it back to Tormund who shook his head.
"Keep it, I've plenty of others," said Tormund, patting his belt where two other obsidian shards sat nestled in.

Tucking it into his own as Tormund had his, Jon looked to the map once more, memorizing the route they would need to take to find the dead. When he finally brought his focus back to those in the room, he nodded, a look of determination set upon his face. "Alright then, no reason to keep pushin' this off any further. Let's get the sleighs loaded and get on with our way."

Jorah looked to Jon, judging the man on his decision to go beyond the Wall. "Lets?"

"Plans have changed, I'll be accompanyin' this expedition North." Jon answered, holding a hand up to silence Jorah as the man looked to argue. "You can either come with, or you can stay here. The choice is yours, Ser Jorah. I suggest you make it quickly."

Torn by the choice given to him, Jorah sighed. "The Queen instructed me to act in your service. If beyond the safety of Eastwatch if where you plan to go, it's where I'll follow."

"The extra sword is welcomed," quipped Jon as he grabbed the sprawled map from the table and rolled it up. "Go on and get ready, we leave before nightfall."

There was a unified nod and cohesive grumbling of those around him before filing out of Eastwatch's defunct armory, Tormund hinting at Jon to stay behind with a few quirks of his brows.

"Something the matter?" Questioned Jon slowly.

"Other than letting you talk me into going back out there, it is was it is," replied Tormund, handing a small, crinkled piece of paper over to Jon.

Jon's gave the Wildling man a perplexed lopk as he took the paper. "What is this?"

"Don't know, can't read your fancy southern words. One of the crows here could though, said its from your sister, the one my woman guards," Tormund informed.

"Your woman?"

"The blond giant, legs as tall as trees."

"Lady Brienne," provided Jon amused, his eyes glossing over the message from Sansa.

"Brienne," repeated Tormund, his tongue wetting his lips at the thought of her.

Discarding the parchment on top of the table they had just used to plan the expedition beyond, Jon shook his head, perplexed by his sisters message that called for Tormund along with all his other bannermen to ride for Winterfell before the next full moon.

"What did your paper tell you?" Asked Tormund, when he finished his early morning day dream.

"It wasn't for me," Jon divulged. "It was for you. But it can wait, we have more pressing matters to tend to."

Tormund nodded and lead the way out to the keep's bristling courtyard of busy bodied Wildling's. Stepping from the dark doorway and into the clouded light of day, Jon smiled as he found Arya sitting atop a barrel, her legs kicking out and heels drumming down on the rounded wood planks.

"You should try and stay warm, it's much better than freezin' your bollocks off," joked Jon lightly.
Arya snorted. "I don't have bollocks."

Smirking, Jon reached up to ruffle her hair as he came to her. "Yer' lady parts then."

Scrunching her face, Arya looked to him with a grin while swatting his hand from her hair. "Please don't ever say lady parts again."

Jon rumbled with a hearty chuckle, truly enjoyed to have her company once again. "You know, I don't think I told you, but I missed you."

"I missed you too," admitted Arya.

Her words moved him, impressing upon him how trustworthy he deemed her to be. "I need you to do something for me while I'm away."

"Away? Where are you going?" Questioned Arya, already knowing the answer.

"Beyond the Wall."

"You said you told the Queen you would only go unless needed," voiced Arya.

"Aye, I know. But none of the men in there besides Mormont have pledged fealty to her or I, how can I send them North when there's no obligation for them to do so? This is her plan, and I intend to see it out," rationed Jon.

"Your breaking your word to her."

"I'm not, I gave her my word that I wouldn't go unless needed, as I see it, I'm needed," Said Jon, defending his decision. "Now, will you do something for me, or must I find someone else?"

Arya looked apprehensive. "What is it?"

"I need you to send a raven to Davos at Winterfell, summon him here on my behalf."

"Why, what for?" Questioned Arya.

"That's between me and my Hand," answered Jon. "I'll need to speak with him once I get back."

"You don't tell me anything," Grumbled Arya.

"I tell you what you need to know, what matters is I trust you."

"If you really mean that, then take me with you, I can handle myself," pressed Arya, after Jon had ordered her to wait outside as he planned with those he intended to send further North, she had waited for this moment, waited to convince her brother to take her with him.

"You know I can't. Beyond the Wall is no place for you," said Jon slowly, watching carefully as her big, expressive eyes flared.

"You asked the Northern Lord's for their daughters to fight, why can't I?" demanded Arya.

"You will. I know you will, I can't stop that as much as I might want to, it's inevitable and I accept that. But it's not going to be today, I need you here, living. If something happens to me, Sansa will need someone like you at her side. Especially with Littlefinger continuing to linger about Winterfell," returned Jon.
"Sansa has Bran with her," protested Arya.

"Bran, or the Three-Eyed Raven?" Jon challenged. "She needs family, and Bran... Well, Bran's just not who he was, you know that as well as I."

"How would you know what Bran's like! Sansa says you've been avoiding him like he's plagued with greyscale!" countered Arya angrily, slipping from the barrel to go toe to toe with him.

Jon bowed his head, knowing his treatment of Bran was far less than what his younger brother deserved. "I agreed to Sansa that I'd see Bran once I've returned to Winterfell, a real return, not a one night visit. Once I've that, I promise I'll get to know him. But that doesn't change anything with Bran being there. I brought you with me to Dragonstone cause you pressed me and there was no present danger, but that's the extent I'm willin' to go. You'll stay here at Eastwatch. That's final."

Sucking in her retort, Arya turned from him, her eyes narrowing as she viewed the Hound and men of the Brotherhood near the Wall's gate, tying down sacks of goods to a sleigh. "You won't take me, but you'll take murderers and men who'll sell out another for a profit?"

"You've told me your opinion on them already, and while I agree they aren't the sort I'd prefer to bring with me, they're all I presently have," Returned Jon, he came to rotate so he was in front of her, blocking her sight of the Brotherhood.

"The Hound tried to ransom me off to Robb when he had the chance, and then to Aunt Lysa," growled Arya. "He also ran from the Battle of Blackwater, what's to say he doesn't do it again if you get overwhelmed by the Army of the Dead?!"

Jon cast a pondering glance to the men of the Brotherhood before fixing his gaze back onto his sister. "If the Hound runs with his tail between his legs, so be it, I can't put courage in a coward. They'll answer for their past deeds someday, but right now, they're willin' to put themselves in harm's way for a greater good."

"So am I," snapped Arya.

Jon clenched his jaw, his eyes pleading her to reason with him. "You're not going. If they go beyond and don't comeback, I can live with myself. If you go and don't come back, how am I to carry on?"

Huffing, Arya turned and stalked away from him, her anger and disappointment radiating off as she stormed her way to Eastwatch's rackety, aged lift.

Watching her depart, Jon felt his conscience nagging at him to let her join him, but he refused to listen. Pushing the thought back with all the other better judgments he chose to disregard over the years. Taking a brief moment to himself, Jon turned, slightly nervous, but prepared for the task at hand as the last few sleighs packed with provisions were pulled by tied ropes to the iron trimmed gate at the Wall.

Tugging his belt a notch tighter around his waist, Jon observed with a flutter of nerves as the gate gave off a sound of twisting metal and rattling chains while it raised to grant the expedition passage to the frozen wasteland that await them beyond the Wall.

Staring at the opened gateway and the tunnel that followed, Jon's fixed vision snapped to the present as Tormund clapped a hand to his back, sending him a staggered foot forward.

"It's time we go, King Crow, the later we leave, the harder it will be to track the dead in the dark. If we're cursed enough to find them that soon," informed Tormund, a handful of Wildling's and their makeshift weapons of dragon glass behind him.
Jon nodded knowingly, his eyes shifting to view the three men of the Brotherhood and Jorah, all of whom had come to don the sewn seal skins and bulked fur of Wildling attire for their trek to Westeros' far reaches. "We're movin' out. Do your best to keep up, stragglers will be left behind."

With that said, the expedition departed Eastwatch-By-the-Sea. A trail of their steps left imprinted in the snow after them. They passed the elongated tunnel that stretched itself beneath the Wall and came out to the Wilderness beyond the borders of the Seven Kingdom's. Stomping their way through the thick powder of white snow, they eventually came to cross a grand valley, parts of which held snow so high it went past Jon's knee. It was a barren land, not a single thing of green in sight, nor a bird in the sky or an animal to be found.

Each man of the group taking their respective turn in pulling the stocked sleighs, making their way steadily over a frozen lake at the end of the valley to a narrow opening between two snow peaked mountains. A wet, heavy snow beginning to fall with ornate snowflakes as they climbed their way up the slippery terrain of the mountains gap.

"You and your lot lived in this freezing shithole?" asked the Hound to Tormund, coming up behind the defacto leader of the Wildling's.

"Beautiful the land of the Free Folk is, isn't it?" replied Tormund, stopping briefly to take in a deep inhale of cold air.

"Shithole," corrected the Hound. "No wonder you and your lot were always trying to come south."

Lurching forward to be at Sandor Clegane's front, Tormund displayed a crazed grin to the towering man. "You insult the Free Folk."

"It wasn't a compliment, that's for sure," grumbled the Hound, pushing past the burly, red-bearded Tormund.

Tormund daringly charged up the slope so he could come ahead, using his body mass to stop the Hound in his tracks. "What happened to you, eh? Did you blow to hard on a hot bowl of stew, or did you stick your rotten face right in?"

The Hound's eyes narrowed and an arm snapped out, clutching Tormund's meaty neck within his fingers. "You're a funny man are you?"

Scrambling as the vice like grip began to cut off his circulation, Tormund clawed at the Hound's hand.

"ENOUGH!" roared Jon from the front of the expeditions column, he stumbled and slid down the slanted slope they were climbing to rush down the line to where the Hound and Tormund were.

"The man's got a big mouth," snapped the Hound, rethinking his current grasp as the other Wildling's started to close in, their weapons held at the ready, grumbling, the Hound relinquished his hold on Tormund's neck.

Gasping and coughing for a few seconds, Tormund reached for the cleaver-like blade tucked into his belt, but Jon's hand on his elbow kept him from drawing.

Releasing Tormund, Jon came to meet the Hound, his eyes narrowed. "We aren't here to fight one another. Your enemy isn't him," he turned and let his eyes drift to each and every man who volunteered to be there. "We've come to take a deadman south and prove the enemy the world should fear is real, the living aren't your foes, it's the dead, and you all best remember it. It's the man right next to you, right here, right now, that might just save your life out here."
The Hound's chin tilted up as if indignant to Jon's words, but all of the men, even the Hound shifted uncomfortably as they heard a soft rumbling echoing off the mountains around them, it then grew to a thundering, snow slipped and fell from high places as the vibrations of whatever was approaching came closer.

Near the head of the expeditions column, Jorah who stood the closest to the top of the slope climbed the last few steps needed. His eyes widening in disbelief and terror as he saw a sea of horrid people running his way. Some were gaunt and pale, others were at some form of decay, and then there were those who had no flesh upon their bones at all, their skeletal frames snapping and cracking as they ran purposefully at them.

Taking a half stumbled step back, Jorah turned shakily around. "RUN!"

Immediately, Jon could tell from the evident horror on Jorah's face just what it was the man had witnessed above the slope. His hand instinctively pulling Longclaw from its sheath. "Ditch the sleighs! Make for the Wall!"

A frantic rush back down was orderly at first, but the slippery decline quickly proved chaotic, the men of the expedition beginning to slip and slide in their haste back to the frozen lake, some even knocking out the feet of the man in front of them. By the time they reached the lakes crystal sheet of ice, the tiresome expedition trudged tiredly forward, careful to keep their distance so their combined weight wouldn't shatter the ice beneath them.

Feet skidding to a stop at the base of the slope and onto the clear, slippery surface of frozen water, Jorah was the last to make it down with Beric Dondarrion just a few feet ahead, the dreadful sounds of screams and moans of agony the battle cry of the dead chasing after them.

Jon heaved breaths as he ran across the ice-covered lake, only stopping when he heard the shouts of men from the rear. Whirling around to find a few of Tormund's men helping another whose leg had broken through the ice, Jonah and Beric having passed them by earlier. Unbeknownst to the Wildling's were the horde of deadman pouring down from the mountain pass, and while he opened his mouth to warn them, it was to late. The dead were on them, cutting, stabbing and slashing. Blood of the Wildling's spraying up to the grey sky in a red mist.

Jon only tore his eyes from the sight when Jorah came rushing up to him, grabbing him by the lapels and shaking.

"We must go, your Grace, keep moving!" wheezed Jorah, his voice laced with panic and fear.

Shaking his head, Jon searched the landscape around him, the men of the Brotherhood and the remaining Wildling's with Tormund having taken a defensive position upon a rocky isle that rose in a slant from the center of the lakes ice sheet. It was as he viewed his companions on the desolate rock that it became obvious to Jon of how futile it was to try and outrun the Army of the Dead, but they could stall them he thought, not for long, but maybe long enough to get help.

"Your Grace?!" bellowed Jorah, shaking Jon once again.

Coming back to, Jon pulled away from the other man's grip. "You need to return to Eastwatch and send for the Queen."

"The Queen? There's no time for that, we have to run," stated Jorah, looking to see the dead running towards them, close enough that he could make out their strikingly blue eyes.

"We'll hold them off the best we can, give you time to reach the Wall, don't let this be for nothin',"
ordered Jon, he could see Jorah wanting to protest but he grabbed the man by his upper arm and flung him forward in the direction of the Seven Kingdoms most northern bastion of defence.

Catching himself so he didn't faceplant, Jorah despite his age stood tall and gave Jon a stiff nod before running off in the direction they had come.

Watching as Jorah vanished into a gust of blowing snow, Jon turned to see three rapid deadmen leading the horde of wights in their wake. Knowing that at their speed compared to Jorah's, it wouldn't be long before they outran him. Crouching down, Longclaw held out in front of him, Jon readied himself for combat.

The first decomposing man to reach him, Jon sidestepped and swung low, halving the deadman at the waist. Carrying through with the momentum of the swing, he readjusted his grip slightly and brought Longclaw swinging upwards between the legs of a fowl skeletal being, the Valyrian steel snapping and dislodging the creatures connected bones till it crumpled in a heap. The last deadman of the three carried a spear, lunging wildly at Jon who in turn used Longclaw to parry the blows, knocking the spearhead from him at each thrust before running the length of his sword through the wights chest, watching as the blue of its eyes faded to a hollow white.

Pulling Longclaw from the immobilized wight, Jon saw as the horde of dead turned their rapt attention onto him, their disorganized charge changing in direction toward him.

"Jon, you bastard! Get over here!" shouted Tormund, the man swinging his arms above his head to draw the King in the North attention to him.

Slipping, and sliding along the surface of ice, Jon rushed to join the others on the rocky isle, taking a little relief when he found himself back in the company of armed men fighting on his side, the side of those still bearing warm breath in their lungs.

"The fuck I agree to come here for," grumbled the Hound as he rotated his long sword from hand to hand, spectating the mass of flowing corpses begin to split apart into two large, disorganized trains that met together on the other side of the isle, encircling them.

Coming down to where Jon stood at the foot of the isle, Beric held his flaming sword poised at the ready, his one good eye fixed on the expressionless faces of the dead. "The Lord of Light has willed us to be, I'd say it's about time we figure out why. Don't you?"

Jon gave Beric a sideways glance, but he found himself rightfully distracted by the appearance of single figure atop the slope in between the two mountains. The Night King in all his terrifying glory sat mounted on a horse that was missing it's lower jaw bone and several chunks of flesh, revealing frozen muscle tissue and organs. The head of the dead stared unwavering to the rocky isle, and Jon presumed to lock eyes with him, a shiver running down his spine as the Night King raised a single hand and swiped it through the air.

Fingers tightening around the hilt of Longclaw, Jon's brows narrowed as the deadmen encircling them leaned forward before their unified charge at the isle, thousands of feet pounding against the ground, causing a tremor effect the made the ground pulse, and cracks as thin as a hair begin to form in the ice under them. Even though some of the dead were nothing more than skeletons of their former self, the sheer amount of how many were amassed showed to heavy for the layer of ice as it finally cracked, and broke open in many places, swallowing up the dead in bunches. Hundreds sinking into the chilled water like discarded stones.

The dead that did manage to make it far enough to the rocky isle, the men of the expedition fought. Beric and Thoros smashed their torched swords against any dead that dared near them, their tattered
clothing igniting from the flames into flailing pyres. The Hound sliced and hacked, a neat pile of
deadmen falling in a clump at his feet. Tormund and the last of his men held the rear of the island,
repelling those that tried to scale the rocky cliffside of the isle, one of the Wildling’s sufficing a
dagger wound to his lower gut.

While nearly fifty deadmen made it to the isle, all were cut down, leaving the men of the expedition
breathing tired and spent, their arms aching from the swinging of their weighted weapons.

Observing as the dead held their stance in a retreated position around the rim of the lake, no doubt by
some wordless order given by the Night King so their ranks wouldn't diminish into the water, the
dead stood, some twitching as they stared possessively, void of emotion at the breathing men on the
island.

Dragging the edge of his blade along his upper arm to clean it of the grime it sustained during the
engagement, Tormund separated from his men to where the men of the Brotherhood and Jon stood in
wait. "What is it we do now? There's no way off this damn rock."

Sheathing Longclaw, Jon took a few, slow steps to a nearby boulder and sat down. "We wait."

"For what?" asked the Hound, he bore a grimace as he stomped down on the skull of a deadman,
crushing it under his boot.

"For help to arrive," mumbled Jon, he reached to his belt for the dagger of Dragon Glass Tormund
had given him at Eastwatch, ensuring it was still there.

Planting his large frame in front of Jon, the Hound cast a shadow over the White Wolf. "And is help
on it's way?"

"... I sent Jorah back hopin' we could distract the dead long enough that he might make it back to the
Wall," answered Jon, turning the shard over in his hand, continuing to inspect it. "He's going to send
for the Queen."

"The Queen? Cersei fucking Lannister?" scoffed the Hound, his large mouth pulling back into a
sinister looking grin. "We lost the sleighs, we've got no food to feast on. We'll starve long before that
cunt comes, which she won't, cause it's Cersei fucking Lannister."

"He's not talking about Cersei," offered Tormund knowingly. "He's talking 'bout the Dragon
Queen."

"The Targaryen bitch?" ground out the Hound.

Jon's head snapped up, but it was Beric who came to silence the Hound before Jon could. "Watch
your tongue, Clegane."

The Hound scowled, turning from Jon and the others, harshly worded obscenities muttered beneath
his breath.

"We wait. She'll come." said Jon firmly.

And wait they did. Day light slowly dimmed as the clouded sun began to set, and in it's descent so
did the temperature beyond the Wall. With their hands and feet beginning to tingle in the cold, and
their exhausted breaths becoming whisps of heated air. The open pockets of water where the dead
had fallen through began to freeze over, and the parts of ice that hadn't broken only thickened in it's
structural strength. The men of the expedition weren't the only ones to take notice either as a few of
the dead began to venture forward to the isle. One at first, then another, and more followed after that,
all slowly traversing at slow pace over the thin lake ice.

Getting to his feet, Beric who had been designated the first watch while the others attempted to sleep, drew his sword from its sheath, fire bursting out along the steel as he did, coating it in the flicker of flames.

As the first few of dead made it across, the mass of wights behind them were quick to follow suit. Beric kicked the foot of Thoros, the two men of the Brotherhood hurrying to wake the others in the cold, dark of night. All of them preparing to brace themselves for the battle to come.

With his flaming sword streaking through the air, Beric swung wildly from side to side, keeping the dead at bay as best he could, unfortunately, he became engulfed by the Night's King's army of corpses, surrounded on every side, he parried until a sharp pain struck him inbetween the shoulders, his head twisting to see the mangled, decaying face of a deadman whose jaw hung barely together by a few strands of torn flesh from his rotting cheeks, the deadman chipped, and rusted dagger plunged deep into his back.

Shaking the frail deadman off him, Beric didn't have a chance to recover from the unsuspecting wound as two swift jabs by the end of a spear punctured him twice in the stomach, blood seeping through the holes of his seal sewn coat, he staggered from the loss of blood, feeling the mobility and strength leave his limbs and his flaming sword slip from the clutch of his palm.

Wavering where he came to stand just above an open hole in the ice, Beric teetered upon the edge before falling back, a splash of frozen water exploding upwards as he sank to the depths of the lake. The icy water at the holes opening becoming tinged with crimson red.

"Beric!" roared Thoros, swinging furiously with his own sword, he split deadmen down to quarters of their height, with every sweeping slash of the blade made contact, sparks spat out of the fiery sword. Fighting through them to the hole Beric had disappeared into, the man from Myr was prevented from his near-suicidal endeavor by a large arm being slung across his neck, hauling him back behind the defensive line at the base of the rocky isle.

"You'll only kill yourself, he's gone, lost to the lake bottom! There's no bringing the one-eyed bastard back from that," the Hound snarled, tossing Thoros from him once they were back behind the line Jon and the Wildling's struggled to hold. "Get up and fight or we join Dondarrion!"

Eyes downcast, Thoros sank to his knees, sliding his flaming sword into a heap of snow, extinguishing the fire. The fight in him gone. Mentally lost as he attempted to accept what was likely to be Beric's final passing.

Around the crumpled Red Priest, the situation at hand grew more dire as the dead finally managed to overcome the Wildling's at the top of the rocky isle, forcing them down to fight back to back with Jon and the others. Time almost appeared to slow as the melee of life against death ensued, hope of success lost to each man of the expedition as they fought for one more fleeting moment of life.

Suddenly, above the clanking of weapons, a deafening screech tore over the battlefield, commanding the attention of everyone on land, the dead and Night King included.

From the night sky above, three massive winged beasts swept down, whirling tornadoes of fire shooting from their open jaws, incinerating large clumps of dead mercilessly with every passing glide over the icy lake. The snow-covered earth around the large body of water left scorched and smoldering as walls of fire cut through the ranks of the dead. Streaks of fissures opened along the lake as the dragons continued to rain down their devastating funnels of fire.
Swinging at the few dead still able to reach them, Jon hacked down the last corpse readily at his front before gazing up to the sky, watching as the largest of the three, a menacing one of black scales serving as steed to the silver-haired speck of Daenerys riding on its back. Noticeably the tall, lanky form of Jorah could be distinguished holding onto her from behind.

"Jon!" came the haggard voice of Tormund, a line of blood streaming down the centre of his face from an open cut at the tip of his hairline. "We've captured one!"

Jon nearly broke into a smile, glad this wasn't to have all been for nothing.

"My lads are stringing it up, but getting it back to the Wall is your end," offered Tormund, Jon's answer of how he was to accomplish such a feat came in the form of Drogon gliding down to the frozen patch of ice still holding around the rocky isle.

Snow blowing up like a blizzard as the dragon's large claws clashed against the surface, it's massive body and tail half coiling around the island. A roar ripping out as it snapped its razor teeth around a couple of passing deadmen beneath it, shaking them for a moment within its clenching jaws, pieces of the deadmen were thrown askew across the open lake, a second later, it's winged arm crooked and lowered to the ground, acting as a rampway to its scaly back.

Shifting so she could see over the hump and thorns of Drogon's back, Daenerys searched for Jon, her heart racing faster than she had ever felt, a wave of calm washing over her as she found him ushering those of his expedition up the lowered wing, each man climbing after the man in front. Absently she could feel as each of the men clambered down behind her along Drogon's spine, all of them holding frightful, cautious expressions as they looked for a horn to grab onto.

At last, when nearly all of the expedition had climbed aboard, she watched as Jon assisted Tormund and another Wildling heave a tied up wight to Drogon's lowered wing. Yet the cluster of rocks just behind Jon made Daenerys grow frigid as a handful of deadmen appeared, dragging their decaying bodies over the rocks.

"Behind you!" shouted Daenerys, she half motioned to have Drogon burn them, but she realized the flames would consume Jon along with them. Horror and fear gripping her as she watched helplessly as the dead clung onto her unsuspecting husband, pulling him over the edge of the rocky isle and from sight.

Rolling over the side, Jon tumbled over the rocks, his body thumping and banging against every boulder till his face hit the crystal, clear ground that surrounded the isle. Although his vision spun, Jon scrambled back to his feet, fighting off the clawing hands of the dead who had dragged him over. Bruised and aching, he plotted out his quickest route back around to the open base of the isle, and more importantly, to Drogon and the rest of the expedition.

Running as fast as his legs would allow, Jon could feel the weight of a deadman throwing itself onto him. Despite their skeletal remains, it was the flurry of flailing arms and grasping hands as another wight jumped on top that had Jon stumbling to his knee. The force of impact cracked the thin sheet of ice beneath them and caused freezing water to come spurting up through a widening crack.

Eyes raised to see Daenerys and his fellow companions mounted on Drogon, Jon sucked in a sharp breath, knowing what needed to be done. "GO!"

Watching helplessly as several other wights plowed themselves onto the pile over Jon, Daenerys hardly blinked when the ice gave way under the stress of stacked weight over Jon, disappearing beneath the swishing water.
"Get this fucking beast off the ground!" snarled the Hound.

Shooting him a deathly glare over her shoulder, Daenerys was calmed by the hand of Jorah on her shoulder.

"He's right, there's nothing we can do for him, Khaleesi, we must go." Advised Jorah softly, he gave her shoulder a squeeze and she looked away.

Her eyes scanning the gaping ice hole Jon had submerged down. Her heart steadily beating as she held out hope for him to climb out, however there was nothing. Not so much as a pocket of air bubbling its way to the surface, the only hint he had once been there was his sword sitting upon the ice.

Clenching her eyes shut, Daenerys begrudgingly pulled back on the protruding horns of Drogon's back. As per her guidance, the span of his wings stretched out and raised, when they came rushing down a puff of snow blew out in all directions, another powerful flap brought Drogon and his passengers even higher to the scatter of stars above. Unable to bear hovering there any longer, she forced herself to pull on the horns, steering them from the chaos beyond the Wall. Drogon's onyx scales blending him into the night sky as gold, Viserion and the green and bronze scale Rhaegal flew a short distance in his wake.

Beneath the icy waters of the lake, Jon struggled with the dead anchoring him down. Longclaw had escaped his grasp before he was dunked under and had resorted to using the dragon glass dagger to fight off the wights, stabbing whatever he could in the slight motions he was able to make. The murky, dark water let little light into its depths and he could barely see inches in front of him. His eyes widening as a face so disfigured you could hardly tell at one time it was human, Jon rammed the dagger into its neck, its body going slack against him as he pushed it away, finally free from the dead who hoped to drag him down to death and despair.

Kicking his legs fervently, he ascended the chilling water to what he hoped to be its surface. Every bit of spent energy sending jolts of pain through him, the freezing temperature of the water numbing him. At last, through the dark water he could make out the soft glow of moon light shimmering above, while it still seemed leagues away, he continued the struggle. His will to live rattled as the last bit of held breath exited his chest, leaving him to take in water in a desperate attempt to breath.

Vision beginning to blur, he shot his arms out above him, feeling his gloved fingers breakthrough the water and the cold winter air crystalize the soaked mitts to icicles almost instantly. Summoning what little reserve of effort he still had within, Jon surged upwards, his upper body bursting from the lake, his arms thrown out aimlessly overhead to grip onto the sheet of ice. Holding on for dear life, he coughed and gagged up the icy water that had managed to seep into his throat. The cold evening air sent shivers running through him and seared the wet skin of his face.

Exhausted, arms weak and becoming further restricted as the damp fur of his clothes began to freeze into clumpy molds of ice, Jon lay half submerged, waiting for death to sweep him from the world.

Watching the steam of his breath grow thinner with every exhale, Jon's eyes started to flicker close. As frost began to settle over him, he could have sworn he heard the distant stride of a horse mixed in with the whistling winds that grazed over the open valley. What he thought was a mirage didn't dissipate, however, the sound of ambient hooves thundering across the snow-covered valley and onto the fractured sheet of lake ice only became more pronounced. Cracking an eye open, Jon watched as a hooded figure cloaked in black pulled on the reigns of a black steed, coming to a skidding halt a few feet from him.
Along the edges of the lake, the dead who hadn't yet resumed their march south and saw the horseman's arrival began to give pursuit back onto the lake, swarming from every direction.

Throwing his leg up and over the back of his horse, the hooded figure dismounted, rushing over to where Jon clung to the ice. Gripping the King in the North's frozen fur collar, the hooded figure heaved and pulled the rest of Jon from the water.

"Wh-who are you?" Gasped Jon, his teeth chattering as he gripped the black cloak of the man who held him in his arms.

Swiftly, the man reached up to his head and pulled down the black fabric that hid the lower half of his face.

A moment of shock registered through Jon where he couldn't decipher if he was hallucinating, or if the man before him truly was his Uncle, Benjen Stark, First Ranger of the Night's Watch whom many believed to have died shortly after Jon had taken the black.

"Come on, Jon, we don't have time lad," rushed Benjen, with one hand helping to support Jon up, he used the other to unclasp the dark cloak draped around his shoulders. "Take this, put it around you."

Shivering and shaking, Jon struggled to wrap the dry, warm cloth around himself. "How?"

"There's no time for that now, you have to go," growled Benjen, dragging Jon over to the side of his horse, the old Night's Watchman used every bit of strength he had to toss Jon's frozen frame over it's back. "Hold tight and don't let go!"

"Come with me," stammered Jon desperately, his hand coiling meekly around the leather reigns to help provide him stability.

Benjen gave a shake of his head as he turned to the side, watching as a horde of wights closed in.

"Benjen!" Wheezed Jon as his Uncle's hand raised over his steeds rear.

"Speak with Bran once your back, he knows," whispered Benjen, his hand coming swiftly down to swat the horse's backside, it reared slightly up off the ground before hitting the ground at a gallop.

"He knows what!?!" Shouted Jon, forcing all the air out of him in the process.

"Everything!" Roared Benjen as he unsheathed the sword at his side, turning to meet the deadmen who had finally reached him.

Even with uneven vision as he bounced around on the back of the horse, Jon watched as his Uncle fought valiantly until the dead were to many and they hid him from view. Lost to an ocean of death.

Exerted of anything left in him, Jon let his head fall, feeling the life slip out of him just as warmth had done his body. Drifting into a state of unconsciousness, an image of Daenerys filled his mind, she herself appearing peacefully asleep atop a plush, poster bed. The sight was inviting and he found himself wanting nothing more than to join her. He could feel his hand caressing the soft pale skin of her arm as he climbed into the bed next to her, laying at her back, he snuggled so his chest was hard pressed to her, a deep intake of the sweet scent she emitted bringing him comfort, it was there in his mind that he felt no longer frozen, in fact, he no longer felt at all. There was just blissful peace, then absolute black.

Chapter End Notes
My first attempt at writing a battle scene of sorts. Hopefully it made sense and I went into detail when needed.

I was originally going to let Jon make it out unscathed, but him passing out frozen I saw the potential for a subplot I couldn't ignore.

Hope you all enjoyed. Thanks for reading!
The reperccusions of Jon's decision to go beyond the Wall come to surface.

Hello everyone. Thank you for all the kind comments, kudos and bookmarks. They inspire me to keep typing away.

Usually, I like to write in one long continuous flowing scene of sorts, but in the last few few chapters I've had to jump locations, but nothing compared to this chapter. Lol. There should be continuity throughout the jumps so timeline wise it should all make sense.

Anywho, without further ado, I present to you, Chapter 11!

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Standing atop one of the Wall's many battlements, Daenerys stared intently at the snow-covered trees below, from at such a height she thought the land beyond the Wall seemed endless with its expansive fields of snow, white tipped mountains and lakes. Presumed to be lost or dead in its vast landscape was, Jon Snow, King of the North and her recently wed husband, the thought of him and his loss filling her with a mix of erratic emotions as she tried to mend the void in her heart. It had formed when Drogo had passed, and although Jon had started to fill it in the brief time she had started to know him, his absence left her empty once again.

Jon, she thought, she had never taken notice to the simplicity of his name till she was faced with the chance of never being able to call him by it. The name was short, simple, and didn't ask to be anything more than what it was, it wasn't shortened or taken from a man who had accomplished some great deed or another, it suited him. Jon personified. However, just thinking the name tweaked a heartstring, the reality of his loss finally settling in to reality. They hadn't been together long, a single night at best, and their first meeting of one another was less than what a love story ought to start with. Still, it was the memory of their first meeting that stuck with her above else, remembering how she watched him cautiously enter her throne room at Dragonstone, his face an open book of apprehension and wariness. Oh how she longed to see that face give her a sullen look one last time.

Daenerys was startled from her thoughts at the sound of crunching snow at her rear. "Your Grace?"
Turning to find both Jorah and Davos, Daenerys attempted to put forth her bravest face, a mask to hide her true devastation. "Ser Davos, I wasn't aware you were here."

"I wasn't, your Grace, I've just come from Winterfell, hoping to grab a word with the King regarding some affairs of the North. To be quite honest I had been under the impression he wasn't planning to partake in this endeavor," replied Davos, there was a somberness to his voice that showed his worry for Jon's well being.

"I was under the same," said Daenerys quietly, averting her gaze from him.

Davos' lips thinned. "Well, I suppose there's no point in beating around the bush then, I don't mean to infringe upon you, but as a courtesy, I thought it fitting to tell you that some of the Wildling's have agreed to go with me in search of the King," announced Davos, sounding reluctantly devoted to go through with what he said.

"I tried to inform him that a journey North would mean certain death, Khaleesi, but he won't heed my warning," cut in Jorah, imploringly.

"Ser Jorah speaks truth, Ser Davos. I've witnessed the dead myself, and as I have seen them, I know we will need every person capable of wielding a weapon defending this Wall," Daenerys confirmed. "Yourself included."

"... I'm sorry, your Grace, but I can't knowingly stay here in good conscience," refuted Davos with a shake of his head. "It won't do you, or the Kingdom's of man any good to have my old bones skulking here."

"My husband named you Hand in his stead, the people of the North need someone to stand in his place. Now isn't the time to throw your life away."

Davos straightened where he stood. "With all due respect, I serve the King of the North, your Grace. As do the Wildling's and the Northern Lord's, all of whom know what's coming and would much rather be fleeing south than face what could mean the deaths of themselves and their loved ones. It was King Jon, that inspired them to stay and fight. With him gone, it won't be long before men start leaving their posts."

"They'll be branded as traitors, and will be treated as such," interjected Jorah.

A thick brow popped above one eye, Davos looked to Jorah incredulously. "Is being called a traitor truly a threat? Mistake me if I'm wrong, Ser, were you not once a slaver? Did the former Warden of the North not wish to claim your head and your response was to flee, or was I told wrong?"

Jorah held his head high, even though he did consider his desperate days as a slaver a blemish upon his reputation. "That was a long time ago."

"And yet, it's still remembered," said Davos lightly. "I suppose its true what they say, the North doesn't forget," he turned to Daenerys. "Nor will they forget a Queen who turned her back on their King."

"I did not turn my back on my husband," growled Daenerys. "I flew from Dragonstone once I received Jorah's raven. I came to save him... I came... to late."

"You did what you could," comforted Jorah.

"Aye, she did what she could," Davos acknowledged. "It's time I do what I can."
Daenerys observed Davos for a long moment, he had put doubt in her regarding the North's loyalties with Jon's absence, that aside, she couldn't help but want the man to go out and succeed in finding her husband if just to see him one last time. "So be it, Ser Davos, take your men and go."

Davos gave a humble bow before excusing himself from her presence.

"Beyond the Wall is nothing but a graveyard, Khaleesi. You saw the dead. He won't be returning." Commented Jorah, watching as Davos traveled the length of the Wall toward the lift.

"Maybe he won't, at least he had the courage to try."

"He's given himself and the men he takes with him a sentence of death. Is it courage to knowingly die for nothing?" asked Jorah.

"Is it courage to do nothing?" Snapped Daenerys, she turned from Jorah and went back to looking out over the Wall, leaving her oldest advisor to stand watching after her.

Resting her head against a wooden post caked in cold frost, Daenerys sighed. Things were easier when she hadn't involved herself in Westeros' affairs, perhaps it was a blessing she and Viserys had fled to Essos. Sure it was a place of heat, savagery, and slaves, but at least there wasn't an impending doom upon it, and furthermore, there wasn't a Jon Snow there to have taken a growing place in her heart. Distantly she looked up to see her children swooping and diving in the grey sky above, none of them seemingly aware to the emotional turmoil she had unexpectedly come to bear. A bell chimed in the distance and Daenerys craned her neck to look over to another battlement where a Wildling rattled the brass bell of his station with great fervor. She could make out the arrival of Davos to the battlement where the Wildling excitedly pointed to something below.

Following the man's directed finger, Daenerys stilled, feeling a shiver run the course of her body, and her breath catch in her throat as she watched a pitch black horse trot out from the thicket of snow-covered trees below. While it was hard to discern, she could faintly make out a lump the size of a grown person's body draped over its back.

"Jon!" She whispered, turning on her feet in haste, she tripped and stumbled into the arms of Jorah behind.

"Khaleesi?" Questioned Jorah, his eyes scanning her face.

"It's Jon! He's returned!" Breathed Daenerys, squirming from Jorah's arms, she passed him by, running down the Wall's stretching walkway to the lift that would bring her down to Eastwatch's courtyard.

Entering onto the old, wooden lift the same time Davos did, Daenerys watched numbly as the Wildling from the other battlement lowered a beam to keep them secure within. Her arms wrapped around herself as she focused on Jon's Hand, silently pleading with him for him to confirm it was Jon below.

The scrunched face of Davos showed his uncertainty about whether it was Jon or not, his one good hand nervously rubbing around the stumps of his other.

With a sharp screech, the lift jolted as it started to slowly lower its way down from the top of the Wall. Shuffling to the far side, Daenerys peered over the edge of the lift to watch as a herd of Wildling's and Nights Watchmen guided the horse and its passenger into the keep's courtyard. Heart beating like it might explode in her chest, Daenerys could feel the nervous jitters flutter through her as the lift and the ground started to meet. As it reached a low enough point, she nearly sighed when
she recognized Jon's face as he was pulled off the back of the horse. Yet the sight of his motionless body gave her a sickly churn in the pit of her stomach.

"He'll be fine, your Grace, the man's been through worse," commented Davos, but the deep, unsettling tone that linked itself to his voice gave her little comfort.

The lift lurched and shook as it touched down, too worried to wait as a couple of Night's Watchmen looked to raise the wood beam, Daenerys tucked under and pushed past them. Her feet scurrying to where Jon had been laid out on the ground, the men gathered around him talking boisterously amongst themselves as they debated what to do with the unconscious Jon Snow.

Legs weakening as she neared him, Daenerys collapsed at his side, her hands clasping his cold face between her palms. His once damp hair frozen into a rigid shape, dead was her first coherent thought, but a small wisp of steamed breath extinguished from his nostrils showed signs of life.

"Jon!" She gasped, wide-eyed she dropped her hands to the solid mats of iced fur. Shaking him with all the force she could muster, Jon didn't respond, his eyes closed and his face set in an eerily peaceful expression.

"Your Grace," called Davos, as he caught up to where she crouched over Jon. His own eyes looking the King over before resting on a few men from House Stark who had ridden with him from Winterfell at Lady Sansa's behest. "You lot, grab your King and get him into that building there and out of those damn frozen clothes."

"You can't move him," pleaded Daenerys, her fingers gripping tightly onto Jon's frozen, knotted fur.

"He's not glass, your Grace, he won't break. Besides he's frozen stiff as a board, if we don't get him warm soon, we may not save him." Warned Davos before giving a swift flick of his hand to permit the Stark men in picking Jon up from the ground.

Daenerys reluctantly released her grip on Jon, allowing his guardsmen to pick him up under his arms and by his legs, carrying him in a shuffle to Eastwatch's defunct armory turned holding cell. Kneeling there, she absentmindedly felt Davos wrap an arm around and her, assisting her to her feet.

"Come with me, your Grace, let's get you inside with the King," said Davos, leading her into the armory.

Daenerys walked ambly at Davos' side, time and her surroundings escaping her till she found herself in an open dark room with her husband laying atop a table, his House guardsmen under Davos' order stripping Jon of his clothes, the furs snapping and bending from their frozen state. His once warm skin looked pale with a tinge of blue, the pink scars on his chest standing out against the ghostly white canvas of flesh.

Once down to the bare, she observed as the men began piling wool blankets and heaps of fur on top of him in an attempt to bring warmth back to his cold form. The guardsmen then took a step back, some making muttered prayers to the Old Gods for their King's survival before filing out of the building by Davos' request, instructing them to keep watch at the door and not let anyone enter. Leaving Jon, Davos and Daenerys to the silence of the room.

It was then as she stood at the foot of the table wishing desperately to reach out and touch him that, Daenerys realized she had been far to caught up in the thought of losing an ally, that she truly cared for him, loved him even. No longer did she view it a marriage of necessity.

"Will he live?" Asked Daenerys, her voice a decibel above a whisper as she watched Jon's chest start
to rise and fall beneath the blankets and fur, his breathing labored just as Drogo's had been before his body became a shell to his lost mind.

"I'm no healer, I doubt we'll know till we have a Maester have a look at him," answered Davos.

"Where is Eastwatch's Maester? Why has he not been summoned?" Questioned Daenerys at once.

Davos sighed, his eyes flickering to his boots. "Castle Black has no Maester, they called for Eastwatch's to serve there until one of their men finishes his studies at the Citadel."

Rubbing tiredly at her eyes, Daenerys rounded the table till she came to stand by Jon's head, her gaze taking in every stubble on his chin, to the crinkle of aged lines in the corner of his eyes. "I can call for a ship to take him to Dragonstone, the weather is warmer... He may fare better there."

Raising his eyes to her, Davos rubbed at the back of his neck. "The time to send a raven and await a ship... He might as well be already dead," he replied. "The best chance he has of living lies at Winterfell, there's servants and a Maester there that can tend to him."

Daenerys was hesitant to see Jon there, the place his siblings resided, and his father raised him. It would have been a leap of hope to think she'd be welcomed there by the people of the North, and she was far from willing to leave Jon's side. "What of the journey there, an open cart can't help to improve his condition."

"It doesn't help to keep him laid out on a table either," said Davos, he held a moment of silence, knowing his next words were not what she wanted to hear. "He needs to be moved to Winterfell, your Grace, he's got his siblings there, the crypt bearing his forefathers is there. If these are to be his final moments, he should spend them there."

An image of Jon laying in a tomb flashed before her eyes and she cringed, hiding her face from Davos.

Jon's Hand opened his mouth to say more, but the sound of an ensuing struggle outside the building's door had Davos striding over and yanking it open to reveal two Stark guardsmen pinning a frantic Arya to the ground.

"Unhand her!" Ordered Davos sternly, even going so far as to pull one of the men off her.

Flung back, the guard's helm drooped over his eyes and he hastily pushed it back up so he could see. "You said not to let anyone enter."

"I figured you could interpret that as anyone but the King's sister you bloody fool," scolded Davos, reaching down to help Arya to her feet. "My apologies, my Lady."

"Where's Jon, is it true what they say, did he make it back?" asked Arya, grabbing his hand, she let him help her to her feet.

"It is, my Lady, but you should prepare yourself, he's not come back whole," answered Davos grimly.

Brows coming together, Arya shook her head. "He's lost a part of him?"

"No, nothing like that," said Davos quickly. "He's yet to wake is all, he's... He's unresponsive, my Lady, he needs a healer, and he needs them soon."

"I want to see him," stated Arya.
Davos stepped to the side to allow her entry to the building. "Of course, come, he's just inside."

Arya slowly entered the armory, Davos following close behind. She could see a few of Jon's fingers sticking out from under the blankets, the Dragon Queen holding them in her hand as she stood at the side of the table, looking down at him. With the walk to the table filled with consternation, Arya's gaze locked onto a crinkled slip of paper hanging out from under Jon, subtly so to not draw attention, she plucked the paper out from under, hiding it in her palm and beneath her fingers.

"What happened out there?" Inquired Arya, peering inquisitively across to Daenerys.

Daenerys didn't look to the girl. Unwilling to break her gaze from Jon on the chance she'd miss him wake. "The dead... there were thousands of them, no... thousands upon thousands... To many to count."

Arya shuddered at the haunted look in Daenerys expression. "And Jon?"

Closing her eyes, Daenerys relived the vivid moment again, the eroded flesh on their fingers scratching and clawing at his clothes as they pulled him over. Her jaw clenched and she sighed, regret for her inability to act and save him. "He didn't see them, they came from behind. Pulled him with them under the ice and water."

"And you did nothing?"

Eyes flashing open, Daenerys head snapped to look at the young girl. "You weren't there, don't presume to know what you don't."

While Davos had been attempting to let the two of them get acquainted with one another, he also foresaw it entering into argumentative territory, and with Jon's survival still an uncertainty, so to was the alliance with the Dragon Queen. Stepping forward to plant a strong arm around Arya's shoulders, the Onion Knight gently ushered her from the table.

Twisting her head to look up at him, Arya shot him a deathly glare. "What ar--"

"It's time we made preparations to bring the King back to Winterfell, my Lady," cut In Davos as he purposefully guided her to the door of the armoury, the young Stark in his arm dragging her heels as they went.

Listening as Davos exited the room with Jon's sibling, and the soft thud of the door closing after them. Daenerys finally let her focus fall back onto Jon, a lump forming in her throat as she dissipated the distance between them, her hand going out to run through his thawing hair before placing a tender kiss to his forehead. Her mind being made then and there that she wouldn't leave his side, even if it meant going to a place where every man and woman would want nothing better than to see her throat slit in vengeance for the crimes of her father's madness.

Winterfell. Barely visible to the naked eye as forceful winds blew falling snow so fiercely it was nearly a blinding white for as far as one could see. The small frosty flakes of snow freezing as they fell, the wind throwing them about as hardened pellets of ice, peppering the travelers from Eastwatch with an endless barrage of unrelenting torment. Hooves of the horses beneath them tromping tiredly through the growing piles of snow on what was known to be the King's Road, the travelers breathed a little easier when they saw the tall walls and towers of Winterfell come into view at last. All of them more thankful to take refuge behind its stone defenses than spend another minute in the North's increasingly hostile weather.

Steadily they came upon the gateway to the Northern fortress, Daenerys thought back to the moment
they set off from Eastwatch, her children following faithfully overhead, providing her with a reassurance of safety, but as the weather turned to what it was, they turned away, and she didn't hold a grudge against them as she had watched with worry as they struggled against the onslaught of raging winds for a better part of a day. Yet with them gone, the bulky oak doors of the castle gate made her realize how vulnerable she was just now, with no Dothraki or Unsullied no protect her, and no husband to fend off the fiends of his own Kingdom, her livelihood rested in Jorah's hands, as capable as they were. Shaking the thought from her mind, she stared ahead, waiting as the two tall wood-planked doors were tugged inward by two Stark guardsmen. The caravan from Eastwatch rode in, a girl with striking auburn hair flanked by Starkmen stood waiting for them in what Daenerys presumed to be the courtyard of the castle.

Daenerys pulled a heap of sewn fur closer to her body in a feeble attempt to keep her body heat within the confines of her layered attire. Around her she took in the ancient stonework and wooden banister walkways stapled to the side of the walls overhead. Her gaze finally resting upon what was likely to have been a magnificent tower that had collapsed within itself sometime long ago, the tower top a ruin of broken rubble capped with a pile of unblemished white snow, but even the scenic setting of Winterfell wasn't enough to keep her attention, her eyes quick to settle back onto the horse-drawn wagon that transported her unmoving, unwaking husband. His body bundled in more wool and fur than they had had on him at Eastwatch's armory, small plumes of steamed breath still seen exhaling from him.

"Ser Davos," greeted Sansa, her voice timid as she grazed over Daenerys and Jorah to the wagon she knew to be hauling Jon.

"Lady Stark, I must say, you're a sight for sore, tired eyes, the journey here has not been kind and the King needs Maester Wolkan's immediate attention," answered Davos, the stubble of facial hair across his jaw tipped with frost. "Given the circumstances with the dead, in the interest of not deteriorating morale, I'd suggest we keep the King's return and his wife's presence to those here right now. It won't do us any good if word gets around about the King condition. It'll be rats to a rubbish heap with those wanting to take up his place."

"We shant waste time then," noted Sansa, she looked to the armed men on either side of her, giving them a subtle nod. "Carry the King to his chambers, one of you fetch Maester Wolkan. Word of the King's return is not to be discussed with anyone, do you understand?"

Her House Guard nodded and mumbled their compliance to her orders before flocking to the wagon, their gloved hands pulling back the layers that covered him.

Dropping from his horse, Davos let a Stark guardsman take the reigns from him, watching as the hulking mass of the Hound and Thoros joined him on the ground.

"I see you've brought back a few strays along with my brother, Ser Davos," voiced Sansa, taking in the familiar face of Sandor Clegane.

Davos gave a tilt of his head. "King Jon brought them with him when he ventured beyond the Wall. It didn't seem right to leave them stranded there."

"So naturally you decided to bring them here." Said Sansa, her words laced with sarcasm.

"I did what I thought the King would do if he were in my place," answered Davos, his gaze shifting as the two men of the brotherhood looked lost within the courtyard. "I trust we can provide them room and board?"

"For now there is, but as I informed you before you left, I've invited the Houses of the North to
Winterfell. I'm expecting the arrival of the realms Lord's and Lady's within the fortnight. Priority for board shall be given to them when they come."

"And they shall have it. These men here, they're hard men. I'm certain they'll find any accommodations bar the snow outside fitting to their needs." Replied Davos.

"Then I leave it to you to find them their accommodations," said Sansa, a hand going up to tuck a few loose strands of red hair behind her ear, her focus shifting to the Hound, the half-burnt face staring back at her.

"I should get to it then, If you'll excuse me, my Lady," spoke Davos, observing as her House's men lifted Jon's limp body from the wagon before setting off to play host to Thoros and the Hound.

Daenerys released the grip of the reigns and threw her body over the side of her mount, everything and everyone around her perceived as irrelevant as she hurried to follow the men not under her command as they carried Jon to a doorway on the edge of the courtyard, Jorah Mormont following her like a shadow.

"I take it that was our new sister?" Asked Sansa to Arya as she came to be at her side, the younger sibling pulling down the hood of her cloak.

"It was, I spent perhaps a total of two days in her company between Dragonstone and Eastwatch, not including the days we spent together on the ride here. I doubt we spoke ten words to each other," replied Arya "I don't know her well."

Sansa shook her head, a sense of trepidation clutching her at the Dragon Queen's presence at Winterfell. "Do you know if she agreed to Jon's term for the North's independence?"

"Are you that eager to take his place? He's not even dead yet," chastised Arya.

"You know that's not what I meant," seethed Sansa. "But it would be foolish of us to not plan for what will happen once Jon goes... If he goes. We can't rely on a hollow promise we don't know is even guaranteed. Can we be so naive to think a woman bent on conquering the seven Kingdom's will let us continue to govern ourselves out of the good of her heart?"

"We should face it when we need face it," counseled Arya, her hands reaching up to pull the hood of her cloak back up. "Or wait at least until Jon's body has gone cold before you try and wear his crown."

Sansa felt a squeeze in her chest as she realized Arya thought her so callous to dethrone their shared half-brother. "You treat me as though I'm some kind of monster, I'm your sister, Arya, your blood."

"Your Jon's blood too," commented Arya, her hand reaching into a satchel slung across her shoulder, fidgeting around for something within.

"I know that," snapped Sansa tiredly.

Arya finally pulled out a thin fold of parchment from her bag, holding it out for her sister to take. "Explain this then."

Almost hesitantly, Sansa took the paper, her eyes drifting over her own handwriting. "How did you come to have this?"

"I came upon it by accident at Eastwatch. Why are you summoning the North's bannermen without Jon knowing of it, why would you summon them when you thought he'd be away? What was it you
"were hoping to accomplish?" Countered Arya, her voice becoming more demanding with every passing question.

Crumpling the parchment in her hand, Sansa shook her head. "It's not what you might be thinking. I wasn't looking to have them oust Jon, I was looking to ensure their loyalty to him. Since Jon's decision to return to Dragonstone, the rumors of him having bent the knee have gone from whispers behind closed doors to open discussion. In the first day alone that you left with him for his wedding, I received two-and-twenty ravens. Ravens demanding I confirm or deny Jon had pledged fealty to the Dragon Queen."

"And summoning them here does what to quell our bannermen?"

"Baelish said it would help alleviate their concerns to have me personally squash the rumors," answered Sansa. "It would show them that even in Jon's absence there are still those here to carry out his will."

"This was Littlefinger's idea?" Arya said aloud, the idea of the summoned bannermen becoming all to sinister with Petyr Baelish having orchestrated it, another red wedding came to mind and Arya had to push the memory of Robb's body paraded around the Twins with his direwolfs head sewn to where his own should have been.

"Lord Baelish advised me as Lady of Winterfell, I acted on it. I know far better than you or anyone else what Petyr Baelish is capable of, but at the same time, if he wasn't a diplomat, there's no way he could have served on the small council in King's Landing for as long as he did." Said Sansa firmly. "There are times he does speak reason."

"He's playing you, and your going along with it like a chicken fattened up before the butcher," Arya announced quietly, her tone an insight to her disappointment.

"If that were truly happening, then why did I order Brienne to keep watch over him, stop him from being here to see Jon as he is?" Asked Sansa. "I heed his advice, I don't trust him."

"Perhaps you're prone to moments of reason as well," Stated Arya, she reached up to brush off a collection of powdered snow from her shoulder.

Feeling an anger start to rise, Sansa took a few even breaths to calm herself before gesturing to a stairwell behind her. "Its cold out, we can talk more about this later. I have Bran waiting in my quarters. You should see him."

Resigned to let the topic drop for now, Arya turned to glance at the doorway Jon had been carried away through. "What about Jon?"

"I've arranged for everything Davos requested in his letter, Jon's being taken care of, its late and you've ridden for some days. Warm yourself and get something to eat, we'll see him in the morning." Advised Sansa, taking the few leading steps to the stairwell, she paused and waited upon the first one for her sister to join her.

Reluctantly, Arya nodded, allowing herself to retreat to warmth and comfort at last, nor could she refuse the offer of a warm meal after having to traverse the North's frigid countryside for the last several days.

The fierce winds howled from the outside, strong gusts of cold air rattling the wooden shudders of the window of the scantily decorated room, the sun had set since arriving to the North's most esteemed castle, and in that time, Jon by all appearances seemed to be fairing just as he had at
Eastwatch, even under the care of Maester Wolkan. The learned man having been reading excerpts from several open texts sprawled across Jon's bed, then administering an assortment of different remedies to the ill King, all the while, Daenerys watched on, exhausted but unwilling to let herself catch a wink of sleep till she heard his voice.

As the darkness of the night took hold and Winterfell became cast in the soft glow of moonlight, the pale tone of Jon's skin faded to a ghostly white.

Smearing a granular cream across Jon's bare chest, Maester Wolkan leaned back on his knees with a shake of his head as the King of the North continued to show no improvement. "I've done all I can."

Daenerys eyes flickered to Wolkan. "All you can?" She said, her fingers tightening around the armrests of her seat. "He's still as he was before coming here, you can't have done all you can."

"I'm sorry, my Lady, but I have no cure for the sickness that has befallen the King, I'm afraid it must be left to the Gods to decide his fate," replied Wolkan gravely, the saliva in his mouth evaporating as he watched Jorah stand from his seat in the corner of the room, his hand resting on the handle of his sword.

"You're addressing the Queen, not a Lady of some low House, or one of your niece's daughters. The Queen," Jorah informed him firmly.

"Certainly, my apologies, It must be said that doesn't change the fact I cannot bring, his Grace, back from the slumber in which he sleeps," returned Wolkan, rising up from the side of Jon's bed, he brought a hand to rest on his lower back as he stood, having crouched for so long the man was struck with an aching tension throughout his muscles.

"That's it?" muttered Daenerys, her hope sinking. "Your certain there's nothing else you can do?"

"I've recalled everything I was taught at the Citadel, there's nothing else I can do or say, your Grace," answered Wolkan, the linked chains around his neck jingling as he collected his books together in an unbalanced tower that teetered in his clasped palms. "I suppose with your blessing, your Grace, I shall retire for the evening and return in the 'morrow to view the King."

Pondering his words, Daenerys knew the man had put forth his best effort having watched him for what felt like an eternity. "I'll look to you in the 'morrow, Maester Wolkan."

"Might I suggest you try and get some sleep as well?" Offered Wolkan, shifting slightly to view the silver-haired woman with sleepless bags hanging under her eyes. Despite her irrefutable beauty, at the current moment he looked to her, she appeared far from Queenly.

"He's right, Khaleesi, you can't stay awake forever," joined Jorah, his concern for her always apart of his every waking thought.

"I'm fine." Jorah sighed. "You should at least eat, I can have food brought to you."

"I'm fine, Jorah."

"Perhaps a room of your own in which to get some rest?"

Daenerys grit her teeth. "I said I'm fine, now if you'll please leave, I care to be alone."

"Khaleesi..." started Jorah, but she turned from him and he gave up, knowing well enough when he
was overstepping her boundaries. "I'll be standing guard outside should you require me."

With no response, Jorah bent at half to bow, then floundered from the room, leaving Wolkan and his wavering pile of books in the company of a glowering Daenerys.

Daenerys sat, watching fixedly as Jon's breathing suddenly became more labored, his chest expanding and shrinking with shuddered exhales of pain. Slowly his breaths stifled as did the beating of her heart, she jumped in her seat as his body began convulsing and shaking till as quickly as the violent episode began, it stopped. His body limp once again. The blue in the veins that traveled the length of his body growing deeper in colour.

Letting the books fall from his grasp in a clutter, Maester Wolkan rushed back to Jon's side, the man leaning over him with an ear pressed to his chest. "His Grace isn't drawing breath," gasped Wolkan urgently, his gaze turning to view Daenerys who sat forward in her chair, an obvious look of fright upon her face.

A question fumbled on the tip of her tongue, unwilling to let herself ask it in fear Wolkan would confirm it. "Is... Is he?"

The Maester of Winterfell diverted his focus to the floor. "The King is... dead."

An immediate pain of anguish struck her at the revelation and she burrowed her head into her hands, tears swelling in the corner of her eyes. Contributing to the grief was Jon's lifeless face burned into the back of her eyelids, the gaunt, hollow expression of his face as he blew out his last dying breath.

Ink tipped quill gliding along the rough surface of scrolled paper, Sansa signed her name before pressing down the Wolfs head wax seal near the bottom. Squishing it in, she drew back to admire her written word, there was an elegance to it that pleased her, even if the subject it detailed was rather a bore. Rolling the parchment up, she tied a ribbon neatly about it and let her eyes look throughout her parents old quarters and her fellow siblings lounging within.

Bran was as she last left him, sitting in his wheeled seat, staring endlessly into the flames of fireplace nestled in the corner of the room. He hadn't said more than a greeting to her the entire day as he busied himself with his ongoing quest to perceive the past and view the present. Beyond Bran, sitting cross-legged atop her bed was Arya, her ever watchful sister gently running a whetstone down the edge of her sword, Needle. The thin blade becoming sharper with every passing glide of the sharpener.

It was an evening of tranquility, even as the Lord's and Lady's of the North were expected to congregate at Winterfell in the hopes of addressing Sansa in the coming day about their King's rumored fealty to the Dragon Queen. None of them remotely aware Jon had taken the woman as his wife, or his unconscious state. A weight had been thrust onto her as she was left -as Jon went on his escapades south- to hold the loyalty of his bannermen while at the same time keeping Jon's secrets from being discovered by the forever prying, Petyr Baelish who would use them to his advantage in whatever scheme he was concocting, and Sansa knew Littlefinger well enough to know he was concocting something.

"Jon," Bran said abruptly, both Sansa and Arya turning to look at him in surprise.

"What about, Jon?" Inquired Sansa.

A silence engulfed the room as Bran turned to look at them, Sansa noted that even in her brothers increasing capacity to feel or show little to no emotion, there was a glint of sorrow in his dark eyes.
"What is it, Bran, what did you see?" Asked Arya impatiently. Her voice cracking.

"Jon's dead."

Chapter End Notes

That's right I killed Jon by hypothermia. The End.

I also realized this chapter that having so many characters in one damn location at one given time is a headache in itself. Trying to give them their own parts and making sense of it, gee. I definitly overlooked that when I started this chapter, so the next one they will all depart from Winterfell except for the characters i've picked the next one to include. Lol.

Furthermore, I have an inkling of a suspicion someone will ask where is Ghost, to be honest he would have been a great addition, but the furry bastard slipped my mind as I was writing this, and where I thought I could bring him in and ease him in throughout the chapter later on, the rework of the story structure was to much to bear. He'll make appearance in the next chapter.

That's right the next chapter. The end was a joke of all jokes, I hope to have the next chapter out as soon as I can. Thank you all and I hope you enjoyed the update.
The Onion Knight's Dilemma

Chapter Summary

The Death of Jon Snow breeds distrust and insecurity within the walls of Winterfell.

Chapter Notes

So happy there were some people surprised by Jon's death, in the hope of not giving anything away early I shall be tightlipped on the next few chapters as I build to something I've been looking forward to writing for quite some time.

As well, thank you to those who've bookmarked, commented and dropped those Kudos! I appreciate knowing I'm not the only one reading this thing haha.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Wolf Fangs & Dragon Fire

Chapter Twelve: The Onion Knight's Dilemma

Shaking as she gathered herself back together, Daenerys pushed herself from her seat, taking the few wobbly steps needed to be at Jon's bedside. Her hand stretching out to rest on his chest, his skin cold to the touch.

"If you will excuse me, your Grace, I shall need to speak to, Lady Stark, inform her of the King's fate," murmured Wolkan softly, he clambered to his feet and made to leave, but Daenerys raised voice halted his advance.

"No," she ordered, dragging her hand from Jon, she fixed Wolkan with a stare that made him instantly nervous. "You will not speak of this to anyone."

"Your Grace?" Returned Wolkan.

"You will seek out Ser Davos of House Seaworth, and you will summon him here. You will tell him nothing, you will say nothing to no one!" Daenerys commanded, there was a glistening trail of tears down her cheeks but she wiped them away with the cuff of her sleeve.

"Its my duty as Maester to this Castle that I should inform the Lord or Lady of all things that transpire within its walls," Wolkan attempted to reason, but the shake of her head had him resorting to silence.

"Ser Jorah!" She called, not even as she finished his name did the door of the room fly open and a concerned Jorah enter, his sword half pulled from its scabbard.

"Khaleesi?" Asked Jorah, his eyes switching between the Maester and Daenerys before falling on the lifeless face of Jon.
"You will accompany the Maester to find Ser Davos, you will ensure the Maester does not let slip of the King's condition to anyone." Ordered Daenerys.

Jorah nodded, struggling to pull his gaze from Jon, he shut his eyes instead. "As you command, Khaleesi, if he should let it slip?"

"Then you will ensure the good Maester never speaks again," responded Daenerys, letting the threat linger over Wolkan's head, to assist the scholar in making the sensible choice in following her orders.

Sliding his sword back into its scabbard, Jorah waved the Maester over to him "It's probably best you find Ser Davos, quickly."

Wolkan looked to Jorah, then turned to Daenerys with a softened expression. "Your Grace, you are grieving, surely you see this is absurd. You're the guest of Lady Stark. News of such importance shouldn't be kept from her."

"Ser Jorah," hinted Daenerys airily.

Jorah stalked forward and grabbed the citadel chain around Wolkan's neck, giving it a short jerk he watched as Wolkan stumbled a few feet before using it to drag the man from the room at a rushed shuffle. The door of Jon's chamber slamming closed with an audible bang that shook the window shudders of the room.

Left to the morgue like silence of her dead husband's quarters, Daenerys gently crawled onto the bed next to him, being sure not to disturb his perished body in anyway. The tips of her fingers brushed against the nape of his neck, his icy skin sent goosebumps up her arms, the heat of his body having drained, leaving him a vacant corpse to his once, sulking yet honorable personality. Perhaps this was further testament to the fate that befell those who called her wife, she thought, a curse upon her in which men who loved her paid the price.

Fingers tracing his jaw, she paused at his chin, a new set of troublesome thoughts projecting themselves in her mind. What was to happen to the North without him at its head, in his death did she unknowingly garner another enemy? Was it possible to retain the North as an ally without him? In truth, she held no exquisite love for the Northern Kingdom, or the Vale that followed it, she did, however, know she had started to love the man that had been named King of the North. And now, without a preconceived succession plan in place after Jon, his realm stood to be a threat once again. Lest one of his siblings take up the mantle, the ensuing power grab once the news of her husbands passing got out was surely an event she hoped not to be in Winterfell to witness.

Daenerys was jolted by the rapping of knuckles against the chamber door. Cautiously she rolled from the bed to her feet, her eyes darting to Jon's sword that leaned against a nearby wall with rest of his discarded belongings.

"Who's there?"

"Ser Davos Seaworth, your Grace, I was told you wished to see me," came Davos' muffled voice.

Hesitantly, Daenerys rubbed at her cheeks with the back of her hand to rid her face of any remnant tears, as weak as she felt at that moment, she knew she needed the appearance of strength to weather the coming storm. "Enter, Ser Davos."

Taking a single step into the room, Davos peeked around the half-opened door before walking in, the chamber door pulled closed by Jorah in the hall.

"It's a tad tense out there between those two," noted Davos lightly, his eyes immediately drawn to the
stiff body of Jon. "How fares, his Grace? Has he still yet to come to?"

Hands fidgeting nervously at her front, Daenerys shook her head. "... He's passed."

"Passe--" began Davos, his face contorting to a look of shock as he repeated her words. "I... No, that... But he was..." fumbling upon the entanglement of risen questions, he clamped his mouth shut as he settled on one in particular. "When?"

"This evening," answered Daenerys with a sigh, the blown breath leaving her along with the faked persona of strength she hoped to portray. Her eyes shining as the tears threatened to pool over once more.

Davos felt an unpleasant sensation in his gut as he approached Jon's bedside, his eyes raking the form of the man he served once over before dropping to a knee and taking one of Jon's hand in his, just to see for himself that the warmth of life had left the King's body. "... I thank you for letting me see him, your Grace. I'm sorry for your loss, he was a good man."

Bottom lip sucked in, Daenerys nibbled on it nervously. "You served him, Ser Davos. You stood at his side before me on Dragonstone. He named you his Hand. How is it we proceed?"

Pulling away from Jon, Davos let the mans cold hand drop from his clasp. A look of bemusement across his aged face as he looked to her. "You want my advice, your Grace?"

"Seeing as the members of my own council are leagues away, except Jorah, I admit you are my only other option, atleast the only other one I care to trust," returned Daenerys slowly. She shifted on her feet as she strode to the chair she had occupied through much of the evening. "The North was his domain, its fate if he were to ever not rule it... We never had that conversation."

"Do you want my honest advice?"

"I do."

"Then, in all honesty, I cannot envision the North thriving without him. Certainly, you have options to replace him, the most logical being Lady Sansa, but I say this with meaning no offense, the young lass hasn't the temperament to lead the North in my opinion--" Said Davos, he let his sentence hang as though more was to be spoken.

Fixing the man from Flea Bottom with the most inquisitive stare she could muster, Daenerys let her head loll to the side, taking in the measure of the man at her front. "If Sansa Stark isn't to take Jon's place, then who... You?"

Davos waved the slanderous question away with the stubs of his one hand. "Not I, your Grace. The Northern Lord's wouldn't follow me even if I tried. Its King Jon. He's the only man I'd put my trust in, he's the only one capable of leading the damned North. He's proven it, a bit carelessly with his own life I admit, but he's the one, the only one with the sense to herd them to defend against the dead, unite them with the Wildling's."

Daenerys teeth gritted, her inquisitive stare morphing to that of a glare as she viewed him. "He's gone, Davos, as much as you or I would choose otherwise, Jon Snow is dead."

"For now," conceded Davos, he took a hard gulp, knowing that by what he was to suggest could mean his end. Jon had warned him that to bring him back again would be to see his head from his shoulders, yet in that moment, his life seemed minuscule when compared to the bigger picture. He was no great leader of men, his son had died in the Battle of Blackwater, in actuality there wasn't much keeping him tied to this world. *Jon did though. If Davos' life was to be taken in order to give
the rest of Westeros a better chance of surviving the Long Night. So be it. "There's a way, I'm not saying its a guarantee. But there's a way to bring him back."

"Back?" Scoffed Daenerys.

"From the dead, aye," confirmed Davos. "The Red Woman, King Jon had told me in passing that it was she who proposed the idea of you to meet with him on Dragonstone."

The stark red-haired women Daenerys met on the old Targaryen island came to memory, but what role she had in all of this didn't seem to connect. "I remember her."

"She had served Stannis Baratheon, filled his head with nonsense of prophecies, I always figured her for a charlatan, but the woman... Had you seen what I saw her do, you'd not believe your eyes, it shouldn't have been possible, none of it," mumbled Davos, he seemed distant as he thought back, the shadow of Stannis served to give him night terrors in his sleep.

"What does she have to do with Jon?" Demanded Daenerys, though as she spoke, her eyes drifted to Jon and the engraved scars on his chest. The words Davos had said before Jon cut him off during their first meeting at Dragonstone rang like an alarm.

'If that's so, how is it then that a dagger plunged deep into his heart wasn't enough to keep him dea--'

Her mind revelled at Davos' blunt honesty back then, the man had laid out Jon's death and revival so clearly, she had been blind then, or had simply chosen to ignore it, but her irritation for her past ignorance didn't last long as her thoughts turned sour as she remembered meeting with Jon days after on the winding pathway leading to Dragonstone's keep. She had always believed Jon was honest, Jon could tell no lie, Jon held no secrets. And now she knew. Jon wasn't always what he seemed, prone to tell lies like anyone else, his reply when she asked what his relationship with the Red Priestess was echoed from the depths of that memory.

'We weren't close, it was more of a passin' acquaintance. The Red Woman and I did not part ways on good terms, your Grace.'

It was a lie. The Red Priestess had brought him life and he had purposely chosen to withhold that from her. Mayhap he was not who she had come to think he was. Even when she had seen the scar over his heart on their wedding night, she had figured then that such a wound would have been a killing strike, but as she had asked, he brushed it away without words, the lust of that night had consumed her, blinding her as he continued to hold his lie, continued to withheld the truth.

"I take it you know what part she played in returning him to the living," ventured Davos, he had watched her as she trailed away into her own thoughts, watched as her face lit up with disbelief as she came to discover a trail of old memories that answered her own question.

"How many times?" She asked in a daze.

Blinking dumbly, Davos shook his head. "Your Grace?"

"How many times has he died, how many times has he come back?" She questioned.

"Once, your Grace."

Daenerys felt like a punch had been thrown to her gut, her world turned upside down. "Who..." she wondered aloud, her thoughts spun in a flurry of incoherency. "How was he killed?"
"When he was Lord Commander of the Night's Watch," Davos revealed. "Sworn men of the Watch, men he thought of as brothers, they didn't take to a decision he made, lured him with the trust he placed in them. Took his life for that decision. He was betrayed. Stabbed. Murdered. Body left like rubbish in a corner of Castle Black, a sign read 'traitor' nailed over his corpse."

"You were there?"

"Nay, I wasn't there to witness it," returned Davos quietly. "I was there to pick him up, I was there to bring him to the Red Woman, she brought him back."

"... He deserted the Night's Watch after that, didn't he." Assumed Daenerys.

"The man's no deserter," Davos defended firmly. "He gave an oath to serve to his last days. When they took his life, he fulfilled that oath. The man's no oathbreaker."

A regret for calling him as such during their first encounter nagged at her, she had assumed it of him, but assuming something of Jon she had quickly come to learn was to make an arse of herself. She assumed to much of Jon, and now that she knew she couldn't, she wasn't going to any longer. Turning from the chaos that ran rampant in her mind, she felt a growing resolve in her to see Jon back, if just to know and meet the real him, not the one she assumed him to be or the one he wanted her to assume he was.

"Being that the Red Priestess is not here, how is it you intend to bring Jon back, as you say?"

Davos couldn't help but feel a sense of pride at seeing the Dragon Queen meet him on the same train of mind. "You're right. We've no Red Priestess. There is someone else in this castle that may be able to do as she did."

A thin silver brow gently arched as Daenerys leaned forward in her seat, she wouldn't pin on the hope of Davos succeeding, but still, she couldn't disregard it either.

As the sun crept up over the horizon, basking House Stark's ancestral fortress in a soft amber glow, Davos Seaworth, Hand to the King of the North strode into Winterfell's Great Hall, the gentle light of the outside shimmered through the windows that lined the walls. For a place that had hosted marvelous feasts and discussion of utmost importance, it sat empty, the long hall of stretched benches and tables lay pushed to the side. At the far end behind the head table of the hall, near the fireplaces speckled with wolfs head motifs carved into its ornate mantle knelt a man of ragged appearance.

Scraggy, unkempt hair streaked with red and grey wound up in a bun atop his head sat Thoros of Myr, the man's eyes locked on the raging fire before him, the tips of the fire lashing out at the open air of the chimney, the wood it feasted upon cracking and crumbling apart.

Shuffling forward, Davos went to stand at the Red Priest's side, hesitant to announce himself encase disturbing what he presumed to be the man praying.

"I didn't take you for a lingerer," commented Thoros, his focus still set on the fire, the flames reflecting off his eyes.

"I've been told I'm more of a skulker," replied Davos. "Are you speaking to the Lord of Light?"

"There is no speaking, the Lord shows me his will and I interpret as I can," Thoros answered.

"I see," huffed Davos, he cleared his throat with a hoarse cough. "... And has the Lord shown you any matters in which to interpret?"
"The Lord hasn't shown me anything, I've lost favor," Thoros whispered. "I've been here all night, I've been watching. Waiting. The Lord of Light has forsaken me for failing to bring Beric back."

"Beric?" Questioned Davos, the name sounded familiar but it was lost to the far reaches of his mind.

"Beric Dondarrion," Thoros expanded, he finally drawing his eyes from the flames. "The Lord of Light had a purpose for him, whatever it was, he won't be seeing it through."

"Dondarrion of Blackhaven," announced Davos, recognition of the name coming to him. "A vassal House to the Baratheon's are they not?"

"Beric served no Lord but the Lord of Light," stated Thoros. "He formed the Brotherhood Without Banners, gave men who sought to right injustices a purpose beyond the petty fighting for a seat of smelted swords."

"The Brotherhood, I've heard tale of them and banditry, but I've heard wrong before," commented Davos gently.

Thoros looked back to the fire. "One must take what he needs if in order to serve the greater good, a greater purpose. Take what you need, not what you want. The Brotherhood had a code, as loose as we were with it at times."

"The hard times call for questionable acts," agreed Davos, unlike Stannis had been, he knew less than chivalrous deeds need be done in desperate times in order to succeed, or at the least, survive. "This Beric seemed a good man, but he's not the only one... You met the King of the North, seen him as he is, you should know he's just as good a man."

"The White Wolf of the North," hummed Thoros. "Has he awaken?"

Davos paused, weighing the appropriate response. "... The King's dead, passed during the turn of the moon," he informed, face held tight on a grim look. "You could change that, could you not?"

Thoros flashed Davos a suspicious glance. "What do you know of bringing back the dead?"

"I've seen it, a Red Woman brought the King back, put her faith in the Lord of Light just as you," answered Davos. "Could you not do the same?"

Shaking his head, Thoros stared even more intently to the fire, his eyes shifting to each flicker. "I see no point in it."

Davos pursed his lips. "I don't presume to know your God's reasoning for why he does, what he does. He's a higher power, and I'm a lowly man, an ungodly man. What I do know of him, he's got a knack for keeping good men in this world still breathing for some time. Your friend among them I'm sure."

"He was better than a good man," Thoros defended, a passion of loyalty enforcing his words. "Beric fought against tyrannical House's that sought to further their own gains at the expense of the low born. Name one Lord of a House in this shite country that would've done the same?"
"Jon Snow," answered Davos immediately, he didn't even need the time to think a reply before speaking, the answer came naturally. Wholeheartedly believed. "He didn't fight for riches or titles, he didn't fight for land or even that damn throne. He's fought to keep the realms of man safe from whatever it is you all saw Beyond-the-Wall. Can you name one Lord in this 'shite country' that would've done the same?"

Thoros shook his head.

"The Red Woman brought him back cause she saw in him a greater purpose, she saw in him the potential for being the one to fulfill a prophecy. Now she's not here, but you are," continued Davos, he knelt down at Thoros' side and pointed to the fireplace he stared at. "Look into those flames and you tell me you don't see nothing, that you see 'no point' in bringing him back!"

"I can only see what the Lord of Light wishes to show," said Thoros, sounding exhausted. "The Lord doesn't show me a will to resurrect your King. I lost the Lord's favor when I left Beric in that lake."

Exasperated, Davos dragged a hand across his face in an attempt to reinvigorate himself in his staled trial to convince Thoros.

"You should lay your King to rest, there's peace in death," suggested Thoros.

Pushing the suggestion aside, Davos fixed the Red Priest with his rapt focus. "Has it ever occurred to you that your God might have had you keep bringing Dondarrion back so the man could lead you North? Lead you so that you could be here at this very moment to resurrect the King?"

A silence took hold of Thoros. Davos had gotten the wheels of his mind turning.

"I know your faiths been shaken and I can't relate, I've never been a God-fearing man. I also know the best damn chance Westeros has of surviving what's coming south is currently laying dead in a bed," pressed Davos.

"Only R'hllor can restore light to life after it's been snuffed out," mumbled Thoros, he met Davos' eyes. "As I told you, the Lord of Light hasn't shown me a desire to bring him back."

"Mayhaps he's leaving that decision to you," Davos proposed, Thoros didn't reply. "I 'sppose I'll leave it at that then," He rose to his feet and turned to leave the man from Myr. "The night doesn't always have to be dark and full of terror, it could be light and full of hope, should you decide to make it so."

A tense silence filled the Hall as Davos tread away, his mind gnawing on the prospect of facing the dead without Jon, a doomed world he thought.

Pacing back and forth, Sansa came to a stop. Her mind, however, continued to spin with a throbbing headache brought on by the series of tumultuous problems she'd come to tend to. Jon was dead, the North was without a King, and in the depths of Winterfell resided the greatest contributor to her headache of all, Daenerys Targaryen. The Dragon Queen who now stood unhindered by her marriage with Jon, free to conquer the North unless Sansa could stop it.

She had struggled for far too long, suffered for far too long to let what she and Jon fought to retake be lost so easily. And so, since Bran had divulged Jon's death, she had set a course to ensure her half-brother's widow wouldn't do as Sansa dreaded the Dragon Queen would do. In the cloak of darkness, Sansa had summoned Lady Brienne, ordering the woman who was her guardian to muster a contingent of her House Guard, thirty men of Winterfell's garrison who would serve as a show of
force against the Dragon Queen, a not so subtle force to let her know she had no hope of resisting. She would take Daenerys hostage, hold her as a bargaining chip she could use to barter the North's independence from the Targaryen. It wasn't a tactic her father or Jon would have approved of, but if there was one thing she took with her from her time in King's Landing, being honorable only served to assist your enemies in hastening your defeat.

Sansa turned expectantly to her chamber door as she heard it open and a nimble Arya enter, how quietly she moved startled Sansa, especially when she considered what her sister had trained to become. "Were you discovered?"

"No, Jorah Mormont was guarding the door, but he was a bit preoccupied to notice me watching," answered Arya, taking a few steps to her left she leaned back against the cobblestone walls, her arms coming to fold across her chest.

"Preoccupied with what?" inquired Sansa, her voice held a quiver of worry that any moment the Dragon Queen would catch onto her plot and the woman's dragon's would descend on Winterfell, razing it's to a heap of rubble and scorched earth.

"Ghost," answered Arya. "He's sitting at Jon's door, staring at Mormont, I'd say the man looked frightened."

Feeling back at ease once more, Sansa let herself rest on the side of her desk. "Did you see anything of interest while... spying?"

"Mormont had left with Maester Wolkan briefly before Ghost arrived, the two of them brought back Davos. Mormont looked to have some heated words for Wolkan before he let him scurry away," noted Arya.

Sansa's eyes narrowed. "Wolkan left the chambers and he didn't come to me?"

"I saw him again on my way back here," replied Arya, a told-you-so expression took place as she made to add more. "He was speaking with Littlefinger in the archway to the crypts."

"Baelish? Wolkan went to speak with Baelish?" questioned Sansa disbelievingly.

"I'd say it's safe to assume Littlefinger know's Jon's dead and Daenerys Targaryen is our guest, and we know where Wolkan's loyalty lay," commented Arya. "Summon another thirty men, round them up as well."

"You'd like to see Baelish in chains wouldn't you."

"I'd much rather see his head on a pike," grumbled Arya, her distrust for Petyr had fostered from Jon's own personal dislike for the man. "Are you certain you want to go through with this? The moment, Mormont or her see armed men of our House coming for them, there won't be any turning back."

"If you saw Davos like you say, it only furthers my certainty. Seaworth holds no allegiance to us, he's more than likely trying to cut a deal with her. Don't you find it peculiar that in the time Bran saw Jon die, we have yet to be informed?" Questioned Sansa. "If they didn't have ill intentions in mind they would have came to us, told us about Jon. They're plotting, Arya. I know it. If we let her leave, she'll go south and come back with her foreign army and dragon's; and you can rest assure the North won't be free after that."

"And what about Littlefinger, you don't think he'll use Jon's death to further his ambitions?" Arya returned, annoyed that Sansa could within seconds perceive a slight or evil in others, but when it
came to Petyr Baelish, you'd swear Sansa saw no evil.

"I'll deal with Maester Wolkan and Petyr Baelish once I have the more pressing threat dealt with," said Sansa. "Besides, Petyr's in the company of the Vale Knights, who I needn't remind you greatly outnumber the men we currently have in our garrison, and while I don't think Lord Royce cares much for Baelish, he's still the Lord Protector of the Vale, Royce won't just let us take Petyr without a fight, or without good cause."

Arya couldn't deny the rationality behind her sister's choice of action, but still, what could Daenerys Targaryen do to them with just a single man in her current service. "You should talk to Bran again, ask him if they're plotting like you think they are. It's a shorter walk to his room than it will be to Jon's."

The words looked to have struck a chord, but Sansa couldn't bring herself to agree as the door to her chamber pushed open once more, the mop of messy dark hair that was Podrick Payne stood nervously shifting in the doorway. His eyes darting about the room and corridor behind him.

"Lady Stark," he greeted, looking somewhat bashful. "I'm sorry for the interruption, but Lady Brienne sent me to fetch you. She's gathered the men you requested. They await you in the courtyard."

Sansa looked to Arya, the unabiding feeling as though every second spared was a second her plot could be found out, she felt confident in proceeding with her plan. "Let Bran sleep, the time to act is now, while we still have the advantage of taking them by surprise."

While torn by the events set to unfold, Arya nodded -albeit a bit begrudged- and reached for the hilt of Needle as she pushed off the wall. "After you then, Lady Stark."

Holding her head high upon her long neck, Sansa passed Arya and Podrick by, the dark green cape over light grey attire billowing behind her as she headed for the courtyard, a cluster of nerves flitting about her stomach as she exited onto the wooden walkway that overlooked the castle gate and accompanying square of open space, shovelled mounds of snow scattered aimlessly about the ground below. Gathered like a herd of a disorganized cattle stood Lady Brienne, her short cropped golden hair and towering height stand above the short crowd of helm and gambeson clad Stark men. Swords, shields, and spears clasped in their grip as they stood peering up at her, waiting for an order.

Reaching out to the oak plank railing, Sansa coiled her fingers around it, bracing herself, she looked down to Brienne and gave a nod. The former Kingsguard to Renly Baratheon drew Oathkeeper from it's sheath, the Valyrian sword gleaming in the light of the rising sun. Sansa watched as her sworn guardian barked a few orders to the men around her before leading the way towards the doorway set along the edges of the courtyard. Sansa held her breath for what was to meet them inside.

Chapter End Notes

As for anyone who might be wondering why I had Sansa take such an aggressive stance in reaction to Jon's death, I reasoned that the way she was portrayed during season 6, determined to take back the North with or without Jon's help, summoning the Vale for the Battle of the Bastards, she has a sense for doing what needs to be done to achieve something, in this instance, the North's independence. Also for this chapter, I regret nothing lol.
Thanks for reading, and until the next one folks! Farewell!
As the last few mustered men started to vanish into the doorway that stood along the edge of the courtyard, Sansa cringed at the sound of a deep horn blowing out from over Winterfell's gate, the obnoxious sound echoing off Winterfell's tall walls. The guardsmen of her House that mounted the parapet rushed back to the side that overlooked the courtyard and intersecting walkways.

"Riders at the gate!" Called the man, his gaze directed down to Sansa. "Banners of House Glover!"

Turning to Arya and Podrick, Sansa looked to be lost, the sudden arrival of a Northern Lord put her plan askew, it would be outright chaos if they learned of Jon's death as they entered the gate, not to include the presence of the Mad King's daughter.

"Podrick," said Sansa urgently, the young man looking back to her with earnest attention. "Get word to, Lady Brienne, inform her and the men she leads are to stand down."

Podrick bobbed his head, before rushing off to the nearest set of stairs, bounding down them two steps at a time, the man made it to the courtyard only to slip and slide his way across the frozen courtyard, dodging the mounds of shoveled snow as he hurried to reach the woman he squired for.

Disregarding the bemused look of her sister, Sansa looked down to the two men of her House guard that stood watch at the gate. "Open the gates!"

Without dispute, the men hoisted the beam from the iron hooks that secured the large oak doors of Winterfell's entrance. Hauling them open, seven men rode into the courtyard, atop the lead horse, Sansa recognized Robett Glover's burly frame. Plumes of heated breath expelled from his red nose.

"Why'd you give the order to stop Brienne?" Questioned Arya quietly, a silence ensued that made
her think Sansa chose to ignore her, but at last, the redhead beauty turned to her with a face that revealed her disappointment in having to have given the order.

"I can't very well have the Northern Lord's see I don't have control of my own Keep now can I? If they're to follow me, I need to show them I can lead," answered Sansa.

Arya's eyes narrowed. "Follow you?"

"Don't make me say it," said Sansa lamely, she knew just as well as Arya that someone needed to take Jon's place.

"Lady Stark!" Cut in Glover from below, the broad shoulder man with a frost tipped beard peering up at her.

Sansa leaned over the banister of the walkway. "Welcome to Winterfell, Lord Glover. I shall be right with you," she replied, she displayed a small smile to the man before turning back to Arya who she found to no longer be there. Even on creaking boards of wood, the girl moved in silence, a sobering realization that those who wronged her sister probably never heard her coming extract revenge.

Padding against the stone floor of the hall as he progressed to Jon's chamber, Davos smiled for the first time in days as he took in the sight of a petrified Jorah Mormont with his back pressed up against a door, the overgrown direwolf that was Ghost sat on its rear in front of him, its tongue hanging from the front of its agape mouth was of more amusement to Davos than it should have been.

"Rest easy, Ser Jorah, it's not some ravenous mutt," chided Davos as he neared the door, his hand reaching out to ruffle the white fur of Ghost's head. "Nearly shit myself when I first saw Ghost here at Castle Black, but that still don't compare to the time I nearly shit and pissed myself when I saw, her Graces, children at Dragonstone."

"I've grown accustomed to dragon's," commented Jorah flustered. "Direwolves will take me a bit to get used to."

"Take your time, Ghost will grow on you whether you like it or not," said Davos, he pat Ghost on its back a few times before looking at the door. "I've come to speak with the Queen, is she there?"

With bags under his eyes, Jorah huffed. "She's not left his side since Eastwatch."

"She's faithful the Queen, I commend her for that," noted Davos.

Jorah agreed with a nod. "Wait here, I'll inform her of your return."

With his back to the door, Jorah fumbled for the latch behind him, hearing it click he took a step back to open it a crack, but the white beast in front of him took it as a gesture to enter and leaped up from its hind legs, its large fur body barreling past Jorah and pushing the door open the rest of the way, the tall slender man from Bear Island nearly toppling over at the abrupt, unsuspecting push.

Ghost ran full tilt with its padded paws thundering under its large body to Jon's bed, even feet away it lunged into the air and over the footboard so it landed atop its master body, its head lowering to nudge Jon's chin with its wet snout before licking his face a few times. Suddenly, its head jerked back and emitted a pained whine.

Daenerys who had been slumped in the chair at Jon's bedside with lulled, tired eyes jumped from her chair when Ghost had entered. Her violet eyes glued to the massive wolf that lurked over her husband.
Hastily stepping into the room, Davos closed the chamber door behind him and checked to see if Jorah had sustained any injury from the King’s most trusted companion.

"That thing’s a ruddy menace," grumbled Jorah as he regained his footing, readjusting his attire.

Davos smiled while delivering a clap to Jorah's arm before approaching Daenerys, the sight of her immediately brought back the news of his failed attempt to persuade Thoros. His smile quickly faltering from sight.

"Your Grace," announced Davos, drawing the attention of Daenerys away from Ghost.

Shifting a foot away from the white wolf, Daenerys locked eyes with the older man, eyes that had seen far too much and told a story without having to speak. "You've come bearing bad news."

"Am I that easy to read?" Asked Davos.

Blowing a sigh, Daenerys turned back to Ghost as its legs buckled and its large body dropped to lay over Jon, its giant head going to rest in the nook of his shoulder.

"It was hopeless to think it could be done," she whispered, without looking to Davos she carried on, her eyes grazing over the animals hulking frame of fur. "I was wed before in Essos... My husband there suffered a wound, and In my worry for him, I turned to a woman who professed to be able to save him, a witch who said she could do as you say the Red Priest could... Still, he died, there was no saving him. Just as there is no saving Jon."

Davos could hear the hurt in her voice as she spoke. "Sounds to me you did what you thought to be the right course of action. No fault in that."

"That witch bore a hatred to my husband, I was warned she shouldn't be trusted, but I couldn't see it. My brash foolishness killed Drogo and Rhaego."

Forehead wrinkling in confusion at the names she gave, Davos looked over his shoulder to Jorah, the other man turned away, offering no answers. As he was twisting his neck back to Daenerys, he still at the sound of a single knock to the door.

Hand on the hilt of his sword, Jorah dashed to the door. "Who's there?"

"Mormont?" Came an amused snort followed by a slurred reply. "... You followed me through the breach at Pyke."

Jorah squinted. "Thoros?"

Rushing forward, Davos sidestepped Mormont and slid the bolt from its locked position, his one good hand yanking the latch down and pulling the door open to reveal a red-faced Thoros leaning against the stonewall opposite the chamber door, his feet crossed at the ankle and a skin of some inebriating liquid held to his lips.

Chugging a few generous swallows of the alcohol, Thoros tilted forward and stumbled his way into the room.

Davos observed the man closely and when Thoros teetered, he lunged forward to clasp a supporting hand to the man's arm, helping to keep him standing upright. "Where'd you get that damn wine from?"

"Who said it was wine?" Returned Thoros, raising the skin overhead as though giving a toast.
Shaking his head, Davos eyes widened as Daenerys seemed to appear in front of them, taking in their unexpected guest with a judging set of piercing, violet eyes.

"Your Grace, this is Thoros of Myr, he's a servant to the Lord of Light," Davos introduced, somewhat abashed by having to assist Thoros from falling.

"... You're the one who can bring the King in the North back?" Questioned Daenerys apprehensively, the man's ungroomed, disheveled appearance and intoxicated demeanor did not portray the character of a person to be trusted.

"I'm but a vessel in which the Lord conducts his will, I alone am powerless, it's the Lord who works through me that can bring him... You... I suppose anyone back," slurred Thoros, his head dipped down as he focused on Jon's corpse.

"I believe you said your God didn't show you a desire to bring him back, if that were true, why're you here?" Inquired Davos.

"Found some ale," quipped Thoros, taking a pull from the skin, the excess of bronze liquid he couldn't swallow dribbled from his lips to his scraggly beard. "Saw a vision in the flames after a few swigs, your King sat atop a dragon, I watched him rain down fury and flame on the dead..."

Scowling, Daenerys shot Davos a disapproving glare. "This man is drunk, and he lies, only those with the blood of old Valyria can become a dragonrider."

"The Lord of Light showed me a glimpse of what's to come, just as the Lord has shown me a dozen times before," blubbered Thoros, he swaggered out of Davos' supporting grasp to the footboard of Jon's bed, the white wolf draped over the deadman lifted its large head to view him, a growl rumbling in the back of its throat.

"And half a dozen times in which the Lord had you bring back, Dondarrion," commented Davos, he gave Daenerys a pointed look. "Truth in his vision or not, drunkard or not. He's the best chance, his Grace has."

Hesitantly, Daenerys gave a nod. She had seen the scars on Jon's chest, realized he'd been brought back, and oddly enough, she trusted the opinion of Jon's Hand. "Go on then, Priest."

Thoros grunted a response as he took a swig and pushed off the footboard to stumble his way around to Jon's bedside, taking in the sight of Ghost, he slowly went down to take a knee.

Lifting up slightly, Ghost hovered its body over Jon, protecting him from any misguided fool who thought to try and do its master harm. The low rumbling growl sounding all the more ferocious when Thoros sought to reach a hand out to Jon's chest.

Snapping its teeth at Thoros' hand -the man jerking it away seconds before losing a few precious fingers- Ghost hunched its shoulders, appearing like the direwolf was preparing to launch itself at the Red Priest, Daenerys intervened as she flew from Davos' side, Jorah looked to follow with his sword half unsheathed, but Davos held him back with an outstretched arm.

"Unhand me," demanded Jorah, his eyes locked on the snarling beast Daenerys was quickly nearing.

"You'll only agitate him more if you go at him sword drawn. He thinks Thoros is intending to do Jon harm, don't rile him up any more than he is already," defended Davos.

Jorah seemed distraught with no stepping in on the Queen's behalf, but reluctantly, he stopped resisting against Davos, his concerned gaze fixed on the Queen he pledged service to.
Almost at the grace of a tiptoe, Daenerys crept to Thoros side, her hand held out at the snarling beast's snout. In all its white fur, she was taken with the beauty of the creature. "Shhh, come now, easy there." She crooned.

Teeth beared at first, Ghost sniffed the palm of her open hand, the direwolves hunched shoulders seeming to relax. Gently, once the growls subsided, Ghost ducked its nose under her hand and bumped it up to its head.

Smile tugging at the corner of her lips, Daenerys ran her hand over the soft white fur, her fingers sliding behind Ghost's attentive ear to give it a scratch. Feeling brave enough she placed a knee on the edge of the bed and wrapped her arms around its neck, her face burrowing into its thick, soft coat.

"Told you, nothing to worry about, just a tad bit agitated is all, Ghost looks mean, but its keen. Smart." Commented Davos to Jorah, observing as his companion only slightly eased enough to push his sword the rest of the way back in its scabbard.

Chuckling to himself, Thoros took a drink from his skin of ale, his mirth drawing the attention of Daenerys, her eyes narrowed into slits. "Many pardons, Dragon Queen, but I'll need to have a look at that King of yours if you want breath back in him."

Having felt the first sense of comfort in days with Ghost in her arms, Daenerys hated to let go of the warmblooded direwolf. "Come with me," she whispered in its ear before drawing away. Slowly she trailed backward toward Jorah and Davos, her hand held out to try and lure the white beast from its master, Ghost watched her closely as she went, tentatively it lurched down and jumped from the bed to follow after her.

With the four-legged guardian cleared from being an obstacle, Thoros leaned back into Jon's bedside, he fumbled about shoving the skins tied cork back into the neck. Letting it drop to the floor, the Red Priest placed his hands gingerly over Jon's chest and the grooved scar above his heart. Closing his eyes, Thoros willed for the Lord of Light to bestow him with a higher power.

"Lord, cast your light upon this man. Bring him back whole. Bring him back from death and darkness. His flame has been extinguished, restore it!" Chanted Thoros, he inhaled a deep breath and waited, expecting to feel the beat of Jon's heart beneath his palms, however, there was no thump, beat, or quick paced rhythm.

After nothing seemed to change in Jon, Daenerys who crouched at Ghosts side with her hands mangled in its fur and heart racing so fast she could hear it beat, shot a glance to Davos. Sharing her sentiment of disappointment, Davos walked to the end of the bed. "What happened?"

"I saw him in the flames," Thoros said surely, his hands lifted from Jon's chest while his mind filled with doubt, could it have been the ale he consumed that made him think he saw a vision in the fire? Had he misled himself into thinking R'hllor had restored favor in him?

Letting go of Ghost once more, Daenerys drifted to Davos' side, her racing heart now pounding in her ears, the sounds and voices throughout the room inaudible to her. Suddenly, -blinking a few times to be certain she'd truly seen it- Jon's chest rose as if taking in a breath. Gasping, she stepped forward, clinging to the footboard.

With a sharp intake of air to his lungs and the flicker of torchlight blinding his immediate vision, Jon shot up from where he lay, an aching hand springing up to shade his eyes as he was overcome with a fit of horrid coughs that shook his whole body.
Chest clenching in pain with every haggard, choking cough that escaped him, Jon's mind spun as his eyes adjusted to the room, while he could hear the flurried sounds of muffled voices around him, he was caught defenseless as a large fur body charged him. Thrown back into a laying position, Jon flailed against the onslaught of Ghost's tongue lashing out at his face.

"Enough, boy, enough!" Called Jon, his hands clasping the side of Ghost's head, he halted its affectionate attack. His faithful friend wasn't the first thing he came to lay eyes on though, for underneath Ghost's hulking frame and between its legs, he saw the pale, disbelieving face of Daenerys at his feet, her knuckles turning white as she gripped the dark wood footboard. As surprised as he was to see her, Jon let his head lull from side to side to take in his surroundings, the familiar stone masonry and sparse decor informing him he was in his personal quarters at Winterfell.

"Your Grace," came Davos' voice, the man fighting back a grin as he ushered Ghost off the bed.

"Davos?" Jon grumbled, he winced as he tried to sit up, his chest sore and his arms feeling drained of strength. His eyes absorbing the array of faces that stood about, his gaze stopping on Thoros, the man's presence bringing forth the memory of his last waking memory of seeing Benjen. It wasn't as clear-cut as the memory of the Night's Watch betrayal, but he had a suspicion he hadn't been sleeping.

Having picked up his skin from the floor, Thoros popped the cork and took a swig of the bitter drink before offering it out for Jon to take. "Take a drink lad, you'll need it."

Jon eyed the skin uneasily, was he not parched he may have refused. Cradling it in his hands, he sucked nearly every last drop, the ale burning a trail down his throat. Gagging as the liquid threatened to come back up, Jon thrust the skin back at Thoros, his gaze going to stare at Davos, the back of his hand dragging across his mouth to wipe away what he couldn't swallow.

"How do you feel?" Questioned Thoros. "Beric always said each time he returned, he felt a little bit less of himself come back with him."

Jon's stare quickly transitioned into a glare at Davos. Ignoring Thoros. "How long have I been dead."

"The details can wait, you should rest," advised Davos, bowing his head from Jon's glare.

"How long, Davos!?" Snapped Jon, his tone biting.

"You passed during the last moon cycle," answered Jorah from the back. "Before that, you lay asleep for days."

Shaking his head, Jon fell back to the pillows of his bed, staring up at crisscrossing beams of timber that lined the chamber roof.

"The King's Hand is right, the King needs his rest," announced Daenerys, her heart clenched at the lost expression that had overtaken Jon. She had rejoiced at first on seeing him breathe and speak, but she didn't realize then the toll his revival would take on him till she saw the vacancy of emotion on his face.

Davos gave a stiff nod as he released Ghost and approached Thoros, he gave the man a sturdy clap to his back for a job well done before guiding the unstable Priest from the room with him, Jorah stepping obediently out after them.

Standing at the foot of his bed, Daenerys waited till the door closed, looking to ensure they were alone, she searched the room only to find Ghost to remain, prone on the floor with its head resting on
its front paws.

"Your Grace?"

Daenerys turned back to Jon with a frown for his formal address of her, but she pushed it aside as she made way to his bedside, looking down at him, she gracefully sat along the edge of his bed, taking his hand into her own, a smile creased her lips as she felt the warmth in it. "You're alive."

"I am," concurred Jon grimly, even as he started to come to terms with being brought back once again, he couldn't help but feel as though he'd been robbed. Robbed of a chance to be at peace and away from the stresses he had assumed by being King.

Taking in every blink of his eyes to the movement of his lips as he spoke, Daenerys soon came to have the sneaking suspicion he wasn't to overjoyed to be back. The thought hurting her to think he was welcoming of the fate that befell him, welcome to his death, welcome to the fact that in his death he held little consideration or sympathy for what his passing might mean to those who loved him dearly, herself admittedly included.

"You're a complete and utter fool, Jon Snow," she whispered, her fingers tightening around his hand.

Raising his head to meet her gaze, Jon swallowed what felt like a brick. He could stand up to the dead, Whitewalkers, and Ramsay Bolton, meet them in combat even, yet one disappointed or disapproving look from her and he wished he could pull the blankets over his head.

"You were dead!" Snapped Daenerys, as she looked into the depths of his grey eyes, she felt a needed release boil up, all the pent-up emotion and thoughts she had kept bottled within over the past few days came flooding over. "You needlessly put yourself at risk, how could you be so stupid!"

Jon clenched his jaw as he braced himself against her anger. "They had me, so I did what I thought necessary to give you and the others time to escape."

"You think I'm mad about the dead that grabbed you?" Asked Danearys, her question rhetorical. "I'm mad that you were selfish enough to go beyond the Wall in the first place! You wanted to be a hero, a glory seeker. You didn't give a single thought to what your death might mean to anyone else!"

"I wasn't being a hero, I was being who my father raised me to be. You don't ask men to fight a battle you wouldn't fight yourself. I lead those men North, it was my responsibility to try and see them make it back," defended Jon, he was a man of honor, and without it, he wouldn't be who he was.

Daenerys shook her head and let go of his hand, unwilling to let his decision and actions slide. "You disregarded my wishes, you should have stayed south of the Wall, as we agreed."

"We agreed I wouldn't go unless needed, it didn't feel right to send men who had no pledge of allegiance to us, to what could have been their death without any risk from us, the ones who conceived the plan who were so ready to put the lives of others on the line but not willin' to risk our own to see it through," snapped Jon, the long retort drew out his breath and he found himself taken over by another fit of haggard coughs.

Brows slanting in her increasing anger, Daenerys leaned into him, placing a hand to his chest to keep him pinned to the bed. "If that were it, I could have ridden Drogon over the Wall to see it through, out of harms reach. So don't tell me you did it for us."
Jon looked away. "You would have been in harm's way, dragon be damned. I took an oath to keep you safe when we wed, not put you in danger."

Daenerys flinched at his words, knowing that he may not have intended to hurt her, but she felt a pang all the same. His words bringing forth the realization that their marriage and whatever relationship she thought they had was a sham. A sham based solely on their arranged alliance and Jon's honor to uphold an oath he took on their wedding day.

"Is that all you are, an oathkeeper? Is there nothing more than that, do you feel nothing for me in your heart?" Asked Daenerys, her voice barely a whisper, a sense of uncertainty gnawing at her.

Using a cough to stifle his immediate reply, Jon let his mind wander, searching for an answer to supply. An image of Ygritte fluttered to thought, the one woman he had known he loved, a complicated love he had known would never last with him been a sworn brother of the Watch and her a Wildling, however, in the end, it didn't matter anyhow, an arrow was the deciding factor to that loves untimely end. And now, through a series of unforeseeable events and circumstances, he had married Daenerys Targaryen, Mother of Dragon's and an assortment of other fanciful titles she claimed. He couldn't deny he was infatuated, but what man wouldn't be, she had a beauty fairer than any woman he'd ever met, and her rightful stake to the Iron Throne was enough to make any man in Westeros envious of him as her husband. Still, was that love? With Ygritte it was a forbidden love for them both, yet with Daenerys he had no oath holding him from being openly with her, yet the idea that someone of her beauty, of her potential status as Queen of the realm, could love him was a hard truth he couldn't swallow, it wasn't easy to comprehend when he had always identified himself as a bastard, a man less than any other who didn't bear the surname, Snow. How could a Queen love a Bastard.

The elongated pause from Jon caused Daenerys' heart to skip a beat, the uneasy feeling of doubt crept in and she had couldn't be in his presence any longer, after nights of no sleep and the days before that she spent at his unconscious side just to be denied of reciprocating feelings. She stood from his bed, prepared to leave, though while she took the first step, she was halted by Jon's fingers wrapping around her wrist.

Holding her slender wrist within his clutch, Jon didn't know why he'd reacted, his hand seemed to move on reactive impulse more than thought associated decision. Or mayhaps it was simply his mind was to slow to catch up to what his heart felt already, perhaps his feelings weren't that difficult to discern, after all, mayhaps Dragon Queen's and Bastard King's could love one another on equal, fair footing. "... Don't leave."

Daenerys nibbled on her bottom lip, refusing to turn around and meet him, to show him the raw emotion that threatened to unleash itself. "I need to leave, I need to return south, I need to see my children."

"You don't," stated Jon meekly, his body throbbing with pain as he clung desperately to her wrist. "We aren't well acquainted, I get it, but you should know by now, I'm no poet or some singin' bard, In... love, or whatever this is, I don't know what half the time, in truth, I've been told I know nothing by more people than I care to count, but fuck that, fuck it all. I know I care for you, I know that much. I need you. Here. At my side."

Chancing an apprehensive glance over her shoulder, Daenerys saw a burning glimmer of passion in his grey eyes that she hadn't seen before. Still, in his monotone voice, she couldn't decide if it was heartfelt or not, in all honesty, she needed to absolutely certain it was honest before committing herself any further to him, she needed to be sure it was him and not his honor binding him to an oath that was speaking.
"Are your words true, or is that the King in the North speaking? Do you say that for the sake of our alliance, or do you truly feel that way?"

"... It's me, the real me," pleaded Jon, while Benjen was his last waking memory, the actual, last fleeting image he had was of Daenerys laying in a bed enticing him to join her, still as inviting as it was then, it was but a wishful picture transpired from a dying man's last thoughts and he craved the real thing. "You... You were my last wakin' thought and my first wakin' sight. Our marriage... It's an alliance, I don't dispute that, I can't dispute that, but it's more than that now, I feel for you. I'm yours."

She didn't know what he exactly meant, but beneath the layered meaning, she understood its base root concept and it was enough to have her retrace her steps to him, crawling onto his bed. Her nails left a streak of red scratches as she drifted her hand over his chest. Her lips brushing against his ear as she drew close to him. "Don't ever do what you did again, you're mine, Jon Snow."

Fighting through the anguish it caused him, Jon raised an arm and let it drop around her, tugging her closer so she was pressed like a second skin to him, her body heat giving some relief to the pain of his chest. A slight curve of a smile on his lips, as she claimed him as hers, he grinned into her crown of silver hair. Maybe peace could be had outside of death? Or at least happiness.

Chapter End Notes

There Jon is back. Alive and kicking, and I didn't end it off in a cliffhanger as much as I wanted to lol. Although next chapter may have one XD.

Also, I'm torn on Davos. I love him. But Jon did warn him. I am on the fence about whether or not he keeps his head for having played a key role in Jon's revival. What's your thoughts?

Anyhow, until next time folks, thanks for reading!
A Mockingbird Sings

Chapter Summary

The King in the North faced with his bannermen in Winterfell must rise to meet them.

Chapter Notes

Thank you to everyone for the comments on the last chapter, really helped me get into a mindset for what Davos' fate was to be.

Also, thank you very much to everyone who bookmarked and left a kudo, they bring smiles to my face!

Without further ado, I present to you, Chapter 14: A Mockingbird Sings!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Wolf Fangs & Dragon Fire

Chapter Fourteen: A Mockingbird Sings

Feebly, Jon held loosely onto Danerys shoulders as she pulled the leather of his belt through the cast iron buckle decorated with the jagged furred wolfs head of House Stark. They had clung to one another the entire day since he woke, and while there were urges through the ensuing night, Jon's body, still plagued with fits of rough coughs and aching chest wouldn't allow him for more than her embrace. Not that they didn't try. But now, in the waking hour of the following morning, Jon stood weak, yet well enough to face the Northern Lord's Sansa had summoned.

Taking a step back, she let his hands fall from her shoulders, as she raked her husband over approvingly. His dark hair pulled back and tied to bundle of black curls that bunch at his neck, with his body drabbed in the familiar leather gambeson. The man could wear a sack and still make it look decent. "Have you ever cared to wear some color? Or is anything but grey, brown, and black forbidden in the North?"

Jon smirked. "We're not a colorful folk, we let the Southerner's have that."

"How kind of you," noted Daenerys lightly, unable to resist, she brought her hands to his chest, her fingers dragging over the worn leather. "Your certain you're well enough to face your bannerman? Mayhaps another day of rest would do you well."

"It very well could, but we've not the time to spare any longer. You saw how close the dead were, and that was how many days passed? To my bannermen, I've been gone since I left for Dragonstone, how many moons have passed since then? They need to know I stand with them," stated Jon, be raised a hand to brush against her cheek affectionately.
"I've heard tale of Northern King and their bannermen," Daenerys whispered, she not need name names for him to know it was Robb of who she spoke. "The storms have relented, my children must be searching for me. You won't need to worry about your bannermen's loyalty when they see Drogon and his brothers."

Jon stilled. "Fear doesn't command loyalty."

"Fear commands loyalty just as much as honor does," advised Daenerys, the look he gave her resigned her to his course of action. "You're too honorable for your own good."

"It's men with honor you can trust, those without it will be the first to betray you," defended Jon, absently, his hand drifted to his chest and the marked scars that served as testament beneath his tunic and gambeson. "Trust my word, I know it better than any other."

"I trust you, it's all that matters," sighed Daenerys, her head shaking. "I don't plan to let you meet them alone. I'll be at your side."

"I concur," said Jon, smiling slightly at her surprise.

"You do?"

"Aye, it's time the Lord's and Lady's of the North know they aren't alone in the wars to come," said Jon, his tone growing more serious as he continued on. "They'll not have kind words for you, don't let it sway your opinion of them. They're good men and women, for the most part. Most of them, however, remember the reign of your father or have heard tale of him through their forefathers. Have patience, show them the you I've come to know, show them you're not the Mad King reincarnate, and they'll come to respect you."

"You make it seem so easy," said Daenerys, she couldn't lie, there was a nervousness in her at the thought of facing off against a hall full of men and women who loathed her just for the sake of her name.

"That's cause I know you, I've seen those sworn to you. If you can get the Dothraki behind you, a few men and women of the North won't be to hard to convince," comforted Jon, he closed the distance between them and brought his lips to hers, the taste of her sent a fire straight to his loins and a wheezed breath to his lungs. Breaking away, he coughed and choked into his shoulder.

"I can't convince you to rest one more day?" Asked Daenerys as he recovered.

He shook his head. "We've been through this, besides, I still need to tend to a different matter before I face my bannermen."

"A matter regarding what?" Asked Daenerys.

Jon grimaced, not wanting to truly address it himself, but knowing he must. How could he have a Hand that wouldn't adhere to his wishes in death, what did that mean for his wishes in life? Would Davos Seaworth always pick a course of action that suited his own wishes, would he undermine Jon's own course for what he saw as right?

"Brooding isn't an answer, Jon," jibed Daenerys, the sullen look on his face was shook off as he drew from the dwellings of his mind.

"Davos," said Jon simply.

Daenerys quirked her head to the side. "What matter is there regarding your Hand that troubles you
"He's betrayed my trust, he broke from my command."

"Ser Davos is a good man, without him you wouldn't be here. Is the matter of trust and broken wishes of greater concern to you than the actions he took to restore your life?" questioned Daenerys.

"That's precisely what I commanded him not to do, I warned him I'd take his head if he ever brought me back again!" snapped Jon, he took a breath and viewed her apologetically. "I didn't mean to raise my voice, I'm conflicted is all. I'm pleased to be living, truly I am, being here with you brings me more joy than I thought myself able to have. But in death, its supposed to be final, it's unnatural to be brought back..."

"Unnatural? Its a miracle" countered Daenerys. "Do you know what people would give to have a loved one brought back from the night lands? I will not have you bring harm to Davos for the reason of you not being able to stomach being alive."

"That's not the issue, didn't you hear what Thoros said of Beric Dondarrion? Every time he came back a little less of him returned, how many times need I be brought back before it's not even me who returns?" asked Jon, there was a fear laced to his words that Daenerys found endearing, perhaps Jon Snow, did fear something after all, it might not be a deadmen or the living, but losing who he was.

"It's you here right now is it not?"

Jon nodded. "It is."

"Then don't die again and we need not find out," answered Daenerys cheekily.

Head shaking, Jon cracked a smile. "I'm being serious, Dany'."

"Dany?" Repeated Daenerys.

"Daenerys," corrected Jon quickly, he still beneath her touch as she clasped a hand to his cheek.

"No, I like it," she whispered, Viserys had called her it, but in his use of the nickname, it usually proceeded some form of manipulation to further his own gains, but when Jon said it, it made her knees weak, and her heart tremble. In that instance, she couldn't help but kiss him, her lips molding to his own, his taste made her hunger for more as she pressed her body against his, her arms coiling around his neck, holding him to her.

Arms slipping around her waist, Jon let his hands drift to cup her bottom, the fleshy mounds beneath her grey overcoat filled his grasp and his appendage swell within his breeches. Suddenly, as if on cue to wreck the moment a knock rattled the door of his chambers, he broke away with heated breath and lust raging in the circles of his grey eyes. "Davos."

"Take his head," joked Daenerys, her face flushed pink.

Chuckling, Jon broke from her so he could stride to the chamber door and pull it open. Behind it stood a somber-looking Davos as expected, but in surprise to Jon, at the man's side stood Arya and sat Bran, his young brother looking dazed in his wheeled seat.

"Arya?" Questioned Jon slowly, his eyes flickering between them all. "Bran?"

"You die, and you're the one not expecting to see us?" Shot Arya sarcastically, without invitation she
pushed Bran through the open doorway, Davos following suit. 

Looking befuddled, Jon shook his head. "Who told you I died?"

Arya shook her head back at him. "You really should get to know, Bran."

A look of understanding settled over Jon, the three-eyed-raven, he had taken his brother's omniscience as something of a fable, a folk tale at best, but the day he received Bran's raven detailing where he had spotted the dead beyond-the-Wall, he put forward a little faith that maybe it wasn't all fable.

Daenerys shared a glance with Davos, her perplexed state prompting him to explain. "The young lads got a sense to him, see's things, things that've happened... Things that are happening, I don't know the name for it, mind you, I haven't asked. Once you start seeing Dragon's flying about the sky and men start rising from the dead, you stop asking questions."

"You can see anything?" Asked Daenerys skeptically, her focus fixed on the crippled teen, a distant look in his eye suggested that while he was present in the room, his own focus lay elsewhere.

"I see everything but what's to happen," murmured Bran, for once his eyes settled on Jon, and it wasn't in a way that made one think they were looking past them, Jon could see his brother in his own eyes for once, not the glazed hollow eyes of the three-eyed raven he'd become.

"Bran?" Asked Jon, unsettled by his brother's stare.

"There's something you need to know, Jon," said Bran, his dark eyes unwavering, his flat tone giving way to the impression it was a thing of grave importance.

"It's about Littlefinger," cut-in Arya earnestly. "He heard you were dead, he's planning to have you replaced with Sansa."

Jon brought a hand up to pinch the bridge of his nose. "Baelish?"

"Order has long gone, Jon, when you died... Sansa thought it was... We all thought it was over for you, she's doesn't know you're back yet, she's planning to gain the favor of the Lord's to succeed you," Replied Arya.

"You mean she's planning to usurp him." Commented Daenerys.

"Not intentionally, she thinks Jon's dead," snapped Arya, she drifted from Bran to stand with narrowed eyes in front of Daenerys. "This wouldn't be an issue if you had kept us informed about Jon's condition. Instead, you hid him from us, hid his death from us. Sansa nearly gave an order to have you imprisoned in the kennels because she thought you were plotting to take the North for yourself."

Hand dropping, Jon clenched his jaw. "She was goin' to do what?!"

Arya cringed. "The point I was trying to make was your death was handled poorly. Instead of what could have been us all working together to figure out how to proceed, we stood divided. It's been vultures to a carcass. Sansa won't press our bannermen to make her Queen if she knows you're alive, she's just doing what she thinks is best for our House..."

"I don't even know where to begin to start tidyin' this mess up," grumbled Jon.

"Start with Littlefinger," suggested Arya. "He's your one true enemy here, Jon. You told me as much
at Eastwatch, he's the one who's been spreading rumors to your bannermen about you having bent the knee to your wife."

Daenerys looked to Jon, he had told her his bannermen were disgruntled, but the way the girl described it, Jon was King in the North by title only, a figurehead leader to a ramble of disorganized, distrustful highborn.

"And I deal with Littlefinger, how? Banish him from the North for spreading rumors and lies, and then what, watch him leave with the Vale Knight's? What does that accomplish other than weaken us against the dead." Questioned Jon.

"The man deserves far more than banishment," growled Arya, she strode back to Bran's side and laid a hand on his shoulder. "The Vale Knight's won't follow him once they learn what Petyr Baelish has done."

"And what has this, Petyr Baelish, done?" Inquired Daenerys.

Large eyes switching from Daenerys to Jon, Arya patted Bran's shoulder. "You really should get to know, Bran."

Huddled together in what could be considered the heart of Winterfell, the Lord's and Lady's, both young and old had assembled in the Great Hall. Whispered talks of their King having bent the knee to the Dragon Queen sired thoughts of treachery by their King, a slight many had taken as reason enough to leave the comforts of their keeps and brave the harsh winter weather at the Lady of Winterfell's invitation to air their grievances against the Northern Crown.

Amassed in a herd of fur and heavy cloaks, the nobles of the north stood a great contrast to the shiny plate armor to the Vale Knights in attendance. The hall while usually having served as a place for orderly discussion in the past had an entirely different setting this morning, the long tables and benches to match, sat packed, and the space around them even more so. Shoulder to shoulder, one might think the entire populace of King's Landing had been crammed in.

At the head table near the far end of the hall sat Sansa, several vacant seats open beside her, seats that were reserved for the other siblings who had yet to show. Arya she could conceive her absence, but Bran? Her brother cared more for the thoughts within his head than malice. Lingering like a shadow behind her, stood a rather pleased, Petyr Baelish, a smug expression shown in his dancing eyes as they looked out to the enraged crowd before him.

"The man's brought us dishonor!" Roared Robett Glover, the burly northern lord appearing to be in more of a rage than veins bursting at his neck.

"The White Wolf who knelt!" Shouted someone from the rear of the crowd.

The room ignited into a chaotic thundering of incoherent noise as those assembled started to shout profanities and vow treacherous acts against the man they had pledged fealty to not so long ago.

Leaning in over Sansa's shoulder so his lips hovered over her ear, Petyr whispered auspiciously. "Gain their ears, my Lady. Show you have command."

Sitting forward and out of Petyr's warm breath, Sansa reached for a hefty stone laying atop the head table. Slamming it to the hard wood surface, she watched as Winterfell's rambunctious guests stutttured to silence.

"My Lord's... My Lady's," she began "I invited you here to air your grievances, yet all I hear is
grown men shouting. I ask you to remember there is civility in the North. Now, you, Lord Glover. If you wish to speak then do so, the rest of you please refrain from disrupting."

The mob before her shifted with a grumble but held their tongues as Robett Glover stepped to the center of the Hall, all eyes upon him.

"My Lady," Glover greeted humbly, his head bowed. "I've faced the winters cold, braved its winds and snowfall from Deepwood Motte to come and be here, to meet with my fellow Lord's and put forward a motion to you, Lady Stark, to strip our traitorous King of his crown!"

"You speak treason, Lord Glover!" Called a voice, the heads of the hall craned to see Arya Stark enter the Hall from behind the head table, pushing Bran in front of her.

Sansa gave her sister a curious glance as she rolled Bran into an open spot at her side before claiming a seat along the table.

"To depose a King whose bent the knee to some foreign whore? And you claim I speak treason!? You've some nerve girl!" Growled Glover.

"You wish to take back the crown you all bestowed upon my brother?" Asked Sansa evenly, her eyes grazing over the faces of the crowd before her. "Need I remind you all that we would still be under the rule of House Bolton if it were not for him?"

"Talk shit 'bout the Bolton's all you like, at least Roose and his fuckin' bastard didn't treat with Wildlin's and Targaryen's!" called someone from the side of the hall, Arya shot them a deadly glare before leaning into Sansa.

"Jon's alive," she whispered, her eyes flickering to look at Littlefinger behind them, the man's eyes narrowed suspiciously.

Face flickering with registered shock, Sansa shook the thought, her brows pulling together. "How?" she mouthed.

"Stall. It's all you need to do, for once in your life don't be a fool. He's coming," whispered Arya, she sat back straight in her chair, loving the stressed look Baelish wore.

Clearing her throat, Sansa sat forward with her hands clasped together on top of the table, ready to address the assembled mass once again. "You all knew the Wildling's were allies of my brother before you pledged your swords and called him King, as for the Dragon Queen... The King has done what he thought best, let us not forget he did secure dragon glass from her at no cost to us."

"He bent the knee! That's the cost we paid for that black glass!" Yelled Glover to which a series of shouts erupted in his favor.

"That is nothing more than a rumor, Lord Glover. The King has made no such pledge of fealty to Daenerys Targaryen!" Defended Sansa.

"Where is the King to put this matter to rest?" Questioned Lyanna Mormont, while young and small in stature, her large personality had garnered her the respect of her peers.

"The King is here, recovering from a journey beyond the Wall," answered Sansa, hoping to keep the news of her brother having taken Daenerys as his wife. "He had hoped to be here to meet with you all."

"Eddard Stark would've crawled from the grave had we named him King in the North!" Snapped
"My Lady," said Petyr, the man taking a few steps to lay a hand on the back of Sansa's seat. "I hold a revelation that pertains to the cause of all this unrest, mayhaps it could even put all raised concern to rest."

"You may address the Hall, Lord Baelish, but you will do so before us like all other Lord's who wish to speak," replied Sansa stiffly, watching as he subtly rotated from behind the head table to where Robett Glover stood fuming, Baelish proceeding to do an embellished bow.

Eyes set on Sansa's, Baelish held back the smirk that tugged on the corner of his mouth. "Word from a trusted source has made it to my ears regarding, our dear, King. A terrible word, one that I'd rather not have to be the one to share, but one I know I must," he feigned a sorrow tone as he continued on. "I regret to inform you in such a public forum, my Lady, but the King, your brother, is dead."

"The White Wolf's dead?" Asked a stupefied Robett Glover, the angry red of his face quickly fading to a ghastly white.

While gasps and hushed whispers filled the open air of the Hall, those who sat at the head table, however, seemed indifferent to the news, as though they hadn't heard or simply didn't care, if either was to be the case, it brought concern to Petyr who couldn't perceive why it wasn't a shock to them.

"I find it difficult to believe you didn't know the King was dead, my Lady!" Stated Glover, the man taking a few hard planted steps to the head table. "What reason did you think to keep this to yourself?"

"There is no reason," proclaimed Arya calmly. "Jon isn't dead."

"Are you daft girl? Did you not hear what Baelish said?" Grumbled Glover.

Snubbing him as she raised her nose to him, Arya turned to Petyr. "I did. Littlefinger's a liar."

"A liar?" Scoffed Petyr, his brows leaping up. "I assure you, Lady Stark, your brother succumbed to his illness a fortnight ago. He is dead, his wife tried to keep this hidden from you and your siblings."

"Wife?" Repeated a few in the Hall, the bemusement they shared evident in their tone of voice.

"You say you received this word from a trusted source, who gave you this information, Lord Baelish?" Asked Sansa, her own voice just as calm as Arya's.

Petyr looked to navigate the question away, but Bran beat him to a response.

"Maester Wolkan told Petyr Jon had died, he also asked Petyr to relay that information to Sansa. Petyr kept it to himself," announced Bran.

Shaking his head, Petyr spluttered for a moment, he was certain he had been alone with the Maester at the entrance of Winterfell's crypt, even more so he was certain that a boy with no use of his legs was not able to sneak up on him without being detected. Yet the boy held an acute answer.

Stalking forward, Glover slammed his balled up fist on the head table. "Is the King dead or not!?"

"I live, Lord Glover," answered a stern voice, the whole Hall shifted where they stood and sat to stare dumbly agape at the open doors of the Great Hall.

Longclaw unsheathed and in hand for all to see, Jon stood with a silver-haired beauty at his side, the
features of which screamed Targaryen and those within the Hall immediately raised their guard. Behind the two stood the straight faces of Jorah, Thoros, Davos, and the Hound.

By all the perplexed faces in attendance at that moment, Petyr Baelish was by far the most taken aback by Jon's arrival. His mouth flapping open and closed as he sought for words to speak, his mind drawing a blank.

Striding forward from his companions, eyes followed the brandished Valyrian sword Jon held with unease. The King in the North only stopping briefly as he came chest to chest with Petyr before pushing past the man from the Finger's so he could stand at the center of the Hall.

Jon spun about in a circle to see he had the attention of the Hall. "Pardon my tardiness, my Lord's and Lady's, I have been... unwell, I'm told, Lady Sansa," he shot her a knowing look. "Summoned you all here to express your discontent for the decisions I've made, well here I am, here I stand for you to criticize. Speak your minds, my Lord's. Go on, or have you lost the courage?"

Only a short distance from one another, Robett Glover stepped forward, his eyes locked on Daenerys at the far end. "So the rumors are true, you bent the knee when you gave us your word you wouldn't. Where did your courage go, King Wolf, when you swore us back into fealty to a House that saw your grandfather burned and your uncle strangled. Your father would be ashamed."

"Ashamed? My father would be ashamed had he known you refused to answer mine and ny sisters call when we sought to retake Winterfell from Ramsay Bolton, where was your courage then, Lord Glover?" Countered Jon, unwavering, he stared Robett Glover down so the man hung his head in shame. "Forget the rumors you've heard, my Lord, don't be mislead by the Queen's presence here. I bent no knee. I made an alliance, one that serves the betterment of the North."

"And what was it that we gave for this... Alliance?" Questioned Lyanna Mormont, rising from her seat along the stretching bench.

"You've given nothing, Lady Mormont, you pledged your House to mine, and House Stark alone," answered Jon, he turned from the Lady of Bear Island to rest his gaze softly on Daenerys. "I accepted a proposal of marriage from the Queen. While we support her claims to the Iron Throne, she has vowed to fight alongside us in the battles to come. The North remains as it were, free from Southern rule."

Lyanna Mormont looked appeased as she retook her seat on the bench, it gave Jon hope that not all the noble's of his Kingdom would be affronted to learning of his wedding.

"If what you say holds true, that the North is free, have her say the words!" Called Wyman Manderly, the man's grey goatee swaying as he broke free from the crowd to go and stand at Glover's side, his burly frame would make a fat man seem thin.

Daenerys met Jon's eye. Knowing full well that if he were to retain the faith of his disgruntled bannermen, then she need convince them they were truly a free independent Kingdom as Jon declared they were. "May I address your bannerman, my King?"

"Please do, your Grace," replied Jon, watching from his peripherals as the looks of those around him seemed genuinely surprised by the Dragon Queen's request to him to speak.

Turning to the burly Northmen who stood side by side a few paces from Jon's back, Daenerys offered them a simple, smile. "Your name, my Lord?"

"Wyman, of House Manderly," answered the man proudly.
"It's an honor to make your acquaintance, Lord Manderly, I believe I read once that your House sits as the liege Lord's of White Harbor, is that accurate?" Ventured Daenerys, recalling the information from a book Jorah had given her on her wedding day to Drogo.

"It is, your Grace, the finest port in the North as well," boasted Wyman, somewhat flattered that the Targaryen Queen knew his House off hand.

"I would not doubt that it is, my Lord, White Harbor has a reputation that is quite known even in Essos," commented Daenerys, she drew back her smile. "As for your understandable concerns, what your King says is true. The North is his, I have no intention to impose my reign here. I believe a strong, unified Westeros can be achieved not just through conflict of arms, but negotiation and compromise. With your King as my husband, I have no misconception that the North stands with me, not under."

Manderly was expressionless as he came forward and planted a hand on Jon's shoulder, giving it a hard squeeze. "You've done the North proud, your Grace, know House Manderly stands with you this day, for all days."

Jon gave the man a nod and clapped a hand on his shoulder, giving it a squeeze of confidence in return. His eyes then turned to the other Lord's and Lady's of his Kingdom. "Who else stands with me, are there no others?"

"We stood with you against the Bolton's, House Mormont stands with you now, King Jon!" Declared Lyanna Mormont firmly, casting a glare to the Northern lord's who had yet to pledge.

"You forgave my House when it turned the cheek, its a debt that can never be repaid in full," spoke Ned Umber quietly, the boy of ten who looked more stablehand than Northern Lord stepped forward to the clearing of the Hall. "House Umber stands for the King!"

The tension in the Hall began to evaporate as Lord and Lady pledged reaffirmed their House's fealty to Jon until, at last, Robett Glover stood alone.

"What say you, Lord Glover, do you stand against your King?" Asked Sansa pointedly.

Glover's head bobbed as he dropped to a knee. "I meant no offense, your Grace, but I like the others, while they may not have expressed it, had my concerns."

"Your concern is of no fault, Lord Glover," said Jon, even with Longclaw in hand, he addressed the man with a respect that was unbecoming of what he deserved.

"I've embarrassed my House again, I thought I might cleanse the stain from it when I neglected to aid you against the Bolton's," said Glover with a huffed breath of disappointment. "Take my head, King Wolf, for my honor, I have none."

Jon went to stand in front of the kneeling man. "Rise, Lord Glover, you're no traitor," he gave a lending hand to the man to get him back to his feet, his focus then turned to Baelish. "But there is one amongst us today."

While Petyr had slithered his way to the side of the Hall as Jon entered, the man stood of pale colour, his head twisting from shoulder to shoulder to see if there was anyone behind him, when only stone and mortar met him, it sank in that the King in the North was referring to him. "Me, your Grace?"

"Yes, Lord Baelish, you."

There was a nervous chuckle that escaped Petyr, his eyes darting between Yohn Royce and the Vale
Knights to Sansa. "I must confess, your Grace, I don't know what you infer, I am unaware of any charges brought against me."

"Are you?" Growled Jon, after all that Bran had revealed to him, he could barely look the man in the eye. "Let me enlighten you, Lord Baelish, as King in the North I charge you for crimes committed to House Stark."

Petyr put forward his best nonchalant smile. "You're surely mistaken, my King, I've committed no crimes against House Stark, I have been and always will be a staunch ally of House Stark. It's no secret I loved Catelyn Stark since I was a boy," he protested, feeling confident he made for the center of the Hall where Jon was. "I tried to save your father from the doom that befell him. I even liberated, Lady Sansa from her tormentors at King's Landing. Does that sound like a man whose committed crimes against House Stark, my King?"

Shaking his head, Jon walked a circle around Baelish, doing a few swirls with Longclaw ro make his blade known to the man. "You put a dagger in the hand of a man you paid to kill my brother when he saw Cersei and Jaime Lannister fornican' in the broken tower."

Petyr shuffled on his feet away from Jon. "I gave that dagger to Tyrion Lannister!"

Having observed the entire display, Daenerys narrowed her eyes at the man's insinuation her Hand had a hand to play in the murder of an innocent child, a crippled child at that.

"That was a lie you gave my mother and father at your brothel in King's Landing," announced Bran, he didn't bother look to Petyr when correcting the man's fib.

The smile Petyr once held slipped from his face, he looked more a goldfish out of water than a nobleman with several titles to his name.

"Bran," called Jon. "Tell those here what else Littlefinger has done."

Bran was void of any emotion as he spoke, a passive quality gained from inheriting the abilities of the three-eyed raven. "Baelish whispered into my father's ear as he held a knife to his throat after King Robert tasked my father as Lord Regent."

"That's nothing more than a lie fabricated by my enemies, tales with no truth to them," exclaimed Petyr, gone was his mask of cool, calm collectnessed as he took notice of the assembled mass of the Hall shaking their head's disapprovingly at him.

Jon closed the space Petyr had between them, his hand reaching out to the man's shoulder, Petyr's eyes lit up with the thought that Jon was making amends to him as he had done Wyman Manderly until the King in the North applied pressure, forcing Petyr to his knees. Relief of amendment gone, fear striking him as he crouched on the cobblestone floor.

Dramatically, Petry slapped his hands together at his front, if there weren't begging words to follow, one might think he was praying. "Lady Sansa, you know me, you know what he says of me isn't true, tell them! Tell them it's not true!"

Sansa spared a glance to Arya, her sister's firm gaze instructing her to follow Jon's lead. "You killed my aunt, Lysa Arryn, it was no accident. You shoved her through the moon door without remorse."

Yohn Royce in his silver armor with it's inscribed runes pulled back with a look of disgust as Petyr turned to him.

Floundering, Petyr sat crouched upon his knees, his imminent fate weighing down on him like a
boulder. He need not know the position of the sun in the sky to know his days in the world of the living were coming to a near. He trembled.

Coming to Petyr's side, Jon looked down at the man, the weight of Longclaw had never been more prominent as it was at that moment. His father had told him the one to give the sentence should be the one to carry it out, and he had lived by that word, he'd taken the head of Janos Slynt and personally hanged those who had been responsible for his murder while Lord Commander of the Night's Watch. This was different, he was never driven to see their end like he was spurred to see Baelish's.

Inhaling a breath, Jon set aside what little pity he had for the man. 'Lord Baelish, in your time in the North you've managed to spread discontent to my bannermen, you've manipulated and tried to murder members of my House for which I find you guilty. As King in the North, in light of all your offenses, I sentence you to death. Do you have any last words?"

Petyr stretched his neck to view Jon standing over him, despite his dire circumstance, he still figured he could talk his way out of his predicament. "Guest rights! You gave me guest rights, you can't kill a man under your own roof!"

Jon brought two hands together at the hilt of Longclaw. "You've overstayed the welcome of guest rights," with that said, he hoisted the Valyrian blade over his head, an audible gasp came from the onlooking crowd just before he brought his sword down in one swoop. Steel slicing through flesh, muscle and the connecting vertebrae, Petyr Baelish's head tumbled from his shoulders. Head rolling across the floor, Baelish's body lurched forward a second later as it collapsed to the floor. Crimson blood oozing out the man's gaping neck wound to form a pool of blood that ran outwards through the cracks of the Hall's cobbled stone floor.

Chapter End Notes

Damn it feels good to write off Peytr Baelish. I highly suggest you all write different ways to off him, it's refreshing lol. With Davos' keeping his head, seemed right someone else should.

Thanks for reading!
A Spark of Dragon Fire

Chapter Summary

In the wake of Petyr Baelish’s demise, a broken House of the North emerges. Future plans are plotted against the Lion Queen.

Chapter Notes

Well folks, I'm not quite sure where to begin with this one. First, let me say sorry for no update last week, this chapter was a difficult one for me to write, reasoning will be given at the end of notes.

Thank you to everyone who's given me their support in comments, bookmarks, and kudos. You inspire me to plugging away and hopefully make a piece of fan literature that's worthy of taking a glance through.

Without further ado, I present to you, Chapter Fifteen!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Wolf Fangs & Dragon Fire

Chapter Fifteen: A Spark of Dragon Fire

A funereal quietness had settled over the hall in the aftermath of Petyr Baelish's execution, his blood having coursed in thin streams throughout the cobblestone cracks of Winterfell's Great Hall, flowing like the veins of the Trident itself. Those of the North who had come to share a bond with the conniving man during his stay in the North had been left both aghast and mortified to learn of the misdeeds Littlefinger had been accused of perpetrating, those few Northmen were also the first to depart Winterfell the following daybreak lest they stay to discover the White Wolf of the North sought to inflict further judgement. The rest of the Northern noble’s -minus Lady Lyanna Mormont, who had taken time to become acquainted with the former Lord of Bear Island, Jorah Mormont- returned to their keep's in the days that followed.

However, as for Yohn Royce, relieved to be free from the torment that was Baelish acting as Lord Protector of the Vale, initially declared his intent to return south with his Knight's back to the Vale, yet Jon, empowered by a hushed whisper from Davos informing him that the wight they captured in their endeavour beyond-the-Wall was kept stuffed in a locked crate, stowed away in the kennels of Winterfell displayed the deadmen for Royce and the Vale Knight's, either by honor or fear, Yohn Royce was more than willing to lend his sword and the swords of the Vale Knight's to Jon, for all the skepticism that revolved around the dead, one sight of them and it turned hard men soft.

Baelish’s body having gone unclaimed by the North and the Vale for some days was doused in oil and put to the flames by Jon's order, his ashes scattered to the snow drifts of the North, his legacy of
backstabbing, betrayal, and greed lost to the winter winds. In the North, at last, there stood a unified strength against the impending Long Night to come, but for Jon, it still wasn't enough. The events of Hardhome and more recently the expedition beyond Eastwatch served as a haunting reminder to what the dead were capable of, their blank gaze as they leaped from a cliff top simply to reach the living who had taken refuge behind the palisade walls at Hardhome, the Wildling massacre there playing itself in a loop over and over in his mind, their lifeless faces reanimating with icy blue eyes, a chill running down his spine at the thought of it, and so, there he sat on his seat at the Great Hall, goblet of wine in hand, contemplating the horrors of the Long Night to come as a pair of servants and their wash buckets scrubbed tirelessly at the blood staining the Great Hall's floor.

"Thought didn't cross your mind to take the man to the courtyard before making a mess?" questioned Davos, his arms folded over his chest as he stood on the other side of the head table Jon lounged, his eyes like the King drawn to the murky water of the wash buckets turning a deeper shade of red with each wringing of the rag.

Jon took a drink. "Every moment given to Baelish to speak and defend himself was a moment the man could have slithered his way out from justice."

"You've been dealing out quite a bit of justice as of late," lamented Davos, recalling the hanged Watchmen at Castle Black, not that they didn't deserve the punishment the King gave them, but with that and the blood staining the Hall floor staring jarringly back at him, the memory of Jon vowing to take his head if he ever brought him back from deaths abyss came flooding to the forefront of his mind. "May I inquire if you've any more to dish out?"

"Ask it, Davos, don't speak in veiled words," rebuked Jon sharply.

Closing his eyes, Davos reached up to the pouch of his finger bones hanging around his neck. "I disobeyed your wishes, your Grace, I've come to accept the consequences. All I'd rather know is when, rather than be blindsided unawares of your sword on my neck."

Holding silent, Jon took a pull from his goblet, then another. "I won't be takin' your head, Ser Davos. The Queen spoke for you, swayed me on my position," he paused, hand tightening along the stem of the goblet. "You disregarded my wishes, and that can't go without comeuppance."

Davos swallowed dryly. "I've never been gifted with the swinging of a sword... I could stand to lose a few more joints."

Jon shot a dark look in his Hand's direction. "I'm no, Stannis Baratheon. I won't be takin' any finger's."

Easing slightly, Davos let go of his hold on his pouch of bones. "The comeuppance?"

"Your Hand," answered Jon, he stood from his seat and leaned over the head table, his upper body supported by his arms on the hard, oak surface. "I rescind your position. Ser Davos of the House Seaworth, you are hereby unnamed as Hand of the King."

Hissing in a sharp breath of surprise, Davos bowed his head. Speech escaping him at that moment.

"Your advice shall be welcomed should you choose to stay in my company," remarked Jon, pushing off the table, he spared a fleeting glance to the remnant stain of Petyr's demise, the last thought he'd ever give the man. Rounding the table, he made for the Hall's grand doors, leaving a disquieted Davos behind in the company of Winterfell's servants.

Traversing the corridors, Jon felt the barren emptiness of them, relating to the gap of space between
the two stone walls, just a few days prior and the keep's hall having been packed with Northmen eager to rid him of his Winter Crown consumed him, and in their appeased departure while they left content with Jon as their King, Winterfell hadn't quite been the same as it had prior to the summoning of the North's bannermen. The home of House Stark had cracked at its very foundation, a rift formed between Jon and his kin in the events that unfolded after his death. Sansa had attempted on several occasions to seek an audience with him, to mend the rift, but Jon's anger, or be it his pride had conveyed him to heed her no attention, casting his eldest sister aside. Arya tried to play neutral at first between them, a mediator of sorts, but eventually she too broke from Sansa, choosing the same distance from her sister that Jon had. To Jon and his current frame of mind, Sansa was Lady of Winterfell, and Lady of Winterfell alone, what brief bond they had shared as siblings had withered and died to him.

It were these times of contemplation that he thought to Bran, still lost within his own mind to either comprehend or care about the strife that had afflicted his blood kin. Jon envied Bran's ability to cut himself off to the world around him, distance himself from the troubles of others, from his own troubles even. The only escape Jon could find in the bastion of Winterfell were the evenings he dined with Daenerys, the quaint, heart-racing moments alone he was able to find with her. He smiled at the memory of them.

Feeling the brisk cool air of the outdoors whip against him as he stepped out to the courtyard, Jon took in the sight of a kneeling, Jorah Mormont in front of Lady Lyanna and her entourage of Bear Island guardsmen, the two appearing to have a few gentle words for each other. A few feet behind Jorah stood Daenerys, her silver hair falling in waves, free from the usual dual braids that ran either side her head, clothed in the same white overcoat that clung to her like a second skin and she had worn in her rescue of the expedition Beyond-the-Wall, her eyes met his and instantly, the grief and tension of his own troubles felt so insignificant.

Smiling came easy when he saw her these days, in that moment no one or anything could have brought his spirits down. Shuffling through the light powder of snow that had fallen, Jon approached her, remembering the nights they shared together after meeting with the Northern Lord's, how she tentatively aided him through the coughs and soreness that had plagued him from his plunge beneath the icy waters of the great beyond. The waking hours they had spent conversing about tales of her time in Essos and his service in the Night's Watch, it was those quiet, blissful evenings they had truly gotten to know each other, to know the person behind the tales that preceded them.

Stepping to her, Jon stumbled as she threw herself at him, unexpectedly taken in a kiss, her arms tossed around his neck. Grinning against her lips, he tugged her close, loving how she fit perfectly nestled in his arms. If an arrow were to fall right then from the sky and take him, he'd swear he'd die happy.

Breaking from her with full, reddened lips, Jon smiled. "You're in good spirits."

"I've received a raven from Dragonstone," replied Daenerys wistfully. "Missandei says Rhaegal and Viserion have returned," she grew gloomy. "No sightings of Drogon as of yet."

Seeing the worrisome tremble in her voice, Jon planted a kiss to her brow. "He's the largest of the three is he not?"

"He is," she confirmed.

"Then you needn't fret, I doubt there's a man in all the Kingdom's brave enough, nay... foolish enough to try and test their mettle against him," Jon comforted.

Although she nodded, Daenerys wasn't as certain as Jon expressed to be, and she knew he read her
thoughts as such. She had a habit of leaving her face out on display for others to read, Missandei had become quite accomplished at reading her thoughts over the years, though Jon was vigilant and attentive, he was quickly becoming as skilled as Missandei she feared.

"They're dragon's, Dany..." he halted as her eyes narrowed.

"They are my children," she said firmly.

Jon rested his head against hers, her perfumed hair smelt of fresh flowers pruned from a garden, filling his chest with the aroma, he sighed. "Of course they are, I only meant--"

"That my children won't be in danger because of what they are," supplied Daenerys, understanding his point. "I know you're right, it still doesn't make it any easier for me, Jon, I still remember them as babe's, hatching from their eggs in the fire, its difficult not to worry."

"I always worried for Ghost when I didn't know where he ran off to," related Jon, he pulled her tenderly close. "Drogon will turn up sooner or later, as you had said, the weathers cleared from the last snowstorm, he's probably lookin' for you."

Clutching him close, she inhaled the musk of his scent, thick with leather, and a freshness close to pine. Her mouth curling at the comfort brought on by the close proximity to him, not even Daario or Drogo had been able to bring her such peace. Ensuring she felt safe, they succeeded, but true claimants to her heart, they didn't come close to Jon. Her blissful bubble popping at the thought of black Drogon sweeping from the skies above, his appearance would open many routes, all of which lead away from Jon.

"And when he does find me?" Questioned Daenerys aloud, it was more a thought than an actual question. She had been far so consumed in everything Jon Snow she had neglected all that was going on in the south, furthermore, the message from Tyrion that arrived alongside Missandei's.

"We're a bit short on livestock to feed him for long should he show himself here, but I'm certain arrangements could be made," presumed Jon, however, her lost look drove that presumption to an end.

"I'll have to return to Dragonstone," stated Daenerys, hating herself at the sight of his mastered sullen look came forward. "It's not that I don't care to stay longer, I would, for you."

"That's not what will happen though will it?"

"No," admitted Daenerys. "I also received a message from, Tyrion. He informs me the Unsullied have marched from Casterly Rock and made camp on the border of the crownlands. My Khalasar's have grown restless in my absence and are eager to see me on the throne. Everything required to take the capital has been arranged."

Loosening his arms around her, Jon thought to distance himself, but she kept her hold around his neck, preventing him from breaking away. "It need's to be done, Jon. You know it as well as I do. Or have you forgotten your own words? 'Winter is Coming'. The deadman you caught swayed the Vale to support you without argument when you presented it to them. I need to summon the southern house's and display the deadman to them at the earliest we can, sway them to realize the Great War rest in the North. Proove to them the dead are real."

"Cersei won't surrender the throne without a fight," said Jon.

"Then a fight is what she'll get, I nearly obliterated the Lannister Army on the Goldroad," returned Daenerys. "She can't have much of a force left to muster a defense, what does she still hold in her
influence to mount the capitals walls? The City Watch?"

Jon shook his head. "The Lannister coffers were restocked when they sacked Highgarden, they could have hired several companies of Essosi sellswords for all we know."

"Varys would have heard whispers if ships from Essos were crossing the Narrow ferrying mercenaries," defended Daenerys, she smiled at his concern. "King's Landing will fall, it's assured."

"You shouldn't blind yourself with confidence," advised Jon, weary that her larger force and dragon's were masking the formidable threat Cersei was.

"And you shouldn't worry, you've enough things here to worry about as it is," said Daenerys softly, her eyes narrowing at the sight of Sansa and Maester Wolkan appearing from a doorway, their faces hard and purposeful as they strode their way. "Your sister, Sansa, comes this way."

Jon tensed, his jaw bulging as he gritted his teeth, the moment of happiness crumbling away at the thought of Sansa. He pulled Daenerys hands from around his neck as he turned to face, Sansa, her red fiery hair in a mangled state of disarray, sleepless bags hanging under eyes. Jon's shunning of her had paid its toll to the Lady of Winterfell.

"Jon," greeted Sansa tensely, her gaze firmly planted on her brother. "May we speak?"

"Theres naught word to discuss, you attempted to undermine me, plotted against our ally," returned Jon bitterly. "We've no cause to speak."

With a trembling lip, Sansa glowered at him. "I did what I had to do for our family, you need to get past it, Jon. There are more pressing things of concern than the choices I made."

"The choices you made are of concern!" Snapped Jon at last, his enclosed anger releasing. "You nearly cost us our alliance with Daenerys, and you summoned bannermen pledged to me without my consent to entertain the idea of being Queen in the North!"

"I wasn't trying to become Queen," pleaded Sansa desperately. "I called on them to try and ease their concerns about the actions you were taking with your... Your wife."

Jon scowled, a deep grimace etched out for her to see. "And what of your attempt to imprison Dany', what explanation do you have for that? What reasonin' was there behind your madness to think you should lock away the North's ally, my wife!"

Sansa held her words, regret wouldn't describe her remorse for the actions she had planned to take in Jon's death, but she couldn't defend her actions besides doing what she thought best for her House, for what was best for the North.

"Be gone with you," ordered Jon, a pain clenched his chest as he noticed the puffy redness of his sister's eyes, eyes that had shed tears.

"Your Grace," interjected Maester Wolkan hesitantly, the man shakily stepping out from behind Sansa, a roll of parchment held out for Jon to take. "A raven arrived just now, it brings word from Eastwatch."

Ambly, Jon took the offered parchment, sparing a glance to his equally curious wife, he unraveled the scroll. The first sight to take in was the smearing of dried blood across its surface, a few words written in shaky scrawl. "It's from Cotter Pyke, the commander of Eastwatch, he says..."

Those around him grew perplexed as his words fell short, his eyes wide as though left in a state of
shock.

"Jon, what does it say?" Pried Daenerys, she gently brought a hand to rest on his forearm.

"The Dead are at the Wall," he answered gruffly. "They scaled the defenses and overpowered the men at the top... Eastwatch has fallen."

"Fallen?" Blurted Sansa. "That can't be, it's the Wall, nothing gets past it."

"If they say it's breached, then it's been breached," growled Jon, his hand tightening on the message.

"My forces are primed to attack King's Landing, prepared for the southern weather..." Daenerys blanched, attempting to formulate the logistics needed to turn her Dothraki and Unsullied North while unprepared for the winter Kingdom's frozen climate.

"You can't commit to that, we need to think, we need to strategize," rambled Jon, his head snapping up. "We need to convene a council."

Scattered about the length of one of the Great Hall's long table, those within Winterfell's strong walls seemed weary and tired, the dim, dreary glow of the torches and the ornate hearth doing little to improve the mood. On one side the table sat Jon and Daenerys, side by side, hands linked together beneath the table. Davos a few paces down on Jon's left and Jorah close on Daenerys right. Across from them sat Sansa, Yohn Royce and Arya, the two sisters keeping an arm's length away from one another while down the same bench at the far end sat Thoros and a disinterested, Sandor Clegane.

"We should call our banners," suggested Sansa. "Fortify the most Northern keeps, Last Hearth, and Karhold. We make our stand there, stopping the dead from going any further south."

Yohn Royce bristled at the idea. "My men and I ride upon horse, my Lady. We should trample these deadmen beneath our steeds. Break them with a charge of cavalry!"

"Break them? There's a hundred thousand, if not more," grumbled Jon tiredly, he looked to Royce then to Sansa. "Defend the Northern keeps to what end? Be trapped behind thick walls the dead will scale and leave us no option to retreat when overwhelmed? Castles might as well just be enlarged tombs."

"Well, what idea have you, King Jon?" Replied Yohn. "How is to you that we fend these deadmen off?"

"I don't know," conceded Jon, his hand tightened around Daenerys, a little comfort given in a tense situation. "All I know is we're outnumbered. Even if we put swords in the hands of all the babes in the North still would be outnumbered. We need support, we need the south."

"The Dragon Queen's men, bring them up," voiced the Hound. "A few thousand savages and eunuchs might do the trick."

"My forces are poised to move on the capital, they're near out of supplies and dressed for the southern," refuted Daenerys stiffly, remembering what Tyrion had once told her when she pondered the idle threat of sending the Dothraki to seize the North.

"There's time for them to turn around and get the necessary supplies they need," commented Davos, drawing the attention of everyone at the table.

"Time? The dead have breached the Wall, what time is there that we have?" Asked Arya.
Shifting in his seat, Davos looked to Jon before settling on addressing them all. "When his grace and the others went Beyond-the-Wall, it took them just under the turn of a single sun to find them, true?"

"Before the moon even had a chance to rise," confirmed Thoros.

"A single day," repeated Davos, his brows bounced as he expanded on. "And forgive my memory, how many has it been since the expedition, I hadn't kept count."

"At least ten-and-seven," surmised Jorah, his brows pulled together in thought.

"Ten-and-seven," repeated Davos again, he breathed out a long breath. "By that account, the dead shouldn't reach Winterfell till we've come upon our next namedays."

"The dead moved quick enough when we met them," noted the Hound.

Jon nodded in agreement. "The dead move at their own pace, their delay to Eastwatch can't be our only consideration to believe we've more time than we do."

"Even if the time, Ser Davos, thinks we have is true, will the Dothraki and Unsullied be the difference needed to survive?" Questioned Jorah, he looked apologetically at Daenerys. "You saw the dead, Khaleesi. With all the hosts of men in both yours and the King's service, wouldn't it be safe to assume we still come short of meeting the dead's number in rank?"

"Is that what this council is? A discussion of how we are doomed to die?" Seethed Daenerys, she loosened her hand from Jon so she could stand. "I will not allow this realm to perish to a band of abhorrent corpses. I shall move on King's Landing as I am prepared to do so, I will remove the pretender who claims to be Queen and march North with all the might of the south."

"A siege of the capital could take longer than, Ser Davos, would lead us to think we have with the dead reaching us," protested Jon, though he to rose from his seat. Knowing inwardly the best option was the South. "Priorities have changed. Mine own have changed, you're right, your Grace, if the North, the Vale or all of Westeros is to stand even a sliver of hope in surviving the Long Night, we'll require the might of the south. Now, how is it we can do that without drawing out a siege at the capital?"

"The Dragon Queen does have dragon's, doesn't she?" Called Sansa.

"Her Grace, wishes to take the capital without a large loss of life to the innocence of the city," defended Jorah.

The Hound snorted, leaning forward in his seat over the table. "What innocence? The capital is nothing more than a festering shithole, tainted with vile, greedy men and selfish whores, let the whole city burn."

"I should of expected such a cowardly suggestion by a Clegane," snapped Jorah. "Did you cheer your brother when he smashed the Queen's nephews head against the royal apartment wall during the Lannister's sacking of the capital?"

The Hound recoiled as though slapped, slouching back into his seat along the bench. The whole Hall filled with a tension, only ceasing when Arya leaped from her own seat, her large eyes twinkling with an idea.

"You open the gates for the Queen's forces, let them enter just as the Mad King was convinced to do for Tywin Lannister during the rebellion!" She exclaimed, a few snorts and huffs echoed her words, but Jon, straight-faced and intrigued looked taken by the suggestion.
"Just as you and Daario did in Yunkai," related Daenerys her gaze resting on Jorah.

"How is it do you figure this could be achieved?" asked Jon to Arya.

Unabashed, Arya let a smirk twist about her lips. "Before the Queen's army is spotted on the capital's doorstep, you slip a few men inside the city. They can't be familiar to the guards there, so it must be men without reputation. Have them take out the men at the gate and Queen Daenerys men can walk straight in, unchallenged."

"As corrupt as the City Watch may be, Little Wolf, they'll take notice of men sneaking into the city with sword in hand," grumbled the Hound from the far end, his words spoken softly as though sparing his former ward from his usual biting tone.

"Unless you enter the city unarmed," voiced Davos, the wheels of his mind starting to turn. "You could potentially go unnoticed."

Daenerys continued to look on her trusted Queensguard. "Is it possible, can this plan work, Ser Jorah?"

Squinting, Jorah ran a hand through his dirty grey, blond hair. "Without steel, it would be unlikely to succeed, Khaleesi."

"What if we smuggled weapons in separately, could it be done, Davos?" Questioned Jon.

"It would present an additional risk of being discovered," answered Davos, he stroked his chin. "Although there is another way we could get swords into the hands of the men sent to carry this deed out."

"Do you care to elaborate, Ser?" Asked Yohn haughtily.

"I know a lad there, a blacksmith by the name of Gendry," expanded Davos. "Should I go with those you choose to send, I'm certain I can arrange for the lad to hand over some steel if he's still in that line of work."

"Gendry Waters?" Inquired Arya hesitantly, unwilling to get her hopes up.

"Aye, the lads a bastard," returned Davos, meeting the girl inquisitive stare with a confused stare of his own. "You know him?"

"I know him, we traveled together on our way North with some recruits for the Wall after father was killed," replied Arya. "A woman in Stannis' service took him after the brotherhood caught us," she narrowed her eyes at Thoros down the table. "They sold him like he was a pack mule."

"Arya," cautioned Jon. "It's in the past now."

"For you mayhaps," Arya countered, her glare darkening as she continued to direct her intense focus at Thoros.

"The lad wasn't harmed, my Lady, he was safely returned to King's Landing, every dark hair still atop his head unmaimed," informed Davos, pleased to see the girl slightly ease.

"Excuse me, Ser," Inserted Yohn Royce. "Did I hear correct, did you not say you could 'arrange for steel if he's still in that line of work'? If those who sneak into the city can't get swords, then it will be as Mormont said, it will be unlikely to succeed."
Davos met the Lord of Runestone with a stiff nod. "You're not wrong in that assumption, my Lord, but it's the best plan we currently have of getting those gates to open without a siege of the city dragging out. That said, the lad I spoke about was the apprentice for Tobho Mott, the finest blacksmith in all the Seven Kingdom's if I dare say. The lads got refined skill when it comes to the anvil and hammer, I think it highly likely he's making a living with what he knows, and he knows how to fashion fine steel."

"While this plan seems foolproof," said Sansa, a sarcasm dripping off her voice. "Who shall be the ones to carry it out?"

Heads turned from side to side, viewing one another intently.

"I'll go," volunteered Arya surely, knowing solely that her training in the House of Black and White would be a great assistance. "I can go unnoticed, and no one knows my face. I'd be just another street urchin to the City Watch."

Jon opened his mouth to protest but Arya hastily cut him off.

"You said there would be a time for me to fight, Jon. This is it." she said firmly.

Grudgingly, Jon conceded with a subtle tilt of a nod. "Are there any others willin' to go?"

"The whole damn realm knows my face, I walk into King's Landing and you can guarantee every other man with me will wind up with their heads mounted on a fucking pike," answered the Hound, he raised a hand and pointed to Jorah and Thoros. "Same goes for these two here. Any man in the capital who served during the Greyjoy Rebellion will recognize them."

"Mayhaps the Unsullied? Greyworm could do it," mused Daenerys, her esteemed captain of the Unsullied had shown his ability to infiltrate the city of Meereen when he stirred the slaves into a revolt against the Masters.

Jorah let his head shake to and fro. "Greyworm and the Unsullied barely speak the common tongue. A handful of head shaved Essosi men will raise suspicions. The Dothraki even more so. It will have to be Westerosi that take on this endeavor."

"I grew up in the capital, I know my way better 'round that city than anyone else here," said Davos. "I'm also the one to get whoever comes inside the city unnoticed. I'm certainly the logical choice to go."

"I've my men to command here, a venture south is out of my means," answered Yohn Royce briskly.

Jon felt every muscle in his body constrict, knowing that he had a part to play in the plan, but the tension wasn't in fear of it, it came as he slowly turned to the side, his smoky grey eyes set on Daenerys. "I've not been south my entire life, I might be known here, but south of the Trident I'm a stranger. No one will recognize me."

Daenerys grew rigid all at once, her amethyst pools shifting tensely onto him. The memory of him laying in his bed, Maester Wolkan declaring his death surfaced and she shuttered.

"That gives us three," noted Davos. "Not quite the numbers needed to take out a whole garrison at a gate."

"It gives you two," corrected Daenerys, she turned from Jon. "The King will remain here in the North."
“The Queen doesn’t speak for the King,” commented Jon, he rapped his knuckles against the table top. ‘We’ll take a few loyal men from House Stark to round out our numbers. The plan will go ahead.”

“The King does not have the final say regarding affairs outside the borders of the North,” announced Daenerys evenly, shooting Jon a seething look.

Around the table, an exchange of awkward glances ensued as Jon and Daenerys stood off against each other. A thankful break in the atmosphere came from outside the Hall, a cacophony of screams and rushing wind stirred the attention of all, to those who knew the Dragon Queen’s children, they were the only ones to not flinch when a roar ripped out like a crack of thunder over Winterfell. Lighting up with joy, Daenerys jolted from the table, a rush of feet sounding off like a stampede behind her as she headed for the doors of the Great Hall, the corridors only a short trail before she burst out to the openness of the courtyard. A crowd of trembling terrified Stark guardsmen and Winterfell servants staring up in horror at the winged serpent of black scales perched on the height of Winterfell’s broken tower, its massive head swaying back and forth as it beared its glistening set of razor teeth.

“Drogon,” whispered Daenerys with a smile, she broke from the others to stand out in the open center of the courtyard. Calling up to the sable dragon in some foreign language none present could comprehend, the black beast lurched and jumped from the tower, a shower of rubble falling down after it.

Wings stretched out, Drogon landed overtop Daenerys, its gigantic body shading her beneath as its long neck twisted to bring its head down to see her face to face, its nostrils flaring as it sniffed her out, recognizing her scent.

Placing a hand to its snout, Daenerys smiled as she pet her son, the rough familiar scales filled her with relief, lost in the tender moment of reuniting with Drogon, she jumped as a hand was placed overtop her own. Craning her neck, she turned to find Jon, his gaze locked on those of Drogon’s.

Taking a moment to calm his jitters, Jon let his hand drift from Daenerys, the tips of his fingers brushing over Drogon’s scales gently, the fire in the dragon’s eyes softening as it leaned into his touch, his hand extending to stroke the red frills of its elongated neck.

Following after Jon as he drifted along Drogon, Daenerys was mesmerized by his comfortability with Drogon, not a glimmer of fear in him as he patted her son lovingly.

“You’re not frightened?” Asked Daenerys finally.

Jon looked back to her with a grin. "Frightened? He's magnificent."

Warmth clutching her, Daenerys nearly swooned. "He's never let anyone get this close to him without me beckoning him to do so..."

"I take it he likes me?" Questioned Jon, chuckling as a pleased gurgle rumbled from Drogon while his hand found a soft spot in between its neck and shoulder.

"If he does, he's not the only one," mumbled Daenerys quietly.

Jon cocked a brow, letting his hand fall from the black scales of Drogon, bashfully he bowed his head. "Dany?"

"Jon?" She replied.
"The plan-" he began, stopping only as she pushed a finger to his lips.

"Don't," Daenerys pleaded. "You can't go, you can't do this to me again."

Grabbing hold of her wrist, Jon pulled her finger from him, taking a step closer to her. "I need to, you came North. Saved me, we fight for each other now, remember?"

"It's different now, that was an alliance, this..." Daenerys sighed, her head bowing down to lean on his chest. "There's more between us now. I... I love you."

Pulse beating quicker than he'd ever felt, Jon swelled at her omission, his chest puffing. "I love you too."

His arms moved lightning quick, snaking themselves around her waist, pulling her whole form against his gambeson clad chest, the cold leather tingling beneath her hands.

Melting in his embrace, Daenerys wished she could stay a melted form in his arms. With his bruised body and haggard coughs finally subsiding, she had hoped desperately to reenact their wedding night, her core damp with a wanting desire needing to be filled. However, it was Jon peeling away from her that silenced her thoughts.

"Fly, return south," he said calmly. "I'll settle the arrangements here, when you receive a raven or see the gates at the capital open, take it. Take the throne. We'll meet again when you sit as rightful Queen."

Fingers gripping the collar of the tunic underlying his gambeson, Daenerys yanked Jon to her, capturing him in a kiss, a knocking of teeth as their tongues swirled and flicked one another teasingly. Their brace of lips separating only when oxygen was lacking.

"Live for me, Jon Snow, promise you'll see me again," breathed Daenerys, her fingers untangling from his collar as she called for Drogon to lower, its shoulder tilting down so she could climb its crooked wingspan to her seat along the great creature's spine.

Jon stumbled on his feet as Drogon's wings swung down a great gust of wind, his neck craning to look up at the woman who'd stolen his heart as she soared into the air. There was a meeting of their eyes in which he made his wordless promise to her. If dead men couldn't keep him from her, he'd be damned to allow the living to do so, fingers clenching into fists, he vowed to himself that he'd bring her the conquest for the throne, he'd bring her the whole world if he could.

Chapter End Notes

So as I said at the beginning, this chapter was difficult. At first I wrote a rather intimate scene between Jon and Dany since they hadn't had one since their wedding night and its been long deserved, however, in the following dialogue I found it to be similar to how chapter 14 started off, so I scrapped that idea and hence my week delay. I also wrote a brief battle at Eastwatch which was to no purpose I found and could be summed up in a single message -thus including Cotter Pyke- bah, so tangled in this chapter.

That being said, I directed a brief focus to bringing some closure to the Davos and Sansa question. Stripping Seaworth of his Handship seemed fitting, and as for Sansa, I hoped to show it more as a case of that coworker you hate to work with, but need to work with
in order to get the job done?

The rest of the chapter was mostly filler in order to rationalize future plot points, such as address the sometimes quick and super slow movements of the dead, as well, finalize events in the south with Cersei in the future.

Thanks for bearing with me and as for a teaser. One more chapter in Winterfell, for Jon it will be an arrival from a former brother of the Watch and a talk with a disabled brother. Two brothers, a past, and a troubled future.

Thank you, everybody, for reading! Until the next update, take care and if you have the time leave a comment!
Waters in the Snow

Chapter Summary

Daenerys turns south, reunions await. Jon prepares for the task ahead.

Chapter Notes

Alrighty folks, we shall finally be departing the North for a while at last. I hope it turns out as interesting as I've planned, but we'll see. Also, first update in weeks that I've managed to get it out before Sunday, that's impressive no?

Thank you to everyone who left a comment and gave me some questions, it makes me process things a little more in depth and helps assist me to get into the mindset of characters which makes writing a whole lot easier.

Thank you as well for all the kudos and bookmarks! But, without further ado, I present Chapter 16!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Wolf Fangs & Dragon Fire

Chapter Sixteen: Waters in the Snow

From the sky above, Daenerys thought Westeros every bit like Aegon's painted table, from the swampy terrain of the Neck to the lush green lands and waterways of the Riverlands, the only disparity she could spot from the table to the true Westeros was the cover of winter steadily creeping its way south, 'tis frosty claws having claimed the North and seized the Necks murky bogs, the abominable winter sought to encroach upon the Riverlands and Daenerys knew soon enough that all the realm would be blanketed under its icy grip, and with it came the Night King's army of dead. Her hold on Drogon's spinal horns tightened as they dove down through the clouds, his massive wings a mottle of red and black bent back as it plummeted to the ground below, the melted ruins of Harrenhall behind them, her gaze set upon a sea of tents and ramshackle huts covering a field of rolling hills.

Drogon swept up just as they glided a few meters from the surface, his onyx body gliding over it till his large clawed feet skimmed the earth, deep trenches forming beneath him as he came to a running stop that shook the ground. A roar of cheers erupting from the city of tents welcomed Daenerys back to the forces under her banner, and smiled, glad to be back in the familiarity of those she knew. With a soft rub along Drogon's black scales, Daenerys climbed down her son's crooked wing, her body sore and aching from the long flight, each step down taken gingerly. A thudding of hoofs sounding like a thousand drums rang out over the open field as Dothraki raced from their encampment to her, a crowd of Unsullied in their black, leather armor chasing after them on foot, the distance between them quickly closed as the Dothraki galloped around her in a large circle that spiraled around her and
Drogon, clumps of grass and dirt thrown up as they ran circles around her, their copper skin glistening in the rays of the early morning sun, their arakhs held high as they chanted "Khaleesi!"

The flurry of the welcome died out as the Dothraki came to a trodding halt, a break in their rank forming as two horses and a pony rode through the gap. A joyous, indescribable happiness overtaking her as she saw Missandei and Grey Worm seated atop the horses, a bearded Tyrion mounting the pony, Missandei was the first to dismount and run to Daenerys, the two women capturing one another in a hug.

"Your Grace, your hair," commented Missandei shortly, drawing away with wide eyes as she took in Daenerys straight silver hair hanging in a tangled curtain past her shoulders. "What have those barbarians done to you?"

Daenerys laughed, her arm reaching out to cup her friend's cheek. "I was cared for, just lacking a caretaker to help with my braids is all. It's good to see you again."

"And you, your Grace. We have been worried since you left," noted Missandei, she half-turned to view Grey Worm as he waited for Tyrion to slip from his pony a few paces back. "I thank you for returning Grey Worm to me."

The happiness Daenerys had faltered, unable to inform Missandei of her planned intentions to send Grey Worm and her forces out to battle once more. "It's good to see him again, unscathed I hope, though I suppose you would know... Have you two shared a bed since his return?"

Missandei flushed, her response muted as Tyrion and Grey Worm approached.

"Ah, the Queen returns without notice and no time to prepare her quarters in advance," greeted Tyrion in a jesting chastise.

"I've just returned and you chose to berate me of all things to say," countered Daenerys simply, watching as his scarred face crinkled with a smile, her eyes shifting to the pony. "You've acquired yourself a noble steed in my absence I see."

Tyrion mock scowled. "Young Missandei has been instructing me on the customs of the Dothraki, she had kindly informed me that to the Dothraki, a man who cannot mount his own horse by his self is not considered a man at all. Naturally, in order to do this and gain their respect, I had to make an exception on which horse I could truly mount, of course, my options were a select few."

"And do you have their respect, Lord Hand?" Asked Daenerys curiously.

"I have their amusement for now, the respect will follow soon," answered Tyrion.

"Dothraki call him Sheep Rider," provided Grey Worm.

"Sheep Rider?" Echoed Daenerys, her tone flat. "I shall order them to cease with the name at once."

Tyrion thrust a hand in the air to dismiss her suggestion. "While I am thankful for the heartfelt gesture, my Queen, I have suffered far worse humiliations during my time at Joffrey's court, this one is entirely orchestrated by mine own accord. Given time, I think the Dothraki will accept me."

"Lord Tyrion is determined, your Grace. Grey Worm and I have tried tirelessly to change his mind. He has yet to do so." Added Missandei.

"Very well," relented Daenerys, her smile returning as she viewed Grey Worm. "I trust your journey east from Casterly Rock went unhindered?"
Grey Worm nodded. "We met no enemy in the journey. Men fear Daenerys Stormborn, they not set foot on the Goldroad no more."

"Is that so?" Daenerys inquired.

"The burned corpses of my House's guard there have had a persuasive effect on dissuading men from travelling upon it," supplied Tyrion in support to Grey Worm.

"This one and all Unsullied are ready to fight, my Queen." Vowed Grey Worm, a deep passion of loyalty professing his eagerness to see her enemies vanquished.

"In due time Grey Worm, a plan to take King's Landing has already been set into motion," divulged Daenerys, garnering her a judging look from Tyrion. "You and the Unsullied will be needed to see it through."

"You planned to take the capital without consultation?" Questioned Tyrion.

"I had consultation," Daenerys refuted.

"From who, your husband or Mormont?" Asked Tyrion. "If it was, Jon Snow, I dearly hope he came up with a better strategy from the one I'm told he had at the Battle of the Bastards."

Daenerys shifted her stance nervously. "And what strategy was this?"

"All that time spent in the North and it was never discussed?"

"What did, Jon, have for a strategy, Tyrion?" She demanded.

"Tale be told the King in the North ran ahead of his army to meet the Bolton forces alone in combat," answered Tyrion. "Had his men not hastened to follow after him, the King would surely have died."

Her heart sank, Jon Snow and his inability to place himself out of harm's way would likely lead to her having an early death, how could her heart take such torment? The covert plan to sneak into the capital didn't seem as wise of a plan as it had in the North.

"Your Grace?" Questioned Tyrion. "Your plan for the capital?"

"We will discuss King's Landing and your sister's fate this evening over a meal," returned Daenerys. "I shall require a wash and some fodder for Drogon."

Tyrion thinned his lips, but nodded acceptingly. His eyes set on the black creature that sat behind her, the red swirls and gold specks of its reptilian eyes sweeping over the amassed crowd surrounding it. "I'll arrange for a few dozen sheep."

"I've a tub in my tent, your Grace," chimed Missandei. "I shall have water drawn and heated."

Daenerys relaxed, pleased to be back in the comforts of her own camp, the Essosi who had pledged themselves in her service. It wasn't the Great Pyramid of Meereen, nor was it the house with the red door in Braavos, but here among those she trusted, it was home.

The bustle of the camp was a boisterous one, firepits a light through the mass of pitched tents, crates and barrels of supplies littered throughout while crudely constructed racks hung pelts and meats. There was an odour to the encampment, a stench of thick smoke and the reeking of horse dung, a musk of cooked meats, the sounds of men's laughter and shouts filling the air. At the center of the
camp lay Missandei's personal tent she'd surrendered to Daenerys. A featherbed tucked inside sat positioned near a chest decorated with carvings of the harpy, a storage piece no doubt acquired during Missandei’s time in Meereen, the chest lid open and showcasing a series of elegant garments, on the other side of the tent an obscene oval tub of iron rested on four metal stubs, the water within steaming as Daenerys slipped into it, the warm water melting away the aches and pain of her lengthy flight. Slouching down, she rested her head back against the edge with her eyes closed, letting the bliss of the moment wash her problems away.

Her eyes opening as she felt her hair taken into a pair of gentle hands, the delicate features of Missandei’s face hovering overhead as she used an ivory handled comb to rake through the tangled strands of her silver hair.

"I must look quite the mess," noted Daenerys softly, grateful for her friend's tender care of her.

"That is impossible, you are the fairest beauty in the world," complimented Missandei, her brows furrowing as her comb came upon a silver knot.

"Has my own self-worth become so grand that those I consider my friends and confidants must shower me with compliments?" Questioned Daenerys, flinching as Missandei tugged and tanked the knot back into straight form.

"It is not a compliment when it is the truth I speak," Missandei replied. "Daenerys of the House Targaryen is beautiful. This is a fact."

Daenerys resisted the urge to roll her eyes.

"Your Grace?" Asked Missandei, a hesitance in her voice.

"Hmm?"

"You had said the Unsullied would be taking part in your plan for the capital?"

"A small part," revealed Daenerys softly, she rotated to meet her translator's dark gaze. "Grey Worm will be fine, Missandei. He'll have seen dire battles than the one to come."

"He's has fought your Lannister foes, does such risk of his life need be taken again so soon?"

"Valar Morghulis," whispered Daenerys quietly, a thought of Jon in mind. "Sacrifices must be made, of all goes as has been planned, Grey Worm and the Unsullied will merely have to walk through the gates of King's Landing."

"The Pretender Queen, she'll allow them in?" Asked Missandei, the worry laced to her words betraying her for the doubt she truly felt for the plan.

"She won't allow them, Jon, will let them in." Answered Daenerys.

"The King will be partaking in this battle?" Questioned Missandei surprised.

"He's on his way there as we speak I should think," sighed Daenerys, unable to mask the apprehension in her words.

Missandei frowned at the sight of Daenerys sulking expression, realizing then that she wasn't alone having to fear the loss of a man she'd come to love. "You care for the King now?"

"My time with him in the North opened my heart," admitted Daenerys, she didn't care to go into
detail and relive the pained memories of Jon's death. "He's a broody man, but even the broodish need to be loved. He's unlike any man I've ever met."

"He does seem brave if what Lord Tyrion says is true, meeting an entire army in the field by himself," mused Missandei.

Daenerys grew angsty. "That isn't brave, it's foolish, it's... It's..."

"Irresponsible?" Offered Missandei, her fingers searching dutifully through Daenerys hair to find any more tangles or knots.

"Yes, irresponsible, he doesn't have a care for his own well being, had you seen him beyond-the-Wall, what his actions there cost him," ranted Daenerys, she halted and sank down in the tub so her chin was submerged, resolving herself to be strong for Missandei's sake. "Jon and Grey Worm will survive this."

Grunting as he pulled the last strap of the saddle through its buckle, Jon gave his steed a gentle pat along its snout. He had been restless in the day that followed Daenerys departure, his mind revolving around the plot to take the capital, the fate of Tormund and the other Wildling's at Eastwatch. His mind spinning as the impending doom of the world spiraled out of control around him.

Jon was thankful for the distraction of Ghost nudging him in the hip, a smile coming to form as he knelt down and buried his fingers into the thick white fur. "I'll miss you, boy. Take care of things while I'm gone."

A quick flick of Ghost's tongue against his cheek was all Jon needed to know Winterfell would be taken care of while away. Delivering a few pats to the large direwolf's back, he retook his footing and eyed the archway of the Godswood where Arya appeared, her hair tied similarly back as his, a dark navy blue cloak falling from her shoulder with Needle slung at her hip and Littlefinger's Valyrian dagger tucked in the front of her belt. The tips of pine trees and frosted branches of the bare oaks within crept up in sight over the enclosing wall around the Godswood, the once lush green claimed by the chills of winter.

"Your taking Ghost with you?" Asked Arya sadly.

"Nay, just sayin' my goodbyes," Jon answered, taking notice of her doleful voice. "What's wrong?"

"It's nothing," Arya said at first, though a sigh and a quick stride to Ghost's side had her answering truthfully. "Just seeing Ghost it reminded me of seeing Nymeria on my way to Winterfell, you know. She's massive now, just as big as Ghost, if not bigger... She's a family of her own, a pack of a hundred wolves or more down in the Riverlands..."

Jon smiled at the tale, pleased to know that while the rest of Ghost's siblings had met their tragic end, he was glad to think there was still one out there. "What's there to be sad about that, that's good, Arya. You should be happy for her."

"For Nymeria it is, and I am happy for her, but what of us, Jon? What of our pack?"

The smile slipped from his face. "What of our pack?"

"We're Stark's Jon, our banner is the wolf, our family is a pack, Sansa, is a part of that pack."

"I'm a Snow, not a Stark," noted Jon, turning from her he went to check the saddlebags of his steed, rummaging through them to ensure he had packed away all the necessities he required.
Arya's gaze flickered from Ghost to her brother, her brows slanted down. "You're a Stark just as much as I am. You might not have the surname, but the same blood that runs through you runs through me and Sansa too."

Jon didn't retort, fixating his attention on double checking his saddlebags, a tad bit aggressively.

"There's to few of our family left to let bickering get in the way of us, Sansa may have acted rashly when you died, but she acted as any wolf would have to protect her pack, she did what she did for us and in return you scolded her for it, I turned my back on her for it, it's not right, Jon," expressed Arya, she sank her hands into Ghost's fur, her fingers twisting in the chalky white coat.

"No it isn't, but right now, makin' peace with Sansa isn't on my list of priorities," grumbled Jon, pulling away from his saddlebags, he strapped them shut before turning to Arya. "I never asked you to turn your back on her, the dispute between her and I doesn't involve you."

"It involves me when it's my family that's in dispute," returned Arya, stepping away from Ghost.

A sigh escaped Jon. "Look, I'll resolve things with, Sansa. Just give me the time to do it in my own way, let me sort out the South first and then I'll sort out Sansa."

Arya was far from appearing appeased and Jon knew well enough when a change in topic was in order, his eyes looking past his sister to the grove of wilted shrubbery behind her. "Did you make a prayer to the Old Gods?"

"I don't pray anymore, whats the point? They never listen," replied Arya, staring pointedly at him. "Bran's at the Heart tree, if you won't make your peace with Sansa then you should at least say your goodbyes to him."

"I never did get the chance to talk with him, get to know him like I said I would," noted Jon, voice filled with regret.

"You died, Jon. I'm certain he understands, now go on and get," said Arya, she passed Jon by and gave him stiff push in the direction of the Godswood arch.

She released an irritated huff as she went off to join Davos and a handful of Stark guardsmen who prepped their own horse's with saddles and sacks, an open wagon a few feet away showed The Hound and Jorah awkwardly carrying a crate that rattled in their arms, something moving within, the sneers of Sandor Clegane drifting aloud with vulgar swears.

There was prance in Arya's step as she left, a confidence to it that Jon admired, so much so it left him slightly encouraged to enter the Godswood, to speak with his brother before departing on his errand to claim Daenerys her throne, to an unknown fate that awaited him. Starks don't fare well in the South. Stroking his destrier affectionately along its jaw, he snapped his fingers for Ghost to accompany him as he stepped through the low arch. Dead leaves covered by snow cracking beneath his feet as he went, his eyes taking in the barren trees around him, the memories of being a boy and playing here with Robb while Theon cracked jibes at his expense, the memories of coming to hide away from the others when he sought to be alone, the tears he had shed at the root of the whitebark Heart tree, praying for his mother to come for him, love him as Lady Catelyn did his half-siblings. He shook the memories away.

Ducking beneath a low hanging branch draped with crystal icicles, Jon pursed his lips as he came upon Winterfell's Heart tree, the rock-rimmed pool nearby lay frozen over in a thin sheet of ice, Bran sitting at its edge, a blanket thrown over his lower half as he sat vacant minded in his wheeled seat. His face displaying a look of absence, his body present yet his mind elsewhere. A twig snapped
under Jon's weight and Bran's head turned to face him, a subtle look of recognition flashed across his young brothers face.

"Jon." Breathed Bran.

Looking from his brother to Ghost as it broke off to sniff at the base of some trees, Jon stepped closer to his brother, taking a knee at his side. "I'm goin' to be leavin' here, Bran."

"To King's Landing, I know," replied Bran, his tone flat.

Jon nodded and laid a hand on his brothers, nothing surprised Bran anymore. "I realize we've not had much time together since we've come home, and its entirely my fault, I know. I just wanted you to know how happy I was to know you were safe... From thinking our whole family had died to having you, Arya and," he hesitated briefly. "Sansa back in my life, its been hard to wrap my head around it all, especially with having to understand who you are now, who you've grown to be."

"The Three-Eyed Raven," supplied Bran.

"Aye, the raven... The sight" confirmed Jon, his words drawn slowly out. "It's an amazing gift, truly it is, it's just... Are you still you, is the Bran I once knew still alive, the one who loved to climb and practice with the bow, are you still in there somewhere?"

Bran's eyes focused off in the distance. "Bran's here, his memories are here. But I've grown beyond who I was, I see the world as it was and is now, too many memories of others in the world to be Brandon Stark alone."

Jon tensed at his brother's omission, none the less he gave his brothers hand a firm squeeze. "For what's left of you still in there, I love you, Bran. I don't know if I'll make it back from where I plan to go, but I know if I don't, I at least want you to know I thought of you still as my brother, Three-Eyed Raven be damned."

The dark, sable eyes of Bran flickered back onto Jon and the latter noticed a softness to them that wasn't there moments before.

"Before you go, there's something you should know, something I need to tell you, Jon," announced Bran.

"Is it the dead, have you seen them again?" Asked Jon hesitantly, instinctively concluding it was the dead that had captured Bran's sight.

"I have," answered Bran, but the off-putting sound in his voice clued Jon in that it wasn't the dead his brother planned to tell him about. "It's about you Jon, who you truly are."

Jon felt every muscle contract at once, an uneasy feeling overtaking him. "I don't understand, what do you mean who I truly am."

"Everything you think you know about yourself is a lie," said Bran bluntly, his face impassive. "You're not a Snow, you're a Sand. Eddard Stark wasn't your father."

A queasy sensation churned in the pit of Jon's stomach, jerking away from Bran's side with a frantic shake of his head. "No, that's not right, that can't be right!"

"You're the bastard son of Lyanna Stark and Rhaegar Targaryen, born at a tower in the Red Mountains of Dorne," explained Bran, observing as Jon's face twisted into a look of horror.
Attempting to get up, Jon stumbled over his feet and fell on his rear, his mouth agape as he tried to process the information. Life altering information, devastating information. "Y-your mistaken, I'm the bastard of Winterfell, Eddard's bastard, I'm not the bastard of Dorne, you're wrong, Bran. Say you're wrong."

"Eddard Stark raised you as his own son because Lyanna feared harm would come to you if Robert Baratheon knew of your real father," divulged Bran. "You're, Jon Waters."

Jon clenched his eyes shut, willing himself to wake up from this nightmare, it had been what he always wanted to know, to finally put a name to the woman who had given him life, but he had never suspected, nor ever wished that Ned Stark wasn't his father, the man he'd idolized and loved. The man who raised him with the idea that honor and truth was to be held above all else, but what was honor and truth to Ned Stark after all when the man had deliberately chosen to keep this from him? He cursed Eddard then, and he cursed himself, hating that he'd been so naive all those years ago at the crossroads of Winterfell when Eddard rode south to be Robert's Hand, and he himself set to ride North to take the black, he should have pressed Eddard harder for the truth then, but instead he settled for the next time they would meet. A next that was to have never come. Gods what a fool he was.

Just when he began to accept Eddard wasn't his father the realization of just who his parents were hit him and he sat forward with his head held in his palms. Rhaegar and Lyanna, The Last Dragon and She-Wolf... Kidnapper and Victim. He wasn't the result of Eddard's infidelity, he was the result of Lyanna's suffering at the hands of his real father. He was sired in an act of cruelty and pain. The queasy sensation in his gut quickly turned ill as he dry heaved before the contents of his stomach came rushing up, tilting over as he spewed that morning's breakfast to the snow... Snow. He wasn't even a bastard of the North, the only Kingdom he had ever known and he wasn't a true Northman after all.

"Why, Bran? Why tell me now!?!" demanded Jon desperately, wiping at his mouth with the fur collar of his cloak.

"I've been trying to tell you since I came back," answered Bran simply. "I even tried telling you after you were brought back."

Jon's forehead crinkled, thinking back to the day Bran had come to his chambers with Arya and Davos to discuss Littlefinger's treachery, a brief moment with his brother came to recollection,

"There's something you need to know, Jon," said Bran, his dark eyes unwavering, his flat tone giving way to the impression that it was a thing of grave importance.

Arya had jumped in before Bran could have told him, a blessing she did he thought, he couldn't bear to think how this news may have been taken by Daenerys, the disgust he'd have seen as she looked at him, the bastard son of her brother, her nephew. He nearly hurled again. They had both said there was something more between them, neither could have predicted this. As repulsive of a thought as it should have been to him, Jon couldn't deny an urge to keep this revelation where it had been all this time, in the past and forgotten, where it couldn't come out to ruin all the good he held in what was present and dear. Daenerys.

Flopping to his knees, Jon shuffled to Bran's side, his hands reaching out to take his brother's hand in his, grasping it firmly. "Promise me you won't speak a word of this to anyone, Bran."

"It's the truth, Jon," returned Bran slowly, tugging his hand back as Jon's grip tightened around it, his fingers having gone purple from the cutting of circulation.
"Promise me, Bran!" Jon beseeched, diving forward he clutched Bran by the lapels of his black cloak and hauled his brother close so they were nose to nose. "Promise me!"

Bran's head bobbed. "It's your truth, your secret to bear if you wish. I will keep it so."

Jon went slack in relief, his hold on his brother loosening. Brokenly, he could only manage the determination to not let word of this get out, the truth a burden that would only hurt those close to him if revealed. "Even if I should perish, Bran, let this truth perish with me, as it did with fath-" he cut himself off, unable to finish the sentence without having to correct it. "with your father."

There was nothing Bran could say that would bring Jon comfort, neither was there an inkling of empathy within the Three-Eyed Raven that could console the Northern King, a dazed look of pain and shame stenciled on Jon's handsome features, his dark steel eyes dim and broken. Bran pitied him in that moment.

"Your Grace," called the thick Flea Bottom accent of Davos Seaworth, the man's nose red from the cold as he came to stand in eyesight along of the Heart tree's pool. "The men are ready to depart."

Jon used Bran's chair as a support to get back on his feet, his legs felt weak under him, his mind a haze of incoherent thoughts as he swiveled to meet his former Hand. Unable to form a clear thought, he gave a sluggish nod to show his acknowledgment. His feet moving on their own accord to join the man who was now keenly aware of Jon's awful state.

"You look unwell, your Grace," commented Davos as Jon neared. "Shall I fetch Maester Wolkan?"

With a flick of his hand, Jon waved Davos' concern away, his mind struggling to keep the task at hand in focus. Ride to White Harbor, set sail for the capital, take the throne for Daenerys, defeat the dead. He repeated those thoughts like it were his life's mantra, it helped separate himself from the immediate world around him, faintly he could hear Davos speaking to him as they strode for the archway of the Godswood, but Seaworth's voice seemed leagues away. The haze clouding his thoughts briefly absconded as he discovered himself back in the courtyard of Winterfell, the men of this ill-conceived plan mounted upon their horses as Sansa stood to the side, Brienne and her squire Podrick at her rear.

Crossing the courtyard and its blanket of crisp, white snow. Jon hovered in front of his eldest sister, cousin he told himself absently.

"Be safe, Jon," beckoned Sansa, yet to Jon the words seemed foreign, his troubled mind unable to grasp her simple well-wishing.

"Erm, your Grace?" Questioned Davos awkwardly, looking between Jon and Sansa. "The Lady has bid you a safe journey."

Blinking dumbly for a moment, Jon snapped out of his stupor, the last few moments from the Godswood to the Courtyard catching up to him. "I'm fine, Davos, there'll be no need for Wolkan."

Davos' brows furrowed at the response. "Wolkan? Nay, your Grace. Lady Stark has wished you safe travels..."

Clueing into what was currently transpiring in front of him, Jon looked to Sansa as if just noticing her presence for the first time, his gaze studying her closely. "Sansa, I um, I look to return soon... When I can... If I shouldn't, if... If I don't return, it's yours, the North is yours," he said, his tone sounding hollow and void of emotion. "Rule it well, be kind and just."

"I don't care about ruling the North, Jon. If you can't tell that by now, I don't kn--" Sansa faltered
mid-sentence, taking notice of her brother's eyes drifting to his feet, the features of his face
showcasing a look of distress. Cautiously she took a step towards him, his face bearing the same torn
look he had had on when she arrived at Castle Black shortly after he had risen from the dead for the
first time, a face of uncertainty and confusion as to what his future had in store while free from
servitude to the Night's Watch. "Jon?"

His eyes flickered up. "Sansa?"

"There's something off with you," Sansa concluded. "Are you rethinking the task? It can be achieved
without you, Jon. You can stay here where the King in the North belongs."

King in the North he thought, twisted by the irony of it, he was a Waters, a southerner, he was no
Northman. He belonged in the South, not the North.

Sansa and Davos exchanged a look of mutual concern as Jon dwelled back into his thoughts, a reply
to her lost as he pictured the statue of Lyanna Stark in the Winterfell crypts. His mother here with
him as he was raised the entire time, all those times spent praying at the Heart tree for her to come for
him and she had been there the whole time. He was taken from his thoughts as Davos shook his
shoulder.

"We can delay our departure if you'd like, mayhaps a bit of rest before the journey to White
Harbor?" Proposed Davos.

"Nay, I've delayed us long enough," stated Jon, returning to the present. Repeating the mantra in his
again to regain purpose, Ride to White Harbor, set sail for the capital, take the throne for Daenerys,
defeat the dead. "Come, Ser Davos, let us ride."

Sansa hoped to speak again, but Jon had already turned. Davos sending her an apologetic look on
Jon's behalf as they strode to their mounted companions. Jon briefly stopping at the horse-drawn
wagon where Jorah sat at the front, reigns in hand and heavy cloak beefing his wiry frame.

"You know your way, Ser Jorah?" Asked Jon, looking up at the man who had once greeted him
with a grimace at Dragonstone.

"I may have spent many a nameday in exile, but I remember the road south, King Snow," answered
Jorah, he spent a glance behind him to Thoros and the Hound who sat in the back of the wagon, both
men eying the crate they had loaded wearily. "We'll get the deadman to King's Landing in time for
her majesty's coronation. You just focus on getting those gates open. Don't get yourself killed again
doing it."

Jon gave a stern pat to the planked seat Jorah sat upon. "King's Landing won't be my end, we'll toast
a mug of ale when the Queen sits the throne."

"Gods willing," returned Jorah. "Fare well, White Wolf."

Delivering one last pat, Jon strode to his destrier and hooked his foot into the stirrups to mount the
saddle. Tugging on the reigns, he trod past the men of House Stark who had answered the call
to volunteer, a dozen strong. Reaching the front of the column where Arya and Davos waited, he
gave them each a look before fixing on Winterfell's open gate.

"Ride with haste!" He called behind him, his heels digging into the sides of his steed, its black mane
thrown back as it took off at a gallop.

Ride to White Harbor, set sail for the capital, take the throne for Daenerys, defeat the dead.
Chapter End Notes

So, to start, the Dany bit turned into a filler chunk, but because she will be absent from the next chapter I wanted to show that she wasn't going to be flying around Westeros aimlessly.

Jon's lineage reveal eh? No Samwell Tarly to fit the last few pieces of the puzzle just yet, so maybe in the future... Hope it was along the lines of believable for a Jon reaction?

Thank you all for reading and until next time, take care!
The Wolf and A Bastard Stag

Chapter Summary

Jon and his companions reach the capital. The foundation to seize King's Landing is laid while the Lion on the Throne seeks to destroy her enemies as well.

Chapter Notes

Life and the holidays have definitely played a factor in my delay of getting this chapter out, but alas it is finally out.

Thank you for all the support and dedication you all have given so far, the bookmarks, comments, and kudos are all greatly appreciated. Hope you enjoy, happy holidays! And without further ado, I present Chapter 17!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Wolf Fangs & Dragon Fire

Chapter Seventeen: The Wolf and A Bastard Stag

Bracing a hand on the ship's railing, Jon held fast as the ship bobbed along the rushing waves, a gentle mist spraying up against his cheek as they sailed over a larger wave that surged towards them, their unmarked white sail catching the wind and propelled them faster through the inlet of Blackwater Bay, the island keep of Dragonstone behind them as they edged closer to the capital of the Seven Kingdoms. His sight fixated on the massive city lurking along the edges of the bay, a hill at one end holding an expansive keep of red brick and a scatter of stained glass windows that twinkled in the midday sun, towers protruding throughout looked as though they sought to reach the clear blue sky above.

The former home of House Targaryen, his true fathers home. A shudder ran the course of his body as he thought to all the history behind the famed city, where Aegon landed, Baelor built his great Sept and Aerys, second of his name lost his mind. It was all Targaryen history thought Jon, sure Robert Baratheon had taken their seat and Cersei Lannister now held it in her clutches, but neither they nor their House's melted ten thousand conquered swords to form the throne, they didn't lay the foundation for the Red Keep or the city walls they hid behind, they were meerly stewards, holding the throne till a Targaryen could reclaim it, and as Cersei was unwilling to relent it willingly, Jon despite his parentage would see Daenerys take back what was rightfully hers, all he hoped for in return was that she never learned of his parentage lest she stop seeing him as a lover but a threat to her claim. He'd seen what men and women alike could resort to doing to one another in order to see themselves in a position of power, and though he didn't think Daenerys to be the callous sort needed to forsake him if she learned his father was her brother, at the same time he had never imagined his own brothers of the Watch capable of betraying him. Of course they eventually did.
Suppressing the dark thoughts that nagged at him, Jon refocused on the nearing city, thousands of rooftops in the lower city becoming more defined with their shingled roofs. The sight of land was pleasing despite the place they would disembark and the task they need accomplish, the journey had been long for Jon and the men in service to his House. From arriving at White Harbor to their voyage to the port of Gulltown in the Vale where they had ditched their northern garb in favour of adorning southern attire and swapping vessels for a merchant ship destined for the capital. Davos had taken the plan of cloak and dagger a step further by dragging their southern clothes through the mud before departing Gulltown, when they didn't look worn enough, Stannis' old Hand had them draped over the railing of the ship as they sailed for Blackwater Bay, the beating sun fading the clothes bright dye.

The irritation of the voyage emerged from Davos' dedication to mask their northern demeanor. Every morning as the sun rose over the edge of the open waters, its amber glow reflecting off the surface, Davos would call on them to congregate atop the ship's deck, from sunrise to sundown he would instruct them tirelessly on what to say if questioned by the City Watch, what slang and sayings were used by the smallfolk of King's Landing, how to mask their thick northern accent. If all went to plan, by the time they stepped off the ship it was hoped they wouldn't be told apart from any other citizen of King’s Landing, they would blend in and look as if they had lived in the grimy slums of the city their entire life.

Even with morale running high for the most part, the dangers of the task at hand became all too apparent when they had caught sight of Euron Greyjoy's Iron Fleet lurking off King’s Landing coast, while it wasn't the hundred's of war galleys it was said to be, the fraction of ships flying the black sails adorning gold Krakens showed Cersei Lannister wasn't entirely without allies, it also served to show her dominate control of the seas encompassing Westeros. Where the rest of Euron's fleet was of concern, the task to be carried out was of greater concern, of greater purpose.

Drawing closer to the Capital's docks, half a hundred or more ships -merchant and cargo barges alike- tethered to the wooden walkways that extended out to the blackwater, Jon watched as the port crawled with life, with a hustle and bustle of sailors and merchants going about their daily lives, unaware of the battle to come. Crates and barrels being offloaded and loaded, men calling out their sale pitches as they tried to draw in business to their stands of shellfish, foreign wine, and other imported goods, the docks looked to serve as a market. Some people by Jon's looked to be drabbed in fine clothes of rich silk, others in near rags, mixed in at random were the men of the City Watch, their chainmail and gold cloaks shimmering in the suns basking light. Hull grinding against the dock as they came to port, Jon pulled away from the railing as the crew of the ship tossed a rope over the side for those below to tie them down. The captain of the ship giving him a nod as Davos, Arya and his House men ascended from the lower deck, each of them squinting their eyes as they adjusted to the light.

A thin plank tossed down from the deck acted as a ramp in which Jon coukd lead the way from the ship, stopping only as a gauntlet-clad hand came to be pressed against his chest, holding him back, a man adorning a black halfhelm with a lowered visor and gold cloak obstructing his way.

"Hold up there, go on and state your business here," barked the City Watchman, even with the lowered visor, his eyes were narrowed.

"Greetings! We've come bearing grain from the Vale to sell, and in our spare time, we tired seamen hope to seek the comfort with a few of the city's fine women on Pisswater Bend," answered Davos, a few places back from Jon, he leaned over the shoulders of the disguised Stark men in front of him so three gold dragon's twinkled under the sun in reach of the City Watchman. "A token of our gratitude for coming to welcome our arrival. Most've us hail from Flea Bottom and long for its homely pleasures."
Eyeing Jon for a long moment, the City Watchman looked over his shoulder before reaching out and taking Davos' offered coin. "Enjoy your stay in the capital lads, if you tire of the women in the gutters come find me here, for a finders fee I'll see you with some quality women to keep your bed warm."

"A tempting offer we may just accept," returned Davos, he leaned forward and nudged Jon to carry on, the Northern King took an uneasy step at first, but they soon found themselves lost in the crowded dock.

As another shoulder brushed against his own, Jon curbed his frustration with gritted teeth, he'd been in the capital for less than a couple moments and already he despised it, hating the crowds that threatened to suffocate him and stench that permeated the air. He longed for the open freedom of the North, its fresh air, and unrestricted environment, his agitation only worsened as he reached the rampway that would bring them to the city level of the capital, the slim roadway packed with men and women carry sacked goods over their shoulders, mules pulling wagons clomped about with no clear direction, piles of animal dung lay without regard along the ramp, the hurried citizens stepping through it without a care. Jon loathed this city.

"Keep pace, your Grace," grumbled Davos, the man clapping a hand on Jon's shoulder as he came upon him at the base of the ramp. "You're going to draw attention looking lost. Remember, you were born here, raised here. You know this city like the back of your hand, you best act like it or we're doomed."

Jon huffed, his nose wrinkled. "The place reaks."

"Aye it reaks, when I was a young lad growing up here I used to hold a cloth to my face to half the smell, but you'll grow used to it," said Davos, he looked to the Stark men who had come to file up at his rear, all of them taking in the city surroundings with large eyes, none having seen anything quite like the capital in the North, White Harbor seemed like a village in comparison to the sheer size of King's Landing. The only one within the company that didn't seem out of place was the young, Arya Stark, the girl, drabbed in cheap wool looked as though she had lived within the slums all this time.

Jon ducked his head as a patrol of Lannister troops passed then by, their red capes dragging at their heels dusted the city streets behind them as they went. When the distance between them was great enough, he turned to Davos expectantly. "How much further to this blacksmith of yours?"

"Its just up on the street of steel, mind you the climb up the streets ruddy hill to the shop will take some time, me and uphill climbs don't agree with one another as we once did," returned Davos, he grabbed Jon's arm and pulled the man aside just as a group of children clutching arm fulls of baked bread ran the narrow street, a few men of the City Watch pursuing them. "Orphans, the city has more of them than rats sadly."

Jon sighed, beginning to realize the capital of the Seven Kingdom's was as terrible a place than he could have imagined. The smallfolk here were treated like dirt the highborn trampled over, clinging to what little bit of life they could make for themselves. He pitied them, and he despised the ornate wealth that towered over them, the Red Keep with its red brick and pointed towers ever looming like a jewel within arms reach that the smallfolk could never obtain.

Jon flinched as a manicured hand pressed up against his chest, a woman of an exotic complexion smiled flirtatiously up at him, her eyelashes batting suggestively. "You've a pretty face. If you've the coin I know a few girls who would gladly take a low price for a night with you."

Careful not to harm her, Jon pulled her hand off his chest by the wrist. "I'm not interested."
"You fancy lads? We've them too, come handsome, follow me," the woman persisted, blowing him a kiss.

"No thank you," returned Jon, he turned away in haste to find Davos smiling giddily. "Was that amusing to you?"

"Nay, your Grace, just surprised is all," supplied Davos, he halted at the corner of the street and gestured his companions to make a turn up another, one that ascended a great hill with shops lining each side of the cobblestone street, signs of shops dangled overhead as armour and weapons were put out on display, the gleaming metal shining beneath the glow of the lurking sun above.

Jon raised a brow at his former Hand. "Whats so surprising about that?"

"That it was only the one lass who approached you, with your looks I figured you'd be having to beat them all off, I'spose I was mistaken, you're not as pretty a lad as I thought," Jided Davos, Jon rolled his eyes and carried on up the street, his eyes raked over the plate armour, most of which was better than any Northman ever hoped to have. Chainmail was the armour of the North, and while that served their purpose, the Lannister's who favoured plate armour held an advantage.

Squeezing between two Starkmen who followed a few steps behind Jon, Arya skipped to catch up to Jon and Davos' earnest strides. "Ser Davos?"

"My Lady?" returned Davos, his eyes darted from shop to shop as he searched for a familiar face.

"What if you're mistaken, what if Gendry didn't return to being a blacksmith, what do we do then?" questioned Arya.

"What happens then is up to your brother I should think," answered Davos, he came to an abrupt stop as his eyes locked onto a familiar face, despite it being cast in shade, he saw enough features to recognize the Baratheon in them. "But that won't be necessary. I see the lad now as we speak."

Arya swiveled to the sight of a modest shop tucked in-between two large ones, while the other establishments of the street proudly showed their work, the shop she saw was humble, only a single sword sat out on display, and compared to the swords of the shops on either side, they didn't compare. It gleamed along its razor sharp edge, its hilt finely crafted with ornate swirls of iron with a black leather bound grip, in the wide-open doorway of the shop stood a shadowy figure slamming a hammer down onto a glowing orange piece of hot metal, sparks flying up with every contact of metal on hot forged steel. Without hesitating, she ran across the street, bumping into a few men of fine robes -not that it mattered to her- as she went, she jumped at the man, her arms wrapping around his muscled frame, she could feel him resist at first before he took in a sharp breath of recognition of her.

"Arya?" questioned Gendry, he stumbled back with her in surprise, she only peeled herself away from him just to truly view him, see that it was truly him.

"You're alive," stated Arya, a grin forming on her face as she released her hold on him. Her eyes running him over from head to toe, his black hair cropped short and shining with sweat that plastered his bangs along his forehead, his bare arms, toned and glistening from his labour. "And you've filled out."

"And you've grown, no mistaking you for a boy anymore," commented Gendry lightly, his brows pulling together a moment later. "What in the Seven Hells are you doing here?"

"I've a list of names that need to be crossed off," stated Arya in a tone that suggested it was a matter of fact, a slight blush to her cheeks at the mention of her budding womanly attributes.
"So, you two truly do know one another then," commented Davos, entering the shop with Jon at his side and the accompanying Starkmen on their heels, their eyes drifted along the shop walls, every inch of them stood littered with racks of freshly smithed swords, hundreds of them, just as fine a quality as the one showcased at the shops front. "I take it you haven't had trouble keeping yourself busy then, lad."

"Ser Davos," mumbled Gendry in a daze, as though disbelieving the man was truly there, his gaze shifting from Arya to his Uncle's Hand. "What are you... What is this, what's going on?" his eyes finally coming to rest on Jon. "Who're you?"

Davos looked around the shop, taking a tentative step closer to the man he had set loose from Dragonstone. "Tell me lad, are we free from prying ears?"

"Aye, unless those men behind you aren't with you," answered Gendry cautiously, a bemused expression set upon his face as he looked to the six men with bearded and stubbled faces lingering just outside his shop.

"That noticeable are they?" Muttered Davos.

"They might as well be flying banners over them, but aye, if they're yours, we're alone." Confirmed Gendry.

"Well then, I 'sspose some introductions are in order. Gendry lad, this is his Grace, Jon Snow, the King in the North," introduced Davos proudly, beckoning for Jon to step closer.

"I'm also Arya's half.. Half-brother, she's told me about your travels together from the capital. I thank you for looking after her, keeping her identity a secret when you learned of it, it's a noble thing to have done, I don't know how to repay you the kindness you showed her." greeted Jon, he put forward an offered hand, hating how he stumbled on introducing himself as his sister's sibling. Cousin.

Gendry took hold and gave it a stern shake. "Your sister was the closest thing I've ever had to a true friend, I nearly started thinking of her as a sister of mine own," he shot Arya a teasing look. "Thank the Seven the Red Woman came to take me away when she did or I may actually come to think of her as family."

Arya swatted at his arm though she seemed amused. "Count your blessings I'm glad to see you."

"My apologies, my Lady," returned Gendry, grinning, he ignored Arya's glare while he turned back to Davos and Jon, he looked to them expectantly. "I've had a Hand come speak to me, several actually if Ser Davos be included, but I've naught had the opportunity to meet with a King, yet somehow, I take it you've not come all this way from your Northern Kingdom to meet with me, have you?"

"Nay, while I'm glad to have met you, you are not the reason we have traveled so far south" answered Jon, he looked to Davos. "Do you care to fill him in?"

"That I shall, your Grace, once of course I've dispersed our fellow companions before we draw ourselves any unwanted attention," replied Davos, he broke from the conversation at hand to brush the Stark guardsmen away, sending them out in different directions in the hopes they would be less suspicious in a gathered crowd. Returning to the fold, the Onion Knight clutched the pouch of knucklebones around his neck. "Listen close, Gendry. We need a favour lad, we're in need of some steel and we haven't the coin to pay for it, not now at least, but one day, soon enough, we'll have you paid back in full."
"What do you reckon to do with my swords should I give them to you?" questioned Gendry.

"Its best you not burden yourself with that," began Davos, but Arya was more than willing to answer the question.

"We're going to require them to cut down Lannister men if they try to stop us from opening the city gates for the armies of the Dragon Queen," provided Arya.

Davos bristled at her revealing of the plan, he looked to Jon who merely shook his head, he knew Arya enough to know she was going to do what she wanted, and as far as the blacksmith knowing, if Arya trusted him, if Davos trusted him enough to ask for steel and think he'd get it. Jon wasn't concerned with the man knowing the plot they hoped to carry out.

"You plan to kill Lannister men?" asked Gendry.

"Any that are foolish enough to get in our way," returned Arya surely.

"Then count me in, they're responsible for my father's death, and I'm sick of beating steel over an anvil, I'd rather beat a Lannister with a Warhammer given the chance," said Gendry firmly, he looked to Jon, knowing it would be pointless to appeal to Davos to let him join this endeavour. "I'll give you any blade you want, your Grace, as many as you want. All I ask is that you let me join you, fight alongside you as our fathers did."

Davos' eyes grew large at Gendry's mention of his father. "Quiet now, Gendr--"

"Our fathers?" interjected Jon, even Arya seemed as clueless as he was. "Do I know your father?"

"Every man in the Seven Kingdom's knew my father, I'm the bastard son of King Robert Baratheon," divulged Gendry, both Jon and Arya looking taken aback by the revelation.

"You knew and you didn't tell me after I told you I was a Stark!" Scolded Arya.

Gendry quickly shook his head. "I didn't know till after the Red Woman told me on our way to Dragonstone, honestly."

"I had hoped he'd have the wits about him to have kept that to himself, but I see now that was daft thinking on my part," added Davos wistfully.

Gendry snorted. "Don't blame yourself, Ser Davos, I was bound to blurt it out sometime, I've been stuck holding that in for so long, it just felt good to tell someone, good to get it off my chest," he fixed Jon with an expecting stare. "Well, your Grace, do you accept? Will the Wolf and the Stag stand together once more as our fathers did. They brought down a dynasty fighting at each others side, seems we could do the same for my father's murderous wife."

"Can you hold your own?" inquired Jon, unwilling to inform the man just how terribly mistaken he was on their fathers fighting side by side.

"Every moment I'm not fashioning steel I take to practicing with my Warhammer, I've been waiting for this moment. Training for a moment like this to come about. I can hold my own, you can bet on that." vowed Gendry, raw determination clung to his tone.

"I'd be lying if I said we couldn't use an extra set of hands," said Jon. "You'll heed my orders, bastard son of King Robert or not, I don't need to bring someone along who won't listen to me in the heat of battle. Unlike what Arya said, this isn't about killing Lannister's. It's about riding the throne of Queen Cersei. Can I trust you in that?"
"I won't give you a reason to doubt it. You point and I'll swing my hammer, you say sit, and I'll sit. You won't have to worry about me," pledged Gendry.

Jon nodded. "Good, we'll need nine swords then, sharpened and battle ready. How quick can you have them?"

"You can take them off the wall right now, all these swords here are sharp enough to take a man's life, but it won't do you any good to take them now," said Gendry, earning him a look of Jon's narrowed eyes.

"Why won't it do us any good?"

"The way you lot are dressed, a man of the City Watch takes one look at you with swords and they'll raise a brow, no one would believe you could afford a blade, let alone nine of them," Supplied Gendry.

Jon let a growl of frustration rumble through his throat, his eyes flickering onto the bashful form of Davos. "You're the one who told us what to wear, so tell me, Davos, how do we get around to the city gates without being accosted?"

Davos closed his eyes. "I was a smuggler, not a sellsword, your Grace. It didn't occur to me that what we wore would be a telltale to watchful eyes that we're not the sort to be sword bearers."

"I know how you'll do it," cut-in Gendry, he drew the attention of Davos and Jon as he strode to a stained, tattered curtain. Grabbing a fistful of the fabric, he yanked it back to reveal a series of shelves stocked with Lannister armour, visored helms, plate armour, even swords detailed with ornate lion head pommels. "No one will look at you twice for holding a sword if you look the part. If you look a lion, act a lion, then to other lions you'll be just another lion. You could walk right up to a gate and open it."

Jon let a laugh escape him, he took a step forward and picked up one of the visored Lannister helms. "This could work."

"I'd say it'll damn well better than just work, it might as well be a key to the Red Keep itself," noted Davos approvingly.

Arya looked to Gendry with a disapproving stare. "You made weapons and armour for the Lannister's after they tried to kill you? After everything they did?!"

"Easy there now, If it weren't for my apprenticing under Master Mott and the Lannister's in dire need of worked steel, I wouldn't be smithing swords as I've been doing, I'd have been in the gutters of Flea Bottom begging for a bowl of brown when I first came back to King's Landing," explained Gendry lamely. "Making armour and weapons for the House that killed my father wasn't ideal, but I didn't have much option now did I, mine own Uncle wanted me dead as well."

Arya turned to Davos, an anger burning in her eyes. "You said he left your company unmaimed!"

"And he did, still a full set of hair on his head does he not? Breath still in his chest?" Countered Davos. "Those were dark times for, Lord Stannis. He came around to what was right in the end, he let the lad go didn't he?"

"Thanks to you I left that island alive, not my Uncle," Corrected Gendry.

Davos conceded with a gentle nod, hoping to let the subject rest.
Jon placed the helm back on the shelf before turning to Gendry. "We'll need some time to scout the city gates, see which one will be the easiest to infiltrate. Once we have that, Davos, you'll ride for the Queen's camp and inform her of the gate we plan to seize. We'll strike when her army appears outside the walls."

"It'll be days till that happens, we'll be needing a place to rest our bones. I can visit a few of the city Inn's, see if they've room for us," suggested Davos.

Gendry raised a hand to draw their attention. "I don't have featherbeds as an Inn would, but I've got this shop here with a roof for you and your men to sleep under should you require it."

"The hospitality would be greatly welcomed," said Jon gratefully, he and those with him grew tense at the sound of conversing voices entered the shop, they shifted to find two men in Lannister armour, both with grim set appearances.

"I'll tell you this, first moment I see one of that cunts dragons flying in the sky, Jaime Lannister can kiss my bunghole! I fought and bled enough when the young wolf rose up, I'll be fucked if I get burned alive," said one of the men to the other.

"I'll second that, especially after what's happened to Lendel. D'you remember my brother, Lendel?" Asked the other man in reply, his deep blue eyes directed to the floor. "Poor sod was caught up in that mess on the Goldroad back from Highgarden. Me and him, we're our mothers only two sons, what'll she do if I end up at the Fathers dining hall? Will she get to live out the rest of her days at Casterly Rock like a highborn lady if I'm not there to provide for her? I highly fucking doubt it."

The first man shrugged with a disgruntled shake of his head, his eyes roaming the shop till they rested on Gendry "Oi, blacksmith. Get your arse over here, we've an order to place."

"I'm with some patrons at the moment," returned Gendry stiffly.

The Lannister guard snorted as he tapped a finger to his crimson chest plate. "You see the colour of this armour boy? Its a we're first sort of colour, the Queen's colours. Now tell your patrons to fuck off and get your arse over here."

With tightening stance, Gendry grit his teeth as he glanced to his immediate guests. "Come back tonight and we'll sort out the rest of the details."

"Of course, we'll see you this evening," replied Davos, he gave a nod to Arya and Jon. "While we still have the grace of daylight we might as well browse the city, take in the sites."

"Lead the way," agreed Jon, he kept his face hidden from the Lannister men as they passed them by on their way out of the shop. Immediately his House Guard began to drift toward them.

"Davos, round up the others and take them elsewhere, if the Lannister troops in that shop see us together they'll have to be blind to not raise question with us, the smaller the group, the less suspicious we'll be. Arya and I will check out the gates."

"I know the way around the capital better than anyone," protested Davos. "I should be the one to guide you about."

"I lived here when our father was Hand, Ser Davos, I know this place well enough to take Jon around," divulged Arya.

"Besides, you're the only one with the know how to keep our fellow companions here out of sight. Hide them, Davos. We'll meet up back here when the sun sets," ordered Jon.
Stiffly, Davos conceded. "Have it your way. I'll be here once its dark, not a moment after. Be careful
and don't use that northern burr of yours to often."

"I lived amongst Wildling's when I was a man of the Night's Watch, I know a thing or two when it
comes to fooling others. There'll be no need to worry about me. Just look after yourself, take care of
the others." replied Jon, he held a hand out for Davos to take, the two men shaking briefly before
splitting apart, the men and their cohorts going their different ways.

As rays of coloured light shined through the stained glass panels of the throne room, it still remained
dreadful place, three King's had sat upon the throne in a matter of years, and three King's had
perished, one to the tusk of a boar, another to a cup of poison, and the last taken by his own self-
consuming grief and torment. Now in their wake, brooding with pursed plush lips sat the Queen of
the Seven Kingdom's, three at best, Seven by title. The cold steel of the melted, mangled blades she
sat upon was far from the comfort one would seek, but it helped keep her mind nimble and her rear
on the edge of her seat as she read the faces of those who entered her court, were they as treasonous
as most small council members turned out to be? Were they spies for the dragon wench who hoped
to usurp her? Cersei's eyes narrowed as her brother entered at the end of the room, a few
commanders of the Lannister host trailing behind him with billowing red cloaks, as per usual, the
sellsword formerly in Tyrion's employe, Bronn of the Blackwater striding along step by step at
Jaime's side.

"Ser Jaime," she greeted formally, giving a swift flick of her hand to have her Queensguard to step
aside as he climbed the throne steps, as always she saw Jaime's gaze linger on the hulking frame of
Gregor Clegane. The man's shoulders as thick and wide as a bull, his height, a staggering size that
had any man looking up to try and meet his bloodshot eyes.

Taking a knee for formality sake, Jaime got to his feet a moment later with a stern face, strands of
grey had come to streak through his golden hair -an effect from the weight of stress that looked to
plug his eyes-- wrinkles cracking at the corners of his eyes that hung with tired bags.

"Rise, Ser Jaime, what news have you for me?" Asked Cersei.

"We've received a messenger from Euron Greyjoy, your Grace," answered Jaime tiredly, he used his
one good hand to brace himself on the steps as he got to his feet. "The sea urchin reports he's the
Golden Company boarded upon the Iron Fleet and are sailing for Westeros as we speak."

"They're late," she stated briskly. "The dragon spawn and her army of savages lay camp on our
border and we stand with nothing but a few thousand men to guard our walls. When will the Golden
Company arrive?"

"The messenger had said he set sail a moon before the Ironborn were scheduled to depart from
Essos. It should be assumed they will land in the crownlands within a day," presumed Jaime.

"Ten thousand sellswords will still leave us out manned compared to the Mad King's daughter, but it
shall be how we use them that will bring us victory in the battle to come. I want riders sent out to
greet the Golden Company upon their arrival. Have these riders inform these sellswords to make
camp near Maidenpool," ordered Cersei, she leaned back into the throne, a thoughtful expression
taking hold of her.

"Make camp along Maidenpool? Your Grace, thats leagues away, we will need the mercenaries here
to hold the defenses," interjected Qyburn, the Queen's Hand stepped from the shadows that cloaked
the area behind the throne in darkness and laid a hand atop a rusted blade that poked out the top of
the throne.
"The contingent of my family's House along with the City Watch will mount the city walls," refuted Cersei. "We shall antagonize the Targaryen bitch to attack us, and when she has, the Golden Company will strike her forces from behind and she will be crushed at the foot of our walls. All those who oppose us will suffer the same fate when we march across the Kingdom's."

Jaime sighed. "She still has Dragon's."

Cersei didn't seem phased in the least by the fabled creatures that had once assisted Aegon the Conqueror in seizing the Seven Kingdoms. "Qyburn?"

"We've been able to construct twelve ballistae to place throughout the city. If the pretender tries to use her dragon's, we shall pluck them from the sky." Supplied Qyburn.

"We had a ballista on the Goldroad, it made no difference when it came to her dragon's," protested Jaime, he gave Cersei a near begging look. "It's not to late to sue for peace. We could send an envoy to discuss terms. Tyrion is her Hand, he'll implore her to hear us out."

"Tyrion is a murderer of our kin, nothing more!" Spat Cersei.

"I told you Olenna confessed to Joffrey's murder, Tyrion is innocent. He is our brother, Cersei. There are to few Lannister's left, can't you see it? We're a dying breed. Do you truly wish to see our entire House wither and die rather than relinquish the throne?"

"Mayhaps Tyrion didn't kill Joffrey, but what of father, what of our mother?!" Sneered Cersei, she looked away from Jaime, unable to bear looking at her dwarf brother's staunch defender. "I would see our shameful brother's head mounted upon a pike. His memory ripped from the pages of history. If you stand for Tyrion, you stand against me. You stand a traitor to the throne."

Jaime recoiled at her words, even daring to take a step back as the Mountain placed himself in between them, the giant of a man glaring down at him, it wasn't a look he hoped to be on the receiving end of, nor were his sister's word claiming him a traitor, that stung far worse than the moment the Bolton man had taken his hand.

"The Queen has made her intentions known," came Qyburn's sleek voice, he took a step forward. "The men of your House are to hold the city walls. This is your task, Ser Jaime of the House Lannister. Do you obey your Queen's command?"

Ignoring the former Maester, Jaime took a step to the side to peer past Gregor Clegane's frame, his sister refusing to meet his eyes. "Is this what you wish of me, Cersei? Am I to hold the walls as we roast under flame and heat of dragon fire?"

"If the task bequeathed to you calls to roast, then roast you will, Ser Jaime. I advise you take your commander's and that sellsword Knight you hold so close and organize the city's defense whilst you still can," commanded Cersei coldly.

Cursing the love he held for her, the love that had him still acting in his sisters service even though he saw their impending defeat, Jaime gave an all to flourished bow, the crown had made his sister-lover more than just Queen, it had made he mind clouded with thoughts paranoia and imagined slights against her, it had sullied her mind. Gone was the tender lover he yearned for, the one that enticed him. All he saw now in her was the sire of their Lord father, Tywin Lannister, the one man who figured his daughter nothing more than a bargaining chip was more astute to himself than his own sons in the end. He huffed and turned, his grimace holding as he guided his commander's from the throne room.
Qyburn waited for Jaime to exit before sweeping to Cersei's side. "A man that questions your orders is a man with doubted loyalty. Your brother isn't to be trusted, your Grace."

Cersei shook her head. "My brother would die before betraying me. His loyalty isn't to be questioned. Now, tell me, my Lord Hand? How is it we antagonize, Daenerys Targaryen to attack us?"

Qyburn's brought a hand up to stroke his chin, his eyes drooping closed in thought. "The pretender Queen did fly out in force when she learned of the sacking of Highgarden and the death of Olenna Tyrell. Given we still have a few Dornish bastards and the Greyjoy girl Euron left behind who were in the pretender's, we could send the Targaryen a few severed heads to inspire her to attack. The Gods know the dungeons have become overpopulated."

Cersei lips pulled up, though a smile, it was more conniving than one of mirth. "I'm not finished with, Ellaria Sand just yet. But the Greyjoy, she's of no use to me. Have her taken to the ruins of Baelor's Sept, this shall be a good time to educate the lowborn to just what happens to those who look to betray the throne. Summon Ser Illyn Payne, the man not had much work as of a late, and I fear his blade may be getting rusty. My brother says we should speak terms with the dragon bitch, so be it, she'll have my terms."

Qyburn gave a humble bow. "I shall carry this out right away, your Grace. I need only tend to the riders you've asked for to meet the mercenary company first."

Cersei seemed uninterested as she stood from the throne. "Whichever matter you choose to tend to first is your business, Qyburn. I only expect it to be carried out." She needn't await her Hand's reply as she stepped from the seat she coveted, her Queensguard in tow, she left the throne room to its glitter of coloured light streaming from the stained glass.

Having observed three of the city's seven gates, Jon and Arya found themselves swept up in the rush of a crowd. Unable to separate from the excited smallfolk, it wasn't long before they found themselves ushered into an open square, people filing into it from every which way. A statue of a Kingly man stood a monument against a backsetting of scorched ruins. Baelor and his destroyed Sept, Jon surmised. To Arya it was nothing more than a reminder to the loss of her father, and by all appearances, it was to be a setting for another loss of life for upon the steps that lead up to the broken sept was a few dozen men of the City Watch, a woman bound by chains kneeling at the feet of a man Arya felt an instant rage toward, Ser Ilyn Payne, the man whose name had graced the top of her list. The mute who had beheaded her father and acted as royal executioner for the throne.

The crowd around them cheered at the spectacle, many calling for the woman to lose her head. It was only by the grace of an aged man dressed in a simple set of black robes and the Hand's pin tagged to his chest that settled the crowd's excitement. Raising a set of spotted hands, he implored the smallfolk to silence.

"You come today to bear witness in front of the Seven to the sentence of a woman who had chosen to disgrace her House by her decision to turn against the crown, a woman who stands accused of treason," called the man to a resounding response of shouts in support. "As Hand of the Queen, I hereby pass her majesty's sentence for Yara of House Greyjoy for which she is found guilty. Her punishment is death. Let this be a reminder to all those who seek to act in opposition to the throne."

"Greyjoy... Theon's sister?" Mused Arya aloud.

"Has to be, I heard she had been taken prisoner by their uncle during my time on Dragonstone, the first time around," Jon confirmed, he looked to the captive woman, meek and cowering, it was
obvious to him that the woman was beaten quite often, sporting a black eye and crooked, broken nose. He was surprised she was even still alive. It was by that opinion he considered her a true warrior.

"You see the executioner," commented Arya, her eyes thinned.

"Aye, I see him," grumbled Jon, his gaze drifted along the amassed crowd about them, their gleeful faces, wide grins and twinkling eyes of mirth as they looked to the proceeding playing out on the steps of the Sept. Only in the south would an execution not be a somber affair but an outpour of celebration, a mummer's play of entertainment to them.

"He's the one who took father's head when Joffrey ordered it, Ser Ilyn Payne," answered Arya, her hand balled into a fist as Jon's neck snapped his head back to view the bald man, with a grim, pale face.

"Are you sure?" questioned Jon dryly.

"I was there when they called father a traitor," answered Arya, she pointed a finger at Baelor's monument. "I clung to that statue as Ser Ilyn swung the sword. I remember that day, I remember Ser Illyn."

Jon wrapped an arm over Arya's shoulder, Eddard Stark, his father by name, uncle by blood. "He'll answer for father. Cersei will answer for father." He pulled her close as the grim man slid his longsword from its sheath and stepped to the side of Theon's sister, the crowd erupted in cheers. Both siblings stood the only silent onlookers as the blade came down to end the Greyjoy girl's life. He could feel Arya start to pull away from him and he struggled to keep her at his side.

"Let go of me," chewed out Arya, she jerked back and away. "You're right, Payne will answer for father, I'll see to it, and then I'll see to, Cersei."

"Arya, don't be a fool, you know our task," implored Jon, he attempted to reach out for her but she took another step back, then another, and while he pursued her, she was gone. Vanishing into the thick crowd of jubilant bodies, their arms swaying in a frenzy of excitement that pushed back against him as he fought to follow his cousin, when Jon inevitably wound up tangled with a few toothless men cheering in his face, he resigned himself to giving up. His neck twisting and craning as looked in every which direction to find where she had gone until he found himself spinning aimlessly about in a circle, a lost expression gripping his handsome face. The plan to seize the capital steadily unraveling at its seams right then.

Chapter End Notes

So this is a necessary filler chapter to set up the battle for King's Landing. And other minor plot details. Hopefully, its got its entertaining bits I suppose. Thank you all for reading!
A Preparation for Ice and Fire

Chapter Summary

As the last preparations to retake the Iron Throne are formulated, old faces emerge, unforeseen threats cause battle plans to be redrawn.

Chapter Notes

Well, this chapter did a 360-degree turn. Had the battle for King's Landing all written - still do- but my terrible habit for filler nagged at me to give an update chapter on Daenerys and introduce someone... long story short, filler pushed the battle and a Dany/Jon reunion back.

So before you all get into the chapter below, just wanted to say thank you to everyone for all the bookmarks, kudos and comments! They inspire me to keep writing, and they are all greatly appreciated, so without further ado, I present Chapter 18!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Wolf Fangs & Dragon Fire

Chapter Eighteen: A Preparation for Ice and Fire

The tall grass - yellowing as the days grew colder- rippled as a breeze swayed them, their wispy tips scratching along the black canvass of her tent, a slight howl from the wind washing over the encampment of her forces reminding her of her own wolf. Black curly hair, steely grey eyes and tidy black scruff covering his defined jaw. The White Wolf, Jon Snow. While she had witnessed the descent of Winter crawling its way south in her flight from Winterfell, it was finally becoming evident that the long summer years were drawing to an end over Westeros, as the light of day drew shorter every turn of the sun, and the once green vegetation of the south began to wither and the leaves of trees changed to shades of copper, orange and brown before falling from their branches.

Sitting upon a rickety folding chair, Daenerys looked earnestly to the map sprawled out in front of her on a simple wood planked table, the maps tattered edges curling up from having been kept rolled for so long, its dark ink, however, looked as fresh as if it were drawn just day prior, a tiny star marked King's Landing captivating her rapt attention. She wondered how many days it had been that she sat here, staring at this map, staring at the city her ancestor Aegon founded when he built his fort. Staring at the place Jon had gone to for her. There should have been news from him by now she thought, the only reason she could imagine his delay was that there was no weakened gate to be found or a more terrible thought, he was captured and rotting away in the dungeons of the Red Keep like Yara Greyjoy, and Ellaria Sand. She cringed at the image it provoked, his wrists bound by chain as Cersei the Mad Lioness tortured him.

Glassy-eyed, Daenerys turned away, preferring the sight of the white wool overcoat she had worn
north but now lay draped across the foot of her featherbed, at night, when the hustle of camp slowed, she had taken to clinging to it, nose buried into its soft fabric as it continued to carry the scent of her husband upon it from their close, intimate embraces. She blinked in a daze as she heard the flap of her tent pulled open and her Hand appeared inside, the thinned lip, Theon Greyjoy at his back, his hair shining with a glint, no doubt having gone unwashed for many days, the frail Iron Islander still as visibly broken as the day he returned from his sister's capture.

"My Lord's," Daenerys received them, she straightened her posture, ensuring the mask of strength she sought to portray slipped back on. "I take your presence here, Lord Theon, as to meaning the entirety of my force has been ferried from Dragonstone?"

"Dothraki and all their horse's" confirmed Theon quietly, his mouth fell open as if to say more, but the Ironborn digressed, taking a step back to the shadows.

"Have you more to add to this report, my Lord?" Pried Daenerys.

Theon looked to her, his face cloaked by shade, a silent plea for help showed in his eyes, yet his lips remained sealed, Tyrion she noticed shook his head sympathetically at the man.

"I am doubtful to think this is all you have come here to see me for," probed Daenerys, growing irritated by their silence.

"Astute as ever, my Queen," Tyrion supplied, his voice laced with a somberness that usually forwarned bad news to come. "We received a rider from the capital, he brought with him a parcel and message for you..."

Daenerys motioned for her Hand to continue when he paused and tossed an apologetic look to Theon. Her aspiring hope that it was a message from Jon went faint, their disheartened looks proceeded their bad news.

"I have with me the message for you to read," said Tyrion, drawing a thin sheet of parchment from within his black vest. He took a few steps to place it on the table, his gaze unable to meet her own. "I've kept the parcel outside your tent. It's an unsightly thing for, your Grace, to have to look upon."

"Unsightly?" Murmured Daenerys, reaching forward with a calculative glance to the Lannister dwarf, she retrieved the parchment from the table. Her eyes drifting across the written scrawl.

'To the Queen pretender,

You stand a foreign invader, your familial claim to the Seven Kingdom's nullified by, his late grace, King Robert of the House Baratheon who broke your brother at the Trident, and by mine own brother, Ser Jaime Lannister who killed your Mad Father. Have your savages lay down their arms, and I shall extend to you an invite to the capital in which you may bend the knee and beg for your life to be spared. Your savage horde and your no-cock slave army can sail back across the narrow from which they came.

Refuse my offer and I shall see every man, woman, and child under your banner meet the same fate as the gift I have sent you. These are the throne's terms for peace.

Signed,

Queen Cersei of the House Lannister, the First of Her Name, Queen of the Andals and the First Men, Protector of the Seven Kingdoms.'

Crumbling the message in her hand so tightly her nails dug into her palm and drew blood, Daenerys
looked to Tyrion with a fire burning in the violet pools of her eyes, her blood hot. "Show me the parcel."

"I advise you don-" began Tyrion.

"I advise you show me before I lose my restraint, my Lord," interjected Daenerys coldly.

Sighing, Tyrion brushed a hand along his bearded face. "... As you wish," he grumbled, shuffling to the entrance of the tent, he pulled back the flap and said a few hushed commands.

Not even a moment later, one of her helmed Unsullied enter the tent, in one of his caramel toned hand's he clasped a black sack out in front of himself, the bottom of which looked damp from whatever wet thing lay inside. Viewing the ominous sack with growing torment as she saw a few tufts of what looked to be dark hair poking out the sacks opening. Her heart sank to her stomach, a cold sweat gripping her as the Unsullied let the sack fall open, his other hand reaching in to pull out a head, pale flesh matted in coregulated blood, as painful as it was to admit, relief rushed through her when she found it to be the ghostly visage of Yara Greyjoy, and not her, Jon.

The wishful woman who sought to be the first Queen of the Iron Isles head hung from her soldiers hand like a prized fish caught in the open water, Yara's eyes frozen open, her mouth slightly agape as her tongue hanged out, a clean cut where her neck should have been. The sound of gagging brought her focus to Theon, the thinly framed man clutched a hand to his mouth.

"I've seen enough, put it away," ordered Daenerys quickly, her Unsullied obeying. "You have my sincerest condolences for the loss of your sister, Lord Theon. She was a strong woman, truly Ironborn."

Theon didn't reply, his anguish blanketing him from the reality around him. Without a formal request to leave, he fled her tent.

Turning on her Hand, Daenerys rose from her seat. "You've claimed to be a smart man, Lord Tyrion, yet I find it quite moronic for you to have brought the brother of a woman with you to see me as I viewed her severed head."

"When word of the messenger's arrival, I had hoped it was with word sent from my brother, who despite his love for our sister, I know he has the potential to recognize when a situation is dire, and my sister's situation is dire. Jaime must surely realize it."

"Yet this message was not of the Kingslayer, and my question proposed to you, you have provided an answer to no amiable defense of why you brought, Theon Greyjoy to endure further pain over his sister's loss," returned Daenerys.

Tyrion huffed. "I saw my sister's parcel, I saw Yara's head, naturally I sought out Theon Greyjoy. Above my devotion to you, I know the loss of a loved one. A mother I had never met, yet one I grieved for all the same just as you had your own mother. My nephew Tommen, his sister, Myrcella. Kind-hearted children. Decent children. I grieve for them too. Theon deserved to know his sister's passing first. He had expressed a desire to me for revenge, though as you saw, the poor sod couldn't bring himself to ask for your permission to participate in the capital's siege."

Drawing a large breath of air, she dug her fingers into the map atop her table. "As I understand the reasoning behind your decision, I still maintain Greyjoy should have been spared the news regarding the loss of his sister till a more peaceful time. The man has suffered. Rushing off into a battle or seeing his sister's head won't help him heal all the wounds he has."
"A peaceful time wouldn't have brought him peace," retorted Tyrion bitterly, remembering the awful night Jaime had set him free to escape and extract his own revenge, and the ensuing peace it brought him. "I know this from experience, my Queen. Only pain can bring peace, which is why peace follows war. The treating of words, negotiations if you will, they only bring pause to malice, it doesn't bring peace. It is regrettably spilled blood and only the spilling of blood, as much as I despise it that bring's a resolute conclusion to peace."

Anger ceasing towards her Hand, Daenerys felt her grip weaken over the sprawled map. "And from your experience as you speak to it so passionately, did you find your peace in the death of your father?"

Weary of his response, Tyrion nodded. Knowing full well that on that dark, fateful night he had committed the cold-blooded murder of his lover Shae and his father, he had found at last the peace he sought, less knowingly, he had to admit that in that rage-fueled night, it still served to give him night terrors in which he relived the moment he throttled the woman he swore he loved. Restless, sleepless nights. "... Aye, peace through vengeance."

Feeling assured, Daenerys felt purposeful once more. No longer would she wait on the sidelines, no longer would she wait daintily by for word from her husband as she had been resigned herself to doing. The throne was her's, the fight for it would be her's as well. The usurper's had destroyed her House's dynasty, she would have her vengeance for that, then she would have her peace. "Call my commander's. We march on King's Landing. I shall bring the peaceful outcome Theon seeks, I'll provide him his revenge. Yara Greyjoy shall not be forgotten to memory as Cersei Lannister's victim, she will be hailed a hero in the history pages yet to be scribed."

"What of your's and Lord Snow's plan?" Questioned Tyrion.

"King Snow," corrected Daenerys, awkwardly reminding herself of the time she had corrected Missandei of Jon's title on Dragonstone's beach. "I have come to the determination that mayhaps the gates are heavily fortified and he can not secure one. He and his company may be trapped in the city, if that is the circumstances, Jon will no doubt take comfort when we arrive."

"You believe him to be alive then," noted Tyrion slowly.

"I know him to be alive," said Daenerys surely. She had let her mind roam to wild regarding Jon's well being as of late. For now, she reaffirmed her resolve for Jon's safety.

"Very well, my Queen," relented Tyrion, obviously not sharing her wishful resolve. "If I may take my leave to summon your commander's then?"

Daenerys eyed the dark canvass that engulfed her, the same layer that shrouded her from the lessening sun's light. "I will summon mine own commander's," she countered, rotating about her table to be at Tyrion's side. "Shall we?"

"We shall, my Queen," replied Tyrion, leading the fair silver-haired beauty from the tent.

"And done," exclaimed Gendry, his calloused hands pulling the last binding strap of Jon's crimson breastplate to a firm fit around his abdomen. "Wear the helm, and your as much a Lannister man if I ever saw one."

"How do they expect to fight in this," grumbled Jon in frustration, he took a few steps with an awkward swagger, trying to get used to the restrained mobility. His only comfort coming from the sight of his House men clad in the same decor, just as irritated to be in the uncooperative armour as
he was. "It's stiff, barely room to breathe."

"Of course it's stiff to you, I saw your father's gambeson when he came to visit me during my father's reign, steel plate armour is not the same he or you wore in the north," countered Gendry, saddened with the memory of Eddard Stark who had been kind. "You should walk in it, spend a few paces to learn the armour, learn the limitations of your movements in it. Swing a sword even, you'll only get used to it if you try."

Jon almost seethed between clenched teeth as he stomped forward in the stoic armour gifted to him. The frustration that burned in him only growing, by the protective suits movement restrictions, and Arya's sudden disappearance. "There's no way I'll be able to fight with all this on," he snapped at last. "Come here and get this shit off me."

"Oh no, you can't give up that easy, give it a bit more time. Grab a blade off the wall, we'll do some sparring," suggested Gendry, the blacksmith strode over to table and grabbed onto a shield bearing the golden Lion of House Lannister, lifting and lowering it a few times as he familiarized himself with its weight on his forearm. "Don't you dare hold back on me either, you won't get accustomed to fighting in it if you don't really try to move in it."

Jon muttered a few swears as he stalked to the far wall of Gendry's shop, his eyes grazing over the forged steel that lined the surface like intricate pieces of art. His focus resting on a bastard sword that was near uncanny to the makeup of Longclaw. Retrieving it from its mount, he did a few gentle swipes of the sword through the air, as predicted the cumbersome gauntlet and spaulder that halted any fast motioned swings came off sluggish. "Gods, we show up at the gate and swing as slow as this, we're dead."

"That shouldn't be a problem for you," noted Gendry, joining Jon near the back wall to fetch a sword of his own.

Jon looked to the blacksmith with narrowed eyes. "Why do you say that?"

Gendry shrugged, a smirk tugging at his lips. "You've been here for days, just like my reveal of my father, your men were bound to talk about you at some point."

"You shouldn't believe everything you hear," replied Jon, he was always told he was Ned Stark's bastard, believed it every time he heard it, so much for the truth in that.

"So it's not true then?" Questioned Gendry, walking pass Jon to a small clearing on the shop floor.

Not bothering to indulge the other man with an answer, Jon went to meet him in the clearing, his sword raised out in front of him, ready to spar.

Gendry snorted, he squared off with his shield held out. "I take it when they say you're wed to Daenerys Targaryen, that's all a lie too, huh?"

Jon shook his head. "Do you plan to spar or just keep runnin' your mouth?"

"Just trying to get to know the man I might end up dying for," said Gendry nonchalantly, he stepped forward with a low swing that Jon blocked with ease, the sound of clashing steel ringing out.

Readjusting his stance, Jon shifted with a backhanded slash to Gendry's shield, the blacksmith throwing the attack off before countering with an overhanded swipe down at Jon. The former Night's Watchman sidestepping it at stumble, the former grace he held when sparring with a sword was amiss with the armour that left his balance unstable.
Grinning with two rows of white teeth, Gendry pressed his attack, a wide swing meant for Jon's shoulder nearly made contact if it weren't for his hasty block, the two swords and their sharpened edges rubbing together as Gendry tried to force his opponent's blade aside.

Jon gritted his teeth as he brought two hands on the hilt of his sword, holding back the brute strength behind Gendry's sword. "Thought you preferred a Warhammer?"

" Doesn't mean I don't know my way around a sword," returned Gendry, he broke from the engagement and put a few feet between them, a few beads of sweat dripping down his brow.

Straightening up, Jon slashed the sword through the air, still adjusting to the unfamiliar steel, as strong as it was and as similar as it was to the Valyrian blade given to him by, Jeor Mormont, this new blade was far from Longclaw as a bow was to a sword.

"You tired already, King Snow?" Taunted Gendry, giving the man across from him a wink.

"Just shakin' off the rust, been some time," returned Jon, he studied the brawny man across from him closely, his footwork noticeably his weakest attribute, he didn't move when striking or defending, something he knew he could exploit when they clashed again. "Seein' as you've asked your questions of me, how about one for you? How come you've not asked where Arya's gone, given you two havin' been close at one point?"

The mirth in Gendry slipped away, his head cocking to one side, a look of curiosity coming in to place. "Easy. Its because I saw how resourceful you sister can be first hand, if she's gone somewhere, then it's for good reason. She can handle herself... I mean, didn't she ever tell you that it was her who lead our escape from the Mountain and his men at Harrenhal?"

"... I wasn't aware she was even caught," Jon said slowly, wondering what else his young sister had chosen to not tell him about since parting ways at Winterfell all those years ago.

"Then you've got a lot to learn about her, ask her about Harrenhal when she returns, your sister's got a bigger set of stones than most men I've ever met," Gendry divulged, he took a few steps toward Jon, his brows slanted down. "Care to continue?"

"Did we even start?" Prompted Jon, he lunged forward with a quick strike at Gendry's shield, following it up with an overhanded slash the young blacksmith struggled to parry.

Looking to make room between them once again, Gendry yelped as Jon stomped down on his foot, catching him midstep back and forcing him to tumble over, the force of which forced the breath from his lungs with a gasp. His eyes fluttering open to find the tip of Jon's snow leveled down at his throat. "Mercy?"

Chuckling, Jon withdrew his sword, sliding it into the sheath at his waist before offering Gendry an open hand. "You did good, a bit slow on the feet, but you did good."

Letting his sword lay discarded at his side, Gendry accepted the helping hand to his feet. "I didn't count on a Northerner resorting to cheating, what's that they say, something about Northmen having honour?"

"You serve in the Night's Watch for a few of your namedays, an honourable fight isn't so black and white," defended Jon, releasing Gendry's hand when stood. "If your enemy will throw dirt in your eyes to gain an upper hand in battle, you best be ready to throw some back."

"Throw dirt? Gods, you sound as if you were born in Fleabottom," joked Gendry, bending down to grab his sword.
Jon sighed as he looked away to the dark street of steel, even with the flimsy iron gate that served as the shops door was drawn shut, he could still see between the crossing bars of thin iron to a street that could have very well been one he walked down often if his true father lived, if Rhaegar sat the throne and raised him as his bastard. King’s Landing and the Red Keep would have been home then, not Winterfell. He quickly turned back to Gendry and his bemused expression.

“You alright there, you drifted off,” noted Gendry.

“I'm fine, just got taken by my mind elsewhere is all,” answered Jon gruffly, barely knowing Robert Baratheon's bastard, he didn't trust to tell him the nagging thoughts that entered his mind from a random glance.

"If you were thinking of Arya.." the sentence lingered on Gendry's tongue, the man deciding wisely to stop at the King's brooding stare.

"I wasn't, as you said, Arya will be fine. No point talkin' about it when it won't do her any good. With Davos gone to give word, we best go over the plan once more, we'll only have the one chance at it so we better not fuck it up,” said Jon, changing the subject, he turned to his house men along the side of the shop, all of them squatting in a half circle as they passed a skin of some southern wine they had purchased amongst themselves. "Quit the drinkin’ and rally up!"

"Aye, coming, your Grace," called a thin man back, he slapped a few of his comrades on the back before they shuffled into the shop clearing, one of the six taking a seat on Gendry's anvil while the others chose to stand, all of them like Jon wearing the Lannister armour, all of them looking expectantly to the King in the North.

"It could be any day now the Queen and her armies will show outside the city walls, I want to run through our strategy one more time, mistakes can't be made, we only have one shot at this," announced Jon. "Edward. Take us from the beginnin'."

The thin man stepped forward, his long face as serious as Jon's own. "Aye, your Grace. As it goes, when the Dragon Queen turns up, we make our way to the Old Gate, the only gate with the least amount of Lannister cunts guarding it."

A few of the other Northmen laughed, yet Jon's glare had them sobering up in haste, the dark-haired King stepping toward a stout man with a raggedy beard that hung down over his chest plate, his forest green eyes diverting to look elsewhere.

"What is it we do once we reach the gate, Harlon?" questioned Jon.

Clearing his throat with a cough to his shoulder, the stout, Harlon, stood straighter under the gaze of Jon. "We inform the Lannister's on guard that we were sent by the Kingslayer to relieve them, and they are to take up guard elsewhere along the city wall."

"Good, remember, it's Ser Jaime, not the Kingslayer," returned Jon, he gave a pat of confidence to the man's arm, before swiveling back to where Gendry was. "Your turn, what happens after we take their position at the gate?"

"We look the part and hold the gate, we open it when the Queen's army is close enough, and we continue to hold the gate until they've entered the city," supplied Gendry.

Jon nodded, his hand going to rest on the pommel of his sword. "That's it then, we keep to that, and we might just make it back North."

"To the North!" chanted the Northmen, some of them raising up their hand’s in clenched fists to the
cheer, most of them grinning, eager to finally be done with mundane waiting for a battle that never seemed to come.

Raising his own fist, Jon looked to Gendry again, the burly blacksmith giving him a subtle nod. Both men knowing the confidence Jon showed was a show itself, the task in front of them an ominous obstacle that stood in the way of searching for the youngest lady of House Stark.

Together they barely made it fifteen paces from her quarters before they were met with Varys', plump bald form gracing them as he spoke to a man with a tall, slender, broad-shouldered frame, that same frame encompassed by a battle-hardened leather from a dusty foreign land. One that Daenerys knew to be across the narrow.

"Ah, Varys, I did not think to expect you, old friend, welcome to the fray of camp life!" greeted Tyrion loudly, obviously jovial to be free from her sullen company she suspected.

"My Lord," returned Varys calmly, he swept to a bow in acknowledgment of Daenerys presence. "Your Grace."

The trampled grounds of her Dothraki's hooves seemed extraordinarily flat for the camp that seemed to breathe life to the union of Varys and Tyrion, the two men exchanging pleasantries without regard. Left in the wake, the tall man of Essosi leather and flowing hair from behind half turned. His eyes resting on her with a look of famished longing, a look that hungered for her. A look that was her entirely Daario Naharris own.

"My Queen," welcomed Daario, he shifted to meet her astounded gaze full on, while left genuinely surprised as him being here, Daenerys was drawn to the gold, naked woman that made the handle of his dagger, gleaming from his belt, confirming it truly was him.

"Daario," she breathed in reply. Tyrion, Varys and her immediate surroundings fading away when the sight of the man she had bedded more than once in Essos emerged, a man she had ordered to watch Meereen in her advance for her birthright. Still as handsome as the day he infiltrated her camp all those years ago.

"You're more beautiful than I last remember, if that's at all possible," complimented Daario smoothly, taking a few steps to her, he had lowered himself to a knee and took her unsuspecting hand into his own, bringing it to his lips he placed a tender kiss, his unruly stubble tickling her skin.

Staring down at him, Daenerys watched as his lips hovered over her hand, her heart beginning to beat a pace or two quicker than it should. Pulling her hand from him, she took a disoriented step away from her past lover, his eyes continuing to look at her with that same, unabiding hunger of lust. "I left you charge of the Bay of Dragon's, did I not?"

"You did," confirmed Daario, rising to his feet, her neck craned to peer up at him.

"And yet, here you stand before me in complete disregard in my command of you," Daenerys scolded, her voice wobbling with the forthcoming of emotions that were brought on by seeing his chiselled jaw specked with dark stubble, and a toned body hidden beneath rugged armour.

Daario ducked his head. "My reason for being here should be for your ears, mayhaps there is somewhere we might speak in private?"

Stifled in her reply, Daenerys became troubled with the thought of being alone with him. Her and Jon's wedding night a memory of her last, true night of passion, one so long ago it served a reminder for her to be wary of being alone with the sellsword who lead the Second Sons. "There shan't be
need of privacy, you shall tell me why you disobeyed my orders here and now."

Offset with her choice to remain in public eye of her onlooking council members and the men of her army passing by, Daario nodded. "As you command... I had learned in Meereen that the foe who holds the throne you seek secured a contract with the Golden Company. I had also learned a large fleet of Westerosi ships had come to provide them transport from the shores of Essos."

Looking to Varys who stood at Tyrion's side, Daenerys grew disgruntled when her Master of Whisperer's nodded in acceptance of Daario's information. "How is it that I was not informed of this?"

"I had only become privy to this information when your sellsword turned up on the steps of Dragonstone, your Grace, we set sail aboard his vessel at once to come tell you," answered Varys, he shifted on his feet. "Since having been back on the mainland, I have received whisper of the Golden Company having landed near Maidenpool, no doubt hopeful to attack from the rear when you lay siege to the capital."

Daenerys felt her face flush red, her risen anger leaving her shaking where she stood. "What is there to do, can we persuade these sellswords to our cause?"

"The Golden Company has never broken a contract," provided Daario, taking a step her side she could feel his warm breath bearing down on her. "When they accept a contract, they see it through to the bloody end, which is how they've earned the motto 'our word is good as gold.'"

"Your Essosi sellsword is quite right, my Queen, the Golden Company won't be deterred by what we can offer them, especially with so few coin in our coffers," added Tyrion, pacing to be closer, he eyed the close proximity of Daario to her. "If we are to take the capital, we will need to break these mercenaries before we march on King's Landing lest we fall directly into the trap my sister hoped to spring on us."

"Break the mercenaries first? Need I remind you, Lord Tyrion that we have men inside the capital that won't stop with the plan as it is, simply because we choose to do so," defended Daenerys, she saw Tyrion's gaze and took a much-needed step away from Daario. "We have no other option but to split our force. I shall take my Khalasar, and Drogon and deliver a similar fate to the Golden Company that I delivered your brother and the Tarly's on the Goldroad. Meanwhile, the Unsullied will march south as planned and lay siege to the capital until such a time that we can rejoin them."

"As fearless as you are to see this plan through, I must protest putting yourself in the way of such immediate harm, especially when we have come this far and this close to seeing you on the throne, my Queen," Tyrion objected. "We should convene a small council to discuss what alternative plans we can pursue."

"My mind has been made, we shall proceed as I've ordered," growled Daenerys, she whirled back around to Daario just to find him closer than before, the startle it provoked had her bracing herself against his solid chest, fingers spread out on the rough leather that guarded him.

Lips twitching with a smile, Daario hastily placed a hand over her own, keeping her touch against him. "My Queen?"

Swallowing. Hard. Daenerys tugged her hands out from beneath his own, praying none of them could see her reddened cheeks in the dark of night. "Did you bring any other Sons with you to Westeros?"

"Thirty, I've left the rest in the Bay of Dragon's to maintain your peace there," answered Daario,
disappointed when she pulled away. "If you give me leave, I'll take my thirty Sons to where the Golden Company lay camp, and I'll bring you back their commander's heads."

"That won't be necessary," cut-in Daenerys hastily, the image of Yara Greyjoy's head was still to recent a memory to think of her enemies being brought to her in the same fashion. Peering once more up at Daario, she suddenly felt parched, a need to distance him from her became an urgent need. "While you are here, you will accompany the Unsullied South," she instructed, rotating to Varys. "Lord Varys, mayhaps you can assist Daario in locating Grey Worm."

Varys gave a slight bow, and for his plush size, the spider moved gracefully to Daario. The two men walking away together, although the Second Son wasn't sneaking in the looks he chanced back at Daenerys from over his shoulder, neither was the look in his eyes, his want for her growing more evident the longer he stayed near her.

"You can race off to battle within the time it takes one to snap their fingers, however, the unknowing turn up of one Daario Naharis and you become flustered," commented Tyrion lightly. "Strange how a woman's heart betrays her so noticeably."

"Betrays me?" questioned Daenerys at once.

"I meant no offence, it's just being a man that has frequented many brothels, I have become quite learned when it comes to reading the desire of women, my opinion of love has changed with the many heartbreaks I've suffered, but my ability to read desire remains the same, that said, as your Hand, I find it my duty to remind you that your husband, King Snow, as you had so sternly corrected me, is currently within the capital to fight for your claim," provided Tyrion, his voice laced with trepidation.

"I take it, in your confuddled twist of words, you are implying I intend to bed, Daario," presumed Daenerys stiffly.

"You share a history," defended Tyrion.

"You should be preoccupied by matters of greater concern, being that we are not in lack of them," snapped Daenerys, pleased to see Tyrion look down to avoid her. "Now, Sheep Rider, if you've managed to gain the respect of my, Khalasar as you planned to have done, have them muster. I will ready, Drogon for battle."

"We may want to delay that," advised Tyrion, giving a suggestive look to something behind her.

Grudgingly, Daenerys turned, hoping with all her might that it wasn't Xaro Xhoan Daxos somehow having escaped his vault alive. A relief in her came at the sight of Davos Seaworth, the aged smuggler caught between the grip of two Unsullied who had taken to restraining him. Lifting a hand to still them, she approached with an apologetic expression.

"I thank you, your Grace," said Davos after she spoke to her men in a language he couldn't comprehend, their hold over him quick to let go. "I sspose I'm not as recognizable after all this time."

"They brought you no harm I trust," beckoned Daenerys sincerely.

Rubbing his shoulders, Davos let his eyes look about the pitched tents around them. "Nothing I can't walk off."

"While I am pleased to hear it, I hope you've come bearing good news, the last messenger we recieved from King's Landing wasn't," said Daenerys softly, she came closer to Davos, eying him closely for any sign of worry.
"The last messenger?" Davos inquired, a bushy brow raising.

"Something to be discussed at a later time, my good Ser," cut-in Tyrion, knowing her well enough to keep the conversation in line. "We take it you bring word from the King?"

"Ah, yes, my pardons," returned Davos, he turned to her with a straight face. "His grace has bid me here to inform you that they are prepared to seize the Old Gate when your forces arrive."

Even with the new threat of mercenaries, and the loss of Yara Greyjoy, Daenerys rejoiced inwardly at knowing Jon wasn't brooding, at the very least, still alive. "Thank you for braving the hostile landscape to deliver this to us, Ser Davos. I am in your debt."

"I merely do what my King commands of me, your majesty," deflected Davos bashfully.

"It appears some of Snow's humbleness is beginning to rub off on you, Seaworth," commented Tyrion in a jest.

"Is being humble a fault now?" Questioned Daenerys, her Hand quick to shake his head, the mound of dirty golden locks upon his scalp swishing.

"It was meant to be a compliment, I should think," countered Tyrion smiling.

"I should think it would be of paramount importance that this information gets to Grey Worm before he and the Unsullied set-off, don't you, Lord Hand?" suggested Daenerys, hopeful to speak with Davos alone.

Tyrion agreed, his reply a garbled mumble of having to muster her Dothraki as well before hurrying off, the man nearly colliding with a few of her said Dothraki in his hasty departure, they're tall stature making them ignorant to the affairs below them. Daenerys though kept Davos in her sights, the older man oblivious to the intensity of her stare.

"What of, Jon? Pray tell he is well," inquired Daenerys softly.

"King Jon's healthy, still strong and able, he and his men hold high spirits," answered Davos, yet his face scrunched, showing it wasn't a whole truth.

"You've more to say, if so, please do, Ser Davos," she encouraged, why is it when someone came to inform her of something, they always hesitated with bad parts, did they fear her?

Davos clasped the bag of finger bones around his neck, a sigh passing his parted lips. "There is, your Grace. The King's sister had run off... Her whereabouts last I heard were unknown, naturally the King's worried, even though he's refused to say as much."

Daenerys frowned, the Golden Company, Yara's death, the siege of the capital, and now, Jon's rash ability to put himself in the thick of unnecessary danger. Oh how she longed to be back in simpler times, the House in Braavos with its red door and homely comforts coming to remembrance. Maintaining a straight face, she stood as tall as her petite height would allow and gave Davos a
thankful squeeze to his stubbed hand. "While I am pleased to have been in your company again, I must be leaving. Please feel free to eat a meal and find somewhere to rest while in camp. My Unsullied are to march on the capital if you have wish to join them."

Davos squinted. "Forgive me, your Grace, but you won't be accompanying them?"

Daenerys' straight face morphed to a hardened one, strict and purposeful, a look that gave Davos stipple of chicken skin. "I will join them as when I can, first I have a golden motto to break."

"Motto... Motto? What motto?" Grumbled Davos, he shook the confusion away only to find the Queen of Dragon's trailing away from him, a few Unsullied following after her. Leaving him clueless, mouth agape like a floundering fish.

Chapter End Notes

Is there a hurray for Daario? lol, if not, don't worry, this won't divulge into a Daario/Dany fic. Or will it? It won't. I'm just kidding.

Thank you, everyone, for reading and giving the story a chance, there's finally a battle coming up, and then perhaps some bonding time... or mourning time depending on who makes it through the bloodshed. Beware, next two chaps will feature character death.

Anywho, thank you to all those who gave this a shot, leave some feedback and take care!
A Clash of Queens

Chapter Summary

The struggle for who is to be the rightful ruler of the Seven Kingdom's comes to task. Blood is spilled as lives are lost.

Chapter Notes

Well, one thing I have learned from this chapter is not to say in advance it will be out soon. I wrote this in segments which caused me troubles later on with having to tie it all in together. That said, this chapter switches from different character locations multiple times, so as hard as I tried to keep a timeline together that makes sense, you will just have to bear to the end notes where I will clarify my interpretation if you end up confused, my apologies.

Second thing I learned, past chapter mention, do not introduce Daario lol! For those I triggered, I'm sorry, but I had to add him. Him and Dany will not be an item in this, I swear, that said, his involvement in the story was required for reasons I can not yet disclose... Mostly to ruffle shit up, but primarily to give Dany a heads up on the Golden Company. I know, I'm a terrible person, if it helps, I still love you all.

Finally, I am so grateful to everyone who took the time to leave a kudos, and bookmarked the chapter. As for those who commented, I truly, truly, appreciate you all, there are still some I hope to reply to here soon, but this chapter delayed me on it, so expect responses soon! All your support keeps me dedicated :)

Alright, without further ado, I present to you Chapter 19!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Wolf Fangs & Dragon Fire

Chapter Nineteen: A Clash of Queens

Fire and Blood. House words that could never have been truer than in that moment that Daenerys circled overhead the smoldering battlefield below her, great plumes of smoke rising from the scorched earth. The land tainted with an infinite stream of red blood, she inhaled sharply as a war elephant lead a charge of cavalry against her Dothraki, men knocked from their horse as the mercenary's cut through. Arrows blotting out the field as they whizzed by just feet beneath Drogon's wings, the Golden Company and her Dothraki exchanging projectiles in the hopes of turning the fate of battle to their side, the Golden Company may have been founded by a bastard of her family's line long ago, that didn't mean they would fair well against a true dragon of House Targaryen.

Pulling on Drogon's black horns, Daenerys steered the massive black dragon down in a steep dive,
squinting as the wind whipped against her face and the air swirled around her ears, through all the
disorientation she could still make out the golden banners of the sellsword calvary. "Dracarys!"

Jaws opening, a spark ignited a burst of flame that spewed down on the men below, their anguished
screams emitted at such a volume, Daenerys didn't think a person was capable of feeling such pain.
She watched as their charge broke, the war elephant keeling over as its thick flesh slipped from its
bones aflame, men of the Company scattering in every which direction only to have her Dothraki
ride them down, their arakh's swinging down to receive a mist of bloody red in return. Around her
she caught a glimpse of Viserion's cream scaled body soaring over a formation of sellsword foot
infantry, the dragon unleashing a stream of fire that scattered them.

Pulling back on Drogon's horns, Daenerys felt the adrenaline course her veins as a wayward arrow
arched over her head, several more rebounding off the black scales that coated her son's underbelly.
Ascending the open sky, Daenerys leaned over again to take in the landscape below, barely through
the smog that caked the field she spotted the remnant forces of the Golden Company attempting to
reform their lines, a wall of shields supported by spearmen holding their weapons up and over the
heads of the shieldmen in front, a formation she knew could cause devastating casualties to her
Khalasar should they try to charge it head on.

Sucking in a breath of cold air, Daenerys drove Drogon down in a dive, her son letting out a roar that
sent a tremor of fear through her enemy, his black mass bearing down on them like an omen of
death. Flying down quicker, and quicker she pulled into a passing glide over the shield wall, a
whispered command, a glow of orange light, and the cries of burned men let her know victory was
on the brink. Maintaining her low glide, she drew Drogon down to a clearing of spoiled grass, her
son immediately starting to tear into a few crisp horse carcasses that littered the ground at its clawed
feet, the charred meat flaking off in clumps as his razor teeth tore in. Climbing down his crooked
wing, Daenerys stepped down to view the current state of affairs first hand from the ground.
Deadmen lay in heaps as far as the eye could see, the air thick with the metallic smell of blood, the
pungent stench the dead having shit themselves, and the musk of smoke, but above all else that she
took in, she heard her Khalasar's battle cry ring out, one she had heard many times before, a victory
cry.

Peering to her right at the sound of thumping hooves, Daenerys observed Tyrion ride up on his pony,
four Dothraki following behind him on their destrier's. Trodding to a stop, Daenerys waited for her
Hand to dismount and join her.

"The day is yours, the battle is won, my Queen," announced Tyrion, his tone flat and void of
happiness, his eyes drawn to the sky where Viserion and Rhaegal continued to fly, sweeping
gracefully about in long drawn out glides. "The Dothraki are rounding up any survivors."

"And the wounded?" Questioned Daenerys.

"Our dear horseslord's were finishing them off until I commanded them to stop in your name,"
Tyrion supplied, pausing briefly to exhale a heated breath. "Some of the sellswords are so disfigured
they beg for death, some have the armour melted to their flesh..."

Daenerys chose to look away from him, unable to meet the eyes of the man who had once scorned
her for the fate she delivered to the Tarly's. "How many did we capture?"

"An estimate suggests close to fifteen hundred, how many more are wounded is anyone's guess,"
replied Tyrion. "I'll order a head count be conducted."

"Are there Silent sister's tending to the injured?" Asked Daenerys.
"They've come from Maidenpool, but not near enough of them to treat all the wounded," divulged Tyrion. "Most of the wounded will suffer in agony, most will die."

Daenerys sighed, turning to look back once more over the burning plains, the stench that wafted in her direction was fowl enough to cause any man to gag, but she stood firm, the flames that raged was by her doing, the excruciating deaths her enemies suffered came by her son's doing. How could she deliver such agony knowingly and not bear to face it?

"Send riders out to all the nearest keeps and settlements, request them for Maester's, Silent-sister's... Anyone who can tend to the injured," she ordered, turning in stride back to Drogon, the dragon's gnawing on a piece of horseflesh stuck in between its giant teeth. "I shall be leaving now. You have command, Lord Hand. The first chance the situation here is under control, reform the Khalasar and make way for the capital."

Tyrion blanched, stumbling a few feet to be at her side. "You intend to join the siege? What will you do there, burn the entire city?"

Daenerys looked down at him, a brow cocked at his worried questioning of her. "I only intend to intimidate the cities defenders. Let them see, my dragon's first hand. Mayhaps his presence alone will be enough to convince them to desist with the defence of your sister."

"And if they don't?" Asked Tyrion wearily.

"I don't plan to throw the lives of my Unsullied away needlessly, men who have pledged allegiance to me and served with devotion for years, what are Lannister men to me?" Countered Daenerys, she didn't wait for his reply, setting off for Drogon, who by nature had already bent down for her to climb his crooked wing.

"Your reign will be a legacy of blood if you lay fire to that city!" Called Tyrion, chasing after her.

"My House words, Lord Hand," returned Daenerys, settling into her seat along the black scales and spikes of Drogon's spine. "Fire and Blood! If they refuse to surrender my throne, they shall have both, and plenty of it."

Tyrion gaped as Drogon raised his wings, the force of wind that hurled at him when they came swinging down had Tyrion stumbling back till he sat on his rear, watching dumbfounded as the giant creature soared up in the sky, joining the hovering forms of his brothers before flying in synchronization, their plotted course, south.

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When the first horn rang out over the capital, neither Jon nor his company paid it any mind, but the succession of blowing horns and chiming bells ringing out as an alarm after it jolted Jon and his company into action. The Northmen and Gendry hurried to equip the Lannister armour, straps pulled through buckles in haste, visored helms thrown on. No words were spoken between them, they had the plan memorized down precisely to the point, Jon was certain he could count the exact steps needed to travel from Gendry's shop to the city's Old Gate.

Caught in his own flurry of thoughts as he buckled his sword belt around his waist, Jon nearly missed the Warhammer Gendry carried, motifs of a stag's antlers intertwined throughout its long shaft. "Gendry!"

The burly blacksmith adorning the crimson armour turned to Jon with a look of bemused question. "Your Grace?"

"Leave the hammer," ordered Jon gruffly, squeezing past two of his men, he strode to where Gendry
stood in a state of confusion.

"Leave it?" Mumbled Gendry, his gaze flickering down to the robust weapon of war held in his grasp.

"Leave it," confirmed Jon, he reached out and laid a hand on the shaft. "That thing shouts Baratheon. You go to the gate with that in hand you won't be lookin' quite the Lion, now will you?"

Huffing, Gendry nodded, his grip on the Warhammer loosening for Jon to take, both of them breaking out into a fit of laughter as it dropped to the floor when he took sole hold of it, Jon being unprepared for the unexpected weight, and Gendry knowing the Northman had never swung a Warhammer in his life.

"I can't believe you actually swing that thing," muttered Jon, crouching down to pick the heavy weapon up.

"Told you I practiced every day with it," said Gendry, walking to a sheathed sword and belt cast aside on a table, he eyed it warily before fastening it around his waist.

"I figured the arms came from smithin', not luggin' this boulder about," muttered Jon, he placed the Warhammer down atop the table once stocked with swords.

"Your Grace, we're prepared to move," called Harlon, and for a split second, Jon barely recognized the man who had taken to shaving off his scraggly beard.

"Right," Jon said after he recovered, he looked to Gendry and gave him a nod. "Side by side, wolf and stag?"

"Wolf and stag," repeated Gendry, cracking a grin.

Taking a settling breath, Jon moved to the front of the group, leading them from Gendry's shop he was stricken as the other blacksmith's along the street looked panicked as they barricaded the front of the stores, wary of would be looters who hoped to take advantage of Daenerys siege. Citizens ran the streetway, women and men alike carrying their children as they sought safety, through the frenzy Jon and his men moved, their armour granting them quick passage as they crowd split in two as they traversed their way to the Old Gate. Through winding alleyway and down, a series of short stairs they finally came to the city wall, panting heavily beneath the armour, Jon eyed the gate where four Lannister men-at-arms stood guard, all of whom looked to be conversing, their fear evident as they shivered in their boots.

"Edward," Jon called, feeling a man step to his side, helm hiding his face from view. "Relieve the gate guard of their watch."

"Where are you off to?" Questioned Harlon, the man looking to follow.

Jon looked to the staircase that lined the city wall, the archers scattered about the battlement knotting their bows with arrows and unleashing them down on the enemy outside. "I'm just goin' to take a look, I'll be back with you all in a moment. Seize the gate."

Harlon grumbled before waving at the others to follow him.

Observing as the troupe headed toward the locked gate, Jon set off for the stairs, climbing them two steps at a time, he rushed forward to look over the wall. His heart sank at the sight of Unsullied. No Dothraki, No Mother of Dragon's. Had the plan changed? Did Davos get the message to her?
Shaking himself from his mind, Jon looked to the Unsullied carrying a series of ladders toward the wall, many falling midstride as Lannister arrows found their mark in black leather armour. Yet, as the archers focused on the ladders, Jon noted a contingent of Unsullied, shields held overhead to guard them from the onslaught above, steadily making their way to the Old Gate, he almost smiled at the sight. Davos. You made it.

Sucking in a breath, Jon watched and waited as the contingent drew closer, his gaze drawn to his left as he heard men shouting to prepare themselves for repulsing an attack on the gate. Half turning, he looked to where a few men of the City Watch prepared to dump cauldron's of boiling tar, hot steam rising out from the thick, black liquid that bubbled and burst. Torn between descending the wall to assist his men in opening the gate, and acting to stop the Unsullied below from facing a gruesome death, he strode forward, knowing the option he need take, his hand reaching for the sheathed sword bearing the head of a bronze lion for its pommel at his hip, it took only one pull for the steel to come free from its holster.

He felt a coward when one of the City Watchmen looked to him with trust in his forest green eyes, not knowing a moment later Jon would swing at him, a clean cut opening the man's throat to a fountain of blood. The others, three in total barely had time to reach for their own swords before he was on them, a lunge forward broke a Watchman's chainmail and pierced his gut, when Jon had tugged his sword free, the man toppled over, tripping one of his companions who had looked to escape. Holding no compassion, just raw fury, he swung down, then again, and again, a red mist speckled him as he hacked and slashed, anger taking control of his every movement then, he saw red and nothing else till an arrow swished just to the right of him. In the absence of thought, he regarded the bodies at his feet, then disregarding them entirely as he kicked the cauldrons of boiling oil over, the tempered liquid spilling out into a pool over the stone floor.

Regaining his senses, he watched as few Lannister archers knotted their bows up ahead, the space between them to great for him to close before they released, turning on a pivot of his heels, he fled, wincing slightly as he heard an arrow ricochet off the back of his helm with a clank that echoed in his ears, he could make out the calls after him to be stopped, but he put his shoulder forward, pushing pass any who tried.

Reaching the stairs, he clambered down, listening to the frantic footsteps of men behind him, pursuing him toward the gate. Heaving laboured breaths, Jon took little comfort when he round the bare corner to the Old Gate to Gendry and his men.

"Open the gate," he shouted, turning to face a few Lannister’s that came barreling into the gateway after him, his sword hand strong but nimble as he tangoed with their blades, parrying their strikes with ease, his feet dancing beneath him as he evaded the lucky slashes he failed to block.

The sound of creaking wood behind him sounded off before he saw the flood of daylight illuminate the dark space of the arched gateway, a string of foreign voices that made a battle cry filled the entry as helmed Unsullied rushed the threshold, the Lannister soldier he had been engaging with unleashed blood-curdlingng scream as he was swept away by a wall of spears. Standing idle for a moment to the side, Jon stumbled till his back became hardpressed against a wall, his hand reaching up to remove the Lannister helm, his black locks damp with sweat fell over his face. They did it, the Unsullied breached the city, it was done, over at last.

"King Jon!?" Yelled a voice, and Jon snapped back to the present, registering the face in front of him through the veil of his black hair.

"Gendry?" He mumbled.

"What now, what do we do now?" Questioned Gendry, his helm off, face splattered with what Jon
could only assume was another man's blood.

Now? he thought, his mind grasping then that the battle still waged on despite the Unsullied having entered the city.

"Your Grace?" Asked Gendry again, his brows furrowed.

Jon blinked a few times, the world around him coming back into clarity. Immediately he reached for the buckle under his arm that held the Lannister chestplate to his body.

"What are you doing, that's your armour," pointed out Gendry confused.

"Take it off, take it all off," he ordered tiredly. "The Unsullied recognize us now, but it won't be long till we run into some that don't. Take the armour off before you get stuck with a spear thinkin' you're the enemy."

Nodding fervently, Gendry reached out and helped Jon out of the crimson armour, the assortment of steel plate protection falling in a discarded heap at their feet. The weight of the cumbersome protection off his body was a welcome feeling, the padded undergarment beneath the armour felt as close to his gambeson he could think of. Taking a moment to gather his wits before carrying on in the company of Gendry and the few Northmen he had with him, the King in the North sighed as the street ahead swarmed with Lannister men quick to meet the invading Unsullied.

Looking to his men, Jon gave them a nod. "On me," he called, rushing forward to join the fray.

The throne room stirred with distressed life, the wives of annointed knight's hunkered by the columns, just the armed Ser Gregor and Ser Illyn standing watch over her and the frightful women. To Cersei there would have been time like the Battle of Blackwater where she waited with them in Maidenvault, frightened for what fate await her as well. But she was Queen now, regal in her figure as she sat perched on the cold steel of conquered swords that made up Aegon's throne. The Iron Throne, the seat of power over Westeros. Her throne. She eyed the back of Ser Gregor at the base of the steps, his towering height and muscled frame, the personification of her might, she flirted with the idea of releasing him out onto the field of battle where hsi greatsword could butcher the dragon bitches army, an army at this point was being trampled under the foot of the Golden Company's elephants, the image made her smirk as she took a pull from her goblet of wine.

She took comfort in her position, the sanctuary of safety she felt, far from the woes of the other sniveling women crowding her throne room. She tsked, reaching her empty goblet aside for her cupbearer to refill. The sounds of battle throughout King's Landing could be heard like a symphony of singing steel as blades clashed and men cried. To her dismay, it sounded as if the battle was closing in on her and the keep, but it was a minds trick she swore, grin coming to form as throne rooms doors were pushed asunder and Jaimie entered clutching his arm beneath the spaulder, blood seeping through his fingers, armour painted in the blood of her enemy and dirty grime clinging to his handsome face.

Standing with arms stretched out, Cersei welcomed him and the good news she was sure he was to bring. "Ser Jaime! Pray tell, is the enemy of the throne vanquished?"

Jaime faltered in his steps, his head shaking to and fro. "Vanquished? Damn you, Cersei! They've entered the city, put your pride aside, I beg you, sue for peace before it's too late!"

Cersei's eyes went wide, lurching forward in her seat. "What of the Golden Company?"

Dragging a hand over his face, Jaime looked worn, aged beyond his years. "What of them," he
snapped. "The cutthroats never showed."

Tossing her goblet of wine, Cersei gripped the bladed armrests of her throne, not even so much as a wince as the old steel cut into her palms, blood trickling out. "We shall stand our ground. Hold the keep to the last man."

"The last man?" Echoed Jaime, a sighing puttering from his thinned lips. "The Gold Cloaks have already fled the battlements, only our House guard continue to fight... The battle is lost, we've lost... Are you still so blinded by your ambition to not see it?"

"I am the Queen, I am a Lannister and by the Seven I swear they shall hear me roar! I swear to the seven the pretender and her foreign horde will bear witness to my fury," snarled Cersei, her head snapping to the side where Qyburn stood in the company Ser Illyn Payne. "Lord Hand, ready the cache of Wildfire, we'll see if the Mad King's daughter truly is unburnt."

Qyburn obeyed with a curt bow, turning to leave the hall at once, Jaime eyed the man as he drew closer, a horrified expression gracing his face.

"Gods, you've gone as mad as Aerys," Jaime mumbled, his eyes narrowing as Qyburn came to pass him. As if reliving a memory of old, he drew his blade, a motion so quick none present blinked before he plunged it through the former Maester's back. A gasp of shock filling the hall below Cersei's maddened scream.

"Traitor!" She exclaimed, rising from the throne, blood dripping from her cut hands. "Kill him, kill him now!"

Jaime pulled back his blade, watching as the man who once tended to his severed wrist collapsed to the marble floor of the throne room, a pool of blood forming about him. Turning only as he heard a set of heavy footsteps approaching, the sight of the Mountain, hulking with his greatsword drawn from its sheath.

Watching with a crazed look etched upon her visage, Cersei glared at her brother, the turncloak who had done to Qyburn as he had the Mad King. Absently, she noticed the mute, Ser Illyn climbing the steps of the throne in Ser Gregor's absence, the large man swinging wildly at her brother who dodged and weaved out of the way of the Mountain's great sword.

"What are you doing," she sneered to Illyn. "Draw your blade you worthless mute and seize my brother's head!"

Ser Illyn paused on a step, the man's slack, uncaring face observing her intently before reaching behind him and drawing a dagger, its hilt a finely crafted dragonbone, its steel sharpened Valyrian. "I should think I'd much rather take yours."

Cersei took a half step back, her heart racing as the mute spoke, the sounds of Jaime and the Mountain's clashing swords a distant battle, surprise gripped her whole.

Advancing up another step, Ser Illyn paused as he raised the dagger to inspect it closer, looking lost in contemplation. "This was used to try and kill my brother Bran after witnessing you and your brother in Winterfell. I think it fitting to use it to deliver your end."

Narrowing her eyes, Cersei caught on at last. "Who are you?"

The bald man, straight-faced as always, reached up with his free hand to his jaw, peeling back the skin as if it were but a mask. Beneath, a shaggy mound of black hair swept out, matted over the big wide eyes of a young girl, one Cersei hadn't seen since the days Eddard Stark called himself Robert's
Hand. "I am Arya Stark, and I've come seeking vengeance for my House, for my brother's... my father, and my mother. The North remembers, and winter has come, so roar all you'd like, it won't save you now, Lion."

Cersei stumbled down a step from her throne, hoping to put space between them. "Where is Ser Illyn, what have you done with him?"

"Ser Illyn lingered to close to an alleyway after executing Lady Greyjoy," answered Arya, stalking forward after Cersei. "I promise you, you'll suffer more than he did."

"I'm with child," protested Cersei fiercely, halting in her retreat from the girl to face her with venom in her voice. "You'd not dare harm an innocent babe."

Arya looked thoughtful for a moment as she came to stand a step distance from the blonde once regarded as the fairest beauty in all the Seven Kingdoms. "Talisa, my brother Robb's wife, she was with child as the Frey's carried out your father's wishes, what mercy was given to her or her babe?"

Shaking her head, Cersei exhaled a sharp breath as Arya lunged forward, the dagger stabbing her in the belly. Taking a stumbled step back, she watched helplessly as Arya retracted the dagger before proceeding to stab in quick, rapid repetition, each one weakening the Queen more than the last till her legs buckled beneath her, and she collapsed, rolling down the throne steps till she lay in a heap at the foot of the dais, her last fleeting sight was a blurred vision of the Mountain disregarding his engagement with Jaime to rush toward her, too late to give her aid but not late enough to avenge her.

Standing over Cersei's lifeless form, Arya looked up to see the Mountain running at her like a charging bull, a man so large she could hardly believe how fast his stride was as he crossed the throne room, the man's arms thick as tree trunks wound up for a swing at her with his greatsword, it was slow though, seeing the attack coming long before he swung. She ducked, diving to the right as the man sword swooshed overhead. She crawled along the steps to get away from him, feeling the thunderous vibration of his feet climbing the steps after her. Her breath hitching as his shadow came to be over her, she stalled, flipping herself onto her back, staring up into the man's bloodshot eyes, the skin around them a sickly grey. So this was it she thought, there were still so many names still left on her list, she regretted not being able to see it through, not able to claim the vengeance owed to her.

Two hands on the hilt of his sword, the Mountain directed the edged tip at a downward angle to the girl at his feet.

Arya closed her eyes as the sword came down, her mind fluttering with the faces of her family, from Rickon to her father, they smiled to her as if wishing her well in her departure from this world.

Hands tightening around Drogon's spikes, Daenerys shoulder checked to see Viscerion and Rhaegal soaring close behind, their wings flapping as the wind rushed against them, the journey from the bloody fields outside Maidenpool had been quick in comparison to her flight from Winterfell to her forces encampment on the crownland border. She felt elated when King's Landing appeared on the horizon, nestled along the edge of the Blackwater, the city taking her by surprise, for all her years in Essos she had envisioned this moment when she would finally see city her ancestors built, from the stories Viserys told of it she expected it to be an extravagant place where King's and Queen lived in luxury, where men and women alike walked among city streets of incomprehensible beauty, but as King's Landing became more vivid in her approach from the sky, she was left feeling disappointed, as though she had been lied to her entire life, the dream of it crumbling away as she view the cramned city that looked more claustrophobic than extravagant. Her disappointment, however, was not paramount, nor was such a trivial thought the reasoning behind her rash decision to be there, she had not flown all this way to judge a city by its appearance, she had come to ensure unnecessary
lives were not spent carelessly.

In her initial pass over the city, she took in the billowing plumes of smoke that rose up from buildings set ablaze, acting as a smokescreen that hid the city streets below from her. Her second pass over the capital she noticed her Unsullied and their perfect formation's were not outside the city walls, giving the impression they had been successful in breaching it, or so she hoped they had at least. With the smoke blocking her view, she couldn't see if they fought in the streets to confirm, but she swore she heard the cacophony of battle through howling winds that tussled her silver hair into lashing tail behind her as she glided on Drogon, absently she could hear the angsty roar's of her other son's as they swept overhead, anxious to join whatever battle they had flown all this way for.

Yet, she held back giving the simple command to rain down their fire, without knowing who it was that would be burned, she couldn't risk burning her Unsullied, burning Jon. Flying out over the Blackwater, Daenerys directed Drogon back for a third over city, hoping to catch a glimpse of the city surface, though it was that pass that fear set into her like a sickness in her bones, for from the plumes of smoke a bolt rose up from the ground, barely providing her enough time to guide Drogon out of its trajectory, it whistled by, grazing his black scaled tail.

Squinting as she banked Drogon at an angle, Daenerys scanned the smokey terrain below, searching for the ballista that had hoped to take her child away from her, she received an inkling of its whereabouts when another bolt came hurling up from the ground, this time it went straight through the wing flap of Rhaegal, the dragon emitting a screech that deafened the sounds of battle below, her eyes grew fearful when another bolt rose up, then another, followed in succession by half a dozen more. It's not just one ballista.

Shouting in high valyrian for her children to disperse, she felt her heart sink like an anchor to the pit of her stomach as she watched helplessly as a bolt pierce Viserion's elongated throat, the cream scaled dragon's wings stilled in that moment, its tail growing slack as its elongated neck hung down. Daenerys felt an immediate loss, an immeasurable loss as Viserion's body fell, its clawed limbs dangling lifelessly as it flipped and turned in its descent down till she lost sight of him in a plume of smoke. Feeling as if her heart was wrenched from her chest, she wailed a terrible cry, her eyes prickling with tears the wind carried away as Drogon sallied forth in the air.

Anguish giving way to anger, Daenerys eyed the Red Keep atop a hill, above the battle raging in the streets at its foot, but while it was above the battle, the Keep and Cersei were not immune to it. Daenerys would see to that, guiding Drogon down at a dive, she didn't see the palace her forefathers had built, all she saw was the haven of her enemy, the woman who robbed her of a son.

Tilting forward, Daenerys lips brushed against Drogon's sable scales, her eyes narrowed at her intended target. "Dracarys!" she hissed.

Jaw spread, Drogon's mouth became illuminated in wisps of orange and yellow, a stream of flame bursting out at the long hall of the Red Keep known to even Daenerys to be the throne room. The shingled roof exploding as the dragon fire ripped over it, the stained glass windows shattering from the intense heat.

She eyed the Keep as the flames spread, the satisfaction or revenge she imagined she'd feel was amiss, she felt hollow, a void created in Viserion's demise that vengeance couldn't even fill. In her rage she had forgotten Rhaegal, pulling on Drogon's spike, they swerved gracefully through the air, her mouth falling agape when she didn't spot his emerald form against the pale blue sky. Had the ballista taken him too? Had the bolt through his wing flap been enough to bring him down? Her palms grew damp as she clung to Drogon, her chest aching in worried misery. Knowing full well the longer she stayed airborne the more likely it was she would end up losing Drogon as well, she eyed a
plot of lush vegetation beside the burning Red Keep, a large enough clearing in what looked to be a
garden to land on.

Jon grunted as he dragged his sword from another Lannister troop, the man's body slumping to the
cobblestone street to join the other bodies laid strewn about. Staggering as he advanced up the street
alongside a group of Unsullied with Gendry at his side, he felt spent, his arms numb from the battle
this far, exhaustion taking its toll. Tiredly, he eyed the way ahead, a narrow street running straight to
the towering Red Keep. The cities defenders had been nearly wiped from the streets, whatever
remained surely awaited them atop that hill.

"Almost there," said Gendry, coming up at Jon's side, looking behind him with a look kin to surprise.
"We've lost the others."

Turning to confirm, Jon shook his head when he found Harlon and the rest of the Northmen missing.
"We'll push on with the Unsullied, no turnin' back now."

Gendry nodded, readjusting his grip on the sword he held, eyeing the blade with some distaste,
longing for the familiar weight of his Warhammer.

Both men flinched as the terrifying sound inhuman roars tore over the city, Jon recognizing them
from experience craned his neck to the sky, smoke screening it in parts, but as a gust of wind blew
the smog to a different direction, he caught glimpse of them flying overhead. Dany's children. She's
come. He grinned at the sight of them, pleased to know she was alright when he had seen her absent
from the ranks of the Unsullied outside the city walls. Hoping to catch sight of her mounting the
enormous one with sable scales, he moved along the street to a spot with a more advantageous view,
the Unsullied unperturbed in their mission as they marched passed him enroute to the Red Keep.

Whatever hope or pleasure Jon saw in the dragon's appearance, it was shortlived as he witnessed
bolts the length of a man shoot into the air, panic setting in him as the winged beasts swayed in the
air, evading the projectiles looking to hunt them.

Rushing from where he was, Jon grabbed hold of the first Unsullied he could lay hand on, an image
of Daenerys clinging to Drogon as they plummeted from the sky took hold, an image he'd be
dammed to try and not stop from happening. "Hold the advance, we have to find those scorpions!"

The Unsullied struggled beneath his grip, shaking him off with a muttering in a foreign language he
couldn't understand.

"Fuck," growled Jon, looking about the marching eunichs, who in their disciplined determination to
complete their Queen's orders, neglected to hear him out.

Gendry watched the Northern King acting in desperation, moving to reason with him that they could
go themselves in search of the ballista, he ducked at the sound of an explosion, the earth shaking
under him as a cloud of smoke and debris filled the streetway. Holding his forearm over his mouth,
he ran to the side of the street, looking up to find a creature sprawled over the top of a house, its roof
collapsed with cracks running down to its foundation. The great beast he knew to be a dragon lay
broken and dead, its head hanging over the edge of the roof.

Stumbling from the screen of dust that suffocated the narrow aisle of a street, Jon emerged coughing,
he had seen the Daenery's deceased dragon, and despite his heavy heart for the loss she must be
enduring, he knew he was faced with either proceeding to the Keep to claim her throne or seeking
out the ballista that posed a threat. The throne could wait, if she was above riding Drogon, her life
was in danger.
"Gods, its massive," mumbled Gendry as Jon joined him, he couldn't take his eyes off it for the life of him, his mind still coming to terms that dragon's truly existed.

"There's no time to stare, we need to find the placement of those ballistae before its to late," implored Jon, he attempted to look at the sky and see where the bolts were coming from to no avail, they crisscrossed as they sailed into the sky, making it all the more difficult to pinpoint their possible location.

"How can you even bloody tell where they're coming from?" Questioned Gendry, huffing as an Unsullied pushed by him.

"Give it a moment, they'll have a delay as they re-arm," said Jon, he looked to the sky hoping to trace the bolts, instead he watched as another one of Dany's children came down from the sky. Thinking it had been shot down as well, he was caught perturbed when the dragon landed in the street.

Rhaegal coiled its tail around its form to fit in between the two rows of buildings, one wing tucked close to its body while its other crooked at an awkward angle, a bolt protruding from its shoulder, its large head stretched out to sniff its brothers corpse, a mournful groan rumbling out as it nudged Viserion's head.

"What's it doing?" Asked Gendry, standing behind Jon, viewing the dragon wearily.

"I don't know, it's injured though," whispered Jon, he had never been this close to Rhaegal before, nor the one hanging from the rooftop for that matter. He'd only been in the presence of Drogon, even then it was a brief encounter at Winterfell with Dany at his side to keep it calm, his mind raced with what to do given the situation. Naturally, he dwelled on Ghost, if the direwolf had been wounded he'd have done everything in his power to remedy his companions wound, would he not do the same for a dragon Daenerys thought of as her child?

"Woah, hold up there," called Gendry when he saw Jon take a step toward the dragon. "Are you mad, what're you doing?"

"Just... Just be quiet," chided Jon, trying to keep collected as he shuffled forward, stopping when Rhaegal's massive head whirled down on him, its serpent eyes locked on the sword he held, nostrils flaring as it sniffed him out.

Fidgeting as Jon stood off with the dragon, Gendry looked around him, taking in the Unsullied who seemed just as wary of the dragon blocking their path, turning back to see Jon rubbing the dragon's snout, scared that any moment the beast might snap its teeth around the King.

"Easy now, that's a good, lad," cooed Jon softly, tentatively making his way to the bolt lodged in Rhaegal's shoulder. Drifting from its head, he traversed down its neck and frills, his fingers dragged along its hardened scales till he came to the source of its pain. Wrapping both hands about the wooden pole, he yanked, Rhaegal writhing uncomfortably in reply as he did, the bolt loosening just a bit. Whispering his apologies, he pulled again, teeth gritting as put his entire strength behind it, the bolt finally coming free.

Humming a soothed sound, Rhaegal's wounded wing arched forward, tripping Jon into its flap, the man going frantic to climb up on its back as the dragon adjusted, crouching low before jumping. As it cleared the rowed buildings, its wings stretched out, it flapped wildly to climb in height.

Holding on for dear life to the spike he was able to grapple onto, Jon pulled himself up along Rhaegal's spine, doing his best not to acknowledge the ballista bolts that whizzed by with close precision. Unable to control his direction, he sat helplessly as the dragon flew toward the Red Keep,
his eyes transfixed on a large portion of the structure supporting a raging inferno, directly beside the burning building, Jon looked to a walled grove of tree's circling a garden, at its center was Drogon's black mass, a place in which Rhaegal seemed all too intent on bringing him to if his direction of flight gave away any indication.

Swooping down into the garden of rowed flower beds, Rhaegal crushed pedal and stem beneath his clawed feet, its large body lowering to the earth with a crooked wing that Jon could climb down.

Grateful to have survived the session, Jon clambered down, more pleased to have his feet on solid ground than his previous journeys by ship. Patting Rhaegal on its jaw as if to say thank you, he rounded the winged beast warily, half expecting a flock of Lannister men to have him surrounded, instead, he laid eyes on the most breathtaking sight he'd ever seen. His wife staring back at him, her porcelain cheeks glistening with recently shed tears, her face holding a look of disbelief at the sight of him.

Chapter End Notes

Okay timeline as I've planned (If you see errors with the timeline in the story matching to this, let me know, I shall make a correction. Thank you!)

-First Segment: Battle on the Outskirts of Maidenpool, several hours before the Unsullied reach K.L

-Second Segment: Present tense, Unsullied arrive at K.L at which point Daenerys and dragons are already enroute. Jon opens the Old Gate.

-Third Segment: Shortly after the Unsullied breach, City Watch flee, leaving the Lannister forces to hold the defence. The events of the Red Keep transpire.

-Fourth Segment: Post Cersei death and Red Keep events, Daenerys arrives. Losing dear, dear Viscerion and burns the keep.

-Fifth Segment: Occurs same time as fourth, extending a tad bit past it.

Hopefully that all adds up, thank you all so much for reading, please leave a comment, drop a kudos and get up on those bookmarks :) until chappy 20, take care!

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!