Summary

Modern Imagines of the world of Ice And Fire. They are Elia and Rhaegar imagines because there is SUCH a shortage of those.

Notes

The characters are all, obviously credited to GRRM. In case I add a new character, I will let you know. Hope you like them. They are complete figments of my imagination. Some information could be wrong, but I am not writing an encyclopedia here so bear with me/
Chapter Summary

This one is the first so it's obviously not very good. It's got a bit of humor but there's more of like melancholy (because I would not say angst, that's too strong a word). There's some optimism at the end, and that's it, I'll stop talking now. Please give it a read, even if you don't ship Elia and Rhaegar.

“I think we should end this.”
“End what Rhaegar? I am quite enjoying this date, although we could’ve gone to the fair, there was a giant rollercoaster!”
“Lyanna, I’m talking about this relationship.”
“You what?”
“I am so sorry; I never thought it would happen like this. I have been meaning to tell you for a while now. I am so sorry. I enjoyed our time spent together, I promise. It’s just that, I cannot be this walking cliché anymore, of this ‘acclaimed and famous genius in love with a vivacious, completely different girl’ trope.”
And it strikes you now? You even left that annoying Martell lawyer to be with me. We almost caused a war. I left Robert to be with you and we have been through so much! I wanted to marry you, have children, little wolf-dragons…”
“Lyanna, we are still young!”
“And in love, right?”
“No Lyanna, the only thing I was ever in love with was my own ego. You appeased it, and I mistook it for some great romantic saga. I left Elia. Elia, that woman was my everything and I left her, just shattered, like that. I shouldn’t have done it. And I am sorry Lyanna, for breaking your heart, I am so sorry, but I cannot do this anymore. There are so many men who love you so much more than I do. I am sure they will keep you so happy. Please try to forgive me.”
The conversation ended with Rhaegar laying a wad of cash at the table and walking out of the dim lit karaoke café-bar. They had made out, and sang songs in this private haunt of theirs for years, and now, he just walked. He walked away, leaving Lyanna as empty as ever. He didn’t even finish the liquor coffee. It was his favourite, the one with a skilled and foamy heart on top. Heck, even the heart lay in half, where his lips had touched it, just like Lyanna.
Before the tears would come streaming, she realised that Rhaegar would come running back to her again, before the night was even up. They always had little fights like this, all the time and she thought he was very angry at the entire fiasco she had created at his father’s birthday party. Lyanna hated these high society parties, they choked the life out of her, but Rhaegar must have been ashamed at his girlfriend dancing like that. He was not only a Targaryan but a famous novelist in his own right. Lyanna was so proud of her boyfriend. She had even given up her career for his book tours which she loved accompanying him on. She was not like that mean and shrewd workaholic Elia Martell who barely even paid attention to Rhaegar. She was not like that at all. She was the most constant presence in his life. Then what had gone wrong?
Lyanna ordered another shot of black coffee and a couple of shots of tequila as she waited for Rhaegar. He did not return. She made a drunken mess of herself at the place, danced on the foosball table, and broke a couple of glasses and alcohol bottles here and there. Finally, an extremely discomfited Ned Stark picked her up from there once he was informed.
Rhaegar never came to Winterfell with a bouquet of blue roses to say sorry, and take her home.
The wind was chilly. Winter did not agree with dragons. Winter, that word immediately sent a cascade of guilt rush down Rhaegar’s spine. He should’ve done more for the break-up, given Lyanna more time to adjust to the massive change that would have come over her life. Warned her. Maybe even fought with her on a daily basis so she would give up. But she wouldn’t, he knew that. And neither was he Elia, a genius of human nature and manipulation.

God, Elia. He was always on his mind recently. He had given up reading news about her because seeing her photo alone sent weird tinges through his whole body. She had gotten prettier, definitely. The last picture he had seen of hers was at a success party for fighting on behalf of the Bank of Casterly Rock and winning the case. Tywin Lannister had personally thrown the party for her. He was not a master of finance but from what he could tell, the Lannisters would have lost everything if Elia had not been there. And didn’t she look gorgeous in those pictures. She had gotten the most outrageously sequined dress from somewhere and it was short and so Dornish and he had secretly kept that newspaper right under his pillow for quite a few days. Then he had felt such extreme guilt from Ned Stark’s public press accusations at him, he had done away with it. He was such a living mess!

He bumped into somebody as soon as that thought came into his head. It was a thick mass of golden hair who had stumbled on the pavements. As soon as the green eyes looked back at him, he recognised Jaime Lannister.

“Look who it is!” The cheeky lion grinned. Rhaegar rolled his eyes.

“Hi, Lannister. Didn’t know you had a thing for shopping,” Rhaegar darted his eyes towards the bunch of shopping bags that Jaime held. Not that anybody would be expected to do anything else at the Upper Flea Bazaar but he was curious.

“Oh, we’re just shopping for Elia’s bachelorette party,” Jaime replied.

“Ahh I see. Wait, whose bachelorette party?” The dragon asked in a whisper.

“Oh Elias’. You know, Martell lawyer, pretty much saved our butts, my best friend, that girl you used to date a couple years back, her.”

The world shook beneath Rhaegar. But he shouldn’t have been surprised. Who was Elia to him today? Nobody. Why should he even care? He should be happy that she has found her happiness and congratulate her. But then, why was there such a burning pain inside? A sudden impulse to strangle to death whoever this lucky bastard she was marrying was?

“Who’s she getting married to?” Rhaegar asked trying to keep it as formal as possible.

Oh some merchant of something from Volantis. Her mother fixed the match. She didn’t really have a lot of say in the matter. She had promised her mom though, that if she could not find a guy for herself by the time she was 27, she would marry whoever her mother chose for her. That is precisely what happened. Honestly though, you shouldn’t expect such a hot-shot and ‘famous at 23 lawyer’ to get a boyfriend so soon. Allow her to breathe, and then she’ll think about settling down. But who am I to say anything? Just the good-for-nothing best friend. I wish her all the luck. I think she’ll fare well in Volantis,“ Jaime ended good-naturedly.

“But if she doesn’t even know the man properly, how is she going to be happy?” Rhaegar despaired.

“The two of you started out on a blind date set by your parents, you did quite well for the first year I reckon. In fact, the two of you were model couple till Lyanna Stark came along,” Jaime said before stopping mid-sentence. “Oh shit, sorry, shouldn’t have brought up Lyanna Stark. I heard about the break-up. Ned and Brandon and Benjen have gone rabid, man you should be careful! Oberyn and Doran were not half this bad, but then again, I guess Lyanna was more attached to you,” Jaime commented.

“What the hell do you mean Lyanna was ‘more attached’ to me? Are you trying to imply that maybe Elia was not attached to me? Because, see, that is not the case. In fact, where is she, is she still shopping, I will go and talk to her, fix your dilemma once and for all,” Rhaegar growled.

“Okay…” Jaime muttered nervously as Rhaegar stomped off towards a jewellery store.

“She’s not there. She’s in there, buying red velvet cupcakes,” Jaime motioned to the bakery right
next to it. “And also ordering dessert for her bachelorette party,” he whispered the last part to himself.

Rhaegar stormed into the bakery, and much to his annoyance, the entire Elia gang was lounging out here. There was a smug looking Varys who sat with Cersei at a table and went through the bill quotations for the food. Cersei was vigorously typing on a calculator. She had gotten smarter with money after her MBA degree from Braavos. There was a young Tyrion who had dozed off to sleep, and there were the Dayne siblings who were chatting with some other Dornish people that Rhaegar did not know. Heck, even Robert was there, grinning and trying to annoy Tyrion. Willas Tyrell was busy helping Elia choose the pastries and cupcakes and other such dessert extravagance. Nobody really noticed him. That was good; he would have enough time to sneak Elia out. Only this Tyrell rose needed to be out of the way.

“Look, red velvet stays, I love red velvet, don’t change that. The rest can go according to your wishes Willas, I trust your taste,” Elia was saying. Rhaegar rolled his eyes. She trusted everybody’s taste except his. As soon as Elia turned, hoping to move towards Cersei, Rhaegar grabbed her by the elbow.

“Oh Rhaegar, hi,” an extremely shocked Elia greeted.

“Hi El, can I talk to you for a minute, outside, please,” Rhaegar pleaded.

“Umm, alright…” the poor Martell didn’t really get a lot of time to react as Rhaegar dragged her out. If he was in trouble, and needed her bailing, she was not doing criminal law anymore, he needed to know that.

“Look Rhaegar, I-”

“No, you listen to me. You cannot marry some Volantine merchant you don’t even know. I mean how is that even rational?”

“Excuse me, forgive me if I heard wrong but we meet after five years, and you are lecturing me on love-life choices? Seriously? Do you even hear yourself? Its like: hey, I’m the man who left my Ivy League royalty girlfriend for a wolf pup that doesn’t even know how to spell her own name because a woman as smart as her could not satiate my bloody ego. But now, since I still feel entitled to her, I am going to come up to her like a complete stranger, because people change in five years, and tell her not to marry the man she is planning to because obviously, I know better. Fuck off Rhaegar.”

“No I won’t. I made a mistake, and I left you, and I will not leave you again. It was the worst mistake of my life, but I will not repeat it again.”

“And who exactly is allowing you to come back to my life? Oberyn and Doran have gone round the corner to book a table at my bachelorette venue. Last time you ‘left me’, I had to use all my powers to stop Oberyn from practically killing you, and this time I cannot. I will not. So just leave.”

That was that. Rhaegar let go of the elbow. How did he even think that he could come traipsing back and everything would go back to normal. So what if he was a young boy who had made a mistake? A mistake was a mistake. He took a step back. Took in a full view. Single and free Elia, the way she was always meant to be. This was the last time he was going to see her like this so he soaked in the view. Silky kimono shrug fluttering in the wind with a Martell sygil tank top underneath that accentuated her curves perfectly. Black ripped denims, her favourite pair of fringed suede high-heel boots and that unruly mass of hair tamed into a ponytail. Large, curious and hurt eyes staring back at him through her on-point trendy glasses. This was the last time he was going to see her like this and he would remember it forever.

Elia realised. This had always been her problem. She realised; she knew people, humans, far too well; better than her vipers also. She wanted to move forward, hold his hand, tell him that it was okay to make mistakes when you were young, it was alright. He had been forced into a relationship he did not want, they had fallen in love, but that was not planned. And then Lyanna Stark had come in like a gust of wind and Rhaegar had been absolutely enamoured. What the foolish boy had not understood was that they were not carefree children of Flea Bottom. They had a name to bear, and to Elia, duty always came first. Nobody was at fault here, and she knew that, and she wanted to tell
him, but her bloody feet would not move, because her mind knew that if she went any closer, she would fall right into Rhaegar again.

“It’s alright. I understand.” Rhaegar smiled.

“No you don’t. You don’t at all, at all. You don’t get that I’ve promised mother, and a Martell’s promise is a promise, you know that. You know I have no choice. You know that. So don’t Rhaegar, don’t start this drama all over again, because you’ve missed the train. It’s gone, it’s gone Rhae, we’ve had our time, and you chucked it. You chucked it, so just leave now,” Elia said. She was sad, and she hadn’t been this sad in a long time. She was genuinely sad, like the tears threatening to spill kind of sad and she had no idea why. This man didn’t even mean anything to her anymore, yet here they were, five years on, at a hopeless place.

Rhaegar pulled her in. he just pulled her in, engulfed her in one of those warm hugs that he hadn’t been able to radiate in the last five years. While he was busy moping around for himself, this infinitely strong woman was fighting her destiny, her family, the extinguishing of her dreams, she was fighting all of that. If not for anything else, she deserved a tight hug from a friend. A best friend, who had abandoned her in the middle of all of this.

“Elia, it will all be better. It will all get better, don’t worry.”

Elia didn’t reply. But the smile that spread across her face was priceless. In a very long time, the young, dynamic and talented shrewd lawyer had had somebody patting her back and telling her everything would be alright. It was cold and Rhaegar felt warm. Elia did not want anything else in this moment. But, like all good moments, this one ended with a massive embarrassment.

“Cersei, sister, it’s getting quite hot in here isn’t it, with a dragon and a sun embracing and all that.”

“Tyrion, shut up!”

Elia laughed, as did Rhaegar, and they let each other go. Sometimes the people closest to us don’t need a reason to hear our heartbeat; they have a right to it, like Elia and Rhaegar did with each other. And what they heard was a tired and a lonely heartbeat respectively. It was one of those times when the exceptionally restrained Elia was at the brink of going out of control. But that control never left her.

She kissed Rhaegar on the cheek, and he kissed her on the forehead. He gave her a dragon locket that was dangling down his neck and she gave him the viper shaped nose ring she was wearing. Then they shook hands and parted ways. The nervousness at the pit of Rhaegar’s stomach had subsided. Elia knew. The world was his.

He had changed his number in the five years they had been apart. He gave her the new one, bitterly joking ‘in case you decide to be a runaway bride’ and left. He waited for her call for the next three weeks. On the fourth Monday, he woke up to collect the newspaper and saw the most beautiful bride on its’ cover. Rhaegar clutched the little viper nose ring and smiled.

The flight to Sunspear will be boarding in fifteen minutes. All passengers of the Dorne Jet are requested to come to the gate.

Rhaegar ran as fast as his lanky legs could carry him. The black coffee in his hands tightly held under the plastic cup cover but the dark brown liquid repeatedly hit the surface, blackening the white cover. Rhaegar could not care less. He had a flight to catch, and he was as far from the boarding gate as he could be.

“Excuse me, excuse me, excuse me, excuse me Ma’am, Sir, I have a flight to catch, excuse me there Miss,” he practically knocked over a young lady in a dangerously slit coral maxi.

“Rhae, easy there,” a familiar feminine voice reprimanded him. He stopped in his tracks and turned around. Damn, marriage had made her even more beautiful.

“Eli, hi. How’ve you been?” He asked with as much nonchalance as he could muster.

“Umm, don’t you have a flight to catch?” Elia teased.

“No, I mean yes, yes I do. Are you going the same way?”

“Oh no, home’s forbidden for me. I am going to Volantis. My boarding gate is next to yours.”
“Ahh, you’re going by the Essos Jet then? I have heard it is one fancy flight. Let’s walk,” Rhaegar initiated.
“Sure. And no, I am not going by the Essos Jet. My husband’s private jet is coming to pick me up, hence, no hurry.”
“Wow private jet huh? Like you always wanted.”
“Like I always wanted,” Elia laughed bitterly.
“Are you alright? Marriage has been good to you right? You’re returning from the super fancy Quarthian honeymoon, aren’t you?”
“Yes I am. A honeymoon that lasted for a month. It’s drained me. The husband’s a bit of a sex maniac, and he doesn’t use protection. He wants over six children because his family has a ‘fertility problem’ and I won’t even be able to work after I have kids. Not that working as the ‘chief legal head’ of their business kept me busy. It was the most boring shit I ever did. Mostly administrations,” Elia ranted.
“And you are going to continue with this marriage?” Rhaegar asked incredulously.
“Who said? Of course not. I will apply for divorce as soon as I reach Volantis.” Elia replied in annoyance. She was fed up with people even assuming that she would continue to stay on in a relationship like this one. And it was not like she had anything at stake. This was not the Prime Ministers’ son. Oh well, he was walking right with her.
“Oh good god really?! I mean, of course, of course, you should. You are a strong independent woman, you should go for it! Umm, but Elia, what happens after a divorce?” Rhaegar stammered. This was something that was so typically unlike him.
“That is seriously the stupidest question you ever asked!” Elia exclaimed.
“Oh no, I meant… I meant… what did I mean? Oh yes, I meant, will you be coming back to King’s Landing?”
“I guess so. Go back to Casterly Rock, start working for the Lannisters again. I liked that job,” Elia mused.
“Criminal was your forte Eli. Maybe you could become public prosecutor, finally!” Rhaegar smiled enthusiastically.
“Oh no, your dad would never allow, I’m not your girlfriend anymore. Heck, I left criminal law as soon as you left me. Your dad would never allow somebody neutral to be his lawyer,” Elia replied, and saw a glint in Rhaegar’s eye, to which she rolled her eyes and pursed her lip, trying to stop a smile from spreading stupidly across her face.
“Goodbye Targaryan, I have a flight to catch. So do you. Different flights.” Elia smugly commented as she began walking.
“For now…” Rhaegar shouted. His boarding gate was on the verge of closing but he didn’t care. He wanted to see Elia turn back and give him a smile just like in the movies. He waited. The girl at the counter urged him on. All of the passengers urged him on but he waited. Elia’s thick mass of pulled back hair was fluttering as she hurried, revealing the bare back with all kinds of strings pulled on it. The view was good, but he wanted her to turn around, just for once, just for once.
She neared the gate. Handed over her boarding pass, was about to step into the connecting tunnel when she turned that pretty head of hers, along with the wild thick mass of Dornish hair, made direct eye contact with Rhaegar, and smiled. A genuine smile from the lips of a lawyer was a bloody enormous achievement, and there Rhaegar was, legs jelly, heart thumping dangerously from ecstasy and a face distorted from happiness, with incoherent happy sounds erupting from his mouth. The rest of the crowd did not understand what the hell was going on, but noticed it was their favourite novelist and practically dragged him in towards the airplane. Rhaegar was extra happy, extra courteous, extra obliging through the entire trip and the air hostesses couldn’t stop wondering what the hell the matter was about.
The young man, for the first time in his life, had realised that all goodbyes were not permanent.
Turbulence

Chapter Summary

This one is pretty funny, or so I thought while writing it! Lady Olenna Tyrell makes an appearance in a way only she can! I hope you like it, and in case you're scared of turbulence, you should totally relate!

Rhaegar had been scared of flights for as long as he could remember. More specifically, he had been scared of turbulence. That phenomenon sucked the life out of him. He was a Targaryan, he was born to ride dragons, not aeroplanes. Alas, aeroplanes were all he would be getting now!

He sent his customary texts to people that were closest to him, although that list had shortened and lengthened in its own respective ways (there were no wives, but there were children). He did this because he assumed every flight to be his last. Yes, that is how bad turbulence scared Rhaegar Targaryan, and the flight to Mereen was long (and full of terrors) his mind whispered. No, he decided to close his eyes and concentrate on other things: the pleasant things in his life, namely- his children. A two time divorcee had only children to look forward to. He was still young, as were they, but he had given up hopes of another marriage. Too much hassle with too less satisfaction. As soon as he closed his eyes though, Elia’s soothing voice drifted into his mind. It had been a long time since he had taken a flight to anywhere; hence the memories of his most stable companion on flight kept flooding back. With Lyanna he had to be tough guy, protect her and make her feel safe (regardless of the fact that she was a tomboy, Lyanna always expected Rhaegar to be her prince charming), but with Elia, there could be no nonsense involved. She could read people like a newspaper, probably even better (most news bored Elia, once she was done reading the murders and the thefts, she would leave the paper lying there, not even glancing at the sports or the tabloids). There was no hiding from Elia’s eagle eye, so he had stopped pretending to be brave and felt the safest when she would clutch his hand tightly and whisper right into his ear, “Rhae, it’ll be fine.” Damn, today Elia was really haunting him.

Plane is ready for take-off, all passengers on board?

There was heavy scuffling of feet. Rhaegar got nervous; plane was ready to board, so why the hell was the cabin crew rushing around? He craned his neck to see if there was any problem, health emergency maybe, in the economy class seats, which were separated from him by wooden doors and partitions but he realised that the chaos was not being generated there. His hands grew cold. Something was terribly wrong. A couple of air hostesses came inside the business lounge, stared at him, and began talking in hushed tones. Rhaegar further furrowed his eyebrows and smiled nervously at them. What the hell, why did he need to be the chosen one to fix whatever was wrong with the plane? He was no aeronautical engineer, he was a cop. A very smart one, albeit, but essentially, a cop (or the police commissioner of King’s Landing, whatever, he scolded his head). A very young and pretty air hostess approached.

“Sir, do you have Miss Elia’s Martell’s whereabouts? Could you contact her? She is the last passenger who has not boarded and she is travelling business class so our owner would kill us if we did not wait for her,” the girl politely explained.

Rhaegar’s face fell. Somewhere at the pit of his stomach, or the bottom of his heart, whichever one, he was hoping for something more adventurous. Instead he realised that Elia would be travelling with him all the way to Mereen and she was late. Just his luck.

At that very unfortunate moment, an extremely familiar figure clad in an even more familiar hot pink trench coat appeared on the scene. There she was, tall and brilliant with the wild hair not
pulled back one bit, and tiny cropped powder pink jumpsuit peeking beneath the coat with a silken scarf nestled around her neck. The rest of the world had changed, Elia had not.
“I am so sorry; it was a bit of a health emergency. Blood sugar had dropped miserably, happens all the bloody time. Sorry again, I know I put you guys in a spot, sorry sorry sorry,” Elia began fumbling. She always did that when she apologised, she was not good at it, took a toll on her ego.
“It’s alright ma’am, here’s your seat,” the girls led her right next to him. Elia’s jaw dropped.
“Here?!”
“Yes ma’am, we believe that is your seat number. Could we see your boarding pass?” just as luck would have it, the number matched.
Elia sat down with a slight grumble and hints of disappointment on her face. She handed her coat over to the cabin assistant and sat back, long legs crossed, not even making face contact with Rhaegar. Heck, she was not even looking at him. This was straight out of a nightmare for her, one bloody long flight to Mereen right next to her ex-husband who had not left with mutual courtesy of friendship. Rhaegar though, felt a strange relief. Elia was here, she would save him, come turbulence.
The plane took off.
“You know, if you didn’t have all that spicy food, and took a few servings of dessert from time to time, all this problem wouldn’t have started in the first place,” Rhaegar regretted the words that left his mouth as soon as he said them, but he needed to make conversation to distract himself during a flight take-off.
“Thank you for the advice doctor, I’ll keep it in mind,” Elia replied sarcastically. That was the end of that conversation.
Food began coming in on silver platters, (quite literally, the National Westeros Airlines was known for their exquisite catering) and Rhaegar was given something to distract himself with. Since he was a VIP and travelling to a conference, he did not need to pay for his food. Neither did Elia; that meant she was going off for work.
“What’s in Mereen?” He grinned, trying another hand at conversation.
“None of your business,” Elia snapped. Rhaegar shut up after that.
“I must say, the two of you look like a dream together, even now, after all these years. It is so good to see the two of you taking off together again. Is it a honeymoon? Are you reconciling?” The annoying co-passenger was, of course, unmistakably, Olenna Tyrell.
“No Mrs. Tyrell, I am going to Mereen on a job assignment and he has to attend the World Police Force Convention Seminar,” Elia replied.
Rhaegar was shocked. As soon as Olenna went away he opened his mouth again, “how did you know?”
“Jaime’s going too. So is Arthur. It is all they can talk about,” Elia replied as if it was the most obvious thing in the world. Rhaegar scratched his head. He should have known.
On her way back from the washroom, Olenna Tyrell caught up with them again, “honestly though, the two of you should give it another go. Even while I was sitting at the back, I could not help but admire the two of you together. She is so much better than that oddly naïve Stark you left her for…” Olenna went on rambling and Elia wished the plane could just give way and she could just fall down and disappear. She secretly enjoyed the Lyanna bashing though.
“Yes, Mrs. Tyrell, I really don’t think that is happening. This seat arrangement was a coincidence,” Elia interrupted her.
“Call me Olenna child, I like you. You are a deserving kid of your mother, shrewd and ambitious, I really like you, and it’s Olenna for you alright? And listen, I would tell my granddaughter to switch seats with you, see, that little girl sitting right over there, but she also thinks the two of you look very good together and we want to enjoy the view,” the old woman chuckled as she left. Elia had her mouth wide open and Rhaegar was shooting woeful stares at her. The atmosphere inside the plane could not be termed stable.
Unfortunately, the atmosphere outside, worsened as well.
Please keep your seatbelts on; we are currently experiencing some turbulence. All passengers, please be seated and keep your seatbelts on. Do not panic, the situation is under control.

Elia was reading. She stole a glance at Rhaegar. Good, he was sleeping; the rest of the flight would be peaceful if he continued in this state. She prayed to the Old Gods and the New that he would. They had already crossed Braavos and this stretch generally proved to be troublesome. But luck was not on Elia’s side that day.

“Turbulence! Turbulence! Oh my goodness, so this shall be my end, turbulence!” Rhaegar’s slumber ended at once.

“Keep calm please, this is the stretch between Braavos and Quarth, you know how bad it generally is,” Elia tried to quiet him down through gritted teeth.

“Yes I do. Do you know how many planes have crashed here in the past fifty years? Three! Three bloody aircrafts, crashed!” Rhaegar was in a state of panic. Gosh, it had been a long time since he could be himself in a flight. With Lyanna it was generally trying to console her.

“Just three Rhaegar! And, how in the seven hells do you know that? You’re the police commissioner of the capital and you spend your time reading aeronautical trivia?! No wonder the King’s Landing crime rate is so high, maximum of my cases come from there,” Elia chided.

“Well, you’re going to Mereen now…” Rhaegar trailed off trying to defend himself.

“That’s like a once in a blue moon kind of thing. I am pretty much always stuck in and around King’s Landing. Have you seen Dorne? I barely ever have to go there. It is such a clean place, devoid of nuisance,” Elia gave a disgusted look at Rhaegar who coiled back in fear. Elia’s presence had made him forget the turbulence.

“I try my best alright,” he argued.

“Yes, you read airplane facts and stalk Lyanna Stark on Instagram. It says a lot about King’s Landing though, doesn’t it? The lousy attitude, the dirt, the sheer stupidity and low quality of people living there. At least during your fathers’ time, there was insanity, but the condition was not so bad,” Elia commented in her nonchalance.

“Elia! Mind your language.” Rhaegar’s bark silenced everybody; except Elia.

“Asshole. You still think you can silence me? You have no right over me Rhaegar, you never did. I am not a sold off hopeless romantic, I am not a young green girl, I am not Lyanna Stark. Do not use that tone on me. Is that understood?” Elia gave her coldest and toughest to Rhaegar. She was an experienced criminologist. Talking to people and scaring them was as much her forte as manipulating them was. And she was done manipulating Rhaegar. He was not her problem anymore.

“I left Lyanna Stark. We had a divorce, and unless you’ve been living under a rock, you should know that. It’s sad how she’s still a touchy topic between the two of us.”

“It’s sad how your father is still a touchy topic between the two of us. What is it? Guilt or anger, or desperation? Which one Rhaegar? What still haunts you about Uncle Aerys? You know the one thing I’ll say about the man, he was better than you were. He was not a hypocrite.”

Elia always had the last word.

The plane would enter turbulence again, in the middle of the night, right between Yunkai and Mereen, when they were almost there.

This time, foregoing all egos, Rhaegar held Elia’s hand, if you could call it holding. He clasped and twisted and rung it a hard as he could. Elia, who was deep in blissful slumber awoke with a jolt, and noticed the phenomena. For old times’ sake, she kept quiet and went back to sleep. Rhaegar kept muttering Valyrian prayers through the entire stretch.

“Will you stop it?! There are other passengers in the plane!”

“They don’t seem to mind…”

“Yes, because you’re not breaking their hand.”

“So it’s your problem only.”

“No it’s not. You’re chanting your prayers too loudly. You’re disturbing others. Stop it Rhaegar,
“we are not going to die.”
“How can you promise me that?”
“Oh my fucking god!”

And then, the worst possible thing occurred: it started pouring cats and dogs, there was a thunderstorm, and the plane was literally tilting from one side to the other. This time, the Targaryan and the Martell both held each others’ hands extremely tightly. Elia’s pulse was rising, but she was trying her best not to show it.

“Oh my goodness, your pulse is rising, this basically means we are all going to die, do you realise that? We’re going to die! Each and every one of us on this plane is going to die an extremely ugly death! A death caused by turbulence! No!”

Shut up Rhaegar. At this rate, only you are going to die, of cardiac arrest, because you’re unnecessarily freaking out! You’re going to die, and I’m going to be blamed.”

“You? Why you?”
Oh, let’s see: I am sitting next to you, for one. I am an ex-wife who you cheated on, for another, and I am Dornish, which basically means that I can induce cardiac arrest in you with any poison I want,” Elia kept ticking off a list.

“Wow, all the criminology really went to your head,” Rhaegar commented.

“Shut up! At least that’s my job. I am not a cop who Googles plane crashes all the bloody time,” Elia countered, and Rhaegar let a laugh slip through.

“I don’t always do that. Sometimes I look at pictures of my little Rhaenys. She’s my firstborn. I think most of my day is spent in thinking what she must be doing. She’s grown into such a fine young lady, I can’t even begin to describe how wonderful I feel when you or Oberyn or Jaime post something about her or with her on social media. Giving up her custody was the hardest thing I’d ever done, but I’m happy. She’s grown up with good influence.”

“You never asked to meet her.”

“And say what? Hi Rhaenys, Papa here. You know why we don’t stay together, all four of us, because I cheated on your mother. Yes, there you go, that’s your Papa, a lying and cheating bastard. And it doesn’t matter that he loves you to the moon and back, more than he’ll ever love Aegon or Jon, but he’s a bad man. He broke a heart of gold. Yes, your mom may be far too occupied with her job all the time, and she may come off as cold and calculating and rational, which she is, no doubt, but there’s also a heart of gold underneath. Reach out for it sometime, it’s the most enriching experience that could ever happen to anybody.”

“She’s a smart girl. She’ll understand.”

“What will she understand? That life’s not fair, that dynamic women get left over all the time?”

“She’ll understand that even the most invincible make mistakes. They fall in love.”

“I was never in love with Lyanna. It was everything but that. Not that I regret it, I most probably don’t, I enjoyed the time I spent with her, but I let my true love get away for that girl and I’ll never forgive myself.” Elia snatched her hand away. The turbulence had stopped. The green light overhead which signalled the seatbelts was put off. She turned her back and went to sleep, closing the reading light that was shining on top. Rhaegar realised that Elia wasn’t sleeping, she was silently sobbing. Elia could not sleep in darkness. She only made the room dark when she did not want anybody to see her tears. He turned the other way and slept. The turbulence had not hurt half this much.

We have landed at Mereen. Passengers can now take off their seatbelts. The temperature outside is…

Rhaegar was supposed to let out a massive sight of relief and touch the floor and take the blessings of all the gods that they kept him alive but all he did was quietly get up and take his hand luggage. Elia was still stirring from her sleep. He was in half a mind to wake her up but his hands shook.

“Go on, you want to touch her now, kiss here now, it’s the time! Seriously, you young children don’t know how to grab opportunity,” Olenna interrupted the pregnant moment. At that, Elia got
up with a jolt and Rhaegar turned red, secretly cursing every Tyrell he could think of. “We’ve landed?” Elia asked still slightly bewildered from her slumber. “I don’t know about your husband, but the rest of us have,” Olenna dryly commented, and then, seeing Elia’s glare, “oh my mistake, ex-husband.”

Elia got up as fast as she could, collected her handbag and put on that outrageous trench coat that still made Rhaegar stare. Today, like no other, Rhaegar wished he had done something differently in life. Neither spoke to the other as they silently exited the plane. “I’m sorry if I scared you back there,” Rhaegar broke the ice while they were walking to the airport through the connecting tunnel. “Nothing scares me anymore.” “Oh good, then a coffee date in Mereen maybe?” Elia gave Rhaegar a look. It was something he could not quite comprehend. What the hell was that shining in her eyes? Anger? Mischief? Sadness? Blunt rejection, probably, he guessed. And then the Martell’s lips curled upwards: “Rhaegar Targaryan, I don’t drink coffee.” “Oh no, no no, of course not. I wasn’t even talking about coffee. Mereen has the best tea parlour in all of Slaver’s Bay, so I’ve heard. We could just go there, drink as much tea as you want.” “I’ll think about it.” “And your number? You’ve changed it right?” In probably forever, Rhaegar felt like a teenager again. “We are staying at the same hotel, idiot.” “How could you possibly know that?” “What did I say about my friends attending this conference? Or were you not listening? You never listen…” “No, no Elia, I listened. I listened to everything you had to say. Who’s going to make that stupid mistake again? I listened to everything you had to say.”

That night Rhaegar went to bed with the widest smile he had ever spared for anybody. There was no jet lag; there was no distress, only optimism. That night, Rhaegar thanked the gods for turbulence. He wanted it on every flight he ever took for the rest of his life.
Divorce

Chapter Summary

So this one has quite a bit of Cersei and Robert in it, which I thought was really cute (or maybe just interesting) because those two together really intrigue me. Hope you like it too!

“See, this is the reason I wanted to go to Elia. You’re almost as successful as her, not even as much and still we need to wait longer for your appointments,” Cersei commented with an air of condescension.

“That’s because her office is in her house, where she gives appointments whenever she pleases,” Rhaegar rolled his eyes.

“She earns more than you do,” Cersei cockily replied.

“Why don’t you go to her then?” Rhaegar sighed, exasperated with the Lannister lioness’ tantrums. “Because Robert got there first, asshole,” Cersei snarled. She resembled a perfect lioness, Rhaegar thought to himself and smiled ever so slightly.

“Alright then, looks like you have no other option, so, let’s get down to business. Why do you want a divorce?” Rhaegar summoned for his secretary, sweet Missandei of Naath to jot down everything Cersei was saying.

“In two words: Lyanna Stark. Honestly though, I don’t blame the Stark girl. She was just lucky enough to be stupid, some of us are not-” Cersei was cut mid sentence.

“Excuse me, what does that mean?”

“Oh you know how you men like younger and dumber girls. You left Elia, that dynamic and talented woman for her, and she doesn’t even know how to spell her own name. It would seem like a shame, but then, when did men ever like women equal to them? In terms of brains I mean and not brawn, you’re fine with tomboys, Lyanna is one, but as soon as a woman is as brilliant as you, oh shit, code red, we need to get going, let’s get out of here! The only reason Robert and I were holding up was because of the kids, and now they’ve grown up and have their own lives and we can finally be free of each other.”

“We were forced into arranged marriages, and Lyanna, she was free. Lyanna, she is naïve and does not know the ways of the world, she is not a diplomatic serpent, she is beautiful and pure and-”

“Exactly. A girl needs to be good to be loved. She can’t be just like you, a little crooked and a little twisted, and then she’s a criminal. She can’t be a woman, that’s a crime. She’s got to be a girl, supporting you, surrendering herself to you and all that jazz. Calling this the modern ages is the biggest joke of all,” Cersei shut him up. “Now are you going to fight my case or is it going to be an ego matter?”

Rhaegar sighed. This was going to be one difficult case. Cersei Lannister was one difficult woman, but somewhere, her words rang truer than gospel in Rhaegar’s ears. Whatever she was saying, every bit of it, he could not deny. Lyanna had left him a few years ago because she could not deal with all the media attention, but even to this day he loved that innocent side of hers. And that day, for the first time in his life, Rhaegar Targaryan hated himself.

“I’ll take the case. Missandei note it down please,” he instructed the young girl and she obediently did so.

“Look, we have to win this. The court will be trying all kinds of shit, increasing the time we have for contemplating reconciliation and all that, but we have to be quick, and we have to be nimble. I cannot spend another day with that man alright, so please hurry up and finish this case. As soon as
If Elia is on the other side, you most probably won’t get all the money that you are hoping for, but the case will be finished fast. She’s the finest lawyer in all of Westeros,” Rhaegar consoled Cersei, and himself.

“And yet you left her. What a shame,” The Lannister-Baratheon left the room shaking her head in shock and awe. She also left an envelope of money wrapped on the table. What the hell? Was this the advance or was this just a typical Lannister showing off their money? Rhaegar looked at Missandei who was in splits.

“Yes yes, laugh all you want,” Rhaegar smiled good-naturedly at the young girl as he began making calls to fix a date for the hearing.

“Cause of Divorce?”

“Where to begin?” Elia’s voices caused eruptions of laughter fill and echo the silent courtroom.

“Silence, silence,” Judge Maynard clapped the hammer down on the mahogany table.

“Miss Martell is trying to manipulate the courtroom with her wit, all the while shifting our focus from the atrocities committed on my client,” Rhaegar began to say.

“If you understand so much, why don’t you do the same?” Elia rebuked. The entire audience broke into more peals.

Judge Maynard gave up with his hammer and rolled his eyes. This usually always happened with the Martell lawyer. She would walk into the courtroom and win the case like a breeze all the while making the entire courtroom burst with laughter. Maynard had given up, like most judges.

“Are you not going to do anything about that?” Rhaegar stood up, questioning the judge with shock written plainly all over his face. Maynard just shrugged.

“Let us resume with the case after the lunch break. Mr. Targaryan, get all your facts and evidence together because at this rate, it looks like Cersei Baratheon will have to pay all the alimony, what with her family having blackmailed the Baratheons and all,” the judge announced. Rhaegar sat down frustrated.

“I don’t believe you were the star of the Citadel Law School. Look at Elia, she makes this job look like an art!” Cersei started screeching.

“Oh I’m sorry, I don’t take coaching classes from her,” Rhaegar rebuked. She stole a glance at Elia and Robert who had very god coordination with each other, like a lawyer and client should have. They had been friends for a very long time, especially after that summer when both had had to bear the same pain…

Lunch was busy and bustling with people, mostly Press. Rhaegar hated the media, they seemed like leeches to him. On the other hand, Elia seemed to be soaking in the attention, like always. He rolled his eyes as she answered question with her usual panache.

“You’re magic, in the courtroom, in front of the Press, everywhere. Rhaegar was a fool to leave you…” Robert blabbers over lunch.

“Oh well, you’re making the same mistake,” Elia shrugs as he takes a large bite of her honey mustard meat sandwich. Robert, who has recently turned vegan, gags.

“No I’m not. There’s a difference between you and Cersei Lannister, and anyways, Lyanna is and always will be, my one true love,” Robert defended himself.

“Cersei and I are a lion and viper version of each other. I am just better at hiding my cunning,” Elia smirks as she continues, “and as for Lyanna Stark, don’t even get me started. You’ll regret it later in life Robert, and I swear to God, don’t blame me for fighting a brilliant case!”

Suddenly, Roert stops digging into his salad. He holds his heart and dramatically falls to the floor like in the movies. Elia is only too agile to quickly call the ambulance. People panic and the case is obviously called off for the day.

“Is it cardiac arrest?” Rhaegar asks Elia.

“I mean, that seems to be the obvious but I think it’s also because he turned vegan recently and his body is not holding up,” Elia explains.

“Why the fuck did Robert Baratheon turn vegan?” Rhaegar is amused.
“Because Lyanna Stark did. You should know better," Elia rolls her eyes.
“Trust me, I don’t know better.” The two lawyers stick together as the medical emergency team comes in. They feel like they’re in this together. It is more comfortable that way.

Cersei goes hysterical. In fact, Rhaegar and Elia mount the ambulance just to control her. She cannot stop crying and Elia is shushing her. This was strange. Rhaegar stays closer to Robert, who is also muttering in his delirium. Rhaegar hears what he says, but he keeps quiet. The ambulance ride cannot be more terrifying than it already is. Elia and Rhaegar find themselves in a most uncomfortable position, and yet, they feel helplessly bound to help these two.

The doctors take Robert in as quickly as possible. He was a Baratheon after all. Elia rolls her eyes as she sees the massive queue of commoners getting neglected for a Baratheon; then again, one glance at a broken down Cersei and she thanks the gods that the doctors take in Robert fast. Also, he was her client, and he hadn’t even paid her, so he needs to live. How cruel, Elia chides herself in her head.

The hours slip by. Cersei grows so anxious that Elia seats her in front of the few religious murals that are kept in the hospital. The out and out atheist Cersei Lannister (Baratheon?) kneels and prays. Elia is most astonished at this sudden metamorphosis. She takes a seat close to the section where Robert was being treated, in case the doctors needed to tell her something. Nobody else has arrived yet. The Starks have been holidaying at Riverlands, but Ned was informed and he was on his way. Renly and Margaery were at Highgarden because Margaery was expecting their second child and Olenna Tyrell insisted that she come home. Elia missed having Margaery around as her intern. She was a famous lawyer in her own right today, but Elia missed working with the vibrant trainee lawyer. Stannis was on his way as was Selyse. That was good, some family members besides an unstable wife needed to be there. And where the hell was Rhaegar? Her eyes scanned the corridor and he was nowhere to be found. She shrugged and sat back- how like Rhaegar to escape.

“I am going to lose this case, you can try to win,” a familiar voice plopped down beside her. “Where the hell were you? And in the Seven’s name are you talking about?” Elia asks. Rhaegar hands a cup of steaming tea as he sips his coffee for an answer.

“Robert will stabilise, the doctor said so, but I will not let this divorce happen,” Rhaegar commented.

“Who are you to decide?” Elia grumbled.

“Do you even know what Robert was muttering in his delirium? It was not a Starks’ name that he was taking, no. It was not even one of his brothers, they aren’t even that close. He was taking his wife, Cersei’s name. Repeatedly, over and over again, he kept taking it in his state of whatever it was he was in. I felt like crying, it was that heartbreaking! You can carry on with this case but I will lose it, I swear to the gods! Did you see how shattered Cersei was? She was howling and crying and throwing a fit!” Rhaegar exclaimed.

“Listen Rhaegar, all I know is that Robert is my client, and it is my duty to serve him the best way I can, even if it means winning this bloody case and getting a divorce,” Elia whispered back to him. “Duty, it’s always been that bloody word for you hasn’t it?”

“And it’s never meant anything to you.”

“Which is precisely why I don’t want Robert to repeat my mistakes.”

Silence. There was complete silence before Elia even had the courage to speak again: “what mistake Rhaegar?”

“You know what mistake Elia. You’ve always known. And if only you hadn’t fought our divorce case so bloody well, we wouldn’t be here today would we? But no, you and your bloody duty! It took mine away from me!”

“You took yours away from you. You made a mess, you fell in love with another woman, and you committed adultery. I was just doing my job when I fought our case, and I will continue doing so. You know why? Because when there was nobody else for me in this world, my job was. And it will always stand there, right beside me. You’ve always known my dying wish, haven’t you Rhaegar? I’ve always wanted to die in a courtroom-”
“Delivering a defending speech, yes I remember. But please, don’t ruin two good lives for it,” Rhaegar begged, then continued, “you know, sometimes, I dream at night. I dream of strangling Maynard in my sleep, for granting that bloody divorce, I dream of strangling you in my dream, for being a dreamy lawyer, and then, after all of this, I hang myself, because at the end of the day, if you don’t live, I cannot either.”

Elia’s silence was unnerving, but she decided to spare Rhaegar. “The doctor is here Rhae, most probably good news. I am going to grab a bite downstairs and head home. If it’s bad, let me know and I’ll come back up alright? I’ll also talk to Maynard about the date of the next hearing. I am winning this case, but if you lose yours, maybe, Cersei and Robert won’t have to live through the nightmare we do every day.”

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“If you ever try to go vegan again, I’ll kill you.”
“I am not going to listen to you woman. It’s not you I love.”
“Oh yeah, then why the hell were you taking my name in your close-to-death experience?”
“Who said?”
“Rhaegar did. Well, he was telling Elia but I overheard.”
“You eavesdropped, you sly lioness. This is why I don’t like women, you’re all so petty, look at my Lyanna.”
“That doesn’t answer my question.”
“Okay, maybe I was. So what? You were howling like a wolf too!” That earned Robert a tight spank on his arm.
“Don’t you dare call me a wolf, kraken.”
“Kraken? Like seriously, there is nothing better you could compare me to? The bloody Greyjoys?”
“They’re doing alright for themselves. Theon’s wooed Rhaenys, can you imagine? A Greyjoy is going to marry Targaryan, royalty, man,” Cersei shook her head in wonder.
“Gossip again! Man, I almost died and my wife is gossiping, seven hells!”
“Well, you’re alive, and the doctor says you’ll be alright, but you’re coming back to a normal diet. Like, what are you three? Even Joffrey was not half as fussy about food as you are! I have to give up my job now and see whether my husband is eating well because he of course, does not brains of his own,” Cersei grumbled.
“Ex-husband,” Robert teased.
“Most probably though, yes. Elia is hell bent on winning the case, so most probably yes. Good for me, I still get to stay editor of the hottest fashion magazine in all of Westeros!” Robert rolled his eyes at that.
“She is going to win isn’t she? Just too bloody good.”
“I don’t know what happens, Robert, and honestly, I don’t want to find out.”
Robert, who was still weak and recuperating, pulled his golden-haired wife in for a kiss. What was their relationship? They were going through a divorce, yet kissing each other hungrily, as if they were the two most passionate young lovers of some community college somewhere. What were they? Just hot-blooded friends? Lovers? Man and wife? He didn’t know, but that moment was something he savoured, because soon, quite soon, Stannis came in, looking as uncomfortable as ever, and Cersei blushed, something he had never seen her do. It was the lioness was going pink in the cheeks; it was the most beautiful sight Robert had ever beholden. That night, as his wife curled into his hospital bed, he felt like the most complete man on this universe.

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“My Lord, my client wishes to withdraw her case,” Rhaegar announced.
Maynard looked surprised to say the least. “And what is the reason for that? Robert Baratheon has already charged complaints of adultery against her. You want to pull back a divorce plea?”
“My Lord, my client too wants to pull it back. There is nothing either of us can do here.” Elia’s statement was usually the last word in a courtroom. Maynard shrugged, and in extreme frustration,
cancelled the case.

“May I ask why?” He asked even as people were piling out of the courtroom, grumbling. They had hoped to see some nice ex-husband and wife brawl inside the court.

“Because we are not going to see our mistake reproduced, especially with your assistance,” Rhaegar replied coolly. The entire audience cooed.

“Lyanna Stark was a lovely girl, who would you call it a mistake?” Judge Maynard asked completely taken aback.

“If you love her so much, why don’t you go marry her? Leave them alone. You ruined two good lives, don’t ruin a third and a fourth.” Elia’s no nonsense tone sent everybody into peals of laughter, yet again. Maynard got flustered, and left. He had had it with these two lawyers. They needed to sort out their mess, in his opinion.

Everybody left the courtroom. Cersei and Robert seemed to be in the highest of spirits. Elia found Ned Stark staring at her with a strange resentment but she shrugged it off. Ned was a sensible man, he would come round to it soon enough. Joffrey, Tommen and Myrcella had gifted Elia and Rhaegar with two beautifully wrapped presents- a token for joining their broken family together again. Heck, even Joffrey seemed happy and bearable, much to Elia’s surprise. The two lawyers were alone, and packing their stuff, getting ready to leave. Rhaegar, being as clumsy as he always is, kept dropping pens all over the place. His hand was not being able to reach down under the bench where the highlighter had rolled down. A familiar hand with a viper shaped watch got there first.

“Isn’t it Dany’s birthday today?” Elia asked as she handed Rhaegar the highlighter.

“Oh yes, it is. And I am still stuck here. What a brother I am!”

“Take her to some Mereenese restaurant, she loves Mereenese cuisine,” Elia suggested.

“Can you come along? She loves you more than anything else.”

“Me? Oh well, I don’t know…”

“Come on, you don’t have plans today,” Rhaegar said.

“And what makes you say that?”

“You wouldn’t be standing here making conversation with me otherwise. Also, where could you possibly be going in that pretty peachy dress, you’re not dating anybody.” Elia blushed.

“I should get going Rhaegar.”

“Please come along. You know Dany would love it more than anything else in the world!” Rhaegar gave it a last shot. Elia sighed.

“Viserys is coming too?” Elia asked.

“No, the boy has become too spoilt. He’s not going,” Rhaegar crossed his arms in front of his chest.

“Fine, then neither am I,” Elia argued. She had brought up Viserys almost, and she heard the most horrible stories about him nowadays, how he had turned to drugs and women, especially after the entire Lanna chaos, but Elia knew, that if Viserys heard that she had gone out with Dany and Rhaegar and he had not been invited, that would really shatter him.

“You spoiled the boy.”

“I don’t care. He’s coming,” Elia ended.

Rhaegar rolled his eyes. There was never any talking above her, she was not as malleable or as easily manipulated as Lyanna, but hey, that was her charm. He fished out his phone and dialled Viserys’ number, who was delighted at hearing that they were meeting up with Elia. Rhaegar smiled, for once the family felt complete. If only Rhaenys and Aegon were here…

“Aegon’s still in Dorne?” He slipped in the question casually as they were out on their way to leave.

“No. He’s back, but don’t you even attempt the insane stupidity of trying to call him over okay? I have tried everything in my power to keep those two vengeance driven teenagers away from you alright? You should be glad that Rhaenys has gone off to study at the Citadel,” Elia explained.

“I am glad that my daughter has gone off to study in the best college in Westeros, I am glad that my daughter has the brains of both of us combined. I am so bloody glad and grateful for all of that,
but the fact that I cannot see my Rhaenys in the city stings more than anything,” Rhaegar ended ruefully although the pride was apparent in his voice.

“You are stupid. Rhaenys would murder you with any chance that she got. She plots with Aegon, and you want to call him today. He’ll mix poison in your coffee probably,” Elia argued.

“That is my discredit. What kind of a father am I if my children want to kill me? Don’t you dare blame them alright Elia? Their father was a reckless young boy, their father regrets what he did to their mother every living moment, and their reaction is the most natural and normal one; so not another word against my babies,” Rhaegar reprimanded Elia.


“Aegon is coming today. A father is either going to get forgiven today, or he is going to get killed, I don’t care which one. I’ve made the mistake of leaving behind the three of you once; I am not going to do it again.” With that Rhaegar held Elia’s hand and led her towards the car. For the first time in both their lives’ he had had the last word.
Professional

Chapter Summary

This one is completely different from the rest of the imagines because here the timeline is completely messed up as Rhaegar has a relationship with Lyanna even before he has met with Elia. Also, Sansa and Tyrion are elder here than they are in the books or the TV series. Everything I have tailor made for myself. I liked writing it but I don't know if it is readable.

The last profession on this planet that intrigued Rhaegar Targaryan was that of being a CEO. He had been observing his father since childhood, heading the Targaryan Corporations Limited, and he had developed a loathing for the job. Young Viserys was more interested in it than he was, and that was a proper family disgrace. In fact, during all the family gatherings, and high society parties, Rhaegar would make it a point to slip out, find an empty space, and begin to make music. It was in one such situation that he had met Lyanna for the very first time.

She was a free spirit, just like him. Rhaegar had been strumming his guitar in the solace of his garden, away from prying eyes, trying out a few of the latest tunes he had composed when she had chanced upon him. They clicked instantly, and then made it a point to meet up whenever these parties bored them. Soon the affair turned romantic, and Lyanna would be coming out of the bushes with wild hair and dirty clothes. She dumped her boyfriend of seven years (unfortunately Rhaegar’s distant and hot-blooded cousin Robert Baratheon) who then decided to set spies to see who she was dating, but with no luck, so he would turn to Cersei Lannister for comfort. Rhaegar and Lyanna had chosen to keep their relationship hidden, mainly because they both detested the media attention.

Now, out of the blue moon, Rhaegar was being asked to work as the ‘acting CEO’ of Targaryan Corps. (whatever that meant), while his father was away for some business at Essos. Essentially, Rhaegar had a lot of grumbles about the whole affair: he was not good with administrations, he had no interest in the job, he was going to bring the company down with his incompetence; but Aerys would hear none of it. Then he heard that his father was planning to stay away for a good six months, and he was livid with anger.

“Six months! You’re going to be away for six months! What kind of a dirty joke is this dad? Who is going to handle this massive empire you’ve built for six months? I am not going to do it. And you’re taking Tywin away with you, which essentially leaves me without a financial advisor! Do you understand the gravity of the situation? Like, how could you even imagine tha-”

“You will not be without a financial advisor,” Tywin interrupted Rhaegar’s outburst.

“Who’s going to help me? Most of the Lannisters are at Casterly Rock, and Jaime is a cop and Cersei is a lawyer, and dad is not going to hire anybody from Braavos.”

“He is going to Braavos to sort out this very issue. Meanwhile, my brightest young trainee is going to come here and help you out. She is exceptionally bright I assure you. She is going to be one of Westeros’ most successful bankers in the long run, I predict it,” Tywin said.

“What’s this Einstein banker’s name?” Rhegar asked sceptically.

“Elia Martell.”

“A Martell banker? Are you out of your wits? And she is supposed to be good? All that the Martells are good at is medicine and toxicology. They don’t know numbers,” Rhaegar began shouting again.

“If we were going by family names, then you are a disgrace to the Targaryan heritage by being a
musician,” Aerys finally spoke, and angered his son a great deal more. “I assure you, she is the best,” Tywin said calmly. “If, dad, by the time you come back, this company has been dragged to dust, don’t put the blame on me, or the Martell banker, it was you and your genius financial advisors’ fault for leaving me with a Martell one.”

Elia Martell was as hot as a Martell should be. Above everything else, she flaunted her Dornish heritage dangerously. The first day that she entered the office, most of the men had had a hard time concentrating on their work. Her pencil skirt was a tad bit too short, and there were slits in her silken blouse, effective ones. She walked with a confidence and élan that only came from being brilliant and beautiful.

“May I come in Mr. Targaryan?”

“Yes you may,” Rhaegar said, intent on his laptop, but the moment he looked up, he could not look back down again.

“Hi, Elia Martell, your new financial advisor, of course, till Uncle Tywin comes back, that is,” Elia said not even waiting for Rhaegar’s permission to sit back down.

Rhaegar had to take a few minutes to soak her in. She was not Westerosi conventional beauty, she would not please the Arryns or the Starks or somebody as traditional as Barristan Selmy, but hypnotic dark eyes, and tanned peachy skin and just the right amount of curves on a medium tall stature really took away Rhaegar’s breath. She was so much prettier than what Oberyn had gone around saying. Was he being modest? The boy was not known for modesty. Oh well, each to his own. However, now Rhaegar totally understood why Arthur and Baelor blushed every single time her name was taken. He was taken aback.

“Are you done?” Elia’s sharp voice cut through the silence.

“Done… with what?” Rhaegar croaked nervously. The woman had a presence nobody could deny.

“Done checking me out, I meant. Over right? Can we get to work now?” She was quick to reply.

“I wasn’t checking you out,” Rhaegar replied feigning innocence.

“Oh no of course you weren’t. Anyways, can we get to work?” The Martell sassed.

“Of course, of course we can,” he nervously replied.

“Cool, I’ll take out the stats I’ve noted down. Most of your stocks are in real bad condition, we need to review them, and fast, then invest them elsewhere. I remember that was my first impression, here we go, just hold up, the laptop takes a little bit of time to open, a few seconds. Also, you really shouldn’t be checking girls out like that, what with a secret relationship with Lyanna Stark and all. She’d be very upset, considering she’s a famous beauty,” Elia rattled off.

“How in the Seven’s name did you know?” Rhaegar asked incredulously.

“Oh well, I’m best friends with Varys,” Elia shrugged.

“Varys? That pap? The star reporter who goes by the pen name of LittleBirdyXXX,” Rhaegar asked.

“Infamous,” Elia corrected.

“Well, technically speaking, you should be thankful to the paps for maintaining your reputation. It is out of pity that they don’t publish your secret relationship. As for me, I love the meida!”

“How in the Seven’s name did you know?” Rhaegar asked incredulously.

“Oh well, I’m best friends with Varys,” Elia shrugged.

“Varys? That pap? The star reporter who goes by the pen name of LittleBirdyXXX,” Rhaegar asked.

“Oh yes, that’s him. See, my best friend’s famous,” Elia smiled proudly.

“Infamous,” Rhaegar corrected.

“Of course you do,” Rhaegar mumbled. The Dornish loved attention of all kinds.

“Excuse me, what was that?” Elia’s ears practically perked up.

“Oh nothing, nothing at all,” Rhaegar replied.

“Oh just some racist comment I suppose. It is okay I don’t mind, Uncle Ty said you were not very welcome with a Martell working at the bank. I get you, what can you Northerners be capable of other than criticizing Southerners,” Elia retorted.

“Excuse me, I am not a Northerner,” Rhaegar rebuked.

“To me you are. To me you are very far up North. Don’t even get me started with the kind of people your girlfriends’ regional guys are, that is next level,” Elia laughed thinking about all the taboos the North held about the Martells.
Rhaegar rolled his eyes. This woman was a handful. “Has it like ever occurred to you that the entire bloody world does not revolve around you?”

“Well sometimes, but then that is usually proven wrong,” Elia replied in the most matter of fact tone.

Rhaegar was simply appalled by her behaviour, and the straight face she maintained even when she was belting out the meanest of the phrases. She reminded him, uncannily of the highly atrocious and sharp-tongued Queen of Thorns Olenna Tyrell.

“Do you know Mrs. Olenna Tyrell?” He asked her one day.

“I’ve met her once, I think. She paid a visit to the Citadel. I admire her,” Elia smiled in a most dreamy manner.

“Oh yes, I guessed as much,” Rhaegar shook his head.

“You’re one of those chauvinist pigs she keeps talking about aren’t you? I thought you would be better, what with the music and all, but you are just the same. You know, I had an abusive boyfriend once, a Clegane. He was an absolute asshole, but you’re worse. You don’t even realise what you are,” Elia would say right back at his face.

“I am your boss, Miss Martell!”

“Oh please, I can totally vision the heights you would take this company to without my help…” Elia’s laugh filled the room.

The first two months were bittersweet. The Martell banker and Targaryan CEO were always at loggerheads with each other. In fact, Rhaegar hated how much he needed her for the day to day running of the company even more than the actual financial advice. If she took a sick leave (which she did take sometimes), he would make it a point to go over to her place and ‘discuss work’. Her presence was becoming a necessity for him, more than a want. It was such a strange relationship. He would always be in awe about the negotiations she would make or the stocks she would save or the speeches she would deliver and the tax reliefs she would get. Elia made as boring a job as finance look like it was fun- and boy, didn’t she have fun!

The entire office noticed the sweet and understanding coordination between the latest CEO and Head of Finance. Nobody said anything, but everybody felt it was cute. They were an extremely visually appealing couple, him with a willowy Targaryan light skin and light hair and light eyes and her with a complete exotic contrast. People would still steal glances at the young couple while they were at work, or, simply, at leisure, joking and pulling each others’ leg and the like. It had taken them time to adjust to each other, people realised that. Although Elia Martell was a woman of exceptional restraint, and one could never understand anything on her part, Rhaegar often let his outbursts show exceptionally obviously. So yes, the first few weeks had been hell for the entire company because their Head of Finance and their CEO never talked to each other or even considered consultation; but then the strangest miracle had taken place. They had been locked into the office for the night and when the employees had returned the next day, the two hotshots were nestled against each other in the deepest and sweetest slumber, and their relationship had never been the same ever again.

“The alcohol is doing you more harm than good,” Rhaegar looked at the bottle of Dornish Red with distaste. Although he was here on the pretext of making Elia sign a few papers for an ‘extremely urgent meeting on Monday’, he was truly just nursing her since she had come down with a semi-mild attack of Typhoid.

“Since when did Wine hurt a Dornishman? The rest of the world can betray us but our snakes, our wine, and our strength will not,” Elia explained patronisingly even as she came down with another bout of racking coughs.

“Oh yes, I can see that,” Rhaegar commented dryly. Elia slapped him on the arm.

“Not me, I am weak, but you look at most of the Martell women, they are so brilliant and strong,” Elia dreamily said.

“Hey, you’re strong too, in your own way, and don’t even get me started ‘brilliant’! You’re just a little physically weak, that’s okay, it’s because your immune system is a real pain in the ass, but
you’ll get better, I know it,” Rhaegar optimistically cooed. “You talk like one of those stupid and dreamy princesses,” Elia laughed, and Rhaegar rolled his eyes. “You want some more of the tea? I have to check your temperature again, in a few minutes. Wait hold on, till then I’ll get some tea,” Rhaegar began busying himself. “No, you don’t have to do anything. You can go now I’ve signed your papers. I’ll take my own temperature,” Elia rolled her eyes. “What the hell, why? Look, there’s nobody else who stays here with you and you need to be looked after right now. Don’t be a typical Dornishwoman, stubborn and too strong for her own good,” Rhaegar chided, and it was obvious how much he had come to care for the girl. Elia was an intelligent woman, she understood, and was hell bent on distancing him. “No Rhaegar, I will be fine, seriously, go now,” she urged him on. “Are you sure? I am not so sure about this idea, in fact, I think it is a pretty bad idea. Okay, listen, why don’t you have your Uncle Lewin over. That will be better no? And why is he never over? Why don’t you live with him in the first place?” Rhaegar asked curiously. “No absolutely not, I am not going to be a burden on my family any longer,” Elia staunchly replied. “Burden? Family is supposed to love and take care of you. You don’t become a ‘burden’ to them. It is something they do out of love,” Rhaegar explained. “It is something they do out of duty. If you had to take care of me, not because you wanted, but because it was duty, you would have hated me with every living breath of yours. Your solace would have been Lyanna Stark, not me, and you would have run into her arms leaving me all alone. But you choose to stay back for me, and that is why you like spending the massive amount of time that you spend with me. It happens. And my family is too bloody good when it comes to duty, so they will perform it till their last breath, but I will not let them,” Elia shrugged nonchalantly.

Rhaegar was so shocked at Elia’s frankness that he left. What absurd ideas this Martell woman had, he was not in love with her. In fact, just before he left, he even told her ‘get over yourself the world does not revolve around you’ but as soon as he was out the door, he broke down. He had really gotten attached to her, hadn’t he?

Elia broke down as soon as Rhaegar left. She had grown insanely attached to the man as well, but she knew that this was all a ploy between her mother and Rhaella’s, to set them up together. As soon as Aerys had said that he would be taking a trip to Essos, they had gotten to work, and everything had worked in their favour because Tywin Lannister had chosen her anyways, to be his protégée and fill in his gap. Elia could not let Rhaegar fall for her like that, and she would not fall for him like that. Heck, falling in love had never been part of Elia’s plan in life; it was something she liked to keep out of distance and reach. Most of her affairs were all just casual flings, typical Dornish style. But this, this was different. She knew it, she could feel it, and with every breath, she hated it.

Elia joined work a few days later, and she was absolutely mortified to meet Rhaegar again. Face to face confrontation had never been her forte, she liked to play around with words and manipulate people indirectly, but she knew that Rhaegar would be wanting to talk to her openly and frankly and she hated the prospect with a passion. She walked as slow as she could, towards his cabin, where she was always called. “Mr. Targaryan, you called?” The name had gone from Rhae, back to Mr. Targaryan. “Yes Miss Martell, I called you to discuss the minutes of the meeting we had on Monday, and what you suggest should be my next rational ste-” As soon as Rhaegar laid eyes on Elia, all air of formality and hostility that he was planning to exhibit flew out of the window. The fever had taken a toll on the woman in a way he had never imagined. She was paler now, and he hated that colour on her, her eyes were more sunk in and she was so much thinner. If only he had stayed back and not listened to her provocations! Even her clothes had become so modest, the formal dress she wore had full sleeves (an outrage by Dornish standards) and covered the knees and was just too simple, too grey, too blah, for Elia Martell.
“Oh Eli, you haven’t been holding up at all, why did I leave you in the first place,” Rhaegar ran to her and held her so close, so tight that Elia swore, she could have cried. “I should never have left you in the first place, me and my stupid pride. What the hell was I thinking, I am so sorry, Eli, I am so sorry,” Rhaegar cried.

“I am not your responsibility, remember that Targaryan,” Elia tried to brave her tears. His overwhelming reaction had shaken her genuinely.

Rhaegar did not allow her to keep up with this nonsense any longer, he kissed her, and he kissed her with real fire, like a Targaryan should. He kissed her so hard that she almost fell back and he was swift to catch her, sweep her off of her feet, and push her against his table. And so started a whirlwind office romance.

Elia and Rhaegar would literally have a go at each other in every imaginable corner of the office. His room was a favourite, but even when the rest of staff had left, there was Elia’s cubicle. There had been both the Men’s and the Women’s washrooms respectively and there had even been the cafeteria which they had not spared, not to mention the meeting room. When Elia finally got her own room (which was basically Tywin’s room but because she was a junior she got it five months later), that became a favourite spot as well. Rhaegar was so wrapped up with Elia that he had forgotten to break up with Lyanna. Most of his time was spent with the Dornish viper, either in the office or at her place, on the pretext that they had heaps and heaps of work and Elia really needed a good cook.

Yes, this acquaintance did Targaryan Corps. wonders. It took the company to heights that Aerys could never even have imagined. Elia was exceptional at her job, and Rhaegar really listened to her. It was revealed by some journalists (and not Varys, he swore up and down to his best friend) that Aerys had actually gone off to take medical psychological help at Essos. There was a scandal, and Elia and Rhaegar grew even closer. She had become his lover, confidante, and solace.

“I think it’s time we should tell people, don’t you think? I mean father will be coming back, so that would be the only rational thing to do,” Rhaegar mused one day, while they were wrapped around in each other in a very comfortable bubble bath.

“Tell people what Rhaegar?” Elia asked in a most amused manner.

“Well, about us, this relationship,” Rhaegar replied as if it was the most obvious thing in the world. “It’s only physical, what’s to say about it? I’ll leave once your dad comes back. I will go back to working at the Casterly Bank,” Elia shrugged.

“What the fuck do you even mean by that?!?”

“I meant exactly what I said,” Elia shrugs again. Rhaegar got up as fast as he could, from the elaborate bath tub.

“It’s only physical? That is all? Everything, everything between us, all of this, it’s just physical? How could you even say that? We genuinely care and love each other. Yes, it probably started off as a steamy physical affair but it is not that anymore. You know that, I know that. We make a good team, we make a great team, and we can reach heights together! Did you see where we took Targaryen Corps? Dad is so impressed. Mom adores you, everything is perfect! How can you say there is nothing between the two of us?!” Rhaegar was hollering now.

“I am not a musician, and you will go back to being one as soon as your father returns. You will make great music with Lyanna Stark, but please, leave me out of this alright. Love is a weakness I cannot afford.”

“Why, what are you, a spy?” Rhaegar spitefully spat back.

“No, I am not. I am a banker, and that is a pretty normal job, but still, I cannot do all this. In some other universe, I would have had to marry you to get to the top of the social ladder, but now, now I can do it myself. I enjoyed my time with you, but I am calling it quits,” Elia replied cooly.

“Oh, so you never felt anything for me?” Tears were streaming down Rhaegar’s handsome purple eyes.

“No.” Elia looked him in the eye as she said that. He left, he changed and he left and Elia sat back in her Jacuzzi. When she had said ‘no’ to him, she might have looked him in the eye, but she also
had her fingers crossed under the water like every time she lied to somebody.

Aerys had come back to see a profound change in his eldest son. Rhaegar had always been a melancholic character but he seemed so much more closed and depressed. The only songs he ever produced (or wrote) were those of heartbreak, and he moped around with a fallen face all over town and he refused to even come to pick his father up from the office sometimes. His relationship with Lyanna had gone public after he broke up with her and the boy had practically become a recluse.

“Something is wrong with Elia,” Jaime muttered to his younger brother, observing her closely at the bank one day. “Her eyes don’t smile like they used to, and neither does she.”

“Hmm, no kidding, even her conversations are bland and unless she has to make negotiations, she generally doesn’t even open her mouth,” Tyrion agreed with his brother.

“Would you Lannister siblings stop stalking her so creepily? It is pretty obvious that she fell in love with the Targaryen boy and instead of running to her apartment with ice-cream, you two morons are trying to analyse her situation from a distance. This is why a girl needs girlfriends,” Cersei noted ever so wisely.

“You really think she fell for Rhaegar?” Tyrion asked.

“I think they both fell for each other. Rhaegar broke up with my aunt; it was such a lot of chaos back home. And now, even Robert is dating you, so she feels extremely isolated and lonely,” Sansa shrugged and informed them, pointing at Cersei, who was Robert’s girlfriend now.

“Not my fault,” Cersei put her hands up in surrender. Both Cersei and Jaime had dropped in to meet Tyrion and Sansa who worked at the bank. They had been desperately trying to set up the two of them, despite the age gap.

“I think we should confront Elia. I cannot stand that fallen face any longer,” Tyrion sighed exasperated.

“Why would she leave him if they both fell for each other though?” Jaime asked bewildered. He was Elia’s best friend, but sometimes, he just did not understand her.

“I think she knew that their mothers were trying to set them up, and she totally wanted to avoid something of the sort. Also, you know she is commitment phobic so there’s also that,” Cersei filled in, again.

“How in fuck’s name do you know all of this?” Both Tyrion and Jaime had given up on this gossip monger of a sister but they wanted to know. Sansa laughed, she knew exactly how.

“You see, your best friend Varys is not the only one with secrets up his sleeve. There’s my acquaintance Baelish as well,” Cersei dropped in the news casually.

“Baelish? You mean the corporate lawyer?” Jaime asked.

“Sansa’s stalker, that creep,” Tyrion snarled.

“He can’t do anything now Ty,” Sansa smiled at Tyrion dreamily and both Jaime and Cersei hid their sly smiles.

“Well, yes anyways, it’s him. He knows all of this stuff, and he tells me sometimes,” Cersei proudly announced.

“Oh well, since we know all of this already, let’s go talk to our friend about this. What are we waiting for?” Jaime announced as the gang began making their way towards Elia.

Now there was a lot of persuasion and convincing that went on but Elia was unshakable. She convinced that nothing good could come out of this strange relationship that had been built as a façade in the first place.

“So okay your mothers set you up, but it was the two of you that fell in love alright?” Cersei reprimanded the young viper for the umpteenth time.

“Rhaegar broke up with my aunt for you, and yet, here I am trying to convince you to run back to him, there must be a reason. I believe in the two of you, I genuinely do, why don’t you believe in you?” Sansa tried to reason. “I mean, if Arya came to know of this, she would kill me.”

Elia smiled at the young girl. She reminded Elia a lot of her younger self, all convincing and sharp. She smiled, Sansa was as far from a Stark as she had ever seen, and yet there was a wolf spirit in
her, but it was more refined and subtle and Southern. She would make a good match with Tyrion, although she was still in school, but smart enough to get a summer job at the bank.

“Thank you Sansa, but I really don’t think so,” Elia smiled.

“This is just plain stupid,” Cersei claimed at last.

“We have to try with Rhaegar,” Tyrion whispered to his sister.

“Leave that to me,” Sansa said determined.

And so began a conspiracy. Sansa and Tyrion began coordinating with Rhaegar, for which they sometimes had to make trips to King’s Landing together, something they did not mind at all, and Jaime was still trying to convince Elia with little nudges from Cersei. Varys had joined the gang though.

“Guys, my decision is final,” Elia warned them in a tone of finality. All three of them sighed. Their disappointment was shared by god and it started pouring outside.

“Look, even God disapproves of your stupidity,” Varys said. “What are you hiding Elia? What is the real matter, why are you not saying yes to Rhaegar?”

“It’s nothing,” Elia replied suspiciously.

“Okay now it’s definitely something,” both Varys and Jaime said in unison.

“No guys…”

“Eli, come on, don’t lie to us,” the two best friends pleaded.

“Fine. At first I thought I couldn’t be in love, it was the entire ‘Invincible Elia’ theory working in my head. Then I found out that Mom had set us up, and I was even more upset so I thought that I could never let this happen. Then a strange fear came over me, like he was going to leave me, I don’t know what it was, I can’t even explain, but it was like, he had betrayed me in some other life, some major déjà vu happening, and I couldn’t. Every time he touches me, it’s like; I can’t give in to that,” Elia mumbled and stumbled her way through the sentence.

“Won’t you give me another chance in this life then? To set all my mistakes right, if I ever made any,” a familiar voice whispered behind her. Both the Lion and the Spider sneakily slipped away, leaving Elia glaring at them. She turned to face a soaked and drenched Rhaegar.

“Oh my god, you’ll catch a cold!” She panicked.

“How unromantic are you? I am talking of a new life here, we are talking of being together through seven lives, and you’re worried about pneumonia?” Rhaegar sighed exasperated.

“This is a more pressing issue,” Elia retorted.

“Damn you Martell,” Rhaegar inched dangerously close.

“Don’t you dare take another step towards me. I told you, I don’t love you, and if my stupid friends have convinced you otherwise, it’s their fantasy, not mine,” Elia warned.

“Were you born like this?”

“Excuse me?”

“Like this, absolutely annoying, and oblivious and so bloody intellectual but not even smart enough to see what’s in front of her eyes,” Rhaegar rebuked.

“I was born a sickly thing, and I have been a fighter ever since. I don’t have any time or space in my life for romance,” Elia inched closer to him and replied in fury.

“It’s a good thing I do then. So you can look after Targaryan Corps. and I can look after you.”

“What? What the hell does that even mean?”

Rhaegar cut her off with a kiss. And he was dripping wet as he caught hold of her, pulled her in and kissed the breath out of her. She would hit him and chide him for wetting her work clothes (an extremely clean pair of trousers with a crisp white shirt) and then she would kiss him back equally passionately, and they would take this to her office and the rest of the gang would celebrate their success together with a drink.

“This is hardly professional behaviour Mr. Targaryan,” Elia would warn every time Rhaegar would pull her in for some dangerous activity in his office, to which Rhaegar would curtly reply: “you should have thought of that before you walked in like a diva right through this door, Mrs. Martell.” Then he would pull her in for a kiss, or just trail kisses down her neck, whatever pleased the two of them, and nothing else would matter at that moment in time.
Porcelain

Chapter Summary

So this one is like really sad, but I promise you the next one is going to be happier! I am so sorry if this makes you sad. Also, Brienne enters for the first time!

“Here is another set of porcelain cutlery, these are tea cups, I think,” Rhaegar smiled as he handed over the intricately packed gift to his wife. The most he could make out from the translucent wrapping paper was that it contained objects of Chinaware. Elia’s fondness for all things porcelain was very well known, and most of the guests were swift to gift exactly that.

“This is so pretty! I think the Tarly’s gifted this,” Elia gurgled in delight.

“Even Randyll knows that my wife loves porcelain more than me!” Rhaegar teased.

“Oh shut up!” Elia smacked Rhaegar on the arm. They were sitting with their backs pressed against each other, and going through the scores of unopened presents from their wedding.

“Listen dear wife, if this obsession does not subside, I will file divorce papers against you,” Rhaegar announced in a matter of fact voice.

“Okay then,” Elia rebuked back and got up, picking up her clothes to be immediately pulled back into her husbands’ arms.

“Now where are you off to Madam? And especially, what are you doing with those clothes? They need to be kept back, on the floor, where they belong,” Rhaegar warned dangerously.

“I think not. And what are you going to do if I decided to wear clothes, completely covered decent clothes for the rest of the honeymoon, all the time,” Elia challenged.

“Oh well, let’s see, I’ll cut them all up then,” Rhaegar shrugged evilly causing Elia to gasp. “And so, if you want your clothes to see daylight again, keep them on the floor.”

With that the couple stopped their little conversation, and the heavy scrutiny of their wedding gifts, and went back to what they had been spending their entire honeymoon doing. Quarth was an exotic place, and with an exotic wife, Rhaegar could have sworn that life could not get better. They spent most of their time indoors although Elia longed to see the Quarthian sun sometimes, Rhaegar was content with the one he had in front of him.

“Almost 65% of our wedding gifts consist of Porcelain cutlery or Porcelain house décor. Do I not matter to people?” Rhaegar despaired as he opened yet another one of those ceramic figurines they had been receiving.

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“Of course you matter to people, and they know that the only way to control you is to keep me happy. They are clever people, you are not, dear Husband,” Elia smiled mischievously at him as he rolled his eyes.

“This is the last lot of gifts, and see, most of it is Porcelain. Where will we keep all of this dear wife?”

“We’ll make a large cabinet just to show off the porcelain. It will be in the living room. Even the cutlery will be kept there; I will not have them used in the kitchen, so that anybody and everybody could break them! I will not have my Chinaware broken,” Elia protectively brushed a hand over them causing Rhaegar to gag. “Jealous, my love?”

“Not in a million years,” Rhaegar shook his head vigorously. But he was also quick to pull the girl back right into his arms.

“This one will be right in the middle,” Elia smiled lovingly at a figurine she held up of some Ghiscari god moulded out of porcelain. Elia was never really a follower of the Seven, she was fonder of the Ghiscari gods, Rhaegar knew that, and here was one that was made of porcelain.
Whoever had gifted this knew his wife very well. “Who gave this?” Rhaegar asked curiously. “Arthur, I think,” Elia replied. “Arthur…”. Rhaegar’s voice grew colder. Arthur Dayne was still a touchy topic between the two of them. Elia had been dating Arthur when she first met Rhaegar. Rhaegar had always had his eyes set on her but she was his best friends’ girl friend so he had tried to maintain some distance. The very week that Elia broke up with Arthur, Rhaegar had gone sprinting to her apartment, bringing her all kinds of comfort food and movies and in less than a month, they were a couple. It had been quite messy on Arthur’s part, so much so that he would create scenes at the college canteen every single day. “Come on Rhae,” Elia kissed his cheek as she laid her head on his lap. “It’s all over now. He was so sober even at our wedding, you should be glad that that mess has been sorted out now.” “Yes, he was sober enough to gift you two of your favourite things all in one figurine,” Rhaegar grumbled. “Rhaegar Targaryan, you are jealous!” Elia laughed at Rhaegar’s face, and she had to admit, jealous Rhaegar was quite hot. Rhaegar picked her up, and took her to the bed all the while thinking: why should I be jealous? I am the one on a honeymoon with you! Elia really wanted to go back to opening the rest of the gifts but Rhaegar would hear none of it. After quite a few sessions of nuptial activities, Elia decided to finally get out of bed. “Oh come on,” Rhaegar groaned. “No, it’s late, we should at least go and have lunch,” Elia scolded him. “We didn’t even have breakfast and I am starving!” “There is something else you can have…” “No absolutely not! Now get out of that bed, Rhaegar Targaryan, and get ready,” Elia warned threateningly. “Yes, yes, fine, whatever you say madam,” a slightly disappointed Rhaegar got out of bed. As he walked to the washroom, he noticed the entire pile of wedding gifts that were lying out on the floor and sighed fondly. “You know, even I am growing fond of these porcelain objects, Mrs. Martell,” he hugged Elia from the back. “Hmm, should we ever get a divorce, you keep them, I don’t think I will ever be able to look at them again,” Elia taunted. “Oh shut up! We will never get a divorce!” Rhaegar could not have been more wrong. He would come to Elia with a bunch of divorce papers and scores of sorries only seven years later on that exact same day. He had fallen in love with a student, somebody he had met when he had gone to deliver a lecture, some Stark girl, and he would decide, in less than a few days, that he needed to separate from his wife. Now whether it was the biggest mistake of his life, or whether Elia was just great at predicting things, was a big mystery.

“Elia say something! For the Love of the Seven! Say something!” Rhaegar kept pacing the room up and down. He had gotten divorce papers for his wife, on one fine unsuspecting evening, and Elia had remained silent ever since. She got up, opened the wardrobe and began packing her things. Rhaegar watched her face closely and there was literally no expression. She was not crying or angry or frustrated. That porcelain face of hers was absolutely blank. An above average breeze was blowing across King’s Landing that day, and Elia only had a floral embroidered silken shawl over her sleeveless purple maxi dress. She held it closer to her chest as she packed all of her belongings into one suitcase. Rhaegar noticed how the woman remarkably left all the clothes that he had ever gifted her. It was not regret or guilt that filled Rhaegar, Elia’s silence only invoked a sense of desperation in him. He realised, at that moment, that he could marry Lyanna Stark, and he could have tens of hundreds of babies with her (just like she wanted), but a piece of his real happiness was walking out of the door. Elia did not
think twice about taking the kids. If Rhaegar was breaking up with her for some other reason entirely, she would probably have kept Aegon since the child was so attached to his father, but Rhaegar was going to bring another woman into the house, a Stark, that too a pretty dumb and naïve one and Elia would not allow any of her children to grow up in an atmosphere like that. The rest of the night was spent in Rhaegar howling away for his children, realising his mistake once it was too bloody late, and Elia going over to Jaimes’ place and spending the rest of the night crying herself silently to sleep. She was never one for the large break downs or the incessant sobbing. Elia Martell had been refined in love and she would be equally refined in loss.

“She needs to eat something Jaime,” Brienne would tell her fiancé every single day.

“You are welcome to try a Martell woman into doing something she does not want to do, best of luck,” Jaime replied back extremely annoyed.

“Excuse me, why are you snapping at me? What have I done?” Brienne sharply retorted.

“You haven’t done anything babe, I am sorry. It’s just… seeing Elia like this is so bloody heart breaking. It’s like a permanent solar eclipse, and I can’t take it anymore. But I don’t even know what to do…”

Elia overheard the conversation. Stealth had always been her biggest strength and biggest weakness. She realised that her presence was causing strains in the house; of course it would, they had a small apartment, and here she was with two children and Viserys practically coming over every day and crying with her. It was a ridiculous situation and Elia was glad that Jaime and Brienne had put up with her for even a week. In the middle of the night, she took her children and she left; she left for Highgarden. She had liked the place so much that she had purchased a beautiful flat for herself many years ago, and now was the time to utilise her own assets. Also, Olenna Tyrell was there and Elia always felt safer with that woman.

“Couldn’t you have tried to manipulate him otherwise?” Olenna Tyrell would ask her one evening at Highgarden.

“I looked at his eyes. I couldn’t have. He had fallen way too deep; down drenched in love with this girl. See Rhaegar is not stupid; he cannot be controlled like that. I have tried trust me, but I also have my own job and my own life to sort out, how would I have known that an affair was going on behind my back?” Elia replied.

“You know what I did with my Husband righ-”

“Yes I know. But there is a difference between your husband and mine. You understood, the moment you saw your husband, that he was a fool who could be controlled. I did not think so of Rhaegar. I underestimated him! I did not think he was like a Baelor who I could control on a remote; I thought he was more of an independent and smart man. Who would have known he was going to turn out to be a jerk?! ” Elia cut right through her speech.

“In that you are right. None of us thought Rhaegar was going to turn out to be like that. Honestly, stupid men are better than half-baked ones,” Olenna commented, and for the first time in like forever, the young Martell laughed her heart out.

“You know, I didn’t even cry, when he brought in the divorce papers. Was I numb with pain? I don’t know. But was my ego bruised and my pride burning? Yes, totally. And I gave up talking and eating only because to myself, I had failed, not as a wife, but as a woman, who could not control her own husband. And then it dawned on me, there are but two kinds of husbands in this world, the ones that could be controlled, and the ones that should be.”

And so the divorce case dragged on in court. Nobody was prepared to grant this successful and beautiful and functionally profitable couple a divorce. Cersei fought for Elia, and Jon Connington fought for his best friend. It was a long fight, and a hard one, but the divorce was given, and Lyanna would go on to shamelessly and quite passionately kiss Rhaegar in the middle of court, an act that would come to be shamed publicly. Not once through the entire process had Elia even looked at Rhaegar, talking was a distant expectation.

That night when Rhaegar went back home, Lyanna Stark was all over him, but there was no smile on his face. He had the love of his life in his arms, but he felt so bloody empty inside that he hated it. In the middle of the night he had gone to switch off the light in the dining room when he noticed
the massive mantelpiece that only contained porcelain objects, and that beautiful night in Quarth came rushing back to his head, where Elia had told him that should they ever separate, he should not even dream about sending back her porcelain. That night, Rhaegar fell asleep under the mantelpiece; crying.

Exactly five years had passed since the Dragon and the Sun had been divorced. Both of their lives had gone on as if everything was normal, and though they missed each other terribly, they kept it to themselves. Elia had moved back to Dorne, and Rhaegar had always avoided going there for understandable reasons. Life was going okay, at most, but Rhaegar was drudging on with it somehow. In the books it was so much more fascinating to run away and live with a student, but in real life there was an awkward age gap which leads to unfavourable gaps in communication. They never wrote about this stuff in the books really, and that is why Rhaegar had all but given up reading fiction.

“You have a message from an unknown number,” Viserys announced as he plopped the iPhone right in front of Rhaegar’s face. Let’s just say that the boy had never really forgiven Rhaegar for leaving Elia.

Rhaegar picked up his phone and clicked on the message. He had given up trying with Viserys; as it is the boy only came once a week because he had to, along with Dany, as per court orders and they barely stayed for a few hours and left. Dany had blossomed into a beautiful young lady but even she kept her distance from Rhaegar. Viserys had convinced her to. Rhaegar had given up even chiding the boy. Instead, he concentrated on reading the message. The screen glared back at him.

‘Hi, Elia here. Rhaenys is having some sort of Father’s Day celebration in school where everybody’s dads are going. If you could come, that would be great.’

Rhaegar’s pulse literally stopped beating right there. Elia had contacted him again, after five bloody years, here she was. It was a short message, and curt, but it was something. It was a sign that he was going to be having a very good day. He was so happy, so extremely dazed with happiness that he went over and kissed a completely bewildered Viserys on the forehead multiple times. Dany was astonished too, and the siblings looked to their elder brother with utter confusion and astonishment.

‘Hi Eli!!!!!!!!!!! So glad to get your message, I really, really hope you are holding up and doing well. What is it you wanted to talk about- Rhaenys, oh yes, I will take Rhaenys to her school, I’ll take you as well, I promise. I will take Egg and Vis and Dany, and the six of us can hang out again!!!’

Rhaegar did not even realise that he was being so completely creepy, sending out a message like that. All he could think of was that Elia had contacted him after so many years; maybe he was at least going to get a best friend back.

‘Rhaenys will be coming to King’s Landing on her own; I think she’s old enough. You’ll pick her up from the airport. The Father’s Day celebration is going to take place in King’s Landing that’s why, otherwise I would never have asked you. It is this Friday. Kindly let me know if that’s convenient.’

Elia’s reply was painstakingly official and curt but Rhaegar thought none of it. She was just trying to tease him, like she used to when they dated, she would call him ‘Your Grace’ and ‘Prince Targaryan’ and all sorts of things like that. That is what she was doing and Rhaegar refused to believe otherwise.

‘Of course I can make it. You need to make it as well, and so does Egg, alright? I have not seen the two of you in forever!!!!!!’

Rhaegar went and informed both Daenerys and Viserys that Elia was coming with their niece and their nephew and their joy could not be contained. However, Viserys, being the clever boy that he was, double-checked with his aunt and realised that she had no intentions of coming, that was his foolish brothers’ fantasy.
Rhaenys was a breathing photocopy of her mother. It was like somebody had placed a mirror to Elia, and there was a slightly shorter version of hers, but yes, with purple eyes. When Rhaegar first set eyes on Rhaenys, he could not contain his happiness; it was like seeing young Elia all over again, a deep profound intellectual beauty. But the minute his eyes fell on her purple ones, he was proud. She was a dragon after all! He ran over to her, scooped her up and spun her around. Rhaenys, a girl of around thirteen years of age, found all this very embarrassing. “What are you doing? Please put me down!” “My firstborn look at the strong woman you have grown up to be. I could not be prouder of you, my child,” Rhaegar grinned as he kissed the top of her forehead. “Yeah fine whatever, can we get going already? The function is taking place at the Dragon pit so we’ve got to go there,” Rhaenys informed Rhaegar. “Of course my love,” Rhaegar said as he buckled her into the car and got into the drivers’ seat. He had insisted that he would drive her there and drive her back to the airport, there would be no drivers or bodyguards or people like that, just a father and a daughter. “So, I guess Maa told you, but the thing is that you have to speak for around a few minutes I guess and then we take a picture and that’s the end of that. I wanted to come with Uncle Oby, but he reached here yesterday and I got tickets for today only. Most of his daughters also go to school with me. He has this enormous speech written out!” Rhaenys exclaimed. “So do I,” Rhaegar smiled. “An enormous speech? Listen, you have to speak about me, not about Lyanna Stark. Now please don’t make things up just for the sake of it, say she’s my daughter and she’s pretty smart and I am proud of her, and get it over with,” Rhaenys said as a matter of fact. Her words stung like needles on Rhaegar’s heart. “Rhaenys, you’re my child, you are my daughter! Nobody can take that away from the two of us!” “You already have Mr. Targaryan. Remember, you left my Maa, when I was seven or six or something like that. Egg was a baby! Do you know how insulted she felt, when she had to go and stay at other people’s places? She was a Martell, a born Princess, and you reduced her to a beggar! A woman who begged for a roof to live under. Had she not remembered that space she had purchased at Highgarden, we would have been living under the mercy of a couple of lions and spiders!” “Rhaenys I repent what I did. Every living moment, every waking moment, I think what could I have done differently? I dream about it, I cannot even sleep properly, is that not punishment enough?” “Oh no Mr. Targaryan. That is not punishment enough. Punishment would be you falling in love with my mother all over again and she leaving you like garbage and tossing you in the trashcan, that would be punishment. Now wipe your tears and keep a straight face because we are almost there I think, that’s what the GPS is saying.” The Dragon Pit was brimming with Dornish children and their fathers. There were a few Braavosi and Rhoynars and whoever else sent their child to the National Private Academy of Dorne. Rhaegar was dying inside, but his daughter was right, emotions could not always replace duty. Rhaenys had taken after her mother in more ways than one. This girl too understood duty like nobody else, and was ready to carry out it out even in the presence of somebody she hated. “Now we would request Mr. Rhaegar Targaryan, whose daughter Rhaenys Targaryan is a highly esteemed scholarship holding student of ours, to come up here and say a few words,” the principle, Mr. Santagar announced, motioning to Rhaegar. Rhaegar sucked in a deep breath and went forth. “The last time I saw my daughter, she was eight years old. She was a bright and amiable young girl who had already won every important person over with her demeanour; just like her mother. Now she’s thirteen, stronger and brighter than any child I have ever seen, heck, she’s stronger and brighter than some of the grown women I have met. Nothing gives me more pleasure to call her my daughter just the way nothing gives her more shame to call me a father. I understand, and I agree. But little Rhaenys, there is not a night I spend where you and Aegon don’t come to haunt me in my dreams. There is not a night I do not spend where I cry myself to sleep first, and then I cry while I
am dreaming as well. I know how smart and dynamic you have grown up to be, I know you want to be an astronaut and I always knew that the stars and the sun was where you belonged; just like a Martell, and just like a Targaryan. You are my biggest accomplishment, which is not much of an accomplishment on my side since your mother mostly brought you up, but I swear to god, none of those medals in Mathematics gives me more pleasure than when I see your pictures on the paper, winning this competition and that. I wish you all the luck my Love, and I have no clue when I’ll be seeing you or your mother or your brother in person again, but I see you every night in my dreams, and I want you to know that even though I am the shittiest father on this planet, you are the most amazing daughter anybody could ever ask for. Thank you for being my dragon Little Rhaenys, even if just in name, I feel like the luckiest man on this planet!” Even as Rhaegar spoke the words there were tears in his eyes. He had messed up, he knew that, but he also knew that he had had the courage to speak up in front of all these Dornishmen; if not prouder, it certainly made him feel lighter. Rhaenys never let other people see her cry. But she was on the verge of tears, and she hated that with a passion. As soon as the speech finished she was next to Rhaegar. There were no ample shows of affection, or a hug or even holding hands, but she did say, in her usual ice cold tone: “you did well dad, you didn’t stutter, that’s good. It’s the first rule of public speaking.” Rhaegar was ecstatic at the word ‘dad’ but decided not to overreact lest his daughter began to ignore him in public. She resembled her mother uncannily. The rest of the celebrations flew away like a breeze. It was soon time for departure, but the father daughter duo made sure to buy some dragon-fruit and sit in front of the Blackwater scooping it out and eating. Rhaegar had made sure they were going to do this, even if it meant leaving the celebrations a little early. “So why did your school decide to celebrate Father’s Day at the Dragon Pit?” Rhaegar asked curiously. “See, some Braavosi merchant left off huge donations because his daughter got accepted with a scholarship so now the school has so much more money than it needs so they are spending it on useless things. The Biology students are being taken to Quarth next week to observe Botanical Gardens as if ours wasn’t good enough! I would have gone but Egg is coming back and Maa has insisted that I stay; it’s the whole ‘family’ thing so I’ve got to stay,” Rhaenys rattled off. “Egg studies in Braavos right?” Rhaegar asked fondly, he wanted to know his children so much better. “Yeah, he stays with our uncle there. Maa does not have enough time to look after us both and continue with her research,” Rhaenys explained. “Rhaenys, sorry.” “We have to leave, it’s almost time for my flight,” Rhaenys got up. “You cannot stay any longer, maybe just another day?” Rhaegar pleaded. “See, if you’re not going to drive me, I’ll call Uncle Jaime,” Rhaenys blackmailed. “No, no, I’ll go, who the hell is Jaime? I will go to drop you off,” And with that Rhaegar held his daughters’ hand protectively and dropped her off at the airport. Viserys and Daenerys were there and they hugged their niece and clicked a ton of pictures till Rhaenys’ name was being called out for boarding. Rhaegar felt almost complete that day.

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“Tyrion, Jaime is not answering his phone, what’s the matter? I needed to inquire about an event that is going to take place tomorrow,” Rhaegar agitatedly said over the phone. “Jaime? Jaime is at the hospital? Don’t you know? I am on my way,” Tyrion sceptically replied over the phone. “Why, what happened at the Hospital? Which hospital?” Rhaegar asked. “Well, of course the Sunspear Health Institute, where else? Elia’s condition has worsened terribly, I think she’s on the ventilator,” Tyrion replied again. “What the fuck do you mean?!!”
“Well you know Elia’s condition. It has worsened. The doctors have said we only have a few days at maximum…”

“What the fuck are you talking about? What’s happened to Elia?”

“Don’t play stupid, Rhaenys came to you, you signed papers, you officially have custody of Rhaenys and Aegon and don’t act stupid now!” Tyrion exclaimed over the phone.

“What custody? Tyrion what are you saying? You have me confused with somebody else!”

Rhaegar also screamed over the phone, much to Lyanna’s annoyance.

“Am I speaking to Rhaegar Targaryan? Renowned mathematician, father to two children with Elia Martell, Elia Martell who is in hospital now because she was diagnosed with last stage bone marrow cancer last year! Elia Martell, the woman who is dying in the hospital and has a husband who is still voluntarily playing the fool!!!” Tyrion lost it in his wrath. Rhaegar could hear a worried Sansa in the background, “Ty, calm down, shouting like this is not going to bring Elia back. Now let me drive.”

Rhaegar dropped the phone to the floor. Everything around him felt numb. Nobody was really in the scope of his vision anymore, not Lyanna and not Jon, nobody. His head was spinning and his legs were weak. He got up as fast as he could from the dining table. Lyanna called after him, “Rhae, Rhae, where are you going? Rhae, wait up; I haven’t even served dinner yet. Babe wait up, I have made Northern broth soup, Rhae, babe, where are you going?”

On his way out Rhaegar caught hold of the Porcelain figurine of the Ghiscari god that was right in the middle of the massive mantelpiece. His vision was blurred by tears threatening to spill, but he managed to make his way to the station where he cut a ticket for Sunspear.

The hospital was brimming with people. He recognised people from King’s Landing, Highgarden, Casterly Rock, literally everywhere. And yet, the entire hospital was grim, silent. Nobody said a word. Some of the more pious ones were knelt in prayer and the rest just stood there silently. The Sun of Westeros was going to set today. No, not set, Elia could not leave him like that; Rhaegar vigorously shook his own head as he made his way through the crowd. Most of them snarled violently when they saw him, but let him through nonetheless. Elia was not just the most accomplished geneticist in the world, but also one of the most beloved socialites in Westeros.

“Can I go in?” Rhaegar asked the doctor as he turned to face him. It was Oberyn.

“What are you doing here?” The viper spat back.

“Oberyn let him through, you know Elia would have wanted to see him once,” Doran said. With an excessive amount of grumbles, Oberyn did let him through. Jaime and Varys were both sitting inside, tears streaming down their faces.

“You know, on the other hand, the two of you won’t be able to annoy me anymore,” Elia joked. Rhaegar smiled a watery smile, how like Elia to joke in whatever situation she was in.

As soon as their eyes fell on Rhaegar, a frown adorned their face. Rhaegar looked to Elia for permission and Elia nodded her head at both Varys and Jaime. She knew that she needed to talk to Rhaegar; there were a few important matters to be discussed.

“Rhaenys liked spending time with you, she wouldn’t admit it, but I could see it in her eyes. She liked you. You’ll be fine. Egg will come around as well,” Elia said in the most matter of fact tone.

“That was a clever thing you did,” Rhaegar smiled at his wife. “You always were, too clever for your own good.” At that Elia laughed, she still liked compliments.

“Take care of them Rhaegar, and take care of yourself; also take care of…” Elia’s voice feebly trailed off.

“This?” Rhaegar held up the porcelain figurine. Elia’s eyes lit up; just like it had every time they opened a new Porcelain gift on their honeymoon at Quarth. Tears were flowing out of Rhaegar’s eyes freely now.

“Oh thank you Rhae! Thank you so much! You know what, I forgive you for whatever you did,” Elia was also on the brink of tears as she clutched the little God. Rhaegar, forgetting all the distance that had been created between the two of them in all these years, engulfed her in a nice and warm hug.

“What I did Eli, is beyond forgiveness. But the way you’re punishing me now, it’s just what
Rhaenys said; true punishment would be if I fell in love with you and you left me all over again. Thanks, thanks for being so cruel.”

“Rhaenys said all this?”

“And a lot more. She’s a lot like you.”

“I know Rhaegar. But Egg, Egg’s like you.”

“Then I will never let him make the mistake I did.”

Elia pulled back and looked into Rhaegar’s eyes. The purple was melting; it was rolling down in solid tears down his chiselled handsome face. Even after all these years, he was still handsome enough to make her blush. As their lips touched each other, Rhaegar forgot all restraint. The kiss was reminiscent of their first, thirsty in the rain. Then Elia’s heart stopped beating, and Rhaegar could feel it, and he held her till her body turned cold and the doctors had come in at the sound of the heart machine having touched rest. Her lips were supposedly cold too, but all Rhaegar felt was the heat of their passion- true love, most probably. It was the kind of stuff that was written in the books.

Rhaenys and Aegon moved in with their father as Lyanna moved out. She hated Elia’s children with a passion, and it was not like Rhaegar loved her enough to choose her over his dragons. The Ghiscar Porcelain figurine had been cremated with Elia but the rest stood in position just like it had on the mantelpiece forever. Whenever Rhaegar felt insanely lonely, he would go and stand there. The sun would flood in from the side and he could see Elia coming in through the window, in that willowy lavender maxi dress she had adorned at Quarth all the time and admiring her wedding presents. Sometimes Rhaegar longed to go where she was, but Elia had made him realise that true love was not about dying together, it was about living for the other.
High School Musical

Chapter Summary

So this is definitely by far my weakest imagine; I have my exams going on so I cannot really concentrate, and that was also the cause of my delay. However, this one has it's fun parts and there is a bit of a twist in the end and these are legit the only two good things I can say about this one. I still hope everybody likes it though, your comments and Kudos' make my day! Also, this imagine has Jaime/Elie/Rhaegar just as MadameLestrange13 had requested. It is really terrible, mostly because I was in a hurry, but I hope you like it at least a little bit! Also, thanks to my elder sister for helping me with some of the reasearch, being the ASIOAF encyclopedia that she is!

King’s Landing High was famous for its’ annual production of Historical Fictional Drama and Musicals. The productions were top quality, mainly because they were written and directed and produced by the most experienced theatre personalities of Braavos. Principal Jon Arryn had maintained this tradition for years, and was properly proud of it. However, for its’ Centenary celebration, he wanted to do something different. He wanted the students’ to come up with a drama themselves, at least those in high school, they were old enough. A conference was called, and this news was announced. The reaction, though, was mixed.

“Let Elia and Rhaegar write it,” Varys suggested. He was far too busy with college applications and the editorial board of the school magazine to bother with more drama! He knew that both Elia and Rhaegar were equally capable.

“Why would Elia write it? She’s a science student…” wailed Lyanna Stark.

“And she’s still better read than you are, what a shame,” Varys retorted, to which Lyanna was about to start a fight.

“That’s enough now you two, cut it out,” Cersei intervened as she hurried off with Varys to History class with her ‘gossip buddy’. “Is there any point at all in arguing with her? Why do you do it?” She began scolding Varys on their way.

“Are you going to write it with Rhaegar?” Jaime asked in a slightly offensive tone as he and Elia were walking towards the Chemistry lab.

“I don’t know. Most probably not, I honestly have no clue. Right now, though, I have a Practical assessment to take care of, more important. I have my Priorities straight babe,” Elia replied in her usual tone of pragmatism as she kissed his cheek before entering the laboratory. Jaime sighed. He really hoped that she did.

“You should write it with Elia,” Jon Connignton caught up with Rhaegar.

“Yeah stop shouting that all over the place, you know how Lyanna is,” Rhaegar glared at his friend.

The entire school was abuzz with the sheer excitement once the news really sunk in. they were going to be producing their own Fest this year, no more bossy Braavosis. They were in absolute ecstasy and decided to put up a really good show. Once the initial grumbles and bouts of nervousness were over, they were ready to go; and all of them, the entirety of the High School called a meeting. The canteen had started to resemble (just like the Teachers’ liked to say) a proper Lower Flea Bazaar market.

“So Elia and Rhaegar are going to write the script, direct the play, and I am going to do the designs, and of course, in case you need a very good-looking actress, I am in but in case you decide to write a serious script with a lot of crying involved, then I am not going to act. I guess Jaime is...
going to play the other main role since he is so bloody good, my brother you know, and Varys is probably going to be anchor for the evening. Who’s going to do the music? Umm, Catelyn, you! Ned, Davos, Robert, all of you, in charge of light okay?” Cersei belted out instructions like a pro. “And exactly who has given you the right to decide?” Stannis’ gruff voice belted out. “Can you suggest a rational and practical alternative?” Cersei taunted him back. “I was asking politely. Typical Lannister, snide remarks and all,” Stannis grumbled. “Hey, he’s taking it to family!” Cersei barked. “Okay that’s enough!” Robert intervened. “This is impossible, we’ll never get anywhere,” some Frey grumbled. “Listen, whatever I said is final okay?” Cersei stated in a tone of authority. Everybody seemed to agree this time. “I don’t have so much time…” Elia began. “Oh shut up! You score full marks even without studying,” Arthur rolled his eyes. “But college applications…” Elia began again “Martell, don’t be a spoilsport, come on, you’re going to get into the best university anyways,” Cersei shut her up. “I can write a script…” Lyanna began as well. “Stark, keep shut. You know Eli and Rhae are the best writers, like ever. They’ve won almost every writing competition since the beginning of time! They are writing the script, that’s the end of that okay? If you want, you can do the dancing and stuff,” Cersei commanded. “We should give Lyanna a chance,” Jaime suggested. “Are you crazy? This needs to be the best production ever! Don’t be stupid brother, keep your personal feelings aside,” Cersei warned. She did not take into consideration the awkwardness that would follow. “Cersei, umm, I have some extra classes with Mr. Greyjoy,” Elia entreated to walk out. “Come back here Martell, we still need to discuss the main themes; and since when did you start taking extra classes?” Cersei called out. Elia rolled her eyes. There was no escaping this lioness. “I have extra classes with Greyjoy Cersei! He’s going to fail me in my Marine Biology electives otherwise,” Elia began to argue. “Who passes in their electives anyways?” Oswell Whent wondered out loud. “I do!” Elia and Catelyn protested together. “Oh well serves you write for something as obscure as Marine Biology for your electives. Rhaegar’s smart but even he went with Valyrian at least, most of us just go with Phys. Ed,” Cersei began scrutinising Elia. “Okay fine, sorry my mistake, now I have to go,” Elia didn’t even wait for Cersei’s reply as she sprinted out of the canteen. Rhaegar and Jaime under the same roof was never a good idea and on top of that she really did have a few notes to take from Mr. Greyjoy; Elia was not joking when she said that. “Rhaegar, you will go over to her house and give her the briefs that we discuss now. In fact, today onwards, you will go over to her place every single day. We need the script ready as soon as possible,” Cersei started shooting out her order again. Lyanna went rabid mad at this and lashed out at the Lannister but was taken out of the canteen very politely by Jory Cassel. Jaime, being a little more refined, decided to wait till everybody had left and then started lashing out at his sister. Cersei hated this; whenever somebody took responsibility, everybody had a problem with that person.

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“Hey, it’s me. Cersei has pretty much ordered me to stay over at your place till the script is ready so here I am,” Rhaegar nervously spoke into the camera and recording speaker that was attached at Lewin Martell’s front door. “I am not in presentable clothes Targaryan, you’ve got to wait,” came the heavily agitated reply. “Oh come on, I’ve seen you in practically nothing,” Rhaegar grumbled. It was hot outside and he
did not want to wait.
“Rhaegar!” Elia sharply shouted on the other side.
“Let me through, please,” Rhaegar began to persuade. The door opened and he skipped inside happily. The Martells always had the best air conditioning and heating systems as and when they needed it. A Martell house was a pleasure to visit when extreme weather conditions were prevailing outside.
Rhaegar knew where to go. He knew every nook and corner of this house. Most of his childhood had been spent at this place. Even before Elia and Oberyn came to live in King’s Landing, Rhaegar would spend an enormous amount of time at Lewin’s library. It was a pleasure to explore a library maintained by a Martell. They had all sorts of books scattered everywhere. When Elia came, he only got a companion to accompany him to read, and boy wasn’t she as intellectually spontaneous as he was! What started off as an innocent friendship would soon give way to stolen glances and kisses behind big books. Everybody was pleased, everybody was happy, and Rhaegar was content with life- till Lyanna Stark came in. As soon as her thought plagues his mind, he tripped and fell.
“Oh gosh, you’ve become as clumsy as your girlfriend,” came Elia’s snide remark. Rhaegar rolled his eyes.
“Here is Cersei’s list of briefs on what she wants for the drama,” Rhaegar got down to business.
“This is very… detailed. She’s a focused girl isn’t she?” Elia remarked as she scanned the pages that Cersei had dictated for Rhaegar to write.
“Yes, she is,” Rhaegar smirked.
“So, what do you want to write?” Elia asked as she chucked the paper out of the window.
“What the hell was that?!” Rhaegar excitedly exclaimed.
“What, you really thought I was going to write as Cersei Lannister instructed me to? I am going to write what I feel like, and so are you. If it’s good, she will appreciate,” Elia shrugged, and once again Rhaegar was in awe of the woman.
And so the planning started. What could a Martell and a Targaryan possibly write together? Rhaegar wanted to write about the first Targaryans who gained control of the dragons, to which Elia snidely commented about how they started out as ‘shepherds’. Elia also snidely commented that maybe they should have written about the Doom of Valyria, which was an offer that Rhaegar rolled his eyes and politely declined. Finally, it struck the two of them! What could a Martell and a Targaryan write together? Of course, they were going to write about how the Martells and the Targaryans finally united in marriage.
“Myriah, that was her name right?” Rhaegar began to jot down.
“You’re the history student,” Elia replied.
“You’re the Martell,” Rhaegar rebuked.
“Rhae, use Google,” Elia regretted the words as soon as they left her mouth. She had not called him that in forever! This could not be happening again, just a few weeks in and here she was going back to square one with him. Rhaegar on the other hand did not understand Elia’s accidental mistake and fished out his phone to use Google just as Elia had instructed. Elia was seated behind him, going through the character sketches they had made when her eyes fell on his lock-screen. Damn, the boy had not changed his lock-screen! It was that same picture they had taken two years ago, when he had professed his love to her when they had gone to Sunspear. Elia was looking beautiful in a Dornish draped Saree, and Rhaegar was looking handsome in a Dornish attire as well. As soon as Rhaegar realised that Elia was sitting behind him, he threw his phone away. Then, he turned around very subtly as Elia put her head down and pretended to concentrate on the character sketches.
For two entire months this charade went on. Rhaegar and Elia kept growing closer, much to the annoyance of Lyanna and Jaime who would rush to launch a complaint against this phenomenon to Cersei just about daily. Cersei, on the other hand, was exalted. Prime Minister Aerys had just decided to refresh relations with Dorne that very year, so it was a very politically pertinent play, and Cersei could not be happier. She was the head behind this, even if Elia and Rhaegar were the hands.
The auditions began. And boy, didn’t they drag on forever. At the end of the first week, even Cersei was fed up. Not a single dialogue was being delivered properly, nobody could match the physical features of Myriah Martell and Daeron Targaryan, and not a single person had the passion that was becoming of these two rivals who put their differences aside for politics, only to find themselves deeply in love.

“Yes Lysa, you have to look at his face when you say that dialogue, but you don’t stare like a lovelorn puppy. For god’s sake! Be a warrior Queen and deliver your dialogues. You are portraying a Martell. Where is the fire?!” Elia barked; she was fed up with teaching women how to be Dornish.

“Petyr, that smile is creepy, get rid of it. Targaryans don’t smile like that, and Daeron was one of the sane ones,” Rhaegar instructed the young Baelish boy. “You are not trying to manipulate her; it is the other way around. Dornish women are cleverer.”

“I give up!” Elia threw away the copy of the script she was holding. “Cersei, this is getting ridiculous now. Anyways, out of all the auditions we held, Catelyn and Ned were still acceptable.”

“Ned does not want to act as the lead, and he looks ridiculous in a silver wig,” Jaime commented, but would come to regret his words immediately.

“Well dear brother, and dear sister-to-be-in-law soon enough, Ned and Catelyn won’t have to play the leads because I’ve found the perfect ones,” Cersei started grinning. It was like a lightening of an idea had struck her out of the blue.

“You cannot play the lead also okay? As it is you are managing the entire production. And Babe, I refuse to play a Targaryan,” Robert began to protest as Rhaegar rolled his eyes.

“It won’t be you and me Babe. It’ll be the new age Myriah and Daeron- it’ll be our very own Martell and Targaryan!” Cersei’s exclamation meant a heavy silence for a lot of people.

“And in these last few days, My Queen, I think it’s more than just fondness that grows in the pit of my stomach…”

“Oh, I see your love grows in your stomach…”

“No it doesn’t grow in m- My Queen, how did you know?” [Eruption of giggles] “My King, you’re not very good at hiding your emotions…”

“Okay, that was an excellent scene, now kiss,” Cersei’s voice floated in through the empty auditorium. Everybody had been spellbound by the performance of the young Martell and Targaryan, well, almost everybody.

Elia looked at Rhaegar with the same intensity as he was looking at her. This was it- the kiss. All this while, these four months that they had been rehearsing, they had never really gotten to practise the kiss. But today was the dressing rehearsal, and tomorrow, the final play. People were nervous, but none as much as either Elia or Rhaegar.

“Oh come on, this is not the time to ignite old passions and mistakes, just kiss for God’s sake!” Cersei hollered.

Rhaegar did not think twice. There was nothing worse than being hounded by a bossy Cersei, and there was nothing more inviting than the pretty Elia, adorning her Dornish gown that was to be her costume for the next day. As soon as he had pulled Elia in, sparks, bombs and dynamite erupted inside him. This was something else, the Dornish fervour, the passion of the Sun. No number of icy kisses from Lyanna could make up for the feeling he got when Elia’s lips touched his. He slowly, and ever so skilfully, pulled her in closer by the waist, as her hands went around and scooped the back of his head. It was a steamy scene, exceptionally well-written, and they were to continue kissing till the curtain call came, something that neither seemed to mind very much. Jaime did though, and walked out of the auditorium frustrated. Neither of the leads really noticed what was going around them, they were a bit more immersed in each other. The spotlights faded out and the music began to play. Elia realised it was time to let go, and she tried to, she really did, but Rhaegar’s grip on her was strong.

“Rhae, stop, stop, jus-” Elai begged in between kisses. As soon as the National anthem began
playing; she pushed him away. Elia was a patriotic girl, and she was not going to have any
snogging nonsense during the anthem.
As soon as they were backstage though, Rhaegar caught hold of her again. Despite Elia’s feeble
protests, Rhaegar held a tight grip on her practically devoured the slightly smaller statured girl.
Their backstage make-out session brought in quite a lot of buzz, something that, to everybody’s
surprise, Varys tried to control. Both Elia and Jaime were his best friends, and he was fiercely
protective about them.
“It’s called rehearsing!” He snapped at a Frey cracking stupid jokes.
“Oh yes rehearsing! Why doesn’t my girl rehearse with me like that,” the Frey obnoxiously replied.
“You might want to deal it out with Jaime,” Varys warned. The Freys slipped away; everybody
was scared of the young Lannister athlete. Varys tried to clear as many people as possible as he
walked out as well. Whatever he needed to say to Elia could be dealt with later.
“Rhaegar stop!” Elia finally pushed the boy with all her might. “What the fuck do you think you’re
doing?”
“What does it look like I’m doing?” the young Targaryan retorted.
“Well Rhaegar, you can’t. We’re not dating anymore remember? You cheated on me, remember?
You left me in the middle of a party, shamed me in front of everybody else, remember?” Elia
shouted at him. This was a real Martell’s wrath, something Rhaegar had never faced before, and
needed to.
“I made a mistake! I was a young boy Elia, we’re allowed to make mistakes,” Rhaegar retorted.
“But not drag our parents into this; you dragged our parents into this Rhaegar. You know why
we’re having a Dorne and King’s Landing pact in the first place? Because you started an affair that
had shitloads at stake! Being young and in love cannot possibly be an excuse for everything. If
love is an excuse and not strength, it’s most probably not Love at all.”
“Exactly, it’s not. But what we have, that is,” Rhaegar replied as coolly as possible. “Don’t tell me
you didn’t feel anything today. Don’t tell me you haven’t been having weird tingly feelings all over
your body for the past four months, because I know I have, and I know you have too.”
“Probably Rhaegar, but unlike you, I am not an irresponsible lover,” Elia spitefully returned.
“You really think you are in love with that Lannister boy?”
“That’s none of your business.”
“Yes it is. Look here, and tell me, tell me that you love him, more than you ever loved me, say it,
and I’ll let you go,” Rhaegar pulled her closer.
Elia walked out. She walked out without a reply. Why was life being such a messed up pot hole of
confusion? Why did she have the most annoyingly ecstatic thoughts when Rhaegar looked into her
eyes? She couldn’t, she could not answer his question, mainly because she did not know the answer
herself. On the one hand was Jaime, a sweet boy, her best friend, but also a boy who genuinely
loved her, and on the other hand was the biggest tyrant in her love life, the first man who had ever
swept her off her feet: Rhaegar Targaryan. She kept cursing herself internally. She had a show the
next day and here she was, stuck at the most terrible fork of life.
“You are the worst kind of girlfriend there is you know?” A familiar voice called Elia out from the
back. This was a voice Elia had been forced to get used to ever since she started dating Jaime.
“Brienne, hi,” she smiled to the best of her abilities in a situation like this.
“Don’t sugar-coat what you did,” Brienne snapped.
“And what was that? Act outstandingly on stage?” Elia replied with her usual panache.
“Oh please, I’m talking about the stunt you pulled backstage,” Brienne spat at her.
“You need to talk to Rhaegar about that, I tried to push him away, and after some time, I even
succeeded, eventually.” There was a snicker in return, from Brienne, an action that deeply offended
the proud Martell.
“I told Jaime not to date a Martell,” Brienne shook her head.
“And who gives a Tarth the right to judge a Martell?” Elia glared at the insolent girl.
“A good human being, somebody who does not oscillate between men,” Brienne returned.
“You mean somebody who wistfully eyes the best friend that friendzoned her relentlessly, every
time,” Elia knew she had gone too far as soon as she said that, but she was confused, and Brienne was only making her more frustrated. Her comment though, made Brienne furious, who came charging at her at a very fast speed. Luckily, Varys was lurking in the shadows.

“Brienne, Petyr Baelish was looking for you. Something’s wrong with Catelyn?” Varys interrupted as all anger flushed out of Brienne’s face and only fear remained. She rushed off to see what was wrong with her friend.

“What happened to Catelyn?” Elia asked curiously, always one for gossip, even in the gravest of situations.

“Oh your welcome Miss Martell, obviously, it’s my duty to save your ass every single time!” Varys snapped.

“I’m sorry. Thank you V.” Elia murmured as she looked down. It was generally a bad day for Elia, she could feel it.

“Elia, what the hell is going on?” Varys sighed in desperation.

“I have no bloody clue! It’s like, everything is falling apart, and Rhae wants to come back into my life and I don’t know what to do! I have no bloody cl-”

“You’ve started calling him Rhae again, and you obviously still love him. You can go for it Eli, I won’t mind,” Jaime smiled as he came out of the shadows too. Turned out he had acquired quite a few habits from Varys.

“Jaime, I didn’t say anything of the sort,” Elia tried to reason.

“Stop it Eli, just stop. At least have the guts to say the truth. Don’t pull a Rhaegar on me; I saw what it did to you. Don’t pull a Lyanna on me; I saw what that did to Robert. For the sake of our friendship at least, don’t,” Jaime smiled sadly. Varys sighed and stepped back, where did he stand? He was at a loss for clever phrases. Elia left, tearfully. After all, she had a play the next day, and playing the lead for the biggest Westerosi school production needed concentration and relaxation.

“And now, I particularly proudly present to you the High School production of this year (extra proud because that’s where I belong): The Dragon and The Sun! Based off of the relationship that marked the platonic (or maybe more) relationship between the Martells and the Targaryans, this is the love story of Myriah Martell and Daeron II Targaryan!” Varys’s voice had always had a very particular charm, but this time, it seemed to ring louder and brighter than ever!

The play commenced. It was immensely successful. Rhaegar and Elia made the most visually appealing couple, who had the acting chops to pull off something as important as the play was; after all, it was not just a play, the Targaryans and Martells had signed a peace accord with each other recently. The production was brilliant, the lights and the sounds sailed as smoothly as it could. The side characters each played their parts extraordinarily well and Lyanna along with her brother Brandon, Catelyn and Ashara, even came in for a beautiful dance. The final dance, though, belonged to the two lovers, who looked like a dream, traipsing around the stage to a beautifully slow love song.

The curtain call brought a lot of cheers. Each and every Targaryan or Martell in the crowd were equally touched, but it was the High School students that happened to become emotional wrecks. For many of them, it was the last year of school, and for almost all of them, it would be remembered forever. Cersei came in at the end of the curtain call, and Rhaegar, Elia and Varys all gave her the credit she was due, with Varys going so far as to say ‘Cersei made it happen, like the Queen Bee that she is!’ Spirits were high, well, most of them, at least.

“You were gorgeous on stage,” Rhaegar whispered into Elia’s ear as soon as they were offstage, and began leaving a trail of kisses down her throat. Man, he had missed her.

“Umm, thanks Rhae, but I should really get going now,” Elia uneasily replied as she slipped out of his grip.

“Where the hell are you going? Won’t you be coming for the after party?” Rhaegar asked confused.

“Oh yes I will, but I need to change first, and then go and… you know, pick up my date. I think
he’s gone back home,” Elia smiled innocently.
“And who the fuck is your date?” Rhaegar asked incredulously. He thought he was, like obviously.
“My boyfriend, you know, the Lannister athlete,” Elia shrugged in an expression of absolute naïveté.
“You must be kidding me! We both love each other Eli, don’t do this. It’ll make both of us sad and miserable and don’t do this,” Rhaegar began shouting.
“Don’t raise your voice on me Targaryan. And remember, you only love yourself. As for me, it’ll take some time, but I will figure myself out. Till then though, I choose to be happy, I choose to be free, I choose Jaime.” With that, the young Sun danced out of the Young Dragon’s life, making him feel like an absolute fool, for the very first time.

Karma was such a bitch.
Spicy Chicken Wings

Chapter Summary

So this one is probably the clumsiest! I had no clue as to what I was doing when I was writing it but my exams are still going on so you have to excuse the bad writing. It was all nice and funny and poignant while I was writing it but while reading I thought it a tad bit disastrous. Please read it and if you dislike it as much as I do, don't forget to drop in a comment. I would love some constructive criticism as much as I love your adorable praises!!! Also, Rhaenys has a role to play (I mean she was there in Porcelain but she has a bigger role here I think)!!

“Do you have anything a little less spicy?” Rhaegar mused as he scanned his eyes over the menu. Dornish drive-ins were the worst, he decided internally.
“What’s your spiciest?” A sharp voice demanded right next to him.
The waiter was in a fix. Who should he have answered first? There was the quiet and willowy Targaryan surgeon who was one of the most important and powerful people in Westeros and on the other hand was the Dornish Chief Ministers’ arrogant toxicologist daughter, the most powerful and authoritative youngster in all of Dorne. He gulped and gave both of them an extremely nervous smile.
“Ours is the most successful late-night drive-in in all of Dorne Sir, Madam,” he politely smiled at both of them.
“I know that!” Elia snapped.
“Yes, it doesn’t exactly answer my question,” Rhaegar spoke as if on cue. He had not glanced at the woman standing next to him, but he could make out that she was a force to be reckoned with around here.
“Well, our spiciest is the Double Hot Chicken Wings, and our least spiciest is the Chilli Mayo sandwich,” the young trainee smiled.
“That’s not correct common tongue, ‘least spiciest’ I mean. That’s not correct common tongue,” Elia pointed out very precisely.
A smile spread over Rhaegar’s face. Who was this grammar Khal standing next to him, her thought process was exactly like his. He was exalted. He turned to face her, maybe shake hands but he was blown away by the girls’ presence. He had expected a reserved and shy normal looking girl, and all he got was a gorgeous tall stunner wearing a dangerously short pair of silver glittery shorts over an equally sparkly golden top that was let loose on one side, and tucked on the other, exposing very little of the shorts that she was wearing. Her hair was loose, naturally wavy, and her face was heavily made up in metallic shades. Wow… the young Targaryan boy was at a loss of words.
“Sir, would like the chilli mayo?” the boy behind the counter asked again, in what was turning out to be an extremely awkward situation where Elia was so completely aware of the stares that Rhaegar was burning her with.
“Hmm, oh yes, yes umm, I’ll take the Spicy Chicken Wings, with the, the umm, yes, the double spicy version,” Rhaegar stumbled and fumbled his way through the question in extreme embarrassment.
“And you ma’am?”
“Double Spicy Chicken Wings,” Elia said flatly as she fished out her credit card.
“I am so sorry ma’am, our machine is not working today,” the young waiter stared at her credit card and back to her.
“What the hell? I’m not carrying cash,” Elia commanded in a most irritable tone. Rhaegar thanked the Gods for giving him this opportunity.

“I can pay,” his chivalrous voice resonated through the empty diner.

“No thank you, I don’t want favours from a Targaryan,” Elia haughtily replied.

“And how would you know whether I was a Targaryan?” Rhaegar’s flabbergasted reply made the waiter suppress a laugh.

“Oh sorry, I had forgotten that even Lannisters and Tullys grow silver hair with purple eyes now. Oh wait, are you… are you some Lysene? I am so sorry, I did not mean to offend you, I like Lysenes,” now it was Elia’s turn to fumble.

“But you obviously don’t like Targaryans,” Rhaegar smirked.

“I suppose I’m not forced to, like the rest of Westeros,” Elia shrugged. Rhaegar was so appalled that he was crazily impressed.

“Her order is on me,” he told the waiter without waiting for Elia’s permission, who was left positively annoyed at the gesture.

“I didn’t ask you to,” she began.

“I wasn’t looking for your permission,” Rhaegar shrugged simply. Elia rolled her eyes.

“I’ll return this tomorrow. Where are you staying?” Elia asked.

“Ask your mom, I’m here on her job,” Rhaegar stated.

“How do you know who my mum is?” Elia asked puzzled further.

“Because I don’t live in Lys, I live in King’s Landing, and of course I’ve heard about the dynamic young Martell toxicologist. You’re all they talk about at the Citadel,” Rhaegar replied.

“You’re a surgeon aren’t you?”

“Yeah. Now how in the world could you know that?”

“Arthur.”

“Oh yes, I’d forgotten, we have mutual friends.”

“They don’t speak about you much.”

“They speak about you far too much. I’d reckon Arthur has the fancies you,” at that Elia blushed.

“I know he does,” came her haughty reply though.

“Don’t you return it as well?”

“Nope.”

“Why? Got an Essosi boyfriend that nobody knows about?”

“You could say I’m looking for one.”

“Valyrians are Essosi aren’t they?”

“Your order,” Elia pointed towards the chicken wings that had been placed on the counter, not taking her eyes off of him though.

“Hmm?”

“Your order!”

“Oh yes, I forgot, almost,” Rhaegar said as he held the two trays and led them to a cubicle.

“Now, about your Essosi boyfriend…”

“I like Braavos way better than Valyrians, or even Lysenes actually,” Elia smirked.

“Tell me, have you ever made close acquaintance with a Lysene or a Valyrian?” Rhaegar asked.

“No, why?”

“That’s why.”

“What?”

“Never mind. I was just awfully concerned of you settling before you tried all kinds of Essosi men,” Rhaegar innocently replied.

“Oh you don’t have to worry about me or my settling down,” Elia rebuked with equal mischief. This banter carried on for the rest of the night. Rhaegar, who was supposed to have gone straight to his hotel from the airport could not bear to keep his eyes open when he went to the hospital the next day where he’d gotten the internship and Elia, who had basically slipped out of Oberyn’s noisy birthday party unnoticed, had been properly chided by her mother when she arrived home the next morning where the family was on the verge of calling the cops.
“Where were you?” Almost all members of the family yelled simultaneously. Elia was shocked, they had never been this livid at her before, she was the most spoilt member of the family.
“I was at the Dorne Diner, you know, the drive-in close to the airport?” Elia replied in a shaky voice.
“You were alone, all night, at a seedy drive-in?!” Elia’s mother was close to hitting her when the young girl shouted out in self-defence.
“I was not alone, Rhaegar Targaryan was with me!” That sealed the matter, and she was never asked about late nights ever again.

“…and Cersei is driving me crazy! She’s acting like this is her wedding, so is Ashara actually. They’re both going wild with the decorations and the clothes, my goodness, the clothes! I must admit, I never thought Cersei Lannister was this talented! Instead of Interiors she should look into full time clothes designing as we—”

“Elia, Elia, just wait, I need to talk to you. I need to tell you something,” Rhaegar interrupted her. His mouth was currently red at all the spicy chicken wings he had been having. Whenever they ended up at this drive-in, they always ordered what had gotten them close for the first time, and just like the first time, Rhaegar was still not used to spicy.
“Oh yes, fire away!” Elia smiled at him.
“Actually, I umm, I can’t do this. I can’t marry you. The marriage cannot happen,” Rhaegar began fumbling.
“What do you mean? The marriage is tomorrow…” Elia trailed off, half expecting her fiancé to be joking.
“I know, Eli, I know. I know that this is absolutely and ridiculously irresponsible of me but I cannot take it anymore!” Rhaegar raised his voice.
“You were the one who wanted to marry in the first place! I said let’s wait, but you proposed!” Elia shouted back.
“It’s not that! There’s somebody else in my life!” Rhaegar spilled out finally.
“Who?!”
“Lyanna Stark.”
“She’s a child Rhaegar! This is paedophilia!”
“No it’s not! She’ll be an adult this November,” Rhaegar defended himself.
“Do you hear yourself? She’ll be an adult this November!!”
“Well there’s nothing I can do. It’s love.”
“It’s you being a dick, that’s all.”
“I am so sorry Elia, I am sure you will be able to find better men,” Rhaegar began.
“Oh trust me; I don’t need your approval. And as far as your Stark whore goes, tell her, that choosing somebody’s fiancé over a boyfriend who she keeps complaining is a man-whore is just plain down ironic,” Elia spat at him.
“Don’t call her that! And you know what an asshole Robert is,” Rhaegar snarled.
“I know he’s your cousin and I know he’s my friend and I know he’s a better person than the two of you combined,” Elia looked into Rhaegar’s eyes as she said this. There was a strange fire, a wild and ferocious spark in those deep black eyes that Rhaegar had never noticed before. There was a heat of wrath in them that he had always thought only Lyanna possessed. He furrowed his eyebrows, but Elia gave him no time to reconsider his options. She barged out the door, out of his life, forever.
“You’re being an absolute fool,” Jon Connington stated.
“I know, I’m a fool in love,” Rhaegar smiled dreamily.
“Self-love,” Jon corrected.
“Excuse me?” Rhaegar asked.
“Why do you think you chose Lyanna Stark? Why do you think elder men love the feeling of younger girls so bloody much? It’s because a woman equal to you will always love herself first.
Girls like Lyanna on the other hand; they play on the football team during the day and pray for a good husband at night. That’s the kind of girl that would suit you. You’re so driven by self-love so much so that you do not notice the difference between being in love with someone and being in love with Love,” Jon shook his head in grave disapproval.

“What the fuck does that even mean?” Rhaegar asked his friend in an obnoxiously infuriated tone.

“The fact that you cannot even comprehend what I am saying is so sad, so sad coming from the once bright and brilliant friend that I had! Lyanna is already lowering your IQ!”

“Jon get out!” And Jon did not hesitate in getting out. Literally everybody important in his life left him that night. He was left quite alone in the world, with only Lyanna Stark for company. He was content. It was love, and it would prevail. In his anger, he ordered a take-away package of double hot spicy chicken wings, and when it came, he could just not consume it anymore. It was far too spicy for him. “What the hell is wrong with the taste of the chicken? It has become so crass and blatantly spicy,” he called up the drive-in that very night.

“What’s your spiciest?” A voice uncannily familiar to the one Rhaegar had heard on a vapid summer night 15 years ago resonated right next to him. He turned around to see a very young, Dornish girl standing next to him.

She was lanky, and exceptionally pretty. Her face strangely resembled Elia’s, long curios eyes and thick black hair. Her face was spotless and shiny and she had a strangely bright smile. The oddest thing though, was her purple eyes. A Dornish with purple eyes could only mean a Dayne and he knew all the Dayne children. The girl was so intriguing to him the bright and smiling young creature that he kept staring like a creep.

“Sir, you want anything?” a voice asked, across the counter.

“Your spiciest,” Rhaegar smiled. The boy across the counter had grown into a man and he rolled his eyes. Rhaegar knew, the boy did not like him that much anymore. Oh well.

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“What’s your spiciest?” Rhaegar asked and instantly knew he was inquiring of the wrong
brother. Nobody would use as strong a word as ‘hate’ in the case of Doran.
“I am Oberyn Martell and Ellaria Sand’s daughter,” she answered proudly. Gosh, this girl was a
mini Elia.
“You can’t be Ellaria’s daughter, you must have a Lysene mom or something with your purple eyes
and all,” Rhaegar commented and instantly regretted it. He was in no position of making
observations like this one.
“Next time, keep your useless opinions to yourself,” the young girl snapped as she took her tray of
chicken and walked to a cubicle where a guy was sitting with his back turned.
“What’s your name?” Rhaegar called out.
“Well I’ve got many,” the girl turned to face him, “there’s Rihanna, that’s what my dad calls me
after his favourite singer, and there’s the house name Rayna or Rhae also sometimes, but officially
my name is Rhaenys, which is super weird because it’s like a Targaryan name and Rhaenys
Targaryan did not exactly meet the coolest fate in Dorne but oh, whatever,” the girl shrugged.
Rhaegar stood. He just stood in complete silence, even as Rhaenys went over to her cubicle and
began talking and blushing around the boy she was sitting with, and even as she finished her food
and left, he did not take his eyes off of her. The good thing was that the girl had not noticed she
would have called the cops otherwise, he was sure of it. He kept standing, rooted to his spot, even
as his order came, and the insolent waiter allowed another customer to pick it up and leave.
Rhaegar stood there even as minutes slipped into a quarter of an hour.
“Are you going to ever take the order or not?” the man snapped. Rhaegar was jolted out of
whatever blues he was basking in.
“Does Elia Madam ever come in here?” He asked with desperation in his tone.
“Why?” Came the suspicious reply.
“Please, just answer me,” Rhaegar begged.
“She stopped coming here a very long time ago. In fact the last time she came, I think she was with
you. It was that fateful night,” he was informed.
“What the hell? She’s never come here after that?!” Rhaegar asked.
“Maybe once or twice, I don’t exactly remember,” the man said.
Rhaegar called up Arthur. “Art, is Elia in Dorne?”
“Yeah she’s been here for the past two months. She’s decided to settle down here after all those
years in Essos. Why?”
“Tell her to come to the Dorne Diner exactly one week later, oh and tell her to bring her favourite
niece along with her… Actually, tell her that around an hour after she reaches, Rhaenys should be
here too.”
“Rhaegar, what the hell is going on?” Arthur’s voice seemed genuinely worried on the other side
of the phone.
“Just do as I say!”
“You asshole, I should’ve broken my friendship with you like the rest of them…”
“Well you didn’t. Now please let Elia know.”
Rhaegar knew that what he was about to do required an insane amount of stupidity, something he
had always had, but it also required an insane amount of courage, true courage, and for the first
time, he felt like he had displayed exactly that. Elia had always been a good teacher, but that night,
even without her physical presence, she taught him what true courage, grit and strength was. What
Northern illusions he had been living under…
When Rhaegar went to bed that night, lips still swollen from consuming the insanely hot chicken
wings, he could hardly sleep. It was not just the spice that was eating up the back of his brain and
biting his taste buds, it was something else. Maybe it was the thought of meeting Elia after so
many years, or maybe it was the excitement he got from planning something (after so many years),
and the nervousness he got from the want of executing it. He tossed and turned in bed till about
three in the morning and then switched on the television. Some entertainment channel was
broadcasting replays of the Little Birds Show with Varys and Rhaegar indulged in binge-watching
his guilty pleasure till they played the episode where Elia had dropped in a visit after receiving the
Braavos Medal in Toxicology. Rhaegar switched off the television, had it just been guilt eating him up, he would have enjoyed watching her do well, but it was not guilt. It was the fact that she had made the visit hand in hand with a Quarthian model, some D’Orwa and Rhaegar felt the most unpleasant burning sensation in the pit of his stomach. He blamed it on the Spicy Chicken Wings.

“Is there something you need to tell me?” Rhaegar asked poignantly, pretending to concentrate on his low spicy mayo sandwich.
“What the fuck does that even mean? Rhaegar I don’t have all the time in the world, I have not closed my lab yet, don’t play mind games with me, get it over with, whatever you want to say and let me go,” Elia stated as a matter of fact. Her chidings were the worst, Rhaegar’s throat dried a little and he sipped some Coke.
“You don’t play games with me Elia, you’re the one that started it. You know what you need to say to me,” Rhaegar replied with some newfound strength.
“What are you talking about? State it clearly; I have to go back and fast. I don’t have my lab assistant today, state your point quickly Targaryan,” Elia snapped, again.
“No Elia, you need to say this, you need to realise that what you have done, what you continue doing is wrong. Elia for god’s sake, don’t do this, just say it, I want to hear you say it!” Rhaegar snapped back.
“You’ve gone mad, and I am late, I need to go,” Elia entreated to walk out.
“Rhaenys is our kid isn’t she?”
There was quite a long pause of silence before Elia sat back down and spoke again. Her voice was lower, and slightly morose, subdued, “you’ve been talking to Oberyn.”
“No, absolutely not. A father does not need anybody’s certificate to recognise his daughter. I’d guessed it the first time I laid eyes on her, but I needed to hear it from you,” Rhaegar gravely replied.
“You may be the sperm donor, but you’re certainly no father,” Elia coldly replied. “And I have never made any claims to be her mother, but I am her aunt, and I love her to the moon and back, and I am never going to love anybody as much as I love her.”
“Why Eli?”
“Because you lost the right to call me that.”
“I broke off our marriage. I fell in love with somebody else, but I would always have been here for the two of you,” Rhaegar softly sighed.
“A man whose sense of duty and responsibility and ‘love’ makes him leave a healthy normal fiancé for a child who’s dropped out of school is not a man capable of normal emotions.”
“Was it my fault that I fell in love?”
“No, it was your fault that you could not see the difference between love and obsession. I really have to leave now. Roslin’s on a date so I need to close lab. I’ve got important stuff there, far more important than you,” Elia stood up. She turned to walk towards the door when she noticed a very familiar figure walking out of a car. Her eyebrows furrowed as she watched Rhaenys walk into the drive-in. she turned around to give Rhaegar a ‘what the hell is going on?’ look.
“Oh Hi Rhaenys! Elia, it was Rhaenys’ idea that she dine with her Uncle Rhaegar and Aunt Elia, wasn’t it? We wanted to keep it a surprise for you,” Rhaegar announced cheekily as Rhaenys came up to him and kissed him on the cheek.
“Uncle Rhae told me that leaving you, and us actually, he was kind enough to include me; he said that leaving us was the biggest mistake of his life and he was never going to do it again. He also said, and he’s talked to papa about this, that he’s going to take me to King’s Landing where they have the biggest and best schools ever, and then I can actually go to the Citadel. Apparently Citadel gives the highest amount of scholarships to students from King’s Landing High. How cool is that? You’re also going to join us right? You literally got an open offer from that super famous Pharmaceutical company, what’s it called? It’s the one that you really like. It will be so much fun. Actually, we have been hanging out quite a bit the past last week and it turns out, we’ve got the
same dragon obsession so Uncle Rhae’s promised me that he’s going to get me a dragon tattoo when I’m sixte-” At that Elia snapped back to life.
“No tattoos young lady, none absolutely,” she warned in the gravest tone.
“But Aunt El-”
“No, not at all.”
“Uncle Rhae…” Rhaenys made puppy eyes.
“Oh please Elia…” he made the same kind of eyes towards Elia but she was made of tougher stuff.
“No is the final answer.”
“Uncle Rhae, order that plate of double spicy chicken wings, she’s usually in a good mood after she consumes that, and then we’ll try,” the sly young girl whispered into Rhaegars’ ear. Elia grew suspicious.
“What conspiracy are the two of you planning?”
“Oh nothing at all, she was just telling me you look so beautiful that it’s making me blush, pretty evidently,” Rahegar tried a disastrous hand at covering up the lie.
“What?”
“Oh no, what Uncle Rhae meant is that you’re looking very hot in that red and gold pencil dress right, so I just told him to stop staring,” Rhaenys began covering up. Elia rolled her eyes.
“Can’t you say something remotely believable?” Elia asked in exasperation.
“But you are looking hot. Red lips were always your thing,” Rhaegar blushed at his own words as Rhaenys began ‘awwing’.
“This is ridiculous. The two of you are ridiculous, I need to go and lock up my lab, you can continue your nonsense plans and schemes without me,” Elia began to get up again even though she was a tad bit flustered.
“No Aunt Eli wait! Ros can close up the lab,” Rhaenys begged.
“Roslin took a break today,” Elia informed her.
“Well, she’s actually on a date with that Stark guy, what’s his name, yes Robb, him, she’s on a date with him but I told her to pack the dinner and go to the lab with Robb. Maybe they’ll find love there; in fact I suggest you don’t go because in case they’re doing something, it’ll be embarrassing for you,” Rhaenys sassed.
“She’s so smart,” Rhaegar proudly nodded his head.
“This is the stupidest thing ever okay! Who finds love in a lab?” Elia retorted.
“Love is crazy; you can find it in the weirdest of places. Uncle Rhae says he found in the spicy chicken wings and your sparkly silver shorts, although I can’t really picture you in sparkly silver shorts, but I can try!”
The Citadel was known all over the globe for its’ distinction in academics and technological superiority- it created the finest scholars and the most responsible, rational and powerful citizens of the Westerosi society. What it was not known for, however, was the internal politics, psychological wars and demons and traumas and heart-aches that the most elite College-University in Westeros also inflicted upon its’ students who were sucked into the world of twisted ambitions and shrewd diplomacy. One such tale was the tale of the Dragon and the Sun, the latter of whom enjoyed and indulged in the darker side and the former who wanted to break through it.

“What you did with Elia was wrong Rhaegar,” Jon spoke as he walked up to his best friend. He had been saying the same thing for the past two weeks but today the silver-haired Dragon stopped in his tracks; since when had Rhae transformed to Rhaegar?

“No, we didn’t. I did, and whenever I did, you avoided it, tried to work your way around it craftily, but crafty is not your style and you are miserable at lying or pretending, so please, we need to talk about this!” The young Connington snapped. Yes, he might have harboured feelings for the Targaryan himself at some point in time, on the brink of being hostile towards Elia Martell, but today he was just appalled at the way she had been treated, and thanking the Gods that he did not have a boyfriend like this.

“Why are you so concerned about Elia suddenly?” Rhaegar asked suspiciously.

“Because you are not, and you should be, you’re her boyfriend after all,” Jon snickered.

“Ex-boyfriend, Jon,” Rhaegar corrected.

“You should be ashamed of yourself,” Jon shook his head as he left as the bell rang. When the bell rang at the Citadel, you had to run, no matter how important a conversation you were in the middle of.

Rhaegar too began running. He had his art elective, which was not all that important, grades wise, but he had a reputation to keep up, even concerning art, he was the smartest student after all. He ran up the old and winding marble stairs of the Citadel School of Humanities, occasionally bumping into a few people here and there. Grumbles and remarks were thrown his way, especially regarding how he had treated his Dornish girlfriend (gosh, his reputation had taken a real blow after that) and some even went so far as to warn him ‘Mind your steps Targaryan, if we attack you this time, nobody’s going to step in and play Superman’ came the calls of the ragging team. Rhaegar ignored all comments and sneers as he made his way to class, nothing compared to his Lyanna, or being late to Mr. Durha’s class- he had no idea that Quarthians could be that strict.

“I’m sorry, so sorry I was on another building and it took me some time to sprint back here. I am so sorry Sir,” he burst into the room, panting and apologising and perspiring profusely.

“Were you at the Medical Building?” Mr. Durha’s eyes shined with happiness. He was ready to forgive his student if he had gone to patch up with Elia. Rhaegar knew that a lie would earn him good favours, but he was not a liar, Jon was right.
“I was at the library,” he cringed a little because it was a white lie. He was at the library, but it was because he needed a quiet space to FaceTime Lyanna. Durha was a little disappointed, but library was pardonable.

“Come in then, what you waiting for!” He began snapping again.

Rhaegar slipped into the room and slinked into the backseat. That was so unlike him, sitting in the backseat, but then again he had lied to his teacher who had pardoned him more or less and if he sat at the front, guilt would eat his guts out. Here he could just concentrate on doing some of his own artwork and later catching up with whatever the teacher gave from Catelyn. Cersei however, was beyond surprised at Rhaegar’s new seating spot.

“What the fuck is wrong with you? Going to sext your new girlfriend or what? She’s already a bad influence,” she commented ever so quietly that nobody except Rhaegar heard her. He was in two minds about whether he should have ignored or replied. Mr. Durha solved that problem for him.

“You’re going to have to do a practical assignment for your half-terms, all of you, even those of you that have this subject as an elective,” this announcement piqued the interest of many and Rhaegar forgot to launch a rebuke against Cersei.

“But Sir, we were promised that electives would mean no extra work, especially during the exams,” Syrio Forel groaned from the first bench.

“Well Mr. Forel, I have changed the rules how about that? My subject is to be taken seriously, and anyways, it’s an easy project,” Mr. Durha shrugged.

“What’s it about?” Rhaegar asked.

“Oh Mr. Targaryan sitting at the back today, eh! I guess that’s what comes of dating an Open University student,” Mr. Durha commented with condescension in his tone. “Anyways, going back to what I was saying, you have to make a painting- either of your muse, or of your inspiration.”

“What’s the difference?” Cersei asked.

“An inspiration is somebody we look up to, somebody we admire, and a muse is a girl who a male genius centres their body of work around, generally male, it is a very sexist concept because the muse never has a personality of her own, she’s lifeless, only an object admired by the poet or the artist and generally for her beauty, innocence and naïveté,” Mr. Durha answered.

“Eww,” came Cersei’s reply.

“Yes, I am hoping you’ll stick to inspiration, but you could do muse too, it would be nice to see how a woman paints a muse,” Mr. Durha commented, to which Cersei gave a crooked smile which generally meant she was thinking of something and already had something up her sleeve.

Rhaegar found the concept very interesting, and was not ready to accept that a ‘muse’ was a sexist concept. Lyanna was his muse, yes he admired how wild and naïve and cute she was, he admired that she would rather dance in the rain than sit and debate and discuss, although he would totally do the latter, and he loved that she could not understand a word of Valyrian and found it boring and totally was miserable at math and hated high-society parties- all of this only made her more human to him, not less. Whatever Mr. Durha was saying was clearly out of contempt and aimed personally at him because everybody was in love with Miss. Elia Perfect Martell.

“As much as I hate his authoritarian streaks, Mr. Durha, is so fascinating sometimes,” Cersei was telling Catelyn.

“Yes totally, his take on human life is so completely different,” Catelyn agreed.

“Oh please, he was just attacking Lyanna,” Rhaegar rolled his eyes at the two girls.

“Gosh, you’ve become more paranoid than your father,” Cersei commented as Catelyn gaped at the audacity and Rhaegar walked out.

“Everybody is just being a jerk! Our love will survive against all odds I promise you this Lya,” he kept muttering to himself as he bumped into Jaime Lannister. The boy had no love lost with the dragon who had broken his best-friends’ heart and snarled at Rhaegar.

“Mind your step,” he growled.

“I was,” Rhaegar defended himself though he knew, in all honesty that he was lying.

“No you weren’t,” Jaime, whose eyesight was not clouded, spoke again.

“Okay, maybe I wasn’t, now let me go Lannister, I’m sorry, I’ll be more careful next time,”
Rhaegar sighed exasperated as tried to move forward.
“Oh please, not like your promises mean a thing!” Jaime snickered.
“That’s enough alright! Ever since morning, every bloody day, all I hear is how wrong I was.
Maybe Love is just strong enough to make you do the most wrong things without even thinking
twice! I fell in love okay, something that I never felt while I was dating your best friend. In fact,
that felt forced most of the time,” Rhaegar spat.
“You are a pathetic excuse for a man,” Jaime spat back.
“Elia is a pathetic excuse for a girl,” Rhaegar sneered.
“Yes, because she’s a woman,” Jaime smiled proudly.
“Then she must have been sleeping with others behind my back too,” Rhaegar said most probably
not even realising how wrong his line of thought, or his words were. It certainly struck Jaime
though, and the boy, not known for his reserve, charged at Rhaegar who too hit back in self-
defence.
The entire corridor stared at the brawl. They were both ferocious fighters and nobody had the guts
to step in. people kept piling till quite a crowd was formed around the two figures fighting with
quite their might. Varys squeezed himself through the crowd to see what the commotion was all
about and was appalled at the scene. He tried to intervene but was obviously nowhere near as
strong to have a say in the matter at all.
“Stop it you two savages!” Cersei snapped absolutely infuriated. Her voice was a storm and it
calmed both Rhaegar and Jaime as they let go of each other with quite a few bruises and cuts across
both their faces and arms and the like.
“What is wrong with you? We’ve talked enough about letting barking dogs and wolves bark,
haven’t we?” Varys scolded Jaime. Brandon Stark immediately furrowed his eyebrows. What the
hell was that supposed to mean?
“What you did was stupid, this is not even your college,” Cersei whisper-snapped at her brother.
“I am going to have to take both of you to the Principal,” Oswell stepped in. Jaime knew that
Maester Donreau would never do anything to him, given that he was from a different college
altogether, so he had no problem in going. Rhaegar grumbled, but he knew there was nothing he
could do, Whent was the Head Boy for the Humanities department and his word was final.
They both trudged to the Principal’s office not even bothering to look the other in the eye. Varys
and Cersei followed close behind in case something went wrong again. Elia would be absolutely
livid to know that Jaime had fought with Rhaegar. She had had enough of that drama, and she did
not wish for her friends to get stuck in that too.
“Principal Donreau, they were fighting in the corridor,” Oswell announced as he entered the office.
Much to all of their surprise, Elia was sitting inside, hands folded neatly on her lap, hair neatly
clipped and braided on two sides and a few band-aids over her face. Rhaegar frowned at that but
chided himself, why should he care about whatever had happened to her? She was not his problem
anymore.
Elia frowned too, at seeing the physical state of her best friend and ex-boyfriend. She guessed in a
minute what might have happened but kept quiet. The anger and frustration in her eyes was
evident, but she was not going to burst or lash out in front of the Principal. There, dignity and
composure had to be maintained.
“Well the Lannister boy is not my student so it is not my judgement to pass as to what shall be done
with him. For that I need to contact his Principal. And as for Mr. Targaryan, I think he has
forgotten the warning he were given during his battle with Robert Baratheon. I need to take the
necessary action but first, I need to finish with Elia here so please seat these two and leave Oswell,”
the Principal calmly answered.
“Sir, my decision is final,” Elia said as soon as Oswell had left the room and both Rhaegar and
Jaime had seated themselves peacefully.
“But Elia, my love, official action-”
“Is useless, you know that. Please let me deal with this my way,” Elia cut in.
“And how can I help? Why have you come to me anyways?” Principal Donreau asked.
“I don’t like to do wrong things without the permission and acknowledgement of the right people,” Elia smiled sweetly. Her tone was so extremely cold and nonchalant that it worried Rhaegar. Jaime suppressed a smile— he knew his best friend pretty well, and he could tell she was about to make some explosions— that was generally Elia’s tone when she was on the verge of doing something dangerous.

“You’re a terrible photographer Jon, I can’t see half of the notes,” Rhaegar grumbled on his Whatsapp call.
“I’ve taken them the best I could!” Jon argued.
“That’s not very good then,” Rhaegar stoically commented.
“Ask Lyanna Stark then,” Jon snapped and cut the call.
Rhaegar sighed in frustration and threw his phone morosely across the bed. He ran a hand threw his silver hair in frustration. Who would have known that falling in love would harbour in all this trouble. Rhaegar ‘Star Student’ Targaryan had been grounded for a pathetic little brawl with Jaime Lannister, it was as hilarious as it was unbelievable. He decided to go around to the library and dig up notes on Essosi history— he needed to pass the tests at least.
Rhaegar hated windy weather with a passion. Maybe it was a Targaryan thing, even dragons did not favour the wind blowing against their face, it made the sky extremely difficult to navigate, or so his father had said. He wrapped his trench coat around himself and took a short-cut to the library. This was a library just across from the Citadel campus (since he was forbidden to enter) and it was not half the size, but it was a decent library and often had valuable archival resources. The back gate was generally isolated and very few people knew about it. There was a small ‘noodle and dumpling’ shop which generally remained empty. He remembered how it was a favourite spot for him and Elia to go on dates, but he shook off all thoughts of Elia as soon as they entered his head. He had been doing that a lot lately. As he was approaching the back-gate, he noticed Gregor Clegane sitting, head down, bleeding profusely and muttering something in livid anger if he was in the state at all to do so. Rhaegar was stupefied at the view, but he was not exactly a fan of the ragging ring-leader so he was in two minds about what to do. On the one hand, he had no desires to help Gregor, on the other hand, how could he leave somebody lying out here like this. He fished out his phone.
“Hey Cersei, we’ve got a situation here, could you come round the back of the Old Town Public Library?” He asked nervously through the phone hiding himself behind a willowy gate. Gregor seemed livid and Rhaegar did not wish to incite any wrath whatsoever.
“What are you doing at the back of the Old Town Public, oh wait, I forgot, you’re grounded,” Cersei snickered on the other end of the phone.
“Why what’s happened?” Came Cersei’s uninterested reply.
“Gregor’s been beaten up,” he announced calmly.
“I don’t believe it,” Cersei hissed on the other side. To say that she was a little soft towards him would be an understatement, but then they had grown up together.
“Well, you can see for yourself,” was all Rhaegar said before he hung up and walked into the library.
The public library made up for its’ lack of space with the peaceful and comfortable ambience that it harboured. There was always a gentle air-condition that was regulated to a moderate temperature and there was always very soft classical music playing so it really helped one concentrate. If only they had had a larger collection of literature, Rhaegar would have been keener on visiting them more often.
He made his way to the Essosi Archive, knowing that it was the only place where he would get his study material. As he made his way through the sections, he saw a very uncannily interested and absorbed Elia scanning the Graphic Novel section. Something was very wrong. Elia hated graphic
Novels— the only one she had ever managed to finish reading was the one on Nymeria’s conquests, and he had, like a lovesick boyfriend, forced her to sit with him as he read about the eternal bonds of love between Daeron Targaryan and Myriah Martell. He blushed at how goofy he used to be, but his attention was instantly diverted to what it was that Elia was so absorbed in doing. She looked extremely composed, poised as usual, and was absorbed in the books that she was going through, something Rhaegar knew was not possible. This was fishy.

“What the hell is that? You beat up Gregor Clegane didn’t you?” He pulled her as close to him as possible and whispered with a passion at her face.

“What?” Elia asked in complete shock, feigning indifference had always been her forte. “Don’t play innocent with me Miss Martell, I saw through all that a very bloody long time ago,” he snarled.

“Rhaegar, the suspension’s really gone to your head, let me go,” Elia muttered softly as she entreated to leave.

“I don’t know, waiting for you to pick a ‘comics book’ and read it and appreciate it I guess,” Rhaegar shrugged nonchalantly.

“Elia answer me!” Rhaegar barked, earning looks from quite a few people. He let go of the firm grip he had on her forearm and looked away.

“Had it not been for your recklessness, neither Gregor, nor you, nor me, nor Robert Baratheon, nor anybody would be going through what we are going through right now!” Elia shouted back as well, but she did it in a whisper, she had always been the more refined one of the two. Rhaegar took a step back, whatever did she mean?

She slipped out of his hands, and out of grip, he thought, forever. He saw a real woman in Elia that day. Maybe it had always been there, but he saw it for the first time, and he was ashamed. Just like a typical ‘man’, he had chosen a girl over a woman. Cersei came in anxiously to see what was wrong with Gregor Clegane, and she was appalled at the damage that had been done, just like Rhaegar had been.

“I don’t believe Elia can be capable of this, you’ve gone as paranoid as your father,” Cersei scoffed at Rhaegar in the hospital.

“Elia has contacts you know, and I’ve seen them fight, and those last few blows to his head, they are amateurish but passionate, something went down, and Elia seems to be livid,” Rhaegar explained.

“Are you stupid? I am sure the entire school has guessed by now, what went down that night,” Cersei said.

“What night? What are you talking about?” Rhaegar asked.

“That night you had a brawl with Robert at the football field for Lyanna, remember; Elia was left alone in the campus, we’d all gone to see your brawl and she had not. Gregor was there too, and he’s always had his eyes on her, we don’t want to imagine what went down, but I am pretty sure we can if we just close our eyes,” Cersei sighed.

Rhaegar’s face distorted in fear and anger and plain down hatred, but whether that was for Gregor or himself was hard to tell. He could have killed Gregor then and there, lying so innocent on the hospital bed, had Cersei not immediately anticipated his actions and stopped him. She dragged him
out of the ICU. The last thing they needed was a murder charge on Aerys Targaryan’s son. Elia would have found the situation funny though.

“Why didn’t you tell me earlier?” Rhaegar croaked.
“Tell you what?” Elia asked as she worked on her laptop, she had exams in less than a week and here was Rhaegar bothering her in her room with cryptic questions.
“Why didn’t you tell me what happened that night?” Rhaegar asked again, this time with a dull fire and wrath in his voice. Elia looked up.
“And what would you have done? Beaten up Gregor? Probably died yourself, in such a brawl, and with your impulsiveness… Had you survived, you would have showered me with pity… what else, that’s all that would have happened right? But that’s not what I wanted. I have never asked for your pity Rhaegar Targaryan, and yet it is all that you have ever given me. I don’t need anybody’s pity, I am a Martell, I am the sun, and that man dared lay his hand on the Sun, he had to burn. But the blame is not his entirely; you know that, as well as I do. Anyways, I forgive you I guess, that’s all you deserve anyways,” Elia said condescendingly. Rhaegar looked down in whatever was stronger than shame.
“Why didn’t you go to the authorities?” He looked up again.
“If there’s a cockroach at your place, just one, you kill it first, and then let the pest control know that there was one and maybe your place is susceptible to more. I’ve let the pest control know,” Elia shrugged as if it was the most natural thing in the world.
Rhaegar laughed. That was literally the first reflex that came to him, laughter. Since when had his childhood best friend, his Elia, turned into this proper Dornish viper, with all her strategies and her strength, he had never realised, and now that he did, he had learnt so much from her.
When Rhaegar left Elia’s house that day, he was a changed man, he was a stronger man. He had been taught how to deal with the most dark and disturbing of experiences and turn it into a strength for yourself. He had been taught that if the quest for vengeance was far too strong and burning inside you, you needed to take it with Fire and Blood. Gosh, this Dornishwoman was more Targaryan than he was. No wonder Tywin Lannister had always called her bright, in his words, Elia truly knew how to ‘deal with unwanted trash and chaos’.

“I am missing a Forensics Lecture for all this, it better be good Syrio,” Elia warned her friend. She had ben dragged to the common hall, like all other students from all other streams, just to witness the display of the Art and Aesthetics practical assignments.
“I hope you like mine,” Syrio grinned in his thick Braavosi accent.
“What did you draw, a Braavosi scenery?” Elia teased her homesick friend.
“No, but I wish…” Syrio cried dramatically as Elia smacked him on the arm.
“Oh come one though, tell me what you drew,” she tried again, this time more persuasively.
“You will see, anyways I am up first, as if I was not nervous enough…” Syrio began muttering curses in Braavosi.
“Oh stop it; being up first is good alright? I was up first for my Anatomy assignment and I got the highest marks,” Elia shrugged proudly.
“Yes, there is a difference between you and me, you’re a scholarship student and I entered with the sports Quota,” Syrio sarcastically replied. Elia was going to come back with an equally clever rebuke had the art students not been called on stage. Syrio hurried, nervous as he was. Varys took his seat.
“Did you see Lyanna Stark, she’s sitting right in the front row,” Varys began commenting.
“Good for Rhaegar,” Elia dryly cut in.
“Oh well, I guess so,” Varys shrugged and sat back. Rhaegar was at the end of the line, and almost everybody in the audience knew that he must have drawn Lyanna Stark, after all the topic was ‘Muse and Inspiration’.
Mr. Durha was beaming with pride as he introduced each of his students and they all walked up to the podium to talk about their work. One had to admit, the quality was top-notch. He was an excellent teacher, and he had been blessed by a talented batch. Most of the work was abstract and that in itself was a sight for sore eyes. Some even made surreal impressions and boy wasn’t everybody in the audience impressed. For the first time, people were not just cheering for their friends.

Finally, it was Cersei’s turn, and Rhaegar would follow. She walked up on the podium with the usual air that she carries about herself of being superior, and everybody had to stifle a laugh. As soon as she unravelled her painting though, the people stopped, gasped, and began cooing and ‘awww’-ing. Cersei was beaming at the response. The picture was an exceptionally well-made charcoal portrait of Robert, and he possibly looked even more handsome than real life. “Well, Mr. Durha said that it would be cool to see a muse through the lens of a woman so here it is. We’ve grown really close these past few months, and I’ve realised what a muse means. Whether Robert is playing excellent soccer on the field, or drinking himself silly, or crying over Lyanna Stark, he’s become my muse. Maybe it’s his innocence, maybe it’s his cheek and adorable stupidity, but for all it’s worth, it is what it is!”

“That was so cute!” Elia and Varys echoed together.

“Wow, when did she get so… bright?” Tyrion mused.

“Hey, she was always smart you know,” Jaime replied. They were two beaming brothers.

Rhaegar came up next, and most people began grumbling. As it is, Lyanna Stark used to come over all the time and had had enough of public displays of affection between the dragon the wolf and they would gag if they had to see any more. Lyanna would most probably jump on him once she saw the painting; it had been a secret after all, a secret to which even Jon Connington was not party. Rhaegar stood and smiled nervously, then proceeded to speak. “So we’ve had a Muse with Cersei, and quite an impressive one, but we won’t be closing with a Muse…”

“I swear to the Gods if he calls Lyanna an ‘inspiration’,” Arthur and Ashara muttered together. Elia smirked at the comment.

“-so, here goes, I guess,” Rhaegar said as his painting was unravelled. People gaped. The painting was a bright orange, so bright that it struck the eye. There was a Sun, on one side of the canvas, a bright orange and red sun that spanned the entirety of the left side, and on the right, merging with sun, or emerging from it, was a side profile of Elia Martell, her black eye blazing and her ebony hair fluttering outwards. She looked fierce, she resembled Nymeria and she dazzled the canvas, as much as she dazzled the audience. “There you go, that’s my inspiration. That’s the only woman on the planet who knows how to take her weakness, and not just turn it into her biggest strength, but turn it into a proper battle strategy and win and then get on with life like nothing ever happened. I am no Dornishman, I didn’t know how to love my respect, I found myself a Muse, but I promise you Elia, no matter where you go and what you do, no matter how wrong or even selfish that may be, it will give me strength. I don’t know what kind of love this is, but since you’re my only source of power, I am guessing that it is the cool kind; you know the kind that doesn’t exist anymore, the kind between two equals that lasts way more than a lifetime. So thank you Eli, thank you for being there for me although I was never there for you.”

As Rhaegar ended, the entire audience erupted into cheers. This was the most heart-warming and romantic gesture they had witnessed in a long time, even if Rhaegar and Elia’s relationship was complicated and undefined, it was beautiful, it was what it was.
Tiger In The Menagerie

Chapter Summary

'Tiger in the Menagerie' is a poem by Emma Jones so all the credit goes to her. We had this poem for our GCSE's and I have been fascinated with it ever since! I guess you could say that this is my analysis of it! I think this imagine is awfully similar to the last one, it's a high school one at any rate. I really hope you'll read it though, and leave the lovely comments that you do!

No one could say how the tiger got into the menagerie.
It was too flash, too blue,
too much like the painting of a tiger.
At night the bars of the cage and the stripes of the tiger
looked into each other so long
that when it was time for those eyes to rock shut
the bars were the lashes of the stripes
the stripes were the lashes of the bars
and they walked together in their dreams so long
through the long colonnade
that shed its fretwork to the Indian main
that when the sun rose they’d gone and the tiger was
one clear orange eye that walked into the menagerie.
No one could say how the tiger got out in the menagerie.
It was too bright, too bare.
If the menagerie could, it would say ‘tiger’.
If the aviary could, it would lock its door.
Its heart began to beat in rows of rising birds
when the tiger came inside to wait.

“Beautiful poem isn’t it?” Mr. Hightower beamed. He was a pleasant man whose spirits were never easily dampened. “So, I am going to assign you teams and you are going to have to work together and within a fortnight, produce an essay or presentation together on the ‘romantic analysis’ of this poem.”
“Romantic?! It’s an impressionist nature poem, where does romance come in?” Elia screeched a little too loudly for the sensibility of the soft and willowy teacher.
“Miss Martell, in your anthology, this poem falls under the Love and Romance section so that is where your essay is going, understood?” He stated.
“But that is ridiculous,” Elia complained.
“Excuse me Miss Martell, the board did not ask for your opinions or your permission when they wrote the book,” Mr. Hightower reinforced his point.
“I know that. That’s why it’s stupid,” Elia muttered, a comment that Hightower chose to ignore.
“Now, to move on to the teams, yes, let’s start with Miss Martell, you’re paired with Mr. Targaryan. Then comes Miss Frey, you’re paired with…”
“Who is my partner Sir?” Elia asked not believing her ears.
“Rhaegar. I told you Elia, where’s your concentration? All this debating and Mun-ing is really going into your head now. I understand you’re the star public speaker of the school but come back to academics also sometime okay? We can’t afford a Straight-A’s student failing, understood?” Mr.
Hightower chided as he turned back to the notebook in his hand and began reading off the other teams.
The entire class had been silenced by the news. Each and every student at King’s Landing Private Academy knew what had gone down between the Dornish Sun and the Young Dragon. Most had taken sides also, but some had chosen to be neutral. Mr. Hightower was a man who generally stayed preoccupied with his own family and did not really poke his nose into the private lives of his students, so his not being aware was not really a very big thing. But everybody else was aware, and they were shocked beyond measure. How were these two ‘star pupils’ supposed to work together if they were not really in proper talking terms yet?
“I’m sorry about what happened in class,” Catelyn made her way to Elia who was packing her bags silently once the bell had gone off. Catelyn had always held a special admiration for Elia and she had no clue as to why, but she just did. It often caused rifts between her and Ned.
“What are you sorry about?” Elia bitterly snickered. Catelyn sighed softly.
“He shouldn’t have done that,” she reinforced her point.
“He didn’t know. It’s Hightower, what do you expect? If there’s a tsunami, he’ll feel it a week later,” Elias stated trying to appear as nonchalant as possible.
“Elia, I’m sorry,” Catelyn finally sighed.
“Catelyn, don’t be. It’s none of your business, you really don’t have to do this; I know how Ned feels about your associations with me…” Elia knew that this was the only way to get Catelyn off her back, talking about Ned, who she was always worried about. Catelyn left slinking away.
“He’s a bit of an ignorant moron,” Jaime caught up with her next.
“Doesn’t life just suck most of the time?” A small voice interrupted Elia’s thoughts as she was fiddling with her salad at one discreet corner of the garden during lunch. She really wanted to avoid people right now, most of all her over-concerned friends. As sweet as they were being, she wanted some peace of mind.
Elia looked up to find an equally distressed Viserys pouting in front of her, like a genuine pout. She smiled at the little boy. Growing up, Viserys had been insanely attached to her, and when Rhaegar broke off ties with her, it was not just him that she had lost. “Middle school not treating you well?” She asked him as she patted the spot next to her for him to sit.
“It’s not just school, I’ve always been called a freak there it’s nothing new, but it’s the home front that sucks. Dad hates Lyanna Stark, heck, I hate Lyanna Stark, mom has no love lost for her, but it’s like, Rhae doesn’t even care about us anymore! Dad’s situation is worsening but he is so damn busy with his new girlfriend! Dad has become self-destructive but he doesn’t care!” Viserys broke down.
“And you’re sure he knows how bad the situation is?” Elia asked cautiously.
“He would, if he listened. But the only person he can listen to nowadays is Lyanna Stark,” Viserys spitefully commented.
“Oh stop, he’s your brother after all Vis, don’t be so mean,” Elia scolded.
“Easy for you to say, you’re not the one living with him right? And little Dany, poor little Dany, she doesn’t understand half of what goes on at home, and people are screaming and Dad throws tantrums and she starts to cry and mom chides her. It’s a routine at home! She’s probably the best-behaved child you’ll ever meet because she only knows discipline, and how to shut up when something is gravely wrong! You left my brother right, but the Sun walked out of our house that day!” Viserys was crying profusely at this point of time.
“Viserys stop!” Elia raised her voice at him and regretted it immediately. The last thing a shaken Viserys already needed was a chiding.
“Don’t worry, you can reproach me all you want I won’t mind,” Viserys sniffled. Elia noticed the glint of the sunshine off the tears that rolled down his cheeks.
“I’m sorry Vis, I really didn’t mean to…” She scooted closer to the boy. Viserys laid his head on her shoulder, as much of it could reach her that is. She was lanky, typical Martell.
“I miss you; probably more than anybody else in that house does. You were my closest friend Eli…” the poor young boy sobbed quietly.
“Oh I know Vis, I know. But it’s your brother that broke off the relationship you know, not me,” Elia said softly.
“I know, but I still miss you,” Viserys grunted stubbornly.
“Well, I think the Gods heard your prayers today because I am due for a group project with your brother. I’ll be coming over soon enough,” Elia grinned. She had wanted to keep the ordeal a secret but she could not stand to see the boy disheartened any longer.
“You will?” Viserys asked in complete ecstasy.
“Yes I will little dragon, I will!” Elia giggled along with him.

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“Sorry, it was Dany again,” Rhaegar announced as he walked into the room from the hundredth break he had taken in between the poetry session that he had currently been working on with Elia.
“Want me to go and see?” Elia inquired.
“It’s okay, we both know who really likes babies between the two of us,” Rhaegar smirked. He knew most of the times Elia was showing off her maternal side; it was more pretention than anything else.
“That’s true, but your family members seem to like me more than you,” Elia retorted. Rhaegar threw up his hands and surrendered. There was no talking around Elia.
She walked to Danerys’ elaborate nursery that was done up in shades of light pink and magenta. There were patterns of dragons and unicorns around the walls and there were translucent curtains that fluttered in the wind and there were dolls scattered about the place. There was also peaceful music playing. Elia had to suppress a laugh; even though she grew up in a relatively restrictive atmosphere, Sunspear for children was all sun and spear and fresh wind and long walks in the garden. It was nothing as weird as this. Elia walked to the crib, which itself was elaborate and decorated with dragon heads on two sides of the wood-work.
Danerys was the cutest baby Elia had ever seen; the prettiest as well. She had long drawn purple eyes, a lot like her brother, with the largest eyelashes Elia had ever seen, and she had a cute little button nose with plump pink lips and cheeks that were in a permanent state of blush. She was very small, petite, but also healthy. Elia had to smile; Daenerys was a pretty female version of Rhaegar, quite endearing in her opinion. The baby immediately stopped crying as Elia held her. She gave a smirk of triumph, all Targaryans were fonder of her than they were of Rhaegar, she knew. It was a natural thing. Elia smiled down at the little girl as she gave out a gurgle of joy.
“Hi Dany, it’s been quite a long time since we’ve seen each other. I missed you little one,” Elia laughed as Dany’s plump hands reached out to caress her nose, something the child seemed fascinated with.
“Unbelievable, she just wouldn’t stop crying,” Rhaegar shook his head. Elia turned around to give him a typical I-told-you-so look.
“Thanks back there,” Rhaegar smiled as they settled back into his bed after putting Daenerys to sleep. They made a pretty good team at the end of the day, unfortunately.
“Let’s finish this before Viserys comes back from his chess class, we’re going to go to the ice-cream parlour after that,” Elia announced.
“When the hell was this plan made?” Rhaegar asked in surprise.
“None of your business,” was Elia’s curt reply which made him look back into the poem and try to derive whatever romantic meaning could be scraped out of it.
“This is ridiculous, I give up,” Elia threw the book to the other side of the bed and considering how large Rhaegar’s bed was, she had thrown it with heavy force.
“Hey, never take out your anger on your girlfriend or your book,” Rhaegar exclaimed.
“Look who’s talking,” Elia cheekily commented.
“I never took my anger out on you,” Rhaegar defended himself.
“No, your ego took its’ anger out on me when it left me for that wolf pup,” Elia commented dryly.
“What is that supposed to mean?” Rhaegar asked.

“Nothing Rhaegar, it’s supposed to mean nothing. Now can we please finish this, Viserys will be arriving soon,” Elia hurried him.

“Yes okay fine, listen, I may have figured out an alternative explanation for the poem, a romantic one,” Rhaegar hurriedly cut in.

“Oh do tell, awfully excited anyways,” Elia replied with a hint of her usual sarcasm. Rhaegar just rolled his eyes.

“Anyways- I believe that this is about people who completely change the way you look at the world; and then, all of a sudden, you just fall in love with that person. It’s about how they enter into your calm and boring menagerie like a tiger and then all hell breaks loose,” Rhaegar dreamily explained.

“Like Lyanna Stark,” Elia softly put in.

“Yes, yes exactly! Exactly Eli, she walked into my mundane life and turned it upsi-” Rhaegar was going on exclaiming had his eyes not fallen on his ex, who maintained her usual straight face but he felt a rush of guilt. “I didn’t mean it like that,” he began stuttering.

“Don’t worry about offending me. Nothing can offend me anymore,” Elia smiled although Rhaegar could not quite place the emotions hidden behind it. There were footsteps outside his door and both of them were secretly glad; they thanked Viserys silently.

“We’re almost done! I don’t believe this!” Rhaegar exclaimed happily as Elia pulled her pen-drive out of his laptop.

“Yeah me too. I’m glad, actually,” Elia said.

“Now I can finally concentrate on Baelish,” Rhaegar muttered to himself but a little too loudly.

“What about Baelish?” Elia immediately caught on. She had no love lost for that man.

“Oh it’s nothing really. He’s just, he’s really bothering Lyanna. You see, Catelyn went out with him last year but she obviously didn’t like him so she called it quits after the first two months. Then she started seeing Ned about six months ago and they’ve grown really close to each other and they make an adorable couple, everyone knows that but Baelish can’t handle it. He’s gone really mad. He’s been threatening Lyanna with mails about hurting Ned or even Brandon and he’s kind of been stalking her and other terrible stuff like that. He’s already managed to make Lysa turn against Catelyn,” Rhaegar said.

“Oh what an asshole, though I never really made much of him anyways. You could always just play along with him then trick him and take him to Principle Morvoe,” Elia suggested nonchalantly.

“What?” Rhaegar asked in complete bewilderment.

“Oh you know, befriend him, or tell Lyanna to do it- no she’s not smart enough. Just, you can do it, or Catelyn, she’s quite bright. Then walk him to the Principle as he confesses everything that he did because I’m sure he deletes all the mails and stuff and you can’t really track anything back to him so this is your only option,” Elia shrugged as if it was the most obvious thing in the entire world. “It’s a good plan. You’re a good planner. How did you come up with this anyways?” Rhaegar asked in astonishment.

“I’ve done this with all my stalkers to date,” Elia replied.

“You’ve had stalkers before? Why’d you never tell me?” Rhaegar inquired again.

“I don’t need to go running to my boyfriend every single time something goes wrong in life. God’s given me brains to function,” Elia laughed. Rhaegar was left a little spellbound. “Anyways, bye Targaryan. Do let me know what came of my genius plan, I generally never give out free advice I was doing you a massive favour,” she said teasingly as she prepared to leave.

“When did you get so cynical and manipulative?” Rhaegar asked in a tone that was lower than general.

“Oh, since birth I guess,” Elia shrugged. “You never noticed. But then again, dancing in the rain makes a man notice you more than outsmarting half of the school does.”
When Elia left that day, she did not leave alone. She left with Dany’s full loyalty, the secret of Viserys’ clandestine girlfriend, her uncle Aerys’ health which she had ensured by getting him therapy sessions with the best psychiatrist in Dorne, Aunt Rhaella’s recipe to Valyrian Dragon Soup although she was a disaster at cooking so she knew she would never be able to reproduce it (Ashara can do the job) and Rhaegar’s heart. Rhaegar reached an epiphany too that day- he had been so wrong about tigers and tigresses.

“Silence class! Silence!” Mr. Hightower snapped, deceiving his reputation as the softest and most docile teacher in all of Westeros.

The class shuffled back to their seats. Mr. Hightower was not known for his snapping tendencies and if he was doing it, there must be something gravely wrong. The sound of leather scraping on ceramic tiles filled the room as the children scurried as fast as they could to their respective places. Catelyn and Ned had just finished with their presentation and it was Elia and Rhaegar’s turn. The entire class was as eager as they were nervous- what if the presentation turned out to be a scandal or ended up becoming a shouting match for the ex-lovers.

Rhaegar got up to speak. In each of the teams, only one member would be doing the speaking whilst the other would be handling the slides. That fact the class had forgotten and was relieved to remember- there would be no shouting match after all. They all sat back in their seats, it was always a pleasure to see what the two brightest bulbs of the batch could put up together. Rhaegar cleared his throat. This was something even Mr. Hightower was eager to see.

The presentation began. In the first slide, much to the surprise of the entire batch and Elia who had left her pen-drive with Rhaegar the last night; there was a picture of Elia and Rhaegar huddling together in the library reading ‘War and Peace’. The class cooed. Elia was beyond shocked; when had Rhaegar managed to fish and put this picture up? Rhaegar began:

“We associate tigers with ferocity and wilderness- being a free predator. That’s true; they are ferocious and wild, and wildly ferocious when they’re hungry. But the one thing we forget, mainly about tigresses though, is that they are scheming diplomats who always wait for the last minute to strike. I’ve seen tigresses bring down elephants. It’s not because they’re physically stronger or larger, of course not. It’s because they are intelligent. They are pragmatic, even about their bloody dinner! I had thought that a tiger had entered into the menagerie of my life when I left my old friends and love and family for Lyanna Stark. I couldn’t have been more wrong. The tigress in my life was as stealthy and diplomatic and annoyingly suave as she had always been. She had entered my life when I was ten, playing with the mud and she had come in with all her ladylike grandeur and reprimanded me- a stranger because she felt entitled to reprimand every kid in the playground, and my life has never been the same ever since. Elia Martell you came like a tiger, only I was stupid enough never to realise that.

So this tiger, what does it do in the menagerie? It watches, it observes, and when your birds are in a weak position, probably distracted, dozed off to sleep, it strikes. It breaks down the cages and attacks. I remember Elia kissed me when I was slightly drunk and out of my senses and particularly ecstatic as it was pouring after the winter ball while returning home.

What is the role of the tiger after it has done feasting on your menagerie? It leaves. It leaves satisfied with a full appetite. If you’re smart, you will never let it leave. If you’re stupid, you’ll find a roach more threatening and run after that. Never make the mistake I did. Never mistake a roach for a tiger. When you feel like there is something threatening to ruin your menagerie, like a sudden tsunami, then that’s not your tiger. When the calmest person in your life stings you harder than any bee ever could; when that attack ravages your soul and rips through your sensibilities- that’s the tigress.

Elia and I had both read the poem as an impressionist nature poem. It took us an extremely long time to figure out how this could remotely be linked to love. However, when we finally managed to reach a conclusion, it was wrong. Elia and I ended up making the mistake I made last summer. It was not until last night that it struck me how wrong I was. Thank you Eli, it was you again who
brought me into the light.
The rest of the presentation I have not altered too much. It is written in Elia’s god-gifted hand- her language and expression is probably the best I have ever read. I am blushing now, I know and Eli has probably turned into a tomato, so I’ll stop now. You can read the rest of the presentation which is mostly contextual analysis and evaluation of language and style. We hope you enjoy it. We hope Mr. Hightower deems it suitable enough, even after my awfully personal speech.”
When Rhaegar left the podium, the entire class was in a delirium of coos and teary eyes and gurgling sounds of expressions of adoration. Elia sprinted to the back of the class and slid into the corner seat as fast as she could. Rhaegar had embarrassed her today probably more than he had ever done before, and this was considering the Harrenhal incident. Jaime grinned as he walked to back and took the seat next to her. Elia could have strangled him with her bare hands if she could.
“When are the babies coming?” Jaime danced his eyebrows.
“Lannister, piss off,” Elia said through gritted teeth.
“Oh come on, it was cute. He was sincere about whatever he said up there,” Jaime reasoned.
“Yes probably, but he could have told me. He could have called me to his place like he did so many times! But no, let’s embarrass Elia in front of everybody because that’s my favourite hobby,” Elia spat out annoyed.
“He shamed you in front of everyone during Harrenhal, he was trying to set that right today. But his feelings were genuine, tigress,” Jaime wisely commented and was surprised at the level of maturity he had deduced from the entire situation. Elia too was at a loss of words. She sat back not bothering to argue.
Elia had been praying to the Gods that the class not end. She was dead scared about the repercussions of Rhaegar’s romantic speech after class. Everybody would be coming up to her, if not Rhaegar himself and she hated this with a passion. As a Dornishwoman Elia loved attention, but of the right kind. Rhaegar Targaryan was the last person she needed for publicity.
“Hi Elia,” Catelyn came up with enthusiastic smiles and nods at her as she was getting ready to run out the door.
“Hi Catelyn,” Elia replied nervously.
“I, I’m sorry, that was just so cute! I am so sorry but I can’t help myself. He was so cute up there! Ned is going to strangle him to death probably, but he was so cute! The two of you were so cute! The picture was so cute! Your presentation was so cute!” Catelyn kept gushing.
“Excuse me, what was cute about the presentation? I think it was a good solid matter-of-fact presentation,” Elia frowned annoyed.
“Oh who cares about the literature part? I was talking about Rhaegar’s speech! It was priceless, gold. The way he looks at you, tigress, I must say it’s not just adorable, it is also hot!” Catelyn was unbecoming of herself as she kept exclaiming.
“I’m getting late for my Maths class,” Elia muttered as she entreated to walk out. This side of Catelyn was really scaring her.
“Oh come back, I still have more gushing left!” Catelyn called after a most flushing red Elia.

“That’s a nice skirt you got there. It’s a pity it’s got to get muddied,” a familiar voice echoed behind Elia. She did not even want to turn back. She had taken the abandoned side of the school to escape as soon as it was over. She had hoped nobody would be there but she had forgotten how well her ‘tiger’ knew her.
“What do you want Rhaegar?”
“I don’t know. Some talking would be a good way to begin,” Rhaegar replied.
“Talk about what? You said what you needed to say back in class,” Elia retorted.
“You didn’t.”
“There’s nothing I have to say,”
“Really?”
“Yes, really.”
“That’s great!”
“What do you mean that’s gre—”
They both stumbled into the mud as Rhaegar’s kiss was forceful, and Elia’s pretty pale pink tweed blouse and pencil skirt were dirtied beyond repair, and she reprimanded Rhaegar the whole way home; but he totally made up for it when he took them off of her and made sure they stayed on the floor of her room. His house would be way too irritating—what with a middle-school pupil and a baby.
Chapter Summary

I can't believe I've reached my tenth imagine! It looks like I only started yesterday! So I wanted to do something special but could not come up with any ideas. If you guys have something in mind, please let me know. Also, let's do a poll or something—what was your favorite imagine so far? Please write a comment I would be so super excited to know!

This one mainly has a lot of fluff since it's the tenth one and I was really running out of ideas but the next ones will be better I promise!

There was nothing in the world that Elia Martell disliked more than unpunctuality. She loathed it with a passion. Even as a young girl of twelve she disliked the consequences of being late. Yet here she was, running late by fifteen minutes for her very first Ghiscari lesson. Her plastic neon boots splashed down the puddles as she effortlessly skimmed through them. The rain was pelting at her eyes and she was having a hard time trying to see anything. The heavy monsoon turrets pelted down on her back and slid down her neon raincoat as she tried to fight against all odds and reach the bus stop. She could at least catch the next bus. She knew she would grow out of breath very soon, given her tendencies and she tried to make it a fight against time.

Elia hated the rain.

The bus stop was slippery with its’ fancy tile flooring. The LED was glinting off the beige floor and Elia slipped on it headfirst. Her hand twisted round the back of her leg and her head hit the floor. She slipped across one end of the upraised platform to the other. Boy, it hurt. She felt a little swelling on one of one side of her forehead. A tiny tear trickled down her cheek and she was quick to wipe it away. There was somebody else stuck in that goddamn stop as well.

“Are you okay?” A pair of curious violet eyes stared down at her.

“I’m on top of the world,” Elia snapped back sarcastically.

“Oh thank god. I got scared, the way you flew to the other side, it was quite spectacular actually,” the young boy kept rattling off.

“Are you stupid? Of course I’m hurt!” Elia snapped louder and angrier than before.

“Oh sorry,” the young boy muttered in such an apologetic pouty manner that Elia was compelled to forgive him.

“Can you help me up at least?” She tried not to sound too empathising.

The boy was more than eager and pleased to do so. He had behaved foolishly, and he was willing to make up for it completely. He had been brought up with the right manners after all. He helped the young girl up and took a good look at her. She was drenched, needless to say, but she was exceedingly pretty. Her long black hair was cascading down her back and her large black eyes peered back at him with an expression he could not quite make out. Her nose was not too tiny and not too large, it was the perfect size, and her lips were so plush and pink that he really had to wonder how. At this age, his were always dried and chapped. He had had a hard time taking his eyes off of her and he could tell that she was not only conscious, she was annoyed. He had to say something to cut through the awkward tension building up. “What is your name Miss?”

“Elia. I know yours. I am so sorry I snapped at you, I was really not in my spirits. Are you going to tell your father? Are you going to complain to my Uncle Lewin?” Elia’s voice quivered as she nervously enquired of him.

“Are you crazy? I was being stupid; I deserved to be snapped at. Tell me, are you Elia Martell?”
Rhaegar asked, once again regretting his stupid question. Elia only giggled.

“Yes, I’m Elia Martell!”

“It’s a pleasure to meet you. Your Uncle Lewin is my friend! He allows me into the libraries and archives sometimes and he’s so much fun! He knows so much. He knows everything about everything. I’m usually just in a lot of awe about him all the time…” Rhaegar rattled off as Elia stood beaming with pride. She was a vain Martell, and whenever somebody around the world praised any Martell whatsoever, she was the happiest person in the room.

“I’ve heard him talk about you too. You’re the curious dragon prince that can’t stop asking him about the Doom of Valyria,” Elia interrupted him.

“Oh yes, I find that fascinating,” Rhaegar glowed in excitement. “Don’t you?”

“Rhoynish mythology is more my style,” Elia explained. ‘But I like the history of Valyria too. It’s interesting. It’s better than Slaver’s Bay.’

“Oh don’t you just hate Slaver’s Bay?”

“Yes, it must be terrible working there. I’d try to avoid it, even for internships,” Elia exclaimed with an air of professionalism and ambition most unbecoming of a twelve-year old.

“What do you want to be?” Rhaegar asked curiously; the boy was still oscillating between singer and writer.

“A diplomat. I want to work for the United Nations Westeros or Essosi branch. God forbid I should never be transferred to the Slaver’s Bay branch,” Elia stated, ambition glittering in her eyes.

“A diplomat? Wow that sounds like a lot of work,” Rhaegar commented completely dazed by her confidence and determination.

“It’s more of like negotiations and deals. It’s a lot of mental work but not too much physical exertion. Hopefully,” Elia added in the end. She was not the fittest child out there and her mother’s constant coddling had made her even more aware of this fact.

“I’d like to be a soccer player or a singer or a writer, or all three really,” Rhaegar shrugged happily. He was in awe of this girl though; he was not half as focused as she was.

“It’s good to have dreams, but you’re Rhaegar Targaryan, you’re going to end up as a politician,” Elia’s matter-of-fact voice cut through the stars in Rhaegar’s eyes.

“I don’t have to!” The boy rebuked.

“Well it’s kind of compulsory,” Elia’s comment hit yet another nerve.

“No it’s not! You’re being mean!” Rhaegar began shouting.

“Oh shut up, I’m only telling the truth,” Elia scolded him.

“I don’t want to join politics…” the poor young boy sniffled.

“Why not? It’s so interesting. You’ll be dealing with human nature, manipulating it, twisting it around, and sometimes trying to do some good as well. I think it sounds like jolly fun!” The young girl happily ended.

“If you’re a diplomat, will you help me?” Rhaegar asked with a raised eyebrow.

“I guess I’ll have to,” Elia shrugged.

“Then I’ll think about it,” a soft blush crept up Rhaegar’s cheek as Elia gave a laugh. The boy was a disaster at flirting, but a sweet one.

So Elia completely forgot about her Ghiscari lessons, and Rhaegar about the visit he was supposed to pay his father at the office, and they sat chatting and pulling each others’ leg for a good three hours before their respective mothers had to come searching for them frantically. Neither got scolded though, much to their surprise. It was not really surprising though- both their mothers could see a lot of good things coming from this association in the future.

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“You are not to talk to Baelor Hightower ever again!” Rhaegar shouted above the noise of the heavy rainfall as it pelted down on the bus stop where he had met Elia six years ago.

“Excuse me?” Elia returned in equal anger.

“He’s stupid and boring and plain out dull. He’s also got a massive crush on you, are you blind?”

“Half the school has a crush on me, what do you want me to do?!”
“I don’t know! But with Baelor it’s different,” Rhaegar argued.
“Yes probably, because I think I like him too,” Elia replied.
“You like him?! I mean, I am generally never on the same page as Oberyn, but about this guy, we totally agree!” Rhaegar exclaimed.
“Then the two of you can keep your precious opinions to yourselves,” Elia snapped.
“Even Arthur is better,” Rhaegar muttered.
“What do you mean ‘even’ Arthur is better? Are you saying none of them are good enough?” Elia asked suspiciously.
“Yes,” Rhaegar replied in indignation.

“Why?”
A silence followed. Rhaegar looked down at his worn out sneakers. What was he even thinking? How could Elia Martell fall for a fool like himself? He may be a Targaryan, but he was a pathetic excuse for his status and name. He wore worn out sneakers and barely had time to do up his calloused silver locks and looked tired all the time because he didn’t sleep at night (the reasons were either music, studies or just stalking Elia on her social media pages) with clothes that were, whenever he wore them ‘last season’. So no, there was no way that Elia ‘perfect and sophisticated’ Martell could fall for him. Elia, on the other hand saw something glinting in her best-friends’ eye that she had never seen before. It was so unexplained. She frowned praying to the Gods it was what she thought it was. But that would just not add up. She had always suspected Rhaegar to be with Jon Connington and Elia Martell was usually always right. She took a step closer towards him. His eyes had the usual dark circles but they were still the prettiest she had ever seen. She looked right into them, if it was even possible- if they were not dense enough.
“I don’t know why,” Rhaegar finally croaked.
“What is it Rhae?” Elia tried again, this time a little less harshly. Rhaegar was a sensitive boy.
“Leave it Eli. We were here to celebrate right, let’s celebrate. Anyways you’re going off to the Citadel,” Rhaegar sighed.
“You’ll be joining me a year later right?”
“If I get through.”

“Stop joking around. Besides me, you’re the best student at school,” Elia scolded.
“I’m not Arthur or Baelor,” Rhaegar bitterly shrugged.
“Rhaegar stop it! What’s gotten into you?” Elia raised her voice again.
“I love you! I love you for God’s sake! And you’re so bloody blind… or maybe, or maybe you don’t love me. Is that it Eli? You don’t love me do you? It’s okay, I-I won’t mind. You’ll still be my best friend…” Tears were running down the purple pupils.
“But I thought… you and Jon… I couldn’t have been wrong,” Elia replied in equal astonishment.
“You thought what?!?”
“Well, I just guessed. I mean he was always so mean to me so I thought he found me threatening. That’s why I grew more distant from you last year. Oh Rhae, I didn’t mean it. I didn’t know, I promise,” Elia cried.
“And had you known?”

A blush crept up on Elia’s tanned cheeks. This was so unbecoming of her- blushing. She looked down at her golden stilettos. She has nothing to say. Sometimes, it’s better not to say anything. She turned her back towards Rhaegar. She does not want him to see. “I wouldn’t have taken so long…” Although Elia’s answer was barely above a whisper, Rhaegar was quick to hear it. He turned her around, spun her on those golden heels, and kissed her as hungrily as he could muster the courage of. She was still an extremely intimidating Martell to him. His hand went right behind her slit golden dress, and her hands callously skimmed his silver locks. The thickness of Rhaegar’s hair was the only thing that closely resembled any of Elia’s physical features, and she loved it. She ran her hands through it as smoothly as she could muster, occasionally tugging it, when his kisses got way too wild, dragon-like.

“Did you really think? Me and Jon…” Rhaegar would ask pulling back from their intimate session sometime later.
“Well yes, what did you expect?” Elia retorted. “I mean, you didn't think I was straight?” Rhaegar asked nervously. Elia laughed. “I found you hot. Now, that’s all that matters doesn’t it?”

“Well, probably still do. But you’re not on the football field sweating right now, or playing that guitar with your hair flying open so I’m not so sure…”

“I’ll show you what hot is…”

“Rhae, Rhae, no! This is a public bus stop!” Elia protested.

Rhaegar gave a grunt of disapproval but realised that what Elia was saying made sense. They were a Martell and a Targaryan after all and being caught like this was hardly something to be proud of although people did fancy them being together. “But it’s raining, not like we can go anywhere. Also, your relatives are flocking your place, and Vis and Dany are at mine so we can’t go there either,” he placed his case.

“You idiot, we’ll go to the Marriot, it’s nearby,” Elia sighed. Rhaegar gasped, why hadn’t it struck him earlier?

“But wait, it’s raining…” He groaned again.

“Should that be a bother?” Elia asked mischievously. Rhaegar did not wait for an answer as he carried to the hotel till she begged him to let her walk when they were close to the gate. How embarrassing it would be otherwise!

Rain always brought back memories for Rhaegar Targaryan. Good and bad. He had met Elia for the first time in the rain. He had professed his love and kissed Elia for the first time in the rain. He had broken up with Elia in the rain. He had broken up with Lyanna Stark in the rain. His father had chosen him to be the Prime Minister the day it was raining. Rain held a motley of emotions for Rhaegar, and he remembered each incident like it was yesterday.

“How long will it take?” He asked the driver half-heartedly as he stared at the rain. He had had a habit of getting stuck at bus-stops in the rain, and he loved it.

“Sir, an hour at least,” the driver replied nervously, expecting Rhaegar to be livid. His smile was priceless.

“I can wait. Take Mr. Lannister with you to the nearest repair shop,” Rhaegar instructed.

“You have a meeting in fifteen minutes,” Jaime reminded his Prime Minister.

“It was raining, I’m sure Doran will understand,” Rhaegar shrugged. Doran was a calm and balanced boy- a more righteous version of Elia, and Rhaegar was sure he would be willing to forgive for a delay of forty-five minutes. He had forgiven Rhaegar for breaking his sisters’ heart. Rhaegar had not forgiven himself though.

“I need to stay with you,” Jaime sighed. Rhaegar could be an eccentric sometimes and as a personal bodyguard, that was extremely irritating.

“It’s Dorne. What can possibly happen to me?” Rhaegar replied with a pride he knew he had no right to bear. The Dornish hated him.

“It’s Dorne, what can possibly not happen to you?” Jaime sarcastically commented.

“Lannister, leave,” Rhaegar ordered. Jaime left frustrated. He had to go find a mechanic garage now, with this new nervous driver. Life was just about great.

A flutter of footsteps was heard. Rhaegar craned his neck outwards. It was somebody with crazy high heels if the noise was anything to go by, and she was running. Rhaegar stood back a little, making space, in case this lady was looking for shelter from the rain. A gust of wind came in with a young lady carrying a sleeping young girl in her arms. Rhaegar frowned; she looked uncannily familiar from the back and he wondered who she could be. She wore Dornish clothes- a subtle combination chiffon saree of lavender and lilac was wrapped around her curvy stature on a sleeveless blouse that was tied by various strings at the back but largely remained backless. Her hair was twisted and clipped on two sides but left open, and that was all Rhaegar could make out from where he was standing. He could not see her face. He tried to stick his neck at an angle to get
a good look but decided against it. The Prime Minister could not afford a stalker label. He was just
burning curious to see what such a posh and well-dressed lady was doing at the bus stop carrying a
child in heavy state of slumber. Maybe her car had broken down too.
“Oby, my car’s not working. Pick me up from Sunspear Library Stop please,” the young lady
ordered over the phone. Rhaegar’s heart skipped a beat. Elia’s voice still did that to him.
“It’s okay I can drop you,” he completely creepily announced from behind her making her drop the
phone in shock.
“Oh for fuck’s sake!” Elia cursed out of reflex and as soon as her eyes landed on Rhaegar she was
furious. He seemed to be a bearer of ill-will and bad luck. “Of course it’s you,” she spitefully
commented.
“I’m sorry about the phone, but I can really drop you. I am going to your place,” Rhaegar
continued.
“Why in fuck’s name?” Elia asked suspiciously.
“I have a meeting with Doran,” he declared.
“Oh.”
“Well, so you’ll go right? The both of you…”
“No, Oberyn will pick us up.”
“Oh come on your phone is not working there’ll be a communication problem,” Rhaegar
persuaded.
“I don’t think Oberyn would like the idea of his daughter travelling in your car,” Elia rebuked.
“Oh that’s Oberyns’ daughter!” Rhaegar exclaimed in relief and ecstasy.
“Yeah, so?” Elia asked in an interrogative and annoyed voice.
“Oh it’s nothing,” Rhaegar scratched the back of his head.
Elia sat herself down. This was the situation, and there was no escaping it. She was stuck in a bus
stop, in the rain, with her ex-boyfriend who she may still harbour some feelings for. Life sucked.
Had she been alone, she could have walked off. A little rain would not have done her great harm,
and she was on a break so she was allowed to be sick, but little Tyene was with her and Elia was
very protective about her nieces’ health conditions.
“How are you?” She entreated to ask after several minutes of awkward silence. It was better than
doing nothing, and even her phone broke.
“Going by I guess,” came Rhaegar’s slightly morose reply. Elia frowned.
“How’s Lyanna?”
“I don’t know.”
“What do you mean you don’t know? The two of you live together right?” Elia asked extremely
curiously. Rhaegar’s cryptic replies were increasing her curiosity.
“She lives in the North with her family. We broke up two months ago,” Rhaegar announced.
“Oh, I’m sorry. I guess I was at Essos for too long,” Elia tried not to sound too amused.
“Did they post you anywhere in the Slaver’s Bay?” Rhaegar asked between laughs, remembering
the conversation they had had.
“No thank the Gods! I was posted at Naath,” Elia laughed along.
“I’ve heard it’s a cool place. Dany made a friend in school who’s from there, though she was
brought up in Slaver’s Bay. Her name is Missandei I think,” Rhaegar commented.
“It’s a super cool place! Marriage does not exist, can you imagine?” Elia fondly remembered
Naath. The place had really healed her after that nasty break-up.
“Wow that sounds very cool. I would like to get married though,” Rhaegar blurted out.
“And who is going to marry you, now that Lyanna is gone?” Elia joked.
Rhaegar looked at her shyly but decided not to say anything. Lyanna had not broken up with him;
he had broken up with her. Elia had it wrong, Lyanna did not leave him, she would never, not for
the world. He badly wanted to remove her misconceptions but decided not to. She seemed to be
very happy, and he would not get back into her life to cause more emotional turmoil and drama.
She needed a good long break from him. “I’ll guess I’ll have to make do with Cersei,” he joked
right back.
“She’s dating Robert,” Elia informed.
“Now how in the world would you know that?” Rhaegar asked shocked.
“I was not stranded. I had Google; I used to read the daily news,” Elia replied appalled at his question.
“Then how did you miss out on the headlines about me and Lyanna?” Rhaegar asked suspiciously.
“Oh I had blo- never mind that, I probably just missed it,” Elia cut herself in the middle of her own sentence. That was so unlike her- usually she was always so sure of the things she did and said.
“You saw it didn’t you?” Rhaegar asked.
“No, I didn’t!” Elia defended.
“How is that possible? It was everywhere,” Rhaegar mused.
“Good for you,” Elia commented.
“Did you choose not to see?” Rhaegar asked in a lower tone this time, half hoping Elia did not hear the question.
“What nonsense, why should I care?” Elia fumbled.
“Now that’s what I was wondering. Why should you care?”
“I don’t!”
“Of course not…” Rhaegar sarcastically trailed off.
“Targaryan, I’m warning you, don’t think so highly of yourself alright? You know what, I’ve had enough of your nonsense, I am going to see if I can catch a cab. I’m keeping the kid here,” Elia was talking as she was walking in the highest heels Rhaegar had ever seen in a trailing saree. It was a bad idea. She tripped before she could go even four steps. Rhaegar was ever ready to catch her though, he had seen it coming.
“You stupid girl. Had you not blocked my headlines, you would’ve seen, I broke up with her in the first place,” Rhaegar teasingly chided.
“Why?” Elia asked in genuine bewilderment.
“You’re seriously asking that?” Rhaegar retorted in rhetoric. Elia blinked back in obliviousness. There was no way, she thought, that Rhaegar could still be in love with her. He had been so adamant when he broke it off.
“No way it’s what I’m thinking it is…”
“That depends on what you are thinking it is…”
“What makes you think I’ll allow you to come back?”
“The fact that you blocked my headlines on your Google feed, the fact that you’re blushing right now with the way your eyes are lighting up, and most importantly, the fact that I really hope you will allow me because I’m still in love with you.”
Elia did not give Rhaegar too much of a chance at conversation after that. The kiss was sweet, but it was also longingly passionate because both had been yearning to be in each others’ arms for the longest time now. Tyene woke up, and smiled to herself before closing her eyes. She was a cheeky child, but she was also a cute child and extremely worried about her aunts’ love life. She was glad. Jaime and Oberyn in their respective vehicles also made an entry but they were more vocal about the display of affection than the child and Oberyn would get a good smack on his head by his daughter later in the day for that very reason.

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“Isn’t it time we got married?” Rhaegar asked softly. He always had to be soft about this topic lest Elia lashed out. The mood and atmosphere were perfect though, it was raining and they were stuck in the bus-stop where they had met for the first time.
“Rhae, we’ve talked about this,” Elia sighed. She was tired. This second pregnancy was taking its toll on her, also the upgraded job requirements. With every new promotion came heaps on new work.
“We are having another baby! Why do we need to wait more? It makes no sense to me,” Rhaegar despaired.
“Just because we’re having a second baby means we are totally committed? That is the stupidest
thing you ever said. What if I fall in love with someone right after we get married? And what if Lyanna comes back into your life?”

“Lyanna Stark could be standing right there, in front of my eyes, drenched and dancing in the rain like she usually is, and I would still sit here with you leaning in on me and me playing with your fingers,” Rhaegar kissed the top of Elia’s head. She needed to trust again, and he would help her do that.

“I don’t know Rhae…”

“If I went and joined Lyanna and danced with her and you know, basically ran off with her, what would you do then?”

“I’d slit her throat, and then I’d slit yours,” Elia’s voice was as uncannily cold as it was matter-of-fact but Rhaegar understood the might and passion hidden behind it. Only he could. He could not control the smile spreading down his lips.

“What are you grinning like a Quarthian cat for?” Elia asked suspiciously. She could feel his lips carving at the top of her head.

“If I got down on one knee right now, you would marry me right?” Rhaegar mischievously slipped in the question.

“I swear to God if you try right now! I like leaning into you okay, it’s one of the only comfortable positions I can afford, don’t you dare get up,” Elia warned him.

“Oh Eli, you’ll marry me alright. If not now then: someday. And don’t you worry, I’ll wait. If you’re ready when you’re eighty, and toothless and wrinkled, I’ll marry you then, but marry you I will,” Rhaegar smiled.

“You’re one stubborn thing aren’t you?” Elia asked. “Where do you get it from?”

“My girlfriend. She’s Dornish you know,” Rhaegar innocently answered. “And she’s stubborn too, when it comes to not marrying me.”

“She’d make a terrible bride with this seven month bump of hers.”

“I can wait two more months don’t you think. And I’m sure it would take at least two months to plan the wedding between the Prime Minister and the Head of International Relations at the UN.”

“I only have a one month maternity leave idiot,” Elia stated.

“A wedding takes a day, not a month. A week at maximum, if you want all those Rhoynish rituals.”

“Of course I want ‘all those’ Rhoynish rituals, I’m a Martell.”

“So are we getting married after Aegon is born?” The quiver in Rhaegar’s voice was that of excitement.

“I’ll think about it,” came Elia’s reply but it was already tentative and there were hints of suppressing a smile.

Rhaegar in his excitement forgot all about the comfort of his heavily pregnant girlfriend (wife-to-be) and instead turned her around and kissed her breathless, kissed her all over like the silly and happy young boy he had become inside. She could barely even gasp for words and she swore that if she was fitter she would have hit him, bruised him badly that is. She swore it up and down and that only made Rhaegar kiss her even harder with even more love and affection.

The rain poured outside, the thunder roared, but it did not do much to drown out the lovers with their exclamations of playfulness and ecstasy.
Truth or Dare

Chapter Summary

So I think this one is a little shorter than the few enormous ones before but I really enjoyed writing this. Hope you like reading it as well! I was writing in a hurry though so I don't think it is very well-written either, but I do hope you like it.

“I’m bored; I’ve run out of ideas now!” Cersei announced throwing her shot of tequila into the air and bringing her manicured neon painted fingers back to the table innocently. “My carpet!” Rhaegar panicked, his eyes widening as the small glass of tequila began creating a large, rounded stain on the off-white floor covering. A darkened texture, something of an obscure beige oval began forming around the glass. “That was highly irresponsible of you!” He looked back towards Cersei and began reprimanding her. “You can’t call a house-party and expect everything to be spotless by the end of the night. Welcome to college Targaryan,” Cersei defended herself, her hands crossing in front of her chest in a completely defensive stance. The bright yellow neon of her fingers completely contrasted with the dark fuchsia shade of her sequined sweater.

“It’s okay, Eli and I are going to the kitchen to keep it,” Catelyn intruded, taking the stance of the pacifier as she usually did. She nudged Elia who had almost dozed off to sleep. She gave a sharp tug on the little black sweater dress that Elia was wearing. “What?” The Martell grumbled.

“Show me the kitchen,” Catelyn urged her and practically tugged her off the ground. They made a nice contrasting pair with Catelyn’s cream tinted light sweater and striped mini skirt and Elia’s tiny glittery black sweater dress with ripped stockings underneath.

Lyanna was a little disappointed that Elia knew the Dragonstone household better than she did, but then again, Rhaegar had been dating her since the beginning of time. She furrowed her eyebrows only to be given a brush on the knee and Rhaegar’s hand up her thigh to show who he belonged to now. She glanced at him and gave a triumphant smile. What irked her most was that Elia Martell never seemed to be jealous. The woman perennially seemed to live in her own world with very little reactions to very few things. “Well, what should we play now?”

“Let’s not play anything. Let’s sit and gossip,” Ned suggested. Catelyn seemed to second it from the kitchen, which was nearby.

“No let’s play something! Ned, don’t be a bore!” Lyanna scolded. She was like a child sometimes, well, most of the times. Rhaegar gave her a kiss on the cheek. “Most of us are adults, come on let’s not play anymore,” even Brandon seemed to agree, something that seemed most unbecoming of him. Then again, he was always trying to impress Catelyn.

“What about Truth or Dare?” Ashara suggested. Lyanna could have gone and kissed the girl in gratitude. She had been eagerly waiting to play it for the longest amount of time. Ashara was a lovely girl, Lyanna thought, very pretty in her coffee coloured dress and jazzy rings and hoop earrings, she was the kind of girl that Lyanna could befriend but her ethnic loyalties lay to Elia. The girl had even told Lyanna that as a Dornishman, she needed to be on Elia’s side. Not that they were taking sides any more, the point of the entire party had been reconciliation. Rhaegar and Robert had shaken hands and taken enormous amount of selfies to prove exactly that.

“I completely second the suggestion!” Arthur and Oswell echoed, as well as Lyanna and Rhaegar and most of the others.
“Yes, it’s good enough,” Cersei and Robert said after enough contemplation.

“Why have Catelyn and Elia gone silent?” Davos mused as he craned his neck towards the kitchen, along with Brienne.

Catelyn and Elia seemed immersed in conversation. In fact, Catelyn thanked the gods that Cersei had dropped the tequila, she had been meaning to talk to Elia since the beginning of the party. Elia was perched on the marble table-top counter in the kitchen and Catelyn pretended to wipe the glass intently. Ned was a little perturbed at the continued association between the two, but he forgave Cat. He never really could be seriously angry at her.

“Don’t you love the patterns on the marble? I’ve always appreciated Aunt Rhaella’s sense of aesthetics,” Elia commented grazing her heavily bracelet clad hand on the smooth and cold surface.

“I didn’t drag you here to discuss interior designing,” Catelyn snapped in frustration and furrowed her own eyebrows at that. She was generally never this worked up about anything.

“What is on the agenda then?” Elia asked with an eyebrow raised. Her lack of interest and nonchalance was driving Catelyn up the wall.

“Have you told Rhaegar? Did you see how attached he has become to Lyanna? He is going to be shattered. Elia, why are you quiet after knowing all this?” Catelyn urged her with as loud a whisper she could muster.

“When Rhaegar began his affair, I had no clue. I had no clue he was taking Lyanna Stark to my bedroom at nights when I was away studying at the library because taking her to his place was impossible. He didn’t tell me that he was planning to publicly shame me at Harrenhal. Why should I tell him our parents are off planning our wedding? The nastiest things Rhaegar ever gave me came as a surprise; he wasn’t really a gift sort of person anyways. Let the worst thing I’ll ever gift him come as a surprise to him. I am not saying shit; you want to, you can. Questions will be raised. How did you know about the scheme in the first place? I don’t think Ned will want to date such an obnoxious eavesdropper!”

“Elia, I’m trying to help you!” Catelyn cried, louder than expected. They both craned their necks to see if anybody in the party had overheard them. No, they were too busy trying to decide between truth-and-dare and Monopoly.

“Then help me; keep shut about whatever you heard or saw. Also, we’re in college, it’s not like our parents are going to get us married today. They’re just talking about it. A lot can change in three years, the engagement may not even hold,” Elia explained to the best of her abilities. The last thing she needed right now was a rabid Lyanna Stark up her throat and she knew that would be the reaction to expect.

“For your sake, I hope the engagement doesn’t hold up Eli,” Catelyn stated flatly before she left, her heels clinking on the marbled floor. Everything was marble in the Targaryan household, unless it was carpeted, the rest of the house was marble. Elia loved it, she enjoyed herself here, and Rhaegar stole that pleasure as well. For revenges’ sake Elia hoped the marriage would happen. She’d like to make him suffer.

“Sleepy?” A voice startled and pulled Elia out of all the Gone Girl scenarios she was imagining for Rhaegar (oh the things she would do if she could) in her dreams. It was Oswell Whent.

“Me too,” Oswell replied. He was a sweet boy, Elia thought, and he has a crush on me. She followed Oswell to the living room. Sitting alone and isolated in the kitchen would send out a very bad message, especially because this party was all about ‘rekindling good relationships’- Elia smirked condescendingly to herself as she remembered Barristan Selmy having used this exact
expression. She would have spat at the hypocrisy of most Westerosis had she had a clear conscience to herself; but Elia Martell was a woman who knew her limitations and were proud of them.

Everybody had gathered in a circle like a proper truth-or-dare arrangement. She sat close to Varys who had thankfully saved a spot for her. Jaime was on the other side of the table flanked by Lannisters and Westerlings. It was a big party and she was still so sleepy. Elia shook her head at her own laziness- had she not spent three consecutive nights in a row finishing her Criminal Law assignment, she would not be in this state today. But Elia hated deadlines and deadlines and deadlines hated her and they were always bound to cross each other, never waiting. Varys gave her a look of pity- he was the only one who knew how hard she had been working.

“Why don’t you catch a beauty nap in Viserys’ room? This house is practically yours anyway,” Varys whispered. He was leaning into her ear and his sparkly t-shirt caught Elia’s eye- it was so outrageous she had to suppress a laugh.

“What are you wearing? This is Quarthian isn’t it?” She giggled straight at his straight face.

“Are you even listening to what I’m saying?” Varys was aggravated and this was the second time somebody had whisper-snapped at Elia in the party.

“Yes, I was listening! This house is not practically mine okay stop saying that. And I’m fine,” she announced looking back up to show that she was concentrating on the game. Varys knew she wasn’t but he also knew that it was pointless to talk to her once she had put her mind to something.

The game began. Cersei really had some sort of bad luck attached to the bottle; it kept pointing to her, and on the opposite side sat Brandon who was giving the lioness a very hard time indeed. Various dares, vulgar or plain down mischievous were given to Cersei, questions about choosing between her cousins (most of whom were present) was asked, and embarrassing questions about Robert were asked as well. Lyanna seemed to have a problem with that, surprisingly, given that she had dumped Robert in the first place. Robert was not exactly her boyfriend so people found it to be a bit odd. Catelyn was asked to kiss Ned which was more cuteness than anything else really, and even Elia smiled sweetly at them. They were plain down endearing.

When the bottle pointed at Rhaegar, Cersei was on the opposite side. Cersei seemed to be a real champ at the game; she handled her challenges and questions just about as well as she gave them to others (one point in the game Varys had been asked to reveal one embarrassing truth about somebody in the party crowd). In fact, Cersei adorned a devious smile and Elia was not very sure as to what that was supposed to entail. She only hoped the question would not involve her. This party would be a real bummer if it got awkward. Cersei brought her lacquered nails close to her lips in an effort to look evil, and she did look a tab bit disconcertingly wicked. Both Elia and Rhaegar frowned.

“So, if you had to save one, and you can only choose one alright, from a terrible situation, let’s take fire in case, who would you save, Elia or Lyanna?” When Cersei was giving the question, her tone was as cold and menacing as when she finished. There was a glint of malevolence in her eyes; of course, this was the way she was getting back on Rhaegar on Robert’s behalf. The two had grown insanely attached over the last few months.

Elia’s breath hitched in her throat. She did not even want to be present for the answer, whatever it may be. Varys was giving her a worried look and the rest were just flicking their eyes from her to Rhaegar to Lyanna in a manner that spelt out ‘sensational scandal coming right up’. Her eyes looked everywhere but at the table or at the guests. Her eyebrows knitted themselves so tightly that it was hard to tell one from the other. She prayed, truly prayed like never before that some miracle takes her away from this situation. The Gods, or God, whatever it was, heard.

“Eli, my tooth is aching!” Little Viserys was shouting at the top of his lungs from the top of the staircase. He had been in his room upstairs playing with Renly and Margaery and reluctantly, with Benjen as well, after Elia had persuaded him that the little Stark boy was not as annoying as his sister. Elia could have adopted Viserys on the spot if she could. She loved the boy.

“I’m coming Vis, hang on. Excuse me,” she excused herself as hurriedly as possible and practically ran up the stairs. Her stockings were slippery, and she did almost slip once but the hurry to run
away from the awkward tension was so much greater. She went right to the top and scooped Viserys up and took him into another room. Viserys and his tooth shared a history of love and hate, so this needed to be dealt with precaution and care.

When Elia came back, which actually took quite long considering Viserys needed a lot of painkillers and bedtime stories and comforting and consoling, everything was back to normal. The game had been resumed. People were giving her weird stares though, they were smirking and Catelyn genuinely seemed to look at her with starry eyes and she had no clue as to what was going on but she chose to ignore. She went and resumed her seat next to Varys. When she had had enough courage, she looked towards Lyanna Stark. The girl seemed bewildered. Rhaegar was flushed and Cersei was enjoying herself. Something had happened.

“So Rhaegar, truth or dare?” It was Cersei’s scheming voice again.

“Dare.”

“Hmm, let’s see, we’ll keep this simple. The party was all about reconciliation right? Leaving behind old feuds for new relationships based on friendship- very nice, a well appreciated gesture. Go, kiss Elia,” as soon as Cersei’s instruction ended the entire room went into hoots of laughter and cheers.

Elia looked up towards Cersei, devastated. Her mouth was wide open and gaping and she was nodding her head vigorously as if to say no. She would not know where to hide, and even Viserys had gone to bed. Lyanna was furious with Cersei and Elia was really hoping that the girl would attack the lioness just so attention could be diverted.

“Oh come on, you’re a Martell aren’t you? Kissing and stuff is supposed to be normal for you,” Cersei shrugged.

Out of reflex, Elia’s eyes landed on Doran who was only looking at her with a look of pure sympathy. She knew there was not much Doran could do here, it was a ‘game’ after all and she and Rhaegar could look like complete cowards and fools if they did not go ahead with it. She did not want to look at Rhaegar, but she was forced to, and for the first time in a very long time, she felt sorry for the boy. He was uncomfortable and out of his spirits completely, but he was getting up and advancing towards her. The entire room waited with baited breath. Some had even fished out their cell phones.

Rhaegar made his way towards Elia as slowly as possible. It was not just the consequences with Lyanna, it was the fact that he really wanted to kiss Elia which made it all the more annoying. What if the desire showed through? What if he could not control himself? Lyanna would understand it was a stupid dare of a stupid game but if he kissed Elia like he wanted to kiss her, Lyanna would understand that as well and be furious. The carpet never felt so long and smooth and fluffy under his toes he thought. Elia was sitting with her hands folded on her lap, lip gloss glistening as she waited for him patiently like she always used to. She had turned around so that he could kiss her. This was not embarrassing, what hurt Rhaegar most was that this was karma as well.

His hand went up on one of her cheeks. He shielded it protectively. He knew that Elia had always been embarrassed about public displays of affection so he wanted to shield her from the rest of them. He leaned in, and just like every bloody time, his heart was thumping loudly while his knees felt like jelly. He leaned in closer and a little closer and everybody had fallen silent but Rhaegar would have preferred the noise. He touched her cheek delicately, like she was made of glass, and he had no idea why. As soon as their lips touched, the room was doing their best not to burst into hoots and whoops and cheers. The kiss was gentle, like it had always been, gentle with an underlying fire that both the dragon and the Sun were afraid of igniting lest they burn. Rhaegar felt himself instinctively being drawn deeper. He knew he was standing on a fine line; he could have been more passionate, the kiss was calling for it, the way both of them lingered around each others’ lips, but he also knew he had a choice to refrain. This was Elia, not Lyanna, and that was the difference- he had a choice. Not because Elia’s love was weak; but because it was stronger. Elia pulled back; how typical of the girl- always to abstain, restrain herself, and also leave Rhaegar wanting more. He should not feel like this, he chided himself inside his head, and got up making
way to return to his original spot. The rest of the crowd had fallen uncannily silent. Even Cersei was at a loss of words. Rhaegar and Elia had joined Citadel later when they had both realised that they got admissions into two different Ivy Leagues. People had heard all about this couple but they had never really seen them in action. Elia was far too reserved and one year later Rhaegar had left her for Lyanna anyways. But today, in the heat of the party, these young students had discovered two beating hearts.

“Any other stupid dares left?” Elia asks viciously. Everybody seems taken aback- who knew the Dornish viper hid so much venom in her?

“I hope you didn’t mind yesterday. How did you like the food? There was red velvet cheesecake eh?” Rhaegar caught up with Elia who was walking like a marathon runner in her ox-blood heels. “No time for this right now, I’m getting late for Frey’s class,” Elia hurried as fast as she could. Her black and white striped skin-tight trousers were posing to make it a little difficult.

“Frey’s class?” Rhaegar asked in complete bafflement.

“Genna Frey, she’s a temporary substitute for Westerling,” Elia stated. “My corporate law class.” “But I needed to talk…” Rhaegar trailed off. He really did; one look at him and anybody could deduce that. His generally pleated silver hair was completely dishevelled and his shirt was half tucked into his ripped denims and he looked like a mess, the kind that did not get any sleep at night.

“We’ll talk later. Can you meet me at the café?” Elia asked as she was running away.

Now ‘the café’ was the poorest excuse for a café anybody had ever seen but Rhaegar and Elia liked to address it as much. It was a sleazy bar that sold espresso shots if you were persistent enough- so Rhaegar had the coffee shots and Elia had the accompanying cream that came along with it if you tipped them adequately. This place was a forgotten spot visited only by hippies and the occasional drunkards if they could accumulate enough money. It was done up in shades of neon and leather and was loud and crass but expensive. There were two VIP seat sections where Elia and Rhaegar crouched on the blood-red couches scrutinising the fascinating customers who came in. It was a secret spot and had remained as much. Rhaegar nodded at Elia as if in affirmation as she walked into class.

‘The café’ had a name- Bright Nights, an extremely sad pun on one of Elia’s favourite stories: ‘White nights’. Rhaegar brushed it off though, said the owners had probably never even heard of the book; ‘you think they read high literature?’ Underestimating people had always been one of Rhaegar’s worst traits.

“I haven’t been here in forever. It’s Friday; do you think I should order a drink? Cocktail maybe…” Elia was musing. Rhaegar seemed extremely fidgety; he did not even glance at the menu once, nor at the waitress who was evidently vying for his attention. “I’ll take a… okay, give me a green lagoon. What is it anyway?”

“It’s gin with green apple and our special Bright Nights fruit mix!” the young waitress beamed. Elia could tell that she liked it quite a bit but none of the customers did. People who came here came for the ‘hardcore’ stuff, probably whisky on the rocks.

“And you Sir?” The girl turned towards Rhaegar with a smile. Even in his haphazard attire and state of being, he was exceptionally handsome; plaid had always suited him well.

“Hmm… oh yes, I’ll just have black coffee. And get some cream on the side,” he sent the waitress away before Elia could say that she didn’t need the cream; she had ordered something of her own today. Times had changed.

“You know, I did order a cocktail,” the waitress was well out of sight when Elia got a chance to say this.

“Seriously?” Rhaegar asked surprised.

“It’s just a cocktail, and it’s Saturday tomorrow. But honestly nobody gets hung over on cocktail,”
Elia explained. “So what is it that you wanted to say?”
“I think I still love you.”
“That’s intense.”
“Elia I’m serious.”
“No, no, I totally get that. But it’s still intense,” Elia suppressed a giggle between her red lips.
“Did you ever love me?” Rhaegar asks completely out of the blue. “Or was I just a Targaryan to you?”
“Well of course you were a Targaryan to me, but I guess I was developing feelings for you. I have no bloody clue. Yes, it was glamorous to be your girlfriend, but I was glamorous as it is, I didn’t need to be your girlfriend. It helped, it obviously did, we were equals in every sense of the word and unlike most boys in school I could tolerate you. I was not a conventional gold digger if that’s the answer you’re looking for,” Elia sat back on the couch. For the first time in his life Rhaegar had done something sensible; it was high time they had this chat. Elia looked extremely intimidating and hot in that plunging red peplum blouse paired with red lips.
“There are many types of gold diggers? I thought they were all the same,” Rhaegar spat in distaste.
“Trust me, the only reason a woman turns gold digger is because she knows she has no other option. We can’t all have as low ambitions as Lyanna Stark you know,” Elia replied coolly.
“You’re comebacks are annoying as fuck you know that? And that just makes you so annoyingly hot!” Rhaegar exclaimed in frustration.
“What are you trying to say Targaryan?”
“I told you. I think I still might have feelings for you- and you’re totally not the right person for me. You’re cunning and manipulative and a downright materialistic person and I love you. And I hate that. I thought Lyanna would help me forget you but you just have to keep coming back don’t you?”
“You called me to the party.”
“I’m not talking about the goddamn party! Okay maybe that stupid game gave me courage today; but that’s not the point. Even if I got married to Lyanna now you’d be swirling all over my head like a bloody bee!” Rhaegar sighed exasperated.
“A queen bee,” Elia corrected.
“You think this is funny?” Rhaegar’s bottom lip quivered.
“I swear Targaryan, don’t start crying,” Elia warned.
“I just… I don’t know what to do! I have no bloody clue! How do I sort out this mess? What will I tell Lyanna now? The Starks are going to murder me!”
“The Starks are not capable of murder. Anyways, let this issue sort itself out,” Elia quietly put in.
“What do you mean ‘sort itself’ out?” Rhaegar asked suspiciously.
“There’s something I should have told you earlier, but of course I was livid at you, so I didn’t. We might be getting engaged at the end of your third year. Our parents have been discussing it all week,” Elia bit her lip as soon as she finished her announcement. This was big news, and even she was scared of Rhaegar’s reaction. His jaw had dropped right down to the chessboard designed flooring.
“How long have you known this?”
“Two weeks.”
“I swear to god Martell I hate you so much. Why do I have to be in love with you?!” Rhaegar put his head in his hands. The waitress came in with the drinks. She was wearing a grin but as soon as she saw Rhaegar’s posture, she escaped as quickly as she could.
“I think it’s only sensible that you be in love with me,” Elia informed in her best matter-of-fact voice.
“I swear to god Martell, I hate you…”

“Who invites their fiancé to their own bachelor party?” Elia screamed over the loud music. The disco was dark and loud and blasting cold due to the over-excited air conditioners.
Arthur and Jon had been planning Rhaegar’s bachelor party for months. Finally they had settled on ‘Bad Dreams’ an over-expensive new nightclub that played incoherent electronic music and served ‘only imported alcohol’. The waitresses were skimpily, yet classily clad. You could tell this was where politicians came if they were looking to have some fun. Much to everybody’s disappointment though, Rhaegar had invited Elia.

“Oh come on, everybody is busy dancing, what would I have done alone?” Rhaegar whined as loudly as possible.

“I don’t know, danced, like a sane person instead of grumbling and sitting here with the same glass of champagne for the last three quarters of an hour,” Elia chided. She had missed an extremely important meeting at the office for this stupid party. Aerys Targaryan was a terrible boss; she knew she had it coming for her next morning. “Your dad is going to kill me!”

“I’ll handle it,” Rhaegar soothed her.

“Rhae, it’s your bachelor party for god’s sake! Go and socialise and let loose and dance and pick up some chicks or something!” Elia started shouting again.

“Eww,” Rhaegar scrunched his face in disgust. “I have a better idea.”

“What’s that?”

“Let’s play truth or dare,” Rhaegar’s eyes glinted dangerously.

“You’re crazy, I swear,” Elia began shaking her head.

“Oh come on! Please, let’s play,” Rhaegar begged.

“Play with the waitresses, a sexual version. That’s what you’re supposed to do on your bachelor party,” Elia suggested with a wicked glint in her eyes.

“I can play a sexual version, but with you,” Rhaegar was grinning. “Anyways truth or dare has always been a lucky game for us.”

“Yes, it made you realise, quite unfortunately, that you were in love with me five years ago,” Elia shook her head teasingly.

“So let’s play. Truth or dare?” Rhaegar asked. It was just the two of them in the cubicle anyways, the rest were out dancing.

“Dare,” Elia shook her head in dismay. This was the man she would be marrying- he was a Dornish disgrace.

“I dare you to ask the hottest man in the club to a dance, and I don’t mean a normal dance, you know, like a ‘bachelor party dance’. And take off that bloody leather jacket; I’m feeling hot looking at you,” Rhaegar devilishly grinned, his smile taking a crooked shape.

“Hottest man in the club? Hmm, let me see, I’ll have to see,” Elia cheekily replied as she got up. Her feet were throbbing in those atrocious pencil heels after an entire day in the office but that was okay. It was Rhaegar’s bachelor party after all.

Rhaegar looked heavily disappointed. He was almost hoping that she would come around and ask him. Lyanna would have; she considered him to be the hottest and most handsome person in this entire world. He sat with his arms crossed in front of his chest. What a bummer. He was really hoping that she would have asked him then and there. He sat with a frown- who could be hotter?

“May I have this dance with you?” A raspy voice asked several minutes later. He was going to refuse but he fell silent as soon as his eyes fell on the familiar little (formal) red dress clad figure that he was going to marry in three days. She had taken a round of the club, but she had come back to him.

“I’m not so sure,” he smirked back.

“Okay, there’s a second hottest guy in the club I could ask…” Elia trailed off.

“Don’t you dare,” Rhaegar got up, pulled her close and walked her to the dance floor.

The two danced completely immersed in each other; the two danced like this was their last dance; the two danced like there was no tomorrow. Everybody was curious about which hot and tall chick Rhaegar had picked up but on closer examination they were all left a little disappointed.

“Please don’t tell me that’s Elia,” Arthur shook his head completely despaired with his best friend.

“My sister is marrying a prude creep. All these Targaryans are nut cases…” Oberyn went on muttering as Rhaegar pulled Elia in for a kiss, and boy, this was not a shy kiss from a public dare.
This was between the two of them, and it was the hottest thing anybody had seen in the newly opened night club.
I know I'm late but I had a lot going on, my school reopened for starters! Also, this one is really sad so if you don't want to just spoil your mood or you're not in the mood for a sob fest, I suggest you don't read it. Then again, maybe my writing is not all that good so you won't feel sad, maybe it has just come off pretentious. I don't know that, but if you feel it, let me know. I have changed my writing style a bit and it could be disastrous. Please let me know. Also, special mention goes to my sister for helping me with the filters although she's miles away really! Thank you so much! Thank you to my readers for being who you are.

Black and White

The backdrop is a mess. There are cluttered props, woodwork, costumes, the occasional trash, and heaps of papers (stage instructions, dialogues, design notes and the like) lying around. There are a few people, reduced to silhouettes, genuinely working, in the background, on a higher floor. The entire workshop is made of wood, wooden platforms, wooden tables and a rusty wooden night lamp, ideal for a photographer to use the ‘black and white’ filter. And anyways, that filter has always been Jaime’s favourite.

The two subjects in focus are propped up one against the other. The girl is tranquility and poise epitomised- her hair is neatly parted in the middle with both sides being delicately French braided till they disappeared into the back. It is dark hair; this much is evident, extremely dark hair, the darkest in all of Westeros. Her complexion though seems to be glowing in the picture, an inner glow, the healthy kind. There is a tiny dark dot in the middle of her forehead, a glaring comment that she is Dornish, it was something only the Dornish women used to wear. She wears Dornish attire as well, a modest full sleeve chiffon kurta with floral patterns all over it- the patterns are done up with sequins so they glint off the light and become prominent in the picture. She has a paired silken scarf to cover her kurta, like most Dornish women do, they drape it around the front, and they have a name for it which no other Westerosi ever seems to recall so they stick to calling it a scarf- but it’s falling, mainly because she is leaning into somebody else, deep in slumber. It has slipped off the side. Her hands are not visible but anybody who knows her would know that she must have them obediently tucked on her lap. Her eyes are closed, she is definitely sleeping, but she is such a graceful sleeper, no open mouth, no drool flowing and no frowns- serene and calm.

The only part of her figure neatly visible is a long and spotlessly pretty neck. As she leans onto the boy, her neck is glaringly evident in the picture. She is a pretty girl, if not more.

The boy looks more slapdash. His hair is light, too light, probably silver, one would guess if one didn’t know. It is pulled into some sort of knot because it is definitely long but the sides have been kept open. They trail to his neck. His entire hairstyle is falling apart though, even the knot at the top is loosening and as he leans into the girl, his hair is falling over his face cleverly hiding some of it and keeping most features visible. Even with the closed eyes one could see that he was handsome. He has a chiselled face and looks extremely pale- a haunting beauty, like the women that poets write poems about. His clothes are in a mess too. The shirt is white, this much one can make out through the filter but there are splashes all over it. Paint, if one was to judge by the scenery, is culprit. The paint blotches all appear as dark stains- it is not a Polaroid filter so one cannot make the colours out. He seems to be tired though, his face says a lot- but there seems to be some peace in him when he leans on the girl. One can understand he likes the warmth of her
presence through his sleep. One of his hands lie on the table right under the lamp and it is in direct contrast with the rest of his complexion, it is stained with paint. The hand has been destroyed by whatever artwork he must have been doing. There is not a single clean spot. The other hand might have been behind the girl or resting on his own lap- one could not tell. A small (yet visible) frown adorns his forehead. He must be tired or troubled in his sleep, but his lips curl upwards slightly so maybe he is not sad. He is very photogenic, just like the girl, and he makes quite the view even though one cannot see the eyes, one does not need to.

They make a healthy pair, an onlooker would think. The boy seems taller but the girl is no less. The girl has a thin build, but it does not look too unhealthy in the picture. The boy has a strong build but is not unnecessarily muscular, he is lean. They look so beautiful together, one pale and the other tanned. It’s a good contrast very visually pleasing. The boy seems to be made of ice and the girl of fire, theirs is not an imposed contrast by last names, theirs is a natural contrast. If one really knew them well, one would also know that it is the girl who is colder, more reserved, whereas the boy has more passion, he is sunnier.

A lone tear trickles onto the picture. It is fading now but all these features can be made out. There is no attempt to wipe the tear; more tears follow, wetting the surface of the photo. In this new and fast paced age, one would expect the picture to be scanned and made a hard copy of but the owner is not willing- some things deserved to be cherished in their original form, it brings him closer to the time when it was taken. The picture is flipped back immediately. There is scrawny writing on the back, and it says:

This one is for when you finally gather up the guts to ask her out. The two of you are as precious as buttons! Best of luck Rhae, go for it man!
Signed,
Cersei and Jaime.

“Did Uncle Jaime take this picture dad?” An impatient voice demands right next to Rhaegar. He is jolted from his reverie of memories.

“Yes, he did,” Rhaegar answers softly so that his daughter won’t notice the break in his voice. He does not turn towards her, it is better if she sees a side profile so she can’t exactly make out his tears. He feels stronger that way.

“Who is there in the picture? Is that Vis and Nys?” The young girl prods again.

“Hmm… oh no, it’s not Vis and Nys. It’s me and your mother,” Rhaegar answers with a deep breath. Visenya knew that her mother was up in the stars, that was all. He had not been living with the children in a reclusive plot of land in Valyria for the past eight years so he could be reminded of her all the time, but some memories just cling on to you, or to your books. This was a picture that was neatly folded into the pages of the ‘Valyrian to Common Tongue dictionary’ that Rhaegar had not touched in years.

“That’s mom! She looks pretty,” Visenya exclaimed. She’s wearing a kurta just like me! Am I like mom?” Visenya asks in excitement and happiness. Rhaegar really has to bite his lip down on the flood of tears threatening to spill.

He turns around abruptly, puts the picture back into the book and puts it up on the highest shelf, out of reach of anybody. The tears are falling like the falls now but Visenya is behind him so he wipes them freely. “You’re exactly like mom,” Rhaegar smiles but he does not turn towards Visenya. He is not lying; Visenya is curious and wise beyond her years, just like Elia.

“She has dark hair though,” the little girl pouts and is quickly engulfed into a tight embrace by her father. This was also a strategy to not show her his tears.

“You have her dark eyes,” he says. He kisses the back of her head repeatedly. This was Elia’s last memory; he was never going to let go of her.

________________________________________

Sepia

There was barely any backdrop. A swing could be seen flinging itself into the sky in the distance.
The picture was hazy, extremely hazy but it was a park. That much could be deduced, especially with the tall tree (not exactly clear as to what tree, but it was very tall with sprawling branches) and the clear sky and the swing. That was all there was to the crumbling sepia photograph, and obviously, also the two main subjects.

The girl was adorable. One could make out the age to be around four of five at maximum. Her side was faced to the camera, and a wide toothy grin could be made out from the side. Her smile had no dimples and there was nothing special about it but there was the simple glowing beauty of perfect happiness. Her mouth was slightly open, but her lips were pressed to the boys’ cheek. Her eyes were open, it was not a deep or passionate kiss, it was a happy and playful one. Only one eye could be seen since this was a side profile. It was jet black and glistening with happiness. She had a braid down one side, and one could make out the profile of another braid on the other side. She was young, so very young, and still her hair was thick and black like any adult. The braid that was visible was so extremely thick that there could have been two braids made out of that. She was wearing something plaid that was all which could be made out from the picture. There were red and blue stripes crossing each other at various points, it was a long sleeve that was simple, no cold shoulders or fancy patterns. Back then fashion was simpler. Her lips were glowing, probably gloss, it looked sweet. She was an adorable young girl and her mirth was contagious. Anybody who saw the picture would be smiling along with her.

The boy was cheekier, his face said so clearly. His hair was white, an astonishing colour, generally at his age (for people of his heritage it was normal) and it was thick and wavy and blowing back. There was a wind, that meant. Although the girls’ hair was tightly pulled back, his was not and anybody with a keen eye could see that there was a heavy wind blowing. He had dimples, large panned out ones. He was facing the camera; he was right in front of it so his attire could not be made out very well. There were suspenders one could guess at most, with navy blue straps. He was smiling too, the widest smile one ever saw on a boy and yet his lips were pursed. He was obviously the cheekier of the two, he had realised that his toothless grin would be cute, but not handsome. He could not risk that. So his wide eyes, a very light shade, probably violet, one could make out from the picture, and his grin covered the most of the frame. He was blushing, he was definitely blushing, one could see his blush from his eyes and from his cheeks and from his entire face. This was the happiness of the young boy who had just garnered attention from the pretty girl he had been eyeing since forever- and here she was kissing him. His dimples were striking, they truly were. One could guess, from this picture itself that he was going to make a very handsome young man. And boy, he did. The picture was so well-framed, and so timely taken, and looked so very natural that anybody who saw it would smile, even on their darkest days. It was a sunny photo, taken for a very sunny day.

“I found it. It was in the storeroom. It’s cute isn’t it?” Viserys went on gushing.

“Where was it exactly?” Rhaegar asked calmly.

“I don’t know. It just fell out of a box.”

“Must have come off loose from one of dad’s old albums,” Rhaegar mused.

“Dad took this picture?” Viserys was more than baffled, he was downright shocked.

“Yes he did. He was so happy that day. I guess he’d always seen it happening, me and Elia. Later onwards though, for him it had become an obsession because Elia was the closest thing we had to Targaryan blood and he needed to get us married off but earlier, but like when this picture was taken, he was genuinely happy. He loved both of us, and he liked that we enjoyed playing together,” Rhaegar smiled wistfully at his own memories.

“Did you just play together? The picture certainly says something different,” Viserys prodded. They looked so sweet together; he could not take his eyes off of the picture.

“That’s none of your business young man. Off with you now, don’t you have to go to Uni?” A blush made its’ way across Rhaegar’s face but he was trying his best not to show.

“It’s Sunday brother.”

“Oh yes, sorry, slipped my mind. Well, it’s your Sunday not mine, I have a presentation to prepare so off with you.”
“What presentation? You’re a scientist not a businessman,” Viserys commented snidely.
“Yes well I need to pitch my new idea to a Mereenese corporation so if you could please let me work,” Rhaegar ended sarcastically as he opened his laptop.
“You just need some time alone with that picture. Gosh, you’re getting worse than mom when it comes to hiding your true emotions,” Viserys commented shaking his head. ‘Mom’ in question here was Elia who Viserys had always called by this name since she was the mother figure of his childhood.
“Vis, leave!”
“You shouldn’t have left her you know. You would’ve gotten some more time with her then.”
“I would really like you to leave now.”
“Yes, yes, run away from the truth all you want, the truth is not going to change…” Viserys trailed off and began to leave the room.
As soon as he was out of sight, Rhaegar scooped up the picture from him ebony tinted glass top table and pressed it to his lips. He was crying again, second time in one day, and he hated it- but she still had this bloody effect on him. He took a good look at the picture again; he was so young and happy and probably already in love with Elia and his father was normal and he was the little apple of everybody’s eye in King’s Landing and he used to spend his days playing around with Elia or being bossed around by her and life was perfect. He really wished he could go back.

Gingham

There was definitely a large party happening at the back, or at least preparing to happen. One could not see exactly because the entire backdrop was completely blurred but if one looked close enough, there was a lot of people carrying props and one could even make out a golden haired boy carrying something long and large, like a ladder underneath his arm. If that was Jaime, and he was busying himself so much, it meant that it must have been his sisters’ wedding. He had always been so attached to her, but people were genuinely surprised when they saw him get to work so ridiculously hard and efficiently during Cersei and Roberts’ wedding. This must have been the engagement, it was raining that day. The people were running about one could see that. The lights that had faded due to the filter were glistening, if you looked closely enough- there was too much light, a lighter filter had to be used. Tywin Lannister had made sure that Casterly Rock resembled the Sun when his daughter got married.

The two subjects in focus were wet- drenched, absolutely wet. It was a private moment, the kind that does not need to be caught on camera. The girl, her long black hair trailing on two sides with the water practically visibly dripping from them, was clad in a canary yellow Dornish suit with all sorts of sequins and intricate workings done on them. It was most probably muslin or silk or satin, one could not say properly. There was a long and trailing, umm, what was it, that silken scarf the Dornish women carried them, on one side of the suit draped causally. The clothes were soaked as well. Her make-up was of top quality, despite the pouring rain, not a drop of mascara was running, her lips were full and pink and it was hard to guess whether the blush was natural or artificial. Her hands were full of gold bangles and henna and the rest of her was also made up in various types of Dornish gold jewellery. She looked like a dream, and her coy smile did the rest of the trick. Generally Dornishwomen were not known for being coy, but when their demure habits did occasionally show, they looked ethereal. The photographer was obviously cheeky; he had even caught Varys and Ashara Dayne somewhere close to the corners spying on the couple. The large and dangly earrings that adorned the ears of the girl were shining off the glint of the lights around her. Had the filter not been a vintage one, the colours would have blinded the onlookers or observers.

The boy is wearing something Dornish too. It is a male Dornish suit, and the colour is a bright and dazzling sapphire green so it creates a beautiful contrast with the girls’ outfit. His one has jewels embroidered on it, extricate embroidery, and the clothing steals most of the attention although his
silver hair looks brilliant too, sticking to the sides due to the water that is dripping from it. He looks insanely attractive when he is wet. His eyes are glistening as he holds the girl from behind, and one can see it was a surprise attack. The girl was completely unaware and is squealing in delight. He understands his trick has worked; there is a wicked glint of happiness in his purple pupils. His face is glowing but it is hard to tell whether that is the glow of the filter, or of the blinding lights, or of his glee (the ‘inner glow’). There is water dripping from the tips of his nose and his silver locks and his watch, albeit extremely expensive is wet, but not clear whether it is damaged or not; did they have the super advanced waterproof watches back then, and even if they did, was Rhaegar likely to own one? It is hard to tell. He does not seem to care much though. His spectacles, (or is it hers) is resting on a table in front of them. They seem to be immersed in each other. The slight pout of his grinning lips obviously express a desire of his to reach out and kiss. This was a private moment, not one meant to be captured, but of course, Tyrion Lannister, master of pranks and making things awkward was present. The picture came from his new camera phone. “Look what Mrs. Baratheon gave me in the office today,” Rhaenys exclaimed as she laid the picture on the white marble table top of the kitchen counter where Rhaegar was busy making red pasta sauce. “What did sh- oh,” Rhaegar’s smile and excitement dampened at one glance. Why were the old memories coming back to haunt him today? “It’s an adorably cute picture don’t you think? But dad, it’s bordering on PG,” Rhaenys joked with a straight face.

Rhaegar remained silent. He took up the picture and examined it. Tyrion’s new phone camera had done the trick, he remembered, the boy had been laughing himself silly when he presented it. He presented it on Rhaegar and Elia’s third marriage anniversary, the cheek boy! He had even written on the crème papered back of the picture: ‘The night Rhaenys was conceived!’ with a wink. Rhaegar laughed; Elia had been so embarrassed that she had hid away her face on Rhaegar’s muslin shirt and Rhaegar had become so happy that he had ordered Tyrion to keep taking pictures like these. That had earned him a punch from Elia though. “This was after Lyanna,” he informed Rhaenys. Rhaenys’ life was divided into two parts- before and after Lyanna, and both were very different from each other. “The two of you look uncannily happy,” Rhaenys commented plainly. “We were,” Rhaegar informed her.

Rhaenys was going to make a rude remark, something to put him down, dampen his spirits, but her hatred gave way to sorrow, it usually always did. “I miss her,” she cried. Rhaegar left the ceramic bowl of half-formed red sauce firmly in its’ place and went over to engulf his daughter into a nice warm hug. Their relationship was not idyllic, far from it, but they both healed each other in a way only a father and his firstborn could. “Me too.” “Why did she have to leave us like that?” Rhaenys sobbed. “She wanted to punish me. It had always been a hobby of hers. I broke her heart, and she broke mine- only she was too good to do it with another man.” “She wasn’t as good as you think she was. She told me never to tell you, but she loved the fact that you were a Targaryan. But yes, she did fall in love with you afterwards,” Rhaenys whispered. It felt like she was betraying her mother, she was, but her father deserved to know. “She was pretty ambitious dad.” “I know that. She was only stupid enough to think that her Rhae would not recognise her. Of course I did. Did it matter? Not so much.” “Dad! If she’s eavesdropping on us, like she loves you too, and she’ll know it was true love on both your parts, ulterior motives and everything included!” Rhaenys turned around and hugged her father with equal vigour. If she had been younger, she would have jumped on him, but that time had passed, they had to cherish what they had.

Invert
The colours are all haphazard, just like a bad dream. The orange is where the red should be and the red is where the orange should be. The pink is where the sapphire should be and the sapphire replaces the coral. There is no space for blacks and whites and pastels. This is a Dornish and Valyrian remarriage—there is no space for anything except bright colours. Some guests, if one knows them well enough, can be distinguishable in the background. There is a dwarf, although the red of his attire has been replaced by blue, and there is a tall girl beside him, the golden flames of whose hair has been replaced by the purple of her tailor-made expensive maxi dress. There are Targaryans too, in the background, because the silver of their hair is replaced by the brightening coral that they must so detest. There are flowers and there are lights, and the venue seems to be a well-decorated and extremely large wedding hall. There are blue flowers everywhere, although they were really orange, and there are colourful origami art pieces scattered everywhere—the children wanted to do that. It made them feel like an integral and important part of the wedding.

The girl is the bride. Her sari must have been red, but it looks a navy blue due to the colour change. Her heavily pregnant belly is visible even through the maverick filter. Her hands and neck and ears and nose and every other visible body part is covered in jewellery. She makes for an ethereal view. Her eyes are smiling from her cheek and the lips are a plush pink, but they obviously look red—Elia looks at the picture few months on and heavily protests, ‘I had pink lips, it was in!’ She has one hand over her belly, whether because she’s aware that she’s being photographed and that is a typical motherly pose, or whether she is truly laying a protective hand over the unborn child is a mystery. Maybe it hurts, she is sore, a wedding is a lot of hassle, and this seems to be taken late into the night. A little look into the backdrop and there are many guests leaving. Her jewellery is predominantly golden but it looks pink, it looks hilarious in coral shades, like somebody has painted all over her. The complexion or the colour of the eyes doesn’t really come out all that well, it is a strange filter, and it captures a lot more than the gritty details of the two subjects. Her smile is one of endearing ecstasy, not spontaneous; it is a more maternal laugh, a mature laugh; but it is also a shy laugh. Of course, the colour of her cheeks remains unknown, but she is laughing a coy laugh, her face is cast downwards. Her husband must be saying something extraordinarily fascinating and funny for her to be laughing like that; after all, she is marrying the same man for the second time! Her other hand is firmly clasped in his and she is secure, she is happy, she is enjoying. Her brother Oberyn would have cherished this picture, minus the presence of her husband of course. Rhaegar has always been a major source of discomfort and distrust for Oberyn. When she brought him to their house the second time around to talk of marriage again, he was rightfully livid. He wasn’t that day though, he had been dancing shamelessly.

The boy was the groom—and a glowing one at that. Although his real face had not come put clearly, all the colours were inverted, even then, one could notice that he was glowing. The pale colour of his face had been replaced by the vibrant yellow of the lights around him, while they had taken a paler shade. His wedding suit was a brilliant shade of sapphire blue, darker, like an illusion of navy, but it is replaced by the red of his brides’ clothes. The red looks festive. He has a hand placed on her belly as well, a loving hand, a father’s hand. He is never going to leave her again, or the child, or the children before that; he is marrying her twice just to prove that. There is a dragon brooch on his shiny suit. The pride a Targaryan takes in marrying the same Martell for the second time is on full display with the brooch. His hair appears black, which seems to be the ultimate irony of the picture— whoever heard of a Targaryan with black hair? The one who was giving away his heart to a Martell, that’s who! When Jon had held the hard copy of the picture in his hands, this was the joke he had made. He loved the filter; it made the wedding seem eclectic and crazy (more than it already was), but a good kind of crazy. The boys’ irises were shining, that much was visible. It was shining out of happiness. He had one arm protectively around his wife and the other on her belly. He was only partially looking facing the camera so it was hard to tell whether he was also heavily ornamented or not but one could take a rough guess he was, if the brooch was anything to go by, and boy, it was outrageous. He looked at his wife lovingly; his smile exposed the cutest dimples anybody ever saw, the handsomest dimples that had caused a war in the first place. The dimples had come home to the smile they really belonged to; the picture said that, as
did the photographer. Jon may have had a crush on Rhaegar during their college days, but even he preferred Elia over Lyanna, at least she had the decency not to publicly display the most disgusting of actions. Also, Elia understood him, and made some space for him as well. This picture was his tribute to the two of them.

“This looks so weird,” Aegon commented. Currently, both he and Dany were busy bending over and scrutinising the picture on the kitchen table while Rhaegar was fixing their dishes. One distanced look at the picture and Rhaegar realised what it was.

“Where did you get that?” Rhaegar asked with a frown that was hard to decipher.

“It was sent by post, somebody sent it. Dany found it when she went to collect mail in the morning like she usually does. She showed it to me,” Aegon answered.

“She should have brought it to me!” Rhaegar snapped. All these photos, all these memories, they were really getting on his worn out nerves.

“Chill Rhae, Uncle Jon sent this,” Viserys said as he plumped down on the empty seat beside Dany, the one on the other side that Aegon was not occupying.

“How do you know?” Rhaegar asked.

“There was a post lying around in their room, and they don’t bother to throw anything into the waste-bin. The post was from King’s Landing and there was a note inside it. The note said something along the lines of ‘really missing the two of you today’ signed Jon Con. That’s what mum called him right?” Viserys asked, a fond twinkle coming into his eyes as he said ‘mum’. That indeed was the teasing nickname Elia had given Jon. It used to piss him off, once upon a time. Rhaegar held the picture in his hands, the spaghetti behind him burning up. Dany smelt it, wrinkled up her nose, and dragged her nephew around to check what was wrong. Rhaegar stared at the picture with a blank face. His mind was too, a clean slate. There were no thoughts in it, no new ideas; they had stopped ever since Elia had given up the ghost. He did not have a heart anymore, as he always said, she took his with her. Rhaegar kept staring at the picture and Dany and Aegon, growing frustrated with his sense of helplessness, helped themselves into the pasta and gave some to Viserys. They also stared awkwardly at Rhaegar- how long does it take to process a photo? It was just a picture.

“Dad, we’re eating,” Aegon informed him. “Dad, dad!”

“Hmm… yes, yes what?”

“We’re eating, we’ve began,” Aegon repeated himself, extremely frustrated.

“You’re growing senile brother,” Daenerys snorted. Viserys smiled too.

“No he’s not!” Visenya retorted as she walked into the kitchen. “Don’t you dare call my dad that!”

“Oh, daddy’s girl!” The others teased her and then they ran around the kitchen till Rhaenys came in and tried to play the role of pacifier. She did not succeed obviously.

“Why did you leave me with all this happiness if you wouldn’t be here to share it?” Rhaegar croaked very softly keeping his eyes on the picture. He could not do this; he walked away from the kitchen. The children noticed, but guessed he did not have an appetite. They went back to their playful quarrels and duels- Aegon charged at Viserys with a spatula and Rhaenys and Daenerys went to make teams. Visenya dutifully, and silently, followed after her father though.

Rhaegar entered his room and locked the door carefully behind him. He gathered all the pictures that he had accumulated throughout the day and went and stood near the fireplace. His office was a decent sized room done up with wooden and glass interiors. There was a grand fireplace though, that took up most of the space. It was outlined with mahogany wood that had carvings of all the great houses of Westeros and there was a fire blazing there, Rhaegar always preferred a fire to be blazing there. He felt ‘safer’ and the dim lighting in the room looked brighter. He stood near the fireplace, taking in the scent of the burnt and the coral flames leaping up to touch his feet, or his hands, which are nearer, and he stoops down to take in more scent. He generally likes to keep one small log of sandalwood and so there is a very gentle smell of sandalwood that drifts in. He smiles, he is also crying, and he decides to throw in the pictures for the flames to feast on.
“That’s how you plan to move on eh?” An extremely familiar voice asks with indignant undertones. The voice comes from beside Rhaegar who stands up to view the insolent speaker. It is Elia, of course, wearing what he last saw her in, the bland cropped and chequered hospital dress that she was wearing, two days after the birth of Visenya.

“Eli…” Rhaegar croaks. She is always beside him like this, especially when he needs to take big decisions in life.

“You are being stupid Targaryan,” she chides in a harsher manner this time.

“What do I do? I brought us here, to be away from you. Every inch of Westeros held a memory of you, every single inch, and I cannot live there,” Rhagear spoke solidly, although the tears were gushing out of his eyes and accumulating on the curve of his lips and the ends of his nose.

“Have the memories gone away? Will the memories go away when you burn these pictures? Will you not go and check my Facebook account for the unfeasible hopes of a sudden status update from me? Will you not twist and turn in bed hoping I’ll hold you and big spoon you although you’re bigger? Will you never look at Red Velvet Cake ever again and think about how you used to lick it off my nose? Tell me Rhae… what will you do about all of these? And when you see the Sun, will you not be able to feel me holding your hands?”

“I tried to go to you. You stopped me! And now you see me rot in this despicable existence! Why Eli, why?” Rhaegar was shouting at this point.

“You wanted to come to me! And what about the five little dragon vipers we had hopes of bringing up together? What of little Vis who couldn’t go to bed without me and little Nys whose best friend was her mother and Aeg and Dany who I meant the world to, and the tiny little Nya, who I never got to know. She smiled when she saw me the first time, which was effectively the last time I saw her. She held her hands up high and she smiled and she touched my nose. What will they do without you Rhaegar? I am not Lyanna Stark, my love may be selfish, but it will never cause as much pain as hers did to everybody around you. For your pleasure, I will not allow to give up those who need you.”

“I need you, I need you Elia, I need you and I want you,” Rhaegar sat down crying. “I kill Gregor Clegane in my dreams every single night, just about as brutally as I killed him in reality, but it doesn’t make a difference. It doesn’t make a difference because you’re not here with me! Why are you not here with me?!” Rhaegar groaned and shouted and let his balled fists hit the floor repeatedly.

Visenya, shocked of her fathers’ outburst proceeded to catch the pictures before they slid off Rhaegar’s lap into the fire and put them safely away. Memories were sacred. Then she kissed the top of his head and opened the door, allowing the others come into the room. They were worried by the outburst in Rhaegar’s room, and they were all crowded around his door. As soon as they were inside they dashed in and hugged him. He was kneeling as it was and he was tackled to the floor. Once the entire family was done with bawling their eyes out, sudden realisation struck Rhaegar.

“Who the hell let you in?”

“Nya,” Aegon sniffs, ruffling his baby sisters’ hair.

“And who the hell let her in?”

“The window,” Visenya innocently commented and the entire family cooed on her.

“As annoying as her obsession with Mrs. Baratheon’s show is, she’s kind of cute, and smart,” Rhaenys commented.

“Cersei is your boss Nys,” Rhaegar warned.

“And a wonderful one at that, but she’s really not good at the show, it sucks! It’s all just gossip, no real content.”

“Mum loved it. She was there during its’ conception. She used to help Aunt Cersei with the ideas,” Nya argued.

“That is a story Cersei fabricates really, I am sure mum had no time; she was a successful neurosurgeon for god’s sake!” Danerys argued. The girl could not tolerate Cersei for some reason, but Uncle Jaime was her mother-aunt’s best friend, and she had to.
“No, she loved it!” Nya stuck her tongue out.
“And who told you that?” Aegon snapped, forever rushing to Daenerys’ rescue.
“Mum did! She talks to me sometimes, I swear!”
At that Rhaegar scooped the little girl into his arms and kissed her forehead a thousand times. “If she has said so, it must be true,” Rhaegar smiles proudly at his youngest daughter.
“You’re all a bunch of fools,” Viserys comments good naturedly.
“Guys look, that’s mum there,” Rhaenys points to the fire and sure enough there seems to be a silhouette of dark sparkling large eyes and thick wavy hair. “I think she’s saying that if we really need to move on, we have to bring ourselves closer to her. Dad, can’t we move back home? I think mum would love that. We’re being unfair, staying away from Dragonstone and King’s Landing and Summerhall, heck, even Sunspear, in this isolated little island. We miss her, but she misses us too.”
Rhaegar looks into the fire as well, and the figure seems to agree. He smiles brightly as he moves his hand towards the flames, he wants to touch her, just once, but she slaps it away. Even today, she hates seeing him in pain.
“Don’t you think Rhae and Eli would make the cutest couple on the planet?” Tyrion whispered to his brother Jaime over lunch. Whenever he was on a summer break, such trivial thoughts invaded his mind.
“I’ve thought about it myself sometimes, but I don’t know…” Jaime trailed off uncertainly. There was a shadow of doubt in his mind, they were equals in every aspect, and those kinds of matches did not really exist anymore.
“Oh come on, I thought you were over crushing on Eli!” Tyrion snapped at his brother. Elia considered Jaime to be her best friend, so that fact that at one point of time he had harboured different feelings for her was to Tyrion a breach of the friendship Elia made so sacrosanct.
“It’s not that!” Jaime returned.
“Then what is it?” Tyrion questioned with equal vigour.
“I don’t know I feel like there’s something off about the two. They spend such an inordinate amount of time with each other, scribbling over homework or fooling around or debating and discussing but should you ever happen to ask them if there has been even a sort of mild infatuation, their refusal is so exemplary and with immense caution and should Lyanna and Arthur be in the same room as them, they make such an extra effort to flirt with them, all the while eyeing each other. Something is totally not healthy,” Jaime judged and explained. He found himself to be sounding very wise and was absolutely proud of it.
“I think it all points to love,” Tyrion added like an effective footnote.
“What points to love?” Rhaegar and Elia echoed as they sat down across the Lannister siblings who had been scrutinising them while they had been getting their food.
“Oh, Sansa Stark’s advances towards my little brother!” Jaime ruffled Tyrion’s dirty blonde locks proud at how successfully he could change the subject. Even Tyrion was admiring him.
“Sansa Stark? Seriously?” Rhaegar asked with a raised eyebrow. “She is Lyanna’s least favourite niece.”
“Lyanna has standards?” It was Cersei’s indomitable voice as she joined the party. People seemed to keep coming to this table hearing the last statement and making their own; it was becoming something of a Mereenese Whisper game.
“Guys stop it seriously,” Rhaegar said putting his two hands in the air beside him in a pacifying stance- he ended up resembling a politician.
“You look like your dad,” Elia giggled.
Rhaegar, who could never stay quite mad at Elia, especially for long, especially when she giggled (which was such a rare feat), tackled her into a hug. She wriggled in her defence but gave up a quarter of a second later and hugged him back. The three Lannister siblings looked to each other, grinning. They used all their blood connection to talk to each other through telepathy, and the verdict was clear- ‘we have to play matchmakers, they belong together’.
So the stage was set. All three Lannisters got to work immediately. For the first time in their lives, all three were working in tandem. Cersei, as much as she resented her differences with her baby
brother, was willing to do this. She may have had a crush on that very Targaryan boy years ago, but it all subsided into childish giddiness when she met Robert (who was healing from Lyanna’s rejection). They became balms to each other, and although they have both been trying to move to higher significance in each others’ life, their confessions never come out right. This was another couple in need of matchmakers. Not now though, right now, all three were concentrating on Elia and Rhaegar.

“What about Saturday? We set them up on a date, what say?” Cersei’s sapphire eyes glittered in excitement.

“I have a date on Saturday,” Jaime announced. Both Tyrion and Cersei looked at him with wonder and mingled hints of disgust.

“With Elia?” They asked in complete suspicion and apathy.

“What, no! I am going on a date with Brienne, she asked me out,” Jaime huffed annoyed at their dogged persistence to flush Elia out of his romantic system. He had done that, well almost, and Brienne was going to help with the rest, at least he hoped she would.

“That Tarth?” Cersei asked condescendingly.

“If it is Elia, you have a problem, if it is not Elia, you still have a problem, what do I do?!” Jaime exclaimed breaking under the high standards they always set for him.

“It’s okay, Brienne is fine. She’s too good and too honest, but she’ll do fine,” Tyrion placated him and Cersei down.

“i guess so, I don’t really care though brother;” she shrugged.

“Oh thank god,” Jaime returned viciously.

“Will the two of you please cut it out!” Tyrion interfered feeling so strange. Usually Jaime did this between him and Cersei. The other two siblings grumbled, but listened to the younger and smarter one.

“Is Sunday okay with the two of you?” Jaime asked exasperated.

“Rhaegar and Elia have their community service on Sundays,” Cersei informed.

“That’s great, we’ll meet them after,” Jaime said. Tyrion nodded in approval, alas, the plan was in motion.

The venue was to be ‘Celluloid’, a cinema themed restaurant with just the right amount of intimacy and the right amount of funk. Had they chosen an extremely pristine and romantic place, the victim parties would have been suspicious; but everybody hangs out at ‘Celluloid’, or so the Lannister siblings convinced the dragon and the viper. They were happy, their plan was working, with the golden touch of Lady Luck, they would really have made a substantial contribution to society.

Celluloid was the strangest restaurant in all of King’s Landing. The entire restaurant was split into three sections: ‘The Actor’, ‘The Director’, ‘the Producer’. The first place was for the youngsters, the price was relatively low and the walls were painted neon so it looked funny in the morning and pop at night. The drinks that were served were neither pricey, nor classy, but there were board games and live sport matches on TV and loud music and fast food to go along with it. If you were rich enough, there were cubicles that could hold around fifteen kids and had all sorts of cigarettes and other sorts of smoke bordering on illegal but never overstepping the boundary. The second was the more mature or sombre place. There were couple tables and family tables and familiar movie posters on the wall, and some famous flick would always be playing on a large projector screen. The sound was not the loudest but that was okay, not a lot of people liked noise during their meals. There were also couple cubicles which were themed around various romantic films, so some had train coaches and some had ship docks and some had round tables decorated with candles and taken straight out of medieval Keeps, bordering on the Gothic. The third was where the business meetings took place. It was styled by the fanciest of the movies and each company could have a table all to themselves, because they were huge tables, and all shaped like famous conference tables seen on screen. There would be light and famous instrumentals playing songs that were title tracks of the biggest movies. There were sophisticated wall paintings of famous silver screen personalities. Hierarchy was very apparent in the restaurant, but there was something for everyone.

Elia and Rhaegar arrived, tired from their day of community service. Elia thought it was all a sham,
pretentious and hollow but it still gave them extra credits on their college grades and they needed those for the best jobs- Rhaegar always kept reminding her of this. Elia always dressed in formals for her service, she treated it like a job- her grey dress and black stilettos and pulled back hair gave serious office vibes. Rhaegar was more relaxed, his powder pink shirt was half tucked and his hair was callously ruffled and he looked as handsome as ever. They held hands as they crossed the road, apparently, they did it for safety. The three Lannister siblings who had perched themselves on the top of a building opposite the restaurant thought otherwise.

“Go to The Director’s section,” a lean and haughty waiter with an accent neither could place very well, informed them and led them to the focal axis of the restaurant leading them through a large oak door that had various murder weapons carved on it (styled after the famous court architecture of ‘Volantis Stands’, an exceptional period drama).

“Are you sure it’s not The Actor section?” Elia asked doubtfully.

“Are the two of you Mr. and Mrs. Targaryan Martell?” The man questioned back so flatly that Elia and Rhaegar assumed he was a foreigner to whom their last names meant nothing.

“I am Rhaegar Targaryan, this is my friend Elia Martell, and we were supposed to meet our friends, the Lannisters, here. Where are they?” Rhaegar asked one eyebrow cocked.

“Oh they cancelled fifteen minutes ago,” the man informed them. “And they booked you a seat here. Now please, it’s been paid for and it is expensive. Sit down and eat.”

Both the fooled parties understood everything. They were extremely intimidated by the man so they sat. Their table had been themed straight out of ‘Forever and Always’, one of cinema’s classic romances. The table was basically just a few pieces of mahogany laid obediently one after another on two stands, just like in the garden proposal scene with flower pots all around them. Elia sighed and sat back, she disliked flowers. There were dainty watering can shaped containers that held all kinds of sauces. She dipped her finger in one, one that looked spicy and brought it up to her tongue and licked it.

“Tasty. Wonder why they picked out this table though…”

“I think it was random, they had no say in it.”

“So, how are we going to deal with this? Silent treatment works wonders sometimes.”

“Martell, you are a genius,” Rhaegar placed his hand on the table and Elia clasped it.

College saw the Dragon and the Sun furiously avoiding the Lannister clan. Elia went on gossiping with Ashara, not leaving a second glance at Cersei and Rhaegar and Jon and Arthur even planned a trip to a soccer match without inviting Jaime. The only advantage Tyrion had over his other siblings was that he was on summer break and he was not really a last year student; far from it. He was reported all the minute details of the happenings at home though and even Tywin scolded them for losing the ‘valuable acquaintance’ of a Targaryan. They were nimble and smart enough to get it back however, around a week later. They were kids at the end of the day, and a couple of apologies and lots of pizza did the trick. The Lannister sibling vowed never to play matchmaker again.

“I bet you three hundred and fifty bucks they’re fucking,” Bronn pulled Podrick to the side and informed solemnly.

“Would you leave the new interns alone?” Podrick chided.

“Don’t be a wimp, place the bet,” Bronn laughed.

“You know, we’re not really allowed to bring friends and family in here. The way I sneak you in could cost me my job. Leave now,” Podrick reprimands.

“I am neither friend nor family,” Bronn jokes good-naturedly.” Anyways, you are being annoying, let me actually go and catch up with the two fuck-buddies.”

“Oh gods no, please…” Before Podrick can finish his sentence, it is too late.

“Hello kids. How’s life? So, what exactly are the two of you interning here?” Bronn approaches Elia and Rhaegar with the air of a patronising senior.

“He’s a photographer. I want to be an investigative journalist, or a science journalist, whichever
one,” Elia answers. Bronn nods. He can easily see who the dominant one is, and he admires her. “What kind of a photographer works for a daily newspaper? Shouldn’t you be doing artistic things?”

“He’s great at what he does. And anyways, what kind of a cop comes and bosses around young mass communication trainees?” Elia rebukes with zero hesitation. “I don’t see you talking this way with Mrs. Tyrell,” Bronn shrugs in bitterness.

“You are not Olenna Tyrell are you Mr. Blackwater?” Elia shrugs as well. “You are a power-hungry, status conscious absolutely manipulative bitch. I like you!” Bronn laughed.

“Hi Mr. Blackwater, the name is Elia Martell,” Elia extended her hand towards Bronn. Rhaegar could not quite understand the dynamics of the exchange so he kept quite. Elia, who had had fire burning in her eyes a couple of seconds ago, was now beaming at her new friend. Human nature always escaped Rhaegar, he was better at art and aesthetics and folds in time. “See you around eh,” Bronn said as he proceeded to leave their cubicle.

“See you around too. Also, please don’t question Rhaegar’s photographic skills ever again, okay?” Elia dangerously warned through her smile even as she waved at him. Bronn only shook his head; he had reached a second epiphany already.

“Yo Payne, I am changing the terms of the bet a little bit alright- I don’t think they’re fucking, I think they are in love!” Bronn exclaimed as soon as he plopped down on the red leather chair opposite Podrick.

“You really need to leave now, lunch is almost over,” Podrick began. “Meet me at the end of the day, we need to discuss this. I know Tyrion is still mad at me for what I did but I can make it up to him by match-making them. That is what he has always wanted…” Bronn was still talking as he left. He had made up his mind; he would get his Lannister friendship back with a bang- a romantic bang.

“I am going to get fired!” Podrick snapped. Bronn, who was comfortably sitting next to him in the little suffocating elevator only laughed. “Tyrion is going to save your ass.”

“What the hell? This is wrong and I hate doing wrong things,” Podrick argued again. “Would you stop whining? Just enjoy the drama,” Bronn cackled as he held the laptop right in front of Podrick’s face.

Elia and Rhaegar had extremely efficiently been locked into the office when they had both come back for Rhaegar’s car keys, leaving their bag and belongings in the reception below where Bronn had promised to take care of them. He was though; Elia’s cheetah print tote was on his lap and Rhaegar’s sombre leather satchel with Podrick. Their phones with the viper and dragon covers respectively were lying on the floor side by side. Podrick had hacked into the building camera system so they could see what was going on. Podrick hated the entire activity almost as much as Bronn was beaming about it.

“They are not doing anything. They are just friends, I swear,” Podrick began after a few minutes of silence. “You’re not usually this talkative,” Bronn snapped back at him. “I have a deadline for tomorrow. I have to write about the interview I took with the Prime Minister,” Podrick argued. “If his son finds love tonight, you’ll be forgiven,” Bronn casually commented.

The office was dark. The individual cubicles lit up due to the various fluorescent marker-stickers its’ young interns stuck around it, and there was a night lamp shedding a cultish yellow glow- insanely soft though. Essentially, the place was dark. When the young Martell and Targaryan got over the initial shock of being locked in (probably a first in both their lives), they groped around for light and remembered that their phones were outside, in their bags. It was not only an illumination product; it was also a product for communication. They were essentially stranded. Elia stood in one corner of the room, hands clutched around the desk with the little lamp while Rhaegar essentially searched around for more light.
“Office has closed; they’ve cut the power genius!” Elia’s holler echoed across the room. Her temper was a result of her desire to have Rhaegar standing right next to her, it was annoyingly dark. “There could be something. Someone might keep a torch or something,” Rhaegar’s reply came from the other side of the room.

“Don’t stray too far, please Rhae, please…” Elia begged.

“I’m not. Just a little further, if I can find something, it’ll be really helpful.” Bronn grunted. He could see no action, and he could not hear what they were saying. “Is there no audio available with this thing?” He prodded Podrick.

“No! I told you it was a waste of time,” Podrick returned, the exasperation heavy in his voice. “It’s not going to be a waste of time. Wait till the office gets really hot and they start taking off their clothes…” Bronn grinned as Podrick rolled his eyes.

A few hours later, they did start opening their clothes. Bronn sat up with interest, pulling a sleepy Podrick by the collar and practically thrusting him onto the front of the computer screen trying to prove a point. All Podrick could see were two rich kids feeling extremely suffocated in an office where the central air conditioning had been switched off. Elia took off her coffee tinted trench coat to reveal a tight off white pencil skirt coupled with a chiffon layered frilly brown top. Rhaegar opened his baby pink blazer to reveal a plain white tee, and soon discarded the tee as well, his chiselled (yet not too muscular) figure glistening in the dim light. Did Elia steal glances? Neither Bronn nor Podrick could tell. All they saw were two best friends that spent the entire night fanning themselves and talking, talking lots, or so it seemed to the people monitoring the cameras. They were really just sharing horror stories and clutching each other when it got too scary- obviously, no camera could capture that, it was way too dim.

“How come you’re here so early?” Elia asked Bronn when she met him in the elevator the next morning. The Upper Flea Bottom Police Station and the ‘King’s Landing Times’ office shared the same building.

“Couldn’t sleep last night,” Bronn shrugged as nonchalantly as he could.

“I wonder why…” Elia trailed off before she left the elevator. Bronn understood- the clever viper had guessed.

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“Well hello Mrs. Stark?” Brandon Stark’s good natured voice boomed behind Catelyn. She made the prettiest bride he had ever laid eyes on, all blue silk and sapphire jewellery, alas she was not his.

“Hi brother-by-law,” Catelyn replied, marking out relationships subtly as she did so. However, there was no going around Brandon; they had dated for three years after all.

“I know that Cat, I really do,” Brandon smiled with affection as he perched an empty seat beside her. “Where’s Ned?”

“Lyanna is having another breakdown.”

“Is Rhaegar involved?” Brandon asked pointing to the guy standing right in front of him, deep in conversation with Elia.

“No, I really don’t think so. Okay maybe, that’s one reason. You know how she gets when she sees them together; she is always suspecting him with Elia although there was never really anything between them. I think the other cause of the panic attack is that she didn’t really graduate.”

“What the fuck are you saying?” Brandon cursed, and a little too loudly. The Tully guests present, looked at him with distaste.

“It’s true, she failed, again. You would think she would pass with her vocational courses this year but she just can’t do it. Ned suggested Open University but that became an ego issue- Elia Martell was the Ivy League celebrity,” Catelyn sighed.

“Whatever went wrong with my baby sister Cat? When did I stop recognising her?”

“It’ll be alright. She just needs to stop comparing herself to Elia Martell,” Catelyn put a hand on Brandon’s shoulder comfortably.
“Elia Martell is a bloody genius, how could Lya even imagine she will compare? Nobody thinks they’ll be as good as Elia or Rhaegar, those two are exceptional. Where the hell does the competition come from?”

“I don’t know, I honestly don’t. She’s good at sports, she should have pursued that,” Cat remembered all the days Lyanna used to try to drag her out to play and fail miserably.

“I feel like I’m betraying my family when I say this, but I really think Rhaegar and Elia make a good couple. The ‘true love’ kind,” Brandon bit his lip not knowing what Catelyn would think. She just got married and she’d already be encountering family politics. It was not that though, strictly not.

“You know Brandon, I think so too. Just please, never tell Ned. You know what he’s like on the Lyanna issue...” Catelyn eyed Brandon nervously and mischievously. The relationship between Elia and Rhaegar had been a favourite subject of gossip at school and college, right up to graduation.

Both of their scope of vision panned into the animated couple standing immersed in each other. Apparently, they were dating Arthur and Lyanna respectively. Elia looked breathtakingly pretty in her bright pink and orange Dornish attire with sequins and strings along the back while Rhaegar was dashing dapper in an emerald suit that had dragon motifs embroidered along the hems and linings. Rhaegar had his hand placed over the pillar supporting it while Elia was leaning into the pillar itself. They seemed so extremely taken with each other in conversation, they did not realise that the trailing Dornish scarf Elia had draped around one side caught fire from the counter of the kebabs kept right next to them. Catelyn was going to shout out in warning but Rhaegar saw the flames and pulled the scarf off of her and pulled her into his arms before he called for somebody to douse it.

“Why do wear things you can’t handle?” He chided Elia all the while holding her and rocking her gently back and forth. Catelyn and Brandon looked at each other with an evil grin on their faces. They both used to work from home after all, and had an ample amount of time at hand.

“Look, it’s not a very big deal; the two of you only need to pose for a couple of pictures,” Catelyn explained maturely to Elia who had her sceptic eyebrows high up in the sky.

“And how the hell is this related to your novel?” Elia asked, her tone of suspicion barely ceasing.

“See, one of my novels has been chosen for a film adaptation, that’s all. We need to send the kind of looks we are looking for in the lead pair,” Catelyn shrugged as if it was the most obvious thing in the world.

“And who is ‘we’?” This time it was Rhaegar’s question.

“Brandon and I! He is helping me out with his whole thing. Anyways, he’s the techie so he’ll be developing the pictures and all,” Catelyn elucidated.

“So why aren’t the producers doing anything about this? Why do we need to pose, we’re barely even models! He’s a photographer and I am a journalist!” Elia exclaimed.

“I am finding this story to be highly implausible,” Rhaegar also shook his head.

“Oh come on, if I don’t send them these pictures then they will cast whoever they want, without listening to my suggestions and the two of you fit these parts so effortlessly, I wanted them to find someone along your lines,” Catelyn pouted using the trump card- emotional blackmail.

“Oh okay then it’s fine,” Rhaegar smiled warmly. Elia remained highly chary though. The costumes were marriage clothing. According to these two traditional matchmakers, both Elia and Rhaegar would instantly realise their love when they saw each other in their bridal avatars. It was silly, but they were sure it was going to work. They got Rhoynish marriage clothes because Elia disliked marriages in the Sept; so it was to be a bright red sari with lots of gold jewellery. They got Rhaegar a handsome off-white Dornish suit with lots of floral patterns embroidered on it. Neither Elia, nor Rhaegar were very convinced with their apparels.

“We’ve both read all your novels, where the hell do clothes like these come in?” Elia asked again.

“You’ve forgotten the marriage in my debut novel,” Catelyn dubiously covered.

“That was between a Stark and a Karstark with Northern clothing in front of the Old Gods,” Elia was quick to fill in. Catelyn bit her lip in frustration; there was no going around this woman.
“We are trying to make it more racially sensitive,” she sighed in all but defeat. “With a Martell and a Targaryan? How does that make any sense at all?”

“Oh for God’s sake Martell, let’s just concentrate on the work at hand please,” Brandon finally snapped from behind the camera. Rhaegar was a bit sad he was on the other side and for the first time too. Elia could see how longingly he looked at the object.

“Now just look at me like that and it’ll do,” she whispered into his ear and he smiled. There were no sudden apprehensions of love as Catelyn and Brandon had wanted there to be, but there was that smile, and there were hordes of beautifully adorable pictures to go with those happy memories. When Ned came back from the office he suspiciously stared at the two who were proceeding to leave. “What were they doing here together? He should be with Lya, at her open university. She’s extremely nervous and scared about starting there,” he gruffly told Catelyn.

“Ned, they were here to do some work for me, it’s all over now, he can go to the OU. By the way, they are not officially dating or anything, your sister and Rhaegar, that’s what he told me,” Catelyn put the last statement in with care and caution. Ned had nothing to say; instead he just kissed Catelyn because he hadn’t seen her for the rest of the day.

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“Hi guys. You must be wondering what the hell is going on. We’ll explain it in a bit,” Elia said standing up. She looked gorgeous in a short red dress with a silver belt around the middle, and her wild Dornish hair styled into intricate braids left open at the bottom. “First, drinks.”

And the drinks did come in galore, with a lot of pomp and celebration. Each cocktail was different as were their names and their colours. There was blue and green and pale pink and coral orange. There were neon cocktails and pastel cocktails, there were striped cocktails (like a deep orange one that had burgundy stripes running down the glass) and polka dotted ones (like the aquamarine one with topaz dots). The guests present namely the Lannister siblings, their faithful acquaintances Podrick and Bronn and two Starks, Brandon and Catelyn; seemed genuinely and pleasantly surprised at the spread. This was followed by the various spring rolls and dumplings and seafood soup, Elia’s favourite.

“I’m pregnant,” Elia’s quiet voice rang out even above the soft oriental music playing in the restaurant, at least to her guests. They all spat out their cocktails and coughed vigorously.

“No, we’re pregnant. We’re in this together. And we’re getting married next month. We’ve been engaged forever really, but dad was paranoid and didn’t want anyone to know. It was really tough for us, and extremely touching to see all of you, in your own subtle (sometimes not so subtle) ways trying to bring us closer together, turn a couple out of us. It was, in all honesty adorable. Thank you. We’ve made some great friends along the journey, and lost some too; it was really sad to break Lyanna and Arthur’s heart like that, we had no right to use them, but we also had no choice. I have loved Elia since we were five, probably, and that has never changed. Thank you all so very much,” Rhaegar smiled warmly. All the time, he had one protective hand snaked around Elia and the other on her belly.

“Cheeky assholes,” Bronn said but he was only beaming with happiness. Podrick was too; although he was now having deep regrets about spending one entire night without sleep.

“Who are going to be the godparents?” Cersei asked curiously. She definitely needed the honour that came with it, godmother to a dragon-viper, how cool was that?

“Can it have seven?” The two young parents chorused looking at each their guests and then at each other with the joy of expectation and heart-warming love as everybody burst out laughing. In all the mirth, Rhaegar managed to steal a kiss from his fiancé and was the happiest anybody had seen him in a very long time.
The stench of the sick and the fragrance of benzyl medicines floated into the waiting room. The waiting room itself was tacky enough—there were plastic chairs and the colour of the floor tiles were a bright blue and shiny white and the tube-lights were cheap so the light they gave off were dangerously gleaming and glinted off the white surface like neon colours off of a fashion magazine. The walls were painted in a medium shade of green that looked like slime and coupled with the smell of the place, definitely gave off those vibes. At some places, especially near the paediatric wards, the pain had chipped off and been painted on by crayons. The little children had full freedom to do whatever they wanted in this hospital, but that was not always a good thing. The receptionist sitting in the corner seemed to be the most disinterested woman in the world, flipping through the pages of a shabby pulp magazine, seemingly more interested in that content, with grunts of disapproval leaving her lips whenever the phone seemed to ring and she needed to take it. Obviously, as suspected, the name plate confirmed the rest: she was a Frey.

“Mr. Targaryan, you’re up next,” a voice boomed over the speaker placed right above Rhaegar’s head and he jumped. The metallic edges holding the speaker in place were coming undone with a few wires uncoiling here and there, which was the reason as to why the sound was unnecessarily amplified.

Rhaegar stood up, annoyed and tired and downright angry with two facts; the first that he had been sent forcefully to the hospital by his mother, and second that the King’s Landing Public Hospital was in such a bad shape. It was his city after all. He grumbled and frowned his way through the procedural check-up of his weight and his height and vita-stats before he was sent towards the doctor. The doors were painted a shoddy burgundy and the nameplates were in bright dazzling silver. This one read: Dr. Elia Martell, MBBS (Citadel), General Medicine. Great, she was not even an MD. But her name seemed to ring a few bells.

“Have a seat Mr. Targaryan,” a voice greeted as soon as Rhaegar entered.

Rhaegar was rendered nervous when his eyes lay upon his doctor. She was just as he remembered her from ages ago at Lewin’s Birthday Party; tall, towering and intimidating. The thick black hair had grown, as had the finely eyes and eyebrows, both a deep shade of brown—her glistening pupils looked back at him. Her lips were prettier now, slightly thinner, the perfect size, and glittering with just the right amount of gloss. Navy blue stripes on cream cotton peeked under her white coat. Her legs were crossed and hair was pulled back elegantly. She was the only classy thing about the entire place, especially with her rimless spectacles.

“Hi,” Rhaegar nervously approached.

“Take a seat, I won’t eat you up, I promise,” she smiled in a more maternal manner, and Rhaegar hated that. She was not someone he wanted to be mothered by.

“Yeah, I’m good,” he said as he finally sat down on a gaudy and glossy red chair— the standard patient chairs in the hospital.

“You’re not holding up very well. All the stats are looking bad, especially your blood report. You have insomnia and low blood pressure and high sugar levels and an enormous amount of caffeine in
your system and your weight in unhealthily low and you’re general immunity is suffering. That’s what I have. You want to add something else?"
“Nope,” Rhaegar looked at her with guilt glistening in her eyes. He thought, scratch that, he knew that being all intellectual and arty and staying up at night and working was in fashion, and it made him feel cool too, but in front of her, he was a fool.
“You need to stop with this lifestyle.”
“Absolutely.”
“No, I want you to promise me, you need to stop. I will give you sleeping pills and pills for diabetes and the like, but you need to change the way you are living. First up, you really need to sleep, your system is crashing. Also, you need to drink lots of water, and some specific anti-oxidant drink… I’m thinking, green tea. Lots and lots of green tea. Move back home, spend a few days there, go to Braavos, go to Quarth, go anywhere you want, somewhere closer to nature perhaps. The forests maybe, I don’t know, but take a break. You need it. What are you studying by the way?”
“Anthropology,” Rhaegar proudly beamed, “I intend to study the Dothraki for my PHD.”
“If you live up to your PHD,” Elia sceptically added. “At this rate, I see no hope.”
“I’ll get better, I promise,” Rhaegar said. It felt like he was in school talking to the most popular girl and trying to impress her with hilarious results.
“Move back home Rhaegar,” Elia reinforced her point, adding a subtle personal touch this time.
“Oh for God’s sake! Everybody wants me to return home, first it was mum, then there was dad, then Viserys joined the bloody band and even your unc- oh wait why do you keep forcing me to go back home? Mum’s been talking to you hasn’t she? She always liked you, always said she’d set us up, and now she can get me to come back home as well, very clever… no wonder dad suddenly allowed me to go see somebody else besides Pycelle,” Rhaegar reached multiple epiphanies.
Elia only gave a cheeky smile that could barely be seen. “I have no intentions of marrying you either.”
“Well, we could go out for a cup of coffee, I mean...” Rhaegar began, this time a visible colour creeping up to his pale cheeks.
“Green tea Mr. Targaryan, green tea! Nothing else is good for your health. But we could go over to my place for some green tea, I make it quite well.”

“Last night was amazing,” Rhaegar groggily whispered, wrapping his arms around Elia in a pleasant surprise. She only gave a gentle yelp; there was nobody else at home after all. “What are you making this early in the morning?”
“We didn’t really get to try green tea last night did we?” Elia asked with her eyebrows raised. Rhaegar only spared her a look of scepticism, raising only one eyebrow. Elia handed him her concoction. “Remember, the one you make at home will not be this. It will be normal, alright? I am your doctor after all.”
“Whoa this is amazing! What have you mixed?” Rhaegar exclaimed as soon as his lips touched the dainty Mereenese styled clay cup.
“Just a tiny little hint of rum. It’s a secret, don’t tell anyone, even my mum grumbles about all the green tea I horde up,” Elia warned Rhaegar with the grin of the guilty.
“And why did you choose to tell me?” Rhaegar asks teasingly.
“You’re merely a one-night stand. What can you possibly do with my secret?” Elia teases right back.
“That’s all I am eh?” Rhaegar catches hold of her by an arm and pulls her closer, close enough for her to smell the rum in his tea. “Then I’d like my shirt back.”
“Oh no, I like it!” Elia pouted.
“Then you can keep it, as long as you ensure our green tea dates continue…”
“This is hardly professional, I am a doctor, you are my patient,” Elia managed to croak as Rhaegar was trailing kisses down her neck already.
“More like prospective fiancé,” Rhaegar smirked and turned her against the kitchen table. “What say we raid your kitchen? We’ve had the stairs and the couch and your bed, and your shower was the best but something tells me there’s a special charm about the kitchen…”

Elia only kissed back for an answer. Rhaegar sat her down on the graphite table top and proceeded to opening, well practically tearing out the shirts of his button that she adorned. Elia did give warning squeals because she genuinely liked the shirt and was thinking of keeping it but she stopped complaining when it hit the floor and Rhaegar did what he was intending to do after all. Things had gotten pretty steamy when they had come back to her place, especially after discussing the Dothraki, and the stark contrast with Rhaegar’s own, practically non-existent sex life which Elia had reprimanded as ‘extremely unhealthy’. She had also said that it was a ‘basic instinct’ which needed fulfilment and things had taken their own shape from there.

“This is actually healthy you know. A boy your age living like an ascetic was a very problematic situation. Like nobody in the world could believe that handsome young Rhaegar Targaryan was a virgin,” Elia said absentmindedly, picking loose threads of denim that had come undone from Rhaegar’s ripped jeans which were lying on the floor.

“What’s the deal with sex anyways? I think it’s overhyped,” Rhaegar announced with the importance of a man who demanded his voice be heard as well.

“Well in Dorne we just like to look at it in a kind of, well, you know, it’s just so normal and natural for us. We have the ‘grown up talk’ at a very young age. We are taught that it’s okay to do it simply for the pleasure and not procreation,” Elia explained to the best of her abilities.

“My father would execute you if he heard you speak like this. If he could have it his way, he would ban condoms and abortion as well,” Rhaegar sighed. It was true, and maybe his frigidity came from his upbringing, to some extent.

“Aren’t you supposed to be a fuelled and sex-crazed person then? Growing up with all these restrictions?” Elia laughed.

“You’ve had no restrictions, you’re no Septa,” Rhaegar returned and Elia smacked him on the arm.

“Well of course not. I think it’s a cliché anyways, the rebel bad boy of the restrictive parents. You rebel in your own way though, don’t you? Not going back home for ages, not answering calls…”

“You’ve had a detailed discussion with my mum it seems,” Rhaegar shook his head at the amount of personal information the viper was belting out.

“She was merely worried,” Elia innocently replied and Rhaegar launched an attack of kisses all over face, both of them falling off the couch in the process.

“You don’t exactly have the most decent way of dissipating her worries though,” he left soft kisses down her neck.

“I don’t think she’ll mind,” Elia smirked, kissing his nose, biting it ever so slightly.

“You are just like your green tea you know that? Spiked with rum…”

“Does Lewin live here too?” Aerys Targaryan’s gruff voice echoed the halls of Elia’s neat, white-washed penthouse.

“No, uncle Lewin lives just down the block,” Elia replied extremely intimidated. Rhaegar was almost going to spit out his sparkling water in heavy laughter at the sheer joy of seeing Elia scared.

“You live alone then?” Aerys raised his eyebrows disdainfully.

“My mother thought it best; to make me independent. Uncle Lewin lives only two houses down though…” Elia’s voice kept getting smaller.

“A girl shouldn’t be living alone, it’s dangerous. Do you have any idea of the things that could happen to you?” Aerys snapped again.

“A girl shouldn’t be living alone, it’s dangerous. Do you have any idea of the things that could happen to you?” Aerys snapped again.

“It’s your city, what could probably happen to me?” Elia replied in subtle jest, a lot of the old confidence coming back. Rhaella absolutely admired the woman seated in front of her, knowing her son had made the right choice and Rhaegar pursed his lips in pride. Aerys shut up. “So what would you like to drink?” Elia smiled, motioning to get up.

“Whisky,” Aerys’ loud order rang the walls of the living room.
“No, you’re not allowed. Maybe some coffee or tea,” Rhaella politely smiled. Aerys began protesting again but Rhaegar was quick to remind him that a girl living alone could not possibly have alcohol stockpiled and Aerys appreciated it with grumbles which seemed to come out as complaints.

“It’s okay; I’ll make some green tea. There’s fruit tea as well. Which one would you like?”

“Fruit tea,” Rhaegar was quick to answer and tried to persuade his parents to do the same lest Elia out of habit begin to spike the green tea again. Rhaella agreed to fruit tea, but Aerys seeing his son and wife take one option, began stubbornly insisting on the other.

“It’s okay, I’ll get some green tea for Mr. Targaryan, and fruit tea… umm, the apple flavour is good, yes apple tea for the two of you,” Elia smiled demurely and Rhaegar raised his eyebrows in absolute fright.

The apple tea arrived first, and Rhaella praised it greatly. There was not much kitchen excellence required really, given that Elia had teabags but Rhaella insisted that it tasted really well, and that Elia had a penchant for making tea. Elia smiled warmly, she was one sane and good woman in this family of oddballs. Then came the moment Rhaegar was dreading as Aerys’ green tea was served. Rhaegar observed his father’s face intently, waiting for any reaction, absolutely any. Elia watched too. Aerys gulped down the whole thing at one go.

“Come here,” he motioned to Elia who hesitantly walked towards him. Rhaegar had his head in his hands. Then there was an exchange of gentle whispers between the two. “Don’t you ever call me Mr. Targaryan kid; it’s Uncle Aerys for you. I loved the tea!” Aerys winked and Elia laughed and both Rhaella and Rhaegar were left speechless beyond repair.

The café was straight out of a pastel music video where the singer was meeting her love interest for the first time. It was aptly titled ‘Fall’ both for the month (for the interiors were themed after that), and for falling in love. The couches were orange, which was actually an extremely loud word because they were basically a light shade between coral and beige, and the floor was chequered with orange and brown (the colours of autumn) and the walls were a light crème with swirling patterns of ginger and chocolate shades spiralled into it. The waitresses wore decent kilts, white-washed shirts obediently tucked into pale orange skirts that went well below their knees. It was a pristine café; and it was a pity that Elia was not in the most immaculate of moods.

Her fingers aimlessly swirled the spoon around the coffee that she had ordered. It was a latte, and even then the smell was way too strong for her. There was also the light smell of hazelnut mingled with the stronger fragrance of coffee beans. “What’s so good about coffee anyway?”

“It’s strong, and it keeps you up at night,” Robert answered innocently.

Elia only threw her head back and laughed at his naiveté. Robert could not quite follow the joke.

“You and Lyanna Stark deserve each other.”

“Is that supposed to be an insult?” Robert arched his eyebrows mainly because Elia could not possibly be praising Lyanna.

“That’s good, you’re already learning under my tutelage. Yes, I did mean it as a bit of an insult. My comment about the coffee was metaphorical Robert,” she explained. “Lyanna Stark signifies black coffee like I do green tea, that’s what I meant.”

Robert only frowned in more confusion. Lyanna was not black coffee, to him she was the prettiest milk shake he had ever laid eyes on, probably the Kit-Kat. “Lyanna is not black coffee.”

“To Rhaegar she is. To Rhaegar any girl who plays hockey and smokes and makes caricatures of professors and acts all cool is black coffee. And apparently, black coffee is better than green tea. Why don’t you men never realise is that green tea can have so much more potential. Coffee is just caffeine and honestly, at the end of the day, it means plain trouble.”

Robert stared blankly at Elia for a couple of minutes. “Green tea tastes like horse piss.”

“Not if you spike it with rum…”

“Who spikes it with rum?”

“I do. Cersei Lannister does, I taught her. Olenna Tyrell taught me. We are the official Bitches
Club of Westeros,” Elia smiled proudly. “There are a few other members as well, some other ladies you may not know.”

“Are they hot?” Robert inquired cheekily.

“We are here to discuss our respective beaus eloping with each other and you are asking me about other romantic prospects?” Elia countered stunned with his behaviour.

“Isn’t moving on the healthiest option?” Robert asked.

“Not before I’ve taken my revenge,” Elia flatly said as if it was the most casual thing in the world.

“Please don’t hurt Lyra!” Robert cried out. “I’ll do anything, I’ll bring Rhaegar back by force or do something, just please don’t hurt Lyra,” Robert begged.

“Good, so you do love her still. Don’t you want her back?”

“Of course I do, but she’s enamoured with Rhaegar don’t you see. He is smarter than her and stronger than her and more dominant and she loves it. She’s always wanted that, I never deserved her truly…” Robert sighed like a scorned lover should.

“Oh I’ve had it with you defeatist men! Now are you going to help me out or not?”

“Depends on what you’re asking…”

“Oh my suddenly he becomes a genius at negotiations. You truly do love her,” Elia smiled. “I think you love her more than Rhaegar ever can. But then Rhaegar is more of a man, maybe she likes that. You know, he’s more refined, he’s not so crass. Maybe Lyanna just wants more of the one thing she’s never had- class,” now Elia was an absolutely expert at manipulating men and their ego, she enjoyed it to be honest. In fact, she enjoyed the entire planning of her schemes more than she would ever enjoy Rhaegar- the final outcome of them.

“This is nonsense! Tell me what to do and I’ll do it,” Robert puffed his chest out.

“Date Cersei. She’s insulted Lyanna in public; it was all over the news yesterday. Date her. Let’s see what happens, one of the Starks is bound to react at least,” Elia laid her plan out bare, well not all of it. A man like Robert Baratheon could hardly be trusted or smart enough.

“I don’t like the Lannisters,” he grumbled.

“But you love Lyanna…”

“I’ll try.”

“You’ll do it. I’ve set up a date for the two of you. You won’t try, you’ll give it a real shot. Now won’t you Robert? Also, dating Cersei is the only way to show Lyanna that you’ve got class.

You’re meeting her tomorrow at an art exhibition: her art exhibition. Please get all over her, and flirt and touch and use the panache that makes all the girls at Baratheon Corps. fall head over heels in love with you,” Elia instructed plainly. Robert was awed at the woman. She was so magnificent. He looked at her so dreamily that Elia began to have second thoughts about calling him over for lunch. She had made it extremely clear, he was to date Cersei. He was not to spare a second glance at her. She looked at him so warningly that he burst out laughing. “Why are you laughing?”

“You thought I had the hots for you didn’t you? For a moment there you thought I liked you. It’s good to see you scared, since nothing seems to scare you at all,” Robert burst out laughing and Elia frowned. “I’m not all that stupid now am I? Anyways, please don’t worry, I consider you to be more of the genius sister I never had growing up, to guide me,” he smiled good-naturedly. Elia smiled too, but that was more a smile of relief than anything else really.

So the lunch was a successful one. Elia had been victorious in convincing Robert Baratheon to work for her (although that is not the way she put it), and Robert too was induced into believing that he was basically one step ahead towards winning back his lady love. The paparazzi who occupied a seat couple of blocks ahead of Elia and Robert had been successful as the biggest sensational headline on the morrow belonged to him and it read- ‘Cross Connection- Robert Lyanna and Elia Rhaegar seem to be swapping partners. Viper dates Stag.’ Both Elia and Robert were livid with rage- while Robert ensured that he visited the office and ensued carnage there, Elia used her resources more subtly to fire the reporter. She had never done this before, she enjoyed the attention that the paparazzi showered her with, but this news was going to foil her own plans and there was nobody Elia hated more than someone who wanted to foil her plans.

The news worked in Elia’s favour though. She was way too taxed with her job to call a press
conference and denounce the news the day it was published so when she returned home and collapsed on her silken soft bed in fatigue, her phone beeped. A message read- ‘Wow, Robert Baratheon. Never talk to me about standards again.’ It was from Rhaegar and Elia laughed herself to sleep because the poor dragon was still in love with her.

“It’s nothing to be scared about, he’ll come back in a day or two,” Elia assured little Daenerys who was sniffing into her red leather attire. She was hardly dressed for the occasion but then again, she had been attending a friends’ birthday bash when the call came from the Oldtown Asylum.

“Where did they take him inside? What is this place?” the over-inquisitive four-year old inquired, her purple glassy eyes looking straight at Elia’s coal-black ones.

“He’s a little sick, and so this is like the hospital where you were taken when you had worms in your stomach,” Elia began explaining.

“Does he have worms in his stomach?” Daenerys asked.

“No, he has worms in his head. He’s crazy can’t you realise that?!” Viserys snapped. In Rhaegar’s absence, he had to take the role of big brother and he hated it. How could Rhaegar get away with everything so easily in life? How could he spend his time fucking that wolf while their father was being taken to the asylum? Daenerys began howling at her brothers’ anger. Elia protectively held the girl.

“Viserys please, I’m begging you. She’s so young.”

“And me? I’m the oldest person in all of Westeros right?”

“No, but I’m here. We’ll handle this I promise,” Elia laid a hand on his shoulder.

“You’re not a Targaryan. It’s my brother who should be here but he’s way too engrossed isn’t he?” Viserys began snapping, and then realised that his words would hurt Elia more than they should hurt Rhaegar, and that was not what he desired. “I’m sorry. You know, you are more Targaryan than Rhaegar.”

Elia smiled and cried, which was a very rare combination given that she never felt so overwhelmed; but she did it all the same, and she pulled Viserys into a hug as well and the three of them stayed in a tight embrace for a very long time. They were three shaking figures, two broken children and one adult trying her best to heal; seated in the lobby of the Oldtown Asylum. “It will all get better, I promise,” she began, but she knew now that Viserys was beyond trusting anybody. She realised that circumstance, and not choice, had made him like her. She liked that, and she promised to herself that she would never let anybody hurt him, especially Rhagear.

Rhaegar arrived too, distraught and in an immediate sense of emergency, tired and agitated and scared. He was paler than usual but Elia decided on quick visual diagnosis that that was fear and not high caffeine or stress levels. Ever Rhaegar was scared, though not as much for his father’s health as he was about having to run Westeros. She understood this because his first question was, “when will they release him?”

“You are a sorry excuse for a son,” Elia spat back.

“I asked you a question.”

“Ask me a compassionate one.”

“When did you ever care much for compassion?”

“When it came to family. And Uncle Aerys, Dany and Vis are my family. As much as you hate the fact, it is true. I am more family to them than you are, at least,” Elia replied venomously. Rhaegar rubbed his eyes and sighed. Having driven all the way from Dragonstone, he barely had any stamina left, and Elia viciously whispering things to him as Viserys and Daenerys slept soundly in an asylum corridor was really taking its’ toll on him. He rubbed his temples and gave out a near silent groan of pain and frustration. Elia, being a slave of her habits, fished out the little neon plastic bottle of green tea and rum concoction that she had stuffed in her scarlet leather jumpsuit pocket and offered it to him. Rhaegar blinked a few times and peered at it, he could not believe this was happening for real. He took the bottle and gave it a sip as silent tears floated down his cheeks like a river that had lost its’ way. “I want you to know, that I was the biggest idiot in the
world for leaving you. But I also want you to know, that Robert Baratheon is nowhere near right
for you.”
“I’m not dating Robert you idiot,” Elia laughed, overwhelmed with emotions herself and not really
sticking to her plan. Rhaegar looked at her with fondness and relief. “But he is a better man than
you are. At least, he’s not a hypocrite.”
The night was strange, and so full of obscurity that Rhaegar and Elia gave up any hope of trying to
scramble out the meaning and status of their relationship which proved to be so much more
complicated than anybody could comprehend. The four of them lay huddled into a bundle of tired
slumber well into the early hours of the morning so that when Lyanna came with her brothers, she
threw a fit as to why she had not been called earlier and Viserys cheekily whispered into Elia’s ear
that they should admit her instead of his father.

“I cannot take a leave before Saturday so you have to get married after,” Elia was explaining while
trying to cook dinner for herself. The dinner was basically ramen noodles, and she was trying to
add the boiling water while talking on the phone with Oberyn and that was proving to be an
extremely difficult task. Oberyn was trying to convince her to the best of his powers on the other
side of the line.
The bell rang loudly, interrupting their conversation, and continued to ring. Elia huffed in
aggravation and made her way across the intricate marble-mezzanine flooring to approach the
polished oak door. It was a heavy door, and quite large with very complicated locks so it took its’
time to open and Oberyn, over the phone, began to curse whoever was ringing the bell so many
times and causing ‘shit loads of noise pollution for his beloved sister’. Elia, when she was finally
successful at opening the entrance, stood aghast at the sight she beheld. There was a shattered,
battered and bloody Rhaegar, eye swollen, nose bleeding, and lip cut deeply with clothes torn
incoherently and deep gashes everywhere.

“Oby, I’ll call you back later,” Elia announced, trying to save the expensive iPhone that was about
to drop from her grip. “What. The. Hell.”
“Ca- can I come inside?”
“Yes, of course, come in,” Elia ushered the visible broken boy into her house.
“I, I am sorry about the… the intrusion. It’s just… i-i-it’s just that…”
“You can explain later, just come in now.”
And so Rhaegar narrated the sequence of accidents that had taken place as she was dressing his
wounds, and in quite an erotic setting, her washroom, petals and candles everywhere as usual, and
him in practically nothing. The story went something like Rhaegar and Lyanna having bumped into
Robert and Cersei at a bar, and one verbal altercation leading to another where Lyanna urged
Rhaegar to ‘fight for their love’ and he gladly decided to oblige and when he found himself
completely defeated, he only saw his girlfriend still madly cheering him on because in her heart,
her hero could not lose or fail her. Elia, knowing it would be extremely insensitive, did burst out
laughing at the entire ordeal but Rhaegar was too weak to protest or even roll his eyes at her. She
did dress him though, and poured a lot of rum and brandy into his green tea (because she was not
going to give it raw, she was a doctor after all) to ease his pain, and made him gulp down
painkillers with it as well. He slept in her bed, and when he had nightmares, she held him, and she
hated that she was doing all of this without any control over herself whatsoever, but when Rhaegar
awoke in the morning, and thinking her to be asleep, peppered her face with kisses, she did open
her eyes afterwards and blush terribly. So Rhaegar spent a month at Elia’s place and she hosted
him with slight reluctance and secret pleasure. The pleasure was so secret that even she did not
realise it.
“You’re still in love with him, that’s why you let him exploit you like that,“ Oberyn snidely and
quite loudly comments when he comes to visit his sister one week.
“Keep your voice down! And no, he’s not exploiting me, have you seen his condition? He can
barely walk; I don’t think he has the stamina to exploit,” Elia snapped.
“Men can exploit in their death beds, you don’t know,” Oberyn shook his head.
“You don’t know baby brother, there is no man in the world that can exploit me,” Elia shook her head in triumph.
Rhaegar coughed from the top of the stairs so that his presence could be felt, because Oberyn was loud enough and Elia had never really bothered about insulating and thickening her walls but she understood the signal although her brother didn’t and kept on criticizing him so she literally had to push him out of her place, promising to meet and catch up with him later at their uncles’ place. Rhaegar felt sad and sorry and annoyed and angry at himself.
“I am so sorry. I should really go,” he told her during another one of his coughing fits when she had come up to give him his medicines.
“Yes, you will go, when you get better,” Elia said casually.
“No, I should go now,” Rhaegar began in an attempt to look like a hero.
“Don’t be silly. Shut up and have your medicine and you can go when it is time.”
“I love you.”
“Have your medicine Rhaegar.”
“I just said I love you.”
“And I just said you are hallucinating because you haven’t taken your medicine, now have it,” Elia thrust a bunch of various coloured pills into Rhaegar’s hand and gave him a tall glass of water.
“I don’t want black coffee anymore. I have had enough of coffee to harm me for a lifetime. Please, just please, could I have some rum spiked green tea?”
“You’ve gone mad. I think Robert hit your head too hard.”
“If I kiss you right now, are you going to slap me? My cheeks are bruised as it is; you won’t slap me will you?”
“And what do I get this kiss for? Nursing you?”
“Lope. You get this kiss for being that viper whose venom is both a poison and a healer. You are my rum spiked green tea, and I just can’t get enough of you,” Rhaegar announced before pulling her in.
Elia did little to protest, but she did pull back and made sure he had his medicines and also put him to sleep, and when he awoke, eagerly hoped he remembered everything that had happened.
Rhaegar remembered it better than he did his own name, and he trailed soft wet kisses down her neck, and found his way right into her heart, all over again.
Cyanide

Chapter Summary

So this one is a spy thriller because I always wanted to write one! It is pretty dark and violent so I am giving you those triggers. Also, it is pretty improbable but fiction can always be forgive right? I love all of you so much and I write for you so I hope you enjoy it.

“You know we share history right?” Rhaegar asked shakily. His voice always quivered in the presence of Tywin Lannister. In fact, he could not name anybody, besides Elia and Olenna Tyrell, whose voices did not.

“Was it a professional feud?” Tywin asked in his usual cold tone.

Rhaegar frowned. Didn’t Tywin know? All of Westeros knew what had happened between himself and Elia. Of course Tywin knew, he was involved in it too, to some extent. “No, it was not professional,” he answered grimly.

“Good. This is professional, please deal with it accordingly. Now leave. The files are kept on your desk; do your homework and go, you would certainly not like to be dominated by the girl you dumped publicly,” Tywin motioned his finger towards the door and Rhaegar was out of it in a second. Truly, this man could insult him right and left but he ever barely raised a voice.

He walked out into the long, cold and deserted corridor. The Interpol headquarters, in the dead of the night, with very few drowsy shifts working somnolently, was quite scary, like straight out of a horror movie kind of scary. The white tiles glinted off the LED lighting that decreased due to the low volume of people present in the office (because they too had sensors like everything else in the office), and gave off a dim white glow that looked like blotches of godly halos around the glass building with dark patches around the corner and the computers. The master computer looked like something straight out of a cheap sci-fi thriller with incoherent green lettering appearing occasionally all over the massive black screen and a few employees skittering around like mice trying to decode it. Rhaegar was disturbed beyond reason at the simple fact that he worked in this creepy office during daytime. He hurried as fast as his lanky and choking stiff starched denim legs would carry him to his own rectangular petite room at the end of the passage. He had to cross the coffee machine, which was nearly always sticky and slippery at the same time, and the broken air vents which gave out a blast of Northern air whenever anybody passed it- his two gifts for being the least successful employee at the King’s Landing branch, which in return was his revenge to his father for forcing him into the job in the first place.

His office was nearly always freezing too, mainly because there was a hole at the below the window, where the plaster had chipped off and somebody had left a dent so the AC always overworked itself into making the tiny room colder. He shuddered and reached for the coat that was kept on a chair callously and wrapped it around himself. He then reached out for the file that was kept neatly on his table, beside the huge disorganised rubble of work papers he had created himself. Typical Tywin touch, Rhaegar thought, and shook his head at the behaviour of the man. He caught hold of the brown paper file and left the room, locking it behind him. The file could wait till he got home, as could Tywin.

“How was work?” Lyanna inquired in her sweet shrill octave.

“Well, you know, how work is supposed to be,” Rhaegar replied, rubbing his temples. He was very careful so as not to snap- Lyanna was pretty sensitive when it came to him.

“What is that supposed to mean?” She asked again, naively.
“Can we talk about this later?” Rhaegar smiled at her politely and took the folder down to the basement, his working office.

The assignment was simple. There was a pick-up and a drop. A confidential file had to be transported to the government of Yunkai via the Slaver’s Bay International Association. While Rhaegar knew this was part of his job, he hated dealings with Slaver’s Bay. Why did they even have to associate themselves with that despicable place? Had he not written innumerable moving blogs to counter all that bullshit? Apparently not, it turns out. Frustrated, he threw the file on the plush leather resting couch and rubbed his eyes and sat back, flipping his head and trying to let the tension flow away. Doing that was way harder than it sounded.

“Honey, dinner is ready,” Lyanna’s voice called from the top of the stairs. She was not very intrusive upon his work and he loved that; unlike Elia who had made it a point to figure out what he did in the basement all alone and that is how she had discovered that he too was a spy. They were set up on a mission together exactly a month later though, and had a good laugh about.

Rhaegar’s mouth curled upwards at the memories.

Rhaegar was going to close the file and go up for dinner, pushing aside all contagious memories, when the last page slipped out of the folder. It was the list of things that were a must for them to carry, like guns of certain calibres and smaller, sharper weapons; and finally, the deadliest only to be used for self-destruction- a cube of cyanide.

________________________________________

“Have you ever seen anybody look hot in green?” Jaime asked out of the blue.

“What kind of a question is that? And no, green is not hot. There is red and black and golden sometimes but green, seriously?” Rhaegar sipped more of his champagne and stared at Jaime in complete bewilderment.

“Well, look right there,” Jaime pointed towards the entrance where a tall Dornish figure had just entered.

She was the stuff quintessential seductive spies were made of- long legs, tan, black hair and black eyes and subtle make-up that only added to the appeal. Elia wore a green gown, the most dazzling and boring green, not glamorous enough to be a sapphire, and not sophisticated enough to be a pastel icy shade; it was an in-between and in-betweens were the tackiest, unless it was Elia who was wearing it. Elia carried it like a dream- the slits were exactly where her curves showed and the open back was playing peek-a-boo with the occasional intrusion of her ebony waves and her long dangly legs that Rhaegar so loved to make fun of in college were the hottest in all of the party. Nobody could take their eyes off, and Rhaegar made it a point to keep them pasted on the floor- he was Lyanna’s now, and no amount of Dornish charm could change that. Elia walked towards them in all her glory, slowly and surely with the air of a matriarch and confidence of a tigress. Rhaegar decided to look everywhere but at her. That beauty was not going to be his problem anymore.

“You’ve killed it, like literally,” Jaime laughed.

“Who’s my prey?” Elia inquired in her usual tone of nonchalance, tilting her body weight to only one leg and standing in a slight shape.

“It’s that Master, he’s from Yunkai,” Oswell informed.

“Oh, we’re dealing with Slaver’s Bay?” Elia raised her eyebrow, feigned naiveté and looked at Rhaegar subtly who gave her a stern look back. “Don’t we make the perfect team?”

“Well, you just need to go with the job?” Rhaegar snapped finally.

“Hey, easy there, dad said we should relax today, there’s going to be more work tomorrow?”

“Does it involve me?” Elia asked.

“It involves you. Don’t act like you’re only a pretty face Martell, you usually plan our operations too,” Oswell replied.

“Oh yes, I forgot, I’m actually good at my job,” Elia sniggered before walking away, towards ‘her prey’. Rhaegar only stood with a scowl on his face, and the other two laughed themselves silly. Elia floated around the room effortlessly, like a seasoned socialite, shaking hands, smiling demurely, and laughing with her head rolled back when and if a rich guy needed a boost to his ego
from his idiotic one-liners. Rhaegar stole occasional glances. He had seen her after a very long
time, almost a year actually, and he thought everything would be okay, the atmosphere would be
easy but it turned out to be quite the opposite. There was a heavy tension in the air, and it was not
just a tension between two exes- there was more friction at work here.
“There, that’s the guy, click the pictures,” Oswell urged Jaime as Elia finally managed to make her
way to the Yunkian. Rhaegar scrunched his nose up in disgust- the guy literally had his hands all
over Elia and they had probably only met for two minutes. His hands found his way tracing down
her spine to even deeper areas.
Rhaegar clenched his fist till a white knuckle gave way and in one aggressive swipe he grabbed a
glass of champagne that a passing waiter was carrying past him. Even the young serving boy was
scared at the speed and force and stared in awe. Rhaegar gulped the drink down, all the while
eyeing Elia and the Yunkian in revulsion and envy- a deep, burning, all-consuming jealousy. It was
never this bad even when they were together. Elia was escorted into the private quarters for the
VIP guests with their confidential folder in hand. She looked back once and both Jaime and Oswell
nodded. Rhaegar downed another glass of whiskey.
“Go easy on that,” Oswell warned him. He only shook his head and let out an animalistic sound
which indicated he had no intentions of.
“It wasn’t half this bad when she was your girlfriend,” Jaime slipped in the comment with extreme
caution. Suddenly, Oswell realised where Rhaegar’s silent outburst had come from.
“Can you keep your stupidity to yourself? The only reason you have this job is because you’re a
Lannister,” Rhaegar angrily glared at him. That silenced the two of them. This was an extremely
offensive thing to say.
“The only reason you’ve ended up with Lyanna Stark is because you couldn’t satisfy her enough-
she even likes Yunkians better,” Jaime shrugged after a while. His nose was red and his voice was
shaking because he had been deeply offended, but he was a lion, and a counter attack was
compulsory. Oswell merely gaped at the exchanges.
Jaime then stormed out, and Rhaegar downed yet another glass of… it was probably sparkling
champagne, judging by the colour. Oswell could see the turbulent turn this mission was taking and
he was determined to try and settle things down. He looked at Rhaegar warningly, as if to plead
him about not making any more scenes and then left looking for Jaime. An impulsive lion was the
most dangerous one.
Elia emerged out of the cloaked and smoky private section. Rhaegar immediately straightened
himself- she should not know that he was drinking. Her curious and slightly frightened eyes
scanned the room. Rhaegar frowned, why were Elia’s eyes frightened? He had been on fifty-three
missions with her so far, and her eyes had never appeared frightened- Elia Martell always had a
back-up plan. He stood straighter and tried to walk towards her but the alcohol made him weak and
tipsy. She found him though, in that crowd, and began sprinting towards him. The pace was all
wrong, and there was none of the familiar confidence that he so loved.
“We have to leave, right now, our cover is blown, come on!” Elia whispered in hysterics as she
motioned to drag Rhaegar away from the scene.
“What the hell? What covers? This job was only supposed to be about trading a file,” Rhaegar
began, his words slightly slurred. Elia understood that, but kept quiet; there were more pressing
matters at hand.
“Trading it for what? Information obviously. A few Braavosi spies found out, we’re dead. Tywin is
going to fire us! Didn’t you do a back-up check as usual? What were you doing yesterday?” Elia’s
speech was so frenzied that Rhaegar only caught a mosaic of disjointed phrases even as they were
escaping through the kitchen.
“What kind of information?” Rhaegar asked cautiously. He did not want to discuss what he was
doing last night; he would be in deep trouble otherwise.
“That is none of our business! Answer my question first!” Elia snapped.
“It was Lyanna’s birthday.”
Elia stopped in her tracks and looked around. Rhaegar could see the rage burning in her eyes; it
was not jealousy, Elia had never been the jealous type, although Rhaegar would have enjoyed the idea, but it was not jealousy. What boiled in Elia’s eyes was sheer anger at his callousness. Rhaegar knew that look a little too well. “Are we not supposed to close all contact with family a week before the mission, Mr. Targaryan?”

“I did, but she requested, it was her birthday,” Rhaegar’s voice broke with guilt and the heavy burden on unjustified excuses.

“Then leave, right now. I don’t want to see your face on this mission anymore. Go get a desk job, you don’t deserve this. You’ve never deserved what you’ve had,” Elia spat at him, face burning with anger, as they were holed up in a small cupboard shaped container close to the kitchen.

Rhaegar observed her face from the close-up and something was very wrong. There were subtly visible scratch marks on her pale tanned cheeks. Her mascara and kohl had been smudged together on the ends of both the eyes. Her lipstick had been rubbed away on one side- she still looked beautiful, but something was off. “What did the man do to you?”

“I. Said. Leave.”

“Answer me.”

“Leave Rhaegar!”

“Don’t shout, people are looking for us right? Do they have a bug on you?” Rhaegar calmly replied.

“No I took it off. But I don’t get it, why won’t you leave?” Elia was pleading now. Anyways, she worked way better off alone.

“Because I am going to kill the man that laid hands on you. Go find Jaime and Oswell, they had both stormed off, go find them and send them to the headquarters; tell them to tell Tywin that we’re both in trouble. Send them off now, and wait for me here, come back here again.”

“You are drunk, you cannot possibly think properly right now,” Elia tried to reason.

“There is nothing to think about- he touched you. I know, lots of men do, but this was different wasn’t it? This was much worse. You are a terrible liar when it comes to me Elia Martell. Now, let me go, and you go your way,” Rhaegar used his hands to mark out the direction and left before Elia could say anything at all. Of course the step he was going to take was stupid, but this man had been worse to Elia then the men before, and all of a sudden, nothing else mattered to him.

Elia waited for Rhaegar to calm down and come back to his senses; he never did. Instead, he told her on the Bluetooth earplug they all had attached to each other: “you have your cyanide right?”

“Why do we need it?” All three asked simultaneously, nervously.

“Just keep it handy.”

When Elia opened her eyes again, she could barely keep the two lids separate. It was like something heavy was bearing down on her, she tried to blink but then the eye kept getting stuck; she gave out a yelp of agony. Someone had punched her so hard that the eye had swollen, bled and formed clots. She kept groaning in agony, and tried to move, definitely not being able to. The room was so dark she could only unclearly make out another shadow. It looked like Rhaegar. Her voice was dried up so no sound came from it. The palms of her hands, the only parts not scarred basically, she thumped against the floor in order to wake him up.

It worked. The figure started moving. Elia could make out, through the long shadow cast by the tiny bulb, that this person (she prayed it would be Rhaegar) was beaten and bruised about as badly as she was. He was moving towards her though, and she kept lying limp. Whatever would happen, whoever it was, she could not care anymore. There were parts of her body aching that she never knew existed. Tears fell freely from her eyes and Elia Martell never cried.

“Eli… is that you?” A distraught and raspy voice called out.

“Rhae…” this was the first time since the break-up that Elia had taken that name with so much ease and relief.

“I am so sorry,” the voice sobbed.

“What happened?” Elia asked.
Neither could remember clearly— but it had something to do with the master Rhaegar had gone to hunt down. He had been captured, so when Elia got no signal for him, she sent Jaime and Oswell away and went back. She had cursed herself for going back, but she had no choice— Oswell was a techie and Jaime was still learning, also she would never subject him to such risks. Then Elia too had been captured and the rest had been a daze of torture and sadism. Neither wanted to imagine the kind of horrors they went through. Yunkai was not known for kindness.

“We never confessed to anything,” Rhaegar croaked proudly. They had finally made their way to each other and Elia was laying on his lap sideways, body entangled with his.

“You think they’ll come for us?”

“If Jaime and Oswell reached safely, yes.”

“And what if they don’t?”

“You have that cyanide don’t you?”

“Yeah I don’t really think mine is working properly, I tried it,” Rhaegar shrugged causally.

“You did what?!?” Elia practically propelled herself up, well to the best of her abilities.

“Hanged,” Rhaegar explained, and held her tighter, and when, out of disgust, she wanted to squirm away, when she pounded his chest and asked him how he could still hold her, he only kissed all of her bruises, well the ones he could see, from her forehead to the nape of her neck. He held her till she sobbed herself to sleep, and then he himself sobbed himself to sleep, occasionally waking up to whisper Valyrian songs to Elia— she always slept better when he sang.

“Are they dead?” A gruff voice demanded as the door flung open. Both Elia and Rhaegar, extremely awake, kept their eyes closed, nestled against each other. Rhaegar added another protective arm around Elia.

“I don’t know chief. The boss wants them dead though, Westeros has begun to ask questions,” another, higher pitched voice answered.

“Eli, give me some of your cyanide,” Rhaegar whispered as soon as they were out of earshot.

“How do I give you some of my cyanide?” Elia asked.

“Spit it out.”

“We’re not allowed to spit it out,” Elia argued.

“Just do as I say,” Rhaegar snapped.

Elia spat it out and Rhaegar split it into half. He gave the non-poisonous bulb of the pill to Elia and kept the venomous part of it for himself without letting her know, in the dim light of the storage room— and honestly, Elia herself was too tired to notice.

“I love you,” Rhaegar professed out of the blue one day, gently stroking Elia’s locks. Elia, who had been busy tending to one of Rhaegar’s wounds (with whatever little resources they had with them in captivity) stopped her work mid-way. She wanted to shrug off what he had said but she just could not get it out of her mind. “You’re hallucinating,” she finally said, as she reached this conclusion herself.

“No, I’m not. I love you Eli, I swear to the moon and back,” Rhaegar replied sincerely.

Elia sat up from the position she was occupying on Rhaegar’s lap. “Rhae, stop. I have had enough of that.”

“I know you have. I just thought I should tell you how I feel.”

“You feel homesick and weak and delusional. I get that, it happens to us, it’s supposed to; they said that during training remember? At least during my training, and I was trained in Dorne. I don’t know what kind of shit you learn up in Dragonstone, not even interested,” Elia replied in the maternal tone she usually acquired when she was trying to explain something to somebody.
Rhaegar, in a strange fit of anger and confusion and frustration, pulled her in hungrily and kissed the breath out of her. He growled even, and held her so close that her sides hurt, and ripped off some fabric from her satiny green gown and trailed his other hand throughout and all over her. Elia on the other hand, did not really resist. She should have, given what she had been through, but for the first time in forever, she felt a burning desire inside herself too- either in the pit of her stomach, or between her legs, she could not quite tell.

So they did end up opening each other’s clothes, and ripping some of it, although that was mostly Rhaegar, and they did end up making quite a lot of noise, so much so that a guard had to come in and check up on them. As they lay entangled in each other, the guard, who happened to be an old and orthodox Northerner, closed his eyes and left. Rhaegar trailed kisses all over Elia and she gave out soft moans, not even having enough energy left, after their, ‘little session’.

“It’s cold. Put my dress back on,” Elia snuggled up to him. The cold floor and Rhaegar’s cold fingers did not offer much warmth once they were finished with each other.

“I can put myself, back on, you know, more like in…” Rhaegar trailed off laughing, earning a punch from Elia.

“Please Rhae, it is so cold!” She begged so he picked up the green material from the floor and draped it around the two of them.

“Better?”

“Somewhat.”

“Sleep now, it’s been a tiring day,” Rhaegar smiled, kissing the top of her head.

“And whose fault was that?” Elia chided playfully.

“Yours, for looking so damn hot.”

In the middle of the night: when the cold was biting, and the darkness was swallowing, the door to the cellar (or whatever that room could be called) was flung open, and the two semi-dressed spies were pulled out. Elia and Rhaegar panicked and scrambled to put their clothes on properly and clung to each other like gum on a class table. Elia’s panicked voice whispered into Rhaegar’s ears and he held her head and her waist protectively, tightly, as he whispered words of comfort back; empty words that they were.

“Who called Interpol amongst the two of you? Or did you do it together?” A tall man with a bald head and yellow teeth and stale breath fanned in front of Elia.

She flinched away, earning a tough biting blow on her face. “We didn’t do anything!” She cried out.

“Lies!” The man shouted hitting her again.

“Stop! I did it!” Rhaegar intervened, tears streaming down his face, and voice breaking.

“No he didn’t. Please don’t hurt him. Our associates, they escaped, they must have,” Elia cried. “Ahh, the two of you love each other,” the man cackled.

“No we don’t. We used to, a very long time ago, but he has a wife now, a good girl, not somebody involved in this filth. She is a good clean girl, let him go back to her please,” Elia looked the man in the eye, trying her hardest to come off as someone who was telling the truth. They could not find any points of weakness between the two of them, she had to lie.

“She’s lying! I love her, I swear, she doesn’t believe me but I love her!” Rhaegar broke down. Elia groaned in frustration. Why the hell was Rhaegar so stupid?

“Oh I see,” the man shook his head in understanding.

“He’s lying can’t you see? He is trying to provoke you so that you hurt one of us and Interpol comes and shoots the blood out of you,” Elia began trying her best.

“No, I seriously love you. I know you don’t believe me or anything, but Lyanna was my aim at a normal life, a life I realised I basically detested. I loved you, only I knew I didn’t deserve you,” Rhaegar rattled off.

Elia began crying in frustration. “Rhae, stop, please,” she begged.

“No I won’t!”
Then there were gunshots, and sirens, and a whole lot of action taking place outside. The man was clearly unsettled, and Elia let out a great big heave of relief. Even Rhaegar’s stupidity could not get them killed now. But the Yunkians were far from defeatists, and the man was a well-trained, well-versed general, who was an expert at dealing with spies.

“Go on, tell their agency that they have been confessing and dishing out dirt, they’ll never think of coming back.”

Rhaegar and Elia looked at each other. Both knew the protocol of what they were supposed to do next- gulp down the little pill of cyanide. But Rhaegar was not as stupid as the general, or Elia had made him out to be. Tywin would never believe that Elia had confessed, mainly because she barely had any information to give out, she was purely a field agent, and they barely knew anything- even if they did, Elia was a Dornish agent, and they were experts at the art of never confessing. They were renowned for their tolerance levels.

Still, Elia gulped down half of the cyanide that was in her mouth, and it did not work. She had left a little behind under her tongue so she chewed on it relentlessly and nothing happened. She looked to Rhaegar in a fit of panic and he smiled back in a mellow manner. Elia’s face distorted into a frown. What had he done? “Rhae, why is my cyanide not working?”

“Eli, they’ll come for you, don’t worry. And even if they don’t, you can strike up a deal with the Yunkian, build a life for yourself somewhere in Essos, Lys like you always wanted maybe. What could I possibly do? Go back to Lyanna and her distasteful Northern dinner? We would never even be assigned together again, forget being able to work on the field. What would I do then? How would I live? I told you, I loved you idiot.”

Elia shook her head repeatedly. “No Rhae, no, I can always tell them we didn’t confess anything, and you’ll be safe, I’ll be safe. I promise you that,” Elia howled in desperation. “How do you expect me to live?”

“You’re the sun. You’ll survive.”

“Miss Martell, you are requested to take a health leave for the next six months. They we shall get you back on the field again,” the Judge announced. The entire court Marshall heaved a sigh of relief. They had been scared that their favourite agent was going to have her license taken away.

“I have a request though,” Elia announced, her voice booming through the courtroom. The judge frowned. She was not really in the position to make requests, and judging by her tone, it was not a request, it was an order.

“What is it?” He asked gruffly.

“You will post me in Slaver’s Bay specifically, six months later. There is a lot of dirt that needs cleaning,” Elia laid her terms bare. Nobody had any objection to make, her request was valid.

“Why?” Jaime asked once the hearing was over and Elia was making her way to the car.

“Justice, for my dragon. Justice, in fire and blood,” Elia smiled.
I know this is a late update but my mom was in the hospital and it has generally been a very busy week. Thank you for putting up with me, you all are precious! This imagine has a sassy twist in the end that I hope you enjoy. Also, Lyanna and Elia confront each other for the first time so I was pretty excited about that. Thank you all for the love once again!

Rhaegar hated shaving, and Elia hated the feel of prickles against her caramelised skin, so whenever the argument arose, Rhaegar would have to kiss his way out of it with extreme care and expertise. He would distract her first, and the best way to do that was obviously snatch away whatever novel she must have been reading, and then dodge it from her as she hopped on both her legs trying to attain it. Then she would finally give up and try to use her eyes and innocence and stand with her hands folded behind her back and a soft, sweet pout playing on her lips, outstretching her neck as if to plead ‘give back what is mine’ and Rhaegar would pretend to mull it over, and slowly extend his arm towards her while she would slowly reach out towards the book in which moment Rhaegar would extend forth his neck and catch her lips in a flaming kiss. The book and all would be completely forgotten as they would somehow manage to stumble their way to the couch where there would be a hungry discarding process of attires, and they would end up making a lot of love. Rhaegar was a clever man, but out of all his tactics, this was the one he knew how to use best. Elia was nothing less though, and after around three sessions, she would bat her eyelashes and trail kisses down his well-toned body, teasing him, till he finally decided to shave. The shaving process was not something he complained about though, because Elia was usually perched on his lap and tenderly using her hands and her coos to shear off the silver stubble.

The alarm clock proved to be a terrible spoiler for the moment. Elia tangled in her silken covers and rolled off the bed in the most sophisticated manner she could muster. Even in her clumsiness, she was an epitome of erudition. She groaned to herself as she got up, and wrapped the silken covers around her, the small satiny slip she wore was no match for the huge room when she herself had turned off the central heating by accident in the middle of the night. So she shivered and sprinted to the washroom and locked the door and ran to the showering cubicle where she let the warm water trickle down her body and cursed herself for still dreaming about Rhaegar. It was a holiday, and this was the reason Elia hated holidays.

She had not realised that the courier guy had left a package on her doorstep, because when she opened it, she was meaning to go out to some expensive Braavosi restaurant for a long and posh buffet breakfast. Her stiletto hit the brown package which she picked up with a frown and a suspicious expression. Elia had always believed that people would be out to bomb her; she was legal advisor to the Prime Minister after all. She opened the small russet tinted packet and looked it over in the sunlight trying to analyse its’ contents but in vain. She split open the seal with her long painted claws (she liked to refer to them as claws because they were so long and sharp and gave her a sense of pseudo strength) and out tumbled a long golden envelope.

The gold of the envelope glinted off of the sun and she had to repeatedly blink her eyes to get used to it. When she finally regained the normal line of sight she read what was written in red cursive and bold: ‘Rhaegar Targaryan weds Lyanna Stark’.

When Elia turned up for Rhaegar’s engagement party (about a week before the wedding), nobody
could really believe their eyes. They had thought that the invitation had been sent as a formality, she was Aerys’ legal advisor after all; so when she trailed into the Dornish Luxury Resort in her expensive designer Dornish coral jumpsuit, and nobody could keep their eyes off of them, the Starks were in for a pretty big shock. Rhaegar was beaming though.

“I am so super glad you could make it,” he rushed over to her gushing, picking her up and spinning her around, hardly realising that that was no way to behave with an ex-wife.

“Put me down!” Elia squealed.

“This is so great! Now my wedding is complete,” Rhaegar beamed as he stopped twirling Elia around and finally let her feet touch the ground.

“You’re crazy, I swear!” Elia laughed and Rhaegar laughed along with her.

“See Ly, I told you she’d come,” Rhaegar said as he walked with Elia towards Lyanna. “My best friend would never isolate me when I need her most.”

“Yeah, like he’s going to prison!” Eli joked. It was a standing joke between the two of them, even on the night of their marriage, that these weddings were basically an elaborate ceremony to send one to jail.

“He is what?” Lyanna asked sharply.

“Oh sorry never mind,” Elia bit her lip and smiled softly towards Rhaegar who looked at her with mischief as well. It was obvious they were hiding an extremely funny inside joke. Rhaegar bumped his head with hers as if in confirmation.

“Come on, let me take you to your room,” he smiled.

“Are you stupid? This is Dorne; I’ll stay at home,” Elia shrugged.

“Nope, absolutely not. Your house is a seven hour drive from this place, and the trains will also be irregular this time of the year, and what makes you think I will allow you to travel by train every day? You are staying here, and that’s final,” Rhaegar stated.

“But… home…” Elia tried.

“No way am I letting you go! There is so much we need to catch up on! Come on now, don’t be a spoil sport,” Rhaegar pouted, and he looked so extremely cute that Elia had to suppress a smile.

“I told Doran I would be coming home though…”

“Then let her go. Her family must be waiting for her,” Lyanna urged.

“I said no, and that remains final. I am talking to Doran, leave him to me, you go and relax, then we can pull an all-nighter what say?” Rhaegar smiled widely at Elia, hope and happiness glinting in his violet orbs. Elia made a mental note of telling him not to appear so close to her in public, it tore Lyanna up. She could see it.

“Why are you here?” Jon Connington happened to land up in the same elevator as Elia, and decided to quench his thirst.

“Because he called me,” Elia sharply answered.

“You never do anything for a straight and simple selfless purpose,” Jon mused.

“You do right? Be happy.”

“Have you decided to sabotage the wedding?”

“Jon shut up. Please.”

“In case you have, just remember, I am with you,” Jon finally let slip, and smiled deviously at Elia.

“Why? You’re still in love with Rhae?” Elia cocked her head to one side.

“I always will be Eli; and that is why, it is my duty to save him from this disaster. Please save him from this disaster. He will never land up in my arms, and I totally get that, but even if he lands up in yours, I’ll be more than happy.”

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“Did you like the dinner?” Rhaegar asked cautiously, surprising Elia out of the blue. She yanked her arm away from the fountain and looked back, then sighed in relief.

“Yes, it was good. There was Khwau Shuey! Thank you!” She smiled at him.

“My pleasure. I chose the menu personally by the way, for most of the dinners and events, except the one on the day of the marriage. Viserys doesn’t like my taste, that’s why he didn’t come,”
Rhaegar sighed meaning more than food when he said ‘taste.’ Elia was a smart girl, she understood.

“Where is he?”

“I don’t know, he has a cottage all to himself, it’s next to yours I think,” Rhaegar replied.

“I’ll talk to him,” Elia nodded understandingly.

“Thanks, Eli. For everything, I mean,” Rhaegar gently placed a hand on hers. She did not take it away.

“It was your wedding, I couldn’t miss it for the world,” she smiled. “Especially because you had turned up for mine!”

“Imagine what would have happened if I didn’t! Dad would have had me murdered!”

“How has he not murdered you yet?”

“I don’t know, Rickard Stark is clever. He’s pulled some strings,” Rhaegar shrugged.

“The Starks are good at diplomacy?!”

“Not all. Rickard is clever though, you’d like him,” Rhaegar laughed.

“He doesn’t like me,” Elia rolled her eyes.

“He’ll come around. I don’t think anybody can not like you for very long,” Rhaegar smiled at her dreamily.

“What’s wrong with you?” Elia asked. Rhaegar had been acting way too weird around her.

“Oh it’s nothing, I’ve missed you a lot,” Rhaegar smiled sadly, looking at the moon through the fountain.

“That’s all?” Elia prodded on.

“Yes, that’s all,” Rhaegar cleared his throat in the manner only he did when he was hiding something. Elia knew him well enough to understand that by now. She did not pursue him though, whatever it was, it could wait.

So they spent the rest of the night by the fountain, mainly catching up on what they had missed from each others’ lives in the last three years. It was not an awful lot, it turned out, except the fact that Elia had to be bogged down by more work because Aerys was slowly slipping into instability and Rhaegar got promoted to the level of Junior Editor; which was not a fact he enjoyed very much because soon he would have to abandon all the exciting criminal fieldwork for boring editing desk jobs. He still went out as often as he could and Elia only laughed at that. She was fonder of the more complicated desk jobs that allowed one to be diplomatic and show off their pragmatic prowess. Rhaegar softly reminded her that there was a difference between working in politics and working for a newspaper to which Elia only grumbled and hit him on the arm. They then explored the resort which was simply huge, and they had a run in with these local Dornish tribes that Elia became weary of in the beginning but Rhaegar’s good nature rubbed off on her too and they proceeded to share an ethnic dance with the tribes although Elia was sure to add her grace and elite Martell poise even to that. Rhaegar stared at her dreamily and Elia soon grew conscious of that very fact. She blushed, and proceeded to dance with even more elegance much to her ex-husband’s delight. That night was the most fulfilling fun either of them had had in a very long time and Elia retired to her cottage at night convinced- she would not let this wedding happen.

“So, why are we not having all those fun Valyrian rituals we had when you and Eli got married?” Jon asked. He was forever in the mood to find faults with the procedures of this wedding, much to Elia’s delight.

“Well, they are Northerners so we can’t really press our culture on them…” Rhaegar dragged, unsure eve of himself.

“But Eli is Rhoynish and we had an equal amount of Rhoyne and Valyria in your wedding. All the fun rituals we had!”

“Jon, Lyanna is different…” Elia trailed off.

“Oh yes, there is nothing she likes more than the North. But then, the Northerners are prejudiced, what can we possibly expect?” Jon nodded his head as if in deep understanding, hiding his true
motive behind layers of sweet spite.

“Well, I don’t really think Lyanna is prejudiced. She is not the judgemental type at all,” Rhaegar began nervously.

“Oh no of course not, that’s us. She is just not fond of anything Southern, that’s okay,” Elia shook her head innocently.

“But that’s not fair,” Rhaegar crossed his arms in front of his chest.

“That’s your fiancé,” Jon cheekily added.

The food came in like a breather, and Elia was relieved. These plans and schemes needed time to settle and really start working, and though they had a shortage of that, some of it was a real blessing. There was a shot of black coffee for Rhaegar (with a fancy name Jon and Elia had never really been able to grasp) with a shot of fresh whipped cream on the side, as well as a butter croissant that smelt fresh and delectable. There was chocolate tea (a Dornish specialty) and pretty triangular cheese sandwiches for Jon. Elia had a spicy hot chocolate which Rhaegar repeatedly advised was bad for her health (much to Jon’s delight who could see how much his friend cared for the viper) along with a platter of assorted cupcakes.

“Sugar is bad for you,” Rhaegar chided when he saw the plate full of mini cupcakes and colourful frosting on the table.

“Right now you said spicy is bad for me, so I ordered all this sweet and now you’re saying something totally different. Make up your mind Rhae,” Elia sassed.

“Both are bad for you,” Rhaegar began again.

“Oh yeah, well then what is right for me?”

Rhaegar was going to say ‘me’ out of habit, like he usually did when he teased Elia on the dinner table (and they usually ended up ‘on’ the dinner table after that with the food having flown away to all directions) but he stopped the syllables from rolling out of his tongue almost as soon as they came. Both Jon and Elia realised and looked at each other subtly, mischievously. “Healthy food,” Rhaegar said after much hesitation.

“Shit! I forgot I had to go order the flowers, see you two around, Dr. Targaryan and patient Martell,” Jon realised there was rising tension and hopped away as soon as possible, barely having time to gather his belongings (which was basically an extremely stylish unisex Gucci leather satchel).

“So, what comprises of healthy food, Dr. Targaryan?” Elia continued teasing.

There was a strange, hot flush rising up Rhaegar’s cheek. “Oh you know, vegetables and the like…”

“I haven’t had vegetables in forever! I’ve even forgotten what they look like.”

“Oh my goodness, what have you been surviving on?” Rhaegar’s worried voice rose to a pitch.

“Well, lot’s of spicy noodles and seafood preparations, and when I am tired of those, I turn to my red velvet cupcakes. Nice, no?”

“Absolutely not! What the fuck is wrong with you? We need to prepare a diet chart for you, with all the proper nutrients. Nobody ever taught you to live alone or something?” Rhaegar scolded.

“Dude chill you’re a journalist, not a doctor,” Elia smiled.

“I can be anything for you.”

“What?”

“Nothing.”

“What did you say right now?”

“I said we need to pay the bill.”

“You haven’t even touched your coffee. And your croissant is crying out for you. Don’t change the topic Rhae, what did you say right now and what did you mean?”

“Elia, I really have to go. The pre-wedding bash is tomorrow and I still haven’t picked out a suit,” Rhaegar got up from his chair, and proceeded to leave. “You can have my croissant, I know you like it. We can prepare a diet chart later.”

“You are running away again,” Elia coldly stated arms crossed in front of her chest.
“It’s the only thing I’m good at. I’m a journalist remember?"
“I never gave you permission to run from me,” Elia said, this time softening her tone.
“I had to. I would burn otherwise- I was getting too close to the Sun,” Rhaegar replied tenderly, bitterly.
“Fire cannot burn a dragon.”
“I’m not much of a dragon am I? Haven’t you heard my father say that so many times?”
“You are more dragon than anybody I know,” Elia replied.
“I really wish I was Eli. I’d have the guts to face you… and love you.”

The bachelor party was the talk of all of Dorne. Dorne had the loudest and wickedest clubs in their resorts, and Rhaegar’s little wedding planning club was out to exploit the one which was in the basement of the resort they inhabited. It was called Black Ivy and had a revolving dance floor with reverberating music and rotating laser lighting that all spelt out ‘happening’. Rhaegar was in awe of the place, as were the rest of them who had never ventured inside the basement.

“Wow, I did not expect it to be like this…” Elia trailed off at a loss of words.
“Make that two,” Rhaegar smiled, still pretty overwhelmed.
“So, is Lyanna here?” Elia asked cautiously.
“Are you mad? This is my bachelor party!”
“You called me to your bachelor party back when we were getting married…”
“Yes because I was still getting to know you. And you must admit it, that night; I really got to know you!” Rhaegar’s evocation of steamy past memories brought a flush to Elia’s cheeks, not that it was very visible in the alternating dark and neon shades of the club.

“Shut up!” She lightly hit his arm.

That night they really drank. Elia tried tequila, something she had been super apprehensive about her whole life, and Rhaegar shifted from shots to whisky to champagne, all on the rocks. So when they ended up in each other’s arms, on the dance floor, slightly tipsy and too hot for bystanders, nobody really spoke. It was Rhaegar’s bachelor party and he had every right to do this, right? So Rhaegar took Elia up to his room and they discarded all clothing and proceeded to romp about in the satiny resort sheets completely oblivious to who they were doing it with- namely, each other. When Elia awoke in the morning, she was overcome by complete guilt, and embarrassment, and yes, a terrible hangover.

“Rhae, Rhae, wake up! Look at what we’ve done,” she cried in high pitches. Wasn’t this her plan? Why was she feeling so guilty then?
Rhaegar, who had fallen asleep on the other side of the bed, somewhere close to her legs, groaned as he woken up so fast. “What the hell is the matter Eli?”
“Wake up for God’s sake!”
“Which God?”
“Are you serious right now? Do you know what we've just done? Do you have any idea what the repercussions will be?”
“Yes, I slept with another woman in my bachelor party, completely normal. This woman also happened to be my first wife, who I was totally having feelings for, even more normal. An-
“No, it’s normal to have feelings for someone else before your marriage, especially if you’ve left that person behind already.”
“People make mistakes, and they learn from it.”
“Not at the cost of a wedding.”
“Oh, so I should get a divorce immediately after marriage, is that what you are suggesting?”
Rhaegar slyly smiled as he tackled Elia and pinned her to the bed, leaving sloppy morning kisses all over her face.
“I did not mean anything of the sort. I am not Lyanna,” Elia grumbled.
“Good. So you’re going to do this the smarter way,” Rhaegar made his way to her neck, and she was sure he was leaving marks.
“What smarter way?”
“When the Septon says, towards the end of the marriage: ‘speak now or forever hold your peace’, you are going to speak then. You are going to stop this wedding, aren’t you? And then we can run away together, like in the movies, except it won’t really be running away because everybody wants to see us together anyways,” Rhaegar rattled off.
“And since when have you been planning this?” Elia asked, although she burst into a flutter of giggles because Rhaegar’s hair was tickling the nape of her neck.
“Since when I sent you the invitation card.”
“When did you become so intelligent and scheming?”
“Oh dear wife, we did spend four years together, you must have rubbed something off on me…”
He cut her off with a kiss.

“Can we talk?” Elia’s daydreams were interrupted by a sharp voice as she was admiring the plants idly in the green house.
Elia turned around to find an unusually calm Lyanna standing in the gate, the shrubbery creeping all over it, creating a nice hallow for her petite figure. “Yes.”
“So, Rhaegar loves you now, all of a sudden…”
“What are you talking about?”
“You know what I’m talking about,” Lyanna spat.
“Well, what do you want from me? This was Rhaegar’s choice,” Elia replied back equally sharply.
“And his choice keeps changing all the time,” Lyanna retorted.
“What?”
“You would know better than me. He really fell in love with you after the first few months of marriage right? He was smitten with you, your eloquence, your wit, your timid beauty, all of it! You know what he used to tell me in bed, that you’re worse than a block of wood. I wonder what he tells you about me.”
“He tells me you’re stupid. Sorry Stark, but you’re clearly no good at the whole manipulating game,” Elia laughed pitifully.
“He also told me that you’re sickness repulses him; especially when you’re having one of your coughing fits and you end up throwing up anyways and he has to be there and stand right beside you, that’s when he realises that you’re really nothing but a lovesick daisy that loves him as much as you love his position in life. You want to hear more? All the things he said about your first pregnancy and how annoying it was for him? He told me he longed to have a normal and healthy girl to bear his children so he could get a kid without all the bullshit he needed to put up with you. He even to—”
“I would like you to leave now.”
“It took me some time but I know now. He only likes having the two of us under his thumb. I am not strong enough to resist, but you are Elia,” Lyanna’s voice quivered, a few salty tears escaping her eyes.
“Leave.”
As Lyanna sprinted away, Elia turned her back around and gripped the iron railings that bound the flowers as she heaved out deep breaths and tried to swallow back the fat tears that were threatening to drop out of her bottomless black eyes. She was taking short deep breaths and letting out painful breaths of agony as she tried to settle her breathing rate to normal. She could not- after all the things Lyanna said, and she did not even know whether they were true or untrue. What if she was saying the truth? She had always seemed too simple and stupid to actually make up lies and try and dissuade her. The tears were falling freely now, and they were clouding her vision. She furiously tried to blink them away and noticed, right in front of her- a flock of growing Venus Fly Traps. Elia smiled, through the water and sniffled. Oberyn never really knew his sister, she never allowed him to, and he used to go around boasting that she was a flower without thorns. Elia used to smile secretly; of course she was a flower without thorns, she was a Venus Fly Trap, and they did not use
their thorns to trap their prey. Was it time for her to go back to her floral instincts?

The wedding was not as grand as everybody had hoped it to be. There were few guests, and the entire Targaryan family, especially the extended branches from Valyria had not even been invited; although it was more like they were not ready to see Rhaegar wedded to anyone who was not Elia. Only the closest friends and associates of Rhaegar and Lyanna were present, along with immediate family. There was barely any press, much to Elia and Jaime’s dismay, as they had dressed in some of their best clothes in a very long time.
The banquet was decorated with blue roses, Lyanna’s favourite, and what she claimed was the beginning of her and Rhaegar’s love story. It was pretty ridiculous, Elia and Jon thought. There was soft Northern music playing in the background although Lyanna would have preferred it a little louder but Rhaegar thought it was boring so he would have none of it. The poor boy had had no say in the wedding, not the blue and white décor and not the Northern cuisine, but he needed to have some democracy with the music so although Lyanna had completely banned the Valyrian music he always jammed to, he had a set decibel for her Northern melancholic tunes as well.
“Oh my, looks like the Starks have taken over all of Westeros,” Aerys muttered in disgust, standing next to Elia. She had to suppress a laugh.
“Lyanna will be a good wife, don’t worry, she’s not the ambitious type,” Elia reassured her chief.
“She is not me.”
“I wish she was,” Aerys grumbled before walking over to where little Viserys was standing, presumably to warn him against the evils of marrying ‘Northern harlots’.
Elia only smiled fondly. The Targaryan family had been her family at one point of time, and most of them still considered her as much. As some of his distant cousins came up to talk to her, ignoring Lyanna completely, she felt quite sorry for the girl; for the first time in her life. Soon though, Elia knew, the wedding would start, and she would not feel very sorry anymore.
The bells and the horn heralded the coming of the bride. Everybody neatly arranged themselves into two sides of the garden, or well, the Starks would call it a Godswood but one grasped the meaning. Aerys looked completely disinterested, even going around and asking various waiters for alcohol while Viserys pressed close to Elia’s skirt and she held a wailing Daenerys. The Lannister siblings, along with their father, all looked on with distaste. For the first time everyone could see the entire family holding the same expression and opinion. Jon Connington stood close to Elia, as did Varys, who was whispering cleverly mean comments into Elia’s ear and Catelyn Stark stood a little away from them, weary of everybody in the party, especially her sister-in-law, who was getting married. Lyanna entered. She made a pretty bride, in her light blue gown, but Varys observed, Elia looked more regal, to which Elia replied “that’s because the grace of a seasoned diplomat will always be more than that of a discount soccer player.” Varys snickered and the wedding proceeded.
Vows were exchanged, and so were rings, pretty expensive rings actually, diamonds set in platinum. Most people just whinged at why so much money was being spent unnecessarily- Elia remembered that none of them had complained when she had been dressed top to bottom in gold for her wedding. She smirked at the irony and hypocrisy. Finally, the Septon raised his hands, and after the last few chants, announced what a lot of people had been waiting for, especially the handsome groom.
“Before I name them Man and Wife, should anybody have any objections to the wedding, Speak Now, or forever hold your peace…” The silence that ensued was uncanny. Everybody stared at Robert; they expected him to be the one to do it. Robert, on the other hand, was waiting for this opportunity and slyly snaked his arm around Cersei’s waist who looked up at him with a smirk. He smirked back. Elia smirked back; this was the cutest and most badass thing she had seen in quite a while.
“Speak Now or hold your peace…” Septon Maynard began again. Jon Connington nudged Elia, urging her to speak silently. Elia stood like a log. Rhaegar’s eyes frantically searched the crowd for
her.
Finally, a thick Dornish accent spoke: “High Septon Maynard, theirs is a couple that is written in
the stars, nobody has any objections,” Elia’s voice smoothly honeyed over the entire the ceremony.
Jon stared at her with wide eyes but it was Rhaegar’s expression that was priceless.
“What the hell? No, she has something to say right?” Rhaegar began in a panicked frenzy.
“If you truly love me, you speak now,” Elia returned in her usually grace and poise. “Why should I
do all the work for you while you only reap the benefits of sleeping with me?” The audience
gased.
“Eli, I love you. My hands are tied, try to understand, yours are not. I broke one marriage; can my
conscience ever allow me to break another? But I gave you this opportunity because I wanted to be
with you? When even murderers are sent to correctional homes, can’t you give me another chance?
I was young and foolish, and I’m not anymore. Elia Martell, I was a fool to let you go, but now I
think I am the luckiest man in the world to fall back in love with you,” Rhaegar replied, eyes glassy
and voice quivering.
Elia stood stupefied. What kind of a gigantic mistake had she made? Lyanna Stark had tried to
sway her and she was swayed along with her. Wasn’t she the cunning diplomat? The Prime
Minister’s legal advisor? She began taking a few steps towards Rhaegar, yes she would speak.
Suddenly, Aerys spoke: “you take another step towards this manipulative and absolute ass, I’ll fire
you Eli.”
Everybody turned towards the father of the groom. His eyes were blood shot red, his nostrils were
flaring and he was fuming- but for the first time in a very long time, he seemed normal. Elia’s
frown deepened. “Didn’t you want this?” She asked incredulously.
“I wanted it for his good. But now I know that he doesn’t deserve you. And he definitely doesn’t
deserve my post. Marry this Stark whore and leave Westeros Rhaegar. A man who tries to reach
for the Sun deceitfully only burns, and I will protect my Martell with the last bit of sanity I have
left. Maynard, marry these idiots already, and exile them.” Elia looked at him through her glassy
ebony eyes and looked back towards Rhaegar with nothing but fury in them. Once again, when she
looked at Aerys, it was only with gratitude and fondness. Then little Viserys came forward and
buried his head in her skirts, as much as he could reach and wrapped his arms around Elia.
“Don’t leave us again Eli,” the little boy sniffled. Daenerys cooed in agreement.
Elia laughed. “Not in a million years.”
Later down the feast, Jon Connington approached her. “I still think you’re making a massive
mistake. You won’t find a better guy than Rhaegar. You do understand that he was doing you a
charity by giving you a second chance right? I hope you know that. He told you to Speak Now and
you let go of that opportunity like a fool. Who called the most brilliant student in all of Westeros
again?”
“Oh, every single teacher in the Citadel Jon. And don’t worry about me finding a guy, I’ll make
do. About the proposition Rhaegar made me, Jon, this is the first time in my life that I am Speaking
Now, and I will never stop speaking ever again.”
I am so so so so so super sorry for the late update but I was pretty busy this week and for some frustrating reason or the other, I was never getting the laptop free (I blame it on my irritating brother) so I had a hard time sneaking it out and typing the story. It's basically cute and fun, nothing too special but I hope you like it. Oh also, the dialogues of the movie, belonging to Elia and Rhaegar are given next to their names with colons. Their names for the movie were Emil and Mia. I don't know if all that came out clearly so I am basically explaining.

“How many people have you auditioned?” Mace asked exasperated with the amount of complaints his son brought him every single day.
“About 90% of the industry,” Loras agitatedly replied. “The remaining ten percent are senior citizens so they cannot be auditioned for the role of these two young lovers.”
“Well, what do you propose we do?” Mace asked in bewilderment.
“Idiot, cast Elia and Rhaegar,” came Olenna Tyrell’s sharp reply. Generally she handled the production house finances but when her moronic son and grandson were up to no good, she occasionally added her inputs.
“The Martell and Targaryan? They cannot tolerate each other. Didn’t you see how they insulted each other at that party Tywin held last summer. People say, well they say a lot of things mother but there is one particular gossip in which people say that they were once lovers and then Rhaegar cheated on Elia, with that Stark girl, what’s her name? She is his secretary, you know, the one you keep calling a cold-blooded fool, that one. Anyways, they are scientists, why would you cast them in a movie? Also, they are as old as me, well almost; I don’t think the age matches,” Mace rattled off, proud for once that he had a better say than his mother on a matter.
“You absolute donkey. The couple in the film is middle-aged, and they are divorced but feelings surface, kind of like Elia and Rhaegar themselves, if your rumours are correct. Also, the couple in the movie are both chemists, remember last time we made a film on space exploration and cast real astronauts in there and they were able to pull it off? Also, both Elia and Rhaegar act better than you do. I used to go for all your school plays and they always played the lead,” Olenna put him in his place.
Mace grumbled and looked at Loras who shrugged. “Margaery spends a lot of time with that Martell woman, I’ll ask Margaery to ask her if she’ll be interested,” Mace finally announced.
“Yes do that, and get back to me as fast as possible. I do the paying,” Olenna snapped.
And so our inexperienced actors were approached. Both vehemently refused in the beginning, and then calmed down, and then Margaery and Tywin respectively manipulated the two of them into sleeping over it (although why Tywin was helping nobody understood, but could guess that Olenna must have blackmailed him into doing it, knowing that Rhaegar regarded his advice). When they slept over it, they asked for another week, during the span of which, all the greatest brains of Westeros, from Varys to Tyrion all paid them a visit to mould their line of thinking towards one of tolerance and acceptance towards the idea. At the end of a fortnight, both Elia and Rhaegar were seriously reconsidering their options. Both had just become joint recipients of the highest honour that scientists could get and both had ample free time on their hands. Why the rest of Westeros was so hell bent on this celluloid project would always remain mystery.
“This is ridiculous! What kind of a chemist dresses like this?” Elia began complaining about her
colourful costume.
“You’re a chemist and you wear plunging necklines and sexy peplums,” Cersei argued back. She
could never tolerate criticism against her designs.
“Yeah, I wear sexy clothes, not clown clothes. Do you see the colour scheme? It’s a joke! Who
pairs deep purple with neon green?” Elia argued back.
“It’s not that bad, it suits your complexion,” Sansa placidly pacified. Although the rest of the world
knew that there was bad blood between her and her employer, Sansa would not think twice about
jumping to Cersei’s defence in the professional field.
“Well of course it looks good on my complexion, I’m not white like the rest of you,” Elia
grumbled.
“Hey, racist alert,” Tyrion barged into the scene.
“Ty, don’t interrupt,” Sansa snapped. This was her first feature film project and she hated the chaos
and complaint that both Elia and Rhaegar generated.
“Babe, I was on your side,” Tyrion pouted.
“Sorry Ty, I’m just stressed out right now,” Sansa said plopping down on a wooden stool and
planting a kiss on his cheek as Cersei rolled her eyes and gagged. “Nothing seems to be working
for either of our actors,” she murmured.
Because our clothes are, simply put, ridiculous!” Elia hollered when she caught lieu of their
conversation. And so Tyrion went forth to do what he did best, convince the first-time actress that
clothes on celluloid needed to be more dramatic.
Unfortunately for Rhaegar, there was no Tyrion Lannister to rationalise the situation and he too
was having a breakdown considering the clothes. “Like really, powder pink pants? How old am I,
five?”
“No, but you’re the kind of guy that likes to keep with the trends,” Jaime tried to explain, to the
best of his abilities.
“I haven’t seen anybody wearing powder pink pants,” Rhaegar cynically retorted.
“No, but you will. Have you ever seen any film under the Tyrell banner? These guys are
trendsetters, they understand which way the market is going, and try to sway the audience with
some trends of their own. Pastels are in, and so are cigarette pants, so we tried to combine them
both,” Jaime elucidated.
“What the hell are cigarette pants?”
“Rhaegar has anybody ever told you that there is a world outside chemistry?”
“Yes, Lyanna…” the Targaryan trailed off dreamily.
“I am not talking about the stupid stuff she’s into, I’m saying like arts and aesthetics,” Jaime began.
“She’s not stupid.”
“Oh please, when she failed her A Levels for the fifth time, even open school did not take her,”
Jaime nonchalantly put forth.
“You will watch your tongue Jaime!”
“Tell the dragon to keep his fire in check!” Olenna snapped as she entered the room and Jaime had
to suppress a smile.
“He is insulting my girlfriend.”
“Are you in fifth grade?”
“No,” Rhaegar replied confused.
“Then why are you complaining like one!!”
“But he is insulting Lyanna. I will not stand for this.”
“Don’t. Please take a seat, and stop fussing so much.”
“Mrs. Tyrell, I respect you a lot-” Rhaegar began.
“Bullshit.”
“No, I really do.”
“If you respected women like us, you wouldn’t cheat on Elia. You only respect girls like Lyanna,
and that, is sad.” Olenna stormed out of the room; she always had the last word.
“What the hell does that mean?” Rhaegar looked to Jaime. “You told her about me and Eli?”
“She is Olenna Tyrell. I don’t need to tell her about anything.”
And so the shooting commenced. Both the actors were primarily uncomfortable in front of the
camera in clothes they considered an outrage to their sobriety, but once they got over the initial
inhibitions, both Elia and Rhaegar seemed to be a natural. Mace despaired at why he had never
noticed these two talents before and then realised that they were chemists after all. It was still a
pity he never noticed their performance during the school plays though- he was always too busy
being the best tree on stage, only to impress his mother.
Elia: There is no point Emil, I’ve forgotten you, you don’t mean anything to me anymore.
Rhaegar: You know that’s a lie.
Elia: Get over yourself, it’s not a lie.
Rhaegar: You are my wife for God’s sake!
Elia: Let go of my hand!
Rhaegar: No.
Elia: Emil, stop it. The kids are sleeping in that room.
Rhaegar: Our room Mia, those are our kids, this is our house, this was supposed to be our life.
Elia: Before you chucked it away.
Rhaegar: Everybody deserves a second chance.
Elia: Not you.
Rhaegar: Why?
Elia: Because you broke my heart.
Rhaegar: Get over yourself Mia.
Elia: Don’t you dare use my line on me!
Rhaegar: What are you going to do about it?
Elia: Don’t take another step, freeze right there.
Rhaegar: Why?
Elia: Because I am not your wife anymore.
Rhaegar: It’s not illegal in this country to kiss someone that is not your wife.
Elia: It is if you are married to someone else.
Rhaegar: But I am not married to anybody else. I used to be married to you a long time ago. Now,
there’s nothing illegal about what I’m going to do right?
Elia: You asshole, you have a young pretty wife waiting back home remember?
Rhaegar: Who?
Elia: What do you mean who? Kate, that’s who.
Rhaegar: Oh Kate Frey? Well, we’re divorced. Have you been living under a rock?
Elia: What the hell are you talking about? When did you divor-
“Now kiss,” Mace whispered more to himself than his actor as Rhaegar inched closer towards Elia
and caught her by the hips as she touched the wall and kissed her without a second thought. The
scene was so perfect he could cry. “That’s it, cut!”
“Wonderful shot!” Margaery clapped from the side.
Elia looked at her friend (also protégé) from the sidelines and beamed at her. Margaery was one
of those people that Elia saw herself in, and the fact that she had taken out some time from her busy
schedule, even before she was jetting off on her honeymoon, was a real privilege. “It was my first
time you know, don’t exaggerate,” she laughed.
“She’s not exaggerating; it was a great shot, both of you. And the clothes look great too,” Olenna
Tyrell spoke making everybody gasp in the process. Was she praising somebody? They thought
they heard wrong. “What? That was a stellar performance alright; I am just about as moved as you
are.” Everybody smiled at that; she could never have been more correct.
“Thank you,” the actors bowed respectfully, and with a proud vanity; neither of them were
professionals and yet they were bowling Olenna over with their performance. Both of them eyed
each other and gave out a sly smile of triumph; looked like they were good at this acting
phenomenon as well.
“I don’t understand why we need to do the bed scene last. Like we should have done it in the beginning and gotten it over with it,” Elia grumbled as she admired herself in the greenroom mirror, the kind with yellow lights bordering the hems. The other reason she wanted to get it over with towards the beginning was because back then she had not developed feelings for him all over again.

“It is a ‘bed scene’, no matter when we do it, we cannot just get it ‘over with’ you know,” Rhaegar commented, fixing his hair. “Where is the damn hairspray?!”

“Second drawer to the left,” Elia motioned with her hand.

“Gosh, you’re my GPS for life you know,” Rhaegar beamed, “navigating me through all kinds of shit and finding my things for me.”

“You’ll survive without me,” Elia laughed.

“I’ve been doing a very bad job of it,” Rhaegar smiled goofily. “Fix my hair up please,” he pouted.

“Come here.” Elia stood up from her stool and let him sit on it. Rhaegar seated himself on the plush single-seat and allowed for Elia to rummage through his hair and fix it in whichever way she wanted to. It was a bed scene so they were supposed to be dishevelled and groggy and although they had filmed the entire make-out the day before, this was more intimate, and way more graphic, not too much though, just enough, like most Tyrell productions, there was sophistication with the steam. And so Elia’s smooth hands ruffled his silken tresses as she occasionally brushed them down his neck because she knew how ticklish he could get sometimes and that really sent him into fits of laughter and so he would catch her by the hands and pull her down into his lap and they would control their laughter and she would start all over again and end up exactly where she started, just like a full circle. Then he too would ruffle her thick black locks to extract revenge and she would squeal and they would end up toppling on each other.

“Is everything alright?” Renly burst into the scene. As an assistant director, he was way too zealous.

“Yes, we’re fine,” Elia and Rhaegar laughed in unison as they tried to get up and ended up on top of each other once again. Renly closed the door with an eyebrow raised, it was best not to disturb these two, he thought.

“Renly got the wrong impression,” Elia said, in between gasping for breath.

“You bet he did. You think he’s going to spread it?” Rhaegar asked absentmindedly, evidently more occupied with a breathless Elia who had a red face and hair that was all over the place. She looked quite hot in his opinion.

“Well, I don’t exactly think he’s the type, but he will definitely tell Margaery and I don’t even want to imagine what happens next,” Elia literally shuddered.

“Oh come on, isn’t Margaery like your one true love or something? You dote over the girl,” Rhaegar laughed.

“Well of course I do, but that doesn’t change the fact that she’s quite the gossipmonger. She’s a lot like me,” Elia smiled fondly.

“Nobody is like you,” Rhaegar planted a wet kiss on her cheek.

“Excuse me?”

“Oh sorry, I was just rehearsing my dialogues,” Rhaegar blurted out but even he knew, as much as Elia, that that was a lie.

The premier was as glitzy as it could get. It seemed like day at night, the cameras were so bright, and it seemed like New Year on the Halloween eve (because they had chosen that very date for release) because the fireworks touched paradise, if it existed, because they went up that high. Guests arrived in gusts of wind- the very who’s who of the industry were there, ready to judge these two young scientists who had been given their job, and ready to judge quite harshly. There was barely anybody in the acting fraternity who looked kindly at Elia and Rhaegar. They were not
meant for this profession, and yet they were coaxed into it. According to every other actor, it was a massive amount of waste—of money, time, and talent. The cars were so long that it took one seven minutes to give way to the next, and the audience was so pumped that half the press had cotton balls ready for when the main guests arrived. It was a pity that they were taking so long. There had been a few nerds, blind followers of the science fraternity, who had been camping under highways, close to the theatre, three days in advance. This was the hype and the glamour lived up to in the premier. It seemed like the beginning of something new and exciting. There were some who were more than a little nervous though.

“Did you see the crowd? I’ve never seen so many people in my entire life, not even during my convocation and half of Dorne was present,” Elia shook her head in worry.

“Oh come on, you’re the celebrity scientist, you’re always on TV, you’re more used to this than I am,” Rhaegar shook his head at what he termed her ‘over-anxiety’. He was way more scared.

“Shut up! There’s a difference between discussing the atomic structure on an intellectual television channel and strutting yourself in front of the whole world to see. Today I realise what a huge difference there is to be a celebrity in your field, and a celebrity on celluloid. This is an entire different world Rhae,” Elia softly exclaimed as their car drew closer and the crowds got louder.

“Well of course, but maybe we should be more excited than nervous no?”

“Are you mad? Are you excited about this or are you shivering because you know we’re going to get rotten tomatoes thrown on us on screen?” Elia questioned.

“Well I have mixed feelings about this entire ordeal okay?” Rhaegar threw his arms up in defence.

The car came to a halt.

As Elia and Rhaegar dismounted from their limousine, there was a deafening unified echo of some thousands of people. The excitement and encouragement was so touching both of them thought that their wet eyes would spill over. Rhaegar went over and firmly held Elia’s hand and gave it a nice tight squeeze. She looked at him in return. They gave each other that watery smile which spelt out ‘I am proud of you, we have come a very long way.’ Then they took a deep breath, in unison (acting together had greatly increased their synchronisation) and Rhaegar slid his hand through her (bare) back in the signature position that the couple of the movie always struck for the red carpet and they began walking down the fated pathway. Elia could not contain the smile that was threatening to spill over and invade her entire face. She was finally walking on a red carpet. As a young girl, it had been a secret wish of hers. Rhaegar was beaming with pride, at himself and his lost and found best friend.

“Did you ever imagine this is what we could come to?” Elia whispered into Rhaegar’s ear who smiled widely.

“Well you know, Uncle Aemon once told me that once you get famous, it’s not very hard to get into the spotlight,” the young Dragon grinned.

“Wise man, he is really. Did you tell him about this then?” Elia asked.

“My mom did. She told every single living Targaryan. Even those distant relatives spread over Lys and Valyria,” Rhaegar groaned softly. Elia only giggled.

“Serves you right,” she said pulling his cheek. The crowds went wild at their whispering and constant physical proximity with each other and when Rhaegar planted a kiss on Elia’s cheek because she had rebuked and said something extremely adorable, and the people lost it. Everyone in the crowd held a secret conspiracy theory that Elia and Rhaegar were dating, even though Rhaegar had repeatedly refused it in interviews.

Thus, a million hearts broke, and very latently and silently Elia’s as well, when Lyanna Stark hopped off a car along with her brothers and ran to almost the end of the carpet where Rhaegar was standing entwined with Elia answering a journalist. She ran to him and wrapped her legs around him and kissed him hungrily and while everybody felt disgusted and turned off their cameras, Elia moved to the side in the usual dignity that she held and stayed there till she was called to enter the auditorium with the rest of the cast. The man she came with was not hers for the rest of the function.

“Do you see how she’s all over him? Uncultured heathen,” Jaime commented, catching up with his
favourite actress while they were waiting for the movie to start, and although Rhaegar was supposed to occupy the seat next to Elia, he was nowhere to be seen.
“As a Dornishwoman, I should not comment on this,” Elia replied looking straight ahead, lest her eyes reveal her true feelings to her best friend who knew her so well.
“Yeah, that’s a totally fabricated response. You are so much better in the interviews even,” Jaime bitterly snickered. He hated it when Elia refused to open up to anybody.
“Are you done?” Elia snapped.
“No, definitely not. We shall continue this conversation after the party, when Varys will also be here and not there interviewing your director. We shall go over to your place with lots of chocolate chip mint ice cream,” Jaime announced.
“You will do no such thing. I have a flight to catch after the dinner party,” Elia announced.
“Where are you going?”
“Old Town. I have a meeting at the Citadel Space Centre.”
“See what you’re doing again? Just because that bastard broke your heart again, you’re running away from him. You are indulging yourself in so much work, all over again that you have no space to breathe, forget thinking about him,” Jaime chided.
“He did not break my heart. It was never his to begin with. We were friends.”
“Oh please, the whole unit thought you were dating.”
“Then that is there problem, not ours.”
“Would you stop defending him?!?”
“I’m not defending anybody!” Elia shouted as she noticed Rhaegar approaching from the corner of her eyes and although there was a lot of commotion, she was sure he had heard her. “Jaime leave, Rhaegar is here, this is his spot.”
“It’s a spot he doesn’t deserve,” Jaime spat as he walked away, to sit with the designers, Sansa and Cersei, who were worried about why his face was fuming red.
“What was that all about?” Rhaegar inquired as he plopped down next to Elia.
“Mistakes we repeat.”
“What?”
“Oh it’s nothing. The movie is going to start, excited?”
“More like nervous, you were right! But yeah, hope we’ll pull in decent feedback,” Rhaegar stated, his voice quivering ever so delicately. He grasped Elia’s hand in the dark and she quietly slid it out of his hold. He was confused, but in the dark, with the madness of the premier, he forgot all about it.
“It looks good on the big screen,” Elia finally commented ripping through the sheet of awkward silence they had built around each other during the interval when everybody came to congratulate them. Neither even got up for popcorn.
“Yeah, no kidding. I didn’t think it would look like this… I mean, it’s still not that good but it’s better than expected…” Rhaegar trailed off, trying to sound as humble as possible. “Don’t worry; you can let down that guard of humility in front of me. Both of us worked our ass off for this project alright?” Elia smiled, the familiar feeling of professional camaraderie taking over.
“Oh thank god, I thought you were never going to speak normally to me ever again. What happened back there before the movie started?” Rhaegar asked curiously.
“That’s what you’ve been thinking about all this while?”
“Is there anything else to think about? Your wrath is scary to say the least.”
“Shut up.”
“Oh that note, let’s get some popcorn.”
“Cheese and caramel mixed okay Rhae? You know though, still.”
“It’s too much work remembering and ordering, you come along, let’s both go, it’s our movie, it’s our night,” Rhaegar pulled Elia’s hand and they were out of the top exit like a gust of wind.
“Critics are raving, fans are raving, media is raving, and so is the industry that was super cynical about the two of you as well. This is definitely a first!” The chirpy lady on the talk-show exclaimed, her hands flying all over the place. Elia, who was seated daintily next to Rhaegar, in a pretty pastel peachy attire, moved back a little to avoid being hit.

“Thank you so much,” Rhaegar politely smiled at the lady, moving one protective hand around Elia’s waist as subtly as possible.

“I love the two of you…” The lady continued gushing.

The rest of the interview was really just a raving session from the interviewer, other guest celebrity, and audience, whose fan questions consisted of stuff like ‘when are you having babies?’ By the end of the ordeal Elia was frustrated. She enjoyed interviews, she really did, but when they were discussing substantial things about her work, or praising her, or even gossiping; she loved gossip, but this was none of the above. It was just a random bunch of people gushing about how cute she looks with the ex that she still never got over. When the lights dimmed and the makers from the wings decided it was time to end the show, she relaxed a little, her muscles evidently let loose and she sighed as she moved a lock of hair from the front of her face.

“And what happened to you? Why were you so tense and morose?” Rhaegar whispered into her ears as everybody was clearing out.

“What nonsense,” Elia countered.

“Don’t lie to me Eli; you were clearly out of your spirits today. Usually you never let me talk, you answer all the questions with your Martell panache, and today, today I have been talking for a total of over fifteen minutes. That has never even happened in our science summits, forget movie interviews!” Rhaegar laughed.

“There was nothing to talk about was there? It was mainly a bunch of people designing a wedding for us, an imaginary wedding, something that is really never going to happen, all their weird fantasies,” Elia grumbled.

“You didn’t like it?”

“Well I never dislike an interview, you know that, but this one seemed a little boring if you ask me,” Elia shook her head, completely forgetting that the tiny black microphone was still attached to her short and sparkly peachy dress as was Rhaegar’s to his black and red Gucci suit. Everybody was listening in on the conversation, even the audience who were piling out the corridors.

“Boring or uncomfortable?”

“Why would it be uncomfortable? We have talked about dealing with rumours and interviews and fan-fiction of this sort,” Elia rushed to her own defence.

“Why are you getting so defensive?” Rhaegar questioned with one eyebrow raised as he took a step closer to her.

“I am not getting defensive,” Elia stubbornly stated.

“Was it uncomfortable because you felt something every time we came close? Because every time we touched, you felt something? Was it butterflies, or an entire zoo? Was it tingling or lingering? Did you feel good when we kissed, and sometimes overstepped the boundary as well? Tell me, because I sure as hell did Elia Martell.”

“You’ve lost your mind.”

“Both of us have.”

“I have not lost anything. Step away from me Rhaegar,” Elia exclaimed as Rhaegar took big striding steps towards her.

“Oh yes you have. You’ve lost that bloody precious heart of yours haven’t you?”

“Rhaegar please, stop…”

“It’s pure chemistry Eli. I know I am in no place to want to come back to your life again, I am not remotely eligible, but while doing the movie, could you feel the palpable chemistry? I sure as hell could.”

“That’s because we look good together, and we fit. What’s so new about that?”

“What’s new about that is that all my life I thought love was supposed to happen between two people that didn’t match; two people the world did not ship, like me and Lyanna, you know,
opposites attract. How would I have known that sometimes the person you fit the best with, the person the world sees you with, is not all that bad. I always thought same poles repelled.”
“Physics was always your weakest subject.”
“Will you teach me, Elia Martell?” Rhaegar got down on a knee. The rest of the world held its’ breath.
“What the fuck you getting down on your knee for? I have two careers to manage now,” Elia reprimanded sassily.
“Add a third one- teacher.”
“And what else do I need to teach you Mr. Targaryan, besides magnetism?”
“Tension…”
“What kind?” Elia raised her eyebrow as Rhaegar pulled her onto his knee.
“You know what kind. Last time we dated; we really didn’t get to explore the tension chapter did we? I left too early,” Rhaegar left a soft, wet, biting kiss on her neck.
“And this time, when will the lesson get over?” Elia inquired through her soft gasp.
“When I die, probably…” And when Elia looked at him with eyes that clearly spelt out that he should not be spouting nonsense like that, he only pulled her in for a kiss, and while the world had seen them intimate before, this was a new kind of intimacy they found. The entire auditorium erupted into cheers, since most the audience had returned in the dark, and Elia blushed like a fool, but Rhaegar only pulled her in closer, if that was possible, and kept her firmly there.
Chapter Summary

I am so super extremely sorry for all the wait you had to do! Actually, my school had their annual fest and I was super busy and this imagine is also longer than the rest because it has a long plotline and I don't know if I have been able to do it justice. I like Elia the best in this imagine because I have brought out all of her shades. I don't know whether you will like it but I really hope you do!!!!

1:00 AM
Rhaegar knew his speed was all wrong. He could feel the jerking of the car rebelling against every muscle in his body, and yet his mind was too clouded with the heavy essence of alcohol. There was heavy metal rock blaring through the car stereo, just the way Lyanna liked it. Why did she have to fight with him all the time? Thoughts of the argument invaded his mind again, and his eyes clouded, his coordination spiralled out of control and for a minute Rhaegar cared about everything but the road. A minute was also a heavy cost on the road and the only thing he remembered before he blacked out was the screech, bang and explosion of two cars colliding.
Blood, glass and alcohol stained the roads. It turned out that both of the colliding parties had been heavily drunk, and one of the cars, even contained alcohol. A young girl stepped out of the back of the red SUV and limped her way to the middle of the road where she could get a good look at the two cars that had been devastated, one contained her parents lying lifeless, and the other contained a young man with silver hair blowing out of the car window with blood flowing down it and colouring it red. She began wailing and the police sirens matched her pitch perfectly.
The police were terrified. Aerys Targaryan would probably have the young wounded girl in jail for the injuries that his son had sustained. He would probably have all of Dorne behind the bars for it. They nervously dragged Rhaegar Targaryan out of the car, praying to the Gods that he was still alive, and he was, muttering in heavy delirium, blood staining his white porcelain face. The ambulance arrived faster than it ever had before; this was the life of the Prime Minister’s son at stake after all. The other couple was taken away as well, but by an ambulance that came much later, and no amount of cardiac shocks worked then. Their young orphan was taken into Dornish custody.

2:15 AM
“I don’t understand why I was called,” Elia’s stoical tone rang through the empty corridors. “You were on his speed emergency dial ma’am,” a young and pretty nurse answered. “So were many other people. I am pretty sure I was towards the back somewhere, we haven’t talked in quite a while, I doubt he would make me his primary emergency contact,” Elia suspiciously prodded. “You were the only one who was in Dorne at the moment ma’am,” the young girl politely answered. “Lyanna Stark is in Dorne as well. I am pretty sure she is touring with him; she literally left her job at the gym to be with him. I know that for a fact, I am the owner of his record label,” Elia informed. “You really think we’re going to call her in the middle of the night to a hospital? She is most probably more drunk than he was, and we value the lives of our patients, ma’am,” the young nurse continued politely.
“That’s a beautifully mean thing to say. Who are you, kid?”
“My name is Roslin, Roslin Frey,” the pretty young girl turned around to face Elia and Elia was blown by how sharp and porcelain and beautiful her features was. Oh, and she was not a nurse, her coat clearly read ‘intern’.
“Shit, sorry, I thought you were a nurse,” she cursed.
“Most people do. It’s because I’m so courteous,” Roslin politely smiled.
“I can see that,” Elia smirked. Roslin smirked back. Both women realised they were peas of the same pod, polite, sweet, and full of venom. Oh, and they had also been wronged by two stupid men respectively. Roslin’s Stark boyfriend had left her for some obscure Yoga-medicine teacher from Volantis. Elia had seen her once; and like Lyanna, she too dripped of goodness, external strength and downright stupidity.

The doctor rushed out of the Operation Theatre and both Elia and Roslin rushed to meet him. Elia’s heels almost slipped on the squeaky laminate tile flooring of the hospital and Roslin gripped her hand swiftly; quite the bond of solidarity had formed between the two vipers (although Roslin was from the Riverlands, it was the only animal she associated herself with). The doctor’s worried expression did little to ease their tension and Elia’s pace slackened as she approached him. As far as she had moved on from Rhaegar, she was not prepared for very bad news. The spectacles came off of the Doctor’s tired grey eyes, and his head shook itself. Things were not looking good.
“Dr. Westerling, what is the matter?” Roslin was swift to ask.
“He’ll live, obviously, there was some internal bleeding but he’ll survive, it looks good. There’s just one thing… he may have lost his memory…”
“How can you say that so surely if he hasn’t regained consciousness?” Elia asked, voice quivering.
“We can tell,” the doctor answered, and she looked to Roslin, who also shook her head in affirmation.
“He will live right?” Elia pressed again, shakily.
“Yes of course he will live Miss Martell, he will just not remember anything,” the doctor repeated again.
Roslin’s eyes glinted with a plan and as soon as the doctor was out of earshot, she pulled Elia to the side. “This is your chance, you get that right?”
“Chance for what?” Elia asked absentmindedly still a little dazed from having to grasp all of that news together.
“What is wrong with you? Don’t you see it as a golden opportunity?”
“To do what Roslin?”
“Ughh! To make him forget Lyanna Stark that’s what!”
“What?”
“Take him away to Essos, help him ‘recover’ his memory, and erase all traces of Lyanna…”
“That’s easier said than done. Remember social media, friends, Lyanna herself,” Elia belted off from her list of possible risks.
“All of that is easy to erase. We can tell the people that he fell in love with you and went off with you to Essos. Lyanna will be heartbroken and not really want to communicate with him; meanwhile, you can give him your own version of the love triangle between the three of you. Build it on heaps of white lies,” Roslin rattled off and Elia was heavily impressed with the girl.
“Wow, you’re better than I was at your age. And what you are saying is not completely undoable. But it still involves a lot of risk, especially Uncle Aerys,” Elia frowned, thinking of the consequences she would have to deal with if the Mad President came to know of their conspiracy.
“Oh please, he prefers you over Lyanna any day, and I would even go as far as to say, he is rather fond of you. He’ll be happy with this union, and the real truth, he never needs to know. Unless you plan on telling him,” Roslin shrugged.
“Why would I tell him?”
“Then how would he know? How would anyone know? Start thinking again, it’s like Rhaegar is the key to stopping your brain. Did you even hear how you sounded: doctor, will he live?” And Roslin pretended to be a frail damsel in distress and Elia playfully smacked the young girl’s arm
and by the end of the night, they had become best of friends.

8:00 AM

“Relatives of Mr. Rhaegar Targaryan,” a young and unsure boy in a white coat approached the relatively empty corridor with only Elia and Roslin still engaged in gossip.

“That would be me,” Elia immediately stood up, Roslin behind her.

“And you are?”

There was a bit of hesitation, and a few nudges from Roslin. “I’m his fiancé.”

“Oh alright ma’am, this way then,” the young boy led the way.

Elia walked into the room and saw a serene sleeping Rhaegar. There was a flood of emotions that welled her eyes up, but she tried to blink it away and ignore it. She sniffled and wiped the edge of her nose with the sleeve of her silken blouse and walked over to the stool that was placed next to Rhaegar. He blinked his eyes, this was the fastest recovery, doctors had been saying, throughout the course of the night, and while one part of her was secretly glad, there was another part of her that was scared of the repercussions. She cleared her throat and looked back at him.

“Who are you?” He finally croaked.

“Me? Oh hello, this is awkward… I’m your fiancé,” Elia rubbed the back of her neck nervously.

“What’s your name?” Rhaegar asked curiously.

“Elia. Elia Martell.”

“That’s a pretty name. I’m pretty sure I don’t call you that normally, do I?” Rhaegar raised an eyebrow at her. Elia shook her head in familiar tenderness; even with a lost memory, he was just as irritating about her nickname.

“Well, mostly Eli…”

“And otherwise?”

“I am not going to tell you the other ones,” Elia shook her head vehemently.

“Oh come on, I’m going to remember someday anyways,” Rhaegar challenged.

“Well, I prefer to wait,” Elia taunted back.

And so this bittersweet banter continued in the course of which Rhaegar asked Elia to get off the stool next to his bed and sit next to him on his bed where Elia happily plopped down, holding his hand which he grasped to because she seemed like his only attachment to reality. When the doctor came in, he smiled slyly at the young couple- they did look so adorable, Rhaegar with his handsome chiselled features even under all the scars and Elia with her sharp and exotic features. He cleared his throat as he approached them, looking like that reprimanding guardian who was approaching two young sneaky lovers.

“Yes Doctor,” Elia and Rhaegar echoed together.

“So Mr. Targaryan, we are going to release you around a fortnight later, unless you get better sooner; and then you can jet off to Essos,” the Doctor smiled brightly- he had been briefed meticulously by Roslin.

“Essos? I thought you told me that as a Targaryan I am supposed to live either in Dragonstone or in King’s Landing or something like that,” Rhaegar stated, completely confused.

“Yes Rhae, but things at your place are a little turbulent so I thought that we should get away for some time together. It had been planned for a very long time indeed, you were driving over to my place actually,” Elia blatantly lied, except the part of ‘turbulent’ affairs in his house which was true because his father had recently been diagnosed as mentally unstable and matters were boiling like a dormant volcano in King’s Landing.

“Thank you so much,” Rhaegar smiled sincerely and kissed the back of her hand. Elia felt another pang of guilt, and decided to suppress it, instead pressing a kiss to his brows and forehead as she smiled widely. There were a lot of warm euphoric feelings coming piling back up in the pit of her stomach, and she tried desperately to get rid of it.

Two Weeks Later
“I must say it is all thanks to the missus, this speedy recovery. It is said that love and nurture truly helps accident patients, today I have seen it happening in front of my eyes,” the doctor beamed, and Rhaegar beamed right back at him. It was extremely true; Elia had been the most constant presence in the hospital for the past fortnight, constantly coddling over Rhaegar, and pampering him rotten. Rhaegar was smitten, although he would not admit it, because how awkward would that be?

“She was so amazing Doctor. But now she’s stuck with only me for a very long time, and I have a feeling I am going to be a proper pain,” Rhaegar smiled, holding Elia’s hand. He could barely walk but he trusted his fiancé over his crutches and grasped onto her hand even though he had a navy blue crutch supporting his limbs.

“I’ll tolerate, don’t worry,” Elia joked and smiled courteously at the doctor as they left. Elia helped him into the backseat of her gold shaded SUV and got into the driver’s seat, buckling herself in and staring the ignition. She could see a small pout playing on Rhaegar’s plush lips when he realised that she was sitting on the front and he was safely tucked into the back but did not raise any objections. He was sure this was what the doctor had ordered; after all, he did not meet the nicest fate when he sat in the front of the car the last time. Elia turned on the stereo to the typical Valyrian Dornish songs she heard and Rhaegar enjoyed the first few before he really began cringing. Elia could see everything from the back, unfortunately.

“Do you have instrumentals?” The young man blurted out before Elia could suggest changing the music.

“No, I don’t, sorry, but I do have some of your music, wait,” she smiled and plugged in a pen drive that contained his music only (yes as embarrassing as that was) and turned the volume up quite high.

“Hmm, I’m good,” Rhaegar smiled and Elia gave out a laugh. This entire charade, pretend game that she was playing got more amusing by the minute.

“I wouldn’t invest in trash, remember that,” she belted out in her voice of the sensible music producer.

“So, how did we fall in love?” Rhaegar asked after a few moments of silence.

“We went to college together…”

“That’s not an answer.”

“Well, we…it’s kind of embarrassing,” Elia rubbed the back of her neck.

“Why? What the hell happened?” Rhaegar asked bewildered.

“It was a blind date, and it went terribly, really. It was also a bet, by most of our friends. Although, and this is the worst part, it was a plan carefully orchestrated by our parents who succeeded in manipulating our friends to believe that we would make an amazing pair. The blind date was terrible really, but afterwards we had a good laugh about it, and then you asked me out on a real date. Things just took their own course from their onwards,” Elia smiled fondly to herself at the memories. The airport came into view and she drove around the back to the private one her family owned. The plan was to keep Rhaegar away from social media, as much as possible, and Roslin could do the job of spreading the rumours about Rhaegar running away to Quarth with Elia.

“Damn, I thought we had cool office romance or something. I thought I met you after the record deal,” Rhaegar grumbled.

“Well, I’m not going to lie; we did have a great office romance. And by the way, when I signed you, I didn’t know it was you. You used to send me anonymous mails because you wanted to work with my label but you didn’t want me to be biased. I guessed when I heard your voice and stuff, but you always seemed so busy with your High Valyrian PhD so I thought that maybe it was somebody who sounded like you,” Elia rattled.

“Damn, I have a PhD?”

“Yup, High Valyrian. It’s a pretty cool PhD actually,” Elia smiled.

“Don’t you have a PhD?”

“Business management in the music industry, that’s sketchily it.”

“Oh my, fancy.”
“Shut up.”
Elia parked the car in a safe corner spot and a few faithful bodyguards of the Martells greeted her right outside the car, taking the luggage and walking them to the airport. Rhaegar was stoked about the fact that he was going to be riding an airplane, it seemed like the most amazing that could happen to him, and Elia shook her head laughing at his innocence. Honestly, it used to be Rhaegar who used to run around with his private jet all the time, waking Elia in the middle of the night to randomly take her on a ride somewhere. He even flew Lyanna to Dragonstone and Dorne when they had had their infamous weekend rendezvous that went horrible wrong thanks to Varys and his online tabloid.
“And where are we going again?” Rhaegar asked curiously as they approached the steps of the tiny jet.
“Quarth. Come along, a well-earned trip awaits you.”

Two Months Later (Westeros)

“What do you mean you don’t know where Rhaegar is?” Lyanna hollered right into Jon Connington’s face, jolting Jon, who was concentrating intently on the work in front of him in the laptop, out of the blue.
“That means, Lyanna, that I don’t know where he is. Now please, leave, let me work.”
“No, you’re lying. There’s something you’re hiding, definitely. Listen, no work can be more important than my dragon, please Jon, tell me where he is,” Lyanna begged.
“Work is important okay? Elections are approaching in six months, I need this propaganda to be perfect, as it is we are losing thanks to your Baratheon.” Jon grumbled.
“He’s not my Baratheon, a Targaryan is my problem now,” Lyanna dreamily smiled into the distance, “which is precisely why I need to know where he is.”
Jon huffed. Her persistence was getting on his nerves. “Okay, so I didn’t want to tell you this but there are rumours that he has gone to Quarth with Elia,” Jon cleared his throat hesitantly.
“That’s bullshit, he loves me.”
“Yes, we know that. Everybody knows that.”
“Then why would he go to Quarth with her?” Lyanna asked in complete incredulity.
“Ask him. Or don’t. Just do whatever you want, let me work in peace,” Jon snapped and went back to typing intently on the laptop.
Suddenly the entire office stood up in fright and discipline as Aerys entered in a frenzy. He was looking frantic and crazy, silver hair flying all over the place, a few greys slipping out, and clothes crinkled with heavy breaths and shallow panting. Jon frowned even as he stood up, because everybody stood up when Aerys entered the office. They stood and watched to see what his step would be, to see who he would fire next, or probably even put into jail; because he did that sometimes, and everybody hoped it was not themselves. Jon watched him intently, especially for his reaction at noticing Lyanna, because he was not particularly fond of the Stark girl; Jon himself was not really fearful of his job because he knew that Aerys was kinder to him than the rest. Aerys stared once, disdainfully, and then began smiling like an idiot and turned on the television that was in the middle of the room.
“What the hell is he doing?” Lyanna asked Jon who was equally curious. He motioned, with his hand, for her to stop talking.
“What the hell is he doing?” Arthur scooted closer to Jon as well, asking.
“Have you guys ever heard of the word observation?!” Jon then snapped in annoyance.
And so the television was played, and the ‘Daily Reporter’, Aerys’ favourite channel was turned on, and right in the front of the crimson background, in glaring white neon colours was the headline that read: Rhaegar Targaryan and Elia Martell have steamy romantic romp-y getaway in Quarth! See images… And there were images, like proper steamy, ‘romp-y’ images. Lyanna looked away in disgust while the rest of the office had their face glued to the screen in silent awe and happiness. Aerys was grinning like a young child had just been given the best candy in the
world.
“Sir,” Jaime began.
“Shut up Lannister, this is gold don’t you see! My son has finally grown a pair of brains! Oh wait, there’s just one brain right? Ha ha ha! I don’t care, I am getting Elia back, and this time for good, this time, I am bringing her into the house as my daughter-by-law! Oh yes Lannister, the Gods have heard me, I can finally get rid of this thick-headed wolf! Let’s all thank the Seven together!”
Lyanna, in her fit of rage, threw the light blue embroidered stationary box of pens and pencils that was kept on Jon’s table towards Aerys and Jon, in his fit of hysteria (because he really valued his stationary) lunged at her in fury whereas the bodyguards did their best to cover their Prime Minister and Aerys himself went livid easily gliding out Jaime’s gun from his pocket and aiming it at Lyanna at which she had to be taken out of the building and Aerys had to be given a shock to be pacified. When Olyvar narrated this story to Roslin at home, she was barely amused, merely proud, that her plan had been able to generate such chaos. She smiled slightly and Olyvar frowned at that but she was quick enough to change the topic.
Meanwhile, things were turbulent at Winterfell. Lyanna ended up crying all over Ned’s bed, much to Catelyn’s annoyance because her new silken bed sheets were prone to tear staining. Benjen too began howling in all the confusion and Brandon was furious, but not half as much as Ned who swore to destroy Rhaegar if that was the last thing he was going to do. Luckily for him, Catelyn and Sansa were able to, of sorts; coax him out of that idea. Robb was confused; why would Rhaegar leave his vivacious aunt for someone like Elia Martell? That night he drunk dialled Roslin, and she was euphoric as to the many layers her plan was working at.
“I always told you he was not over her,” Olenna exclaimed with triumph at the dinner table, “and you were all going on and on about how Rhaegar and Lyanna have true love,” she mocked her son. “It certainly looked that way from a distance okay,” Mace jumped to his own defence with Alerie holding his hand under the table so that Olenna could not see because otherwise she would accuse them both of being brain-dead morons. Her tongue was not infamous without reason.
It seemed like all of Westeros was shook with the news. Lysa was so extremely confused with the entire incident that Jon Arryn had to sit down at dinner and try his best to explain it to her lucidly at dinner thirteen times. However, he still proved unsuccessful and Lysa went on to call her ‘childhood best friend’ Petyr for the proper details because apparently, he knew everything. Robert should have been ecstatic but instead, he found himself rushing to Cersei for the proper amount of gossip and both of them were amused at themselves.

One Week Later (Quarth)

“I need to finish making the bread dough,” Elia’s moan was muffled by Rhaegar silver locks all over her face as he had attacked her neck from behind, snaking his arms tightly and protectively around her waist.
“The bread can wait,” he put simply as he turned her around and perched her on the table top, using one hand to deftly open the strings of her silken slip.
“Rhae stop, I’m hungry,” Elia whined.
“So am I.”
“No I’m hungrier than you, like actually hungry, for food, nutrition,” Elia began explaining. “So you told me that the Dornish are supposed to be like, super sexually active all the time, but all you do, is run away from me,” Rhaegar pouted, and he looked so extremely cute that Elia could not help but pull him back and the bread dough was all but forgotten as he carried her to the bedroom, only except they didn’t really wait to reach the bedroom, they ended up on the couch. “I didn’t know that Targaryans were so, well… active,” Elia smiled as she lay wrapped up in his arms after their little ‘session’.
“Hmm, I think it’s because of what you do to me;” Rhaegar kissed the top of her head, and her nose.
“No I’m sure there were other girls too…”
“Nope, I don’t think anybody made me feel the way you did. I don’t remember anything, but this, this is special. Nobody can compare to this, if you really ask me,” Rhaegar stated as a matter of fact.
“Not even Lyanna?”
“Eli, I don’t remember Lyanna,” Rhaegar huffed at her. “Shouldn’t that be obvious?”
“But if you did, you know, suddenly remember Lyanna, would you leave me for her?” Elia asked cautiously.
“I thought you said that I broke up with her and came back to you,” Rhaegar mused.
“Yes of course, I was giving you a hypothetical,” Elia tried to reason.
“Well, that won’t happen because I already abandoned her for you,” Rhaegar smiled as he switched them over so he was on top again and kissed her hungrily. “Why are you having such stupid thoughts?” He asked after pulling back for breath and then kissed her lips lightly again. He just could never seem to get enough of her.
“I was just wondering…” Elia tried her best to cover up the awkward situation she had put herself into. “I wouldn’t want you to go away, ever.”
“I am never going to leave you, ever.”

Two Weeks Later (Dragonstone Private Airport)

“Lya he has left you! I don’t understand what we are doing here!” Ned snapped, exasperated at how long he was having to wait for a delayed flight from Quarth.
“He needs to give me answers,” Lyanna shouted back. “He needs to tell me why he went back to that uptight and sophisticated, ambitious little Dornish bitch.”
“Well technically, you broke their house first,” Robb cut in but a glare from Lyanna was enough to send him cowering to a corner.
Suddenly, the mechanical voice from the overhead speakers interrupted their squabble and Lyanna and Robb both jumped in surprise. Ned, who was used to everything about an airport, barely rolled his eyes at their childishness and waited for the arrivals gate to open so he could lead both of them inside. Jon Connington also arrived in time, panting, as did Arthur Dayne. It was heedless to say, neither were on excellent terms with him.
“Where’s the Prime Minister?” Ned asked.
“He sent me,” Jon beamed proudly. He had recently been awarded with the Employee of the Month Award as well.
“Oh shut up you chose to come. Plus, it is not like Aerys loves Rhae enough to come and pick him up from the airport all the way out here, in Dragonstone,” Arthur cut in.
“Viserys?”
“Oh Viserys is visiting Dorne on a college field trip,” Jon reported. “You bet he’s having fun. His girlfriend lives there,” he added and even Arthur laughed. Ned rolled his eyes; the Southerners were way too frivolous for his taste.
The arrival gate opened to a score of distant Lysene Targaryan relatives (because the airport was mainly for silver-haired people) and some Westerlings and Tarlys who had acquired permission from the Prime Minister. Lyanna could not have strained her neck more to catch a glimpse of the love of her life; Ned shook his head at her desperation but decided to let the matter slide. Lyanna began waving her hands crazily in the air when she noticed the first inkling of Rhaegar’s dirty green designer trench coat. However, along with him came striped short dress clad Elia who Rhaegar ad trapped between himself and the trolley and was leaving kisses all over her neck as she giggled and tried to stop him from committing this extremely public display of affection.
Lyanna’s smile dropped immediately but Ned laid a hand on her shoulder, a hand she effectively shoved away. Ned frowned, since when had other people begun mattering more to his baby sister over him. Robb too was a bit shocked, but he was more outspoken than his father. “Damn, this is dangerous. Why do you choose heartbreaking boyfriends over your own family?” The little boy
“You wouldn’t understand! You follow society’s expectations of love, you left that amazing Volantine for who, a Frey?” Lyanna barked back.

“Technically, you’re being prejudiced, and honestly, I cheated on Roslin with Talisa. We patched up a few weeks ago, that’s not called ‘leaving someone for someone’ that is called coming back home. But what you know about home? You broke Elia’s, and you abandoned your own!” Robb shouted back. Lyanna was going to retaliate violently but both parties were subtly held back by Ned.

Rhaegar and Elia were heading towards the exit gate, and as soon as Lyanna caught a glimpse of that, she forgot all other petty conflicts and ran towards the happy couple. She was a fast runner, way faster than Rhaegar and Elia wrapped up in each other and walking slowly, and she came and stood in front of them, panting, red in the face. Elia was petrified, and Rhaegar was just plain confused. Elia tried to urge Rhaegar to leave then and there whereas Rhaegar’s curiosity was just peaking.

“Who are you?” He finally asked in his raspy baritone.

“What the fuck does that mean? It’s me my Dragon, your Lya,” Lyanna began extremely confused and then it struck her. “Wait, you lost your memory in that accident didn’t you?”

“Oh yes I did. Wait are you Lyanna Stark? My ex, that’s you,” Rhaegar pointed at her and then looked at Elia who had gone pale in the face. She had hoped that Lyanna would be so heartbroken that she would never want to speak with Rhaegar again but she had forgotten that girls like Lyanna had no sense of self-respect, they were blinded by love.

“I am not your ex my love! What other lies has this bitch been feeding you?” Lyanna looked at Elia with practically steam emerging from her ears. She was letting out soft and deep growls of anger and looked so funny that even in such an extremely tense situation, Elia had to purse her lips.

“Oh yes, Eli told me you’re still hung up over me. Honestly, I love her, and we’re going to get married, so can you please not interfere. Look, I don’t know you properly, and I don’t wish to be rude, but we need to go now, we are both very tired,” Rhaegar explained.

“These are crazy lies! The bitch has been manipulating you to think her way! You want proof that we are together? Fine, I’ll give you proof. Your favourite food is Dragon-fruit Salsa and you hate multigrain bread and you love black coffee with no sugar and your favourite movie is the ‘Dragon and Viper’ based off of Myriah Martell and that other Targaryan king’s love story and you love the fact that I play soccer and you get turned on by it and recently you wrote a song called ‘Full Moon Night’ and it was about me. How would I know all that if I wasn’t your girlfriend?”

Rhaegar’s grip on Elia and the trolley loosened and while she desperately tried to make him look her way and try her best to twist him around her tears, his eyes were only fixated on Lyanna. Elia could feel the ground slipping under her feet and for the first time she felt genuine tear drops playing on her long mascara drenched lashes. These were not the crocodile tears she could belt out on request; these were genuine because she felt a pain twist her heart. She shook her own head vigorously, trying to tell herself that she could not be in love and that she was only using Rhaegar for the power and position in life and not because she had true feelings towards him. That could not be the case. She wiped her tears violently, her palms turning black and pink with all the kohl and mascara and blush but she did not care. Her face was a mess, but she had to get rid of these genuine tears that had probably never fallen from her eyes before.

Meanwhile, Rhaegar had walked over to Lyanna and had his arms wrapped around her and was kissing her with the passion that he had used towards her, probably even more. He was also whispering something silently about having remembered everything all of a sudden. Elia turned around; she could not look at what would happen next, the true love’s kiss they keep harping about in the movies. Heck, what was she thinking? A man could be a total asshole and still find love at the end of a movie but a woman needed to be good and morally upright to do the same. And Lyanna was morally upright, Lyanna was wild and fun. Elia was everything a girl shouldn’t have been, and women don’t find love that easily. She proceeded to walk away from the scene but bumped into Arthur who was looking at her with sympathy, a look she hated so much. Finally,
venom came flooding out of the viper, “what are you standing here and watching all the fun for? Take your best friend and his lady love and leave.”
“I’m not sure as to who his lady love is, and I don’t think he is sure either,” Arthur raised an eyebrow teasingly.
“Don’t play games with me Arthur, let me go,” Elia tried to shove past him.
“Are you sure you won’t stay to find out who he really chose?”
“He had already chosen her in Harrenhall Arthur, and there was nothing even God could do, even after inducing memory loss, to keep the two away.”

One Month Later

“I must say, you’re a true businesswoman,” Willas commented as he sat down next to Elia with a series of folders that seemed to be slipping falling all over the place. Elia shook her head at him and smiled, he was the clumsiest lawyer she had ever seen, but the boy knew his job.
“And why is that?”
“I mean, even after everything happened with Rhaegar, after people publicly shamed you and burned your picture and stuff, forget closing your label, you’ve increased the duration of Rhaegar’s contract! I mean… wow! My grandmom was so super proud of you,” Willas gushed and Elia ruffled his thick mass of hair in delight at his simple admiration for twisted women.
“The show must go on Tyrell, the show must go on. Now come on, give me the papers I need to sign,” Elia urged and waited patiently for him to take out her papers from the mass he had already managed to accumulate on the table. “I hope you understand that this is a restaurant, and our food will be arriving soon, and food is kept on the table, not on the floor.”
“I do, I do, just give me a minute,” Willas grumbled as he began fishing through the papers and toppled them all down to the floor. Elia stared in a familiar disappointment. She had known Willas forever, and she was used to his habits by now.
“May I talk to you?” A familiar voice interrupted their little unfruitful business meeting. Elia looked up and was shocked beyond measure to find a fidgety Rhaegar playing with a loose strand of his mint cardigan. He looked handsome even in the neat ‘good-boy’ look. She needed to stop staring.
“Yes of course, Mr. Targaryan,” she got up and walked off looking back at Willas and warning him to gather his important papers by the time she came back. Willas had a feeling that she was going to be gone long.
Rhaegar walked her behind the pretty lace partition which had all kinds of Yunkian designs on it and a long corridor beginning thereon. It was isolated, mainly because the restaurant was so expensive people rarely came during this time of the day, and also because the Chef preferred to keep the corridors clear for his waiters to rush up and down in case there was a case of raw fish gone wrong- it was a very expensive sushi bar after all. Rhaegar was so extremely nervous that Elia thought he had ended up killing someone in order to defend Lyanna and had now come to Elia for some good law contacts or something like that. She looked on, waiting for him to say something anxiously. He kept opening and closing his mouth like a fish.
“I need to say something to you,” he finally blurted out.
“Wow, I would never have guessed,” Elia shrugged in her sarcastic nonchalance.
“This is important! Everything in life is not a joke!”
“So when the fuck did I say this is a joke? I don’t even know what you want to actually comment on it,” Elia cynically replied.
“Okay, fine, here goes: I want to leave the contract. I’m breaking it. I will pay for all the economic damages that I have made I promise. But I don’t want to continue this anymore,” Rhaegar felt like a massive weight had been lifted off his chest but now he felt a worse sense of emptiness inside.
“May I know the name of your new label?” Elia coldly asked.
“Marriage.”
“What?!”
“I’m getting married to Lyanna, and she doesn’t want me to continue this. And she is right, anyways this career will fade out and then I’ll be left with nothing? She hates the media attention, especially the hate from the fans. She thought you will be bearing the brunt of the hate but the fans hate her even more now,” Rhaegar said, but it all came out in jumbles because there was a flurry of emotions working inside him now.

“I thought it was the contrary.”

“No, no it’s not actually. No matter what you do, the people will always love you. I know at first we all got the impression that the public anger will be channelled toward you, but that was just a couple of over-zealous Northerners, nothing else. As for Lyanna, you know, she loves the real me, not the pop-star, and she wants me to start a bakery in the countryside, somewhere far away, you understand, right?”

“You’re going to leave music for making cupcakes?” Elia asked with both her eyebrows raised, a teasing smile on her lips.

“Please don’t make this harder than it already is. She is my muse, my inspiration for everything in li-”

“And yet she makes you choose between her and your dreams.”

“I have already achieved those dreams, now she is the dream I need to achieve.”

“You know what Rhaegar? At one point of time, I thought I had feelings for you. I am ashamed of myself now.”

“I know, I’m ashamed of myself too,” Rhaegar softly whispered.

“Why?”

“Because I left you.”

“Okay, stop right there, I am not having this last apology bullshit right now. Your contract cancellation papers will reach you tomorrow, and don’t worry, you don’t need to pay. Save that money… baker,” Elia laughed at the end.

She entreated to walk away and with one swift pull of the arm, she was pulled back into Rhaegar. Neither had any idea as to what was going on, especially Rhaegar, who had pulled her back. “You really don’t feel anything? I am getting married to another woman? I am changing cities and probably even going into the countryside where I can die of primitive disease. You will never see me in the office, ever again, and all you’re concerned with is the bloody money?” Rhaegar croaked out an angry response. His eyes pierced into hers, and they were flaming with something Eli had never seen before. She frowned.

“What the fuck are you talking about?” Elia asked incredulously.

“Yes, because you were with the love of your life,” Elia shrugged loudly, just like Rhaegar was shouting at her. Willas was craning his neck to see what was going on. He could only catch a few obscure words.

“Who the hell told you to make that decision for me?” Rhaegar was crying now, and not sniffling, properly crying.

“Whatever the fuck do you mean? You yourself said you remembered everything.”

“And what if I wanted to forget? What if I wanted to give myself another amnesia attack just so we could go away to Quarth again? Do you think hitting my head against this would do it?” Rhaegar was desperately howling now.

“Rhae stop! Stop it! What is wrong with you?!”

“You are wrong with me!”

“I am wrong for you. That’s why I left, because I didn’t want you to suffer for the rest of your life. It’s the most selfless stunt I’ve ever pulled and the feeling sucked. Next time, I’m not doing any charity,” Elia huffed.

“Who the fuck gave you the right to decide what was wrong for me?”

“Well, in the movies the guy always ends up with the innocent girl, not the gold digging bitch. She usually stands on the sidelines and huffs like an idiot. I daresay I had more dignity than that,” Elia’s lips curled upwards at the memory of how well she had handled herself and she fell in love
with her all over again.

“This is not a fucking movie,” Rhaegar pulled her even closer and his breath fanned a few locks that had come undone from her tight formal bun.

“So… what now?” Elia breathed in a heated whisper, her breath fanning over his silver locks.

“I guess I’ll have to kiss you,” Rhaegar shrugged. “That’s what they do in the movies.”

“I thought you said that this is not a movie.”

“Damn you Martell, ever heard of being an opportunist?” Rhaegar growled, pulling her further closer, if possible.

“I literally used your amnesia to try and seduce you, don’t teach me about opportunists,” Elia sassed.

“And yet you let me get away.”

“Oh that’s just probably because I really began to like you, genuinely, and I didn’t want you to live a lie. You’re the nicest thing in my life, the cleanest and the most innocent thing in my life and there is no way I was going back to pursue you.”

“I swear to God, you’re the strangest thing I’ve ever seen! Generally when somebody loves somebody, they go and pursue that person, fight for that person, they don’t give up!!” Rhaegar shouted again.

“Well I am not just some somebody okay!” Elia shouted back.

“No, you are an absolutely idiot. You are worse than me. Shame on you. Now, I am going to kiss you and if I ever hear any more of that you’re a bad person and I’m a good person and so we don’t deserve to be together shit again, and I am going to tell the whole world how much you love watching cheap mainstream Ghiscari films,” Rhaegar announced, glad that his point was the last one.

“Don’t you dare tell anybody tha-”

The rest of the restaurant, and Willas cheered as Rhaegar picked her up and placed her on a nearby table, never breaking the kiss. Elia was glad there were only a few people in the restaurant.
Hey guys, I know I am running a little late but I was super sick this entire week so my apologies. Okay, so let me warn you that this entire chapter, well, almost, is one big, long sentimental speech. If you find that concept way too boring I understand and you don't have to read. This was not really a story as much as a concept I had and I had written out the speech quite a long time ago and because I was sick and did not feel like writing anything new, I only wrote down fillers out of the speech, made a scenario and organized the chapter accordingly. I seriously don't know whether you will like it but I look forward to your response! Also, this one is smaller than the ones I have been uploading as of late so it won't be all that tiring!

“Are you crying? Like, for real, crying?” Renly nudged Margaery gently.
“Nonsense,” Margaery snapped. “I just miss her a lot.”
“There are tears coming out of your eyes,” Renly pointed out, even fishing out an intricately embroidered silken handkerchief from nowhere. Margaery only pushed it away. “Your make-up is getting smudged,” Renly teasingly sang into her ear.
“I am not crying! And this is water-proof make-up by the way,” Margaery glared at him. Renly chuckled and ruffled some of the hair that was intentionally left messy from the bed braid that Margaery was currently sporting to all public events- it was a big rage. “Did I give you permission to touch?” She snapped.
“Oh my, where?” Renly danced his eyebrows and Maragery elbowed him in the ribs.
“Will you not let me mourn in peace?”
“None.”
“Why?”
“Because Elia would not want you to.” That statement silenced Margaery.
“Papa, what are we doing here?” Willas tugged at Renly’s expensive suit.
Margaery looked away, and Renly bent down to manoeuvre his sons’ questions and curiosity elsewhere. His tricky explanations were interrupted by Sept bells ringing. He looked up, placed his index finger on Willas’ plump lips and sat up from his squatting position. The Sept was brimming; Renly had never seen such a crowd in his life and for the first time he truly understood the effect a good politician had on the people. Was Elia not corrupted at all? Did she never really think about herself or be pragmatic? That was all a hoax; obviously she was a power-hungry bitch, but Elia’s duty never abandoned her; even when her fool of a husband, or were they only lovers back then, he had really forgotten, had eloped with a school kid, her sense of duty remained intact. She served her people to the last of her breath, and her people were gathered today to breathe their life into her again. Renly could hear the shuffling of feet outside the doors of the Sept and he craned his neck to see all the people of King’s Landing piling around the entrances and exits, hoping to catch a last glimpse of Elia before she would be cremated in the Rhoynish style. Renly was sure that even the people who loathed the sight of Rhaegar were thanking him for keeping this last service in the style of the Seven before she would be gone forever, physically.
When Rhaegar walked in, the entire room rose. Renly admired the man; even at this age, he looked like he had the first time Renly had seen him. He had a separate panache about him that Renly really admired. His silver hair was greying at the tips, and Renly was sure that was a styling trick, the man was extremely self-conscious, and his porcelain skin had signs of wrinkles but they
usually gave way to youthful ones when he smiled and his dimples reached the corners of his eyes. Today, though, he was barely smiling. He wore the Dornish colours of mourning, so he was decked in white; but it was not the dazzling happy white he always wore to public appearances, this was more subdued and gloomy (it was crazy how even white had shades). He sat very close to the body, but did not look at it once. Maybe he could not bear to, and did not want others to see him cry; the Prime Minister needed to be strong and unflinching at all times. Renly only pitied him today.

“We will first have the blood kin of the deceased speak. Mr. Oberyn Martell, we request you to come up please,” the high-Septon whose name Renly always forgot, broke the silence. Renly was unsure about whether Oberyn would really be able to say anything; he was crazily attached to his sister. Renly remembered every afternoon he used to go to submit files or retrieve documents from her, Oberyn would be sprawled on the plush scarlet leather couch in her office and she would be chiding him to go and find some work of his own. Renly was right; Oberyn did look like a mess. His twinkling eyes were dull, like during a solar eclipse, and his nose was red, and his face was red, although it looked darker, out of sheer exhaustion. His gait was not the usual hop and skip that Renly was used to either- it seemed slower, more mature, like out of the blue, Oberyn Martell had suddenly just grown up. “How is he going to deliver a speech, or say anything really? He looks disastrous,” Renly commented to his beautiful wife seated next to him.

“Shut up!” Margaery snapped. Their son only laughed; he loved it when his papa got a share of the scolding as well.

Oberyn took a deep breath before proceeding to speak. “There has never been a moment in my life when I have not respected and loved Elia like nobody else on this planet. I’ve made it no secret that she was my favourite Martell, and there’ll be nobody like her, ever. But today, probably for the first time in my life, I hate my sister. I hate my sister because she left me, and she made me promise her that I’d live, and she gave me nobody to blame for the death, and she just left. Like that, poof, into thin air. I’ll never forgive her, for as long as I live!” And with that Oberyn’s cries echoed the walls of the Sept.

“I told you…” Renly whispered to Margaery.

“I would be the same way, I’m sure. Maybe just a bit more subtle, if I was in his place, his shoes. You Baratheon brothers won’t understand it; you’re poor excuses for siblings,” Margaery explained. Renly only grumbled. While she was right, he had not given her the permission to rub it in his face.

“Dr. Doran Martell?” The high-Septon was on the podium again. Renly blinked his eyes a few times, this man could practically teleport himself across the room, he was that swift. Doran’s speech was warm, and happy. His memoirs and anecdotes about Elia, the baby sister he doted on but never showed, was tear-jerking, but smile-inducing as well. There was not a face in the audience that was not smiling with glassy eyes. “I miss her, and I love her, but she will never know that. I was always more of a distant cousin, and I am glad I kept it that way; there was one less person to think about when she died. At least, I hope so,” Doran was also crying now, but it was softer and subtler and only a few tears ran down his tanned cheeks as he quickly did away with them.

“There was a reason I didn’t want to come,” Margaery sniffled into her designer silken handkerchief.

“Oh, you’re crying for real now,” Renly tried to take on the tone of somebody who was being taunting, but even he was battling tears on the brim of his pretty eyes.

“Who’s that?” Margaery suddenly asked as a young Dornish boy walked onto the podium, surrounded by pretty Dornish girls.

“That’s Trystane, Doran’s son, and those are Oberyn’s daughters,” Renly informed. “They are going to sing a song I think.”

The young Martell children sang a sweet and wonderful Dornish song on Life and Death and Renly was moved because he appreciated music almost as much as Rhaegar did and then it was Margaery’s turn to laugh at his moistened eyes. Just before leaving, both Tyene, and Arianne spoke
into the microphone saying that whatever little knowledge they had of diplomacy, was Elia’s gift, and that if they ever made politicians or world rulers of themselves, they would only hold Elia responsible for all the good they would carry out. This moistened Margaery’s eyes and Renly nuded her softly again.

Both Rhaenys and Aegon spoke about the memories they had made with their mother, and the memories they were able to make for her, and they both broke down in between but they were two eloquent children and they spoke in a manner that would have made their mother proud had she been watching them. The real emotional speech though, belonged to Viserys, who had always acknowledged Elia as his mother, and proceeded to speak on why he had taken this decision although it made many question him, he had always maintained that Elia was the mother figure of his childhood, and continued to be, and would never stop. Daenrys and Visenya cheered everybody up with their humorous anecdotes although little Visenya did tear everybody up while she was asking Daenrys where her ‘mommy’ had gone. It was not as if all of Westeros had had enough that now they had to see the youngest and most adorable Targaryan demand why her mother was absent at such an amazing gathering. Everybody remembered Elia, the social butterfly.

“Now, I would like to request Mr. Targaryan to say a few words,” the high-Septon announced.

Rhaegar got up, and though his steps were slow, out of both age and grief, he was determined to speak, he owed her this much at least. He wasn’t sure about his oratory skills, that they could handle a flurry of emotions as well.

“It’s very hard to speak about someone you’ve spent more than half your life with. It’s even harder to sound remotely coherent about her when all you really want to do is tear your lungs screaming and asking her to come back. I will try my best though, and remind me if my voice gets watery, I think it might. Eli, this one’s for you, and I think it’s the longest thing I’ve ever written. You never could get me to write something that was not obscure andarty, and today, here I am, penning one of those ultimate sentimental pieces you liked to read in the editorials of the King’s Landing Times.

I met Elia for the first time when I was six; well, almost six, I was going to be six in a month and at that age all you really want to do, is age, so I considered myself to be six alright. She didn’t, and she put me in my place. She was the most sweet-talking and sarcastic person I had met, even at that age, she was eight, and a senior, and very pretty, and I was infatuated; even though most of our conversations were basically her taking jibes at me. I was in love all the same; I used to worship the ground she walked on.

The first time I realised my Goddess was human was when, at the age of nine, and she was eleven, I found her crying. She was broken, and I was devastated. How could she cry? She was the woman for me, invincible, and tall, and exotic and smart. I was intrigued as well, and I asked one stupid question too many and she snapped at me but I didn’t leave. I needed to know what made her not so strong all of a sudden. She told me someone had told her that she could never be a minister, of any sorts, and all she had ever wanted to do was rule over people, and there were big men telling her that girls shouldn’t go into politics because it’s a dirty place to be and girls should be clean and ‘moral’ and I didn’t know what moral meant at that time but I didn’t like it because it made her cry. So I vividly remember, we were cramped in Lewin uncle’s closet, and I wiped her tears, and I told her she was a woman if there ever lived any and of course she could be a minister of whatever she wanted. She kissed me on the cheek, quite a few times, and I could swear I had never been happier.

The first time I realised she was a ‘woman’ in every sense of the word, and I was clearly whipped on that woman, was when I was fifteen and she was in her last year of school, and out of thin air, she spun herself a boyfriend. He was tall and handsome and came from the Reach so he smooth-talked his way into everybody’s hearts, especially her family, and I hated him so much I could strangle him to death, and I had no idea why. Arthur did. I still remember he walked up to me and told me that the way I looked at Elia was the way Balon looked at the pictures of Krakens in his graphic novels and that said a lot. I still didn’t believe him, but I saw Elia and Baelor kiss at a party and I remember it being the worst feeling I have ever had in my entire life.
It took me another year to gather up all the courage, and even then, I was sure I most probably wouldn’t have said anything to her had she not been leaving. Because when I saw the clink of her nude pink heels strutting down the marbled airport floor, and further away from my eyes, I realised I was in deep, and there was no coming back out now. Our parents were there, all her friends were there, all my friends were there; and even then, the shyest guy in all of the Red Keep Private High dashed over the railings and halfway across the room to pull her in for a kiss. I remember how red and flushed she was, and that was the best feeling in the world, that I could do that to her. She never stopped scolding me after, for making such a public display of affection.

You can imagine the amount of time I have spent with this woman. Yes, there was a brief period of separation that I hate talking about, mainly because the guilt still eats me up, but also because this was the first time I had been the bad guy. Being the grey person was Elia’s job; she was materialistic and ambitious and extremely manipulative when she wished to be, but there was this one time when I had gone out and been a terrible person, mainly because I was so blinded by my ego and sense of male superiority, I felt my true love was a kid, who played soccer and really could not spell her name correctly, forget mine. I won’t be taking names, this thing’s being telecast, as far as I know, but I will never forgive myself for those five years I spent apart from Elia.

Actually, those five years, we weren’t really… apart from each other physically. She was still the Home Minister or Interior Minister, I believe we all have different names for the position, and I was still the Prime Minister and we worked in the same building and I always bumped into her in the elevator and after the first two years, we even began talking. That was the beginning of the end of my ‘ultra-male phase’ really. Once I started talking to her, it all came back; she’s the kind of woman that’s really hard to resist you know, especially when she begins talking science and philosophy and politics, and it’s hard not to admire that. It’s hard not to feel guilty at your going back home to a simpleton. More essentially, what sucks is if you’ve left her and you know you really have no business trying to come back to her life.

Luckily, the kids were a huge help! That and the fact that she got a boyfriend during the fourth year, whose name I am not really going to take, because again, national telecast. The boyfriend was handsome and dashing and eloquent, also, really strong. He was a cop, and I thought I was just annoyed at that fact, because the cops clearly never liked me much, especially because they needed to work under me, but then I realised this was a Baelor thing happening all over again. Arthur drilled it into my head, again. I was back to square one, right where it all began. I came to a full circle with Elia at that moment in time, and it gave me a very euphoric sense of happiness.

We did not get married till the third kid; something that was the result of my infidelity, obviously and her resulting trust issues. It was the happiest day of my life though, when I stood by the Sept with the entire Westeros looking on, either physically or through the many national telecasts that was simultaneously going on. Let me make a confession, no amount of spontaneity in a forbidden secret marriage ceremony amounts to the euphoria you could possibly get, claiming your beloved as one heart, one flesh and one soul in front of the entire world. That is a different kind of high, and Elia taught me that. Whenever I hear of you youngsters eloping I only shake my head in a sort of high-handed pity; you’re never going to experience the fun of a consented wedding, and trust me, that is special.

She was my legally wedded wife for the last fifteen years. We were cohabiting before that, obviously we brought up three kids, but we legally, and spiritually (if you believe in all that, I did, Elia didn’t) bonded only five years ago. I know it sounds like a very long time, but trust me, it’s nowhere near as close as you would imagine forever to be, or even a very long time. Fifteen years seems nothing to me now… I want some more time with her, some more gossip, some more fighting, definitely more kisses… more of everything. Just give me a second please, I had promised her I wouldn’t cry… Just a minute.

Back to what I was saying, yes, marriage. Marital life. Yes, Elia was not a believer of these things. She pretended to be; she pulled off the ‘good wife’ act to a t, and was a better Mrs. Targaryan than the world had ever seen. However, behind closed doors, after all those years, when she finally realised that I understood her hunger for power and loved her anyways, she was a best friend more
than anything else really. And now, my best friend is not there anymore.
Elia never drank, and she never smoked, but she did watch slash-er movies produced by the Rayder
production house, and take it upon herself to sass a room full of seasoned politicians, all men. She
never sassed like Mrs. Tyrell, said she hadn’t reached the age for it, but sass she did, outsmart them
she did; in her own way. She silently presented them terms they couldn’t refuse and blackmail
them in ways that would go way beyond most of our moralities. She was my hero. And now, my
hero is lifeless.
Elia detested romance for the life of her. She used to tell me, if she ever suffered from insomnia, I
had only to bring in a bunch of all the sap I sit and watch when she is not around. She was Dornish
though, and believed in complete sexual freedom, polygamy, bisexuality, and everything else
Dorne manages to handle with such panache. She used to scold me when I got to clingy, but I’ll
write this down for you, she never saw another man when she was with me. Maybe it was because
she had been through infidelity, maybe it was because she truly loved me, or maybe it was because
the role of a lover was a duty to her as well. And Elia always performed all her duties ritually. She
was a role model of a lover, my lover, and now, I will never get to hold her again.
I don’t know what’s happening to me today. I’ve delivered shit tons of Ted Talks and sentimental
speeches but it has never amounted to this sort of wailing, tragic dénouement. Look at me, my nose
is running, and I’m a mess. I’m sure she’s laughing up there somewhere. I feel like a complete
fool. She’s always liked that, making a fool of me. She’s also always loved making fools of other
people with me. We made a great team! And now, my partner in crime is missing.
See, I’ll be brutally honest with you; I am not much of a talker. Neither was Elia, to be honest. She
would flutter her long drawn eyelashes and belt out small talk like a professional at all the high-
society parties we ever went to but essentially, she hated talking. She hated girls who talked a lot
because she knew it was a cliché to make women look stupid and these people basically breathed
life into it. However, when the two of us were together, alone, it was a task to get us to stop
talking. There was nothing that could exist the under the Sun and not be discussed by us. People
generally believe that when two stiff upper-class people have been arranged into a match, and I am
sure it looked like that at a distance for the two of us; they must be bored out of their wits. That
rich male CEO in the common tongue movies needs a sweet and clumsy waitress to really fall in
love; his uptight rich fiancé must be a real yawn. It doesn’t get more clichéd than that. My rich and
uptight and ambitious girlfriend was the only one with whom I could discuss political intricacies,
general high-society gossip, and various ways in which I could run Westeros- and trust me, she was
so much better at it.
Anyways, I began digressing from the entire point I was talking about, which is, essentially, that I
hate talking. However, today, you must forgive me. Today, I need to be excused, you know why,
because today I am going to be meandering off topic and talking too much and doing whatever I
can to avoid going back home. The thing is, today, when I go back home, there is going to be no
Elia to gossip with. Today, there is going to be nobody sitting next to me in the passenger seat and
playing weird Dornish music on the radio all the while arguing with me about my music tastes.
There is going to be nobody in the kitchen I can stealthily creep from the back and kiss and hope
things just get steamier. At night, when I turn to face the other side, she won’t be smiling in her
sleep and just looking like the epitome of serenity. I won’t be able to pull her into my arms because
of how beautiful she looks, even if she groans in her sleep, and smile and think of how I got so
crazily lucky. I will never have to do any of these because there will be no one to do them with. No
more pens are going to get stolen from my desk and then found in the Home Ministry, no more
fighting over the current world order, or supernatural, or really what we must have for dinner, no
more fighting about anything. I don’t know how to live with that. I don’t know how to live without
her.
I promised Elia something, before she slipped away from the my hands forever, I promised her I
would live, because we had five children under our responsibility, and Elia still believed they
needed our guidance and supervision. I don’t know if I am going to be doing a good job, anywhere
close to how she brought them up, but I am going to try. I am also going to try and be a better
politician, actually implement all the changes she made because this time, when something goes wrong, I will not have her to fall back on. Most importantly, I will be a better man; not because Elia was the kindest Saint out there, not at all; simply because hers was the kind of honest and inherent bad which made you want to turn good. She herself may not have been the best kind of person, but she turned all those around her into golden people. We like to believe that people who listen to their hearts are better than those who talk to their heads but Elia made me realise that unless you listen to your head, you might be a great person, but you will not be able to change anybody else. She was able to change me.

There is so much more I would like to say. I would like to keep talking, on and on and on and on… And then I would never talk ever again, only bask in the warmth of her memories but I cannot do that. I have responsibilities, and I would only be insulting her if I did not execute them properly. It was always her favourite poem, the one that ended with: “And miles to go before I sleep/ Miles to go before I sleep.”

This is way too long to be an epitaph, and we have to totally think up something else to scribe on her mural, but this was the least I could say. I know each and every one of you here, or well, at least most of you here, really did love her. And I love you for that. I love you for sitting and patiently listening to me speak; I don’t even speak half as well as she does. Thank you so much, from both of us, because I am sure that is what she would also have said. She had far too much gratitude for a woman who was so high-maintenance and arrogant! I love her the just way she is, just like the rest of you.”

“If you’re having any problem with the heels I could hold them for you, anyways the parking space is just about there,” Renly commented, watching his wife give little silent yelps of agony with every step she took.

“Whoever said there was something wrong with my heels? Why are you men always after our heels? For God’s sake I love them! I can’t change into sneakers only because it would make me a cooler wife. This is what I am, and I’m sorry for being this way Ren,” Margaery’s tone metamorphosed from a snappy one to one of slight disappointment and low-key melancholy.

“I am glad you are just the way you are,” Renly commented, holding the car door open for her. “What?”

“You opportunist, gold-digging wives may not be as romantic as the stupid girls in the movies, but you’re amazing just the way you are.”

“No fucking way.”

“Babe, mind the language… Will is in the back,” Renly said the last bit in something barely above an audible whisper.

“You seem to be in love,” Margaery continued, not bothering to acknowledge his warning.

“What do you mean?” This time it was the young Baratheon who was caught off guard.

“You can’t be in love with me; you’re not straight to begin with and even if you were, how could you love me? I thought you’d already seen my despicable sides,” Margaery rattled.

“Well, about your first doubt, people change, it’s all fluid really; and about your second doubt, of course I’ve seen you at your worst, like Rhaegar saw Elia at hers. I’ve seen the strange monster that lights up in your eyes when you see the seat of the CEO in my brother’s office, I’ve heard you repeatedly nagging about my lack of inspiration and ambition in life, I have had you pull all your strings to make me more hard-working and aspire for bigger things and while I should detest being with a materialistic, unromantic woman like yourself, for God’s sake, I love it! I love it, because what would I do of simplicity and purity and naïveté when all I really wanted was to lay down and gossip the dirtiest before going to bed every night.”

At that Margaery kissed him, and baby Willas saw. He gagged, to which both his parents turned red, but the entire way back home, they had a hard time keeping their eyes and hands, off of each other. Margaery would send a note of thanks to Rhaegar and Elia’s mural grave the next day, and Rhaegar would be confused out of his wits, but he kept the note anyways. He liked small pretty
things like that.
Wow I’ve reached my twentieth chapter! I am so super happy about completing twenty chapters and the overwhelming response I have gotten along with it!! Thank you all so so much.

At the completion of yet another ten chapters, I am literally willing to do whatever you guys want me to do, just name it!

Also, I must announce this, I may not be active for the next five days because I am running off on a quick holiday to the hills! It was about time I took a break really!

By the way, this chapter is really breezy given how dark the last one was. Sorry about that, this is definitely cuter!

I love you all so so much!

Influenza was the proof that Gods really existed, and in their intense jealousy of human mortality, and thus resulting ability to live life to the fullest- they had invented influenza. Elia was sure of this as she lay in bed using up the umpteenth box of tissue paper and throwing the cardboard across the room as the crumpled moist tissue went flying elsewhere; and landed on the foot of her bed, near her feet. She kicked it in disgust and sneezed again. As a sickly child, Elia should have been used to all this by now, but no matter how many times the pollens caught up to her, she was never prepared. She sneezed once again, and cursed out really loud, this time, in Ghiscari.

“Wow, you’re giving me a good language course, sister,” Oberyn exclaimed as he pushed the door to her opulently decorated room with his foot and entered with a large container of steaming hot soup. Elia glared at him. “I wonder do they pay you to teach Ghiscari as well? I was taking a look at your pay roll, damn, I never seen a professor get paid that much!”

“Have you encountered any professor in your life, besides me? Oh yes, and Doran.”

“I have my professors, and they’re all quite poor,” Oberyn taunted back.

“Yes, because you go to an Open University, where, just like they accept you at lesser grades, they accept professors of lesser quality, equals to, lesser pay roll,” Elia exclaimed, and then shook her head in reprimanding manner, “shameful, my brother attending Open University.”

“You’re just jealous I have more fun in college than you ever had in your entire stretch of education.”

“Did you call my Vice Chancellor and let him know I was unwell, or were you fooling around with your ‘college friends’?” Elia shot him a sharp look which clearly spelt that she was annoyed beyond measure, even with her favourite sibling. She really hated colds.

“I’ll call him, all in good time sister. Right now, Master Chef Oberyn and his special rattlesnake soup,” the young boy announced happily, walking over with his mini-cauldron towards his ailing sister.

Elia would have chided him, but she loved rattlesnake soup way too much to actually protest. Instead, she only sat and sipped on the thing hungrily. The last night had been spent with such virulent bouts of cough that she had been forced to throw up the accumulated snot and most of her dinner had come out with it. She was starving, unable to breathe, and also hurting on the abdomen. The warm soup did wonders to her inside and out. Oberyn observed intently and occasionally commented on her colour returning slowly. She could never stay angry for long at the boy and ruffled his hair. He only laughed with mischief and giddiness. Oberyn was the constant source of happiness and positivity in a life that was so wrought with academic politics; not to get Elia wrong,
she loved the politics at her workplace, and meandering around it, but Oberyn was a much needed source of simplicity and mirth that kept her sane.

When she was done with the soup, she fished out her phone from underneath her pillow and Oberyn only stared at disbelief. Elia had this habit of conjuring up her neon cell from thin air.

“Now, call.”

“You call, you voice seems healthier with the soup,” Oberyn grumbled. The Vice Chancellor of the Citadel was no joke, and he was perennially scared of all kinds of men of position in the academia.

“Don’t be an idiot, call, for fuck’s sake,” Elia thrust the phone into him.

“Wow, fever really brings out that inner gangster in you,” Oberyn laughed even as he reluctantly entered her password, unlocked the phone to be greeted by a wallpaper of, well, a lot of things written in black and white drawn with tables. “What is this?”

“That’s the annual exam schedule. Will you call please,” Elia hurried.

“All you Profs are abnormal. Who has a schedule saved as the home screen, I run away from them,” Oberyn was still grumbling when he put the phone to his ear.

Elia rung her hands and nervously bit her lip and prayed to her Rhoynish Gods all the while that Oberyn was outside the room speaking to her Vice Chancellor. Maester Dronaris was a strict man and she did not want the phone call to be accentuated by her sneezes although that would authenticate the excuse. Even then, she knew he would be irritated and she would rather her charismatic brother spoke first. Not that Elia lacked charisma, only that she had a low supply of it when she was down with the flu. She could hear Oberyn’s exclamations and nervous stuttering outside her door but was not going pay attention to it, she would rather Oberyn come in and give her a detailed transcript of what went down. When he entered like a gust of wind with a red face that clearly spelt trouble, she was glaring and staring nervously at him at the same time. He was still panting and making large eyes.

“What happened?”

“He is quite a handful, how do you handle him?”

“I didn’t ask for your opinion, I asked for the hard facts, what happened?”

“He said he needs a proper medical certificate to prove it but he was willing to believe you because you are generally pretty regular… what a creep he is!”

“I did not ask for your personal preference; did he say anything else?”

“No, only asked you to return as soon as possible.”

“Did he say anything about who was going to substitute for me?”

“No, why? Oh, you’re scared the substitute might be better than you and then you can end up losing the job, I see!” Oberyn cracked at his own joke towards Elia’s ego.

“I’m scared the substitute might be Baelish who harasses the girls and cannot teach for shit,” Elia replied sharply.

“No, he didn’t mention anything about a Baelish, but he did say, and he was quite excited about this, that Rhaegar Targaryan was acting as a substitute for Ash for the next two months,” Oberyn remembered out of the blue.

“Rhaegar Targaryan is going to be teaching Journalism?” Elia asked astonished.

“Why, you thought a handsome couldn’t be a professor? Didn’t the two of you have a summer romance in school or something?”

“Oby, I never thought that, that handsome face would become my colleague one day…”

All Elia could hear through the Citadel walls were chatters of how handsome Rhaegar Targaryan was. The girl rolled her eyes as she slid comfortably into her seat in the staffroom, right in the middle of the long table, and turned out, much to the envy of others, right next to Rhaegar Targaryan’s seat. This was mainly because Ashara and Elia were friends and when they had first gotten the jobs, they had made it a point to be assigned seats beside each other in the teacher’s hall. Elia had never imagined it would have dragged her into such an awkward position later in life. She cursed Ashara for ever taking the leave to attend her cousin’s wedding.
The entire day was spent as a relative breather given that they were never free at the same time and always managed to avoid each other. Rhaegar had begun to grow extremely curious about the empty spot next to him so when he was informed that the owner of the seat had returned his interest had peaked. He kept shooting glances at it while he was checking answers and every time he entered the staffroom, his eyes would dart to the empty seat but he never really ended up catching a glimpse of her.

“I see you’re quite fidgety today; your eyes, especially,” Willas softly commented. Willas was a sweet boy, but he was a Tyrell after all, there were some things the Tyrells could not help themselves with.

“I’m good,” Rhaegar hurriedly replied, flushing, extremely embarrassed that somebody had taken notice. What if this economics professor was told, things would become tense unnecessarily.

“If you’re curious about who it is, I can tell you,” Willas offered.

Rhaegar was going to politely decline, but the echoing sound of the bell cut through their conversation. The last classes of the day were neither economics, nor journalism. However, Rhaegar still stayed back, in case his students had queries. He was a diligent boy and the Vice Chancellor was having second thoughts of keeping him permanently. He finished organising his own file as he waved at a cheeky Willas who drove off towards his Microbiology class in a wheelchair. Willas was fun, once you got to get under his skin, and Rhaegar was beginning to realise that. He waved off at his new best friend with a smile but suddenly a tall, tan figure blocked his view as she entered the doorway.

At first, he had to blink, to get used to the dazzling brightness. Then, when the initial temporary deprivation of sight was overcome, Rhaegar had to blink a few times to come to terms with the intense minion yellow sweater dress and striped, shredded stockings as the lanky frame with flying wavy locks entered the room, crossed his being, and took the seat next to him. This exotic beauty taught economics? Wow. He turned around to face her, and was glad Willas was not here to watch his demeanour and pass comments about it. The face seemed intensely familiar, especially with the large dark eyes and tiny, well-placed nose. The girl suddenly became conscious of the fact that the handsome young male sitting next to her was, well, staring.

“Hello,” she greeted politely. The politeness in her voice rang a thousand bells in Rhaegar, and he immediately remembered who it was.

“You teach economics?!”

“So, are you asking that because you find me to be an attractive female or are you asking that because I am the Elia you knew from highschool?”

“Both, shamefully.”

There was a high-pitched tinkling laughter from Elia, something so extremely rare. Maester Pycelle, sitting across them, looked at the two with disdain. “You’re brutally honest.”

“Not usually, but I never could lie to you eh?”

“You did end up lying to me finally,” Elia said, and immediately regretted the awkwardness she knew would follow. It was one of the perks of having a colleague who was an ex and also eye-candy.

Rhaegar rubbed the back of his silver head and was about to say something, anything really, but found himself fumbling, faltering. He was never the kind with the brilliant tongue; the war of words was always Elia’s forte. He cleared his throat, deciding to meet her jibe with more of the only thing he had, honesty, but a sharp fire alarm interrupted him, much to his gratitude. He got up immediately, and seeing the rest of the professors so extremely calm, going on with their work as if nothing else had happened, frowned and sat down again. “That was a fire alarm, right?”

“Yes, it’s a fire drill. We have one every three months,” Elia answered, thanking fire.

“How do you know this was a fire drill?”

“Oh I had gone to talk to the Dean in the morning and he informed me that we would be having a fire drill again. It’s mainly for the students really, we know what to do.”

And the students really did come pouring out, but they were all scared pale and screaming extremely loudly, much to the irritation of all the other teachers who let their frustration show by
glaring at the fleeing students out of the open door. None of the pupils took much notice though, as they all began running out in masses, complete hysteria overtaking the college gardens which were adjacent to the staffroom. Elia frowned, and Rhaegar was scared out of his wits. He had never encountered a more real fire drill. Pycke and the more senior teachers seemed to be extremely bothered by all the noise and were even seen to be taking out some cotton which these senior citizens always had stashed around somewhere to cover their ears.

“Wow, you’re students are really good actors; they are giving an authentic feel to this drill,” Rhaegar commented.

“They never have before,” Elia commented as she was already out of her seat and craning her neck out to see what was going on. There were millions of students piled around everywhere, looking to the top of the building and exclaiming and creating a situation close to a stampede in the beautifully decorated garden. Elia took a step out now, this was not part of the deal, staring at the sky and passing comments, that is. This was strange behaviour. “Oh my goodness, it’s a real fire!”

Catelyn Stark, who sat close to the door, heard her exclamation first and looked up to see the commotion. Rhaegar stood up straighter than a sturdy log and was out the door before anybody else. However, he had a hand catching his by the long sleeve of his gingham t-shirt. He turned around to see Elia staring at him with an expression that was unreadable to him. Meanwhile, the rest of everybody in the university had rushed out.

“What the hell are you doing let me go!” Rhaegar hollered.

“What kind of a dragon runs away from fire?”

“A sensible one!”

“Please go and check upstairs. The rest of us can’t, but you can. Please go, please, and see if there are any students trapped,” Elia pleaded.

“Are you mad? Don’t you know the standard procedure in life; save yourself first and then make sure others are safe,” Rhaegar belted out. “It’s actually more beneficial than you think it is.”

“But you’re a Targaryan, and with great power comes great responsibility, now please, go…” Elia pushed him upstairs.

Rhaegar ran off the other way, to the garden where everybody was assembled. Elia took a long hard stare at the staircase, and since everybody was far too busy screaming in the garden, she knew she needed to take matters into her own hands. She ran up the smoky steps as fast as she could; she knew it would be easier if she was swift because the smoke wouldn’t get caught in her eyes or hitched inside her throat. She ran as fast as she could, and truth be told, Elia didn’t really care for anybody’s life except her own, but there were a couple of files lying scattered around her locker that she would really like in an unburned state. Truth was, she had really hoped Rhaegar would have gone and fetch those for her.

The top floor was burning, and the brilliant orange and yellow of the fire blinded her eyes as she tried to fight her way through it. The smoke and the sheer heat proved it to be an impossible feat. Suddenly, the locker near her burst into leaping flames, one of the students must have kept flammables in there and it sent Elia flying across the corridor. Thankfully her pretty head didn’t bump into anything but her lower abdomen was severely bruised at the sudden impact with the concrete wall. She gave out a limp response to the pain as it shot through her. There was far too much smoke to be thinking straight now, and there were tears in Elia’s eyes, falling freely, mainly because she had always wanted to be assassinated and this was the last kind of death she had wished for.

In a swift moment, sort of like the Rhoynish Gods had answered her prayers, a pair of strong and pale hands scooped her up. She saw a mop of silver wavy curls and smiled. Rhaegar was a good man, better than her at least. Again the glimmer of hope sparked in her; maybe those files would be salvageable. She knew it would be too much to ask of Rhaegar but maybe he was the only one she could ask. Nobody else would have believed it, rather blaming it to be the smoke that had sent her into disillusion but that was hardly the case. Rhaegar knew some of her worst traits, he wouldn’t be judging. But he was already making his way down the stairs which was a bit of a let-down.

“Rhæ, my locker, there’s folders outside it. Please…” she croaked, pointing towards a flaming
room. “Please.”
Rhaegar, a slave of his habits, groaned, sat her down on the staircase, which had not been affected yet, and went towards the direction she had told him to. He still couldn’t believe his own legs. Elia rested her head on the railing and prayed to the gods that something could be saved. When Rhaegar came out again, holding a brown envelope of papers, shirt half burned out, he noticed Elia in a state of frailty, practically having fainted. He furrowed his eyebrows at her state as he picked her up and clutching her important papers, brought her down the stairs. The entire college cheered for him, but Elia had already been knocked out by then.

““What was so precious in that file that you made me risk my life?” Rhaegar furiously questioned when Elia had finally opened her eyes.
Once the initial shock of finding herself in the hospital was over, and disdaining over the plain chequered blue dress was finished, she actually turned towards Rhaegar to spill the beans. “You’ll tell nobody right substitute?”
“No, why would I? Should I?” Rhaegar danced his eyebrows playfully.
“Stop acting smart! I know you feel like superman and all but please, don’t tell. I’ll tell you because you saved me and I owe you I guess.”
“Oh geez calm down; tell me, what was so confidential in those papers?”
“I might be changing my job.”
“What? I thought you were one of the youngest and greatest assets the Citadel had, that’s what all the seniors told me first day I joined the job,” Rhaegar commented, visibly upset at the news.
“Well yes, I am, but I’ve got a better job offer at the stock market, as an economic analyst. It’s a lot of fun.”
“So is this. You can’t ditch them, they really like you. Plus, you know how hard it is to get an economics teacher, and a good one at that.”
“Who told you I was a good one? I am a popular professor, and of course, I love the kids, but I need some money too.”
“You get a lot of money,” Rhaegar countered.
“Who told you that?”
“Oberyn.”
“Wow… you have been talking to my brother…”
“There was nothing else to do really, waiting for you to wake up the entire night. I’ve just sent him home, he’s young, he needs some rest. We had decided that once he came back, I would go,” Rhaegar explained.
“Wow, you waited the whole night?”
“Stop, you’re making me blush now…” Rhaegar motioned in a most feminine manner making Elia burst into amicable laughter.
“Ouch, my sides are hurting,” she whined.
“Yes, it hit you there the hardest. I’ve never seen anyone who goes that far for a new job.”
“Hey, it’s not just any job, it’s a stock market job, and it’s pretty amaz-”
“You’ll have to work with Petyr Baelish.”
“Maybe; initially. Doesn’t mean I have to work with him my entire life. I’m going to rise to the top,” Elia dreamily sighed.
“I was wondering where the old Elia went- didn’t realise she was hiding behind a Uni professor,” Rhaegar shook his head. “There’s that ambition I hate so much. It’s good to have you back.”
“Rhae, why did you save me?”
“What kind of a stupid question is that? Just because I broke up with you doesn’t mean I was going to let you die.”
“No, I know that. I just meant, why would you come to rescue me? You could have sent the fire brigade; I heard them in the distance anyways.”
“With great power comes great responsibility.”
“And who could have taught you that?” Elia mused, one pretty eyebrow raised to her temples. “My favourite professor,” Rhaegar whispered back, keeping one hand subtly on the hospital bed. Elia, who was a sucker for his subtleties, reached out and grasped it. “Just tell me, is there any part of my body that has been burnt? I really don’t wish to be all charred and not so attractive anymore,” Elia broke the peaceful silence. “Eli, we were having a beautiful moment!”

It was rare for the teacher’s room to ever sound like a fish market, but on the day that the Citadel opened again, right after lunch, that’s precisely what it represented. Elia had arrived late, due to the fact that she was still on a crutch and suffered from elongated breathing diseases. Her surprise at the hullabaloo was shared with Qyburn, the eerily introvert and silently curious anatomy professor who everybody, colleagues and students alike shared a secret distaste for. He stood next to Elia and examined her through his glassy eyes as always. Elia shared her strong theories about the origins and whereabouts of this man and they grew stronger than ever. There was something wrong with all the professors of the Life Sciences. She cleared her throat and scooted slightly to the left, away from him. “I wonder, there must be news of marriage,” he mused, standing at the entrance, next to Elia, as he flicked his eyes towards her. To say that she was irritated at his sudden musing would be an understatement. “I think it’s got to do with the job,” she politely replied, excused herself, and entered the room to join in the ensuing happy chaos. “I am so happy that Rhaegar got to keep the job, my students would be heartbroken otherwise. They always kept gushing about him,” Ashara was garrulous in the centre of the table. “Wait, you’re fired?” Elia’s ignorant voice boomed down the hall and suddenly everybody took notice of her, especially Rhaegar who offered her a seat immediately (that was also politely declined), and began coddling over her. Elia felt extremely uncomfortable when all of these extremely senior colleagues jumped onto her physically cooing, it was a little uncanny. “No Eli, I’m still teaching journalism. But remember there were talks of opening a department besides English that was solely for Creative Writing; well, Mr. Targaryan has been made Head of the Department,” Ashara announced smiling widely. “Wow that’s great,” Elia said, reeling from shock. This was a drastic measure to take in an institution of higher studies. It wasn’t fair that a Targaryan was getting to move up the career ladder this fast. She thought it to be a bit unjust but kept that to herself. Rhaegar did notice a slight uneasiness in the features, and a stiff posture maintained throughout his welcoming ceremony which was a popular practise in the Citadel where all the teachers welcomed new staff by cutting a cake. His eyes kept flicking towards Elia throughout the afternoon and it was only after she had left to take her single class of the day that he could concentrate on the conversations people were so eagerly prodding with him. He nodded his head and smiled politely, as politely as he could muster that is, thoughts of Elia were still swarming his head. “What’s wrong with you? When I got a job at the Citadel I was dancing all over the place, Arthur had a hard time trying to douse out the igniting excitement,” Ashara caught up with Rhaegar, cornering him. She wore her best expression of intense suspicion and sipped on Sprite from a paper cup. She resembled a cheap private investigator in Rhaegar’s mind and he kept that opinion to himself. “I’m genuinely happier than I ever have been before,” Rhaegar smiled back. “It doesn’t show.” “Well, maybe I’m not the expressive type,” Rhaegar countered. “You cry on my brother’s shoulder while we watch cheap Braavosi rom-coms, you’re telling me you have a hard time ‘expressing’. Cut the bullshit Rhaegar, what’s the matter?” Ashara snapped. “Nothing’s the bloody matter!” “It’s Elia isn’t it?”
"I don’t understand your friends’ problem Ashara, she’s never happy, no matter what I do."
"Now I’ll give you a real piece of information- she has a hard time expressing her emotions. Don’t take women for granted Rhaegar, they are more similar to men than all those tomboys you date are;” Ashara belted out her expert comment like she usually always did when she was playing Dr. Love with the rest of the world. Poor girl had a rotten luck when it came to her own love life. Rhaegar sighed, and went back to sulking in the corner. He had landed a dream job, and would be teaching something far more interesting than journalism (strictly his own opinion), and yet he deemed it fit to stand in a corner, swirl the dark carbonated drink in his cup into neat concentric circles, and contemplate why he had left Elia to begin with. Maybe they had been destined to have a summer affair only; maybe he had been stupidly blind; maybe their time for romance had not yet come (because Rhaegar had a strong feeling that this was a good and stable kind of energy, the one he sensed with Elia, and should it ever come true, it would last him a lifetime); or maybe, despite Rhaegar’s fantasies, they were just not compatible enough.

“How dare you!” Rhaegar’s voice hollered across Elia’s long drawn corridors and vibrated off of every non-living object in the house done up with complete wooden interiors. There was a loud echo.
“What are you doing here?” Elia slurred. It was pretty obvious she was slightly drunk.
“Oh wow, you’re making a mess of yourself already, and you’re not even two days out of the job; good lot of benefit the stock market is doing for you,” Rhaegar’s voice was still raised.
“Rhae, stop. I haven’t joined the stock market yet, what are you talking about?” Elia, in her drunken daze, placed a finger on his chest, to physically guard him from coming closer.
“You’re drunk. Bloody hell.”
“Which hell?” Elia giggled in a complete state of adorability that only a drunkard can exude. Rhaegar had to suppress the smile that had suddenly threatened to erupt.
“You need to sleep this off, come on, let’s get you to bed,” Rhaegar urged, not paying much heed to Elia’s petite index finger trying to stop him.
“No, I am not going to sleep. I put sleeping pills in Oby’s salad so he could go to sleep, and I could drink, wee!” Elia exclaimed in complete ecstasy as she twirled around with a long sapphire tinted bottle in her hand. Rhaegar caught her as she was about to fall.
“You’ve gone mad! Who drugs their own brother?!” The young dragon shouted.
“I wanted to get drunk. I’ve lost everything; I’ve lost a job, I’ve lost a crush who I suddenly realised was not just a crush really, I’ve lost the proper use of one of my legs for an application that still has me hanging and now I’m going to lose my self esteem my marrying any ass my mother picks for me,” the young viper kept slurring and all that information at the same time was far too much for Rhaegar to grasp.
“You’re getting married? You’re job at Wall Street is not permanent yet? Why the hell did you leave the Citadel?” Rhaegar’s questions poured out of him like the volcanoes that had drove the Targaryans away.
“Too many questions you fool,” Elia chugged down the rest of the bottle like she was at a competition and Rhaegar snatched it away from her grasp despite the protests and the pouts. “My water!”
“I’ll get you water; proper water! You absolute idiot! Was it your ego that made you think I have made you Head of the Economics, or was it that annoying brain of yours once again telling you to let me go without a fight; I’ll give you some real news now- I became Head of Creative Writing for you! They adore me so much because I saved you and you have no idea how much that University loves you and needs you. You have no idea how amazing a job it is to mete out knowledge and you have no idea how much I die every day because you’re so fucking hell bent on letting me leave. Once I’ll leave you forever, and even jumping into the fire won’t save me, plus, you’re not a Targaryan,” Rhaegar blurted out.
The brunt of his speech made Elia tumble back and predictably find herself in his arms again. He
was crying now, because he had never been this close to Elia or her honesty, and she was crying, because she had learned to feel after a very long time, but mainly, they both were crying because it was such a ridiculously complicated situation and they both loved the feel of each other’s arms. So Rhaegar was swift to pull her in and softly kissed the back of her head as he cradled her and she took soft and deep breaths in an alternating rhythm into the nape of his neck. When Elia awoke in the morning, still extremely clothed, much to her disappointment, she glanced to her side to find Rhaegar spooning her, clothed himself as well. She gave a grunt of disapproval and brushed his hand off of her. The loss of her warmth was sure to wake him and he looked up groggily. “What’s the point of drinking if you won’t even take advantage of me?” Elia crossed her hands in front of her chest. “Didn’t even bother to change me into night clothes,” she shook her head in disappointment.

“But last night we cried and held deep emotional discussions, verging on the point of philosophical,” Rhaegar replied, his morning baritone thick with phlegm. “Is that what you plan to do with me for the rest of your life?” Elia raised her eyebrow. “Excuse me?”

“I meant, I’m not going back to the Citadel if you don’t go and talk my mom out of whatever preposterous marriage she is arranging for me,” Elia placed her bargain in the voice of a true economist.

Rhaegar stared at her a little dumb at first, and then with realisation suddenly striking him, got up in the sitting position she was in, pulled her into him, tumbled over the covers with her and ended up on the floor in her excitement. Elia tried to protest to the rash behaviour claiming that she had given him a chance the previous night and he had not taken it and no amount of rashness now would do the trick of melting her before their wedding night but he silenced her with an unreasonable amount of loud kisses. Thank god for teaching substitutes.
And I am back! Phew, it was a good holiday, but I totally missed writing so this is better!
Also, merry merry Christmas, albeit a little late.
Now a few things about this imagine; a lot of people were requesting me to write jealous Rhaegar, and I did! Although I think I made this a little too dark but I really want your feedback on how you liked it. There will be quite a few jealous Rhaegars after this as well.
So, Lokitty Wokitty had suggested that maybe Elia could date Brandon and I found that idea to be quite imaginative and cool and I have tried to use that here but I don't know if I have done justice. I have gotten a lot of good response and ideas and I will try my best to touch on those!
A very Happy New Year in advance as well!

“Wow, you’ve grown taller.”
“No, Rhae, I’m pretty sure it’s the heels.”
“I’m pretty sure it’s not. You have grown, quite tall.”
Rhaegar’s energetic lavender pupils scanned Elia’s lanky, curvy frame in a mode that made her feel slightly awkward. Just the tiniest bit. They were exes; had been, for quite a while, till she landed up with an invitation to the opening of his very own Press House. Elia was proud, and as a best friend from college (because she had pushed the memories of their romantic association right to the back of her memory), she had thought it to be her responsibility to be present. Rhaegar checking her out was really not helping. Rhaegar had always been a sucker for subtlety so what really went wrong at that party was quite the mystery to Elia. Rhaegar would later go on to blame the alcohol like he usually always did (although he was not much of a drinker at all).
“Rhae, I am pretty sure it’s the heels,” she cleared her throat as she kept shifting her weight from one foot to the other.
“Yes, well, I guess so. You just look incredibly… different,” Rhaegar managed himself at the last minute, and came to his senses. He didn’t wish to use ‘different’, but for the lack of a better word in the situation they found themselves in, he was bound to.
“Thanks. You look just about fine too! Finally get to wear those floral suits huh!” Elia laughed along nervously.
“Yes, gosh thanks. Eli, I never knew blue suited you so well…” Rhaegar’s dreamy tone was cue to more awkwardness.
“I didn’t wear it very often, I guess…” Elia’s hands involuntarily went to the back of her neatly pinned up hair and scratched it slightly to get rid of the tension grappling at the back of her head, and inside it, if possible.
“How are you?”
“Grand. I’ve actually shifted to King’s Landing now, completely. You’ll be seeing more of me, unfortunately!” Elia smiled warmly at him. She felt like the ice was finally breaking. Maybe being neighbours would help them better the latent friction that bubbled between the two of them.
“Although it’s a pain being away from Brandon.”
“Brandon who?” Rhaegar inquired curiously. He was not used to hear names of other men from Elia’s mouth, well, except her annoying brothers.
“Brandon Stark. My boyfriend. You’d know him, he’s Lyanna’s brother.”
“You’re dating Bran the playboy? You know the standing joke amongst him between the other cops, that he’s slept with the entire bloody station; females only though. And why are you dating a cop?” Rhaegar burst out, and tried his best to pass it off as simple concern.
“Hey, I dated you.”
“Yes, I was a poet. There’s a difference between a poet and a cop.”
“Well, I’m a foreign diplomat, and anyways, what’s this prejudice against cops?” Elia asked in her tone of high-pitched laughter that she usually assumed when she was trying to ease out a situation.
“They’re stupid,” Rhaegar replied plainly. “And anyways, he’s a lecherous idiot.”
“Yes, I know he’s got flirtatious tendencies; but I’m a Dornish woman you know, all of that’s fine with us. We care for each other and it’s just… everything is so perfect in my life right now. Even long distance works for us! I am so glad you invited him! I’ve never been happier…” With each new statement of Elia’s gushing, needles pricked Rhaegar everywhere.
“I don’t care. We love each other, the rest doesn’t matter,” Elia cut him through the sentence and dampened his spirits. “In Dorne, we’re open about everything.”
“That’s unhealthy.”
“What is wrong with you? As a friend, you should be happy for me,” Elia frowned and asked him in a tone that was a little too loud for comfort.
Rhaegar wanted to scream out that he was not a friend; that they were not just friends, they were so much more; that the history they shared would never be worth any Stark on either sides but he kept quiet for Elia’s sake; her happiness still mattered to him more than anything and he didn’t want to complicate the party and make a mess of it. He walked away, frustrated and jittery, and stood in the corner of the room, close to his little group of Arthur and Jon, and sulked. Elia, on the other hand was taken by surprise and frowned and muttered to herself before Brandon made his usual glamorous entry and she walked over to his arms.
“Dude, there’s dark chocolate panna cotta, your favourite. Why you standing here looking like a mourning Hamlet?” Jon nudged his best friend.
“She hated dark chocolate…” Rhaegar trailed off, leaning his head against the tall glass window surface and playing his fingers over it. “But she used to taste some for my sake. She’d complain about it, and scrunch up that cute nose of hers, but she had it for me.”
“What the hell are you talking about? I thought Lyanna loved dark chocolate?”
“I’m not talking about Lyanna!” Rhaegar snapped.
“Did someone mention my sister?” Brandon’s ‘attractive’ baritone boomed behind Rhaegar.
“Well yes, we were just wondering how she was left uninvited in what increasingly seems like a Rhaegar Targaryan’s exes party,” Arthur interrupted what he knew was a conversation meandering into the wrong lane.
Both Brandon, and Elia beside him, burst into laughter along with a jovial Jon Connington and a relieved Arthur simply laughing because he had to pretend like that was a joke. Rhaegar still sulked, although the intensity was mellowed. Elia shot him a subtle look, as if asking what was wrong, but he smiled in return so she did not pay much heed to it. She turned instead, to her boyfriend, and kissed him on the cheek before whispering into his ear, presumably to take her to the edibles counter. Rhaegar burned and churned and twisted inside but the sudden lurch of fire also gave him the incentive to smile broader externally.
“I think we should make our way towards the food as well. It is getting late,” Jon suggested.
It was Rhaegar who took the primal giant strides towards the food counters. Albeit, Elia was standing near the salad corner debating on what she would like to take; fortunately it was not one of those narrow tables where only one person could take a helping at one point of time so she wasn’t holding people up. Rhaegar smiled to himself, remembering all the times they used to gate crash weddings and Elia used to hold up the dinner line speculating on her choice of salad and more often than not, they used to get caught. But it wasn’t like people minded; both Elia and
Rhaegar together were easy on the eyes and everybody fancied a dreamy Martell-Targaryan romance. He approached her with one of his best charming smiles; Rhaegar was in the mood for playing games.

“Babe, you think this meat salad is going to be better? It has too much mayonnaise though, I don’t like mayonnaise,” Elia blabbered on but it was not like Brandon was listening. He was far too absorbed with the cold cuts and the cheese.

“I think you’ll like the meatzza and olive oil combination,” Rhaegar interrupted, pretending like he had casually dropped into the conversation.

“I don’t Rhae that one has pineapples though…”

“Aren’t you the cutest, contemplating salad?” Rhaegar nudged her fondly.

“I honestly think it’s annoying. All of you indulged her with this habit of fickle nature didn’t you?” Brandon coarsely put.

“Don’t be so mean!” Elia retorted back to him only to be picked up and spun around in delight. Of course they had stupid cute couple fights; Rhaegar rolled his eyes and poured some hot chilli sauce for himself into the pale white plate unknowingly, dipping a finger into it and grimacing as soon as the spice hit his taste buds. Nothing seemed to be working in his favour.

“You are hopeless at hiding emotions,” Arthur interrupted Rhaegar’s line of all kinds of thoughts. The boy looked terribly disturbed. “Stop gaping and scowling.”

“I am not gaping, nor scowling. And who would I gape and scowl at?”

“You are so stupid and messed up. Your love life is in shambles, and now you’re in denial about being jealous, about your ex! Like who does that?”

“Could you be any louder Art?”

Arthur left, huffing, and Rhaegar continued to wallow in shallow self-pity. He barely paid attention to the rest of the guests, and finished up whatever little food he had taken in the first place. He needed some desert love, but it turned out that two others had gotten to his favourite counter before him. He was heading straight for the Dark Chocolate panna cotta when he saw Brandon’s hand reach out and scoop up four of the dainty cups that the panna cotta came in. He frowned; was Brandon Stark really going to consume four panna cottas? His worst nightmare came alive though, as Brandon coaxed Elia into having one. It needed an enormous amount of kisses but it was evident that Brandon loved both his girlfriend and dark chocolate because he wanted Elia to taste his favourite desert. And then, Elia did something that Rhaegar had thought he was the only one who had the privilege of experiencing; she actually bit into the thick mass of gelatinous dark chocolate preparation and Rhaegar could gag out of jealousy then and there. It was a good thing neither member of the loved-up couple had noticed him because there were tears free-falling from his pretty purple eyes. He didn’t bother to wipe them as he ferociously sprinted towards the restrooms. On his way, as his luck would have it, there was a bump into a known silver-haired figure.

“Wow, you’re… crying. Oh well, at least it shows you’re human,” Viserys snidely commented.

The young boy had no love lost for a brother who he thought was a shame in the Targaryan lineage.

“Vis, move out of my way,” Rhaegar warned, voice dangerously low.

“What the hell happened in there? Some girl finally threw coke on your expensive clothes?” Viserys continued taunting.

In his rage, Rhaegar not being able to take it anymore, took a straight lunge at his younger brother’s jaw and didn’t wait to hear a crack or even a groan from the wounded boy as he ran to the washroom. Yes, the guilt was eating him up, but honestly, sometimes Viserys truly rode on his nerves and tested the patience that Rhaegar so valued in himself. Sometimes, he was sick of being a nice and polite person. He patted some cold water on his tired eyes and stared at the mirror. There was nothing but an empty shadow of a passionate young poet staring back at him. Whether it was Elia who had caused this, or the organizing of the event, he did not know. But he felt and looked like a mess and only sighed back at the reflection that was clearly pointing out his failure at life. Of course he had just opened a publishing house and life was supposed to be at its’ zenith for Rhaegar but it felt so pointless. He quickly began washing away the tears that refused to stop and
began breathing deeply, making a sort of groaning sound. The thoughts of Brandon and Elia simply refused to exit. His hands fished around his velvet pocket, feeling for his phone, and produced it out as soon as he felt it touch his fingertips.

“Lyanna, this is me Rhaegar. I know we haven’t talked in a while but I was just curious; is Elia really dating your brother? I thought you hated her and stuff. How did this come to be?” This voice message was his last resort. There were some things in life for which taking the dirty route was the only option.

He finally splattered some water on his face and wiped it clean with the off-white environment friendly tissues they offered at the club. He was ready to win the love of his life back, regardless of whether she wanted him in the first place. This was war, and everything was fair here, even if the enmity with Brandon had no consent from Elia herself. He fixed the polished collar from the top of his blazer and gave a last look at the mirror; Rhaegar had to look better than he had ever done before. He gave his hair a little ruffle, so that the calloused look made the smoky pale haze of his face become highlighted further. He sucked in a deep breath as he walked out with a newfound confidence, and determination.

There was an uncanny silence outside, and Rhaegar had read enough books to be aware of these types of silences. He walked to the porch and inside the large banquet hall only to find everybody gathered around Viserys. Of course the whiny and spoilt boy had complained to whoever would listen and now there was a crowd gathered around him, shaming Rhaegar internally he could have placed his bets on that. The closer he walked, the more evident red gushes out of Viserys’ nose became. The pale Targaryan skin was the worst when it came to bleeds, because everything was visible with a disturbing kind of transparency on the skin surface. He grimaced a little at the damage he had inflicted, but then remembered that Viserys was no saint either. He saw Elia crouching next to the boy and fussing over him—obviously, Viserys had always been a sucker for her attention, even when they were dating, he used to cling to her annoyingly, and more often than not, Rhaegar found him following them to their dates. He was sure Viserys had produced his own version of the truth, and Elia was livid at him.

“Why did you do this?” Elia sharply questioned as soon as her eyes fell on him. He gulped and shifted from one foot to the other.

“We had a falling out.”

“Regarding what?”

“That’s a family matter,” Rhaegar blurted out and the words felt so wrong sitting on his tongue. Elia was part of their family, always had been. Viserys was gaping at the answer, and shot his eyes to Elia who was genuinely hurt by the sharp sting of the words.

“Fine. Don’t you ever contact a stranger again,” she spat as she walked out, Brandon in tow. Rhaegar’s jaw dropped right down to Dorne. All his plans had neatly been foiled by the complaining and grudging little brother of his. He could have killed Viserys then and there, sitting on a chair looking innocent with handkerchiefs pressed to his nose, but he contained himself. There were still other people, and the last thing he needed right now was a family feud in the papers. A family he had excluded Elia from, so extremely conveniently.

“That was bad. Like really bad; I’ve never seen Eli so livid,” Arthur commented as he approached Rhaegar who was staring out of a window softly fuming.

“I’ve lost her forever haven’t I?”

There was something about the scent of bakeries; Rhaegar always felt warm, welcome and invited. And these three feelings were something he had been facing a shortage of in real life. The fresh bread dough and strong coffee, mingled with some cocoa and warm pastries wafted in the air as some of the most wonderful scents he had ever inhaled in his entire life. He took in a deep breath, and bit into his fancy marzipan cupcake. There was another tinkle at the door which was strange, considering very few people knew about the Dorne Bakery in King’s Landing.

“I want some red velvet cupcake and a spicy chicken patty,” an extremely familiar voice rang out
from the doorway itself, as a tall, dripping wet figure made its’ way to the counter. In his bid to dig into delicious food, Rhaegar had forgotten all about the rain. He stared wide-eyed as Elia’s soaked figure ran to the billing section.

“The spicy patty had finished. You’ll need to wait a while,” the Targaryan spoke out of turn. Elia sharply turned her head.

“What are you doing here?”

“I love this place too. You don’t own it,” Rhaegar’s words came out harsher than he had intended them to.

“Wow, being an ass has really gone to your head. Poor Vis, I wonder how he manages,” Elia replied.

“Poor Vis! Has it ever occurred to you how I survive with that stuck-up piece of shit! He keeps throwing his fucking law degree at my face over the smallest things and he bullies Dany and he plays obscure Dothraki music in the middle of the night and that’s not even the entire story; I have idiotic employees in my new company but can anybody spare a precious few minutes to listen to my side of the story, my day, in that house? Hell no! Every Targaryan has a story to tell, but nobody has the time to listen. My life is a mess, in every aspect of the word, but of course, poor fucking Vis; how does he manage living under the same roof with me?”

Elia stared at Rhaegar, her jaw dropping, water dripping from the ends of her ebony bun, and her knuckles shivering slightly due to the cold. She looked back at the cashier who was also quite shocked at the sudden outburst and asked Elia to repeat her orders. Turns out, Rhaegar was right, and she needed to wait a while for the spicy patty. She bit her lip and contemplated the empty seat in front of the silver-haired man who was lashing out at her two minutes ago. It was empty, as was the rest of the bakery, but there seemed to be the extreme need for the two ex-lovers to sit down and have a talk with each other. It was high time.

“You either need a shrink, or a wife.”

“I don’t want either. Maybe a friend who understands me will do just fine,” Rhaegar bitterly replied at his own weakness of not being able to say he needed her.

“You have friends who understand you,” Elia argued.

“Not like that!”

“Then like what? Tell me because I have never seen you as snappy and as complicated as this before. Gosh Rhae, being angry and emotionally manipulative was my job, when did we swap places?” Elia finally exclaimed, having given up on his tantrums.

“Can we not talk about this at all please?” Rhaegar begged, his baritone breaking.

“Fine. Let’s talk about something else; I don’t know, let’s not talk at all, I’m pretty sure you’ll find some reason to be offended anyways,” Elia rolled her eyes. She was not the kind who was eager on tolerating shit from people that were close to her.

“Eli I told you I’m going through a rough patch. Respect it for fuck’s sake!” Rhaegar hollered.

“We all go through rough patches, but none of us are that fucking sulked up about our exes moving on.”

Rhaegar shot his face up from the hot drink he was concentrating on. Elia had that strange unreadable expression she usually wore when she was outsmarting the best men in the game. He was far from the best anything in any game, and yet he knew she felt it was quite an accomplishment to read through his feelings. He felt offended and violated, to say the least. The best part about one-sided love was simply the fact that it was done in privacy and only he had a right over it. Elia was nobody to come bossing around his little world; and he felt that had crumbled as well. He stared at her in the most hurt expression he could muster, trying to make her feel the guilt of having read through him like he was transparent.

“Miss Martell, your red velvet cupcakes. We also have some cheesecake of this flavour, would you like that?” The lady from the other side of the counter hollered to their little tale in the corner. This was one of the perks of having a self-service café.

“I’m coming,” Elia hollered back, not removing her eyes from Rhaegar. “Don’t you dare try to make me feel guilty, I moved on, which was the natural thing to do.”
“You never loved me!”
“Did you Rhaegar? You cheated on me with a girl who was still in high school? Is that love?”
“You’re fine with Brandon sleeping around,” Rhaegar hadn’t wished to put his argument that way but there was no taking it back now.
“First of all, he doesn’t ‘sleep around’ anymore and secondly, even if he did get drunk and make a few mistakes, or ended up flirting with a couple of girls, he would tell me. You know why, because he loves me, and it’s not just for sex.”
“I love you too.”
“No you don’t Rhaegar. You’re not even a good friend; for friendships’ sake you should have told me that you were sleeping with Lyanna behind my back.”
“I was a coward, but I loved you,” Rhaegar’s voice quivered.
“Cowards don’t make lovers Rhae, they make runaways,” Elia put in her last words softly before she got up, to take her food, and leave. “You’re a coward, so is Lyanna, but none of you are near good lovers.”

When Elia walked out, with her pale pink takeaway baggage, Rhaegar leaned back on his chair, sipped on a new latte he had ordered and found himself. On her permanent way out, Elia had taught him things he would probably have never learned for himself. It was true, Lyanna and Rhaegar loved the chase; he was sure that no matter what age and day they would have been born in, they would run away, and they would do it predominantly because they loved the feeling.
Rhaegar remembered all the switching of trains and private flights when his father had found out about the affair; he remembered how Lyanna had cried into his arms when her father had died because of the mad Dictator’s whims (where he also remembered being surprised that Lyanna was not angry at him at all); and he remembered the sheer thrill of her pregnancy scare and how they had loved the thrill of building a life for themselves away from everybody. They were cowards, and he didn’t want to be a coward anymore.

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“I am so glad you turned up. Last time we met, I said some downright nasty stuff to you and I really wanted to apologise,” Elia seated herself obediently next to Rhaegar who was solitarily sipping on a glass of Dornish red. She made a beautiful bride, but she was exhausted, the lines were pretty clear on her face.
“I think I’ve been doing just fine. Your words had some good come out of them,” Rhaegar smiled good-naturedly.
“I am glad. Did you meet Brandon, newly this time, without all the ego I mean!” Elia laughed.
“Are you trying to provoke me to make a scene at your wedding?” Rhaegar’s phrase slightly slurred.
“No, I was making a joke, but I’ll leave now. You clearly need to be left alone,” Elia stated while she was getting back but was swiftly pulled back into Rhaegar’s arms; well almost, at least on the seat next to him.
“You’ll be leaving with me, I need to talk,” Rhaegar caught hold of her wrist and with a swift flick; the two of them were in the middle of the woods. Elia really regretted the decision of a destination wedding.
“What the fuck do you think you’re doing Rhaegar?” She asked in a dangerously low tone, one that meant anger, lots of latent anger bubbling inside.
“Would you have dark chocolate if I told you to?” Rhaegar asked quietly, maintaining complete composure.
“What?!”
“Would you?”
“What the hell are you talking about?”
“Dark chocolate, I’m talking about dark chocolate; would you have it if I gave it to you? I think that’s what I got you as a wedding gift, lots of expensive Braavosi dark chocolate.”
“Brandon loves dark chocolate.”
“Yes I know, so I’ve observed; but would you have it?”

“Have you considered going to a shrink? I kind of meant it when I said it last time,” Elia muttered slightly under her breath. It seemed to be a touchy topic for everybody recently and she could not recognise Rhaegar anymore.

“I think you’ve fixed me better than anybody else could,” Rhaegar replied earnestly.

“Have I? Because I don’t recall giving advice like drag brides out of the middle of their wedding dinner to ask them questions about dark chocolate,” Elia sassed him.

“Oh, that was an improvisation,” Rhaegar smiled.

“Are you okay Rhae?” Elia brushed a hand on his cheek.

“Will you have the dark chocolate just because I gave it to you Eli? Tell me and I’ll leave.”

“I have to go back, Brandon is waiting for me, and Lyanna is there too. Have you talked to her? She seemed pretty excited about your arrival. We’ll be starting the dances soon,” Elia blabbered on like she was nervous about something.

“I don’t do cowards anymore,” Rhaegar let go of her hand and let her walk away too.

The party was intensifying, and most of his friends were on the dance floor. Rhaegar’s eyes were only fixated on Elia, while she was dancing with Brandon, while she was whispering and laughing with him, and while she was cutting her wedding cake. Not once did his pretty purple eyes look away. There was a strange kind of madness shining through them; for the first time in his life, Rhaegar resembled his father. Aerys’ madness was his hatred, and Rhaegar’s was his love. Had he seen himself in the mirror then, fear would have unsettled him too.

“You’ve got to blink sometime,” Daenerys’ sweet voice interrupted as she plopped down next to him, licking on a piece of hot chocolate fudge.

“Excuse me?”

“The way you’re looking at Eli, you’ve got to stop it. Brandon’s her husband, not you. You missed the bus.”

“Is it that obvious?”

“Well, I don’t think anybody else cares. I just had my eyes on you big brother,” Daenerys cheekily shrugged.

“Don’t be stupid, it’s nothing like that. She’s getting married and I can’t believe it, we’ve been friends for the longest time so it feels a bit weird, there’s nothing else going on,” Rhaegar defended himself.

“Control that web of lies you’re spinning, it’s getting ridiculous. You should be glad I caught up with you before Tyrion did; the way he was laughing at you, I am pretty sure his words would hurt.”

“You and your punk friends.”

“Hey, Ty is like really smart okay? He’s a PI! And I’m going to study law, so your observations don’t hold,” the young girl snapped at him.

“Yes, yes, I’ll have two idiotic lawyers staying in the same house as I am,” Rhaegar grumbled. He was generally not like this to his younger siblings, but everybody seemed to be getting on his nerves at the wedding. It was good for Tyrion he had not come passing snide remarks.

“It’s your fault that you don’t have the Dornish Consul General staying with you,” Daenerys shot right back before she was off to her group of ‘punks’ as Rhaegar dubbed them.

Rhaegar downed his sixth glass of wine and stood up. He needed some help from the chair he was sitting on but he was doing better than he expected. The kids could laugh at him all they liked, he was sure he had handled himself way more gracefully than he had expected to. He stumbled a little but managed to pick up the maroon blazer that had fallen to the floor. It was quite hot, especially with six glasses of wine in the system and he had no intention of putting on a coat. In fact he planned to open a few buttons from the silken garble that he was wearing once he was inside the car. The walk to the car was the real challenge actually. He did the best he could, and decided to take the shorter route through the dense gardens (or forest, it depended on perspective actually) so he could get there faster. He had come alone and that is how he would go... It was only after he thought this that he realised how many metaphorical layers the line had.
On his way through the shrubbery, whereby he had managed to get a few leaves stuck into his silver locks and grazed the edges of his satin trousers, he heard a strange kind of chomping noise that was a cross between drinking and eating. He thought he did an excellent job of hiding behind a lean, lone tree branch and watched curiously as a figure clad in Dornish wedding attire licked off chocolate from her fingers. Rhaegar rubbed his eyes, closed and opened them, and finally, looked again. There was Elia, the love of his life, married to another, who was secretly devouring the dark chocolate he had gifted her.

Emotions so overwhelmed Rhaegar that he knew he needed to run from the scene. It would be extremely embarrassing for Elia if she was caught like this and if there was a bare minimum of what he owed her, it was saving her from that terrible feeling. He was sure she would be overcome by guilt as well. He ran as fast as his cloudy vision and dangly legs would carry him till he reached a clearing from where the parking spot was visible. Before reaching the car though, he broke down into tears. He howled, and it was a good thing the party was still raging inside that nobody heard him. He looked up into the skies and looked down facing the ground and howled, big fat tears cascading down his pale pink cheeks. This was the most euphoric and desperate he had ever felt together at the same time.

In some other life, he would not mess up with his choices, keep his wits about himself, and share dark chocolate with Elia into eternity.
Happy New Year!! (Yes I know I am a little late). So, this one has a storyline which was requested by mirkwood13. It was an amazing storyline and I don't think I have been able to do it justice. Tell me if it was not good enough because I would really like to write another Aegon imagine! Don't hesitate to leave criticism on it at all!
I love you all, thank you so much for requesting! Also, requests are always open guys, just in case you have an idea, I will try to do something about it! Thank you so much for everything!

The blue of the Deep Red Sea was unparalleled, as was the fresh smell of minerals that wafted through it even when the cruise barely skimmed through its’ waters. The blue was brilliantly transparent, so the shallower animals were visible like future through a crystal ball. The wind was comfortable, warm and strong; enveloping, like a mother’s hug. It was a pity that not everybody shared the same enthusiasm for the sea.

“Why does Dany have to string him along?” Rhaegar muttered in subtle disgust as he leaned ever so slightly to whisper into his ex-wife’s ear. Elia was surprised by the sudden verbal interruption. “He is her boyfriend, that’s why! I thought you were the Universal Flag-Bearer for True Love or something,” Elia spat back. There was not a day when she didn’t like to remind her recent ex-husband that he had cheated on her and passed it off as true love.

“He is a Dothraki,” Rhaegar rolled the word around his tongue like it was something as distasteful as Wasabi. Now it was a pity that Elia loved Wasabi.

“Double standards huh? No one can expect better from Valyrians,” she slowly whispered into his ears.

Aegon stood and smiled at a distance. He liked it so much better when his parents got along. Had he not ‘accidentally’ booked his mother’s ticket in this family tour they were all taking, cruising around the Slaver’s Bay, he would never have gotten to see such nice moments. He was sure that Daenerys had guessed what he was up to, she always seemed to guess what he was up to, but he loved her because she kept it a secret. She had always been more than only an aunt to him, but she had terrible choices when it came to men.

And Aegon’s thoughts about his aunt’s love life chronicled into reality as her latest boyfriend (a Dothraki at that) bent over the railing in what had been the twentieth time in their journey of barely thirty minutes and thrown up again. Aegon scrunched his nose in disgust because his eyes accidentally caught sight of the disgusting green liquid that was being thrown into the sea; the Dothraki maintained strange diets and he did not wish to think anymore. He turned around and came face to face with his sister who was generally good-natured but shared terrible memories with the sea. It was a pity that she was engaged to a Greyjoy but both siblings loved their mother and would never disobey her.

“You think he’s throwing up a horse’s heart, I’ve heard it’s a Dothraki delicacy,” Rhaenys mischievously whispered to her brother but he could see her going green in the face too.

“Nys please!” Aegon hollered in discomfort, but was loud enough to catch everybody’s attention. “Nys, let’s please go for breakfast was what I was trying to say,” he scratched the back of his head and tried to make up for the outburst.

“It’s noon Egg. Didn’t the kids have breakfast at the airport?” Elia questioned her husband. She was always worried about them if they were travelling with their father.
“Of course they did! What do you take me to be, an imbecile or something? Especially Egg, he downed an entire cheese bacon omelette and then had two more sandwiches,” Rhaegar blurted out in self-defence.

Elia stared back at her son who raised his own hands in defence as well. “I was finishing an assignment; I didn’t have time for dinner.”

“But Egg, you ate my piece of pudding as well. And even before that, you stole some pasta from my plate!” Visenya hollered from behind her brother.

“Wow, so now we have a hog and someone who cannot keep anything in his guts; this is going to be one lovely cruise trip,” Elia smiled at the entire family and laid back in her deck chair. She hated tanning in the sun, so she was obviously sitting in the shade, but she still enjoyed the warmth that came with it.

However, within minutes of having said that, her own seasickness began to settle in and she went completely pale and green in the face, which was a pity considering the tanned blush that usually adorned her cheeks. She ran to the railing as fast as she could and began throwing up all the wonderful fish and meat wraps she had in Braavos and made a hundredth mental note to never eat before boarding a water vessel again. Rhaegar was swift to get up and by her side before the rest of the children had time to blink; patting her back and holding her hair. He had done this through three pregnancies and numerous cruising trips; he also knew he himself was going to fall patient in a few more hours. This was habit to the two of them, and Aegon found that to be extremely cute.

“It’s genetic isn’t it? This seasickness,” Danerys inched closer to him, after having left her boyfriend in a sheltered refuge.

“Thank the Gods it is, I have a feeling the family is going to need each other quite a lot through the length of this trip…” Aegon whispered back pragmatically…

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“Shouldn’t we have reached Quarth by now?”

“Patience lady,” Viserys chided Rhaenys.

“Mum, Vis is being mean…” Rhaenys whined.

Elia looked up from her laptop and meted out an expression of annoyance at both of them so Rhaenys turned her attention towards her father. Rhaegar, who was twirling the olive in his martini, looked up absolutely bewildered. Rhaenys was the black sheep of the family when it came to patience, and this she was aware of, so, tired of waiting, she went back to her room and closed the door with a thud.

“I am telling you, she’s become like this because you used to watch those crazy thriller soaps when we were expecting her; not an ounce of patience the girl has,” Rhaegar shook his head.

“Oh, so it’s my fault now,” Elia exclaimed.

Aegon put his head in his hands. Why did they have to fight all the time? Honestly, his magazine was just a façade; all he was really doing was keeping surveillance on his parents and their behaviour. His eyes flicked to Viserys who was also rolling his eyes at their constant bickering. Honestly, for all the love that Viserys had for both Elia and Rhaegar, he preferred to stay with them separately, instead of under the same roof. This was the only part of life where he disagreed with Aegon probably. Daenerys stormed out of her room fuming, wiping a few angry tears from her face as she plopped down on the deckchair next to Aegons’. He gave a curious look but decided to mind his own business, the magazine. By this point, Aegon had forgotten what the magazine was even about.

“Men are such jerks,” she muttered under her breath.

“Says every woman when she fights with her partner. We say the same about our girls when we fight. Calm down, have a drink or something,” Aegon soothed.

“No, Dany is right,” Elia seconded from the other end of the room.

“Oh, I thought you had work,” Rhaegar mocked.

“Well, what does it look like I’m doing, getting wasted on free alcohol?” Elia jeered back.

“Okay, first off, you’re on your laptop but you’re more interested with what the kids are saying; second off, this isn’t exactly free alcohol since I paid for the cruise,” Rhaegar began reasoning.
“Hey, you didn’t have to pay for my ticket!”
“Well you’ve got to pay something with all your black money…”
“I pay with what I earn Rhaegar Targaryan, I don’t eat off of my father’s fortune,” Elia mocked gently.
“What you earn is black money; namely because, you are a criminal!” Rhaegar screamed back.
“You are no fucking better!” Elia threw her laptop to the ground and walked out.
“That was an expensive laptop dad,” was the first phrase that came out of Aegon’s mouth.
“She can afford another, trust me,” Rhaegar too mocked with Elia’s tone.
“Gosh your ego is such an asshole! What bothers you more, that mom might be richer or that she is way smarter!!” Aegon asked, temper getting the better of him.
“Calm yourself Egg,” Daenerys was soothing this time.
“He needs to answer me,” Aegon was fuming.
“I don’t need to answer anybody, definitely not my son,” Rhaegar rolled his eyes and left.
Aegon sat back down with his head in his hands. This was hopeless, and he could see his plan crumbling in front of his eyes. Aegon remembered all the nights he had spent crying for a complete family. This was his dream, to reunite the two lovers all over again, mainly for two gains; the couple was cute and Aegon thought they still liked each other, and so that he would never have to deal with salty, tear-stained pillows ever again.

“Astapor was good, wasn’t it?” Aegon’s hesitant voice inquired as he entered Elia’s cabin. She had not been sharing dinner with them ever since she had fallen out with Rhaegar, and yes, that was a very long time ago.
“Hi Egg. What do you want?”
“Mum, I just want to talk to you,” Aegon approached her and sat on the edge of the bed. “You have every right to be paranoid about your work, I get that, you’re always kind of in a state of danger; but about your family? Really mom, that’s not cool. I know dad was a massive dick, but he had some valid reasons you know…”
“Egg, he’s your dad,” Elia warned.
“And you still obviously care for him.”
“What?!”
“I understand all right, I can see things I’m not a kid anymore,” Aegon retorted. “Just because you run a crime cartel of sorts doesn’t mean you don’t have to find love,” the young boy argued.
“Just because I am your mother doesn’t mean I am going to have to love your father,” Elia rebuked with equal force.
“No, it doesn’t, but the two of you were in love once.”
“Yes, once; past tense. And then he cheated on me and somewhere along the way, I learnt to live without him,” Elia wistfully replied.
“Yes, but that doesn’t mean you don’t love him,” Aegon countered.
“Egg, what are you trying to do?” The mother’s intuition finally asked.
“What?!”
“I understand all right, I can see things I’m not a kid anymore,” Aegon retorted. “Just because you run a crime cartel of sorts doesn’t mean you don’t have to find love,” the young boy argued.
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“Egg, what are you trying to do?” The mother’s intuition finally asked.
“What is meant to be.”
“Egg, some things don’t belong together,” Elia stated with poise.
“Have you seen me? His looks and your brains, his temperament and your presence of mind, his charisma and your panache; the two of you belong together,” Aegon’s tone had a rising pitch and tempo. He was getting excited, this was his secret and it was out now.
“Egg, what are you saying? Why are we here?” Elia asked with a raised brow.
“We are here for a holiday Maa, but I was hoping to strike a bigger deal; I am your son after all,” Aegon answered.
“Egg, understand this, we left each other, it wasn’t working out and… Egg sometimes, you’ll realise that to make it work, love is not enough. That’s when infidelity happens Egg, that’s happened to us, we couldn’t survive on love anymore, our differences got the better of us and Lyanna Stark came traipsing in so I turned into a hobby and she turned into his passion. What
would you really choose if you had to? You know the answer Egg, hence your silence.”
“No, my silence is because you’re the smartest woman I have ever met and you define yourself as
dad’s habit,” Aegon finally spoke.
“No Egg, I define myself as a leader of a cyber… cartel, well, for the lack of a better word, who’s
got two PHD’s in Computer Engineering and Ethical Hacking; I define myself as the woman who
runs the virtual world on her fingertips, but to your father, I am only his habit,” Elia smiled. It was
so strange, that fact; the entire planet trembled at her thought and then there was Rhaegar. “That’s
why he despises me, because he thinks he cannot have a criminal as his habit.”
“But you’re not a criminal!”
“Try telling your father that; honestly, I’m tired. I’m happy with life, where I am at right now, I’m
at peace with it, and I don’t want to mess things up anymore Egg,” Elia let out a tired sigh.
“You’re tired with life, because you’ve worked too hard. Everybody needs a hand to hold
sometimes Maa, even you,” Aegon softly stated.
“I’ve got five of you, isn’t it enough?”
“Nope. We’re guests Maa, we’ll come and go, we’ll belong to other people after this but dad
belonged to you; he was yours and you were his. How you let a florist and part-time football
enthusiast even get to him is beyond me.”
“Egg we were two consenting adults who made a choice and we don’t want you to interfere.”
“It’s a choice that keeps the two of you crying at night, trust me when I say that, I’ve lived with
you both,” Aegon argued.
“Maybe, but we’ve learned to live with it. Living with the pain is easier Egg, than living with the
knowledge that anything could happen with your loved ones if they are close to you.”
“You let dad go because you thought he was under threat?!”
“Well he was stupid, what could I do? He was a bumbling fool of a scriptwriter who forgot his
own lines. He was adorable, and easy to manipulate and it didn’t take too long to make him fall in
love with Lyanna. Breaking up with him would have killed him of heartbreak but I knew he could
learn to live with guilt,” Elia let out a deep breath. She had never said these things to anybody, not
even Oberyn, who still believed his sister was an ethical hacker who worked for Interpol.
“You never asked dad what he wanted.”
“He despised me anyways, when he came to know about the blacker shades of my profession,”
Elia defended herself.
“He still loves you,” Aegon exclaimed, flabbergasted.
“I don’t think so.”
“It doesn’t matter what you think.”
“Anyways, I have moved on,” Elia announced.
“Oh really? Then come down for breakfast tomorrow mom, I’ll believe you.”

“Wow dad, you look like a… mess…” Aegon trailed off as Rhaegar entered the cruise, hair
dishvelled, sweat dripping down his pale face which seemed to be very red peppered with an
interval of uneven breaths.
“Oh yeah, wait till you see your mom,” Rhaegar exclaimed and pointed towards a panting Elia
who followed him into the cruise.
“What ever the hell happened in the markets?” Viserys asked, his glass of coke practically slipping
from his hands.
“An old habit caught up with us,” Elia smiled. Rhaegar was grinning too and Aegon was trying not
to.
“What, sex?” Viserys asked cynically. He was a blunt man, usually.
“Vis! We’re like your parents, how could you?” Elia began chiding.
“Well, you do have three biologically produced children so when you said old habits I thought of
that, naturally,” Viserys explained himself looking to Aegon for support who was trying his best to
control the smile threatening to invade his face.
“What was this old habit guys?” He finally asked.
“Well, we got into some trouble and danced our way out of it. Used to do it all the time back when we hung out in Dorne,” Rhaegar smiled fondly.
“Yes, only except this time it wasn’t a big deal, there was just a bit of translation problem. It turns out that the Yunkian have their own version of Valyrian which is really weird and twisted,” Elia stated.
“Wow, I wonder what other kinds of trouble you ran into?” Viserys muttered, but he was loud enough.
“Oh, we used to try to perfect the art of pick-pocketing and it never worked,” Elia shook her head looking at Rhaegar who nodded in agreement.
“Why would two rich kids need to pick-pocket?” Aegon asked utterly confused.
“Oh, it was for fun,” Elia and Rhaegar innocently answered in unison.
Aegon and Viserys gave each other the perfect look of incredulity as Elia and Rhaegar hopped away. Now while Elia was making her way to her own room, Rhaegar pulled her by the elbow, towards his quarters. His excuse was that they needed to sort out everything they had shopped and that could not wait, even in their physically chaotic state. And boy, talk about chaos- Elia’s neatly braided hair had come undone and her silky airy pink caftan was not cold enough to hold perspiration although the weather was pleasant enough; on the other hand Rhaegar had a redness to his face Aegon had never seen and Viserys was vaguely nostalgic about it, along with his anarchic hair and cotton shirt with a few buttons open, he looked beyond the most attractive Aegon had ever seen him. The boy decided to pay his father a visit when his mother had finally made her way towards her own room.
“Hi dad, how was the shopping?” Aegon quietly approached.
“Oh, hey you. I’m fine Egg, how are you doing?” Rhaegar replied distracted.
“No dad, I asked how the shopping went?” Aegon pressed further.
“The shopping? Oh yes shopping! I got you a new pair of shoes, these are of a special kind you only find in Slaver’s Bay, it has a wooden frame and it looks really cool, I think the kids in your college will be very jealous of you,” Rhaegar knew he was talking too fast, blabbering, and that was never a good sign.
“Wow, you got us gifts! Was it mom’s idea?”
“Why would it be your mom’s idea? It was our idea, I don’t understand, I care for you just as much as she does, trust me Egg,” Rhaegar looked at his son with eyes that were hazy (glassy would be an exaggeration). And it was true; he had sacrificed a lot of things for the children.
“No I know that dad, I know you care for us. You left mum for us…”
“That’s… that’s not true. I left your mum because I loved another girl,” Rhaegar fumbled.
“Even you know you’re lying. Lyanna Stark only made it convenient. You left because you thought that mom’s nature of work would put our lives into danger. You never asked us what we wanted.”
“What could you possibly want then? You were children. I protected you!”
“We wanted a complete family, had that ever occurred to you?”
“I did try to give you a complete family. I gave you Lyanna but you kids drove her away!” Rhaegar shouted in defence.
“Dad she was a kid herself! And really, you have very stupid logic,” Aegon stated distastefully.
“I don’t understand; I left my Elia so that you children could be happy and now like an ungrateful cretin, you’re complaining about me?” Rhaegar asked incredulously.
“We didn’t ask you to ‘give up’ mom for the love of the seven! We wanted her as much as you did. Has it ever occurred to you that maybe because she does not express her love, she loves you more than you could ever love her?”
“Aegon, you’re being stupid. Leave.”
“Egg is not being stupid dad, this is a talk we should have had a long time ago,” a female voice interjected the conversation just as Aegon was about to leave. He had turned when he saw his beautiful sister guarding the doorway.
“Is this the idiotic reason you have dragged me and Elia together on this trip?” Rhaegar asked suspiciously.

“Both of you came of your own accord dad, don’t blame that on Egg. By the way, it was his plan,” Rhaenys shrugged. Aegon made eyes at her and she ignored them. “All five of us were living with the pain of having to see our parents suffer because of us when we didn’t even ask for it. Have you ever tried to think how that would feel?”

“All of you have gone crazy. What we did was for the best,” Rhaegar said through gritted teeth.

“No dad, you did what you thought was best. And you were wrong. Everybody is wrong sometimes,” Aegon spoke again.

“If I had not done such a ‘wrong deed’ all of you would be dead by now!” Rhaegar hollered. “Who put such stupid ideas into your head dad? Maa has been in this business for years now and her bodyguard has not suffered from a single scratch,” Rhaenys chided in a tone that only reminded Rhaegar of Elia.

“I wasn’t going to take the risk,” Rhaegar kept defending himself.

“You should have. You would be happier then, forget us we would be the happiest kids alive; and yes dad, we would be alive,” Aegon rolled his eyes.

“I am not going to listen to this nonsense anymore,” Rhaegar now stared with angry eyes at the two children. And this was a rare sight, mainly because he was the father who spoiled, not scared.

“Has it ever occurred to you that mom is a human being with real feelings? And that maybe you hurt those feelings when you disregard them completely? Keeping all matters of convenience and survival aside, she has a heart too dad,” Rhaenys spat.


“That’s because it’s with you,” Aegon coolly put.

“Look at you, interns and college kids trying to asses love. Leave right now the two of you!” Rhaegar snapped.

“Dad, I hate to put it this way, but you’re not the only one who’s smart enough to read people,” Rhaenys replied.

“Nys, Egg, my two beautiful and mature children, I would like you to leave now,” Rhaegar signalled the doorway with his finger. The children were getting on his nerves now.

“Think about what we said dad,” Aegon turned around before leaving.

“There is nothing to think about. What has happened has happened, what would you like me and your mother do now? Remarry? Don’t be stupid Egg,” Rhaegar sassed back in quite the tone of defiance.

“Think about your happiness, and mom’s feelings, and do whatever you think is okay. Also, you should know, just because the two of you are good at hiding your love doesn’t mean that others don’t see it. All of Westeros knows,” Aegon informed.

“Knows what? Is Westeros jobless or anything?”

“Westeros knows that even Dragons bow to the Sun, and Westeros also knows that its’ Sun burns the brightest when she has her dragon by her side,” the children echoed together before leaving. Rhaegar sat back on his bed, and for the first time in his life, groaned and kicked at whatever he found in front of him for making a massive mistake.

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“Oh my god, nobody is allowed to sleep on this boat! First it was that weird Mereenese dance and now an alarm. What is it, a fire drill?” Elia kept muttering and cursing as she was dragged out of her room by enthusiastic onboard volunteers. All passengers had been assembled to the front deck. It was simple chaos on deck. There were a total of fifty-five passengers on the cruise at that point and none of them seemed to be disciplined enough, although most of them were adults. When Elia walked onto the wooden platform, she could see the children standing silently in a corner while the adults were running all over the place. Even were little Visenya was standing with the other children. She motioned to her youngest child who came darting into her arms. The little girl was shaking with fear.
“Where’s your boyfriend?” Aegon was asking Daenerys as the two made their way on board. “I don’t know and I don’t care; we’ve broken up,” Daenerys sharply replied.
“Dude, you share the same room. And this is an emergency, most probably a matter of life and death, you should call him,” Aegon explained, a little scared with his aunt’s nonchalance. “He is not in my room. You should search the female dorms they had lower down the ship, maybe he’s having a good time there,” Deanerys’ tone became even more spiteful and sharp. “I thought he was the faithful type,” Aegon mused.
“Well he was, and then we had a fight,” Daenerys shrugged.
“Well, fighting doesn’t mean that you’ll cheat on your girl,” Aegon exclaimed.
“Wow, this is good. We’re on the deck of a ship which is most probably sinking or something and the two of you are discussing philosophy and what, love,” Rhaenys reprimanded, standing right behind them and getting extremely annoyed.
“I was looking for you guys!” Viserys exclaimed as he hugged all three of them together. “Where is mom and Rhae?”
“Vis, my goodness, thank god you’re all safe,” Elia hugged her favourite child as she approached them all from the other side of the deck.
“Oh mom!” They exclaimed in exaltation and practically jumped on her.
“Where is your father?” Elia asked regaining her composure. “And what the hell is going on?”
“I think it’s an iceberg,” Daenerys announced.
“We don’t live in your little world of celluloid Dany, this is not Titanic,” Rhaenys rolled her eyes. “Also, this place is too hot to have icebergs.”
“She has a point,” Aegon stated.
“Where is Rhaegar?” Elia shouted again.
“I saw him sleepwalking again so I had figured that he would have found himself here already,” Rhaenys replied.
“Rhae does not sleepwalk!” Elia exclaimed.
“He started after you left. He’s usually looking for you in his dreams. It’s strange no mom, the life the two of you couldn’t have in reality you build in dreams,” Aegon stated.
“What do you mean?” A panicked Elia narrowed her eyes.
“You talk in your sleep no, you take his name,” Aegon informed.
“This is really not the time to be talking about dreams,” Viserys screamed as a large wave came crashing down onto the deck, wetting everybody. It was not an iceberg; it was a storm, a huge one.
“They’re bringing lifeboats see,” Daenrys pointed.
“You kids find a boat, I’m going to find your father,” Elia firmly stated and did not wait for their protests as she left.

The children were left a little bewildered but realised that the passion they had all been talking about was really there, and neither Elia, nor Rhaegar would get off the cruise without the other. It wasn’t like Elia was a selfless angel, but she was going to wait for Rhaegar, maybe till the cruise had almost drowned, then she would leave. Only fools would wait after that was what she would say. Viserys heralded everybody into one lifeboat and they booked it entirely for themselves. The children stayed close to the cruise because they really wouldn’t leave without both of their parents. The waves came crashing in large crests and they all hugged each other but got drenched nonetheless. It was a visceral experience, and even little Visenya scared out of her wits decided to keep quiet. She scooted closer to Daenerys who hugged the little girl to her knee as she stood up trying to find signs of Elia and Rhaegar.

“Rhae come on come on, where are you? I don’t want to die because of you?” Elia was muttering to herself as she ran through the corridors as fast as she could. And she kept calling his name so she was sure she resembled a mad woman by this time.
“Eli!” She heard a sound which was between a groan and an exclamation from the pantry.
“What are you doing here? How can you possibly eat in the middle of an emergency?!”
“I am not eating genius, my leg is stuck here! I found myself here when I woke up,” Rhaegar explained himself as Elia sat down and tried to untangle his leg.
“Serves you right for sleepwalking,” she muttered back.
“What are you doing here?” Rhaegar asked in a whisper as he moved a strand of ebony hair from Elia’s face.
“Oh I don’t know, I’ve always wanted to die in a sinking ship, that’s what I’m doing! What about you?” Elia was absolutely livid and Rhaegar understood all this anger was directed towards him.
“Wow… you stayed back for me?”
“Yes, because I’m not like you,” Elia spitefully returned as she was successful in untangling his foot. “Come on, let’s go.”
“Eli wait; thanks.”
“Rhaegar this is not the fucking time to get sentimental. We’re going to die if we don’t leave now,” Elia pleaded with her husband.
“I’d rather die with you than live without you Eli,” Rhaegar softly murmured, tears staining his pale cheeks. Their foreheads were touching and his hot breath was fanning her face.
“Well, number one, I would rather not die; and number two, I’d rather live away from you knowing you’re alive and healthy than watch you die, any day Rhae,” Elia replied, pleading him to leave.
Rhaegar was touched, and it showed. He was generally not this easy to sway, but with Elia in his arms, after so many years, and the emotionally stressing surroundings all around, he was a little overwhelmed. He repeatedly chanted ‘I love you’ into her ears as she tried to get them out of the ship which was submerging into the water wherever they went. When the gravity of the situation dawned on Elia, she felt a helpless sort of sadness creep into her.
“Eli we will get out of here, don’t worry.”
“How, just fucking how?!” Elia howled. “This place is drowning and we will drown with it,” this was the first time that Rhaegar saw the viper sob herself into a mess.
“Excuse me, miss, sir; is there anybody else down there or just the two of you?” A voice inquired, out of nowhere. Both Elia and Rhaegar gave the volunteer the look that people give their god.
“No there’s no one else,” Elia managed a watery reply.
“Come on then, let’s get the two of you on a lifeboat,” the man said, keeping calm and leading out towards the deck. It turned out that they had taken a wrong turn somewhere and ended up on the other end of the deck. That was why it had taken them so long.
“Mom, here!” Rhaenys hollered the moment she caught sight of Elia’s wet silken nightgown. “Oh my god dad is with her too! We’re all alive, we’re going to survive!” The viper-dragon was squealing in delight. All the other children craned their necks to see if this was real or a dream. Elia caught a sight of her children waving to them as she sprinted there along with Rhaegar. They thanked the man who had escorted them so far and Rhaegar subtly reminded him that it was ‘Sir’ and ‘Missus’. Elia rolled her eyes as she subtly reminded him that they were not married anymore. Rhaegar pouted so she kissed him on the bridge of his nose.
“Gosh the romance can wait, get onto the boat first,” Viserys hollered in annoyance as the pair was finally lowered onto the boat. “They won’t romance when we ask them to and risk their lives cooing over each other,” he was still muttering as the whole family engulfed each other in bone-crushing hugs and was taken away with speed, far away from the wreck.
“Oh gosh, even the children stayed back for us,” Rhaegar softly sniffled as she held Visenya and Elia close and tight to him.
“Because we are family dad, and that’s what family does; it stays back,” Aegon reminded him as he ran for another hug as well.
Rhaegar internally promised himself, he would never leave them again.
Wow, so I know this is like a super late update and you must be wondering whether I got abducted by aliens or something but reason is worse.... my exams! Ughh I hate exams and the only reason I actually decided to publick this really ill-written piece of imagine is because I already had a lot of it written out. But it is not very good, definitely one of my worsts but I don't know if you'll like it or not. I don't know if it's readable at all....

“I have a bad feeling you’re going to forget me once you reach,” Elia sniffled into Rhaegar’s chest. It was a classic airport farewell scene.
“You’re the one that encouraged me to try for civil services in the first place,” Rhaegar replied softly, running circles on her back.
“Well yeah, and I’m proud of you. It’s just that… Castle Black is so far away Rhae…” Elia scooted even closer to Rhaegar, if that was even possible and her husband hugged her back as well.
“Eli, this is the 21st Century, we have Skype and we have Facebook and we won’t be far away from each other at all. Plus you can always visit me,” Rhaegar reassured.
“Yes sure, while all my clients choose better celebrity psychologists,” Elia rolled her eyes, wiping the tears from them.
“Well, that won’t happen because there is no better celebrity psychiatrist. You, my lovely wife, are the best there is,” Rhaegar kissed her cheek repeatedly.
“Yeah right, Cersei Lannister is like my only client. Oh, did I tell you, Alerie Hightower was thinking of coming as well. Her agent gave me a call the other day,” Elia was just beginning a conversation when the loudspeaker announced boarding for the flight to Winterfell.
“Babe, I’m sure you’ll beat the biggest names in the field. I believe in you like you believe in me. And I love you,” Rhaegar placed a passionate kiss on her lips.
“I love you too,” Elia tenderly replied, kissing him again. As he walked away in the distance, she felt something slip from her fingers. Elia had let go of Rhaegar many times in the past, but she was having a very bad feeling about this one.

“So Mrs. Tyrell actually said that I’ll get a semi-maternity leave where I can work from home. We’ll convert your study into my office, isn’t it all so exciting? And then there was stupid me worrying that I would have to end my career for our dragon or choose my job over her,’’ Elia went on gushing while Rhaegar merely replied in soft hmm’s. “Rhae, are you even listening to me?”
“Yes, yes certainly. Babe I couldn’t be happier, but honestly, I need to get back to work,” Rhaegar mumbled and hung up as fast as he could.
He looked up to meet Lyanna Stark’s light hazel eyes and was lost in them, once again. Elia had been right, Rhaegar had forgotten her. The moment he had laid eyes on the goofy and free-spirited canteen assistant at the King’s Landing Embassy, he had fallen in love. All his life, Rhaegar had known security and predictability. He had dated the girl he went to summer camp with, and for all her elegance and wit and charm, she was too stable, too boring, and too mundane. Lyanna Stark was a gust of fresh wind, and Rhaegar had always liked new things. Lyanna was young, and she was looking for some fun, but she found love instead. Rhaegar was stronger and taller and smarter and everything Robert was not. He was elder to her in every aspect of the word and she loved the feeling of being so sexily dominated. Their affair had escalated quickly, in about two month’s
time; and then in the third month had come the most chirpy call from Elia in a very long time. She was pregnant. There was a little viper-dragon coming Westeros’ way and Rhaegar had never felt more bewildered and stressed in his entire life.

“Why does your wife keep calling so many times?” Lyanna asked in undertones of annoyance.

“Well she is my wife, and she’s expecting,” Rhaegar replied tiredly.

“You mean I mean nothing to you?” Lyanna’s voice quivered.

“Lya, babe I never said that! You mean everything to me. You are my world,” Rhaegar softly whispered as he pulled Lyanna into his lap.

“Whatever we are doing, is it wrong?”

“Yes, but nothing has ever felt more right,” Rhaegar left wet kisses on her neck and they began their activities all over again.

While there were some people who sympathised with the two young lovers, not everybody was a fan. One of the most vocal critics was Elia’s best friend, Jaime Lannister. As a Lannister he may not have been the flag-bearer for morality, but he was certainly a better person than a hypocritical adulterer. Jaime was the sunniest and cockiest person one would meet, but recently he had been turned to a hollow ghost of a young man torn between loyalty to a friend and a job on stake, a job he really loved. He had learned pragmatism from Elia and the only reason he was navigating in the grey, morally dubious zone that he was, was because he knew Elia would forgive him. But there were some things even his rationality could not take anymore.

“Your wife is in the hospital again,” Jaime announced, standing next to Rhaegar who was working intently on the desk while Lyanna had come to deliver his coffee.

“Why?” Rhaegar asked absentmindedly.

“Well, at first it was the excessive morning sickness but then at the hospital the doc-”

“All pregnant ladies have morning sickness,” Rhaegar cut him off.

“Oh yes, they do, but your wife, my Eli, my best friend has always had a frail health and now there are complications in her pregnancy. She was not supposed to carry this baby, her womb wasn’t developed enough and when she tried to talk to you she never received an answer on the other end. If anything, and I mean anything happens to her, both of you, are going to jail,” Jaime knew at this point of time that he had lost his precious job; but that day, Jaime had gained back his dignity. He knew Elia was going to chide him for not being practical enough, and putting her over his own interests but he was happy.

“What the hell was that?” Rhaegar mumbled as Jaime stormed out.

“Do you think I should tell Eli, and how should I tell her, like just directly or what?” Jaime knew he was blabbering over the phone but he could not help his excitement. He was hiding inside a washroom cubicle because he was sure Rhaegar was going to hand over ‘the firing’ letter to him.

“Jay, Eli knows,” Varys cleared his throat.

“What, what?”

“She’s a smart woman. She understood he was having an affair and then she has contacts all over everywhere so it wasn’t hard for her to find out even if I refused to tell her because I didn’t want to hurt her and knowing that your husband is cheating on you with a juvenile really hurts. Then she found out it was Lyanna. I asked if she wanted to file for divorce but you know how she is, she would rather make Rhaegar stay on her terms and reap his benefits than leave him, cheeky viper that she is. Also, she is coming to Castle Black herself,” Varys informed.

“Oh pray why?” The last piece of news was the most shocking one for Jaime.

“Oh, you know Jeor Mormont right? The Hollywood director turned philanthropist who now works with the Night’s Watch? Apparently he has been having bouts of hallucinations but he demands for a celebrity psychiatrist only so they are flying Eli to him.”

“I have a bad feeling about this,” Jaime gulped.

“Don’t we all? Eli seems excited though, we were just booking her a hospital bed for the delivery at Castle Black.”

“Wait, she’ll be coming before having the baby?”

“Well yes, it’s sort of an emergency with the Mormonts. And you would only think Targaryans
were bat crazy,” Varys rolled his eyes.

“Oh goodness V I don’t know how this will go… Especially since I was glorious enough to get fired…”

“Why did you do that?”

“I couldn’t take Rhaegar and Lyanna in the same room anymore okay? There is shamelessness, and then there is the two of them. I couldn’t take it anymore, what could I have done?”

“You should have been smart about it,” Varys advised.

“I’m not very smart at all V. Anyways, I think I should hang up now. I’ll stay back here till Eli delivers and then I’ll leave. Oh gosh, I feel like there’s a massive storm coming,” Jaime’s voice quivered slightly before he heard Varys hang up on the other end and he tucked his phone away as well. He took a deep breath before exiting the men’s room.

“Lannister where were you? I’ve been looking everywhere. Elia is coming and she is your best friend and you will handle her is that understood?” Rhaegar began blabbering as soon as he caught sight of Jaime.

“Oh so I’m not fired?” Jaime asked incredulously.

“Who is going to handle Elia if you leave?”

“Do you not have any self-esteem at all?”

“I have love to give…” Rhaegar stated dreamily.

“You repulse me,” Jaime snarled. And with that he was out of the door.

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“Wow, the building is magnificent,” Elia stared in awe. Jaime looked on in disbelief.

“Your husband is fucking a child within those walls and you are admiring them?”

“Jaime relax; we are not Northern savages. We know how to appreciate things for what they are,” Elia quieted her best friend down.

“If it were up to me, he would be dead by now,” Jaime muttered.

“Well thank the seven,” Elia commented before walking in.

The atmosphere inside the office was as tense as nobody had seen in ages. Everybody seemed to be aware of the affair, and everybody seemed to be disturbed about the fact that a heavily pregnant Elia would be visiting this office three times a week as a medical officer. It was cruelty unheard of, and a situation that was completely unprecedented. Elia’s heels echoed the heart beat that steadily kept rising as people watched her make her slow way to the head office, coolly ignoring Rhaegar’s fancy room. Her panache had already bowled them over.

“Wow, what a woman,” was a common echo throughout the room.

“Hello Mr. Mormont, I’m Elia, your psychiatric consultant and just basic all around confidante for the next two months. Two months is what you ordered right?” Elia entered confidently.

“Oh yes Dr. Martell, do take a seat. Two months is what I ordered because I will be doing what is probably the last work of my life. It’s a short documentary on the History of the Wall and since I have been working with the Wall Conservation Convention for years, not to gloat but I am the Director of the committee now, so I was asked to make the film; especially given my celluloid history. However, my mental health is not holding up and I need you Martell,” the old man sighed defeated.

“At your service Sir,” Elia announced gladly. Her ambitious smile was to die for, as Rhaegar had always commented, and even Jeor Mormont was bowled.

“Welcome to the Night’s Watch, Elia Martell,” Jeor smiled at right back at her.

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“Oh my god, I cannot believe this! Your bitch of an ex-wife got me fired!” Lyanna screamed and Rhaegar, who seemed to be dozing off on the job jolted right out of his dreams.

“What Elia? No, she couldn’t have done anything. I mean, you’re part of the canteen staff, how can she fire you?” Rhaegar tried to explain.

“Oh, so you mean that my job is not worthy of your ex-wife’s status,” Lyanna rolled her eyes.
“No, I did not mean it like that Lya. Also, she is not exactly my ex-wife yet. I have not filed for divorce,” Rhaegar put in the statement he had been wanting to make for weeks. It was true; he was not ready to go through a divorce right when he was sorting his career out.

“What do you mean you haven’t filed for divorce yet?” Lyanna asked, shocked. Why did she always have to give trials for Rhaegar’s love and he never gave anything back?

“I will. I need some time okay,” Rhaegar tried to explain.

“If you don’t give her a divorce, we can never marry,” Lyanna began crying.

“Why would you want to marry? We could just live together,” Rhaegar shrugged. “I mean, you can see how much hassle marriage brings. Plus, you yourself did not want to marry Robert.”

“That is because I did not love Robert. I love you, and I get my freedom with you, so I want to marry you,” Lyanna began her dreamy explanation.

“Wait, that doesn’t make any sense,” Rhaegar began shaking her head when there was a sudden knock at his door. “Come in.”

And a mass of neat wavy ebony locks poked her head inside, with pretty brown eyes and plush pink lips and also, an extremely attractive tan. Lyanna stared in disgust and looked at Rhaegar pleading him to not let her in but Rhaegar knew better than to turn away a heavily pregnant woman who had come from the other side of the office to talk to him about what he hoped would be an important matter. Unlike Lyanna, Elia was a woman who enjoyed her work, and never let it mess with her personal life. Not that Rhaegar liked her professionalism; he thought it made her too cold. A cold sun.

“I need to talk about Mr. Mormont,” Elia said as she slowly entered. Her pale pink Dornish suit was tight, tighter than the usual things she wore. It was like she had especially dressed up to remind Rhaegar about what was going on.

“Well go talk to him,” Lyanna retorted.

“I am here to do my work Miss Stark, and I don’t like unwanted interruptions in between,” Elia informed her coldly.

“Lya, leave,” Rhaegar motioned towards the door.

“How long have you been working with Mr. Mormont? What kind of symptoms if any, of mental instability, has he displayed to you?” Elia rattled off as Rhaegar stared with an expression that couldn’t be surprise or admiration, it was something in between.

“Well, are you going to answer her, or are you going to stare at her?” Lyanna viciously asked.

“Excuse me; I cannot have fourth class staff here while I question Mr. Targaryan,” Elia coldly replied.

“What did she call me?” Lyanna hollered.

“Lya, please leave. We’ll talk about this later,” Rhaegar begged.

“Oh, so now you’re going to go behind my back and fuck your wife,” Lyanna raised her voice.

“Excuse me Miss Stark, I am an experienced professional and know better than to waste my time on assholes. I’ve made that mistake once; I am not going to make it again.”

Now Rhaegar was intimidated by both the women and he could not help but admire Elia’s strength and resilience even as he shooed Lyanna out the door. She might be making it difficult for him to get a divorce, but she certainly wanted nothing to do with him. There was a paradox about that which baffled Rhaegar, even as he sat down to answer her professional questions.

“So, as I was asking, have you ever noticed any erratic behaviour?”

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“It is a girl Mr. Targaryan, congratulations,” this phrase from the doctor was enough to send Rhaegar into a celebratory disposition.

“Thank you. I’ll never know how to thank you enough Eli,” Rhaegar softly whispered as he kissed a sleeping Elia’s forehead.

“It’s a good way to thank her, this; taking away her custody,” Jaime grit his teeth at Rhaegar who stared back in confusion when he came out of the room.

“What do you mean?” Rhaegar asked, perplexed.
“Well let’s see, your girlfriend and her father have been working hard at your divorce and they are almost successful, given that they have some brilliant lawyer called Craster to help them and in fact he is so good that you might even be getting custody of the child. Congratulations Targaryan, you are a certified ass,” Jaime spat. He had long realised that Rhaegar never expected any sort of good behaviour from his side and he utilised that opportunity to the fullest.

Rhaegar was shaken, but decided to take a seat. He knew what he had done was wrong, he had not stopped Lyanna, he had given her all the freedom she wanted and she only used it to buy herself a marriage certificate. Through the transparent glass of the ward room, Rhaegar could see his wife fast asleep. He knew he loved Lyanna, of course he did, but he had begun to grow a certain distasteful feeling about himself at the pit of his stomach, and that was never a good thing. He was so young; he could not be having a mid-life crisis.

“Mr Targaryan, your wife wants to speak with you,” a young nurse informed him.

Rhaegar walked in with tentative steps as he saw Elia’s eyes boring into him. He gulped; the weight of guilt was heavier than it was described to be. How could there be so many wrong feelings attached to the most positive feeling in the world- love? What kind of a phenomenon was love if it was so destructive and consuming? He sat on a stool, at a distance from Elia. Even her presence ate him up now. He had become a bona-fide criminal in his own eyes.

“I heard it was a girl,” Elia weakly began.

“Oh yes. She’s beautiful,” Rhaegar smiled. His little princess was the only positive thing in his life.

“Are you really going to call her Rhaenys?”

“I’ve always wanted to.”

“What does Lyanna want to call her?”

“What?” Rhaegar looked at his wife with sheer confusion in his eyes.

“You heard me. What does Lyanna, her new mother wish to call her? You are planning to take my child away from me, aren’t you? I overheard the idiotic girl talking on the phone with her father. She cannot even keep her voice down,” Elia informed him.

“Well, are you just going to let me take your daughter away from you?”

“I will tell you what I will let you do Rhaegar Targaryan. I will let you keep this marriage and me and my baby as long as you never come home again and send me enough money to equal the amount I earn anyways and let me keep the house and the privileges because you really weren’t good for anything else anyways and I might let you visit Rhaenys sometimes. Oh yes, and if you have a child with Lyanna, ever, it is going to be a bastard. Best of luck with that. Oh yes, also, I get to keep the private jets, you can suffice with flights if you wish. I’ll tell your dad you liked Castle Black quite a bit and I am sure he will let you stay. As for King’s Landing and all the things you were supposed to look after, let me take care of them. I will let you do this and no more. Is it a deal?”

Rhaegar stared at his wife with wide eyes and complete surprise. This was that side of Elia he had never seen before and didn’t want to stop seeing now that he had. She looked majestic, ebony hair sprayed out on the white hospital bed and the lamps above shining off of her tanned pale skin, creating a God-like halo around her, making her look like an angel. She was a dark angel, ambitious and cunning and she never truly loved him, but Rhaegar had never loved her more. He was almost tempted to catch the woman in a flaming kiss but he controlled himself. He took in a deep breath and looked ahead, as if pretending to think, only occasionally stealing glances at her. He asked for two days time to think about it, and kept her in the hospital right there, although Elia wanted to move as soon as possible.

Rhaegar brought her flowers every day. He played with Rhaenys in the room and whenever he thought Elia wasn’t looking, he stole glances at her. Elia was crazily impatient to get back to work again but she found her client walking up to her in the hospital to check up on her baby. Elia had been beaming that day. It had become pretty evident that the Mormont was quite fond of his doctor and Elia too preferred this client over most of the snooty celebrities she had had to treat before. Sometimes when Rhaegar would come in, he would overhear Elia and Jeor gossiping about the clients and Elia gently reminding Jeor that she was under pacts of discretion to shut up and they
would still have a laugh over the way some of them behaved, especially Robert with his drinking problem and Elia’s witty remarks would not only brighten Jeor’s evenings, it also brightened Rhaegar’s.

“Are you in love with me?” Elia’s formal tone caught Rhaegar off-guard as he was putting Rhaenys away on her crib before she would be taken to the nursery for the night.

“What do you mean?” Rhaegar asked, trying to brush it off as a funny joke.

“You know what I mean. Everyone means the same thing when they ask that question,” Elia rolled her eyes.

“Eli, I don’t know what you’re talking about,” Rhaegar stuttered. Elia only scoffed in return.

“Mrs. Targaryan, it is time for your pills,” a nurse interrupted. Elia obediently craned her neck to see if the nurses were giving her the right medicines because she did not trust anybody except herself and maybe Rhaegar at one point of time. Rhaegar shook his head at her behaviour as she analysed each and every pill and by the end of the process the nurse was fed up that she handed the prescription over and left the room. At that Rhaegar’s laughter knew no bounds and Elia only rolled her eyes as she popped one pill after the other although she was still suspicious about why the doctor needed to give her so many in the first.

“What is the bastard doing here?” A thick Dornish accent announced.

“Oby, this is not even visiting hours!” Elia exclaimed. “And what are you doing this far up North?”

“Eww, the way you said that almost makes it sound like a euphemism,” Oberyn laughed his sister’s worry away as he left a kiss on her forehead. “No but seriously, why is he even allowed in this room?”

“Well, he’s kind of the dad. You should know something about being a dad,” Elia teased. She adored her nieces, but she did not indulge Oberyn’s promiscuity and lack of commitment or stability in life.

“Well I’m not an asshole of a dad so I don’t know about that. Oh by the way, Uncle Lewin is an amazing lawyer; he just got you full custody of Rhaenys. I’m here to make you sign some papers,” Oberyn announced.

“How can she get full custody? We aren’t even divorced, so what does that mean?” Rhaegar exclaimed in a panicked frenzy.

“That means you two are separated genius, and since my sister earns as much as you do, and she has a few other… well there were legal terms, and since you are an adulterer, the point is that she gets to have full custody of Rhaenys,” Oberyn informed sassily.

“You cannot do that, she is my daughter too! Eli please…” Rhaegar begged.

“Why are you trying to act like you care about my niece? She is just going to be another show-off piece for your self-righteousness. I’ll tell you something brother-by-law, there can be nothing right about an adulterer,” Oberyn spat.

“My name is Elia Targaryen! I have a clear conscience, so don’t think you can belittle me,” Oberyn rebuked.

“Yes, because open relationships are allowed everywhere, and it’s a different thing altogether. I don’t lie or cheat, I have a clear conscience, so don’t think you can belittle me,” Oberyn rebuked. “Oh please, the way you live is absolutely barbaric!”

“And you are civilised because you fucked a wolf.”

“How dare you call Ly-”

“Okay stop!” Elia intervened.

“If I ever see him near you again, he won’t have a tongue to spout all the bullshit that he was,” Oberyn growled before storming out.

“And you, do you have to say something? Do you also have any ultra aggressive comments to pass about my brother? Or do you consider everybody except the Martells to be human?”

“Elia I never said anything about you being Dornish.”

“No but you wanted to. You wanted to say that I come from a land of decadence. You wanted to say that the reason I am an overambitious, arrogant, pathologically lying manipulative bitch is because I have been raised amongst vipers. Don’t think I don’t know you Rhaegar, of course I do. All you Valyrians have always been the same. I hope you find happiness with your white wolf
whore,” Elia spat, but she was colder and classier. Rhaegar, at a complete loss of words, stormed out of the room. Elia sat in silence for some time, and then the tears began flowing out of her hazel orbs. She had held them inside for far too long. She had held them inside when she had accidentally eavesdropped on Rhaegar complaining about having to marry into a Dornish family, and she had held back her tears when he would drag her heritage into every petty argument they had and she had held back her tears when this very man had told her he kind of sort of loved her and she had thrown her self-esteem down into the fire and said she returned the sentiment because she was infatuated with him. Elia had held back tears for far too long now, and she needed to cry. She also needed to do something. She was itching to do something, anything really.

“I’ll miss you. I think you’re the best shrink ever,” Jeor sniffled. “The rest analyse way too much and think way too less. I’ll miss you little viper, and I’ll miss your little viper.”

“We’ll miss you too Jo. Please come visit us sometime,” Elia smiled at him.

“You are going to Dorne! It’s all the way down South,” Jeor pouted.

“I am going to King’s Landing, and I have a good mind to stay there. It’s not that far down South. Visit me when you can,” Elia replied.

“But I thought you were going away from that bastard of a husband of yours because his tenure at Castle Black is coming to an end,” Jeor stated confused.

“Well I am getting late for the flight, I’ll explain when I get there. I’ll call you; we have a lot to catch up on!”

“Now what strings could you have pulled in the last two days?” Jeor asked in admiration and complete perplexity.

“Two days is a very long time for Elia Martell. I pulled my strings last night,” Elia winked and Rhaenys clapped in excitement. Elia had half a mind her daughter understood her.

“As I’ve always said, a shrink with a brain is a rare thing. You keep going woman, and maybe I’ll see you in King’s Landing next year,” Jeor laughed.

“Oh yes please do come!” Elia beamed while her daughter also giggled in glee.

“Wait, Eli wait,” a distant heavy baritone called out as Jeor, Elia and baby Rhaenys’ eyes traced out a long and lanky silhouette, who when in full view, turned out to be the handsome eldest Targaryan. “Sir I need to talk to her alone, can I please?”

“Rhaegar, she has a plane to catch,” Jeor stated.

“Yes, I know that, but please. Eli it won’t even take a minute, please,” Rhaegar pleaded. Rhaenys, not being able to process so many things at once, began crying.

“Even your daughter doesn’t like you,” Jeor snidely commented.

“Sir this is a family matter, would you please,” Rhaegar politely but firmly stated.

“What is the matter? Why are you barking first thing in the morning?” Elia snapped and it silenced both her Rhae’s, although she had a good mind to call Rhaenys something else. Anything else would do really.

“I need to talk, one minute please,” Rhaegar was practically begging.

“Okay fine, Mr. Mormont, can you hold her?” Elia asked as Jeor reluctantly held Rhaenys in his arms. The little one seemed to like him and made no noise; however, Jeor was suspicious of the Targaryan boy.

“Beware of your dad little dragon, he can be an annoying handful sometimes,” Jeor whispered softly into Rhaenys’ ear who only clapped in delight.

“What do you want Rhaegar?” Elia asked, annoyed. She did not wish to miss her flight. It was from the hospital, complimentary and business class.

“I’ve come to a realisation. Well sort of, it is a realisation because it was always staring me in the face and I didn’t know where to look. So I went looking at the wrong place and I was blinded, for a certain amount of time but I am not blinded anymore. Look, Elia, I understand that I am a deplorable human being. I totally get it, I am an adulterer, and you think that I’m also racist, which
I’m totally not but that’s the impression I gave you so I guess it makes me a quasi one. Also, the only reason I had reservations about marrying a Martell was because you were sort of my super distant cousin, it had nothing to do with the Dornish in general. However, the point is, the reason I am standing here in front of you, like this is, that I don’t want you to leave. This is not about Rhaenys, my little dragon is a completely different story and this is not about her. I don’t want you to leave, you, my wife; my first love, and it’s taken me some time to realise this but my only love. I don’t want you to leave because I won’t be able to function without you. And now there’s Rhaenys as well. Can I have your custodies, like both of you,” Rhaegar finished his speech knowing he had spoken too much.

“That was a touching speech,” Elia began as she took a step closer to a euphoric Rhaegar. But I have a better idea than you having to take care of two women under your custody because I assure you my little baby is going to grow up to be a woman, nothing like your Lyanna. However, back to my solution, my solution is that you stay here, at Castle Black, forever, as is the arrangement I have made with your dad and I go to King’s Landing and live in our apartment and own our properties and drive our cars and live the fantastic life we dreamed of together, with our baby girl. You and the North deserve each other, and trust me, the rest of Westeros will totally understand. Now, I have a flight to catch. Best of the luck for the rest of eternity- without me.”
And so my exams are finally over! I mean, I do have bigger exams coming up and all, but that's about half a month away so I am going to try and squeeze in a couple more updates. Thank you so much for being patient.

Also, I know the Game of Thrones fandom is generally cool with everything but since this is my duty, I have to let you know, this imagine is kind of dark, well quite quite dark actually and has some mentions of abusive relationships. Now, you may read at your own discretion.

Please leave feedback of any kind you want, I don't mind. I will definitely get back to you. Thank you all so so much again, for all the love I receive!

“Thank you Petyr, the place is amazing,” Rhaegar smiled as he looked around the whitewashed apartment.

It was a bland apartment, l-shaped and completely white, no furniture and no central temperature controls, but Rhaegar loved it. There was a simplicity and openness about it that whooshed around his bones like a gust of wind and made him feel… at home. More than he felt at his dad’s palatial mansion anyways. When it came to colour, he could always touch up on his own, with a little help from Arthur. The marble flooring was definitely a plus. He tapped his feet on it, it was definitely original. Petyr stared in distaste at his habits; it was far too cop-like for the shady real-estate agent. And Rhaegar was not even a cop, but most of his friends were, and he was not one of them. Petyr had learned to be wary of anybody who was not a friend.

“So… I take it you’re going to buy it?” He placed tentatively.

“Yes of course,” Rhaegar looked back and beamed. He had actually forgotten that there was a man standing behind him at all. Rhaegar did that sometimes, got far too caught up in his own dreams.

“The money…” Petyr trailed off.

“My dad will pay,” Rhaegar nodded. Sadly, his dad was paying him to stay away from home, and no matter how choosy Rhaegar tried to pretend he was being about picking a place to live independently, the point was that his father wanted him out of the house.

“Of course,” Petyr nodded. “I will leave you alone with the apartment then. Keys are here; keep it at the reception when you are done. And lock the place properly, my reputation at stake,” Petyr stated.

“Sure. Also, about neighbours,” Rhaegar cleared his throat and looked around nervously. This was the tenth apartment he was inspecting. How could he place that he was also picky about neighbours?

“I don’t really know. A lot of agents work with this building and I didn’t get whoever is living across you. However, I have heard it is generally bachelors who prefer this place; rich bachelors especially,” Petyr replied cheekily.

“Okay, thanks,” Rhaegar softly said. Bachelors did not always mean good news.

“I am taking your leave then,” Petyr was swift to walk out of the door.

“This is perfect…” Rhaegar whispered to himself.

And it was. The protruding kitchen, the large open windows, the silence, and the sheer size of the apartment was all a delight for Rhaegar. He took in a deep breath and walked around feeling the empty open space all around him. He was brought up in a mansion, and yet there had never been any space. There was seriously something about owning ones’ own space, it really opened things
up. He walked to a small and raised platform and knew, just knew in his heart that this was the place for a piano. The musician inside him traipsed around.

“Is the neighbour hot?” Arthur danced his eyebrows.
“She hasn’t moved in yet,” Rhaegar replied blankly, staring at the door opposite.
“How do you know it’s a she?” Arthur questioned, confused.
“Varys told me. He’s the one who’s bringing her,” Rhaegar informed.
“Varys and Petyr are doing good for themselves, real estate and all,” Arthur snickered.
“Yes, I’m the only one who’s struggling,” Rhaegar rolled his eyes as Arthur laughed.
“Your big break is going to happen dude, just a little bit of patience,” Arthur patted Rhaegar on the back as he was walking out of the door.
“Well, I don’t need a ‘big’ break; I need a ‘critical’ break. Otherwise I am going to be stuck making loud mainstream movies that I would never watch myself,” Rhaegar groaned, as he gently bumped his head against the oak door.
“Patience for that as well mate. But please, try to make at least one movie in your lifetime that the rest of us will understand,” Arthur joked as he finished slipping on his shoes. “Till the silver screen outing Rhae, see you!”
“Hey, I only make documentaries! So till the next film festival, genius!” Rhaegar laughed as he called after his friend who was already off and into the elevator.

As Rhaegar was walking into the apartment, he heard a clink of heels turn out of the elevator and walk towards the apartments. His interest peaked; there were only two flats on that floor and he was not expecting a lady guest (Lyanna had expressed interest many times but had been rebuffed by a Rhaegar who had clearly moved on). He craned his neck to see who it could be and with the first appearance of the mustard yellow blouse and skirt, striped pencil heels, straightened and neat hair, with a confidence to the walk that was to die for, Rhaegar could have killed Varys on the spot. This was not a joke, and he was definitely not in the mood for some. As the young lady approached, with a very tiny royal purple trolley, definitely not the kind one brings when one is moving in; Rhaegar stood by his door to politely greet his neighbour.

“Is that you?” The familiar silky voice spoke.
“Hello, Elia,” Rhaegar breathed out. It had been a very long time.
“Are you really what I am thinking you are?” Elia asked suspiciously.
“Love thy neighbour, Elia, lesson number one. Don’t worry, I won’t disturb you,” Rhaegar chuckled.
“You couldn’t even if you wanted to. Given your nocturnal habits, I’ll be off to work far before you’ve even woken up and nights won’t be a tension. You were always peaceful and I am looking for some peace now,” Elia sighed, with a look in her eyes Rhaegar could not quite place.
“That’s understandable. It’s not every day that the CEO of the biggest net-based retail store buys a flat in remote Dragonstone,” Rhaegar cheekily pushed.
“This is one hell of a fancy and expensive flat,” Elia rebuked.
“Still, I know you prefer fancy. The good things in life. It’s quite odd that you’ve chosen this. For your standards, this is quite the ‘humble abode’ trust me,” Rhaegar laughed.
“If you keep saying things like this, I will get you kicked out of this building for issues you won’t even be able to comprehend. Business woman here with a double degree in Political Science and Law, trust me,” Elia shrugged nonchalantly, and walked inside her new home.

“Oh wow, you’re here too,” Elia’s voice was tentative as she sat down by the doorframe with a cup of green tea.
“Welcome to the doorway party neighbour,” Rhaegar grumbled, scribbling something in a notebook. The rest of his apartment, as much was visible, was completely littered with balls of paper. Elia grimaced a little at the state.
“Don’t worry, I won’t bother you and you won’t speak. Let me just sit here for a while,” Elia said, leaning her head against the doorframe and taking a sip of the iced tea. Well, that tasted even worse than normal green tea so she made a face, but obediently began chugging down the rest as well. She was a good girl.

It was Rhaegar who spoke again, because silence with Elia was too comforting for his comfort zone. He needed her noise. “Didn’t think you’d be fond of silence.”

“Well, I didn’t think you talk so much either,” Elia replied. “I never heard you say so many words at the same time even when we had sex.”

“Well, you’re not exactly supposed to gossip while having sex are you?”

“No, but you know what I mean. Gosh, it was all so… awkward and mechanical for us back then,” Elia mused.

“And you were my first time!” Rhaegar laughed.

“Yeah no kidding. Thank god I had good experience before, otherwise, that would have been my expectation from sex!”

“Thank god I found Lyanna too, I guess.”

“Oh, I’d always thought she’d be terrible in bed, given how small she is,” Elia commented. “How is she anyway?”

“I don’t know.”

“You don’t mean to say the two of you broke up right? I mean, did I lose my right to the Targaryan inheritance for nothing?” Elia playfully gasped.

“At that age, especially if you have been forced into an arranged marriage, any other girl seems like forever. Sorry about your inheritance, but look at the bright side, you’re a business mogul,” Rhaegar chuckled back.

“Yeah, no kidding. Felt good to do something on my own after a very long time, sick and frail Elia invents the world’s biggest online retail chain!” Elia smiled, albeit a little bitterly.

“You started off by selling old music records right? And then it boomed it into a huge store and now I see Cersei order dry shampoo from there. That was cool, the sudden boom,” Rhaegar stated.

“Wait, you’re dating Cersei?!”

“What? No! We go to film school together,” Rhaegar laughed at the absurdity of her comment.

“You go to film school?” Elia was surprised.

“Hey, you started off selling music records okay. We both ended up doing unprecedented things, it was fun. By the way, why music records? You were not exactly fond of music back when we married.”

“Exactly. And to me, you were music. You embodied everything I knew about ‘proper’ music. And so, every time I sold a record or music merchandise, it felt like I was selling you. It was a wonderful feeling.”

“Ouch.”

“Don’t look at me like that; you abandoned me while I was going through a risky pregnancy. You never even came to meet me when I had a miscarriage. What was I supposed to think about you?”

“Hey, I’m fine with you selling me. Whatever makes you happy, I didn’t give you a lot of that feeling so if selling helps, why the hell not.”

“Won’t you ask where I got the old and rare records?”

“I guessed they were mine. You put them to good use, especially because I was never going to return to that house again,” Rhaegar smiled at her in all good intent.

“You really hate Uncle Aerys don’t you?”

“And you don’t. By the way, how couldn’t you? That man practically held you hostage in his house,” Rhaegar stated curiously, looking at Elia.

“Well then shouldn’t I be angrier at my husband, who, knowing everything, didn’t do anything at all,” Elia replied softly.

“You’ve got a point. I’m sorry about that, but back then… well, it was the first time I ever got to chase my dreams. I was crazy about Lyanna, and she was crazy about me. We both freed each other. I was finally living my dream.”
“I always thought music was your dream.”
“Well music too, but Lyanna and I set each other free,” Rhaegar dreamily dwindled.
“By tying each other down? I’m sorry; I’ve never understood how love worked. All that commitment, all those problems, and then claims of freedom; it puzzles me a little bit,” Elia said truthfully. Romance was seriously a topic that bewildered her.
“Well it’s, it’s complicated. Love, is complicated,” Rhaegar tried to explain.
“So complicated that your key to freedom doesn’t live with you anymore?”
“That’s the thing about love, it drives its’ loved ones away sometimes. My break-up with Lyanna was entirely my fault,” Rhaegar sighed, gently bumping his head against the door-frame.
“Oh well, at least you’re taking responsibility for somebody. Lyanna has had a good effect on you,” Elia understandingly nodded her head.
A pang of guilt struck Rhaegar. “It was not exactly Lyanna who taught me responsibility. It was the pressure of getting a job when I had a runaway lover on my hands,” he confessed.
Elia couldn’t control her laughter. “The rich and spoiled Rhaegar Targaryan was looking for jobs?”
“Oh come on it’s not that funny. That’s when my musical ambitions really washed down the drain.”
“Well, you can search for them, pick them up and wash them again,” Elia suggested shrugging.
“It’s not that easy.”
“Oh well, what would I know about professional struggles.”
“No, no I didn’t mean it that way. You’ve achieved your dreams in ways I could never think of achieving mine so you’re a winner at life don’t worry. I just meant, it’s extremely difficult to make a name in the music industry,” Rhaegar laughed a little as he scratched the back of his head.
“Hence the film industry,” Elia piped in.
“Well, not exactly the mainstream. I will make documentaries mostly. At least, that’s what I want to do,” Rhaegar corrected her conceptions.
“Oh, those really arty movies that nobody understands,” Elia exclaimed as Rhaegar gave her the look. “Sorry, didn’t mean it that way.”
“Well, documentaries kind of make me feel close to me in a way that music used to,” Rhaegar ran a hand through his silver locks. He was growing them. If he needed to make arty movies, he needed to look like a maker of one.
“But they’re not exactly music are they?” Elia pressed knowing she had hit an emotional chord. Emotionally manipulating people was a great past time Elia Martell revelled in.
“Well no, but something I’ve learned; you can’t have everything you want in life,” Rhaegar declared, trying to come out as wise but his breath was hitched in his throat as a couple of tears were caught in his eyes.
“I would disagree with you on that one but given that we have been through slightly different courses in life, and we are two different kinds of people, I won’t say anything,” Elia smiled innocently trying to pretend like she seriously meant it when all she really wanted was a sudden burst of emotions from him.
“For a young boy, even an over-mature bookworm like me, his father means everything to him. He models himself against that man, whatever daddy does; he must be doing the right thing. So what happens Elia when you see that man extract hours and hours worth of pleasure torturing people and making you watch, along with him, as his laughter rings through the walls of the cells? And these are men whose sons you play with, men you see walk past you at his office everyday and then suddenly, they are being tortured, killed, and the worst kind of torture I swear. You grow up trying to be everything that man is not, everything he suggests, you detest. I would never have hated you as much as I did had my father not gotten us married. I would probably have soaked in the pleasures of politics had he not represented that. I would probably have been a better man and a better husband, and a hot-shot musician had he not been in the picture,” Rhaegar told his story, tears softly streaming down his face.
“Your father didn’t like music and you loved it. So, how exactly would you have been a musician if he had not been in the picture?”
“I wouldn’t have run away with Lyanna in the first place. This entire… fucked up debacle wouldn’t have started and I could have finished my music school in peace and went on to do greater things from there,” Rhaegar softly sniffled.

“You ran away with Lyanna because your father didn’t like her?” Elia incredulously asked.

“Well when you put it that way, maybe. I was a young boy with very warm blood trying to protest against a man who I thought was a tyrant alright?” Rhaegar defended himself.

“Well I am glad he existed. Had you not run away with Lyanna, how would I have discovered my potential to become the owner of the world’s largest online retail store?” Elia playfully danced her eyebrows trying to lighten the atmosphere.

Rhaegar genuinely laughed; in a very long time, and Elia thought she might have felt a tiny small blush creep up her cheeks due to that so she immediately looked down. When they both went to bed that night, something had changed. Elia did not call up any of her journalist friends to give them a scoop of the insomniac life of Rhaegar Targaryan, and Rhaegar had a peaceful smile plastered on his face for the following five hours. He even slept for four, and was amazed at the audacity when he woke up with an alarm the next morning.

“Hmm, I see a package from Rhoyna,” Elia lightly spied as Rhaegar was sitting by the door and trying to open a new package he had received in the morning from Elia’s internet empire. It was a pretty notebook.

“Oh well, what can I say? It’s value for money,” the boy playfully shrugged.

“Hmm, wait till the sale is over,” Elia warned.

“You have rich clients for that trust me. I see Cersei literally order like fifty things at once from Rhoyna, and it’s everything, from lingerie to food!”

“She orders lingerie in front of you?” Elia asked, her eyebrows touching the upper-lining of her forehead in shock.

“If I did not value my green tea at night, I would throw it at you,” Elia chuckled as she took a sip form her earthen floral pattern cup.

“No seriously Rhoyna is amazing. I get everything I need from here, even when there is no sale,” Rhaegar smiled.

“Well, thank you very much. I am humbled,” Elia smiled back, good-naturedly.

“Hey, you wanted to name our daughter Rhoyna right?” Rhaegar suddenly recalled.

“It was a better name than Rhaenys any day,” Elia defended herself.

“Oh please, Rhaenys is a badass name okay? Our daughter would have been the coolest girl in the entire universe!” Rhaegar exclaimed as a slight blush crept up both their cheeks.

“Yes you bet. Well, Rhoyna is my daughter. She’s my baby, my creation and I hold her dearer than life,” Elia proudly stated, puffing her chest up to the best of her abilities.

“You should be proud of her. She’s doing wonders; much better than if you had to bring up a real daughter with me,” Rhaegar warmly stated.

“Well of course. I cannot even imagine you as a father!” Elia laughed.

“A man who doesn’t turn up to the hospital after his own wife’s miscarriage, shouldn’t even legally be allowed to be a father,” Rhaegar bitterly scoffed at himself as Elia looked at him with a hint of sadness before she was quick to blink it away. It wasn’t her style to feel genuine emotions at all. This was strange.

“You did what you had to. Don’t dwell on the past Rhaegar, it won’t let you sleep at night,” Elia’s comment made both of them laugh at the irony.

“What keeps you up at night?” Rhaegar inquired.

“Green tea,” Elia cheekily smiled.

“Yeah, right. But no, seriously, what keeps you up at night Elia… Martell? I mean, I have film school and then my past but what about you? I know you don’t work at night. You used to keep harping to my dad about work ethics and how there should be no professional work done at home
after nine no matter who you are. You read that in a book by a Yunkian master remember?"
“Oh yes, that management book by the Yunkian Master. Really helped me sometimes though,”
Elia said, trying her best to change the topic.
“So, what does keep you up at night?” Rhaegar too was a dragon and dragons never gave up easily.
“Something similar to you, I guess,” Elia rubbed the back of her neck.
“Film school?!”
“No, idiot!” Elia snapped.
“Past mistakes?” After some silence on Elia’s part, Rhaegar pressed again. “What past mistakes
could Elia Martell have committed?”
“None, can we not like talk about this?” Elia hollered suddenly.
“For the love of the seven, there is no reason to shout! By the way, I bared my soul to you weeks
ago and I have been getting good sleep ever since. It helps, just so you know. Maybe even Elia
Martell, CEO, Rhoyna, needs to talk and vent sometimes,” Rhaegar softly said as Elia was leaving
their general meeting spot.
Elia sat back down with a plop. If Rhaegar was getting good sleep, why did he meet her here every
midnight? Plus, baring her soul, and him venting about how he could not fulfil his dreams because
of his own responsibility, were two completely different things. He would not understand, but
should she even try? A phone call interrupted the pregnant silent moment.
“Dude, I just found out, Elia had been dating one of those Clegane brothers, creepy as they are,”
Arthur gushed through the phone, but Rhaegar had accidentally hit the loud-speaker button. Elia’s
eyes widened but Arthur could get a bit chatty sometimes. “She broke up with him a few months
ago. It’s the elder one, the creep. Just imagine, dating that monstrosity! And Eli is so tiny!”
“Art, I’ll call you back later,” Rhaegar stuttered as he cut the phone as fast as he could, in the
process of which, the phone slid out of his hand.
“Well, now you know what keeps me up at night,” Elia bitterly smirked before entreating to get up
again.
“No, please wait, Eli please. I don’t know anything. You are such a mystery, I only asked Arthur to
find out what you had been up to since your brothers wouldn’t talk to me. I just wanted to find
something out but I still don’t know many things about, essentially, what your demons are,”
Rhaegar tried his best to explain himself, knowing he had lost his wife again.
“My life was supposed to be entwined with yours. I was your responsibility as much as you were
mine! When you have washed your hands off of that, why are you asking after me now?!?” Elia
screamed, eyes going red with the exhaustion, and held back tears.
“Because I am curious! You would know what curiosity feels like. You sniffed out my dad’s
biggest political scam because you were curious. Who would understand mindless curiosity better
than you?” Rhaegar screamed right back.
“Or are you trying to make a movie on me?”
“Elia for god’s sake! I have done enough wrong to you already; I am not that bad…”
“Clegane used to torture me, beat me, sometimes force himself on me and a whole lot of other
things. I stayed because it was like a loan from Lord Tywin. I was at the Casterly Bank’s mercy
when I wanted to start my own company and I didn’t know what would happen if Gregor broke up
with me. He had asked me out once, and I had agreed, and then it had turned into this toxic thing
which I had only wanted to run away from. Even today, if a girl needs to take a loan from a bank to
start her business, there are all these things she needs to think about. You’re sad because you
couldn’t achieve your dreams right? All dreams come at a price Rhaegar, and mine was too heavy.
Of course, Rhoyna’s success was the key to my freedom but I have tried my best to be completely
free and I cannot. I am not that strong, I don’t have it in me anymore. All I have done is fight all
my life Rhaegar, fight to live, fight to study healthily and get a proper degree, fight to keep alive a
dead marriage from the start, fight to start new life from something that was dead, and then fight to
make a proper name for myself. I cannot do it anymore. I couldn’t stay at home, it would show on
my face, and I didn’t want Oberyn to know what I had gone through so I stay alone. That doesn’t
mean I am not happy, I am the happiest I have ever been; but I just can’t sleep anymore because I
am so tired, and so scared. I’m a lot like you Rhaegar, except you haven’t been through the physical worst of it.” Elia ended sniffling. Tears were flowing freely, and she did nothing to wipe them. She didn’t exactly want to see Rhaegar’s reaction.

“I am sorry. This is not going to take back any of the things that happened to you and you’re still going to have to keep fighting your constant fear but I am sorry. If nobody has ever said this to you before, I am sorry from all their sides,” Rhaegar softly said, with a small smile towards her. In a very long time, Elia genuinely smiled too, wiping a few tears.

That night, Rhaegar did not get any sleep at all. He was too busy stalking Gregor Clegane, planning the things he could do but Elia plopped down on the couch, she was so tired, and quietly fell asleep. She didn’t even make it to the bedroom. Both Elia and Rhaegar had had their own fights, sometimes, even against each other, so it was only fair that they would find their solace in each other too. When morning came, Elia was smirking to herself. She had not had any bad dreams at all.

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“We actually, kind of went out on a sushi date a few nights ago. It was so magical Art! Why hadn’t we done this stuff when we got married?” Rhaegar was musing dreamily over the phone while tying his shoelaces. He did not even want to go to film school anymore, just stare at Elia’s door and wait for her to open it.

“Yeah well, you were kind of hell bent on not liking your father’s choice,” Arthur gently reminded on the other side of the phone.

“Well I was stupid. I was extremely stupid, and hopefully, I’m not so stupid anymore. She is actually a lot of fun, not like mindless spontaneity, but she’s amazing. Can’t we marry again?”

“Okay, Rhae, calm down. Slow down right there. You’re falling too fast, take a deep breath. Oh also, the two of you never legally got divorced so you’re still technically married,” Arthur informed. Rhaegar’s ground shook.

“No fucking way! Art, you never told me that before! Wait, hadn’t I applied for a divorce?”

“Yes you had, and the lawyer had given us lot’s of fancy promises of a divorce but it never really materialised,” Arthur stated.

“Oh my god! And then there was me being so stupid again and forgetting this and never bringing it up and now that we are married, I can live with her right?” Rhaegar was talking so fast, it was a little hard to grasp.

“Rhaegar, she’s your wife, you can do whatever you want with her. But I don’t know about emotionally and psychologically. Does she want to be with you?” Arthur tentatively asked.

“I think she does. I’ve seen it in her eyes, I think. I am not sure though,” Rhaegar bit his lip.

“Well, be sure, before you tell her, just be sure,” Arthur advised.

“Thanks for the advice mate. I’m heading to college now, see you around later,” Rhaegar said as he practically skipped out of his apartment.

“As soon as Rhaegar stepped out of his apartment, it was like a truck hit him right in the chest, well metaphorically speaking. There were piles and piles and cardboard boxes splayed out in the front of Elia’s apartment and more professional ‘movers and packers’ were piling more furniture and decorative pieces into newer boxes. What the hell was going on? Looking at Elia’s bleak white flat, he could never have imagined that there were so many things stored inside. He had only caught glimpses though; they never entered each other’s living space.

“Hey Eli, what’s up?” He asked curiously, as she strode out in a fancy Dornish-cut Caftan dress, thigh-slit, high-slit and blazing red with embroidered oranges everywhere. Also, a Sun and Spear golden brooch stuck where the dress ended the neck plunge. “Vacation?”

“No; well yes, it’s kind of like a permanent vacation from this place. I’m going back home! Thank you so much Rhae, it was all because of you. Thank you so much, talking and just… being with
you, it has helped me so much. Thank you so much!” As tightly as Elia hugged him, Rhaegar felt
his heart was shattering to pieces.
“Home means? King’s Landing or Dorne?” He managed to croak.
“Dorne of course. I mean don’t get me wrong, King’s Landing was a kind of home too. But yeah
Dorne. Also, Rhoyna is moving headquarters to Sunspear. I mean, it was pretty difficult even
operating the headquarters from here and I always knew this was going to be temporary. The new
building in Sunspear is amazing! You must come visit me sometime; maybe you can shoot an arty
movie in Dorne. Although, I must warn you, it’s too sunny. Those dark movies of yours will be
best shot in the North. And then you can go and rekindle your romance with Lyanna too. All the
best Rhae,” Elia was beaming, and this time Rhaegar decided he would not be selfish enough to
come in the way of her happiness. “Thank you again.”
“It was a pleasure to be of your service,” he gave her a watery smile and only hoped she had not
known him well enough to see through the tears.
“Ma’am, we are done here,” one man obediently informed.
“Oh well, that’s my cue to go,” Elia smiled.
“Who’s going to be my next neighbour?” Rhaegar asked.
“Well, you won’t believe it! I kept gushing on and on about what an amazing neighbour you are,
and how wonderful this entire building is, and now, Varys wants to buy it! Like he’s going to the
buy the entire apartment, no more rents. He’s a great guy by the way, and I don’t just say that as a
loyal best friend,” Elia informed.
“Ahh, well, that’s comforting,” Rhaegar rubbed the back of his neck.
He decided to escort Elia to the elevator, which had its’ door wide open, looking to Rhaegar like it
was ready to engulf her and take her away from him forever. He stood in front of the elevator as
Elia entered it. He was trying his hardest right now, to hold back the tears, and that kind of
included biting the back of his mouth and lip till he drew blood out. Rhaegar had always hated
farewells, and now he detested them even more.
“Didn’t you have to go somewhere?” Elia asked looking at him.
“Oh yes, of course,” Rhaegar realised as he hopped inside the elevator too, and his eyes might
slightly have moistened up at the fact that Elia was holding the ‘door open’ button only for him.
And another guy who was holding brown cartons for her.
“Film school?”
“Oh yes, yeah, we have our annual project coming up. Basically, it is like an assignment you have
to submit at the end of the year where you make a short film of your choice and then get graded on
it. I will still have one more year to go following that but I will be getting the certificate at the end
of this, if I pass. The following year is only going to be a specialisation course,” Rhaegar
explained.
“Well, I really look forward to seeing your work but please Rhaegar, don’t make it extremely
obscure. Something that even we can understand maybe…” Elia trailed off cheekily.
“You are smart enough to understand everything Elia. I can totally see through your dumb-girl
façade now,” and then Rhaegar leaned in closer to her, “but don’t worry, that will be my secret.”
Watching Elia turn beetroot red was the ultimate triumph for him.
“Excuse me, ma’am, sir, if the two of you are done, we have reached the ground floor,” the guy
standing behind them with Elia’s crystal-ware awkwardly interjected.
The two parted ways, and there was one part of Rhaegar that just badly wanted to pull the woman
in and kiss her breathless, which Rhaegar had realised earlier, was quite easy to do, given that Elia
was generally always short of breath. But he really needed her, and yet his hands were tied. If he
really loved her, he would act responsibly this time, and not come between her happiness, that
belonged to her alone. He really wished he could be that happiness though; it was a stronger wish
than the ones he used to have about being singers and filmmakers.
“Goodbye Targaryan, see you again. I never knew ex-husbands could be such amazing two a.m.
friends. Thank you so much!” The young viper cheered as she was leaving the building. It
suddenly struck Rhaegar, he was not an ex-husband, whatever else he may be.
“Husband, I am still your husband,” Rhaegar was panting, red in the face, when he caught up with Elia at the airport. She was about to walk into the check-in section.

“How the hell did they allow you in here?” Elia asked incredulously.

“Prime Minister’s son here. They would be fired had they not,” Rhaegar pointed to himself, proud of this status for once in his life.

“Well, what are you talking about?” Elia now asked even more confused than before.

“Our marriage. It was never really annulled. I mean, I know I applied and all, but, they never really granted it. I didn’t have ‘solid grounds’ was what they said although I am sure the judge, like everybody else thought we just looked cute together,” Rhaegar was still panting, but he said what needed to be said.

“Well so what do you want me to do about it? We could have discussed the divorce proceedings over the phone too, I kind of have a plane to catch,” Elia was whispering now because a few people were checking out the visually appealing couple already.

“Well the point is, we are married, and you cannot leave without me.”

“What the hell is that supposed to mean?”

“I mean, as your husband, I have certain rights over you. I don’t want you to leave till my convocation and then we can both shift to Dorne if you’d like,” Rhaegar proudly announced his solutions.

“What is wrong with you? What are you talking about? Are you high? Is Cersei giving you stuff to smoke or what? Where does ‘we’ come from? We cannot be together,” Elia kept shaking her head.

“What the hell not?” Rhaegar asked.

“Because we don’t love each other! I mean come on, what the hell is going on?”

“Well I love you. Now you can make up your mind. If you’d like to stay, great, if you’d like to leave, not so great but I’ll be okay with it, you know why? Because when you truly love someone, you let them go. You let me go the first time, if you want; I’ll let you go this time,” Rhaegar softly said, because these were words only meant for her. There was quite a crowd gathering around them.

“Oh so you’re in love with me all of a sudden?” Elia questioned incredulously.

“Is that a crime?”

“I thought you loved Lyanna.”

“I thought so too, actually. It’s amazing right, how much we think alike,” Rhaegar inched towards Elia.

“Are you trying to be funny or manipulative because you can’t manipulate a businesswoman,” Elia crossed her arms in front of her chest warningly.

“I am being honest, something I’ve never really been before,” Rhaegar cockily replied.

“Not even with Lyanna?”

“For the love of the Seven, who did you get married to, me or Lyanna?!” There was a collective laugh from the crowd. They were quite enjoying the scene.

“Rhaegar, don’t make a scene here, I have a plane to catch,” Elia warned again.

“You’re the one making a scene, asking so many fucking questions. I wonder how the investors tolerate you with all your questions!”

“Don’t question my style of doing business, I am the best there is!”

“Then don’t question my love for you. I will be the best you’ve ever seen,” Rhaegar pulled her closer, hoping his charm was going to work, one last time.

“But my flight…”

“Why are you such a cheapskate? A bloody rich CEO and still worried about a business class ticket! Are you going to kiss me or not?”

“Will you refund my money? I don’t know with what, get me solitaires or something.”

“Not until you kiss me. Honestly though, what are you waiting for, the people to disperse because I don’t exactly think they are going to leave till they see us kis-”
The entire airport cheered as Elia claimed what was rightfully hers, and Rhaegar, like a young teenager in love, was blissfully reddening as he buried his face in the nape of her neck after the kiss was finished. They were both a little red and breathless, and extremely embarrassed at the public display of affection. Neither of them had ever been the PDA type.

“My solitaires, on our way back,” Elia ordered.

“Yes, Your Grace,” Rhaegar kissed her cheek.

“Also, if I am going to be your wife, you are going to make movies I can understand and enjoy,” Elia commanded.

“Hmm, I was actually thinking about making a love story for my assignment film. I’ll call it Insomnia I think, and it’ll be about broken coffee cups that join each other and become a whole through conversations they have at night,” the dragon softly hummed into Elia’s ears. He had been yearning to touch her for a very long time and now, he was not going to let her go.

“Coffee cups?!” Elia squealed in surprise. What kind of a concept was that?

“For all your business and economics prowess, you’re really bad at metaphors aren’t you?” Rhaegar asked.

“Well I always hated the ‘figures of speech’ lessons at school,” Elia shrugged.

“Don’t worry, I’ll teach you,” Rhaegar smiled as he spun his wife around.
I know I am updating in forever but I guess I can be forgiven because I had my exams (still do, there's just a long break). Still, I am really really sorry that I have not updated in forever. Also, this chapter is really not that good, it is fragmented and I finished it in a hurry because well, I really wanted to finish it. I don't like battling with one chapter for very long. I am really really sorry. Still, do give it a read!

There are two types of Principals in the world—dictators and manipulators. The dictators are hugely unpopular, extremely strict, and conventional in their approach to education. The manipulators are sweet-talkers, selfish, and get their work done without letting anybody understand their strict regimentation. Now Rhaegar Targaryan was neither, and Elia Martell was both. They were also ex-spouses. So when the year for the prestigious Westeros Education Awards came (which by the way comes once every nine years), there was bound to be heavy tension. The intensity had just not been anticipated as much.

“And this year is the year when the academics fight it out! Teachers outsmart teachers and the Principals, oh god, the Principals, they go all out to promote their institutions. It is that year, when every educationists turn business and showmen! However, this year is special. This year, along with the Edu Awards feat comes another spectacle that only takes place once every fifteen years, the Shooting Star showers! The night of the awards, the skies will be showered with what the astronomers are predicting would be a thousand meteors in the sky! This will be the most intense shower in centuries!” Varys’ voice boomed over the LED television screen.

“Gosh you do know how to shout!” Elia tried to out-speak her friend in a most drunken state.

“Oh well I’m sorry but it’s kind of my job,” Varys sarcastically replied, equally drunk.

“So is mine. I don’t go around calling you a… what is it you said? Yes, businessman,” Elia slightly slurred.

“I work for a company honey, a media house, I don’t run it,” Varys returned.

“My job is better than both of you!” Jaime gleefully interrupted. Currently, all three best friends were sprawled on Elia’s front couch, drunk, and slightly out of their wits.

“Night mom, I’m going to bed,” Aegon announced as he walked up the stairs to his room.

“Did you have dinner?” Elia asked trying to sound sober.

“Mom, I was at the Lannisters’ place,” Aegon answered. He was used to these three being drunk and fooling around the house after all these years.

“Hey, you were at my place and I didn’t know about it?! Did you break in, I’m a cop, better not have!” Jaime stated in his tipsy state.

“I was with Tywin,” Aegon rolled his eyes.

“He takes finance and economics tuitions from your father,” Elia informed.

“Gosh, dad is a teacher also now,” Jaime rolled his eyes as Varys snorted.

“Well he’s a good teacher and he teaches my son well,” Elia put in the last word.

“Can you imagine, baby Aegon, seems like he was born yesterday, already on his way to becoming a banker!” Jaime enigmatically looked ahead as if staring into an abyss when in reality he was simply staring at Elia’s new high definition television set.

“They grow fast,” Varys and Elia commented together.

“Good thing I didn’t have kids,” Jaime snidely commented.

“Hey, neither did I!” Varys exclaimed and all three broke into peals of laughter.
Both Rhaenys and Aegon had grown accustomed to their mother and uncles fooling around after one shot too many. They didn’t mind. Neither did Visenya actually, but she was with their dad. Visenya attended their dad’s school along with Daenerys, but both of Elia and Rhaegar’s first born children, along with Viserys, all went to Elia’s institution. It was a family battle this time, with the Education Awards. The siblings, along with their aunt and uncle, however, remained as united as ever.

“Today we will have both Miss Martell and Mr. Targaryan on the hot seats with us, regarding the Edu Awards Grand Slam that you cannot miss every Thursday starting from today! Today we have the two most successful Principals of Westeros competing against each other. Both their schools, the Targaryan Training Academy and National Westeros School led by Rhaegar Targaryan and Elia Martell respectively, not only have the highest ratings, but also the best reputation throughout the years. This is what Mr. Targaryan and his ex-wife need to say about each other’s… institution!” Varys’ exclamation brought on a lot of laughs as the Edu Awards Grand Slam began.

Elia and Rhaegar walked on to the studio looking dapper in their own ways. Rhaegar looked as handsome as ever, in one of his signature ‘Dolce and Gabbana’ floral suits, while Elia looked elegant as ever in her formal light blue and pink velvet jumpsuit. Even today people wished their marriage to never have been dissolved. Two pieces of perfection, they deserved each other.

“Welcome to the show,” Varys smiled warmly.

“Thank you for having us,” two of them echoed together as the crowds went wild. Everyone knew what was said about couples who spoke together, and only hoped Elia and Rhaegar would do the same.

“So, shall the debates begin?” Varys leaned forward eagerly.

“Of course,” the once married husband and wife spoke in tandem again. Old and young, everyone was losing it today.

“Well, the Targaryan Training Academy has been renowned for its’ Sports Scholarship Program and the immense importance it places on unconventional subjects such as Poetry and Philosophy. However, it has also been criticised for not having any board examinations and hence having a low quality control. What do you have to say about that?” Varys threw his first question at Rhaegar.

“Well honestly, I personally believe that tests commodify knowledge. However, we do have annual and block examinations that asses the abilities of our students well enough. Although we are one of the top institutes of Westeros, we do not teach like most mainstream schools do. Hence, our students are more content, definitely happier,” Rhaegar informed sincerely.

“I don’t hear my students complaining,” Elia snickered softly, as the entire hall burst into fits of laughter then.

“Well, well, Miss Martell, your question next then. The National Westeros School currently has the highest ratings on Google. However, as you know, the school with the top ratings does not necessarily win the award every time it is held. There is a separate panel of judges who evaluate the work you are doing and then asses your school accordingly. Your school has a good reputation all around, with children excelling in all subjects. You are known to have the most dedicated teachers in all of Westeros, almost challenging the professors of the Citadel, and your students regularly score high marks in every competitive examinations. However, there have been criticisms of your school from various sources which say that you do not pay equal attention to the co-curricular regime. What do you have to say about that?” Varys challenged his best friend. She had told him to.

“Honestly, this award does not matter to me. The National Westeros School has an unparalleled reputation across the globe and the fact that my students are the happiest and most content, regardless of less importance on co-curricular activities, simply shows that we teach children to take joy in education. When one can take joy in education, the fun of learning, one comes out a better person than most,” Elia suavely defended.

“What makes you think your children are content?” Rhaegar snidely commented.
“Well, Mr. Targaryan, my children find the best jobs after school since they naturally get into the best colleges and every alumnus I have met has only had words of gratitude for the school. Our Right to Education scheme ensures that the poorest children from Flea Bottom might find themselves growing to be a huge lawyer. I know you believe meritocracy is a myth but at NWS, we make it a reality. Also, the personal attention we pay to each and every student is also worth a mention, given that our teenagers have the highest index of personal happiness.”

“Well spoken Miss Martell,” Varys applauded, as did the rest of the auditorium.

“Your teenagers are extremely conceited to say the least,” Rhaegar put in sideways. There were a lot of children from the TTA present who all cheered for their principal. Honestly, this was a battle of the schools in a more sophisticated manner.

“That is because my teenagers score well,” Elia put in. Now it was the NWS pupils’ turn to cheer for theirs.

“Scoring well is barely something to be proud of. It only shows your abilities in passing exams, not in being intelligent,” Rhaegar countered.

“Oh my, I wonder what you have to say about your glorious mark-sheet that got you a full scholarship at the Citadel,” Elia retorted, making Rhaegar go red in the face.

This banter carried on for quite a while. Varys barely got the chance to put in a word sideways. He cursed both of them for being so charismatic and such exceptionally well speakers. Usually, most of the Principals who came were so sloppy and boring that it was Varys who kept the show going, but with Elia and Rhaegar there was never a chance for him to truly shine. So he sat back and sipped on the free mineral water that was provided by his channel, letting the two ex-lovers take over his show. There was not a single bored face in the audience. Even the Targaryan-Martell offspring watching at home (because they generally refused to attend any program where their parents might even happen to bump into each other) were pretty fascinated watching these two fight it out. Each of them had taken their sides as well.

“Well, well, that was a good fight,” Varys huffed when the buzzer went off and the time was up for the two debaters to end their debate. “That was an enriching session, but I was really hoping the two of you would spill some bedroom secrets through the course,” he chuckled.

“You know them all V,” Elia smirked right back.

“Why?” Varys feigned indifference.

“Bringing up Lyanna.”

“Why?” Elia grit her teeth as she elbowed her friend while she was picking some sandwiches from the post-interview feast that the channel had splayed out for her and Rhaegar and a couple of other educationists.

“What was?” Varys feigned indifference.

“Bringing up Lyanna.”

“Why?”

“They have divorced about six or seven years ago. Why would you dig all that up now?”

“Why would you care?” Varys danced his eyebrows.

“I don’t care about Rhaegar, but I too feel uncomfortable sometimes okay,” Elia glared. “No need to feel envious if the two of us stole your thunder from your show.”

“Hey Varys, it was a good show,” Rhaegar’s voice suddenly interrupted their conversation.

“Not a word,” Elia warned her friend as she left the two men to their own devices. She knew her friend had understood what that warning meant. Anyways, it was not like he was ever going to spill
their secrets; still, Varys felt like matchmaker sometimes and it was best to keep him warned, under control.

“Rhaegar, hello,” Varys coated his greeting with as much sugar as possible.

“You are a splendid host,” Rhaegar complimented.

“Why can’t your wife be half this nice?” Varys whispered to himself, and then corrected the fact in his head; Elia was one ex-wife. “How is Lyanna?” He said out loud.

“Oh we really haven’t talked since the divorce,” Rhaegar said, biting his lip slightly.

“Yes of course. I am sorry about that, I guess,” Varys shook his head lightly in order to show he regretted making the comment he did.

“I didn’t take it to heart I guess,” Rhaegar laughed back.

“That is so good of you. Even Eli seemed to be more ril- umm Rhaegar, I think my producer is calling me, I got to go,” Varys quickly slipped out knowing his friend would kill him when she came to know of his almost slip-of-tongue. It was a bad habit the poor boy fostered, a few glasses of vodka in his system, and he always became like this.

“Elia was what?” Rhaegar mused to himself as his eyes fell on the distant figure talking to one of the educationists who had been invited.

“The two of you still look wonderful together on screen,” Kevan Lannister was gushing as Elia pretended to look flattered.

“How was the show?” She asked politely. Honestly, she wanted to hold him by the neck, shake him, and ask him only that- how was the bloody show.

“Oh it was funny! Especially the part about the bedroom secrets!” Kevan threw his head back and laughed, which gave Elia enough time to roll her eyes. She was back to fluttering them as soon as he looked at her again.

“Thank you so much. Look forward to seeing you on the day of the actual award ceremony,” Elia politely smiled and excused herself. She loved parties, and she loved talking to people, especially coupled with the free food, but if all they could do was gush about her and her ex-husband, she was willing to pass.

Speaking of ex-husband, she bumped into the Dragon that had once been hers en route to the dessert section. Their foreheads touched lightly and she looked up to meet very familiar purple orbs. Rhaegar always preferred the word violet because he said sounded more poetic. Elia remembered how she used to laugh his romanticism away, leaning on his abdomen even as they read love poems out to each other. Maybe she had taken all that for granted. This was hardly the time to be contemplating such things though.

“Sorry, I still don’t look where I’m going,” Rhaegar nervously laughed as he scratched the back of his head.

“What a pity, you really should be starting,” Elia widened her eyes as she kept thinking of how to escape the awkward confrontation.

“Yeah, no kidding. How are you by the way?” Rhaegar pressed on.

“I’m alright, you?”

“Grand.”

“Great. Rhaegar could you move, I have to go get some dessert,” Elia hurried.

“Oh I was going that way too,” Rhaegar said.

“Really? I thought you were headed towards the other direction?”

“No. I mean, that’s the dessert counter right?” Rhaegar pointed towards the man making ice-lollies.

“No that’s only for ice-cream. Real dessert is that way,” Elia informed.

“Oh well, then we’re both going in the same direction. How foolish of me to get lost,” Rhaegar chuckled.

“Not the first time you’ve done that,” Elia quietly slipped in and then turned her around the other way so Rhaegar would most probably not register what she had just said. The catch was that Rhaegar always registered what she said. He valued her words more than anything, and he had clearly comprehended the comment she passed. Had it not been guilt gnawing at him from the
inside, he might have retaliated.
“What is real dessert by the way?” Rhaegar mused when they were half-way towards the dessert line-up.
“Anything sweet, I guess,” Elia shrugged.
“So why not the ice-cream?”
“Well go have the ice-cream if you want, why are you tailing me anyways?” Elia retorted.
“I am not tailing you! This is not called tailing!” Rhaegar also, pretty loudly replied back to her, shocking her a few seconds there.
“Well whatever it is, stop the charades. We don’t have to be nice to each other; you might as well stop trying.”
“Unlike you, I am genuinely nice,” Rhaegar spat.
“There you go, I was wondering where the old Rhaegar was hiding,” Elia bitterly smirked.
“The old Rhaegar was made like this, by you,” Rhaegar retorted again.
“Fine. Then pray why are you following me?”
“Because I really want dessert, for the love of the seven!”
“Then shut up, look straight, and do not attempt to talk to me,” Elia pursed her lips together and sealed the deal. She always had the last words anyways. Rhaegar was used to it.
“Oh my, I had almost forgotten that Varys is your best friend,” Rhaegar commented, scanning his eyes over the dessert.
“Now what is that snide comment supposed to mean?” Elia rolled her eyes.
“Would you take a look at all the sweets? Red velvet cake, red velvet cheesecake, red velvet cupcake, red velvet cookies, red velvet soufflé; I mean, what the hell even is red velvet soufflé?! Did you bribe their channel to do all this?”
“Only you could have such stupid ideas. In case you haven’t noticed, today’s theme for the dinner was red.”
“I hate red velvet.”
“Not as much as I hate your carrot cake Targaryan.”
“No kidding, you made it for my birthday once, and I had to hear the same story for the next five years,” Rhaegar laughed as Elia chuckled along with him.
“Well, in my defence, I hated baking, and I was making disgusting carrot cake!” Elia beamed at the memory.
“Carrot cake is not disgusting, it’s the best. In fact, it actually has a taste of its’ own, unlike these plain cakes coloured over twice with artificial chemicals,” Rhaegar pointed towards a dainty cupcake and Elia was quick to pick it up and place it on her over-flowing plate.
“This is all edible chemicals, and red velvet has a very subtle taste; you’re just not posh enough to acquire it,” the Martell cheekily shrugged.
“Of course, the Gods stuffed all the sophistication of the world inside Elia Martell!” Rhaegar laughed as he remembered precisely how many times a day he used to tease Elia with his phrase. The viper rolled her eyes good-naturedly.

“I didn’t know you liked coffee,” a very familiar and very attractive voice behind Elia reached out for the extra-strong three-bean coffee pack she had been trying to catch a hold of for very long.
“Sorry, still haven’t acquired that taste, but Art is staying over at my place and you know he drinks coffee like people drink water,” Elia turned around to face Rhaegar. “I didn’t know you got a cat. You always made it pretty clear you were a dragon person,” she looked at the large packet of cat food Rhaegar was carrying. They both chuckled.
“Yeah, this is for Nys’ cat. The story goes something along the lines of you didn’t allow her to keep a pet at home so her pet stays with me and she stays with you,” Rhaegar gently informed.
“She never told me. Why don’t you throw the cat out, and if she throws a tantrum, I’ll deal with her,” Elia became extremely strict all of a sudden.
“No absolutely not. She loves that cat as much as she loves herself I won’t let anybody touch it,”
Rhaegar protectively replied.

“Wow, you are one great dad,” Elia put her sarcasm extremely subtly.

“Yeah no kidding, I’m the best there is!” Rhaegar bitterly laughed. He knew that in this lifetime, he was never going to completely rid himself of guilt.

“Well I’m not the best mom so we’re equal,” Elia gave him a reassuring smile. Rhaegar had really been missing those lately, and he almost wondered why.

“So, how long has Art been staying at your place?” Rhaegar asked, trying to appear nonchalant.

“He came in last night. He has some sort of secret something here that he won’t tell us about but you know how these Interpol people are,” Elia replied.

“But that could be dangerous. Hey Elia, my kids live in that house too okay? How can you let a secret agent live like that?” Rhaegar began raising his voice.

“Arthur is not a secret agent. Plus, he’s also been teaching Viserys loads of hacking so his stay is paying off,” Elia smiled.

“I don’t give a shit about Viserys, he is all grown up but my little Nys and Aeg stay in that house too,” Rhaegar began hyperventilating again.

“Excuse me, you should care about Viserys; he’s your brother. And also, everything is safe. Arthur is a senior officer, what do you think can possibly happen to him?” Elia interrupted, completely irritated.

“Well, senior officers get assassinated all the time, I read about it daily in the papers,” Rhaegar exaggerated.

“When was the last time a senior Interpol officer got assassinated?”

“My dad was assassinated.”

“Okay, first up, he was a politician. Secondly, he got killed because of a riot you started, and third, that was years ago. What has gotten into you?” Elia huffed before deciding to walk away. Why was she even wasting her time talking to him?

“I just want the three of you to be safe,” Rhaegar blurted out.

“It’s a little late for that don’t you think?” Elia looked back and spat out sharply. “Also, learn to wish well for your both of your siblings Rhaegar, not just one.”

“Viserys does not consider me a brother.”

“You have never done anything to earn it. That does not change the reality. Viserys is young, you are not. Please try and understand,” Elia reprimanded.

“Why do I always end up with the burden of responsibility and understanding?” Rhaegar muttered.

“You run away from it Rhaegar; stop running, and you’ll be fine,” Elia said before making her way to the cashier.

“Hey, won’t you take anything for the kids? They must be expecting something,” Rhaegar caught up with his wife.

“No I don’t spoil them unlike you,” Elia replied.

“What makes you think I spoil them?” Rhaegar cocked an eyebrow.

“I’m not blind, I can see the amount of gifts you give Rhaenys. I can see them when she comes home,” Elia rolled her eyes.

“They don’t exactly live with me you know. I like to spoil them as often as I can,” Rhaegar smiled bitterly.

“Yeah, sorry about that. I never did understand why courts choose moms over dads,” Elia stoically stated.

“Well the moms are generally not assholes,” Rhaegar frankly confessed.

“I think that’s the nicest thing you’ve ever said to me,” Elia said handing over her credit card to the cashier.

“Well I was talking about all moms in general but welcome,” Rhaegar said impressed with himself.

“Wait, that’s really the nicest thing I’ve ever said to you?” He asked again, astonished.

“Well, what did you expect? Not like you treated me like a goddess or anything,” Elia sniggered.

“Let’s go for some coffee,” Rhaegar suddenly proposed, astonished even with himself.

“Let’s go for what?” Elia asked equally surprised.
“Coffee; I am not trying to make up or anything I swear,” Rhaegar defended his intentions. “Then why are we going anyways?” Elia asked, clearly testing her husband’s capacity for defending himself.

“Oh you want me to… make-up I mean,” Rhaegar scratched his head in utter confusion. “No I don’t, I was pulling your leg; genius. How do you run a school at this rate?” Elia chuckled. “My kids don’t mind,” Rhaegar proudly puffed his chest out. “But seriously, if you’re okay with it, we could go and have some coffee. I mean you can have tea, I’ll have some coffee.” Elia did pretend to think for a while, and in the beginning she was truly musing the possibility but then she gave in. What harm could it possibly do? In about a fortnight they were going to be pitted against each other in the most prestigious awards for education and there was no harm that they had already not wished upon each other- a cup of coffee and tea seemed totally doable. They finally found themselves splitting in laughter in a tiny café adjacent to the supermarket where they had bumped.

“The Quarthian teachers are the weirdest hands down!” Rhaegar snorted. The two Principals were enjoying a little bit of gossip amongst themselves.

“That is because you don’t have Dothrakis working for you,” Elia laughed back.

“Why do you have a Dothraki anyway?”

“Well to be completely honest with you, nobody can teach the language better than a native. I had approached some of the best linguists but even they believe that the Dothraki are true champions in their mother tongue. You know I only want the best for my school,” Elia gloated a little.

“Yeah no kidding, you steal good teachers from everywhere,” Rhaegar replied with a hint of a grudge.

“I don’t steal teachers, they come to me,” Elia shrugged nonchalantly.

“Any teacher would, with the job offers you provide,” Rhaegar countered.

“But that is less your ability and more my credit,” Elia argued.

“Look Eli, you and I both know that essentially this world runs on money. Why are you playing innocent?”

“At least my students are not brought up to be righteous and pretentious. They know what the world runs on, and they try to change it in their small subtle ways, I’ve ensured that. The Starks gobbled you so much with their crudity; you’ve not got an ounce of Southern sophistication left in you,” Elia suavely put across the table.

“I broke up with Lyanna three years ago. We divorced, in case you’ve been living in Mars,” Rhaegar replied irritated.

“You left Lyanna, she is still inside you. Look at the food you’ve ordered, bland and gross,” Elia shrugged, looking across at the large and brown walnut cake in disdain.

“Why are you dragging food into this?” Rhaegar shouted.

“Did you bring me here to fight?”

“No, but it looks like we can’t anywhere without fighting with each other,” Rhaegar replied in a livid fit.

“Exactly, so don’t even try.”

“Elia, why did you agree to come?” Rhaegar asked, voice shaking just the slightest bit, as Elia got up to go.

“I missed fighting with someone. Thanks by the way,” the viper laid out a wad of cash on the table and left. Elia had always preferred splitting, even back when she was after his money.

“I’ve never seen a shooting star before. Have you papa?” Visenya asked, looking out the tinted windows of the car and getting disappointing results.

“Yes Nya, I have. I met your mother on a star shower night. It was not as grand as this but there were quite a few shooting stars,” Rhaegar smiled at the memory.

“Mama likes star-gazing too?” Visenya asked in child-like happiness. She loved stars, and she was so glad all of her family did as well.
“Of course she does! She would never tell you that though, so don’t tell her I told you,” Rhaegar chuckled. He trusted his youngest dragon; she was the closest to him.

“Papa, ever since you got back from the store that day, after buying food for Balerion, you have been talking about Mama Non-stop,” Visenya softly said. She did not want her father to think she had grown too big for her boots.

“Did you say something love?” Rhaegar asked, distracted as he was, by the phone. Visenya shook her head vigorously.

The night was dazzling, not only because there was supposed to be a star shower and the entire universe seemed to be preparing for it but also because the humans themselves were having a sort of educational star shower themselves, where the largest auditorium in all of Westeros, Baelor’s Sept had been decorated like never before. Well, a lot of children had not been born to see the Edu Awards held the last time. It was a proper grand sight to behold. Even Visenya gaped in awe as Rhaegar poked his head out of the window and smirked. The Edu Awards brought back a lot of good memories for him. Their car pulled to a haul in front of the steps leading to the auditorium, and Rhaegar helped his daughter down as his eyes immediately searched for the rest of his family; and Elia.

“What are you looking for Papa?” Visenya asked cheekily. Rhaegar was jolted out of his trance.

“Nobody in particular, just Dany, Vis, Nys and Egg I guess,” Rhaegar shrugged.

“Nobody in particular then,” Visenya mocked her father’s expression when he was trying too hard to be nonchalant.

“I will not have any more of you teasing me young lady,” Rhaegar playfully glared at his favourite little dragon, well, viper-dragon, and led her up the steps.

“I am looking for Dany too. She needs to tell me what happened in the latest episode of Keeping up with the Lannisters,” Visenya said.

“You watch that?” Rhaegar asked, partly surprised and partly disgusted.

“Mom watches it too,” Visenya defended herself.

“Well I expect nothing better from your mother, trust me,” Rhaegar rolled his eyes.

“I have always doubted her taste as well, choosing you and all,” Jaime cut into the conversation. He was walking by them, but Rhaegar had not noticed. Visenya suppressed a giggle. She loved her uncle Jaime and his cocky sense of humour, especially when it riled up her father.

“Given that she’s got an eavesdropper of a best friend, I am not surprised,” Rhaegar shrugged sarcastically.

“Given that she’s got an idiot of a husband, I am not going to comment further because she is coming this way and she is going to kill us if she sees us talking about her,” Jaime pursed his lips into a smile as soon as Elia’s eyes spotted them both. Rhaegar smiled too, and both the men were looking like perfect fools.

“Hello you two,” Elia beamed. She was looking regal in a fancy sequined Dornish outfit.

“Hi Eli,” Jaime greeted as he tackled his best friend in a bear hug.

“Jay, my hair!” Elia squealed as Rhaegar looked on pensively.

“Hello Rhaegar,” Elia smiled in between her Lannister attacks.

“How are you?” Rhaegar smiled as awkwardly as possible.

“Nervous. You?”

“Well, I’m feeling better now,” Rhaegar smiled.


Three cannon-balls, or well, something that sounded like cannon-balls, started the event off and all four of the unsuspecting parties sprinted inside the auditorium. The air-conditioning was blasting, and the fireworks were too loud. Some even complained that it would be impossible to see the shooting star shower but witty host Varys assured everybody that the fireworks would die down as soon as the first award was announced. In the rush of the moment, Rhaegar found himself seated next to the family he had abandoned. There was no awkwardness though, strangely; they basked in each other’s silence, and external uproar, as usual.

Each of the categories kept getting tick off one by one. The anxiousness kept rising. Honestly,
nobody really bothered about the other awards. Yes the teaching awards and the various students of the year accolades demanded some attention but everybody’s eyes were on the schools competing for best institution. After all, two divorcees had been nominated for the first time. No matter how professional one was, gossip always swayed people.

“When are the final awards going to be declared?” Rhaenys impatiently leaned over to her mother.

“These are the final awards,” Elia looked at her daughter with the look she generally gave to Lyanna Stark, the look reserved for idiots.

“No, I mean, ‘the’ final award. You know what I mean,” Rhaenys pointed out annoyed.

“Stop acting like Lyanna Stark. Just sit, and watch,” Elia snapped. Truth was she was getting far too nervous herself.

“You mentioned Lyanna Stark?” Viserys leaned in, clearly in the mood for some gossip. Elia glared at him too.

“Concentrate,” Elia motioned her hands towards the stage, carefully spelling out each syllable as she did so.

Varys came back on stage and everybody was curios again. He cleared his throat and looked around nervously. Elia knew there was something wrong right away. However, the only thing he said was that they needed to move to the adjacent covered auditorium as fast as possible. There were grumbles and protests but Varys being Varys did not really listen, he only spoke. Elia was extremely curious now. Involuntarily, her eyes flicked to Rhaegar.

“I like this place!” Daenerys crossed her arms in front of her chest.

“Well Princess, too bad it’s an emergency,” Viserys mocked her.

“Would all of you stop bickering and get a move on please,” Rhaegar hollered and all the children shut up. Then they quietly followed the path he showed them. People, as was habit, ran around panic-stricken, creating an unnecessary chaos.

“Dad, won’t you come?” Aegon asked as he glanced back and saw Rhaegar standing where he was initially.

“I’ll just wait a bit and then go,” Rhaegar replied.

“Wow, you’re doing social service now,” Rhaenys caustically commented. Aegon suppressed a laugh.

“Would the two of you leave?” Rhaegar glared and they scuttled away.

“Oh my god, the star shower has taken an ugly turn. You wouldn’t believe what is happening, I was watching a few reports,” Elia gushed as soon as she caught hold of Rhaegar.

“Hmm, you can do your research later, we have to get a move on now,” Rhaegar urged as he pulled her by the elbow.

“Where are we going?” Elia asked completely bewildered.

“Elia, everybody is being evacuated, we have to move!”

“Oh, I’m so sorry, I didn’t notice, I was too busy… anyways, why didn’t you go?”

“Was just… well, you know, somebody needs to herald other people but let’s go,” Rhaegar stuttered.

Elia gave him a suspicious look because he was clearly not interested in anybody else but she let it go with a shrug and made her way towards the exit where Rhaegar was practically dragging her anyways. Nobody could really understand what was going on, not even the scientists, but it was not just a star shower that was happening. Everybody was being heralded into the closed auditorium like sheep and it was simple chaos. Elia, curious and scared of the accumulating virility of the crowd, pulled Rhaegar towards another smaller shelter. Rhaegar, confused and scared himself, followed her quietly.

“I don’t think it’s wise to add more people in there, it’ll be a stampede,” Elia was panting. “Where are the children?”

“I told them to leave first, and they went,” Rhaegar explained.

“Good, then they’ll be fine. Anyways, they are VIP’s, they need to be fine. Are you okay?” Elia asked.

“Well yes, but tell me something, aren’t we VIP’s?”
“We are old VIP’s. Anyways, I don’t want to know who wins the award,” Elia confessed.

“Why?” Rhaegar was astounded.

“I’ll feel bad both ways, and I don’t feel like feeling bad today, it’s a beautiful night. A little destructive maybe, but, look at the sky!”

“You’d feel bad if I lost?” Rhaegar raised an eyebrow.

“Well yeah, I mean, you’ve worked so hard to make a saintly and pretentious school that people will actually buy. It was never a tough job for me,” Elia went back to her spirits.

“Yeah, yeah, whatever. I have a feeling you’re going to win; not because your school is mainstream and successful and neither because you may have slept with some of the jury but simply because you make the smartest kids. I’ve seen, and I’m honestly, super jealous.”

“Rhaegar, I think that’s the nicest thing you’ve ever said to me,” Elia looked at him wide-eyed and laughing.

“Oh yes don’t start thinking too highly of yourself. Look there, that’s a proper shooting star,” Rhaegar pointed towards the sky.

“What the hell is a proper shooting star?” Elia asked bewildered.

“Stop asking stupid questions and wish for something,” Rhaegar said as he closed his eyes and clasped his hands together and mumbled something quietly to himself. Elia only stared at him, with an expression on her face that generally never sat there.

When Rhaegar was done with his wishes he looked at her. He was confused, she did not have her eyes closed, and neither did she have her hands clasped. In fact, she was looking at him, and it was extremely hard to know what Elia was thinking. He frowned and was about to ask what was wrong, why she had missed her chance to make a wish but he was interrupted by a sudden announcement on the speakers. The awards were starting again. The last and most awaited award of the year was to be announced soon.

“Come on, let’s go,” Elia said, leading Rhaegar out.

“I thought you didn’t want to go,” Rhaegar said.

“I changed my mind.”

“What did you wish for?”

“Nothing. I didn’t need to. Whatever happens tonight, I’ll be happy either ways,” Elia smiled.

Rhaegar pulled her in suddenly. They were standing outside the auditorium. There were large screen on two sides that were showing the award ceremony live. Varys was beaming on the stage again. Elia and Rhaegar were only looking at each other. “Whoever wins tonight, can I take you home?”

“Yes, I would like that very much,” Elia grinned as they both leaned in, fireworks exploded in the background, and her school won. “You are my shooting star, I don’t need anybody else,” she whispered softly, pulling away from the kiss.

“Won’t you ask what I wished for?”

“I know. You wished that I would win so you could take me out, get me drunk, and then fool around with me,” Elia rolled her eyes.

“Hey, I didn’t want to fool around with you after you got drunk! What would be the fun in that?”

Rhaegar grinned as Elia shut him up with another kiss.
Hey I am so so sorry, I know I am very late but I do have a valid explanation: I was finishing one of the first installments of my board exams. This is the tough life of a kid who has taken too many weird subject combinations! Anyways, I am not here to rant to you, and I do have a chapter.
It is an Elia-Robert imagine like a million people have been requesting (Bo is one reader who suddenly comes to mind but there have been many) and here it is! I know many of you requested this so let yourselves be known in the comments section please. I don't know if I have served justice to your expectations though, sorry about that. Enjoy!

“My young ladies, and hot gentlemen, it is that time of the year again when our boys attempt to move out of the friendzone on Friendship Day! This year, the Ticket Out joust shall take place in Summerhall! Oh well, it almost sounds like Harrenhall and remember what happened there last time? Don’t we all love us a bit of gossip guys! However, I shall be writing about last year’s event in our weekly edition so don’t miss that out. For now, here are the details on this year’s event! In case you’re stuck in the friendzone and desperately want out, this is your chance boys! Participate now. In order to enter…”

“Wow, you just had to mention Harrenhall,” Elia eyed her best friend with contempt.
“Hey, I am a journalist; or at least aspiring, call it whatever but the thing is, that’s my job okay. I am sorry if you and your boyfriend are ample gossip material,” Varys sassed back.
“Ex boyfriend genius,” Elia rolled her eyes and began making her way down the corridor towards her class.
“You know, there’s still a faithful Elia-Rhaegar fan-club in school,” Varys was panting while speaking because he was having a hard time keeping up the stiletto-clad long-legged Dornish girl.
“Well too bad there is no Elia-Rhaegar anymore,” Elia replied in annoyance and increased her pace.
“Hey not fair, you have long legs and I don’t!” Varys began sprinting.
“I am not in the mood for you, or your gossip, or the way you sensationalise my private life okay? I might have enjoyed it at one point of time, but it has been a year, let go of it V,” Elia hissed towards him. Her voice never increased a certain decibel; she was not the kind to make a scene.
“Why didn’t you let go of it yet?” Varys pulled her by the elbow bringing her to a halt.
“What do you mean?”
“Look at you, your eyes are glossy; your eyes! Like they never flow unless you’re acting or you need to manipulate someone and you’re still genuinely sad about what happened at Harrenhall even today. King’s Landing High may move on someday, but you think about when you will.”
As Varys stomped away, Elia had never felt that helpless or vulnerable her entire life. Her closest friends knew, she was the not girl with real feelings, never had been. The only thing real about her had been her dreams, and the Targaryans were an easy way to go up that ladder, but never had she imagined she would end up losing her heart in the process. It was shocking, to say the least. Elia had only realised the extent of her feelings when her handsome and chiselled boyfriend had won their annual joust and handed over his ticket-out rose to Lyanna Stark, telling her that he didn’t want to be stuck in the friendzone with her anymore. Devastating would have been putting the situation very lightly, but not only because she had lost her Targaryan boyfriend, but simply because she had lost a man she had actually found herself developing feelings for. A fat tear found
itself slipping from her eyes and falling splat on the marbled floor. She looked at it with disgust, her sign of weakness, and tried to rub it off of the floor with her pointed heel. Her foot almost slipped. Disgusted, confused and frustrated, she walked to her Pure Mathematics class.

“Do you think I should register?” Robert nervously asked.

“Why are you asking me?” Elia nonchalantly shrugged.

“You’re smart, you should know. Maybe I could defeat Rhaegar,” Robert mumbled the last part.

“It’s just a fete, don’t stress yourself out, and right now, concentrate,” Elia motioned towards Genna Frey who was throwing a stern look their way.

Robert pretended to concentrate on his textbook of inane poems that made no sense to him at all. They had at one point of time, when he had been in love, and he had believed that Lyanna returned the love. Thus, he used to gobble up whatever poem came his way during the super boring Literature lessons. There was no Lyanna anymore, and his only motive to attend the classes had vanished. Well, Lyanna was still there, she was just not his. He felt a strange relief in befriending Elia though, poor girl knew exactly what he was going through. He glanced at her once more hoping to catch her attention but she was a good girl, or at least pretended to be, and had gone back to concentrating on the class.

“I think I am going to,” Robert announced while they were packing their books.

“Honestly, do what you want, I’m not going,” Elia rolled her eyes.

“Why not? I didn’t take you to be one of those people who gave up easily,” Robert frowned.

“I am not giving up or anything; I just have a dentist’s appointment that day,” Elia stoically stated.

“That is just an excuse,” Robert cleverly pointed out. It seemed like an accomplishment to him, outsmarting Elia Martell, or at least seeing through her lie. It was a huge accomplishment.

“Of course, you would know, you’re buddies with my dentist,” Elia mocked.

“Okay, tell me, what’s your problem?”

“I have a wisdom tooth extraction.”

“Nobody ever heard you complaining about a wisdom tooth before,” Robert sassied Elia.

“My boyfriend made a fool of me in public and practically announced that he was sleeping with a child. Did you hear me complain then?” Elia retorted back with equal panache.

An idea suddenly struck Robert. Of course he would participate in the joust, and he would win it. But he would not only win it for himself, he would also win it for Elia. She had been just about as wronged as he was, and while he had been drowning his sorrow with bottles of alcohol and leaning on every strangers’ shoulder for support, she had kept a stiff upper lip and going on with her daily life. There truly was no justice in this world, but he would try.

“On second thoughts, I will participate,” Robert finally announced as they exited the class.

“Do whatever you like Baratheon,” Elia shook her head laughing. He was a very fickle boy, but even she had grown used to that in the past few months. A very strange friendship had blossomed between the two.

“I want to beat him,” Robert stated.

“Beat who?” Elia innocently asked. Of course she knew who he was talking about, but the Martell liked to play along.

“Stop it Viper, I can see through you now,” Robert too had acquired quite a few skills from her. Elia only threw her head back and laughed and they both walked down the corridor sharing a laugh about the entire incident when suddenly Elia bumped heads with someone as tall as her, in those killer stilettos. Now there were very few people in school who were as tall as that, and since she was looking down with her eyes closed while laughing and walking, she did not even want to open them to see who she had bumped into. She kind of already knew. Also, she recognised that cologne very well.

“Ouch,” she whimpered as softly as she could. Both Rhaegar and Elia had quite hard heads, and they met at a speedy acceleration.

“Sorry,” Rhaegar mumbled and his eyes flicked to the right as he saw Robert. Instantly, the
apologetic expression went for a toss. “Excuse me.”
“What an ass,” Robert also mumbled. He was not one to let go easily and he had noticed Rhaegar’s change of expression very well. Why the Targaryan donkey needed to change his demeanour towards the girlfriend he had wronged because she was with his nemesis was beyond him.
“I heard that, genius,” Rhaegar hissed back, almost resembling a Martell, so much so that Robert had to press down a smile.
“You were meant to, light-bulb,” Robert impertinently retorted. Even Elia laughed at that, and instantly regretted it.
“The two of you deserve each other,” Rhaegar spat at her this time. Elia’s jaw fell to the floor.
“Only a dick sees a dick in everybody. We are normal people, we can be friends with the opposite gender without having to jump into their beds,” Elia finally spoke. Weirdly, this was the first conversation she had had with Rhaegar since the break-up. It felt strangely therapeutic.
“Says a Dornishwoman,” Rhaegar bitterly smirked before walking away, not waiting for the reply because he knew Elia would say something so true and so spiteful about the Northerners that he would end up hating himself, and losing the little verbal war they just had. Generally Dornishmen were very easy to racially trigger by passing comments like that, but even if Elia was ever deeply hurt, she would only lace it with bitterer words. She was a proper viper.
Elia on the other hand had been deeply affected by what Rhaegar said. She suddenly remembered her first day in the school when she had obviously been friendly and accepted because she was a Martell but also given patronising Northern comments along with it. Elia might have been a great manipulator, a wonderful pretender, but she was not used to other people being like that. In Dorne, everybody was as frank as frankness got; thus it was suddenly a huge shock how everybody wanted to be her friend, but she also knew, were only spouting venom about her behind her back when she turned. It had been crazy. The school was filled with people like her! She had been lost as to how to be the Queen here, everybody was competition. And then had entered the Valyrian boy in the same situation, with purple eyes, silver hair and lots of friends but none genuine. They were quick to become each other’s solace and by the eighth grade even the teachers said they were going to grow up and get married. They hadn’t kissed till the ninth grade though, when Elia had helped Rhaegar out of a very sticky situation where he had discovered a married teacher having an affair with a student. He had given her a kiss on the lips in return; Elia had blushed and Rhaegar had hugged her because she looked adorable when she blushed- but he had never said that it was normal for her because she was Dornish. So when he said that to her in the corridor, after all those years of being best friends and two extremely popular outsiders, it pricked her heart harder than the cheating had.
“Let’s go,” Robert was motioning her towards the canteen.
“When you beat this piece of shit in the tourney, send me a picture. I’m going to frame it,” Elia stated, before walking towards the ladies’ room as fast as she could. Robert smiled, oh well, at least she had real feelings, she was a human being.

“Who are you going to the Friendship Day fete with? Can all three of us go together like we did for Junior Prom?” Jaime excitedly asked.
“I’m down with anything, I’m used to going alone as well,” Varys shrugged.
“I have an appointment with the dentist, I can’t,” Elia coldly stated.
“Oh come on, that’s not fair! You’re not a giver-up!” Both Varys and Jaime echoed together and then realized they had invented a new term.
“Why can’t anybody believe I have an actual dentist’s appointment?!” Elia snapped at both of them.
“Who else asked?” Both the boys eyed her suspiciously.
“Don’t be stupid it’s not like that, only Robert was asking,” Elia rolled her eyes.
“Robert Baratheon has been spending a lot of time with you,” Varys casually stated and Jaime nodded in agreement.
“Excuse me, what does that mean?” Elia suddenly realised the implication of the statement and stared at both of them suspiciously.

“It means we’re glad you’re making more stupid friends. Every smart guy in the school seems to have an ego problem with you,” Jaime playfully passed.

“You’re certainly not one of the smart guys so stop trying,” Elia returned the snide comment with equal vigour.

“Exactly, that’s why I’m your friend,” Jaime broke into a laugh and Varys began laughing with him. Soon, even Elia gave in to their antics and all three lost themselves in the mirth of the moment.

By the time lunch had given way to the next class, neither of the three had finished their food, and was not even in the process of finishing their food. Their laughter rang through the walls of the colourful canteen and literally everybody envied the little group. There could have been huge groups and cliques of friends but there was only one small group that was truly happy and open with each other. Even the stiff Northerners who hated all things South and frivolous appeared to be a little envious of the three of them laughing till their sides were splitting and they were absolutely red in the face.

“You know we have to get to class right?” Jaime finally controlled his laughter.

“Yeah life just caught up again. What class do you guys have?” Elia asked good-naturedly.

“I have Phys. Ed. And I think he has creative writing,” Jaime answered.

“Do you think it’s possible to skip creative writing?” Elia eyed Varys mischievously although she was guiltily biting her bottom lip.

“I hate it anyways,” Varys threw his hands up and shrugged.

“Hey, my Phys. Ed. is important too okay!” Jaime argued and both his friends laughed and pulled his cheeks much to his annoyance. “Just because the two of you are smart doesn’t mean you get to bully me like this,” he pouted.

“Where would we be without you Lannister? We love you,” Elia smiled warmly and pulled both of them in for a hug.

So skipping classes took a toll, on the brains and the conscience- mainly because it was an absolute pain trying to sneak out or find a free classroom with all the revolving CCTV cameras literally everywhere. It was a tough job, but Elia and Varys were two of the finest minds in the school, and not only was Jaime a loyal sidekick, he was also pretty agile and the bunking expert. As they quietly slipped out of the canteen by the time the camera had turned the other way, and managed to skip out into the playground through the backdoor, they noticed a solitary Robert Baratheon smoking something.

“Oh look we’re not the only ones,” Jaime softly explained.

“You guys go along and wait for me near the swings, I’m coming,” Elia motioned them to move towards the kids section because none of the high-school teachers ever went there.

“Okay…” Both of her friends made sneaky eyes at her before slipping past Robert without him noticing really, and laughing about the weird attachment that had formed between their friend and the scorned Baratheon.

“Hey you, cutting class?” Elia asked as she approached Robert. His eyes widened.

“Is Miss Elia Perfect Martell cutting class along with me? Who woke up on the wrong side of the bed today?”

“No Robert it’s nothing like that, I do cut class sometimes. It’s rare, I know, but I do. And plus, Jaime and Varys are with me. We are as good influences to each other as we are bad ones too,” Elia gently chuckled as she stood next to Robert and he threw his cigarette away.

“I cut class all the time. Welcome to the club,” Robert extended his hand grinning.

“Aren’t you failing your classes?” Elia cocked an eyebrow.

“Well yes, but I kind of told Selmy that I’m going to take extra lessons from you. Well, he suggested a few names and yours was one of them. I’m sorry but ever since the Harrenhall incident, I am not comfortable talking to anybody else. You have Jaime and Varys but I never had friends like that.”
“It’s fine, calm down. You’ll make friends like that don’t worry. And I am sure Ned will come around too, someday, things won’t be as awkward as they are now. Till then, we’ll study English Literature,” Elia laughed.

“Thank you! Hey, by the way, you up for some ice-cream? Or maybe frozen yoghurt? We always start new things with some sweet and I know you don’t have an excessive sweet tooth but ice-cream’s cool right?” Robert nervously asked.

“I like frozen yoghurt better actually, with lots of chocolate chips!” Elia exclaimed.

“Cool, FroYo it is!”

“But… you have to take both of them along with us too,” Elia pointed to the handsome golden haired boy and his bald-headed friend chatting away animatedly.

“Of course, I thought the three of you came as a package anyways!” Robert smiled good-naturedly, and at the honesty of that comment, Elia could not help but laugh.

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“He’s a little too crass for your tastes, you know that right?” Rhaegar whispered to Elia as they were currently huddled over a book in the library. Why they always ended up as reading partners together was beyond her.

“What are you talking about Rhaegar?” Elia whispered back through gritted teeth.

“I am talking about you and that… Baratheon,” Rhaegar practically spat out the name.

“He is your cousin and you will take his first name with proper respect. Have some shame, he’s the man you wronged,” Elia chided.

“Oh please, his kind deserves to be wronged,” Rhaegar rolled his eyes.

“You know what, I am ashamed I ever thought of you, or dated you, or even looked at you for that matter. You are repulsive,” Elia spat venom through her pursed lips and she was shocked to find a certain… gloss, to Rhaegar’s eyes at her words.

“I am not the best guy there is, but neither is Robert,” his voice shook slightly, but it did little to unnerve Elia.

“At least he’s not a paedophile!”

“Neither am I! And you will mind your language Miss Martell,” Elia had never seen Rhaegar this livid. She knew she hit a weak spot.

However, the entire library batch also found out how livid Rhaegar could be and that was never a good thing given that libraries hone silence. The teacher, who just so happened to be an irritable Frey, got extremely bewildered and jittery by the sudden noise and walked to find the source, both Elia and Rhaegar hid with a book then but it was too late. The teacher was already giving them a look of disdain. Nobody liked it when their best students got unruly.

“The two of you, out, now,” he spat in a staccato voice. Both the manipulative young teacher-pets tried their best puppy eyes but in vain.

“Sir, he was shouting, why am I being punished?” Elia whined with a baby pout.

“Miss Martell, enough of your nonsense, and anyways, the two of you are one unit; he talks, you get the blame. Now get out, both of you,” the teacher shooed them away. Clearly he was not aware of the scandal at Harrenhall.

“I cannot believe this!” Elia properly screamed once they were out of the library. There were no restrictions anymore. “I have never gotten thrown out of a class before!”

“Oh well it was high time then don’t you think?” Rhaegar taunted.

“What has gotten into you Rhaegar? I knew you were an asshole, but I thought it was a result of your blindness, your ignorance; now, you’re just proving to be a bad person for real. And what is your deal with Robert anyways? How dare you think you’re better than him? Whatever else he may be, he is not a cheater, or a hypocrite.”

“Oh please, there’s a new girl in his bed every day,” Rhaegar rolled his eyes.

“He never looked at another woman when he was dating Lyanna. You are the one who should be ashamed of yourself,” Elia rebuked.

“Why are you taking his side?” Rhaegar asked furiously.
“This is not about taking sides; it’s about not being a hypocrite,” Elia explained.
“Yes of course, because you are perfect and innocent and too-good-to-be-fucking-true!”
“Rhaegar, regardless of how bad I am, I know that, and I acknowledge it, to myself. I don’t hide from it like you do. But why am I wasting my time explaining things that are beyond your comprehension? One can change any type of criminal on this planet, but what does one do with hypocrites. They, as terrible as they may be, are convinced that they’re all fucking perfect,” Elia was livid with rage this time and Rhaegar actually took a step back as she took a few towards him. The red in her eyes was really scaring him.
“I didn’t… I didn’t think you hated me that much,” Rhaegar finally squeaked out.
“Well it’s a good thing you do now. Get lost before I do something I’ll regret,” Elia’s cool came back to her and she stated so in her signature panache.
“Like, were you thinking of striking me?”
“No, I’m not Lyanna. I would have done worse, now, leave.”
Rhaegar had never been left so flabbergasted, but when he did find he could move his legs again, he just didn’t want to. He wanted to stand and apologise to the woman he had wronged. He wanted to hold her and tell her he was sorry, for everything, that he was willing to do anything to get her to come back to him. He would have done anything to get her back, when a plan suddenly struck him. She definitely made him cleverer, it was the Elia effect. However, Elia herself found his stare so creepy that she decided to walk away. And she walked away in disgust- creepy Rhaegar was worse than hypocrite Rhaegar in her head.

“I’ll send you the presentation when I’m done,” Elia curtly informed as she stood to walk away. 
“I think it’s going to be great,” Rhaegar beamed.
“Yeah no kidding, who would’ve known even art could be that interesting eh?” The Martell sneakily commented.
“Now I know you’re only saying that to irritate me so I am going to let that go,” Rhaegar smiled good-naturedly.
“Well thank the Seven you actually understand me now,” Elia laughed, not knowing she had freshened up a few unwanted memories. Or maybe knowing, she was a tactical expert.
“Yeah, sorry I never did before,” Rhaegar bit his lip.
“You were a kid, I was a kid. There was not much any of us could have done you know,” Elia tried to mellow out the awkwardness.
“We’re still kids you know,” Rhaegar gently reminded her. She could get quite ahead of herself sometimes.
“You’ve become a kid, I was never a kid to begin with,” Elia informed him haughtily.
“Excuse me, what is that supposed to mean?” Rhaegar cocked an eyebrow.
“Nothing, leave Rhaegar, it’s an important day tomorrow, let’s get going,” Elia changed the topic and began walking out of her seat only to be swiftly pulled back by Rhaegar.
“We never talked about Lyanna you know. It was all spite and fight and boom, we never saw each other’s face again unless we had to bump in the corridor. There was no time, neither scope, for discussion,” Rhaegar professed. Elia was giving him a cynical look and he turned slightly defensive. “What, it’s always good to use debate and discussion to sort issues, you taught me that.”
“Yeah well this is not a political problem, and neither am I interested, and nor is this the time. We have a presentation bound for tomorrow and we better concentrate on that yes?”
“I was thinking we could order some food…”
“No Rhaegar, we have to go back home and practise the speaking parts otherwise ours is going to be a disaster,” Elia panicked. She had no clue as to how Rhaegar could be so calm and collected about the annual graded presentation.
“Ours can never be a disaster, you know we are the best team there is.”
“Don’t get ahead of yourself Targaryan, we are not who we used to be. Those were a different time and we shared a different rapport and our chemistry shined through. Sometimes, it was more
chemistry than research really,” a ghost of a smile spread through Elia’s lips. Memories did that to you.
“I think we should talk about it.”
“There is nothing to talk about Rhaegar. Go back home and work on the speech again, I don’t want to make a fool of myself tomorrow,” Elia chided him. Rhaegar tried his puppy eyes and she nodded her head.
“I’ll do it when I get home I promise!”
“Have you seen the time? You’ll collapse in bed the moment you get home if we start eating now. Come on Rhaegar, bye,” Elia huffed.
“Don’t say that. Say anything else and I’ll let you go but don’t say that,” Rhaegar looked right into her brown eyes and something happened inside- both of them.
“Don’t say what? Why are you acting so strange and weird today?” Elia questioned puzzled.
“Nothing, never mind, I’ll go home, get lost and all just the way you want but I was wondering, would you like to go for a round of fro-yo before we head home? From that parlour close to your place you like so much,” Rhaegar hopefully tried.
Elia suddenly felt a pang of guilt hit her. She had no clue why there was a pang of guilt in the first place. This was the man who had humiliated her in front of the whole school; he had participated in a contest only bachelor guys go for in the first place without letting her know, and then he had proposed to the school clown in front of everybody letting her down completely. Oh yes, he had also ruined the long-standing warm blood between both their families, something that had reaped Westeros a lot of good social affects, things he was not even smart enough to understand. And yet there was a spot somewhere in Elia which felt slightly weird as to how she would always drag herself to meet Robert in the very place she fell in love with Rhaegar. It was payback, but she was also not Rhaegar, it would take her some time to get used to this, whatever it was. Even flaws were ashamed at cheaters and did not have names for them, and she was not even cheating.
“Hey you two, dating again?” A very familiar nosy voice interrupted their silence. Both Elia and Rhaegar turned to face Cersei in annoyance.
“What do you want?” Rhaegar asked with teeth that were gritting.
“Slow down there dragon, I was merely curious. Damn, I do not want to intrude on a steamy moment here, although, how could you have a steamy moment in the middle of a restaurant but knowing the two of you, a Martell and a Targaryan who cannot keep it in his pants, I wouldn’t be surprised. Take some free advice; everybody around here will enjoy the show,” Cersei was grinning from one ear to the ear.
“Thank you for the advice, now, can you leave us to act on it?” Elia asked in her usual sweet tone, dripping with sarcasm.
“Seven hells, people nowadays, they don’t even want you to help them,” Cersei muttered to herself as she walked away.
“What do you want?” Rhaegar asked with teeth that were gritting.
“Definitely back together,” she concluded and walked out with a smile that was hard to read.
“Umm, anyways, about your offer, umm, well your place is en route to mine and I don’t think it’ll hurt, a cup of fro-yo each so… why not?” Elia gave Rhaegara small smile, hoping she was exuding the right kind of vibes. Rhaegar’s face lit up though, and she didn’t even know what that meant. The walk to the yoghurt parlour and the stuff they discussed on the way and the flavours they ordered and the way they ate their fills, everything seemed too familiar. The world seemed to be falling back into old rhythms and truth be told Rhaegar liked it. He liked the blush rising on Elia’s cheeks every time a stranger looked at them and smirked, he liked the way Elia’s long-clawed finger wiped off some vanilla and hazelnut yoghurt from the tip of his nose and he loved the way they distracted the generally disoriented dude at the counter and ran away without paying only to come back and give him some more money. Yes, Rhaegar unprecedentedly loved everything that was happening, and Elia did not mind either, and they had fallen back to their old habits so far that Rhaegar had pulled Elia in for a kiss when he went to drop her only for the both of them to realise
what had just happened and they had let go completely awkwardly and Elia had sprinted inside her
apartment. Rhaegar felt like an utter fool for the first time in his life.
“Hello,” Elia tentatively answered Rhaegar’s call once she was inside her house. She had not run
this fast in a very long time, and she didn’t even know whether she wanted to answer the call but
she did anyways.
“I am… sorry, I really am, for what happened back there,” Rhaegar nervously said.
“Don’t be,” Elia said before cutting the phone and squealing to herself, something she had not done
in a very long time. Rhaegar danced the whole way home. What were they doing to each other?

“I am nervous,” Jaime announced as he approached his best friends.
“Wait, you’re participating?” Varys asked with a cocked eyebrow. As the host for the night, he was
decked up in a shiny red suit.
“Well I thought I just might,” Jaime shrugged.
“Who are you going to ask for a ticket from, if you win?” Elia asked curiously. She had finally
done away with the dentist appointment, and yes, she was looking gorgeous, in a mini sparkly blue
and green dress that resembled a peacock.
“Well… don’t tell anyone, especially Cersei because she hates her but I think Brienne,” Jaime
shyly announced.
“You like the footballer Tarth?” Elia asked surprised. She had no idea, neither did Varys. Since
when did Jaime learn to keep secrets from them?
“Please don’t tell me you don’t like her,” Jaime looked at both of his best friends anxiously.
“She’s a little thick-headed but she’ll do, you’re not the brightest either,” Elia shrugged, and then
laughed as did Varys as Jaime rolled his eyes.
“Look, it never matters who we date as long as that doesn’t come between our friendship. You go
ahead Lannister.”
“Nobody can ever come between our friendship, don’t you worry about that spider,” Jaime
grinned, glad at the green signal.
“Don’t you call me spider!” Varys warned good-naturedly.
“Guys, the fete is about to start in about fifteen minutes, Varys, we need you on stage,” Catelyn
informed as she walked towards them.
“Let’s get this party started then,” Elia smiled, widely, one ear to the ear.
“Oh yes, let’s,” the other two echoed her happiness.
The joust was obviously not like an ancient joust. It was not like armour and horses and lances,
one of that. It was a host of different games where you had to get through the many levels till you
reached the final one which kept changing each year. And the boy who won (although sometimes
girls participated too), would get down on a knee and ask for a ticket out of the friend-zone from
the girl they liked. It was something the high-school students looked forward to, probably even
more than prom.
“Best of luck buddy,” Elia and Varys wished Jaime as he left for the games arcade, through the
other gate.
“You think he’s going to win?” Varys asked Elia eagerly.
“I hope he does. I don’t even want to see what goes down if Robert wins,” Elia profusely shook her
head. At that Varys gave her a look.
“Eli, what is going with you? Some of my little birds sent me some pictures, and I don’t want to
reveal them, and I don’t really like Robert but seriously, we don’t need another girl playing him
and Rhaegar. I am all for you playing these men, but not Robert. I know this sounds weird coming
from me but he really doesn’t deserve that anymore. I’m sorry; I know I am in no place to say this.”
“No V, I am in the wrong but I am not really playing them… heck, I don’t even know what I’m
doing anymore,” Elia shrugged extremely frustrated. “And now I’m here wearing a pretty dress.”
“You’ll find a way out, you always do,” Varys beamed at his friend. He always found a way to
make the day a little better for Elia.
“This time V, I really hope so,” Elia shook her head with an uncertainty that was foreign to her.
“Ladies and gentlemen, please take your seats. All hosts please take your positions,” the Principal’s voice boomed over the speakers.
“That’s my cue, see you later alligator,” Varys childishly chirped before he skipped out of his seat and left Elia all alone.
Elia looked around her. Everybody seemed engrossed in something, or somebody, and then there was her, praying that things wouldn’t boil down to Robert and Rhaegar confronting each other again. Heck, when it came to her, she had only wanted to lead Rhaegar on, play him on, but things were stirring inside her that she could not put a finger on, and it confused her and she hated it.
Speaking of the devil though, he entered the room; Lyanna draped around one arm, pulling everybody’s attention towards him. Elia frowned, something was totally wrong. Last night Rhaegar had called her and told her that he was going to participate in the ‘joust’ and when she had asked him why; he had replied that he wanted to win somebody over all over again. Elia was not stupid, with their growing closeness, she knew what he meant, but she had chosen to ignore it. Rhaegar clearly had no plans for participating in anything though.
“Hey you, hi,” Rhaegar’s raspy voice was right next to Elia before she could blink. Where had he abandoned Lyanna now?
“Hello,” she said flatly.
“I’m not participating because you know… there’s not easy way to say this really… Eli, whatever has been happening for the past few days, I don’t know what you make of it but as far as I’m concerned, I was having secondary feelings. But I was so wrong. I’m sorry Eli, if I led you on but I think Lya is the one for me. Yes, I still don’t know, can you believe that? It’s like I’m torn between the two of you. You always have solutions to problems, can you solve mine?” When Elia finally looked Rhaegar’s way, he resembled a little puppy, fluttering his eyelashes and trying to win her over. The saddest part was that he himself believed that he was a good person. It was pathetic.
“Right now, the games are going to start. You should go back to your seat, we’ll talk about this later,” Elia tried her best to politely shoo him away and he was only too easy to convince to do so.
The games began. The first few rounds are generally pretty similar each year with the teachers taking particular interest in the quiz round and looking with slight disdain at the rounds which involved a few indecent guffaws here and there regarding comments that the children had freedom to make. The games were fun, and everybody enjoyed, even if they didn’t necessarily join. It boiled down to Robert and Jaime after the first five rounds and everybody held their breaths. They were both extremely popular boys in school and people couldn’t make up their minds as to why they wanted to see winning. Well… Robert probably, because of what happened last year. And anyways, Jaime could have any girl he wanted. Well, they thought so at least.
The last game involved an Atlas kind of round where one was also playing a video game parallel to answering back the constant name, place and thing duel with the other finalist. It was nerve-wracking to say the least, and things had definitely been easier the year before. Everybody waited with baited breath for one of them to lose their cool or name the wrong thing.
“Quarth,” Robert breathlessly named as he concentrated on the large screen in front of him.
“Bravos!” Jaime shouted in the middle of the heated game and well, Braavos did not begin with an H. When he realized that, it was kind of too late because well, the gong was sounded and there was a clear winner. Robert had won.
There were deafening cheers. People were happy. They were happy because a sort of justice had been served although honestly, they didn’t know who Robert was planning a proposal for. Now the real curiosity peaked, and people couldn’t take their eyes off of the young Baratheon who was grinning. Varys walked smugly towards the winner with the golden microphone that he very proudly called his.
“So, Mr. Baratheon, is this poetic justice or what!” Everybody laughed at Varys’ statement, except Lyanna, who seemed to be fuming. How could Robert win at a game that was tougher than the one her dragon had won for her last year? It seemed impossible.
“You could call it something like that, although I’ve always been bad at poetry,” Robert cheekily
smiled. “There’s only one person who has helped me through it.”
“Oh shit, really Baratheon? That’s how you introduce me? Poetry teacher?” Elia muttered to herself. Was she secretly glad? Of course she was.
“She and I have a lot in common actually, ever since last year, more than earlier actually. And although she’s a genius and I’m just me, we do have more in common than either of us would like to admit,” Robert went on, shrugging sweetly.
“Hmm, that’s better,” Elia hummed to herself.
“Miss Martell, would you be more than a friend? I mean, as amazing as friendship is, I want something much, much more than that. At least where you’re concerned,’’ Robert was flushing now, and he was a little awkward, but he was also jubilant inside. Now there was only one regret pricking him, Rhaegar had not participated. However, that idiot of a dragon solved that problem for him.
“What a joke, she has standards,” Rhaegar sniggered.
“Yes I do, which is precisely why I’ve come to realize how much better Robert is… than you at least.”
Elia’s wink sent hoots coursing through the room, and she walked up to Robert with a grin, and they shared the sweetest kiss ever, much cuter than the hungry and passionate one that had been shared last year. Phone clicks blinded everyone in the room, except Rhaegar, who sat sulking in a corner, trying to concentrate on the dark wall.
Spa Retreat

Chapter Summary

Sorry, sorry, I know I'm late, I really am this time! Ironically, my excuse this time is that I was caught up with a lot of extra-curricular activities!

This imagine has been requested by Sam who has been so very super sweet to me from the very first comment and I don't think I have been able to do the wonderful plot-line justice but I have tried. I am really sorry Sam, I was caught up with a lot of work!

Having said that, I myself had a lot of fun writing this but I really don't know if it has come out well.

Last, but not the least.... 163 Kudos!! When I started this, I never imagines I could cross the 150 limit because primarily I was never that confident about my writing caliber and let's get real, there's a not a lot of people in this fandom who ship Elia and Rhaegar. With this overwhelming amount of Kudos all of you have proved that love between equals is possible and beautiful too! Thank you so much!

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

All the Love.

A

There was something about wildflowers that fascinated Rhaegar a lot. There was an untamed essence, the way they catapulted their scents wherever they liked, and how raw and striking their beauty was with not a care in the world. Rhaegar loved wildflowers actually, and Lyanna had resembled a large bouquet of wildflowers when he had first met her. It had driven him up every wall he could ever imagine. Now she just wasn’t there anymore, and he was going to be a married within the week.

“Are you going to stand there all day or are you even going to come inside?” A sharp voice inquired. Rhaegar looked up to find his brother staring impatiently back at him. “What are you staring at the flowers for? You need to sign papers; this is your bachelor’s trip we are on! Come on inside.”

Elia was a good girl. Well, she was more like pragmatic but Rhaegar liked using the word ‘good’ because she had never caused him many harm. Yes there were stories about her, but he liked to keep his senses closed to them. Maybe she would reveal them herself if he kept on pining for Lyanna but he kept that to himself also. His eyes flicked to her on the other side of the large hall. Her friends had come for her bachelorette too, at the same spa retreat. For some strange reason, both Elia and Rhaegar, and their families had decided that it was a better idea to go to the same place for their bachelor weekend even if they went as separate convoys. Honestly, Rhaegar was sure people only wanted to avoid him getting together with Lyanna all over again. She wasn’t invited though, so he didn’t the point in their worry. Albeit, what was worry if not a little pointless.

“Welcome to the Summerhall Spa Retreat Sir,” the over-eager receptionist with the funny moustache smiled at him. He nervously smiled back. The man seriously looked creepy with all the smiling he was doing, and randomly, at everybody.

“This is going to be fun,” Arthur whispered into Rhaegar’s ear as the young Dayne walked next to his friend happily.

“I certainly hope so,” Rhaegar muttered under his breath but was only all smiles in front of his friend. Obviously, some secrets and desires were meant to stay that way.

His eyes fell on Elia again, although she was too immersed in conversation with Cersei and
Catelyn. It certainly made an odd triumvirate and he actually found himself frowning. What could these three women be gossiping about? Then again, the answer hit him hard and fast; it must have been Lyanna Stark. All three held a special hatred in their hearts for his wolf-love, and they must have been completely drowned in the special bitching session they were carrying out about her. “Don’t worry, they have lives, they’re discussing the upcoming elections,” Jaime suddenly intruded on his train of thoughts. Wait, was he staring out loud at Elia and her… acquaintances? “What do you mean?” He tried to play innocent and began fidgeting with the hem of his linen pastel marigold-yellow shirt.

“I am not that stupid. I wouldn’t exactly be working in the criminal bureau then. Anyways, my responsibility as your official escort is up and you will have a trained bodyguard by your side the entire time. Also, Arthur is your friend and he’s better than most of us at the office. Enjoy, I have Elia’s bachelorette party to be a part of. See you around sometime. It shall actually be quite weird, the way the two of you are having your bachelor party at the same spa retreat. Anyways, see you around and you enjoy too, or at least try to. Stop sulking for once, if you can,” Jaime cheekily inserted the last phase and was off as fast as his legs could carry him. Rhaegar, contrary to popular belief, only let a ghost of a smile tug at the end of his lips. Elia was very lucky to have Jaime as a friend, the boy was certainly funny.

“Rhae, are you coming or not?” Arthur and Oswell called from where they were standing, close to the elevator.

“When did you get here?” Rhaegar asked Oswell surprised as he approached the boys.

“Oh I am offended, as a guest I am getting no respect,” Oswell shook his head in mock disbelief.

“Okay that’s enough. Now tell me, when did you get here?”

“Just about five minutes ago. You were filling up the forms and stuff so I thought I’d go and greet your fiancé but she was gone too. I know Elia, but I’ve never met her before. I mean, everybody’s heard of the forensic lawyer and all, but I’ve never seen her. I’ll meet her down the course of the trip, I am sure,” Oswell grinned.

“Yes of course, why not, just walk down to the other side of the retreat and you’ll find her,” Rhaegar tentatively replied. Oswell seemed only too eager.

“Later idiot, let’s go get refreshed first. I am dying to check out the bar!” Arthur whined and that case was put to rest. Rhaegar rolled his eyes as the two boys kept bickering and walked off inside the elevator with him in tow. He had a feeling this was going to be a very long week, and an even longer bachelor celebration.

“How has your bachelor life been panning out so far? I only mean the retreat though, the rest has been wonderfully publicized,” Elia’s laugh filled the vacuum that was surrounding Rhaegar who was standing on his ground floor balcony, staring like an empty puppy at the moon.

“Aren’t we like, not supposed to meet or something?” He asked, and then instantly realized he was being extremely rude.

“Yes you’re right, I had only come to talk to the receptionist; Cersei Lannister has some complaints about her room.”

“Oh tell me about it,” Rhaegar gave a lopsided smile. “She’s always up everyone’s throat isn’t she?”

“She’s not that bad actually,” Elia shook her head ruefully.

“I thought the two of you hated each other. I was actually quite surprised to see you invite her along to your bachelorette gang,” Rhaegar confessed.

“We hated each other because of you. That problem Lyanna solved and then we just became best of friends,” Elia laughed about the strange and ironical situation.

“Isn’t it more awkward now then?” Rhaegar asked bewildered.

“Well, I had thought so too but Cersei seemed to be taking it quite well. In fact, she’s even kind of happy with Robert. Then again, Baratheon industries is a big fish,” Elia scoffed.

“Am I fish too?” Rhaegar asked nervously. He had no idea as to why he was so nervous.
“Well of course, hadn’t I said that earlier?” Elia shrugged nonchalantly.  
“No, you never told me you saw me as ‘fish’? What the hell is going on Elia, do you even want to really marry?”  
“Calm down for the love of the seven! What did you think, just because Lyanna is sweet and wild and naïve and romantic, all girls are like that? Well maybe, I don’t know about girls, I’m a woman, and we have needs; we have desires and dreams and sometimes, fishing is a great method to get at those dreams. Anyways, I always wanted to marry the President’s son.”  
“You know I am not going to stand for politics right?” Rhaegar said eyes wide and pulse increasing.  
“Yes you’ve made that very clear in all your interviews, stupid boy that you are. Still, it’ll be fun?”  
“You’re marrying for fun?”  
“My goodness you ask too many questions. Anyways, what are you marrying for? I thought you were still pining about that wolf w- girl,” Elia tried to handle her emotions, and penchant for gossip.  
“You were going to call my Lya a whore like everybody else, I know. It’s fine, no need to bite your tongue, we’re used to it by now.”  
“Well, well, why are you marrying Mr. Targaryan?” Elia was curious now.  
“I don’t know. Now that I come to think of it, I really don’t,” Rhaegar shook his head.  
“You’re still a kid, you’ll be sorted later in life, don’t worry,” Elia assured him patronisingly.  
“Excuse me, what do you mean by kid? You are going to be marrying this kid in a week, if I may remind you,” Rhaegar was taken aback, to say the least. He had been called a lot of things in life, but ‘kid’ had never been one of those.  
“I mean immature, seven hells are you that stupid? I thought you were only childish, but no, you’re seriously stupid. Damn, I should have tried my luck and seduced you. I thought reading all those books would make you smart but alas, you liked Lyanna Stark, what can one expect?”  
“I loved her, and I still do, if I may say so.”  
“Do you even know what love is? I hate love, but at least I know what it means. I know it’s supposed to stop wars, not cause them, I know it’s supposed to create, not destroy, and I know it’s supposed to heal, not scar. That’s why I’ll never be good at it, but you’re the kind of person who could have been. Instead, you go in for passion, and ruin your own life,” Elia kept belting out her philosophies like some professional spiritual guru and Rhaegar stared at her in awe. “Sorry, some heavy dialogues those were. I don’t know what’s happened today, I just can’t seem to not be quotable.”  
“No problem it’s soothing to hear you speak. You don’t speak a lot do you?” Rhaegar stated softly.  
“No, I like to save my words of wisdom for the perfect moment and this is nowhere near perfect but I am wasting my words on my husband-to-be anyways. Don’t expect me to speak this much after marriage, prepare to spend your life in awkward silence,” Elia’s laughter took an unprecedented bitter note at the end.  
“I don’t think it’ll awkward. Neither of us are big talkers, so it won’t be awkward. Maybe it’ll even be comfortable,” Rhaegar shrugged.  
“Slow down rocket boy, I think you’re beginning to like my company. None of that is happening here, especially here, this is out bachelorette spot, well if you take the feminine. We’re supposed to avoid each other, lead happy lives otherwise for the last time. So enjoy your freedom for a few days more Targaryan, then, I shall be a Targaryan too.”  
“You’re really going to be a Targaryan?” Rhaegar questioned cautiously.  
“Well of course not, you guys are bat-crazy. Also, never trust someone whose hair is white since childhood like really? I’m not offending albinos though I’m only talking about Valyrians. You guys are creepy. And it’s not like I’m going to look like you after marriage, and thank god for that. However, in the public eye, I am going to be a complete Targaryan, who lives and breathes for the welfare of her Targaryan family,” Elia ended dramatically and Rhaegar was in splits.  
“Then I’ll keep it a secret… that deep-down inside, you’re a snake!” He playfully whispered to her.
“Oh yes my love, people mustn’t know, or even guess!” Elia gasped back. “But I think your brother will see to that. I have a feeling he’s going to go around telling everybody that you’re still a Martell, in that obnoxious Dornish accent of his, he going to be like: ‘Eli, oh no, she’s still a Nymeros Martell, a viper and a scorpion inside!’ Honestly, I can bet my life on it he’s going to be saying this to every wedding guest invited,” Rhaegar laughed, forgetting that he was talking to Oberyn’s sister herself. “Thanks a lot, now I know why my brother hates you so much. But please, he’s not all that bad at politics okay? I mean, he lived with me and Doran, whether he gives off those vibes or not, he did and he’s learned something. You have spent too much time with the Starks. Not everybody is like them,” Elia rolled her eyes. “Hey, they know politics too okay? They don’t have clean slates for brains you know.” “Of course, they only have air, clean slate is too much!” Elia laughed at her own joke while Rhaegar proceeded to roll his eyes but then decided to attack her anyways, cheekily that was, in a manner of play, and they both toppled down into the ground, landing on the soft and cool grass. The conversation went places from there. Grasses to stars to movies to books, the conversation went everywhere and sometimes came back to Westerosi gossip as well. Rhaegar was red in the face from laughter and for the first time, there were real tears in Elia’s eyes, from all the laughter she was indulging in! It would have been a rare sight to see had their friends caught them like that but they were glad they had not been interrupted. Yes Elia did complain about the grass and how it was going to mess up her hair and Rhaegar did call her a diva and then Rhaegar himself got absolutely spooked out by a chameleon whereas Elia used her ‘Martell powers’ as she called them, to shoo it away and called Rhaegar an absolute coward, something he hated being called. By the end of the night at least Rhaegar had understood what marriage was about, not that he realised it though. But he knew, marriage was not mindless passion, marriage was a deeper bond, an understanding and there would be rough roads, but they would not be impossible to walk on.

“Your fiancé is hot!” Oswell exclaimed even as the steaming Espresso shot practically spilled out of Rhaegar’s mouth. “Elia? You met her?” “Of course Elia, you do only have one fiancé right? And no, I didn’t meet her in person, but she’s on Vinder, you know that dating app. Never mind, I don’t think you do, but she’s on it, and she is hot!” Oswell kept on blabbering. “Elia is on a dating app?” Rhaegar asked bewildered. “Are you jealous Mr. Targaryan? I am sure she is only enjoying her last few days as a bachelor, then she’ll delete it!” “It is not that. She just didn’t seem the type you know. I mean maybe for fun but not a very active account or something,” Rhaegar was mumbling more to himself than anybody else actually. “Nope, this seems to be a pretty regular account,” Oswell stated. Rhaegar’s frown deepened but he shrugged it off. They barely knew each other, okay, they knew each pretty well, given that they were both excellent judge of characters and had measured each other up already, and this definitely did not fit, but he decided to brush it off nonetheless. It was her personal life, and their personal lives had not become their businesses as of yet. He needed to stop being such a grumpy old man and enjoy his own bachelor getaway because he was sure Elia was enjoying hers. She had this habit of manipulating the best out of every situation she was in. It was admirable, to say the least. “Hey Rhaegar, answer a question for me, why did you come to this spa retreat? So you can sit and sulk and contemplate like you generally do anyways?” Arthur interrupted his line of thoughts. Honestly, Rhaegar hated when people did that but this was a line of thought he could not reveal so losing his temper was not an option. “What would you rather do?” He asked politely instead. “Oh I don’t know, there’s a swimming pool right in front of our eyes but why do we care? There
are hot bikini-clad spiritually-inclined girls fooling around in that pool but you’ve become a celibate on this trip and of course, there’s a host of other activities in this wonderful place and yet you choose to sit here and be an unproductive philosopher because nothing comes out of you anyways! And then look at Elia, she’s brilliant too okay, but she knows how to have fun. I see her group of friends, and today I saw them in the morning and they were headed towards the river to have a picnic by the river spot. We’re sitting by the pool and biting our nails,” Arthur ranted. Rhaegar had wide eyes by then.

“Let’s… swim, if you want to. I am just going around to the vending machine to get some soda, you carry on…” he feebly stated as he slipped out of his seat and walked to the back where the vending machine was kept.

“Hey buddy what activities do we have planned today?” Jon Connington was getting some soda from the machine.

“Arthur knows. Basically tell him whatever he wants to do, we will do,” Rhaegar blurted out. He knew it sounded extremely weird, this was his bachelor party and Arthur was making all the decisions. But hey, to his defence, he had not wanted a bachelor vacation in the first place.

“Are you sure there’s nothing you want to do?”

“No Jon, now stop irritating me and leave!” Rhaegar snapped. Yes, he had been bottling that in for too long now.

Jon was beyond confused, Rhaegar seemed to be in a perennially bad mood, and even Arthur shooed him off when he came inquiring. Then there was the constant flood of Instagram pictures form Varys showing off all the cool places Elia was taking her friends. Maybe he should just warm up to her join her group.

“Damn she is hot!” Oswell exclaimed out of nowhere. He was sitting right across Jon so talking to him was the only option. Something was better than nothing right?

“Who?” He pursued.

“Elia fiancé Martell,” Oswell grinned.

“You’re chatting with Elia?” Jon was surprised. Oswell and Elia would make a crazy odd pair.

“Well no, I’m viewing her profile on Vinder,” Oswell explained.

“Elia Martell is on a dating app?!”

“Why does everybody seem so surprised by that statement? Rhaegar had the same reaction,” Oswell was beyond bewildered. What were the legends of Elia Martell?

“Well you know, you wouldn’t exactly think she was the type… especially if you’ve worked with her,” Jon answered. She was famous around the forensic department, and even that was an understatement.

“Well whatever she is, she is super hot,” Oswell gushed.

“What picture is it that you’re looking at?” Jon craned his neck curiously and Oswell was happy to oblige.

Elia did look hot, especially in her orange and hot pink Dornish attire. And she was looking all the more ravishing with red henna painted on her pale skin, and her smile was so wide it was to die for. Even Jon was impressed, and he was sure, had Aerys been smart enough, he would have shown Rhaegar this picture, and then all memories of Lyanna would have washed away. The bright background of the picture was blinding, especially with the million-watt smile that she had adorned on her face. Oswell was grinning like he had found something expensive, something that was a keeper, Jon was not going to lie; he had.

“You’re the luckiest guy on the planet, I swear. You’ve hit a jackpot,” Oswell was smiling, ear to ear, even as he skimmed through his Vinder chats, and Rhaegar sat sulking and having breakfast.

“Actually, Ozzy, I used to get a very similar feeling earlier on in our friendship, he was the son of the owner of Targaryan Corps, they practically ran Westeros, but it’s tougher than you think,” Arthur explained.

“Who the hell was talking about Targaryan Corps? Who wants to be in the election business
anyways, no offense Rhae, but I was talking about Elia. Damn, that woman is fine, and she knows how to flirt,” Oswell cleared the doubts heavy in the air. Rhaegar sat up, finally registering what was going on.

“Have you been talking to her?” He asked curiously.

“Nope, I have been chatting with her,” Oswell answered cheekily.

“Well, what’s she saying?” Rhaegar asked, pretending to be nonchalant.

“She’s really smart, and flirty, and the pictures man… you just got lucky. I still don’t understand why you sit around moping,” Oswell shrugged like it was the most obvious thing in the world.

“I am not moping, and Oswell, just a gentle reminder, she’s my fiancée,” Rhaegar softly said.

“Are you jealous?” Arthur asked from the corner of his eyes, looking up from the newspaper.

“No it’s nothing like that, of course not, I barely even know her, I just, I was reminding Oswell,” Rhaegar began defending himself.

“I am just testing her mate, don’t worry,” Oswell assured his friend.

“He’s just testing her mate,” Arthur mocked Rhaegar and broke into peals of laughter with Oswell.

“What’s there to test? It’s not like we know or love each other so we don’t expect fidelity at first. I mean nothing too scandalous but what’s scandalous about flirting on a dating site?” Rhaegar rebuked.

“Dude, I am sure she is not okay with infidelity,” Arthur shook his head.

“If she’s showing it, it can’t possibly be her. She’s subtle and all you know,” Arthur commented.

“Well maybe she’s looking to have some non-subtle fun. Gosh, don’t bog her down so much,” Oswell defended himself.

“You don’t need to worry about all the fun she’s having; do you see the way she leaves the resort with a new program every day?” Rhaegar spoke this time.

“I don’t meant that kind of fun, I meant, maybe she needs a man you know, someone she knows and trusts, not the stranger she’s marrying,” Oswell answered him.

“I don’t think Eli is that type. She won’t go around searching for romantic companionship mindlessly,” it was Arthur who spoke this time.

“Exactly, she is more professional and pragmatic than you can imagine. I understand her now,” Rhaegar stated with underlying emotions neither of his friends could understand, but they did shoot each other looks.

“If she is such a good actress then maybe she’s fooling all of you,” Oswell shrugged.

“Oswell, you cannot know her better than Arthur or me,” Rhaegar reasoned.

“And how well do you know her? You only met her the day your parents decided upon the match and knowing your brooding nature it’s not like you met her afterwards,” Oswell rolled his eyes.

“The relationship between me and my fiancé is not yours to speculate,” Rhaegar went down to a dangerously low volume and began gritting his teeth. No one had ever seen him like this.

“Alright, you want proof; I’ll give you proof. Here you go…” Oswell began.

“Oswell stop, Rhaegar stop… Jon, it would be really nice if you could come and help me out here,” Arthur craned his neck to call the friend that was sitting apart and watching the drama unfold.

“Connington to the rescue!” Jon exclaimed as he walked over to their table.

“No absolutely not, Rhaegar wants proof and I will give him proof,” Oswell declared.

“Oh yes, please do,” Rhaegar retorted. The atmosphere had become quite aggressive, much to everybody’s despair.

“Guys please stop, what weird madness is this? Look, Elia doesn’t care about either of you and you
shouldn’t either. Yes she is going to be marrying Rhaegar but the two of them are not married yet and she has full freedom to do as she pleases,” Jon tried to reason.

“Jon, please stay out of this,” Rhaegar was quick and curt to put him in his place.

“Thanks, now listen,” Oswell began, and the rest of the bachelor crowd had their head in their hands. An explosion was on its’ way, they could feel it. “So it started with her wanting to know what I looked like. See, she has clearly written here: ‘you’ve been drooling over pictures of me… now, my turn.’ And then, when I sent her a few of my selfies, she wrote ‘oh wow, you’re really handsome; and witty too. They generally don’t come together.’ Now, if this is not flirtation, what is it?”

“This sure is flirtation, it’s just not Elia,” Arthur stated as he sat back confused. Elia would never say things like this. Her seduction was subtler, he knew.

“Oh wow, so now it’s a fake account! Like really guys, why do you have to clamp down on her freedom? She’s Dornish, she’ll find her way. It’s beyond me why she wants to marry you in the first place, you’re totally not her type,” Oswell looked at Rhaegar with a sorry expression on his face, and this one was genuine.

“But… but Art is right, that can’t be Elia,” Rhaegar repeatedly shook his head.

“I’ve seen her around the precinct a few times and even I can guarantee you that, that is not her,” Jon too assured.

“Oh, I see how this is. You and Arthur are scorned lovers, this one is a fiancé who doesn’t even know her, and all of you are just jealous that she genuinely seems to be into me. The Elia Martell no one could win over is actually into me!”

“Oh stop dreaming there’s got to be some mistake. You know what, enough of this confusion, I’m going to talk to her tomorrow,” Rhaegar cut Oswell off.

“Rhae, I feel sorry for you now man. Accept it, she’s marrying you, but she doesn’t love you,” Oswell softly whispered.

Rhaegar stood up and left. Nobody inquired after him either, they let him go. Even Oswell understood he needed some time alone. People weren’t blind; they could see how close Elia and Rhaegar had become in the past few days, the time spent in the Spa Retreat. Although they were living in separate cottage spaces on two different sides of the resort, because they had come individually with their own friends, they met almost every night in the lobby and in the garden under the stars and laughed and talked and laughed some more. One friend every once in a while could catch a glimpse of the two betrotheds every once in a while. Honestly, they were glad. It was a strange relationship, nowhere near a normal romance, but there seemed to be a deeper understanding somewhere, and that’s why Elia’s chats came as such a shock. Rhaegar was going to test all understanding tomorrow. He needed to, and he had never needed anything more.

“So, you and Oswell huh?” A spiteful voice cut through Elia’s moment of tranquillity as she was dozing in her little white hammock. She practically fell off.

“Oh, good morning to you too Rhaegar,” she groggily said. Her tiny lacy caftan didn’t leave a lot to the imagination, and she was extremely irritated Rhaegar had just barged in like that.

“I’ve had it with your manners and your politeness, I don’t need a good morning, I need the truth,” Rhaegar’s voice kept increasing in pitch.

“Some manners would do you wonders actually. And what honesty are you talking about? I’ve even told you I’m a gold digging bitch, what more do you want? Have I manipulated you in some way you can’t understand because that was not my intention? I never intended to manipulate you in any way and if I have, please elaborate,” Elia yawned.

“What is wrong with you? If you have nothing coherent to say, please leave,” Elia was getting irritated now.
“Oh, so I am incoherent now. Why, because the only coherent person on this planet is Oswell Whent,” Rhaegar exclaimed.

“Oswell who?”

“Don’t act innocent. At least don’t pretend to lie. I have dated and made a mess of my affair with Lyanna Stark but you know everything there was to know about that. Please don’t lie to me now. I think I deserve that at the very least,” Rhaegar’s voice softened and his eyes watered.

“Okay, you want honesty, you have to tell me what you’re talking about first,” Elia took in a deep breath and slowed down too. Rhaegar seemed to be emotionally volatile particularly this morning. “I’m talking about your special friendship with Oswell on the dating site,” Rhaegar sniffled lightly.

“Dating site? What dating site?”

“I don’t know. I am not on dating sites, you should know!”

“I am the only female Martell in my generation; do you really think I need a dating site?” Elia cocked her eyebrow.

“Well, why are you on one then?” Rhaegar demanded.

“Rhaegar, I am not on dating site whatsoever. Whoever is telling you all this is clearly lying, I swear,” Elia tried her best to explain.

“But Oswell showed me the texts. It was your name and your picture,” Rhaegar countered.

“That cannot be possible. I have never even visited one of those sites,” Elia shook her head.

“Oswell showed me your pictures! He showed me the things you say to him, and quite suggestively I might add,” Rhaegar’s eyes were watering now but Elia was beyond confused.

“How is that possible? I am not on dating website. If I haven’t lied to you about my true nature, trust me I shall never lie to you about anything,” Elia rolled her eyes and gritted her teeth and enforced her point forcefully.

“Then how could you possibly be chatting with that man?!”

“I thought you were intelligent, but you’ve clearly read books all your life and comprehended nothing and there’s only air in that thick skull cranium of yours! Has it ever occurred to you that maybe it was not me talking to him? Either it was a doppelganger, which is highly unlikely, or it was someone pretending to be me,” Elia finally burst out. Rhaegar stared dumb at her for a few minutes.

“Are you saying it’s a fake profile?” He finally broke the silence.

“Something of the sort, yes,” Elia shrugged. She was glad things had more or less calmed down now.

“I’ll show you a few screenshots and then you can tell further, maybe,” Rhaegar fished his phone out.

“How did you get screenshots, of my chats, with Oswell?”

“Oh, he was chatting with you once, but he needed to go attend to nature’s call, and back then he used to keep telling me that he was only chatting with you because he wanted to test you but I was pretty curious so when he left I took the phone and took screenshots and sent them to myself although I deleted that text afterwards,” Rhaegar explained while he concentrated on his phone.

“So you are smart, but something has made you stupid… oh, you’re like those innocent teenagers who are so self-righteous that they often see through their own intelligence and basically end up pretty blunt.”

“Wow, thanks. I think that’s the nicest thing anyone has ever said to me,” Rhaegar rolled his eyes and Elia laughed, her head thrown back. Rhaegar decided he liked that sound, and the view.

“Spend the rest of your life with me and I’ll teach you to be this sharp all the time,” Elia stated.

“You can do that for the both of us while I just sit back and enjoy playing dumb,” Rhaegar announced and handed his phone over to her when he had finally found the pictures.

And so Elia scrutinised them. The pictures were hers all right, but it was nothing you wouldn’t find in Google. Most of these were the first pictures that popped up when one typed Elia Martell. Basically, she was in love with the camera, so despite not being in the showbiz, she maintained a very exotic and pretty and picturesque Instagram. And anyways, she was always there for a red carpet event or a socialite party so it wasn’t that hard to get her pictures. Whoever had made the
account was quite stupid though, they had picked the very first pictures that usually showed up on the search engine. Elia was laughing as she read the conversation. Rhaegar was relieved when Elia showed him her pictures on Google and although that was inconclusive proof, her eyes and expression when reading the conversations was all he needed to know.

“Okay this is hilarious, but did you really think I would flirt like this?” Elia finally questioned when she had returned his phone to him.

“Well I didn’t, but Oswell kept gloating and I confess I gave it second thoughts.”

“Well then for your information, I am extremely classy and subtle when I seduce. I’ve been flirting with you since day one, have you realised?” Elia cocked an eyebrow.

“Well no, I was too busy you trying to cover up my flirtations,” Rhaegar scratched the back of his head, red with his confession.

“That is cute. But suspicion is not; and anyways, why were you so hot and bothered? We’re not even married yet. Don’t worry, I would never have an affair after marriage and if I did, not a soul would know,” Elia rolled her eyes as if stating the obvious.

“Why would you have an affair after marriage?” Rhaegar furrowed his eyebrows.

“Well why not? You had one before marriage, it’s only fair I get a chance,” Elia shrugged.

“You’ll have an affair even if you don’t fall in love?” Rhaegar asked.

“You don’t need to fall in love to have an affair,” Elia nonchalantly countered.

“Oh, so you mean like you’ll be in love with your husband but you know… you’ll have a few affairs here and there,” Rhaegar tried to rationalise the situation.

“When did I ever say that? Do you think I am capable of loving? Do you think you are, with anybody who is not Lyanna? I mean, there won’t be any love in our marriage, but I was looking forward to some friendship and trust, something you’ve denied me of Rhaegar,” Elia shot him a look of slight disappointment.

However, there was an expression on Rhaegar’s face she could not quite understand. It was different from any look he had given her, and it was different from the looks she usually got from anybody regarding anything. Elia have a slight frown and looked back at him, as if questioning him as to what the matter was, but his violet pupils only got glassy. Now that was strange. Whoever had ever heard of your fiancé crying because you’re talking about setting him free after marriage? But something twisted inside Elia. It was miniscule, but it happened, a tiny section of her heart sort of twisted at the sight of Rhaegar’s eyes going glassy although the rest of her was only trying to figure out what was going on.

“I’m sorry Elia, I didn’t mean to. And I was being stupid about the whole Oswell thing; even if it had been you, I had no right to react the way I did,” Rhaear confessed, albeit with a shaky voice.

“Then why did you? Why did you react the way you did?” Elia slowly reached for his hand.

“I’m a stupid boy. I may read too much but I’m inherently stupid. My dreams shall get me nowhere Elia, but our marriage might. I am sorry,” Rhaegar slightly squeezed Elia hand and tried to let it go. The Martell clasped it back.

“Hey, speaking of stupidity, why don’t I sharpen that brain of yours? Let’s go through the list of suspects who could have made this fake profile and short-list people and let’s see if we can solve this?” Elia replaced her confusion and frowns with an inner resolve to help this guy grow for the rest of his life and a bright smile that made Rhaegar smile brighter.

“You’d like to do that?” Rhaegar raised his eyebrows as if in disbelief.

“Yes I would Rhaegar. Also, I think I have a particular suspect in mind…”

“Cersei Lannister?” Rhaegar gasped curiously because he was literally always suspicious about that woman.

“No Rhaegar not Cersei Lannister. It’s a Frey, she’s part of my bachelorette gang and she keeps harping on and on about Oswell,” Elia giggled as she replied.

“Wow, does your bachelorette gang have no quality control? First Cersei, and now a Frey?!”

“Hey, at least we have more fun than you do,” Elia sassed.

The banter continued till late into twilight and then it occurred to them that they actually had a case to solve! So Sherlock and Watson set out to solve a case; but it was hard to say who was who.
Maybe because they were equals in every which way, and maybe it had taken them late to realise that they didn’t need to be a Sherlock-Watson, they were explosive as Elia-Rhaegar themselves. By the end of the night their suspect had been confirmed and the following morning the crime solved. A beaming Rhaegar had had been defended by his pretty fiancé in front of Oswell Whent and his pride had known no bounds. The spa retreat trip was coming to an end but for Elia and Rhaegar, it was just the beginning of their lives.

“You have no idea how long I’ve waited,” Rhaegar whispered as he snaked his arms around Elia and began trailing kisses down her jaw-line to her neck as she very busily began taking off her heavy golden Dornish jewellery.

“What for?” Elia asked teasingly. “Because I’m sleepy right now but why would you have waited for long for sleeping? That can happen whenever, wherever,” she shrugged.

“You’re joking right?”

“No I’m not, what were you talking about?” Elia turned around to face her husband, and put her arms around his neck as he lifted her slightly.

“I’ll show you what I was talking about,” Rhaegar grinned as he went back to the kissing he had been trying to perfect for ages, for Elia.

“Rhaegar, stop acting like an over-eager virgin teenager,” Elia rolled her eyes even as she secretly enjoyed the attention he was showering over her.

“Hey, how did you know?” Rhaegar asked petrified. Nobody knew this.

“Wait, really?”

“No, no of course not, I was joking,” the young Targaryan tried to blow it off as a joke.

“Oh my goodness, you’re a virgin. Rhaegar Dashing and most handsome man on Earth Targaryan is a virgin!!” Elia exclaimed as laughter began bursting through the sides of her reddened lips.

“Okay shut up, I’m pretty sure there are people on the other side of the door listening to us. King’s Landing can be disgusting like that sometimes,” Rhaegar glared at his amused wife.

“It’s not disgusting, it’s natural. They want to hear us make ‘noise’ and then they’ll leave. Have you never been to a wedding in Dorne? We have rituals particularly pertaining to how long you’ll last, if you know what I mean? Oh wait… you’ve never even had sex before!” Elia burst out laughing again and Rhaegar felt like an inexperienced junior desperate to get the hot senior girl’s attention.

“Don’t mock me…” He squeaked out quietly, and all to his advantage, Elia found that endearing.

“I had thought that you and Lyanna…” She inched closer to her husband, and tightened her grip around him, looking into his eyes and wanting him to know she wasn’t all that disheartened.

“Oh no, we didn’t date that long. Once dad came to know of the affair, I could never have taken that chance. Also, she was super young and though she was extremely energetic, something about her kisses never got me excited enough I guess,” Rhaegar mused as he shrugged.

“I don’t want to discuss the sex-life you shared with Lyanna Stark, I am just glad it was non-existent,” Elia rolled her eyes.

“And why would you be glad?” Rhaegar smirked as he teased.

“Because… I’d really like to be the first one to spoil you…” Elia grinned. As they kept taking steps backwards, they both stumbled on to the well-decorated bed and laughed.

“Mrs Elia Martell, allow me to show you who spoils who,” Rhaegar devilishly whispered into her ear which he softly nipped, kissed and trailed down there onwards. Who would have known, a spa-retreat getaway would have founded him so much happiness? He for one hadn’t the haziest clue when he had set out. But now, he was simply grateful; and when his name fell from Elia’s lips repeatedly through the course of the night, he knew it had been the most wonderful decision he had ever taken.
Band- AIDS and Bullet Holes

Yes I know late again, I just had a LOT of work in between!
This was an imagine requested by Puffin, well somewhat. I think she wanted a jealous Rhaegar in the background of Robert/Elia imagine and I haven't been able to do that but this is Robert/Elia and I really hope you like it!!
As for the song and the lyrics, all credits go to Taylor Swift! Gosh, I love that woman!
By the way, this is the first time I am not posting from home, curtsy over-lavish family members who wanted a one-day trip to a fancy-ass resort in the middle of nowhere! I am so glad I convinced them to carry the laptop, it was real fun posting on a vacation!
All The Love
A.

Band- AIDS don’t fix bullet holes,
You say sorry just for show,
You live like that, you live with Ghosts…

“Have I ever told you how much I like that song?” Elia smiled as she looked back at Varys musing at the backseat.
“Yes, both of you have told me repeatedly how much both of you loved and related to that song when Lyanna and Rhaegar dumped you,” Varys rolled his eyes. Especially with Robert and Elia getting married, this song had been on a loop.
“Your friend is quite grumpy,” Robert laughed one hand on the steering wheel and the other holding Elia’s hand.
“Her friend is sick and tired of listening to the same song over and over again as we travel a wide span of King’s Landing simply to distribute wedding cards,” Varys rolled his eyes.
“You’re tired with King’s Landing? I do hope you remember we have Highgarden to go?” Elia commented.
“But I thought we were doing Tarth today babe,” Robert interrupted.
“Leave Jaime to that,” Varys sniggered leaving Elia in splits.
“Wait, so they’re really dating?” Robert asked curiously.
“We are his best friends so you could say we are reliable sources, and anyways, I am always a reliable source,” Varys declared, proud about himself.
“No seriously, they are dating. And they are so super cute!” Elia chuckled, as she was trying to control herself from the first bout of laughter.
“Well good for him, I’m really happy for them actually,” Robert smiled as he looked on ahead while driving.
“Yes, they make each other happy and they’re really cute together,” Elia smiled back and Varys just knew that the couple was going to look at each other again and have one of those unspoken ‘couple’ moments where the rest of the world is supposed to stand still or something like that. He coughed and frowned but nothing helped. Thank the Seven he had not indulged in romance, but he was not particularly religious either.
The car soon came to a halt so that Elia and Robert could decide whether they were going to Quarth or Highgarden next and that meant another milkshake stop. Honestly, Varys had had it with these milkshakes stops. Just because they loved their hazelnut and choco-chip shakes from
Keventer’s did not mean they needed to stop the car every bloody half-an-hour to get a ‘lactose boost’ as Elia called it. Plus, she was a surgeon, what did she know about nutrition? Varys grumbled as he hopped off the car as well. It was better than sitting inside that warm vehicle and boiling anyways. Elia insisted on keeping the heating on, although winter was waning. It was beyond Varys how Robert tolerated all her tantrums, well he did too, but neither him nor Jaime had ever imagined Elia would actually find a guy who would listen to and fulfil all her demands. Rhaegar Targaryen kept her more fancies more in check actually. Speaking of Rhaegar…

“Hey Eli, can I ask you something?” Varys whispered to his friend, catching up with her long legs.

“Hey Varys, what’s up?” Elia replied.

“No, I’ve not… wait, now that you mention it, maybe. Whatever, anyways, not my problem,” Elia frowned and tried to cover up for whatever was bubbling beneath and walked away faster.

Varys did frown a little bit but then let it go. She was getting married, to cry out loud, of course it may just have escaped her notice and that was absolutely alright. But it had been a very long time ago, maybe around her engagement, yes probably that, and it had escaped her anyways. So Varys began sprinting to catch up with the two of them and only stopped to rest once he was on the door of the milkshake parlour. He entered and was greeted by the sweet smell of flavoured milk - a scent he was sure he was going to grow sick of by the end of the entire wedding bonanza. He walked to where Elia and Robert were enthusiastically ordering their milkshake.

“Hey, babe, do you want some water?” Elia asked curiously.

“Sure, I would love some water. I have had enough milkshake for a day!” Varys exclaimed, trying to be as polite as possible.

“Babe, give me water, I don’t want him to fall sick,” Elia stated. Given that she was always the sickest among her friends, she had a real habit of babying them instead. Maybe it was her defence mechanism. Varys and Jaime had figured that out a very long time ago but they let it be. Most probably, even they enjoyed being coddled by somebody.

“Thank you,” Varys softly smiled and went over to occupy a seat for the three of them.

Elia and Robert received their drinks and got a plastic cup of water for Varys and walked to the table Varys had been occupying. They were both all smiles but lately, that is all they had been so Varys chose to ignore that and took his cup of water and gave it a sip only to wince out loud. What kind of water was that? Then the scent of the fresh lemons hit his nose and he grimaced. Varys absolutely hated lemons and lime; he had had enough of them in Quarth during his short stint there.

“This is not mature,” he said through gritted teeth.

“Sorry V, I couldn’t resist,” Elia tried to make a point through her laughs.

“Not everybody likes milkshake Miss Martell,” Varys rolled his eyes again.

“I know, I know. I’m sorry V, we just couldn’t resist,” Elia laughed.

“Hey, we’re the ones getting hitched so we’re allowed to be mischievous,” Robert cheekily commented.

“Yes of course,” Varys smiled although internally he was really grimacing. Honestly, he had nothing against them, they were only looking to have fun, but he really did hate lemons and now his head was still buzzing with the scent and that was just terrible.

“You’re okay right? Please don’t go all silent treatment on us,” Elia then used her emotional gentle voice and that always seemed to work.
“I’m fine Eli,” Varys reassured her. However, on the inside, there was a small devilish part of him that almost wanted Rhaegar to be present at the wedding simply to stir up some drama and fun not at the expense of him and his lemon hatred. However, Varys was barely ever careful what he wished for.

“Hey there Miss. Martell!” Rhaegar’s voice boomed as soon as Elia opened the door. She blinked a few times. Her groggy morning eyes thought they were still dreaming. Albeit she had mascara sticking to it and her dark maroon lipstick had rubbed off on the rest of her face but Elia needed to be excused. She had had a wild engagement party, and was too sleepy afterwards. She was definitely not prepared for Rhaegar standing at her door, his grin turning from happy to shock at her state. He did open his mouth a few times to say a few things but they quickly snapped shut.

“Is that really you?” Elia finally asked.

“Is that really you?” Rhaegar questioned back.

“Yes most definitely,” Elia smirked as she stood back from the doorway so he could come in. Basic manners.

“So what happened last night? What did I miss?” Rhaegar was excited, and he wanted to laugh, but maybe Elia wouldn’t take kindly to that.

“I had a wedding dance family bonanza is what happened last night,” Elia replied flatly. What was he doing in her apartment with so many bags again?

“Well I surely missed it, and I’m sorry I couldn’t make it earlier,” Rhaegar apologised.

“It’s no problem at all. Umm… you’re here for the wedding?” Elia asked nervously.

“Well, what does it look like?” Rhaegar laughed cockily.

“I guess so, but umm, I mean don’t get me wrong, why’d you drop in here?”

“Oh yes don’t worry, I know it looks weird. Actually I’m not going to stay at home so can I crash here for a couple of days? I promise I’ll find a place soon,” Rhaegar explained.

“What about your apartment?” Elia was too curious, she had forgotten that maybe she was being a tad bit too rude with a guest?

“My apartment?” Rhaegar asked confused.

“The one you share with Lyanna,” Elia informed.

“Elia, Lyanna and I broke up a very long time ago,” Rhaegar informed frowning. How could Elia not know that? And she always knew everything.

“Oh yes I am so sorry, completely escaped my mind,” Elia bit her lip and smiled at him albeit a little nervously.

“So essentially Rhaegar Targaryan is homeless but I’ll find a place super soon, don’t you worry,” Rhaegar shrugged happily, trying to make the situation look sunnier. That was not like him at all actually, he was always the more pessimistic one.

“No it’s not that at all, I just, I didn’t know you didn’t have a place. I won’t kick you out, don’t worry. We owe each other that much,” Elia smiled ruefully.

“I know you won’t, but I’m scared I’ll impose,” Rhaegar smiled back. “I don’t want to be a bother.”

“I am having a wedding, you’ll be the least of my bothers,” Elia rolled her eyes.

“Well then could I ask for a cup of coffee?” Rhaegar mischievously questioned.

“You always have to prove me wrong Targaryan don’t you?” Elia laughed. “I’ll make you that insipid coffee once I get changed. Just make yourself comfortable.”

“Hey it’s called black coffee and it’s an acquired taste,” Rhaegar called after her as she walked to her room.

There was not a nook or canny of that house which was not familiar to Rhaegar. He had been here, he had grown up here; his first love and first heart-break and first tears and first fight, it had all been here. Elia was always left to pick up the pieces. He would go around roaming as a romantic poet and getting his heart broken all the time and then he would come over to this apartment and have some of Elia’s delicious black coffee. She had her fair share of lovers too but he never
listened. Yet Rhaegar only realised that now, he had never listened. He walked around the living room, tracing the pictures which were up there and some of the empty spaces where he used to be. He could not bear to go to the guest room. How could he sleep in the guest room in Elia’s apartment? And pray how could he let her marry someone else?
“Wow you’re still here?” Elia interrupted his train of thought.
“Yeah I’m just… waiting for my coffee,” Rhaegar lied.
“Oh god, I’ll get it right now. You and your coffee,” Elia rolled her eyes. “By the way, you could have made it yourself.”
“But it wouldn’t compare to yours,” Rhaegar was quick to say.
Elia didn’t reply. It was always Rhaegar’s job to make everything awkward. She remembered when they were in high school and he had a crush on her which she had no clue about so she used to bring boys and he would make such a grand fuss about them and make things extremely awkward. He was just great at making things awkward. So she walked silently to the kitchen and turned on the coffee machine and let that whirring sound consume the dense air which had surrounded the two of them already. Some things were better left unsaid, ignored and drowned in his coffee.
“Here’s your coffee. You better go and make yourself comfortable. I’m sure it has been a long journey wherever you came from,” Elia stated handing Rhaegar’s coffee mug to him.
“Yes a very long journey indeed, I just came from Dragonstone,” Rhaegar laughed.
“So you had gone to meet Vis and Dany?” Elia’s eyes sparkled with hope.
“You wish; but of course not. We try to avoid each other as much as possible, I had gone to write a segment on the beaches there,” Rhaegar rolled his eyes.
“You needed to go there to write? You grew up there all your life Rhae. If someone told me to write on the Water Gardens now, I would only have to close my eyes,” Elia smiled and reminisced.
“Are you taking Robert there for the honeymoon?” Rhaegar asked softly. It was what Elia had promised him.
“No, we’ve been there many times. We’re going to Volantis, neither of us have ever been there before.”
“It’s really hot and humid,” Rhaegar warned for no apparent reason.
“It’s exotic, and it seems really fancy. Plus, I’m sure we’ll stay somewhere with central air conditioning Rhaegar,” Elia joked.
“No, I’m sure you will, I’m just worried you won’t be able to enjoy as much as you would like to on a honeymoon.” Rhaegar argued.
“Rhaegar, you don’t exactly feel like being a ‘tourist’ when you’re on your honeymoon you know,” Elia explained.
“I don’t need details,” Rhaegar replied curtly.
“I couldn’t give you details myself Rhaegar, I’ve never gone on a honeymoon before. You on the other hand, have,” Elia teased, although she knew she was bringing up bad memories.
“Yes, we had a sham in the name of true love and secret marriage. Pray I’m happy you do not have to go through anything like that. There is nothing worse than fighting against the world only to realise they were right,” Rhaegar mused.
“I shall leave you to your reflections because I have a lot of last minute shopping that needs completion,” Elia said. She had always been awkward-situation averse.
“I could accompany you. You know I have impeccable taste,” Rhaegar joked.
“I also know you hate shopping with me.”
“I hate myself,” Rhaegar muttered. “Hey, never hate anything blindly if you hated it once. Tastes change. Come on, I’ll come with you.”
“Are you sure? You don’t have to. Plus there will be people with me and you must be tired.”
“Tired of coming from Dragonstone, I think not. Also, Miss Elia Martell, may I have the privilege of joining your bachelorette gang?”
“Everybody’s welcome to join my bachelorette gang, even my fiancé himself,” Elia smiled before walking back to her room to grab a few essentials she needed before leaving.
“Oh seven hells I wish he doesn’t,” Rhaegar muttered to himself but Elia heard him. A sixth sense working inside her told her that Rhaegar had not come to join her ‘bachelorette gang’ but she let it slide. Over-thinking before a wedding would only get her pimples.

“Wow… is that the dress I gave you on your 21st birthday?” Rhaegar asked jaw still on the floor as Elia walked out in a sparkly tasselled mini dress.

“Oh goodness yes I just realized! How weird is this?” Elia widened her eyes. She was wearing her ex’s dress to her bachelorette party.

“It’s not weird, it’s beautiful. At least I think it looks wonderful on you,” Rhaegar announced.

“I am not talking about the dress genius; the dress is stunning, thank you for that. I am talking about the situation,” Elia cleared his doubts.

“I don’t think there’s anything wrong with the situation. We are friends now and what kind of a friend doesn’t help a friend out during their last night of freedom?”

“The last night of freedom, seriously? I remember you saying something about Lyanna’s love setting you free when you left me,” Elia rolled her eyes as she began putting her heels on.

“Yeah I couldn’t have been more wrong. Take it from a man with experience,” Rhaegar made the voice of those gurus constantly belting out life hacks on television and Elia was in splits.

“Well Mr. Experience, we have a party to attend. Shall we?”

“Of course we shall,” Rhaegar grinned.

The drive to the party was fun… and familiar. Rhaegar had a piled up stock of all of their favourite soundtracks and they sang and danced and laughed the entire ride. But when they got to the party, it was a prettier sight! The venue had been decorated with fairy lights just the way Elia liked it and there was a long string of all of her pictures as a bachelor. It was such a pretty sight to behold! There was also a massive dance floor in the middle of it all by the most wonderful lake Elia had ever laid her eyes on. There was a wooden bar counter to match the theme but Elia had vowed she would only sip on orange juice. She was a teetotaller anyways.

“Like what you see?” Rhaegar danced his eyebrows.

“This was your idea?!” Elia gasped.

“Well, most of it,” Rhaegar rubbed the back of his neck nervously, biting his lip.

“Thank you so much Rhae, it’s so wonderful,” Elia gushed and pulled him in for a hug.

“The pleasure was all mine,” Rhaegar smiled as he took in a scent he had been missing for a very long time. “Shall we dance?”

“Yes we shall,” Elia laughed.

As they went off to dance together, there were quite a few whispers and snide remarks on the side. It wasn’t that people didn’t wish the couple was still together, it was just that most of them thought Rhaegar was a massive asshole. Oberyn was fuming and Doran was worried. He was generally quite confident about his sister but Rhaegar’s sudden entry into the scene had left him a little worried too. Varys was biting his lip; he had never really imagined this actually happening, and now had no clue what to feel. Jaime was just plain annoyed- why the Targaryan bastard again?

Jaime had had it with Targaryans; he couldn’t bear to see another one. As if working for Aerys was not enough, now his cheater son too! The Dayne siblings did have a frown initially, but they were friends of Rhaegar too, and while they seldom understood the boy, some part of them said he must have been doing it as a friend- because he truly loved Lyanna.

“I must say Mr. Targaryan your legs are still nimble,” Elia joked as Rhaegar twirled her around.

“Excuse me Miss Martell, how ancient do you take me to be?” Rhaegar glared playfully.

“Well I don’t know, not too old in any case because hey, I’m always going to be older than you!” Elia laughed, at which Rhaegar twirled her faster, and now their collective laughter was drawing a lot of eyes.

“We shall see about that one,” Rhaegar challenged.

Their dance was effortless; their chemistry and banter, even more so, but it was a newfound twinkle in each others’ eye that drew them in the most. After a couple of moments everybody
joined the dancing couple because that was what they were here to do. They were here to dance the night away. Let Elia dance and get tipsy with her ex, this was her last night as a free bird anyways! People forgave easily, especially when someone as charming and favourite as Elia was involved. However Varys stood at a distance and analysed the situation. He could always forgive his friend, but he was less forgiving towards himself. Was Rhaegar a culmination of his wish? It was all done in simple jest he swore up and down internally. Varys could see the Targaryan was not actually trying to be the ex-turned best friend with the golden heart, he was simply pretending to be. Varys prayed to all he knew that this would not have consequences.

“Elia, is there three more like you?” Rhaegar slightly hiccupped as his vision blurred and three Elia’s popped up in front of him.

“Is there five like yourself?” Elia laughed. She was equally drunk.

“Well, maybe, but I know there’s only one like you…” Rhaegar softly slurred and began leaning in. The duo was currently sprawled on Elia’s plush carpet back at the apartment and both were extremely, in crazy levels, drunk. They were both facing each other and trying to make some sense of the situation but there was too much sexual chemistry to actually be able to make sense of anything and their hands were barely being able to contain each other. Elia looked right into the violet orbs she had really missed and Rhaegar stared back, with double the intensity. A kiss did happen, and a very passionate one, but they were too drunk to go further. Both collapsed on the floor right there. Seven hells, that was close!

“You make a beautiful bride,” Jaime’s eyes were watery.

“Hey, I wanted to belt that cliché line out!” Varys pouted. Jaime stuck his tongue out at him. Elia only looked at herself in the mirror. She didn’t recognise the woman there to be honest. And no, it was not because she was decked up in red traditional Dornish bridal wear, she had imagined herself in that garb plenty a time but it was the thought of what she was feeling that ate her up on the inside. Was she turning into the person she loathed Rhaegar for being? Why was it so hard to get a simple kiss out of her head? She had done it a million times before; there was nothing special about it. Plus, it was her bachelorette party; she had every right to do that, right?

“Hey, are you really that nervous?” Jaime quietly whispered to her, worried about that blank expression on her face.

“It’s marriage, you wouldn’t know anything about it,” Varys joked sneakily about the military man.

“Neither would you,” Jaime countered.

The two began laughing but Elia’s tension was mounting. Her head could have burst any moment.

“I kissed Rhaegar last night!” That was a long due outburst.

“Did you sleep with him without a condom?” Came Jaime’s question.

“What is wrong with you? Obviously not!”

“Thank the seven you won’t end up pregnant then, although nobody would have understood because you’re getting married today anyways,” Varys stated. “Oh but then silver hair…” That left both her friends in splits.

“We didn’t sleep together!” Elia snapped.

“Then why the hell are you getting so worked up? The way the two of you were so wrapped together in each other, we thought that was definitely going to mess your apartment up,” Varys shrugged casually.

“But J, V, something worse than sex happened last night…” Elia gulped.

“You’re not saying…” Jaime trailed off.

“Eli, I may hate Robert, but he doesn’t deserve to have all his girls stolen by that equal oaf of a Targaryan,” Varys shook his head.

“Thanks for making me feel better about myself Varys,” Elia rolled her eyes.

“You want a real piece of advice- Rhaegar’s a dickhead,” Varys flatly stated.

“I know that, I just… I don’t know what to do, and I shouldn’t be confused about this seriously,”
Elia began blabbering.
“I think you should have a talk with both of them,” Jaime suggested.
“Oh my, speak of the devil and he is here,” Varys commented.
Rhaegar entered the room, eyes completely bloodshot (which was a usual phenomenon when he had a hangover) and hair slightly dishevelled although he was donning quite the expensive red coloured suit. He gulped and stared at both Varys and Jaime, and then at Elia. She looked regal. She was wearing red and gold, two colours she had always wanted to wear during her wedding, and once he had set his purple orbs on her, Rhaegar had a hard time even looking to Varys or Jaime.
“We need to talk,” he coughed.
“Sure as fuck you do,” Jaime cursed.
“Jaime, Varys, leave,” Elia glared at her friends as they scuttled away.
“Thanks, about that. I just… I have to talk to you Eli, it’s, it’s eating me alive,” Rhaegar stuttered.
“Talk to me. Look me in the eye and talk to me.”
“Eli, did you feel something last night?” Rhaegar asked.
“Did you?” Elia asked back.
“Yes, yes of course I did. Even this morning I was trying to fight it and I cannot anymore. You know what happened three years ago was a bad mistake right? Lyanna was the biggest mistake of my life,” Rhaegar sighed.
“And what am I?” Elia asked.
“You are my weakness. The love of my life. So strange right, I’m saying this on the day you’re getting married to somebody else. But you, you make me a better person. As long as you’re there, I know I’ll be alright. Babe, let’s run away, come on, it won’t be that hard. We’ll handle everything once we come back from our lavish wedding in Valyria. And then everybody will understand,” Rhaegar urged impatiently.
“Rhae, I… I don’t know, never thought this would be happening on my wedding day to somebody else either. I’m just… just so confused like something wrong is happening and I can’t even put my finger on what,” Elia shrugged desperately.
“Let me help you,” Rhaegar inched closer to her whispering.
“What do you mean-” Elia began but was soon cut off by his lips on hers. It was a good kiss. Rhaegar was a good kisser, Elia had always known that. His soft and generally plush lips had a gentleness that women found swoon-worthy. Still, something felt a little off.
“You get what’s wrong?” Rhaegar teased her after pulling back and touching his forehead to hers.
“Yes, I think. Could you… could you wait for me at the garden, towards the back? I’ll meet you there,” Elia said.
“I got you babe,” Rhaegar excitedly whispered and gave her lips a short peck before walking off.
As soon as he had left, Elia fished around for her phone and when she found it, dialled Robert. The boy deserved to know, at the least. So much had happened to him that Elia was sure what she was feeling was pure guilt, and that was what was wrong. It was nothing else really. She prayed to the Seven and every other God that he would pick up. They had promised not to see each other till the ceremony so she could not just walk down the corridor and barge into his room. She tapped her manicured and pastel-coloured nails on the marble tabletop. She had to let Robert know, she owed him that much; but before all of that, she needed to ask him a question. It was pricking her and eating her alive.
“Ro, am I your weakness?” Elia’s blurted out before Robert even had time to process it was a call from his bride-to-be.
Rhaegar had been waiting for too long. He was a wise man, regardless of how he fumbled in front of Elia, he was not that dumb. Even Rhaegar Targaryan had the brains to know that if a bride was taking this long to run away, something must most definitely have been wrong. On the other hand, Elia had asked him to wait here and he trusted her. She after all had one of the soundest minds in Westeros, one even Tywin Lannister respected, and he would respect it too. However, every Targaryan had a limit to their patience. Rhaegar’s was waning fast. He tapped his polished boot on the well-kept garden pavement which was surrounded by rose-bushes. The fragrance was of
paradise, from where he was standing. He took in a deep whiff and went back to waiting. His hands were itching to just fish the phone out and dial her number.

“What are you doing here? The wedding is going on inside,” a small voice interrupted his thoughts and he turned around to find one of Elia’s innumerable nieces.

“What the hell do you mean?” Rhaegar furrowed his silver eyebrows.

“The wedding, it’s inside. What are you doing here?” The girl spoke again, slightly creeped out by how stupid he was. Why would you stand in the back garden, and he was not even smoking at that.

“There’s no wedding happening,” Rhaegar rolled his eyes, mistaking the kid to be stupid. Dornish kids were anything but stupid.

“What is wrong with you?” Young Nymeria stared in disbelief.

“Oh gosh Ria have you completely lost it?! There is no wedding happening!” Rhaegar snapped, and quite loudly. Nymeria took a few steps back in surprise.

“He’s right, there is no wedding happening right now, because the wedding happened around ten minutes ago,” Elia stated, coming and standing in front of Rhaegar, the Baratheon cloak on her shoulders, and her diamond ring glistening in the sun.

“What do you mean?” Rhaegar asked voice shaking.

“I mean I’m Mrs. Martell-Baratheon now,” Elia shrugged.

“Eli… why?”

“Should I really marry someone who thinks I’m a weakness? And what did you say; I am going to help you shine; make you a better person… Not interested Targaryan, I need someone who makes me shine. And when it comes to someone who’ll follow you around like a puppy for the rest of your life, I suggest a wolf cub,” Elia stated.

“Why are you doing this Eli? We made each other happy. We were so happy together, we deserved to be together and live happily ever after. We needed each other. Remember the kiss?” Rhaegar pleaded.

“Yes, I remember the kiss Rhaegar; after the heartbreak and the crying and the destruction and the way you ruined my bright future with your political limelight. A kiss after all of that, yes I remember Rhaegar. But you should always remember this too- band-aids don’t fix bullet holes.”
This one was quick! Actually, exams are approaching and I am trying to finish a few pending ones as soon as possible. By the way, this is really not that good so I am sorry about that. Basically, it is a lot like 'Rain' if you've read that but I also generally run out of inspiration once my exams come close.

Please do give it a read even if it's terrible.

I love you all so terribly much!

All the love.

A.

The store was cheap; but it was also small and ignored by the rest of the world- a primary requirement by both the girl and the boy. In fact, their fame so intoxicated the entirety of their worlds that sometimes, escapades into seedy DVD rental stores was a small piece of relaxation in a whirlwind life. Boy and girl would never even have met otherwise, and their lives would not have been transformed either. Thank the few DVD rentals that still existed in King’s Landing when all of the rest of the world had moved on to streaming and downloading and other such technologically heavy terms. Elia and Rhaegar for one would always be thankful.

“Ma’am, this is the latest season of Blood, Blood, and Money,” the young shopkeeper thrust a CD on Elia’s face even as she was trying to remain inconspicuous.

“I don’t want this, thanks,” Elia quickly muttered under her breath.

“Are you sure Miss, it’s really good,” the young boy tried to persuade her.

“No kid, mind your own business,” she snapped. Elia had not had a good day at work, but a pestering shopkeeper was making it much worse. She tried to walk past him with as much politeness as she could muster.

“Well sorry Miss, I was just trying to help you out. Everybody seems to be a in a snappy mood today,” the boy sasssed back rolling his ebony orbs.

“Wait, there’s someone else in this store?” Elia turned back and questioned the boy.

“Oh yes, there’s another weird bespectacled or should I say sun-glassed dude, at the other end, over there,” Elia’s eyes followed the boy’s finger to the other end of the shop. “That’s also where the romantic crime dramas are kept,” the boy grinned, not missing the opportunity to publicise.

“Thank you,” Elia flatly stated and made her way to the other end. She was not curious about the other customer, not by a long shot; it must be some poor soul like herself trying to salvage his reputation but she wanted to get to the romance/crime drama section pretty quickly.

The first time she laid eyes on him was not really laying eyes at all. A thick mass of hair was hidden beneath an effective cap and the pale white face (she could make out the complexion by the bare hands) was hidden by an expensive printed scarf, and if Elia had to guess, it must have been Dolce. However, she tried to dodge the ripped-denim clad figure and move to the absolute end of the store where stacks of ‘Limitless Love’ the latest cheap Valyrian TV show was kept. She grabbed two of the last episodes and was on her way out when she bumped into said, mysterious stranger. It was another rich kid who had trouble controlling his love for Valyrian serials, she could make that out.

“I’m really sorry,” a silky Valyrian accent apologised.

“It’s no problem, the fault is mine too,” Elia smiled and tried to leave. She herself hoped she was not being too recognisable; she had shades and a pretty discrete trench coat on.
“Is that any good?” The young man pointed to the DVD’s in her hand. Gosh, it seemed like he was hell-bent on conversation.

“Yes it’s… it’s okay. It’s just begun, I’m sure it’ll take some time for the plot to thicken,” Elia explained.

“Yes Valyrian soaps take time; but they grow on you,” the young man mused.

“You’re right actually, they grow on you. And before you know it, you feel like you’re part of the family they show,” Elia blurted out. This was the one thing she had repeatedly refused to do in her head, discuss Valyrian soaps, especially her love for them.

“I know right! And have you seen this one, I’m watching it right now; it’s called ‘Unguarded Emotions’ and it’s really cool. Like the plot is taking its’ time to thicken but it will, and I’ve really begun to like it,” the cool stranger said, exposing the small DVD he had protected so well under his long scarf. “This is the latest episode.”

“Oh my gosh I know this one! Zara slits her hand in this episode,” Elia blurted out.

“Thanks for the spoiler, what are you buying?” The young male asked although he knew, he had seen the plastic cover in Elia’s hand.

“Oh, Limitless Love,” Elia procured her DVD’s.

“Oh well, then even I won’t tell you that the episode you’re buying is where Maria kills her mother-in-law,” the gutsy stranger shrugged nonchalantly.

“Okay thank you,” Elia huffed. This man was really a handful, but she was still not willing to share identities.

“Karma is a bitch,” the man rolled off of his tongue effortlessly.

“Well excuse me, I am a busy person, I must bill this in and then leave,” Elia refused to make any more conversation. She was a busy person.

“Hmm, and what is it you do?” The gutsy young man asked. Okay, he was really getting on her nerves now.

“I am a cyber lawyer. Now may I please be excused,” Elia raised her pitch a little bit. She was getting slightly irritated now. It was not that she did not find the man interesting, he was quite intriguing, but a few more details and he may even be able to guess who she was. No, Elia would never take that chance.

“Wow, that’s a lot of work,” the stranger leaned against the wall.

“Yes it is now will you ple- wait a second, who are you?” Elia inched closer to the stranger. He was definitely doing this on purpose. He knew who she was. If only she could see through that sunglass.

“I’m someone you were going to have to meet pretty soon anyways, glad to meet you like this; at least we know each others’ weakness,” the young man smiled. It was a handsome smile. A handsome smile… someone with a handsome smile she was yet to meet. Then it struck Elia like thunder to a tree; this was the man that her parents had tried so hard to set her up with that finally she had given in to a blind date that was due next week. This was the troublemaking private detective son of the President. She gave a small gasp and took a step back. Now heels are always a great catalyst in love stories because Rhaegar Targaryan was quick to catch her and pull her as she was on the verge of falling down and she landed right on his chest and she looked up and his sunglasses fell and just like their cheap Valyrian daily soaps, there was romantic music playing in the background. Both Elia and Rhaegar realised, they had been fools to avoid this date for such a long time.

“I thought she was never going to get caught!” Elia wailed as her favourite character ended up with the police bracelets.

“She’s Maria, she’ll find a way out,” Rhaegar reassured. He was currently seated on the floor, close to Elia’s legs as she had them folded up on the couch. Rhaegar liked the floor.

“I bloody well hope so. And I pray to the old gods and the new that Sana dies,” Elia muttered under grit teeth.
“Control your Martell emotions,” Rhaegar warned eyes wide.
“Do I have to, in front of you?” Elia asked sweetly. As outsiders, both Elia and Rhaegar were completely Valyrian and Rhoynish to each other. For the rest of Westeros, they sometimes had to act like Andals.
“No you don’t, I was kidding,” Rhaegar smiled looking up at her.
It was in times like these that something stirred down, deep inside the heart, for both of them. Rhaegar would feel a little fluttering inside him, like a dragon was flying all over, and Elia would feel a warmth spread from the toes to the hair, like the sun was warming her up. And then both of them would refuse to look at each other because they knew their love would shine through. Plus, Rhaegar was obstinate enough not to give in to the woman his father had chosen for him. Elia was more pragmatic, but something inside her slipped when Rhaegar came around.
“Unmm, would you like some more coffee?” Elia broke the pregnant romantic silence that had engulfed both of them.
“No you really don’t have to; I know you hate coffee,” Rhaegar scratched the back of his head.
“That’s alright, I’m making it for you,” Elia argued.
“Then I’ll come with you,” Rhaegar stood up. Truth be told, he had seen this episode before, but both of them had made a sort of latent general vow that they were not going to see major episodes without each other so he could not exactly tell her. Then again, he had viewed it by mistake; there was a link that had come up in the preferred readings and he had clicked on it accidentally.
“No you stay, somebody needs to watch what happened,” Elia pointed towards the large TV.
“Well you watch, I’ll go and get the coffee,” Rhaegar argued, again.
“Are you sure? I have a feeling something major is going to happen right now,” Elia flicked her eyes towards the television screen again.
“You can tell me,” Rhaegar said as he was already making his way to the kitchen. He was too scared he may give out some major hints and he did not want to do that.
“Okay then,” Elia frowned, but let him go. She was a smart girl, a lawyer after all; and something was definitely wrong with Rhaegar.
Elia sat down, and decided to concentrate on what was playing out on the screen. However, for some unknown reason, her eyes kept flicking to the kitchen. It was not that she had gotten too used to Rhaegar, which she had, but she could totally bear his absence for some time; it was simply that he was hiding something from her. How far could you get away from a lawyer after all?
“So, you knew that Maria was going to get caught right? You knew her mother would come out of coma and basically spill all the beans about her?” Elia asked as she perched herself on the marble tabletop of her open kitchen. Rhaegar had been fiddling with one coffee cup for way too long now.
“Eli I… I mean yes. There had been a link and I clicked on it accidentally. “No you stay, somebody needs to watch what happened,” Elia pointed towards the large TV.
“Well you watch, I’ll go and get the coffee,” Rhaegar argued, again.
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“So, you knew that Maria was going to get caught right? You knew her mother would come out of coma and basically spill all the beans about her?” Elia asked as she perched herself on the marble tabletop of her open kitchen. Rhaegar had been fiddling with one coffee cup for way too long now.
“Eli I… I mean yes. There had been a link and I clicked on it and boom! I know that’s a shoddy explanation,” Rhaegar rubbed the back of his neck.
“I don’t care about whether you watched it or not, promises are meant to be broken, and who hasn’t snaked behind their friends’ back and done something mischievous? I have a problem with you lying to me,” Elia coldly put across the table, quite literally.
“Well maybe… if you un-friend me, I won’t be lying to you anymore,” Rhaegar cheekily put forward since he knew that was the best way to come out of the entire mode that Elia was moving towards, of chiding him. Plus, this was something he had really been yearning to say for the longest time.
“What do you mean?” Elia questioned. Was there a tiny part of her that was actually scared of losing Rhaegar? Probably yes, and that was quite scary.
“You don’t know what I mean,” Rhaegar inched his hand closer to Elia’s, across the table. Okay, now Elia knew what he was talking about.
“And then you’re going to leave me like Anshu left Maria,” Elia sardonically stated.
“Are you mad? Anshu’s being an idiot! He’ll come around soon enough. Let him spend a few days without Maria… and even if he doesn’t, there’s always me,” Rhaegar puffed his chest out.
“What are you going to do?” Elia laughed. Rhaegar was younger than her by two years, but definitely acted like a kid.
“I’m going to beat him up!” Rhaegar happily announced and Elia was in splits. “Well can you kiss me for now, and then we can decide what we’re going to do with Anshu for later,” Elia proposed.

It took Rhaegar a few minutes to process what she was saying, but when he finally did, he wasted no time at all. He took practically a plunge across Elia’s precious marble tabletop, spilling her coffee all over it, and his own shirt. Elia did scold him, but that was way later, after they had gotten quite breathless and she was flushed and gripping on to his shirt for dear life that she realised that it was sticky and then she began freaking out and made him do quite the kitchen chores and clean that precious marble of hers. And he did get to open his shirt like he had hoped to, but they had gone to clean it instead of really doing what Rhaegar had originally had in mind. That, Elia conditioned, was off the limits till they had at least been out on ten dates. Rhaegar did try to grumble about that being too long, especially for Dornish standards but there really was no arguing with a lawyer.

________________________________________

“Isn’t this exactly the spot where you had told me never to lie to you?” Rhaegar asked, walking around the kitchen, trying to find his familiar black tin of coffee beans. “Yes, and this is where you had told me- the truth,” Elia curtly replied. She was, of course referencing to the confession Rhaegar had made of two-timing and falling in love with Lyanna Stark.

“Umm… where is the coffee?” Rhaegar cleared his throat trying to clear the atmosphere. “I don’t keep coffee anymore,” Elia shrugged.

“Ouch,” Rhaegar pouted, to which Elia really had to smile. “Do you still keep law books at your place?” She asked.

“Yes I do, actually,” Rhaegar nodded. “Your law books really help me, with a lot of cases actually.”

“Oh well, at least I was of some use,” Elia sighed bitterly.

“Why would you put it like that?” Rhaegar frowned.

“Put what like what?” Elia asked utterly confused.

“Eli, I never wanted to use you,” Rhaegar shrugged as if it was the most normal thing in the world for a man not to use a woman.

“Of course you didn’t,” Elia rolled her eyes. “No you have got to believe me! And what would I use you for?” Rhaegar asked, not noticing how condescending that sounded.

“There you go, the real colours of Rhaegar Targaryan,” Elia mocked and laughed at him. “I’ll tell you what you wanted to use me for; I see Lyanna Stark abandon her career, her bright future as a major stockholder at the Baratheon corps, and run after you like a lost puppy saying you set her free. I see her take care of you like she’s a nurse, not a sports graduate, and I see her extinguish every other dream she had, for the ‘freedom’ you offer her! Do I blame her? Yes, partly, because she’s so dumb that she sets an all new low standard for women like us but do I also sympathise with her? Absolutely Rhaegar, because all she knows is how to understand you, and take care of you, and sacrifice for you. She doesn’t know what it’s like to live for herself because she lives for your love; and I could never do that. I have ambitions, I have dreams, and above all, I posses a rational brain. Underneath her sports-toting tomboy is a slave of young girl serving you; and underneath my manicured and parlour-shiny exterior is a woman with a mind of her own who could manipulate you. So I am sorry Rhaegar that you could never use my self esteem for your care, but I am also happy, I didn’t end up like Lyanna Stark.”

The rain belted outside, and thunder roared like a Lannister, or a Martell, it depended on perspective. Rhaegar stared, dumbfounded for a few minutes. No, he had always known Elia was like this but he had always been weary of it. Some part of it had been weary, another part angry, sometimes even hateful, and one last part had been fond; because she was, well Elia. But never before had he admired so much for being who she was. Her words struck her harder than the
thunder was striking earth outside, and Rhaegar felt precisely as scared and enlightened about
himself as the earth feels when such a phenomenon takes place.
“Do you happen to have some beer at least?” He finally asked.
“No Targaryan, I don’t. Even that used to stay in my refrigerator because of you,” Elia laughed.
“For the first time in life, Rhaegar Targaryan does not have a fitting reply.”
“I don’t need a fitting reply when I’m talking to you,” Rhaegar finally smugly replied.
“I have some grape juice if you’d like, but it’s no wine,” Elia finally sighed. Even she was at a loss
of words.
“Did you see Limitless Love ended?” Rhaegar asked as Elia went to take out some grape juice
anyways.
“Of course; Maria died, but she died a hero. That’s generally our fate anyways,” Elia smirked,
thinking about the emotional last episode.
“Elia I’m sorry,” Rhaegar said, biting his lip, and gulping his ego, hoping to flush it out some time
later.
“It’s fine Rhae, I didn’t give you that lecture for an apology; it was to flush all that venom out of
my system. I am a viper after all,” Elia rolled her eyes.
“You want to have a marathon? For old times’ sake,” Rhaegar asked purple eyes slightly watery.
He was obviously referring to binging on television when he said marathon.
“I am really not in the mood to watch Maria die again,” Elia huffed. The death had really taken a
toll on her, that character was too much like her in a lot of senses.
“I’m not talking about Limitless Love,” Rhaegar said.
“Unguarded Emotions then?” Elia asked.
“Yep, I think it’ll be fun,” Rhaegar grinned.
And in the next fifteen minutes, every sense of familiarity that the two shared came back. They
were lounging on Elia’s couch, leg’s folded (albeit not touching one another), and binging on the
melodramatic, poorly-made celluloid substance that had brought them close the first time. Both
were enjoying it quite a bit, and neither had the guts to own that up. The purple and brown orbs
were fixed strictly to the television, and they were trying to ignore the romantic tension that was
building up in the living room simply due to the content that was being shown on screen; where
Zara and Andy were literally all over each other.
“I told you he loved her!” Rhaegar exclaimed when the kiss in the rain happened.
“You never said anything of the sort, but I always knew,” Elia returned haughtily. She had always
guessed the two characters would share a kiss in the rain.
“What a liar, I have been predicting this since day one,” Rhaegar argued. In the heart of the
moment, and with both of them paying close attention to the television, they kept moving towards
each other on the couch.
“So have I. But the point is, they look so cute,” Elia smiled as she saw the couple and grinned.
“I know right, absolutely adorable,” Rhaegar looked at Elia and she looked back at him and for a
moment they forgot that they were broken up and leaned in for a kiss only to realise that there was
a sudden noise inside the screen. Both looked towards it.
There had been a car accident. Elia gasped, and Rhaegar bit his lip. He had seen this episode
before, again, and he hadn’t said anything because he didn’t want Elia to know that. Some things
really never change. Rhaegar clasped Elia’s hand because he knew she needed it. She generally
always did when there was a tragic sudden turn on a TV show. He felt so guilty he wasn’t there
where Maria died and Elia had to watch that all alone. The entire doing was his, all his fault.
“You’ve watched this before haven’t you?” Elia finally said after a few moments of silence.
“What? Wait, how did you know?” Rhaegar was bewildered.
“I know how you breathe Targaryan, and this is just about spoilers,” Elia rolled her eyes.
“I’m sorry,” Rhaegar sighed softly.
“We didn’t exactly have a mutual break-up and we’re totally allowed to watch all episodes without
each other, not just major ones, please Rhaegar, it’s okay,” Elia reasoned.
“No I’m not sorry about that. I mean, probably about that too but I’m sorry for being an asshole
Elia,” Rhaegar whispered. “Asshole is putting it mildly; but I’m happy in a way. I mean, I don’t know, I feel like I don’t have to hide myself from you anymore; that really used to kill me- hide my true ambitions from you and everything, now I don’t have to do all that and it feels liberating to say the least. But yes, I still didn’t get to be a Targaryan wife so that’s a bummer,” Elia pouted in the end, chuckling as she smiled at Rhaegar. He had been a good friend, so this felt good. “You never have to hide anything from me anymore,” Rhaegar smiled back with a look in his eyes that Elia tried her best to reason with herself was fondness. It wasn’t really. “I know right, I am so thankful-” Elia was cut off with a kiss.

“Oh my god, could you ever have imagined that they would finally pair Misha with Aryan?” Elia squealed as her eyes were glued to the television, and Rhaegar’s were glued to her. “I didn’t think they would be so smart, but Aryan is one lucky man,” Rhaegar smiled, still looking at her. “I don’t think you would’ve said that three years ago,” Elia chuckled. “Three years ago, I was an utter fool,” Rhaegar confessed. “You bet you were,” Elia huffed as she looked down at him ruffling his hair. Things felt normal now. It had been a very long time since they had gotten back together but today seemed more normal than all the other days combined. She had her own reasons for that, and Rhaegar did too, although the other didn’t know that. “Elia I love you,” Rhaegar blurted out. “Oh wow that’s new,” Elia chuckled. “Why do you lack a complete sense of romance?” Rhaegar despaired, leaving a lingering kiss on her neck. “Hey, I do have a sense of romance okay? I think last night was very romantic,” Elia announced. “Elia, last night we were stuck at one of my father’s boring Galas and everybody was a politician and it was just disgusting,” Rhaegar stuck his tongue out. “Lyanna wouldn’t find it very romantic,” he added teasingly. “Obviously, she would find jungles and rivers and waterfalls romantic. Also, sleeping out in the middle of the forest under the stars which you can just see in a planetarium anyways,” Elia rolled her eyes. “Well yes, that is romance isn’t it?” Rhaegar questioned. Elia only gave him an incredulous look. “Come on, you can do better than that,” she urged. “What do you mean?” Rhaegar narrowed his eyes at her. “Rhae, my love, what is the point of that romance which needs trees and forests to bloom. Romance is truly romantic if it can find its’ way in a room full of politicians and still lift you up. Like yesterday, how we kept burning each other with glances. Mostly you though, because sometimes I was really caught up with conversation. Romance is exciting if you can ignite it in a closed room with four walls clamping down on you,” Elia slightly seductively, although it was more of a whisper, spoke into Rhaegar’s ear. Rhaegar blushed, and looked down, and fiddled with the little velvet box in his pocket. Maybe this was the reason he knew his forever was with the woman sitting right next to him- the woman he didn’t need a forest or an adventure to romance with. Elia was right after all, and she always is, true love doesn’t need nature, it just needs two mature people. What had he been thinking when he fell in love with a kid? Then again, maybe he wasn’t thinking at all, and that’s the most dangerous crime a human could commit. As a detective, he should have known that, but as a lawyer, that’s what Elia taught him. “Babe, I really have something to tell you,” Rhaegar now whispered into Elia’s ear. He didn’t have a clue as to why they were whispering- as in, they were the only two people sprawled in front of the television. Still, whispering gave an odd and beautiful sense of intimacy. “Yes babe, tell me, you’ve been fumbling forever. And once you’re out with your beans, I’ll be out
“Eli, I know I’ve fucked up big time with you; probably more than once. I have probably hurt you in ways that I don’t even know and you’ve been okay with it because in your head, you think women like yourself deserve that. It’s a crude idea, but everybody thinks that way. Nobody ends up with the gold-digger. Well I think that’s bullshit. If everybody deserves love, so do they, and who am I to mansplain? I’m just telling you what I believe in, I am not trying to validate you babe. All I’m saying is, and now this is moving in a completely different direction and I am so nervous I may not even be able to actually say what I want to say but what I want to say is will you make me the luckiest man in the world and the first to ever fall in love with his gold-digging girlfriend; and just say yes. I mean you may not, but still you know, I would be happier than ever before if you did say yes,” Rhaegar was blabbering now. The ring was still in his pocket.

“Babe, what are you talking about? What do I need to say ‘yes’ to?” Elia asked.

“Oh shit, I am sorry, I am so sorry. Here’s the thing. It’s platinum, just the way you like it,” Rhaegar said knowing he had completely messed up everything. He was supposed to do this after they had had dinner, and definitely not in this manner. “Eli, I think I messed everything up,” Rhaegar bit his lip.

“Rhaegar, you did just about perfect,” Elia softly said, eyes glistening a bit. Basically they were watering- partially due to the speech, and partially because she was getting married!

“So… is that a yes?”

“Oh you idiot,” Elia laughed and pulled Rhaegar in for a kiss.

Although they had shared plenty of amazing kisses, both were amazing kissers, this was Rhaegar’s favourite. There was an excitement and spontaneity about it that had never been there for either of them. There was a sense of effervescence in the air, although their love was firmly rooted on the ground. Rhaegar pulled Elia onto his lap and held her so tight that she had to giggle, and try to untangle herself. Rhaegar would not let her go. They had gone through too much, and he had almost lost her once; for him to let go so easily.

“We’re going to have the most amazing wedding ever,” he grinned as soon as both of them pulled back.

“Well it better be fast,” Elia urged.

“Why?” Rhaegar asked confused. “I was simply going to take forever deciding on the colour of my suit the day of the reception.”

“Rhaegar, I’m pregnant! You better be fast about the colour of your suit!” Elia scolded.

“Oh you’re… wait, you’re what?”

“Pregnant, two months down,” Elia looked at him nervously. “That’s what I wanted to tell you.”

“But then, why would we have to speed up our wedding preparations?” Rhaegar questioned. He was beaming, but this argument didn’t make sense.

“Because I refuse to be photographed with a baby bump on my wedding day!”

“Oh well, our little Rhaenys can be your maid of honour on our wedding day. I want it to be perfect, just the way I have always wanted it. Maybe if this was someone else, we would’ve been fine with a wedding in the middle of the forest with zero guests, but with you, I want to be perfect,” Rhaegar grinned, and then he kissed her forehead, then the bridge of her nose then her lips where he stayed longer than the rest and finally her stomach, where she was carrying their viper-dragon. “I love you,” he softly whispered.

“Who, me or Rhaenys?” Elia teased.

“Both of you, more than I ever thought I could have loved anybody,” Rhaegar looked up, eyes watering a bit, as he was finally coming to terms with the news.

“Well I don’t know about me but our kid will certainly hate you if you name it ‘Rhaenys’ I promise you that,” Elia laughed.

“Hey, it’s a beautiful name!” Rhaegar pouted.

“What if it’s a boy?” Elia teased.

“It won’t be a boy, it’ll be my little Rhaenys,” Rhaegar happily beamed.

“Well then we’ll see about it. But, for now…” And with that he took hold of his fiancé, gently placed her on the couch, and then was a little more than gentle for the rest of the night. Oh yes, and the ring looked beautiful on the already glowing, soon-to-be-a-mother Sun.
Souvenirs

Chapter Summary

Hey! My exams have started but I just had to update this chapter!
Basically, I have an announcement to make. I won't be updating chapters in about a month following this because my family is going on its' annual Europe trip, and I am not because college applications (I have a wonderful life I know) and they're taking the laptop with them where I have all my imagine ideas stored. I do have other devices with me but my imagines are on this laptop and I don't want to transfer them anywhere else. Thus, I won't be updating in over a month but please, do not panic. I am not ending this here and I will totally be back.
Meanwhile, if you wish to chat, always feel free to drop a comment and I will respond as soon as possible. I will totally miss not being able to write as well!
I love you all so much!
By the way, after reading this chapter, in case you're confused about why it's called 'souvenirs', basically that a metaphor for Elia's memories.
All the love.

A

“Baby, what’s this box?” Lyanna’s sweet voice called out.
“Wait, let me have a look,” Rhaegar said as he walked towards her. The attic was really up high, in fact, the entire store-space was weird. Even their living quarters were slanted and strange architecturally. Lyanna left a quick peck on his lips as he approached and Rhaegar did his best to squeeze out a smile. She could get a little too clingy physically sometimes.
“This box is filled with weird stuff I’ve never seen,” the young wolf pouted.
Rhaegar kneeled down and opened the box properly, instead of the way Lyanna was touching it with a finger and trying to open it. What he saw inside took his breath away- like literally, his breathing was hitched in his throat and he was sure he was going to have a large fountain spill out of his eyes. But why? He had chosen this life- he had run away and he had abandoned her. But what he felt was definitely more than guilt. Rhaegar looked down, because Lyanna could not know- she would throw a massive tantrum about not being the most important woman in his life. Or maybe not, she was extremely gullible so he could always make up a story. But he was not in the mood for lying, or anything actually. He just wanted to sit there and go through the things in the trunk. He let the few tears in his eyes drop and then wiped them in a way Lyanna wouldn’t understand and then decided to speak. He was still a very bad liar but this was Lyanna, not Elia.
“Umm, this is nothing important. I’ll sort this out and then come to bed,” he cleared his throat, pretending it was phlegm caught in there.
“Okay babe, I’ll be waiting,” Lyanna kissed his cheek and left. As soon as she left, he collapsed on the ground, body wrecked by tears.
The first thing Rhaegar’s hand pulled out was a delicate wooden pen, and it was so sophisticated, so extremely pretty. It had a deep mahogany cap and an elegant ebony body and the initials E.M. were inscribed in ivory. The pen was almost as elegant as its’ owner. Rhaegar twisted it in his hands and brought it close to his nose taking in a whiff. It smelled of old wood now, but it had smelt of her hand once, and that was a glorious smell, he remembered. Elia never stepped out of her bedroom without using citrus hand-cream, and all of her stationary smelled as much.
Sometimes, if she pulled them too much, Rhaegar’s cheeks smelled of citrus too, and he loved it.
was an intoxicating smell. When he had gone to the Tower of Joy with Lyanna, he had wished to sit by the window and take in that smell all day long. It had never come. Maybe it was Elia’s version of Dorne that was so beautiful, he just made it ugly.

“You know what my favourite gift was tonight…” Elia’s soft voice interrupted Rhaegar’s thoughts. No, actually, six years earlier, they had interrupted Rhaegar when he was sitting on the edge of the garden portico extension. She had walked towards him in a silky and risky nightgown. Her fancy-ass, expensive birthday clothes had been shed.

“Umm, the Kindle?” Rhaegar asked, eyes glittering. It would definitely have been his.

“No Rhaegar, not the Kindle!” Elia laughed. “It was this.”

When Elia had held up her hand which had his gifted pen tightly clutched, his heart had skipped several beats. He had held her hand too, and his were trembling. Although there had been latent tension between the two of them for the longest time, he had never touched her, not so intimately. All those friendly bear-hugs did no justice at all.

“No, you’re just saying that to make me feel better,” Rhaegar announced.

“No I’m not Rhaegar. This thing is so pretty and classy and wooden, a lot like me. Plus, it actually writes really well,” Elia laughed softly. His heart skipped a beat again.

“You’re not wooden,” Rhaegar finally said.

“No? I always thought I was, well a little you know; all prim and hoity-toity, you know how I am,” Elia shrugged.

“Yes you’re all that but you’re wonderful, you’re not wooden at all,” Rhaegar repeatedly shook his head.

“Well you’re too sweet, maybe I’ll give you some honey for your birthday,” Elia cooed and ruffled his hair. Rhaegar reddened even more.

“Thank you,” he nervously stuttered out.

“Why are you always so nervous around me?” Elia questioned smiling warmly.

“No, I’m not nervous I just, I feel like I’ll mess up. You know, you’re so cool,” Rhaegar explained.

“Well that’s very sweet of you Rhaegar,” Elia returned.

“Thank you,” Rhaegar beamed.

“You really like me don’t you?” Elia softly questioned.

“Oh no, it’s nothing like that… I mean no, you’re really lovely, yes I like you. I mean, you know, you know what I mean,” Rhaegar made a fool of himself.

”No Rhaegar, I don’t know what you mean, and I won’t know till you actually tell me,” Elia sighed, and then she stood up from the cobbled and polished spot where they both were seated and began to walk away.

Rhaegar suddenly realised that if he let her go now, he would never get her back again. And so he mustered all the courage he ever had, which was not a lot actually, given that he was the only Targaryan who had never felt the need of assuming a dragon upon himself; something Elia always kept pestering him for. She was a Sun, and she wanted him to be a dragon. He wanted to give her a reason for that now. He pulled her by the hand, and she plopped right down next to him, where she had been sitting.

“You really like my gift right?” Rhaegar cockily questioned.

“Well, yes,” Elia said uneasily this time.

“Then I need a return gift,” Rhaegar announced.

“This is not a kindergarten birthday party Rhaegar… but fine, I’ll give you a return gift if you ask for it. What do you want?” Elia asked shaking her head as if she was dealing with a child.

“I want a kiss,” Rhaegar simply put.

“Excuse me, like a kiss, as in a kiss?”

“Does it mean something else in Rhoynish?” Rhaegar asked cocking an eyebrow.

“Don’t you dare act suave with me Targaryan,” Elia nodded her head fondly and leaned in and closed any distance which had still been sustained between them. Now, finally, there were one. A teardrop meandered down Rhaegar’s cheek as he remembered the sweet kiss. Spicy actually, Elia had just had dinner and post-dinner she had had some of her favourite Dornish red chillies and
The kiss was spicy. Rhaegar could do anything for it now, but it was too late, and he respected that as well. He softly kissed the pen and safely tucked it back into its’ place.

The next thing he laid his hands on was an old and faded phone cover. It was one of those early iPhones people so fondly reminisced about nowadays. It was black and white and personalized, with Rhaegar grinning into the camera and Elia pressing a loving kiss on his cheek. He remembered she had given him this on his birthday, and he had been slightly irritated because he thought she was being too clingy. If he could, he would have gone back and killed the old him with wildfire- Rhaegar thought that was the worst way to die anyways.

“So you don’t like it,” Elia shook her head in a disappointed manner as Rhaegar rolled his eyes. There they went again.

A few more teardrops genuinely fell from Rhaegar’s eyes. Had he not been so foolish then; had he held her once and taken in that citrus scent and just let the rest of the world melt away, things would be so much better now. He still remembered how ugly that fight had gotten. He still remembered how, after angrily making love to Elia that night, he had decided, that living with Elia was nothing short of a dictatorial regime. Democracy had only given him a broken home; but he was an idiot back then.

“It’s not like that Elia. I really like it, I just think it’s a little, you know, extra,” Rhaegar tried to reason.

“I’m sorry, I thought you’d like it,” Elia coldly stated. Now Rhaegar understood that she was receding inside her hard shell of defence.

“Eli, it’s really sweet. It really is, but I cannot parade this around on my phone,” Rhaegar tried to reason gently.

“Never mind, I am the only trophy worth parading around anyways,” Elia retorted.

“Elia have I ever paraded you around like a trophy?” Rhaegar began raising his voice. “Do I treat you the way Robert treats Lyanna?”

“What’s wrong with the way Robert treats Lyanna? They’re both immature kids and Lyanna is one of those leeches who want elder men just for the sake of validation; even Robert’s too good for her but at least he values her. He truly does,” Elia stated.

“Lyanna is none of the things you just said! She is sweet and simple and innocent; and what’s the deal about wanting validation from an elder man? What does that even mean?”

“She is stupid, simply put in your words, stupid; and stupid girls have a certain type of men they really like,” Elia began explaining.

“Oh great, judge away,” Rhaegar rolled his eyes.

“What is your problem? And why is Lyanna Stark mentioned in every fucking fight we have?”

“I don’t drag her in, you drag her in. You badmouth her and you god-mod Robert, it’s not my problem,” Rhaegar tried, like an absolute fool, to defend himself.

“Something’s going on between the two of you isn’t it? You hate Robert so much, you fucking flare up if I call her an idiot; what is it Rhaegar? You’ve become paedophilic now?” Elia questioned sharply.

“Okay Eli stop it, for one, Lyanna is almost an adult, for two, Robert is an asshole and for three, she’s not an idiot,” Rhaegar barked.

“You’re in love with a child! Why don’t you do something, adopt her, and then fuck her- that will feed your disgusting fetishes even more!”

“Elia stop!” Rhaegar had almost raised his hand. Thankfully, his sense of self-restraint had been amazing as long as he had been with Elia. He had stopped himself, he had not even literally raised the hand, but Elia knew him since forever. She could understand his hand was twitching.

“Go on, be a wife-beater, be a paedophilic idiot, be everything that is the worst cliché about men on the face of this planet. But most of all, don’t forget to be the giant hypocrite that you are! And yes, I will say this as long as I want because I know it’s right- Robert is better than you are. At least he doesn’t pretend,” Elia finally spat with a fire and disdain in her eyes Rhaegar had never seen
before. Or maybe had; a couple of times. Then, she stormed upstairs, and he stormed outside. They both needed a breather.

Rhaegar, rather than calling Lyanna and landing up in her arms, found himself in a pub. And in a pub, one drink leads to one drink too many and in a matter of half an hour, he is drunk beyond his wits. Rhaegar was lucky it was a Flea Bottom Pub where not too many knew him because had it been one of the more posh regions of King’s Landing, his career as a public prosecutor would have… well, faced a few ups-and-downs. Nobody would have really dared to say anything to Aerys’ son. On the other hand Elia had been crying herself to sleep. Well as much as her mascara would permit that is, but she had really dozed off.

Now Elia and Rhaegar should have let that matter be right there; but Rhaegar found himself not only stumbling back home but also stumbling right into Elia’s bed. And once he was there, his drunken hands, and Elia’s effect of excess wine made sure they enjoyed a wonderful night. The last one they would ever enjoy together. It was a beautiful night, and when Rhaegar awoke the next morning, because he always woke up first, there was a smile plastered on his face. It subsided when he found Elia. What an idiot he had been.

Rhaegar traced his long pale fingers down the spine of the phone-case, and his silent tears hazed the already-fading black-and-white picture. Had he used it just once, had he recognised the sweet intentions behind it (yes he still thought it might have been a little creepy but it was an adorable creepy), maybe he would still be waking up next to her. Rhaegar put the phone case aside because he would keep it somewhere safer, pray if Laynna ever came to see it, he would be in big trouble. He was going to close the box when something extremely glittery caught his eye. It was so glittery; it was glinting off the streetlight streaming in through the window. Rhaegar was quick to pull it out and once he did, the lump in his throat hardened significantly. It was Elia’s favourite silver sequined one-piece swimsuit that had happened to be in his cupboard the day he ran away.

“Elia come out of the swimming pool right now!” Rhaegar was ordering in a tone he had never used on anybody before. He had no right to use it on her. He was the one grieving; she was long out of his life. And yet, he needed her like the day needed the sun.

“Elia please… mom… she’s… please just come out of the fucking pool,” Rhaegar’s voice was choked.

At hearing that, Elia didn’t waste another minute. She was out of the pool before he could blink his tears away and then she slipped on a silken ivory and red robe and sprinted towards him. Rhaegar had left her, not the Targaryans, and anyways, she was the one who brought up Viserys, she felt a responsibility towards that family which even surprised her sometimes. And yes, Rhaella didn’t like her a lot, but that didn’t budge her commitment.

“What happened?” Elia questioned concerned.

“She’s… she’s had a baby… but then she’s… she’s not there anymore Eli. She’s just… dead. She just wasn’t there anymore…” Rhaegar broke down again.

“How is Viserys, and dad? I’ll come to the hospital, don’t worry,” Elia sat down and Rhaegar softly sobbed into her lap. She slowly stroked his hair and his back.

“You don’t care about how I am,” Rhaegar finally spoke once he had calmed himself down a bit.

“There are plenty of other people to care about how you are. But dad and Vis, even if the Seven Kingdoms pledge their support, they don’t really care,” Elia softly replied.

Rhaegar looked up at her. Tears were still brimming at the edges of the deep wells that were his eyes. He was handsome, that was something which took Elia back even in a situation like this. But why had this handsome face come to her of all people? He had a young girl back home who he was trying to marry in the court. What the hell was Rhaegar doing here?

“You’re right. You’re always right. I just don’t know what to do,” Rhaegar laid his head back down on Elia’s lap.
“You can mourn; I mean you are but there’s really not much you can do Rhaegar. Just please, be there for Vis and dad.” Elia explained.
“Eli I, I don’t really know how to say this but; I don’t think she just died of childbirth,” Rhaegar said a little while later, after they had basked in each others’ comfortable silence.
“And hence you have come running to Elia instead of going to Lyanna,” Elia bitterly smirked. “But I am not a detective, I merely write crime novels.”
“Oh please, as much as I hate to admit it, you’re the brightest star in all of Westeros,” Rhaegar softly rolled his eyes, referring to a comment his father had made.
“You want me to investigate your mom’s death?” Elia finally asked.
“I just want you to tell me that my suspicions are baseless,” Rhaegar replied.
“And that you are increasingly becoming as paranoid as your father,” Elia gave a small smile.
“Yes, that too.” Rhaegar softly sniffled; looking into the depths of Elia’s swimming pool. It was a pretty pool, the most aesthetic indoor pool he had ever seen.
“Which hospital?” Elia asked.
“The King’s Landing National, where else?” Rhaegar replied.
“Okay Rhaegar let’s go; just clearing one thing, if Lyanna goes livid on seeing me, not my fault if she ends up in jail,” Elia warned.
“Okay, if a scratch lands on you, the responsibility is on me,” Rhaegar said and gave Elia a small smile.
“Wait, let me change out of this first Rhaegar,” Elia commented.
Rhaegar looked at her then, in all her finery; hair pulled back with utter sophistication and a light, see-through ivory robe over the most sparkling swimsuit he had ever laid eyes on. When all was said and done, at the end of the day, why did he always find himself coming back to her? Who was she to him after everything that had happened between the two of them? Was it her eyes, or her words or simply her presence? Rhaegar would never be able to fathom, and he didn’t have any time either. As soon as Elia had walked to inside the showering cubicle to change, Lyanna’s call had come. She was panicked, his father was after her, and they had to leave as soon as possible. Rhaegar had left Elia a small note which said ‘goodbye’ but nothing else so Elia had assumed that he had left for the hospital and she had gone there too and accidentally she had taken the bag where she kept her swimming costume with her and it was left with Viserys and through a long cycle of exchanging bags and hands, it had landed up in Rhaegar’s room when he was packing. It had been a long and distressing day anyways, and Elia was not feeling energetic enough to pursue her swimming suit especially when Aerys was livid as to how his son could be missing. Rhaegar had left that night, but Elia had remained inside him and with him too.

Rhaegar folded the one-piece as carefully as he could. It was not wet anymore, but it still shimmered, and it looked like a dazzling beauty- a lot like Elia. He kept it neatly to one side of the trunk where suddenly, something hard poked his finger. He took in a deep breath, another slice of memory, but pulled it out nevertheless. It was the most beautiful thing Rhaegar had ever laid eyes on, and always would be.
“Oh this is perfect! How did you know these are the sort of earrings I liked?” Elia squealed.
Rhaegar smiled as the scene unfolded in the mirror in front of him. She was so happy that day, glowing completely.
“I’m not blind okay, I see you turning your nose up at all these Andal pearl earrings,” Rhaegar laughed, kissing her ear softly.
“Aren’t you the best boyfriend ever!” Elia exclaimed and turned around and kissed him passionately, to which Rhaegar only responded by returning the kiss equally passionately.
“Well I happen to have the best girlfriend ever too,” he grinned like a Siamese cat.
And then he picked Elia up, and spun her around, and she squealed till he let her down and then she ruffled his hair and they looked back at the mirror and she pulled his cheek fondly as he bent down a little low to kiss her neck. And then because that always tickled Elia so much, she gave out
that small gurgle of a laughter which she did in moments which were not supposed to be funny but she found them to be. And as Rhaegar looked at the mirror in front of him, in that attic, all hazy and dirty, he could still remember that sunny day in front of that mirror with that pretty little golden earring.

“Well Rhaegar Targaryan, you and I have a fundraiser event to attend, shall we get going now?”
“Why do we have to go in the first place?” Rhaegar pouted. “Let the two of us stay in together.”
“Oh come on Rhaegar, your parents won’t be able to go today and they promised the organisation that somebody from the Targaryan family would go so we have to go,” Elia reasoned.
“Well you’re not a Targaryan and I don’t want to be one; so why do we need to go?” Rhaegar kissed her and then something struck him, in lightening speed.
“I totally understand why your dad wishes I was the Targaryan son and you were the Martell seductress sometimes,” Elia rolled her eyes at him. “Come on drama king, let’s get going.”
“Hey, you want to be a Targaryan?” Rhaegar suddenly asked, pulling her back into his arms and keeping her firmly there, leaning against the mirror.
“What kind of a question is that Rhaegar?” Elia nervously asked. Well of course she was nervous; she had wanted to be a Targaryan for as long as she could remember. Well not like a real one but part of the family so she could be in politics. Now she had also fallen in love with Rhaegar in her own way but she was sure he wouldn’t understand that if he ever came to know the truth. So essentially, Rhaegar could never know her true ambitions.
“Well you know, it’s a simple question. Do you want to be a Targaryan?” Rhaegar shrugged.
“Well it’s a stupid question, because I’m a Martell, and I am not going to grow silver hair overnight, or suddenly not get burnt by fire anymore,” Elia rolled her eyes jokingly.
“Oh come on, I did not mean it like that,” Rhaegar softly whispered into her ear. “I meant it as something else…”
“What did you mean it as Rhaegar?” Elia pressed on.
“Well you know, I meant would you like to be a Mrs. Targaryan. I mean honestly, you’d look straight up weird with silver hair, but you’re absolutely gorgeous just like this, the most gorgeous Mrs. Targaryan ever,” Rhaegar kissed her passionately.
“Rhae, this is hardly the time to joke, come on, we need to get going,” Elia hurried as soon as they pulled away.
“But I’m not joking, I mean it; would you like to be a Mrs. Targaryan?” Rhaegar had questioned, and he had looked into Elia’s eyes and there was a strange sort of love, a possessiveness he had never seen before. She wasn’t just hungry, she was starving; now he had initially thought it was him she was starving for but it had never been him. It had always been his power.
“You’re not joking?” Elia then raised an eyebrow.
“I’d be a fool to,” Rhaegar bit his lip.
“You idiot,” Elia’s smile had spread to the very last corners of her face and she had kissed him with a passion he had never known before.
No matter how much his self-righteous friends would later taunt Elia to be a gold-digger, Rhaegar had seen a softening in her eyes that day. From the hunger of power, even if it had been for a split second, it had turned into plain love and admiration for him. That split second had haunted Rhaegar ever since he had decided to leave her for a girl of supposed more ‘substance’. And he could never have been more wrong. The thought haunted Rhaegar everyday; that softening in Elia’s eyes. He could have made her a better person, and she would have made him the best President Westeros had ever seen. If only he had had a little more patience, he would have understood the value of caring for someone instead of being blindly cared for; had he been a little less selfish, he would essentially have his one true love right next to him. Because no matter how many times Rhaegar said it out loud to himself, Lyanna was never the love of his life, and wasn’t going to be. It had always been Elia, the other outsider in Westeros; the woman who loved her passions enough to have to use people in order to get it, the woman who had taught him that the world was grey, and especially people were not in black or white; it was the woman he was always destined to come back home to. Essentially, the woman he had scorned.
“Baby I waited for you all of last night, where were you?” Lyanna wailed as Rhaegar was jolted from his sleep. There were marks in his pale hands from clutching Elia’s earring all night. There were tear stains down his pale white cheeks too.

“Oh I just, I fell asleep here. I’m sorry, I don’t know how it happened,” Rhaegar white-lied. He had been sitting and ruminating Elia’s memories, that’s how it happened.

“But baby I was waiting for you,” Lyanna exclaimed.

“Yes I know, I heard you the first time,” Rhaegar replied, pronouncing every syllable properly so that the kid could understand.

“Well then why didn’t you come to me? And what is this box all about?” Lyanna questioned sternly.

“It’s just a few things I can’t leave behind no matter how hard I try. Anyways, let’s have breakfast,” Rhaegar sighed as he quietly slipped the earring in and stood up, forcing out a smile.

“Oh, come down, I’ve made dragon-fruit salad just the way you like it!” Lyanna chirped happily.

“Oh how wonderful, I can’t wait,” Rhaegar sighed. He used to like dragon-fruit a lot, as a kid, he didn’t anymore.

They trudged down the stairs to the breakfast table which was on the second floor. The shop was on the first floor, or the ground floor, it depended on who followed which numbering system. It was a joke, talented and brainy Rhaegar ending up owning a small and unimportant store and spending the rest of his life working on that store and living in a tiny settlement above it. Yes, once the romanticism had worn down, Rhaegar was left in tears.

“Is someone here?” A very familiar voice called out below. The door to the shop was always open, only the sign changed according the timings. Rhaegar couldn’t believe his ears, he must have been dreaming.

“We haven’t even opened yet; who could it be?” Lyanna wailed.

“Wait, I’ll go check and see,” Rhaegar sprinted downstairs.

“Hi… Rhaegar. I didn’t know this shop was yours,” Elia spoke with a hint of surprise and utter authenticity written all over her face. That meant she was totally lying. She was a great liar by the way.

“Cut the crap, of course you did,” Rhaegar rolled his eyes.

“Oh phew, at least you’re still the same person,” Elia smirked at Rhaegar’s harsh comment. She wouldn’t have believed it was him had he approached her with guilt or sympathy or even friendliness. This was the Rhaegar she knew.

“When are the cops coming?” Rhaegar asked, leaning on a pillar, looking her up and down. She looked significantly thinner, and pale; especially with the dark maroon short dress that she was wearing. What the hell had happened to her?

“Oh they’re not; I just came to check up on you,” Elia shrugged and turned around.

“You didn’t expect me to be around did you?”

“Yeah, no I didn’t. What a bummer, I hate when my plans don’t go the way I wanted them to. Anyways, I am leaving,” Elia hurried.

“Well I really you wish you would have. I wish you would have threatened her with my life and then she would’ve told me to leave and I would have come back to Westeros,” Rhaegar softly said.

“Aww, poor rich boy is missing his luxuries,” Elia taunted.

“Poor rich boy is definitely missing more than his luxuries,” Rhaegar replied.

“Okay, well whatever, I need to go now.”

“Oh my god, so you had genuinely come here to check up on me?” Rhaegar asked.

“No that’s rubbish, I had come here to threaten Lyanna,” Elia put up a soft defence.
“You’re lying, you’re totally lying. You had actually come here to see how I was doing. You knew where I was all along didn’t you?”

“Oh well Rhaegar, you’re really smart. At least I rubbed off on you in some way. Anyways, I have to go now,” Elia stated, and began walking towards the door.

“How are you?” Rhaegar called out.


“Because you care how I am, and that’s just how our relationship works. It’s one massive give-and-take deal and now I really wish I was a better dealer,” Rhaegar sighed in defeat.

“Well that’s just too bad isn’t it? Now may I take your leave?”

“Why are you in such a hurry?” Rhaegar questioned.

“Rhaegar please let me leave,” Elia hurried.

“What is the hurry? I mean I know Lyanna’s upstairs but if she sees us together maybe she’ll ship me back,” Rhaegar hopefully tried.

“Rhaegar Rhaenys and Aegon are in the car I have to go,” Elia grit her teeth and replied and began walking off. Rhaegar followed after her.

“Who is Aegon Elia?” He asked in a tone which was oscillating between shock, euphoria and devastation.

“Someone you don’t need to know, and someone who’ll never know you, I will make sure of that. Yes I had come to check up on you; but honestly, you deserve a place like this. I may love you, but I have zero respect for you. So you and your baby whore can stay in this dark and damp shithole. Me and my babies are going to enjoy King’s Landing. Goodbye Rhaegar,” Elia softly smiled.

“Aegon is my son? Elia, I need you to answer me!” Rhaegar still pursued.

“He contains your DNA, and has that crazy silver hair, but he’s as much as your son as I am your wife; which is not a lot at all Rhaegar,” Elia replied as he continued walking.

“You mean I have no rights over him?” Rhaegar pulled her by the elbow and she landed into his arms.

“Do you believe you deserve any rights over him?” Elia questioned back.

“No, I’ve lost those rights a very long time ago haven’t I?” Rhaegar looked the most defeated Elia had ever seen him.

“I wish you all the best for your new life buddy,” Elia hadn’t used that nickname in forever.

In a fit of absolute madness, or maybe clarity (the only clarity he has ever experienced), the Rhaegar pulled Elia in for one last passionate kiss. No, she would never be his again; and that was all his doing. But she deserved to know he was sorry, she deserved to know that all men weren’t complete pigs; she deserved to know that he had a conscience and heart somewhere too. She would never love him again but if she could love someone else, he would be happy for her. She needed to know that people change and realise their mistakes. He for one totally did.

“Thank you buddy,” Rhaegar gave her a genuine and small smile once they pulled back. “I’ll never live again, but I’ll exist for the three of you.”
And I am back! I know I had been gone for the longest time but you have my explanation for that in the last chapter. However, now I am back with my old routines and I will be updating regularly like I used to. I am so sorry to all those who thought I had abandoned this. I won't abandon it I promise.
Thank you for being there.
All the love.
A

Jaime’s curious green eyes followed the precision of Elia’s tanned pale fingers. Like literally, she was not even using her hands, she was only using two fingers; and the scalpel was effortlessly brushing over the corpse like it was butter. But that was a disgusting metaphor and he cringed the moment it came to his mind. It wasn’t remotely his fault though- Elia was just that great. Jaime was now assured that the King’s Landing forensics was in great hands- just like he would make the general King’s Landing police force, a force to reckon with.
“Inspector, don’t you have to go through the file?” Elia’s grim tone suddenly interrupted Jaime’s ambitions.
“Well yes, Dr. Martell, I was simply appreciating some art,” Jaime good-naturedly mocked.
“You call this art?” Elia raised an eyebrow.
“Well I’m surprised you don’t,” Jaime gasped in mock surprise.
“Jaime, get back to work,” Elia sternly urged her friend.
The hurdle of footsteps outside the working room frightened Elia and Jaime both. This was a forensic hospital, which meant it closed after ten, and normal patients weren’t even allowed. Plus criminals always lurked about where their crimes were kept. However, the King’s Landing forensic institute should have been well-guarded. Jaime’s gun was not with him and Elia got easily scared, especially due to the nature of her work. She had seen the worst sides of humanity really. It was a wonder how she was such a staunch humanist- how her faith in humanity never shook.
“You stay right here, I’ll go check and see,” Jaime took the lead.
“Nobody needs to go anywhere, just shut up and get back to work,” Elia chided although she was visibly disturbed herself.
“Are you sure? I mean I could always…” Jaime offered.
“Jaime, you’re new to King’s Landing. Things are different here; everybody’s business is not our business and we do not need to interfere,” Elia reprimanded again.
“But there was a noise in the Forensic lab and that should be your business. Listen, there’s still noises happening outside,” Jaime argued.
“Fine, go Lannister, but if you father catches you not working and loitering around, that’s not my problem. That’s another thing about King’s Landing, here, you really need to be scared of your father, like for real,” Elia belted out advice with the experience that she cherished.
“I am never going to be scared of that man alright; I’ve been trying to fight him since childhood,” Jaime announced.
“Well that’s too bad because you’ll get nowhere here otherwise; and I suggest you start respecting him. He’s the commissioner after all, he’s the man you report to, not me,” Elia advised again.
“Yeah, yeah I’ve heard all that before; Arthur Dayne warned me the first day,” Jaime rolled his eyes.
“Well then you better listen Jaime. You are my friend and I shall not have you getting into any sort of trouble. Now come back and finish reading the file. I’m almost done with the body,” Elia stated in her signature tone of a mother.

“Do you have to report to my father too?” Jaime broke the silence again.

“No, I have to report to my uncle,” Elia softly laughed.

“Don’t you report to Rhaegar Targaryan?” Jaime softly asked, knowing he shouldn’t have.

“Does Rhaegar look like a cop to you?” Elia questioned. “Or a doctor?”

“Umm, no, not really. He’s a sculptor,” Jaime answered easily.

“Well then why the hell should I report anything to him?” Elia spat under grit teeth and Jaime understood that this topic was not up for conversation. Jaime was about to reply when Ilyn Payne, one of the morgue guards on duty rushed inside the room. Both Elia and Jaime panicked. This was a high-security and contamination-free zone after all. Plus, some of the most confidential work in all of Westeros went on in this forensic chamber. Ilyn Payne seemed to have no regard for that whatsoever.

“Mr. Rhaegar Targaryan, our Prime Minister’s son, he is hurt. He requires Dr. Martell’s urgent medical attention,” Ilyn Payne’s electronic Siri voice spoke. The man communicated with the rest of the world through his iPhone.

“Is he dead?” Elia stoically questioned.

“No, he’s not dead. How could you ask such a thing Dr. Martell?” Siri gasped.

“Well then I can’t help can I? Take him to a doctor for the living,” Elia shrugged.

“Please Dr. Martell, he’s burning,” Ilyn Payne pleaded, that is, Siri.

“You’re joking right?” Jaime raised an eyebrow.

“He’s a dragon, he won’t burn, calm down,” Elia joked.

A loud scream ripped through the sardonic silence of the forensic lab, and Elia’s expression changed from that of sarcasm to one of pure horror. She hadn’t heard a scream like that before, and she had been an intern in countless burn wards. Then again, Rhaegar had always been too spoiled for his own good. But that scream was too loud to ignore. Jaime and Elia spared a glance to each other, and then made a dash to the door.

“Oh my god, I’m going to die!” Rhaegar was groaning out in pain. “Those are not words suiting an athlete,” Jaime shook his head.

“Well he’s an artist before he is an athlete,” Elia mocked as they both walked towards the chamber where Rhaegar was kept, and had been groaning for the longest time.

“Okay why did you bring him here?” Elia questioned the assistant once she entered the small chamber. He had burned, and it was a pretty bad case of burns if she was to be the judge. This would need heavy dressing. Thank the Seven it was only the hands.

“Ma’am, his father had forbidden anybody to give him any medical help. This was the only place he could come to; I didn’t bring him in,” the young assistant defended himself.

Elia looked at Rhaegar and for the first time in her life- she felt sorry for him. He was wriggling in pain, and there was a redness to his face which was taking deep heavy breaths because he couldn’t take the pain anymore. He almost resembled a pain she had felt… no, he would never have to experience that. But she still felt really sorry. She sat down next to him and looked at the assistant, nodding softly and motioning her eyes to the dressing box. Poor Rhaegar couldn’t even tell Lyanna where he was; because (a) the girl was too dumb and would definitely let her brother know, and (b), she would throw a fit if she came to know he was with her.

“Look at me and keep breathing. The burn is not too deep; you’re still a dragon for the most part,” Elia softly whispered as she began her work. Jaime looked away, it was too disgusting; and this was a sculptor’s hand she was dealing with.

“Eli, he’s going to kill me,” Rhaegar croaked.

“He is going to do no such thing. Who is going to inherit his golden empire then? Viserys is too small, think rationally,” Elia scolded in signature Elia style. That brought a ghost of a smile on Rhaegar’s lips. “He’ll give it to you,” Rhaegar sardonically stated.
“I’ll change my name if he does. But he won’t,” Elia rolled her eyes, and gently cajoled off some skin from Rhaegar’s hand. He yelped in pain.

“I’m never going to be able to sculpt again right?”

“Who says? As soon as this is okay, you can get back to work,” Elia assured.

“Are you sure?” Rhaegar pressed again, albeit shakily.

“Do you want to get back to work?” Elia asked; still busy with the wound.

“Are you kidding me? Sculpting is my life; I don’t even know what I would do without it. I mean, I’m pretty sure that’s why dad burned my fingers, he wanted me to stop,” Rhaegar exclaimed. But he was weak; his voice was so very weak.

“Well then I am sure you will be able to get back to work, and as soon as possible, I promise. By the way, how did he do it? This is a pretty intense burn,” Elia asked.

“It was wildfire,” Rhaegar stated.

“Oh damn, Uncle Aerys has really gone mad hasn’t he?” Elia chuckled sarcastically.

“Wow, that’s really nice of you,” Rhaegar replied in return.

“Well, my asshole of an ex burnt his delicate hands. What do you expect me to do?” Elia returned mockingly and Rhaegar looked down in something that resembled utter shame.

“Hey, you know some conspicuous place I could lie low in for a while?” Rhaegar asked after some silence. The dressing was almost done, and his hands were numb.

“Wow, you’re really scared of him aren’t you?” Elia widened her eyes.

“Yes, yes I am. That man tried to kill me, what do you expect? He was threatening to burn all of me, it was only a good thing that I got away with my charred hands,” Rhaegar exclaimed.

“Umm well, in that case… you could stay at Uncle’s place,” Elia finally suggested. “I mean, uncle Aerys barely ever goes there.”

“Could you stop calling him that? He doesn’t deserve such a sweet name from you,” Rhaegar spitefully told her.

“He doesn’t deserve as weak and idiotic a son as you,” Elia retorted sharply.

“I guess so. But umm, thanks. Should I really stay at Uncle Loo’s place? I mean you’ll be there too right?” Rhaegar asked after some silence, and defeat.

“Rhaegar, I have my own apartment.”

“Oh wow, when did that happen?” Rhaegar asked surprised.

“Rhaegar, our apartment, that’s mine now. Are you suffering from dementia also?” Elia chided.

“Oh I thought you wouldn’t want to stay there you know, given the history… never mind…”

“Rhaegar, my life doesn’t revolve around you, I’m really sorry.” Elia coldly stated. This was the first time Rhaegar felt a pang of disappointment, and something stronger, but he decided to ignore it.

“Well that’s a great thing then. So umm, should we get going?”

“No, we will not get going anywhere, you will get going. I have a car and a chauffeur who’ll drop you. I’ll have to stay here and work for the rest of the night I guess. It’s a large corpse,” Elia informed him, standing up and gently holding his hands. “And when you reach Uncle Lewin’s place, tell him to take a look at this properly. I am not the living being expert after all.”

“I’ll stay here with you,” Rhaegar suddenly said.

“Why would you do that? Rhaegar, you need some expert attention to that hand and I have a lot of work. There has been a double homicide and my report is still not ready. You go home,” Elia pressed.

“No, I’ll only leave with you,” Rhaegar firmly stated.

“Rhaegar, stop being a child, I have work to finish,” Elia argued.

“So I’ll stay here with you till your work finishes,” Rhaegar started again.

“Rhaegar, why are you being so stubborn? I cannot finish my work fast, it takes time and precision and concentration and I can’t do all that as long as you are here,” Elia gave him the scolding he really deserved.

“Please Elia I don’t want to leave alone. Father won’t do anything if you’re there but he’ll kill me if he sees me alone and I cannot leave please,” Rhaegar pleaded, his hands clasping hers as did so.
Elia had never seen this kind of desperation on Rhaegar before. She almost felt a sense of pity for him, served him right though.

“But your hand will get affected Rhaegar,” Elia finally sighed, exasperated.

“I don’t care; my hand doesn’t come before my life. I mean I guess my life is going to be terribly bland without my hand but still, it’s better than death,” Rhaegar announced, and he sounded like a little kid.

“Oh slow down drama king, you’re not going to lose the hand, only the recovery may be more painful. Come on now, you’ll have to stay inside this room with a lot of corpses while I cut one up. Don’t make faces and don’t distract me,” Elia instructed as she began walking out of the chamber, and Rhaegar followed at her heels.

“I promise I’ll be as quite as a pin. You know, pin-drop silence,” Rhaegar laughed at his own pun.

“That was terrible Rhaegar,” Elia made a face at him. “By the way, I have another question, why were you so concerned about losing your hand? Is it only because you’re a sculptor or is it because Lyanna doesn’t satisfy you well enough,” this time it was Elia’s turn to be cheeky.

“Eww, Elia, please, keep your sexually explicit language to yourself!” The prude of a Targaryan cried out.

Elia’s laughter and Rhaegar’s discomfort echoed down the corridor as they both went back to where Elia had been occupying herself with her favourite kind of people- dead ones. And Rhaegar was true to his word. He was as quite as a ‘pin’ and closed his eyes dozing off slightly. After all, he was tired, and he didn’t want to be surrounded by dead people when the threat of death had been looming on his head anyways. When Elia was done, and it was almost morning by the time she was done, she tried to wake him softly. But Rhaegar looked so peaceful she was almost tempted to kiss him, and that was a very dangerous feeling.

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“So, you know how absolutely obnoxious she is right? But she’s gotten meaner and shallower, if that was even possible, and she just wouldn’t stop talking. I mean, okay being upstart is one thing but being absolutely vulgar is another and most of the things she says are absolutely audacious…” Elia’s voice drifted into Rhaegar’s small guest room and he was jumping up from his bed within a second. He hadn’t been in contact with any human being other than Lewin Martell for the past fortnight so any other living being was insanely welcome, especially if that living being was as hot as Elia.

“Elia, would you stop being judgemental for a minute, I need to tell you something,” Lewin’s milder voice interrupted his darling niece.

“I am being judgemental? Well let me remind you that I had to put up with that woman’s shit for the past three hours, and she just doesn’t stop talking and you bailed out on the high-tea,” Elia subtly reminded.

“I had a surgery, what was I to do?” Lewin despaired.

“You could have made the plan for another day, I wouldn’t have had to tolerate her alone,” Elia rolled her eyes and crossed her arms in front of her chest in annoyance.

“It was an emergency Eli, try to understand.”

“Well next time you have this kind of an emergency, I’ll bail out on terms of sickness too,” Elia conditioned. “I cannot tolerate these Dornish relatives alone again.”

“Alright, fine; now will you listen to me? I must discuss something important with you, it’s about Rhaegar.” At that statement, Rhaegar stopped walking towards the living room. But he was really close, so he stuck to a wall. He needed to know what they were planning about him. After all, Elia had taught him not to trust anyone.

“Oh wait, Rhaegar’s still living here? You’re quite the good Samaritan aren’t you?” Elia laughed.

“Eli, this is not funny, it’s about the boy’s life,” Lewin gently chided.

“Well, he wasn’t very concerned about my life when it came to him so I am not going to return any favour,” Elia nonchalantly shrugged. That hurt Rhaegar, more than anything had ever hurt him. He wondered why it was so.
“I get your anger, but you brought him to me, you made him my responsibility. I feel for that boy’s life,” Lewin explained.

“Fine, great, why are you telling me?” Elia asked.

“Well, what do you think I should do with him now? He’s been staying here for two weeks now,” Lewin presented his problem, not so gently.

“Kick him out, it’s simple,” Elia glared at Lewin as if he was missing the obvious.

“Elia, I cannot ‘kick him out’ it’s not that easy!” Lewin rolled his eyes, exasperated at his nieces’ lack of basic sympathy.

“You want to play Good Samaritan, go for it, but I had no part in that alright?”

“You brought him here,” Lewn subtly reminded.

“But I didn’t tell you to house him here like it was an orphanage alright? That was your choice. Can I go and talk to him? Maybe we’ll figure something out,” Elia stood up, making her way towards the guest room.

Rhaegar sped towards his room (it wasn’t his room exactly) at the speed of light when he saw Elia making her way towards him. She could never know he had overheard the conversation. For all her two-faced tendencies, Elia was a genuine gentlewoman when it came to manners. She may have loathed him, but her manners would never betray her in front of him. Rhaegar had spent a lot of time around a wild-mouthed and straightforward Stark girl. He seriously appreciated this quality in Elia. He closed the door behind him with a bang and jumped straight into the covers, socks still dangling from his feet.

“And how are you doing?” Elia warmly whispered as she entered the room, it felt more like a dark alcove though, with a flickering neon bulb. How typically Rhaegar; artsy, and weird.

“I am better, definitely better,” Rhaegar coughed a little, trying to cover up for the heaving that was a result of his sudden sprint.

“You can move your hand?” Elia asked, with the concern of a doctor.

“Yes I was playing my harp yesterday,” Rhaegar smiled genuinely.

At that Elia had to suppress a laugh. She couldn’t even begin to imagine a wistful Rhaegar enigmatically playing the harp while her sombre, down-to-earth and slightly grim uncle heard him play, occasionally requesting this song and that. The idea was as unique and amusing to her, as was it terrifying. Thank the Seven he was not living with her!

“Well that’s a… great thing! You should be absolutely fine soon,” Elia managed herself.

“You never really liked my harp did you?” Rhaegar asked softly, with a tone of disappointment, and loss.

“Well you never liked my cooking. I think we’re square,” Elia smirked. “I’m joking; I was never too enthusiastic about the harp but I didn’t hate it.”

“Well Lyanna loves it,” Rhaegar announced.

“Good for her then.”

“And you know what, I am going to go and start staying at her place soon. Maybe in a couple of days,” Rhaegar announced again.

“And won’t it be dangerous?” Elia huffed.

“You don’t understand, I’ll go to Winterfell. Trust me; dad doesn’t hate me enough to send an assassin all that way up North,” Rhaegar softly chuckled.

“Well you should’ve gone there the first day then,” Elia rebuked uncharacteristically grudgingly. She was surprising herself.

“I would have, but I needed a doctor,” Rhaegar stated the obvious.

“Well Winterfell has doctors too,” Elia sardonically replied.

“Yeah but by the time I would get there, nothing would be left of my hand anymore.”

“Oh I am sure Lyanna would be able to kiss it better. That’s what true love does, doesn’t it? Play with your rationality till you’re not completely human anymore. And finally you become rabbits anyways,” Elia almost spat.

“Why are you getting so angry?” Rhaegar tested the waters, cheeky boy.

“I am not getting angry. I just think it was redundant, putting my uncle through all that trouble,”
Elia’s guard went up tenfold again. “I thought your uncle didn’t have so much of a problem with it,” Rhaegar sassed. “Well of course he didn’t. He’s an angel, like the rest of my family. But you shouldn’t have had to make him go through all the lying to your father. If Uncle Aerys finds out, he’ll be dead,” Elia argued. “Well Lyanna would be dead too, if dad found out about her,” Rhaegar stated the obvious. “Well between my Uncle and that featherhead, I would much rather it be her!” Elia spoke uncharacteristically loud for her standards of etiquette and delicate manners. Elia had always been soft-spoken, soft-spoken and efficient, that was her motto. Now Rhaegar really had nothing to say to that. Would he tell Elia that he would rather choose the girl he left her for rather than her own uncle? Hell, she risked her own life too, for him. And did Rhaegar even want to say that? Did he really want to say, that he thought that Lyanna’s life was more precious than the two of them? He didn’t know, he wasn’t sure. But Elia standing there looking absolutely gorgeous in a coral peplum formal dress was not helping in the least. He sucked in a deep breath and thought about his next words. They needed to be chosen carefully. He needed to put Elia in a spot. He needed to trap her in her own game. “Elia, do you want me to leave?” He asked quietly. “What kind of a question is that?” Elia asked back instantly. She had been waiting for him to say something, the silence had become stifling. “I don’t know, you seemed kind of irked about the whole affair,” Rhaegar shrugged softly. “I am not irked. I am simply disappointed that you put us through all this trouble,” Elia defended herself. “Well, I had to go back to Lyanna sometime right?” Rhaegar asked. “I never told you not to. All I said was: what is the point of putting us through all this trouble?” Now Elia understood that she was being irrational. “Oh well I’m sorry I came to you. I should’ve let myself die instead,” Rhaegar rolled his eyes, sick of her attitude and reluctance to say what she really wanted to. Lyanna had an open temper, and he preferred that. “You could’ve gone to any doctor in the capital. In fact, I was the riskiest option. You know how much I hate you; I could totally have rattled on you,” Elia countered him. “Trust is a two-way street Rhaegar. And you are the last person on this planet I would ever trust, so I’m pretty sure you don’t really trust me either. It’s just an illusion you have. Plus, you knew that your dad preferred me over Lyanna any day, and since you came to me, even if I rattled on you, he would be happy,” Elia bitterly scoffed, her coldness returning. “You really think I would use you like that?” Rhaegar’s voice quivered. “That’s the only thing you’re capable of doing Rhaegar, using me. Oh, and then leaving me.” As Elia left, Rhaegar had never felt lonelier. “I thought you had left,” Elia stoically stated as Rhaegar walked into her back-chamber nervously. This was approximately forty-eight hours after that intense conversation. “I will, I guess,” Rhaegar softly shrugged. “Then what are you doing here? If it’s about keys, you can always leave them with the maid,” Elia replied, busy with a piece of paper. “It’s not about keys Elia,” Rhaegar rolled her eyes. She could be dying but her pragmatism would always come first. “Okay well here’s the thing- you can stay here, you can leave, this is your city, that is your girlfriends’ but please, don’t involve me or my uncle anymore. We’ve been dealing with your shit for the past fifteen years. Please, just leave us alone,” Elia informed Rhaegar coldly. Then, in her signature Elia style, completely ignoring his presence next to her, she buzzed a bell at which a young intern appeared out of nowhere.
“We have no corpses scheduled as of yet ma’am. However, Mr. Lannister from the Red Keep precinct was asking for you,” this obedient young intern informed.

“There is no work at all? Nothing pending?”

“No ma’am, but you should visit the precinct once. Mr. Lannister seemed to be pretty excited,” said intern informed.

This was Rhaegar’s moment, and he needed to seize it. Yes, he had always been the one seizing moments. He had always been the one confessing and running around and trying to prove himself all the while Elia just sat like a pretty doll and expected him to do everything for her. That having been said, maybe it was because out of the two them, she was the superior one. As much as he had to murder his ego every single time he said that to himself, it was true, and there was no running from it. Yes, she was a woman, and she was more superior. She was not an overgrown child; she was understanding and sophisticated and brilliant and classy. She was all of that and more, and this time, he needed to let her know that that was a wonderful thing. Maybe nothing else would come out of this ordeal, but she needed to know this.

“Well since you have no other work now, I would like to speak with you,” Rhaegar interjected the intern. The intern was definitely not pleased.

“Well Rhaegar, in case you’ve become partially deaf, she also said I was needed at the precinct. Your home precinct,” Elia sardonically stated.

“Oh come on, Jaime’s just calling you there to gossip. I bet Varys is going to be there too. I know how this entire thing works okay. But what I need to say is important.”

“Oh yes, and what is it that is so important which you need to say?” Elia pushed forward. Rhaegar was stupefied. No, he needed to find the right words.

“I just wanted to tell you that… I’ve burned myself again…”

“What the hell Rhaegar? Who burned you this time?”

“I did, I burned myself, but it was an accident, but I wish this wouldn’t be an accident. I wanted to burn myself, badly; I wanted to do it because I have been such an idiot! I have been a blind idiot all along! I was playing with some wildfire left over at Uncle Loo’s pla-”

“What kind of an idiot plays with wildfire?!”

“Well why does your uncle keep some in the first place?”

“It’s an alternate source of fuel,” Elia replied under grit teeth. There was only so much argument you could do with a stupid person.

“Well it’s a nightmare alright? Take it from a guy whose father is obsessed alright? It could hurt you, it could hurt your uncle,” Rhaegar began.

“And since when did you start caring about me and my uncle?” Elia sassily asked.

“Since forever, I guess. I only realized that when I saw all the wildfire though. And I imagined you and Lewin in the house and I imagined if something had gone wrong and I just couldn’t anymore… I couldn’t imagine any further Elia Martell because my heart just stopped right there. Because that was your heart which was beating in my chest. And mine is with you, obviously,” Rhaegar shrugged harmlessly.

“That is very Meta; but what are you trying to say? And where the hell is your burn? I believe I need to dress it,” Elia frowned with an air of scepticism.

“I can burn myself all my life if that meant I could stay another day at your uncles’,” Rhaegar meekly said, holding his hand out which was charred, or maybe scarred would be a better word for it. It had not burned nearly deeply enough.

“Rhaegar, that’s a small scratch,” Elia’s face fell flatly.

“But that is not the point! The point is that I have been standing here for so long, trying to tell you that I love you and you haven’t been listening to me! Or maybe you have and still you’ve chosen to ignore it!” Rhaegar burst out.

“Yes, I have chosen to ignore it. You cannot come in here burned by wildfire and make claims of our hearts still being intertwined. Those had become untangled a very bloody long time ago. I untangled them myself,” Elia chided him.

“No you didn’t.”
“Excuse me, yes I did. I most certainly did.”
“Nope, you did not.”
“And why do you get to judge?”
“Because my heart was entangled too, and it’s been there since forever. It will always be there, and I could run away with Lyanna to Braavos and it would still be there. Right there on your annoying desk,” Rhaegar pointed at the utterly neat and obsessively clean white desk.
“Spare my desk Rhaegar!”
“You still haven’t given me a response.”
“Well you haven’t exactly made the most vocal query.”
“Do you love me?”
“You know that answer,” Elia rolled her eyes nonchalantly.
“No I don’t. But tell me, try me.”
“There’s nothing to try…”
“Elia Martell, do you love me?”
“I don’t know,” Elia’s voice quivered. Rhaegar didn’t know if he would be an asshole to find vulnerable Elia extremely attractive.
“Well, we can always find out over dressing my wound,” he smirked.
“Oh shut up, that’s hardly a wound,” Elia rolled her eyes.
“Then maybe I can ruffle your desk up a little for you. You have been lacking spice in your life, and that is indeed a shame for a Dornishwoman…” Rhaegar shook his head cheekily as he approached, pulled her by the hand, made sure her high heels let her fall into his arms, and didn’t stop kissing her. Till he needed oxygen that is, and then they went right back into it again. Whenever they had a fight afterwards, Rhaegar would always get a jar of wildfire. Thank the Seven, and his father, for that substance.
I took a very long time to update, I understand but I was super busy with college applications! Things are settled now and I shall be more regular, do not worry. This is not a very good chapter, but it was all I managed to write in the chaos of adapting to college life. I've missed you all very much! You shall be seeing more of me now don't worry. All the Love.

A

“So, here’s the deal: we cut a fifty percent on our contract but in return, your profit margin needs to be above a two-hundred percent…” Rhaegar, are you listening?” Rickard Stark got slightly irritated. “Yes, yes I am actually. Yes I am totally listening…” Rhaegar trailed off, violet pupils fixated on something else entirely.

“I don’t think so,” Rickard grumbled. First it had been an unnecessary fight with Lyanna in the morning and now it was this inattentiveness. The Targaryan boy had begun to get on his nerves.

“Who is that woman?” Rhaegar pointed towards a tall, lean and curvy female (all in the one same person) who was wearing a gold gown which had a generous amount of cuts and slits running down the back. Thick ebony hair had also been clipped to one side and the amount of soft bouncy curls adorning one side of her face was enough to drive anybody crazy.

“You’re not listening to me,” Rickard pressed.

“No, I am, I promise. I just, I’ve never seen her before but it feels like I have and…” Rhaegar began muttering to himself.

“Fine, when you’re done looking at other women, let me know. I’ll go and see what Mr. Lannister wanted to tell me,” Rickard huffed. It was a bad idea, staring at another woman in front of your girls’ father.

“No, no, I was just curious, I didn’t mean it like that,” Rhaegar hurried after the man. But once Rickard reached Tyin’s spot, he turned around and began walking in the opposite direction.

Anybody but Tywin, lord please, was all he could say.

“Oh I am so sorry,” a delicate voice exclaimed at the sudden impact with Rhaegar’s head. Rhaegar looked up to find the person he was staring at staring back at him. Wow, the party had come full circle indeed. He cleared his throat and tried to speak, but no audible sounds came out. That was mainly because he was having a strange attack of déjà vu. He knew this woman, he was sure of it. Except he did not recall knowing anybody that was this hot, or tall, or attractive; it didn’t make sense; his friend list wasn’t exactly made up of super exotic beauties. Who the hell was she? And now he was also embarrassed to ask her about it.

“I am sorry too,” he finally croaked out.

“Yeah it’s alright. Guess we were both at fault hmm,” the woman shrugged. Her voice, that voice… Rhaegar recognised it too.

“What’s your name?” Rhaegar blurted out.

“Excuse me?” The lady seemed a little taken aback.

“I mean, I feel like I’ve met you somewhere you know. Maybe not, maybe I’ve been around Dornish people too long to feel like I know everyone, but I feel like I’ve seen you somewhere,” Rhaegar mused, more to himself than her really.

“Yeah, I have heard that one before,” the woman rolled her eyes and was about leave.
“Oh no I didn’t mean to hit on you. I have a girlfriend, that’s her dad right there,” Rhaegar pointed towards Rickard.

“Wonderful, that is very honest of you,” the woman sarcastically commented.

“But I’m serious, I’ve seen you somewhere,” Rhaegar shook his head, scratching it.

“Well you must have, I keep hopping these parties,” the beauty shrugged nonchalantly.

“And do you know who I am?” Rhaegar questioned.

“Yes of course. I mean, there’s not a lot of Targaryans in Westeros,” the lady shrugged.

At that Rhaegar was a little taken aback. Lyanna had challenged him, asking him whether he knew her, and he had been blown away by it. But this attractive woman with a composed rationality was different, for the lack of a better word. Otherwise, challenging powerful men and finally submitting to them was the vogue of the day.

“You are right about that,” he smiled, almost demurely.

“Well Mr. Targaryan, I must take your leave now. I have a flight to catch I must get going,” Elia excused herself.

“Oh yes of course… wait! You know my name, I don’t know yours,” he called her out as she was walking away.

“Your future papa-in-law is standing right there; better not get to know any other woman properly yes? Definitely not a pretty young socialite,” The attractive woman called out from towards the exit where she was headed. Arthur heard her though, and cocked his head in that direction. Were Elia and Rhaegar talking to each other again?

“Are you done talking and gazing and gaping?” Rickard Stark interrupted Rhaegar’s train of thought.

“Umm, yes of course,” Rhaegar stuttered.

Rickard gave Rhaegar an incredulous look, and suddenly the accusation struck him! Rickard had asked him whether he was done checking another woman out, and he had not even denied it. Just off the record though, Rhaegar was not checking her out. He was merely a little mystified and still trying to figure out where he had seen her. She was Dornish, this much he understood, but he knew a lot of Dornish people. His first sweetheart, right in the first few years of high school, had been Dornish herself. She was a wonderful woman, and back then, Rhaegar had been a stupid boy. The Martells and Targaryans steered clear of each other ever since. The Dornish were practically autonomous after what had happened between the two of them. Yes, he had been stupid then, and he was being stupid now.

“Don’t put me in a spot Sir; I wasn’t doing anything of the sort. I had simply… mixed that Dornish lady up with Ashara,” Rhaegar tried to defend himself.

“Oh yes, because of course, that woman looks exactly like Ashara Dayne,” Rickard sarcastically nodded.

“Oh no, it’s not like that. I just… I got a little confused. But you were saying something about expanding your business…” Rhaegar tried taking a guess in the dark.

“And give it you? Never. Not even over my dead body,” Rickard dismissed in annoyance.

“Oh no, I never meant it that way. And anyways, your daughter would kill me if something of the sort happened,” Rhaegar scratched the back of his head.

“Finally, you are talking about my daughter!”

“Oh Sir, I always talk about her,” Rhaegar smiled.

“Wow, this is one hell of a party!” Rhaegar exclaimed. He was never one to be enthusiastic about a party but this was something else. Jaime Lannister knew how to throw a party. “Why does the music have to be so loud though?”

“Rhaegar, it’s a club, the music is supposed to be loud!” Jon shook his head, explaining.

“But he hired the club for a few hours right? He can do as he wants,” Rhaegar argued.

“Yes Rhaegar, he can, and he decided to play loud music like a normal twenty-something year old,” Jon rolled his eyes.
“It’s not normal, it’s nihilistic, the decibel of this sound,” Rhaegar stoically commented.
“Well, Grandfather, can we go and wish the birthday boy now?” Jon rolled his eyes. Out of everything that his best friend could have been, he was an old-fashioned prude, and an intellectual; or at least a wannabe intellectual.
“Of course, I am sure he is going to love my gift!” Rhaegar beamed.
“Of course, because there is nothing more enticing than another man gifting you a book of Neruda poems,” Jon chuckled. Jaime would think the Prime Minister’s son was not straight, and afraid to come out as well.
“It’s not a book of Neruda poems; it’s a Memoir of Neruda. It is a very precious book,” Rhaegar dreamily stated.
“I am pretty sure Jaime doesn’t even know Neruda,” Jon laughed, much to Rhaegar’s annoyance.
“Well now he will. By the way, I am sure he does, he studied Literature and Creative Writing in college didn’t he?” Rhaegar asked curiously.
“Well yeah, because it was easy to pass,” Jon rolled his eyes.
“Did you study journalism because it was easy to pass?” Rhaegar asked Jon.
“Of course, wasn’t that obvious?” Jon rolled his eyes.
“I thought you liked journalism,” Rhaegar widened his eyes.
“No I do. I mean it’s alright I guess, and it’s a good job. Plus you said I make a good journalist, that we need more journalists like me, who will try to search for the truth and...”
“Woah, woah, slow down Jon, do you mean you entered journalism because of me?” Rhaegar was astonished.
“Well I mean, I think your advice is valuable and you will only always want the best of me. But after you said it, I mulled over it as well and I came to the same conclusion,” Jon replied sheepishly. He was also definitely blushing.
“They don’t make friends like you anymore,” Rhaegar smiled. Jon was a great friend, always had been.
“Well they don’t make geniuses like you either,” Jon admiringly commented. Now Rhaegar was not entirely sure as to what that meant, but it was a sweet comment.
Now by this time, with all the walking and the talking, they reached the podium where Jaime Lannister stood, grinning and proud. He was a lion as it was, and today was his birthday. He smiled at the men as they approached him. Rhaegar was about to groan out a complain at the velocity of the volume but Jaime’s smile was so hard to miss. He would let it slide this time. He had not seen the lion this happy in a very long time.
“Happy Nameday,” Rhaegar greeted in the traditional Westerosi way.
“Thank you grandpa,” Jaime joked.
“Here you go, this is my gift, and this is Jon’s,” Rhaegar handed over the colourful packets. This was Jaime; they had gone to extra lengths to make the gifts look colourful and shiny.
“Oh my, thank you again,” Jaime was beaming.
“Hey, I understand it’s your birthday and all but aren’t you smiling a little too much?” Jon nudged him, at which Rhaegar laughed. Sometimes he failed to notice obvious things, but he was alright with that.
“I am smiling too much actually. My best friend is back from a hiatus at Dorne, and Braavos. Actually she’s been to a lot of places,” Jaime began gushing.
“Oh my, a globetrotter,” Rhaegar exclaimed.
“Yes, there she is. Well she’s not exactly a globetrotter. She is actually a foreign minister,” Jaime clarified.
“Well where is she?” Jon asked. Seldom did women besides his sister and that soccer player he was dating make Jaime this happy.
“Right there, wait, I’ll call her,” Jaime pointed towards a tall ebony-haired woman standing with her back towards them. She was wearing a dangerously backless gown. Almost at that very moment, as if it was cosmic, the young lady turned around. It was her, the socialite, the mysterious lady who made Rhaegar’s head spin around whenever he laid eyes on her.
She was a foreign minister then. That seemed more concrete than being a socialite. Plus, she seemed to be too vaporous and elusive to be a socialite. But she also seemed to be friends with everybody. There was not a face in the party that did not light up when it saw her. She was quite something, and also very well-connected.

“Oh my God, Miss Socialite,” Rhaegar gaped.

“Is that what you call her? I am not surprised, it suits her,” Jaime grinned and laughed.

“I just… that’s what she said… I mean, the last time we met…” and all of Rhaegar’s statements were left to be gaps because the woman herself walked up.

“Oh, hello. Hello Jon… Connington I suppose? Hello Targaryan,” the cheerful Dornish socialite beamed at the sight of so many people.

“You’ve met before?” Jaime asked in a tone which was… strange. Rhaegar could not quite place what it was.

“We’ve met, it was another party. Your dad was there,” Elia widened her eyes playfully at Jaime and he swatted at her.

“Where is your dad?” Jon asked.

“He should be around. Don’t worry; even the daunting thought of a disco cannot deter him from attending my party,” Jaime joked, and both the men broke into peals of laughter.

“I am going to know your name today,” Rhaegar whispered. He had sneakily snaked in behind his socialite. Wait, what the hell did he mean by his socialite? It was a slip of tongue, erm, mind.

“Well, think up some lovely synonyms for socialite then,” Elia shrugged as she turned to face him. She had been taken aback by the sudden voice from behind.

“Oh come on, you’ve got to have a name,” Rhaegar groaned.

“Want to dance?” The tall and elegant woman asked in return.

“Yes, dancing is good, as long as you tell me your name. I know you’re a foreign minister,” Rhaegar bargained.

“Don’t you watch the news?” Came the pat reply.

“Oh, so you’re a famous foreign minister?”

“All foreign ministers are famous, if you’re interested in politics,” Elia rolled her eyes.

“Yeah probably, I wouldn’t know. I hate politics,” Rhaegar gagged.

“Why would you hate politics?”

“What’s to like?”

“What’s to hate?”

“Oh I don’t know, everything,” Rhaegar rolled his eyes.

“No, I love it. I mean, what’s not to love? The intricacies, complications, best and worst of human nature, people, power, glory, I love it all!” Elia exclaimed, and a feeling at the pit of her stomach told her she was giving away too much of her character. That was a bad idea.

“Wow… want to dance?” Rhaegar asked after a little moment of being spellbound.

“You want to dance?” Elia asked incredulously.

“Hey, I can dance alright,” Rhaegar puffed his chest out.

And so Elia held out her hand and he took it, because she was definitely faster than he was. The two equally tall people and attractive people looked a dream on the dance floor and they danced like a vision too. As Rhaegar twirled her around, and caught her in time; their laughter rang the walls of the loud disco. People stared, people talked, people felt the heat of the chemistry, and they definitely dug it. When three songs ended, and the two of them were a little out of breath, Rhaegar whispered something into Elia’s ear, and they made their way to the drinks counter.

“You’re not bad,” Elia cockily commented.

“I’m not bad? Have you ever seen a better dancer?” Rhaegar gasped.

“Please Targaryan, I’ve danced with Arthur Dayne,” Elia rolled her eyes.

“So Arthur knows you?” Rhaegar asked eagerly.

“Yes, but please, don’t go around spying and stalking me,” Elia warned sternly.

“Hmm, I might just,” Rhaegar sing-songed.

“Okay, here’s the deal; if I get an inkling of a doubt as to the fact that you’ve been asking about
me, and remember, Arthur tells me everything, then we shall never speak again. Dance is a very long way off but even when it comes to these… gatherings, I’ll never even look at you.”
“Wow… you’re really hell-bent on playing elusive mystery lady aren’t you?”
“I’m not really mysterious if I’m a socialite am I?”
“Yeah, that kind of spoils the aura. People like you way too much.” Rhaegar commented as yet another stranger waved past the beautiful woman speaking to him. Both of them laughed, the tense atmosphere was forgotten in an instant.

“Hey dad, do you mind if I take a nap somewhere?” Rhaegar rolled his eyes as he sipped on some expensive wine that was provided, of course, by his dad.
“Why can’t all of you be like Elia?” Aerys muttered annoyed.
“Be like who?” Rhaegar asked slightly puzzled.
“Sir, we need you for the Press,” Barristan Selmy suddenly interrupted the duo.
“Yes, I’m coming,” Aerys motioned and began walking away without so much as an acknowledgement to his son. Rhaegar was not his favourite by far.
“But wait dad, about Elia… dad wait!” Rhaegar called after his father to no avail. The man simply walked away. Now Rhaegar would seriously go and take a nap simply to insult him. No, he wouldn’t really do that. He was a tad bit more obedient than he liked to admit.
But Elia; that name rang a thousand bells. And when it hit the correct one, Rhaegar realized who she was. She was his summer love; they had had a quite steamy affair at a summer camp once, well as steamy as two school kids could get, and he had never quite forgotten her because she had taught him things about politics, discipline and duty which he would have loved to forget. And the more Rhaegar tried not to think about what Elia taught him, the more they came back to him. It was crazy. When he met Lyanna, he thought finally, all of those strange and rigid teachings would wash away with the wild wind that was Lyanna Stark but now they were broken up and at the mention of that name, Rhaegar was going slightly mad all over again. Sometimes, love doesn’t really come in the form of love; it comes as hate, or indifference, or duty or even a memory. But it absolutely sucks when that happens.
“Why doesn’t your girlfriend ever come to these parties?” A soft and melodious voice interrupted his thought process. He turned around to see the mystery socialite. She was here as well.
“I don’t exactly have a girlfriend so I’m not entirely sure as to who you’re talking about,” he replied playfully. For a change, this woman made him forget Elia Martell sometimes. He should probably keep her chained to him then; but she was more of a phantom than anything, intangible and vaporising.
“Are you Lyanna Stark’s boyfriend?” The socialite gasped.
“Are you the skillful gossip? Well, something you’re not aware of, we broke up three months ago,” Rhaegar rolled his eyes.
“Why?”
“Excuse me, should that be any of your business?”
“No you’re right, it shouldn’t. I’m a little nosy, in case you haven’t noticed,” the lady laughed nervously.
“But I’ll still tell you, after all, I have a feeling that despite your massive friend circle, you aren’t going to tell anybody,” Rhaegar began. “Basically, she thought I was devoting too much time to politics and all the rosy ideas we had about romance was fading away and she couldn’t take it.”
“Oh you stupid children, don’t you realise, love is not that which you find under the stars or on the canopy or in a deep, deep jungle; love is that which you may find even in the middle of a bustling busy party. Otherwise, you’re more in love with nature than you are with the person to begin with,” Elia rolled her eyes wisely.
“Wait, did you just call me a child?”
“Well of course, you’re younger than me,” Elia shrugged.
“How would you know that? I don’t even know how old you are,” Rhaegar grumbled.
“Well I am not you am I?” Elia retorted.
“Yes true, but I don’t even know who you are and you will never tell me,” Rhaegar pouted.
“Viper, come on, we need you on stage,” Aerys suddenly popped out of nowhere.
“Oh wow dad you ought to learn some table manners yourself,” Rhaegar chided.
“That’s no way to talk to your father,” Elia widened her eyes.
“You don’t know alright, don’t interfere,” Rhaegar stated and was amazed at his own audacity.
“That’s no way to talk to her. Treat her wrong one more time and she’ll pour venom into you,” Aerys grumbled.
“Uncle Aerys, let’s go,” Elia urged.
“You two know each other?” Rhaegar was puzzled.
“Better than you know either of us,” Aerys shrugged.
Before Rhaegar could say anything Aerys linked an arm with Elia and walked away. Rhaegar’s brows further knitted into frowns and furrows as it took him some time to understand what it could be that possibly bound this mysterious socialite with his father, besides the fact that she was a foreign minister. He called her viper… who did his father call viper? It was coming back in bits for him… the summer camp, that same intonation his father used, that fond nickname ‘viper’. That young girl with the thick hair in plaits, running around his mansion and her summer home, kissing for the first time, helping her through what she deemed to be a very dangerous summer camp because there were bugs everywhere… Rhaegar’s first time with someone, he would never forget that. Then the casual way he broke her heart… everything was coming back to him now. She couldn’t really be who he was thinking she was!
“Hey man I’ve been searching for you,” Arthur patted him on the back, spoiling his train of thought. But Arthur definitely held more information that could be fruitful.
“Art, do you remember Elia?” He asked, catching the young cop off-guard.
“Yes, Ashara’s best friend, she was a Martell, I know, I remember,” Arthur stuttered.
“Ashara wasn’t much of a best-friend was she?” Rhaegar cocked an eyebrow.
“What do you mean?” Arthur asked.
“I remember Lyanna humiliated her, a lot, in school. Then she had to leave for Dorne anyways but I remember Lyanna calling her ‘not worthy of my love’ or something of the sort. I also remember Ashara having taken Lyanna’s side. She still does,” Rhaegar stated.
“Well yeah, we all remember she was kind of uptight and stuff,” Arthur shrugged with a smile.
“Hmm, she was also the only person in the world who truly knew me. She was my first everything, and I had been a fool to desert her, but I had equally foolish friends to egg me on,” Rhaegar spoke with so much conviction, it scared Arthur.
“Rhaegar that’s not fair, if you believe leaving Elia was a mistake, and honestly all of that is such a long time ago, then that’s your problem. It’s not mine or my sisters’ or even Jon’s really,” Arthur argued.
“I am not blaming you. My mistake was mine alone, as was my stupidity; but please, don’t even dare claim that your sister was a good friend to her. She has only been ever been a good friend to me and Lyanna,” Rhaegar coolly replied.
“What happened to you? You broke up with Lyanna didn’t you?”
“Yes, I have begun to redo my mistakes. And I won’t be stopping anytime soon,” Rhaegar smiled.
“Wait, what the hell does that mean?” But Arthur was swiftly pushed away as Rhaegar caught sight of Elia and, unfortunately, his father along with her. Why did they have to come in a package? Arthur was beyond puzzled. What had happened to his friend? Rhaegar was smitten with Lyanna, Ashara had told him. What went wrong? And why would he suddenly turn to such an uptight, classy and articulate woman? Lyanna was so much fun, dumb yes, but so much fun!
“Hi Elia, how’ve you been?” Rhaegar tapped on her shoulder politely. Elia turned around, but when she saw who it was, her complexion paled.
“Viper, come on, you’ve got to impress that investor for me. He’s too stubborn,” Aerys interrupted their little moment.
“Yes Viper Martell, go on,” Rhaegar urged, but not without that slight hint of disappointment in his
“So… how have you been? Didn’t exactly answer the question last night,” Rhaegar whispered right into Elia’s ear, making her jump. And Elia practically never jumped.

“Rhaegar, what are you doing here?” Elia asked, her voice still shaking.

“I’m sorry, did I scare you? That was not my intention. By the way, this is my dad’s office, what are you doing here?” Rhaegar chuckled.

“We have a meeting,” Elia curtly informed, rolling her eyes.

“Well I have a meeting too,” Rhaegar announced haughtily.

“With your father?”

“Nope, not in a million years. Simply, with you,” Rhaegar grinned cheekily.

“Rhaegar, I don’t have time for all this. Please move aside,” Elia huffed as she shoved past him and walked inside the meeting room.

Now Rhaegar was not known for his patience. As a young child, when he wanted a candy, he really wanted it; and no, he would not spare the terrifying Aerys Targaryan a moments’ rest till he got it. Rhaegar had never been patient; nobody had taught him that skill. But in the heat of the moment, and in the sudden clenching of the heart and chiding of the mind, Rhaegar Targaryan did the unthinkable; he sat at his father’s monochrome lounge, which honestly seemed dead boring to him, and waited the entire day for the Lady he knew he had to win back.

“What are you… still doing here?” Elia wore the expression of a deep frown when she saw Rhaegar dozing off on a plush beige couch.

“I told you I had a very important meeting,” he grumbled even in his sleep. As in, he was not really sleeping. He noticed Elia from the corner of his purple eyes.

“I am not scared of my dad,” Rhaegar puffed his chest out innocently.

“Oh, should I call him down now?” Elia fished her phone out.

“No, I mean I’m not scared of Papa… as long as you’re here!” Rhaegar cheerfully announced in an effort to please Elia.

“I am not in the mood for your nonsense Rhaegar, at least step aside so that I can leave,” Elia huffed in annoyance.

“Did the meeting not go that well…” Rhaegar knew he was getting into murky waters. Elia was obsessed about her work, she took it very seriously; he had spent the entire night Google-ing her up. “I mean, I have a remedy for that.”

“My meeting went just about fine, and I don’t need political advice from you,” Elia hissed back. “Oh no, not politics, I had something entirely different in mind,” Rhaegar grinned.

“Rhaegar what is wrong with you? We finished whatever we had and we left it at that! What the hell is wrong with you? Why do you want to begin something we finished ages ago?!?” Elia screamed at him, finally disgusted of the entire situation. She hated it when she had an unsatisfactory meeting.

“It never began Elia; we started off as two rich kids who needed to be together but you look in my eyes and you tell me that we tried honestly, that we gave it an honest shot. I’ll believe you and I’ll never bother you again,” Rhaegar argued.

“Fine, if it never began, what’s the point of starting now?” Elia folded her arms in front of her chest and looked at him sassily.

“Because even if there was nothing real in that relationship; the feelings were. If there’s one thing I’ve realised then that is this Elia, emotions cannot be measured by spontaneity or money or sameness or adventure, emotions can only be measured by two equal, mature and different individuals who like to sit and talk together at the end of the day. That is love, and I’ve learned it the hard way,” Rhaegar softly replied, inching closer to her.
“Rhaegar, we barely know each other,” Elia replied.
“Well I don’t remember how I wasted all my middle-school afternoons all of a sudden,” Rhaegar shrugged, and strongly so. He was trying to, after all, mock her.
“How dare you say we wasted them?!”
“Well how dare you Elia? You said we don’t know each other, but I probably know you better than I know myself. I’ve known you since the day I was born Elia, we were bound to. I once told Lyanna, I had no choice when it came to love, only except I didn’t finish the sentence; because deep down, I couldn’t finish the sentence. The point was this; I never had a choice… about you. No matter where I go and which kid I fall for next, you’re always going to be standing there right in front of my eyes, arms crossed in front of your chest, and a chastising look in your crazy black eyes. Because we belong together, always have and always will, no matter how far I try to run from that,” Rhaegar finished his beautiful little speech (at least he thought it was beautiful), with a hint of moisture in his own eyes.
“But we’ve been apart for so… so many years…” Elia croaked out, a little choked herself.
“And it feels like yesterday doesn’t it? I broke it off last time Elia, let me make it up to you,” Rhaegar tilted his head slightly so he could get a better look at her eyes.
“You mean we’ll keep breaking it off with each other,” Elia frowned.
“Maybe, maybe not; maybe this time I’ll just catch you and put a ring on you. I know that’s what dad wants for sure,” Rhaegar smiled.
“This is not a joke, it’s our lives you’re talking about Rhaegar,” Elia rolled her eyes.
“Exactly, it’s our lives Elia. They’ve been intertwined since birth, and we’ve never been able to untangle them from each other. So for two lives who’ve only ever known each other, we’ll figure it out,” Rhaegar sighed, using his hands to emphasise what he meant.
“But I don’t want to lose you again,” Elia’s frown deepened.
“Then you better lock me up now, and never let me go,” Rhaegar warned, the ghost of a smile dancing on hip lips.
“Please kiss and end this, we also have to go home,” someone from the growing audience spoke. Elia, in her embarrassment, hid her face in Rhaegar, and he beamed because her physical contact seemed to be the first sunrise washing over him, and he held her close and kissed her cheek and just like he had tried to promise, never let her go again.
Mothballs

Chapter Summary

I know I am super late, sorry guys! I have been really busy with college, still settling down I guess.
Really looking forward to your comments and love!
Mwuah!
All the Love.
A.

It had all started with an innocuous incident. Rhaegar Targaryan, on his daily morning hunt for the perfect suit, had slipped upon a mothball. He didn’t even keep them anymore, but he remembered who did, and remembering her had always been a pain. So, as he sat biting his lip in the pain he did not wish to express as Dr. Lewin Martell treated the little bump on his forehead, his eyes kept ogling the bright picture kept on the doctor’s table- of his three bright nephews and niece. Now Lewin was an experienced man, and not just about medicine.
“When was the last time you called her?” Lewin’s question caught Rhaegar completely off-guard.
“Hmm, what was that?” He asked, trying to feign complete indifference, and ignorance, which was a pathetic attempt because Rhaegar Targaryan had an intelligent face. Of course that never meant he was necessarily intelligent. Lewin and his family members would definitely tell you otherwise.
“When was the last time you called her?” Lewin pressed again, this time with softness and gentle chiding in his voice. After all, he had seen Rhaegar grow up in front of his eyes.
“Are you talking about my mother?” Rhaegar expressed his stupidity.
“Rhaegar, your mother has been dead for the past… ten years,” Lewin sighed, although even he was a little weary of the time it took him to do the maths. The way their lives had been ransacked, he had no reason to forget that date, or any date of the war for that matter.
“It is okay, takes me time to do the math sometimes also,” Rhaegar gently smiled. “And I don’t remember the last time I called her. We generally correspond over mail about weekends that I get to keep the kids,” Rhaegar then answered Lewin’s question.
“Well I’m done with your wound, get back to work then,” Lewin bandaged the small place.
Rhaegar was a man prone to panicking, and this habit had been growing by the day. Often, Lewin would bandage the smallest of the wounds. Unfortunately, he could not bandage every wound, however much he wanted to.
Rhaegar nodded like a small kid who was guilty, and slid off the smooth patients’ bed with the dark green plastic cover on top of it that he had been always been so fascinated by as a child. It was not exactly plastic but a very strange material which he preferred to dub as plastic because he was not good with materials. Leather, silk, satin, cotton; they made no difference to him really, but he fondly remembered how particular Elia always was. After all, she was a textile designer, and she was brilliant at what she did. Also, she was pretty paranoid, hence all the mothballs everywhere in what used to once be, their shared wardrobe. Rhaegar’s eyes glinted of fondness, and an alien happiness he had never experienced before as he tried to give Lewin some money which was promptly refused and he was sent away. Of course, he did not forget to catch a glimpse of a glowing Elia in her graduation attire in the photograph. He had never seen her that happy, and he had not been that happy in a very long time either. It was a mystery what a sudden reappearance of mothballs could do to his day. Rhaegar even greeted the guard on his way.
“Sir, shall I take you to the office then?” His chauffeur promptly asked.
“Yes… umm, no, actually, turn the car around, we’ll go visit the Citadel Mill today,” Rhaegar informed.
The Citadel Mill was a name given to the large group of factories and industries that brewed under the tutelage of the Citadel. Elia worked at a textile house in the Mills, and Rhaegar remembered this road all too well. His chauffeur did as well, actually, and was slightly baffled when Rhaegar decided to take this route after so many years. Nobody could imagine that he could have some actually work at the Mills himself, but to his defence, he did not. And at the end of the day, what would the Education minister be doing at the technological area of the Citadel complex?

________________________________________

“Hello Sir, how may I help you?” The customary mechanical receptionist asked her customary mechanical question.
“I am here to see… Miss… Elia Martell,” Rhaegar gulped and forced the words out of his mouth. It shouldn’t have been an issue for him though; he was the reason for the change in her titles.
“Yes of course Sir, I’ll just give her a call, can you ple-” the woman stopped mid-sentence when she looked up and saw Rhaegar. She had not been looking properly at first.
“Yes, I’ll wait,” Rhaegar awkwardly smiled and turned his feet the other way, towards the fluffy purple-mauve couches and loveseats splattered around Elia’s office. She loved a good hint of the. dramas and royalty.
“No Sir, you can go, the office is that way, down the corridor to the right,” the young Lady motioned with her hands, telling Rhaegar as if he already knew, telling Rhaegar as if he had come to surprise Elia, telling Rhaegar as if they were still together. Well young Lady, Rhaegar thought to himself that was not true. But he followed her directions anyway, because he did not know where Elia’s new office was. Gone were the days when he would be working at the Citadel Library and come to stalk Elia at work. That was stalking, now that Rhaegar thought about it, only except he was extremely charming and sweet and never invaded her privacy. But he did go to the public canteen and sit at the table diagonal to her, and he did keep on borrowing books on textiles from the textile factory, and he did keep on loitering about around Olenna Tyrell in the claim that she was an intelligent woman when the truth was that he wanted to be around her intern. Well, Olenna Tyrell was a remarkable woman, but Elia was her intern, that was something else entirely. Albeit, this very Rhaegar had no idea as to where Elia, the CEO of the textile department now sat, where her fancy office was, with the long glass windows she had always aspired for; Rhaegar did not know anything, besides the fact that she had gone to Braavos for a holiday, and dropped the children off at his place while she was at it. What brought him here today was another mystery completely. Rhaegar softly tapped on the long glass door, just the way Elia liked them: corporate and important. He took in the millisecond that she did not react, to observe the office from the outside. It was relatively smaller than what he had imagined it to be, but that must have been because she had the entire floor to herself and this was simply the room for her most important work. There were lots of plants, as expected, and a small bird cage with no bird inside, typical Elia sense of aesthetic, and dark brown rugs with off-white walls and an asymmetrical couch of mixed shades. The office was not simply Elia, it was him too. She had incorporated so many things that he liked. For the very millisecond, Rhaegar was overcome by shock.
“Come in,” Elia’s authoritative voice brought him back to life. She had not looked up to see who was knocking. That was a good thing probably; let his voice speak for him.
“Hello, Elia,” he softly spoke, clearing his throat in the process. As soon as Elia heard the voice she hadn’t in light years, her dark eyes perked up and her face slightly contorted into a look of worry and downright discomfort. The first question that occurs to a mother is always obviously whether something had happened to her children but Elia knew that if something had, she would be the first one to know. But then, what in the name of every God was Rhaegar doing here? The Braavos fashion week was approaching and Elia did not have time for any sort of nuisance.
“Hello, Rhaegar,” she regarded him carefully.
“I was just… I was just, you know, visiting the area and… I just thought I’d come in and pay you a visit,” Rhaegar smiled away the nervousness. Now Elia was further baffled, what kind of a cheating ex-husband does that?
“Are you in trouble of some sort?” she pressed again.
“Oh no not at all,” Rhaegar vigorously nodded his head and was about to add the sentimental question of ‘can’t I come and visit you sometimes’ but he knew that the answer to this would be in negation. Some things were better left unsaid, especially if you knew the repercussions. Of course Elia would never really be impolite to his face, but that was what he hated so much. Raw passion and anger was something Rhaegar thrived on, it was something Elia despised.
Now just when Rhaegar was beginning to think this entire ordeal was a massive act of stupidity (if he hadn’t been thinking this same thing as soon as he told the car to turn around that is) and his feet were debating amongst themselves about whether to turn away or stay, he noticed something glinting on Elia’s ring finger. He tried to best to pretend not to notice and simply look around the room and admire the eclectic interiors but his eyes kept flicking to the dragon-shaped ring he had slid into her finger so many years ago. Sometimes Rhaegar really forgot how many years it had been, and that was not because he didn’t care, it was because Elia was an in-built habit.
“What’s happened to your forehead?” Elia ripped through the awkward silence.
“Oh you know, I bumped my head… oh never mind, I slipped on one of your darned mothballs,” Rhaegar confessed happily. It was futile to be lying to this woman.
“You still keep mothballs?” Elia questioned with a raised eyebrow, but her eyes were evidently gleaming.
“No, it must have been one of yours,” Rhaegar informed her. He would never buy those things. He thought they were a waste of money anyways, and so irritating. It would greatly irk him how much Elia loved the fragrance.
“Rhaegar, I left that house eight years ago,” Elia gently reminded him.
“Your mothballs didn’t,” Rhaegar tried his disastrous hand at humour. Elia’s half-gaze from the top of her Mac-book spoke volumes.
“Anyways, why are you here?” Elia spoke after an imminent pause.
“I really wanted to… see you,” Rhaegar murmured the last part, more nervous than the first boy called up to speak for a school event.
“What are you, a high-school admirer?” Elia scoffed condescendingly. “Rhaegar, my kids are part of an education system run by you, do your job.”
“They are my kids too,” Rhaegar feebly argued. Never would this have happened in front of the headstrong Lyanna, but when it came to gentle and sophisticated Elia, Rhaegar was always tongue-tied. None of that Targaryan pride could see him through this one.
“Oh yes, I had forgotten, sorry,” Elia stated, the right-most corner of her glossy lips curling slightly upwards. This was Elia at her classiest savage, and Rhaegar was feeling small. He paid her a visit, not to be insulted.
Rhaegar did take some time, contemplated whether he should have gotten up and left or simply stayed where he was. After all, what was he going to do by staying there? Clearly Elia was more interested about her laptop, and it was natural, she was at work. He should have been at work too, Elia was right about that. He should have been checking the schools, checking to see if the children of Westeros were doing alright. He should have been calling a meeting with the Principals due to the latest complaints of low hygiene at the Flea Bottom schools, and he should have called the health Minister while he was at it. Instead of doing anything of that sort, Rhaegar was simply sitting and staring blankly at a wife who clearly did not want to have to do anything with him. Okay, granted that she was an ex-wife now. No, Rhaegar shouldn’t have come in the first place. He was flustered and embarrassed, but he did not blame Elia.
“Where are you going?” Elia’s voice called out as soon as he stood up, spinning on his left heel to walk out the door.
“Umm, outside…” Rhaegar’s voice trailed off as his fingers innocently pointed towards the door.
“What is wrong with you? Why are you acting like Aegon when I scold him?” Elia properly looked up from the laptop and rested her dainty, well-contoured face on her interlaced fingers propped on the fancy glass table. Or maybe it was wood, Rhaegar was very bad at materials, especially if they were as painted and fancily sculpted as this one.

“Well, maybe because I am his father,” Rhaegar proudly announced.

“Yes no wonder, only cowards make cowards. But even Aegon is not as much of a coward as you are,” Elia rolled her eyes and went back to her work.

“Excuse me, what do you mean? Ever since I’ve come here, all you’ve done is insult me,” Rhaegar sat back down.

“Well I’m sorry, unlike Lyanna Stark, I am not particularly religious about you,” Elia retorted. Lyanna used to worship the man, and as much as Rhaegar denied it, he adored the ego boost.

“It’s always about Lyanna; the two of us can’t have a normal conversation without her popping in. It’s like, you’re in love with her or something,” Rhaegar sighed deeply.

“The two of us cannot have a normal conversation without dragging her in, Rhaegar, because the two of us are facing the consequences of what you went around doing with her. There is no scope for a normal conversation between the two of us anymore,” Elia looked at Rhaegar with so much spite that he felt her venom might kill her.

“Fine, then I guess it was a mistake to pay you a visit in the first place,” Rhaegar sternly stated, almost stamping a foot down in the process. This was how a general conversation between the two of them usually went.

“Bloody right it was,” Elia spat back.

“Fine then, I’ll leave,” Rhaegar announced, and this time, there was no contemplation. He stood on his feet, walked towards the direction of the door, and hesitated slightly before opening pulling on the doorknob.

“Would you like to have lunch? There’s only two more hours to go before, you know,” Elia suddenly asked as Rhaegar stopped in his tracks.

He turned back to look at her. They exchanged that look, the one they had been exchanging since about forever. Rhaegar was seething in anger, Elia was plain annoyed, a certain conviction glowing on her face; and yet, a glimmer of conspicuous hope was hard to miss on Rhaegar’s face, and a stronger sense of fondness and disappointment on Elia’s features- Rhaegar still gave up so easily. Some things never change.

However, when he did speak there was magic. “Yes, I would love to, actually.”

“I missed your flatbread,” Rhaegar made the passing comment while he was munching on some of the very best lunch he had had in a long while. There truly was no place like home.

“Thank you very much,” Elia smiled graciously. She was careful not to eat too much. After all, she could always go back home and make this in a better way. Only the Gods knew what insipid horror Rhaegar was consuming alone at home.

“Thanks, for leaving so much for me to eat,” Rhaegar commented, noticing.

“I had a filling breakfast,” Elia lied, blushing.

“You want to go to Mace’s ice-cream store?” Rhaegar’s eyes suddenly glittered. Now Mace’s ice-cream store did not really belong to Mace Tyrell. The man probably did not even know that the store existed, since it was rather tiny in size, and he was not the most observant lad in Westeros. However, the ice-cream owner, also the man who served people what they needed, and the cashier himself too, bore uncanny resemblance to the Tyrell heir. This had often cheekily prompted both Elia and Rhaegar to probe into the investigation of whether he was Olenna Tyrell’s love-child but they had made a very disappointing discovery- Olenna Tyrell had remained faithful her entire life. While Elia admired that, it made Rhaegar feel a tad bit guilty in the present. After all, he had not been able to, pathetically.

“Yes of course,” Elia smiled, pulling Rhaegar out of his thoughts.

When they found themselves at Maces’, both were a tad bit taken aback at how much the place had
changed. It was significantly larger; there were fancy seating arrangements, pastels and light beige wooden textures with a long wooden table and petite adorable tools made for sitting, facing a beautiful view outside the well-decorated window. It was a beautiful place, and this other Mace had dotted it well with a lot of potted plants. Elia and Rhaegar were in such a great awe that it took them some time to process how this could have been that very same tiny and dingy blue-white tinted cloudy ice-cream café.

"Somebody got rich," Rhaegar whispered softly into Elia’s ear, whose hand went up right in front of her lips to stifle a giggle.

"Well it’s good to see somebody flourish," Elia commented back.

"Oh hello Mr. and Mrs. Targaryan, welcome, welcome to my humble ice-cream parlour," discount Mace suddenly exclaimed, jolting the couple out of their wonders.

"How does he know our names?" Rhaegar leaned in and whispered to Elia.

"Well, Rhae, a lot of people know our names," Elia whispered right back, albeit, extremely sarcastically.

"Yes but he implied that we are still together," Rhaegar replied promptly, making Elia think too.

"Well maybe he doesn’t know…” Elia suggested.

"If he knows us, he certainly knows about the divorce as well," Rhaegar glared at her as if she was missing an obvious point.

"Oh come on, no need to whisper in the corner, I know you two! Sneaky young lovers trying to taste all my flavours for free,” the man fondly chided them and called them up to his counter.

"Come on, today I will let you have as many scoops as you want… for free!” His energy was hard to miss.

Elia and Rhaegar walked with a slight reluctance. Something about the infectious happiness of this man told them they were wrong. Not right now, little else had ever made them feel as complete as they did walking towards a familiar ice-cream waiter who was waiting to serve them some of their most favourite flavours. No, all of that felt extremely right. What did feel wrong was the way this man seemed so happy to see them together and they were not. In fact, the worried frown on both their faces propelled them to intertwine their hands together.

"Now, now, what would you like young lady? I suppose the same old after-eightyish…” The man grinned.

"It is eight-ish, not eightyish,” Elia explained gently.

"Oh come on, don’t be a prude,” Rhaegar rolled his eyes at her.

"I am not being a prude!” Elia swatted him.

"Oh do stop fighting kids, here, taste a little bit of my new flavour,” Discount Mace handed them one cone to share from.

The ice-cream was black and gooey and had sprinkles and chocolate chips oozing out. Both Elia and Rhaegar looked at it with a hint of suspicion but accepted it anyways. They had both learned the same lesson in college- the best things in life, always did come for free. Well, almost always; Elia would argue that her designer clothes and her favourite golden drop earrings did not. That was another debate entirely. In the mean time, the two ex-lovers got down and dirty into practically slurping what was proving to be an extremely tasty ice-cream. Rhaegar envied how effortlessly graceful Elia was even while she was doing that.

"You have ice-cream, all over your face!” Elia exclaimed with a hint of disdain.

"Well I’m sorry Miss, not all of us are products of a finishing school,” Rhaegar teased her gently, trying to wipe some ice-cream from his upper-lip quite unsuccessfully.

"Hey, I did not go to a finishing school I am a finishing school simply by myself,” Elia clarified. And it was true, her impeccable manners had not come from a finishing school, she had been born like this. And this was a conversation the two of them had been having since forever.

"Remember the time you told me there’s a certain way to hold a tea-cup?” Rhaegar laughed. It had been one of their first meetings. He had been clearly displeased.

"Well yes, because there is a certain way to hold a tea-cup,” Elia sassed back, one hand, actually on her hip.
“And is there any way to hold an ice-cream?” The other Mace interrupted. “Sorry, I had been eavesdropping.”
“It’s okay, that happens to us. The two of us are very interesting,” Elia replied knowingly, and extremely patronisingly, as Rhaegar rolled his eyes.
“What could possibly be interesting about a tea-cup?” He despaired.
“Well, I am not one of those people who need to watch soccer matches or go on mountain hikes to be interesting; true wit lies in turning the mundane into something more interesting than you could ever imagine,” Elia suggested, not realising that she had alluded to Lyanna Stark, which had made Rhaegar feel even more guilty. And now he was quietly slurping some ice-cream that had dropped on his fist.
“And the lady is right!” The shop-owner gleefully exclaimed. “After all, such activities are for children, yours, you lucky man, is a woman.”
Rhaegar felt uncomfortable, more than he had ever felt in his entire life, and he looked down slightly, taking a small bite off of the hardened part of the ice-cream. He dared not look Elia in the eye, but she wanted to. Elia had never been more curious than right now; she wanted to see what true guilt and the realisation of stupidity looked like. She softly used her index finger and brought his face up to meet hers. Their eyes locked, and for the first time in his life, Rhaegar Targaryan felt the tug of mature and heart-warming true love. It was the kind that simply did not exist anymore. Then Elia allowed him to take another bite of the ice-cream, and it left a blackish stain on the side of his lips, to which her pursed smile drove him mad. So then he, in return, took a small blob on his finger and lightly smeared it on her cheek. Elia’s look of incredulity was to die for. That afternoon ice-cream parlour, and those gentle memories, was something that Rhaegar had to live for.

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“Elia, we’re getting late. You can always come back grocery shopping later,” Rhaegar urged his ex-wife, practically pulling her by the end of her long-draped saree.
“I’m not grocery shopping, I’m simply buying some moth-balls,” Elia protested, picking up five generous packets.
“Well, get some for me too then,” Rhaegar’s voice relatively softened. This was the second ‘date’ they had been on, in the last three weeks, and Rhaegar would have loved some moth-balls to take home. The fragrance would remind him that there was still hope; that someday, the lady who so believed in their efficiency would be back in his arms, at their home, where she belonged.
“You want moth-balls? I thought you loathed them,” Elia commented.
“Yes well, I could do with some right now,” Rhaegar dreamily commented.
“Told you, the amount of coats you had, some day the moths would be getting at them,” Elia triumphantly smiled before she picked up an extra packet and walked towards the cash counter. Rhaegar noticed that there were six packets in her hand. He simply wondered if the other four were for some other… people, men, he did not know about. Or one man, that was bad enough.
“And why exactly are you carrying six packets? You’re not going to buy all six are you?”
“Well of course I am! Why else would I be carrying it?” Elia looked at Rhaegar like he was stupid. Well, she always thought he was stupid.
“Yes but there are six…” Rhaegar trailed off. He was pointing at the packets in her hand, and looking at her like she was stupid. He never thought she was stupid generally though.
“Yes Rhaegar; there are five for me, and one for you. Do you want more?” Elia stopped in her tracks and turned around to face Rhaegar. She was getting fed up with his questions.
Rhaegar didn’t reply. There was only one woman in all of Westeros, and probably even the rest of the world who would buy five packets of moth-balls to herself. Rhaegar did laugh however, and playfully pulled a few packets from her hand and ran around with Elia trying her best to chase him although she was terrible at that. When she finally managed to tug at his shirt, they both fell back, and Rhaegar was quick to face the brunt of the wall and pulled her close to his chest. They had a beautiful moment, but there was a little kid who was so enthusiastic that she thought it was a romantic movie playing out in front of her eyes, and excitedly exclaimed so, which of course,
forced the two apart.
“‘We’re late for the movie you know,’” Elia hurried after the purchase of her moth-balls, while they were making their way to the destination.
“‘Yes and whose fault is that?’” Rhaegar danced his eyebrows.
“‘Not mine, you said you wanted a packet of moth-balls,’” Elia innocently batted her eye-lashes.
“‘Oh really, did I now…’” Rhaegar’s voice, playful and dangerously low directed itself towards Elia who gasped as he gripped her from the back and lifted her feet slightly off the ground. It was a tough feat because unlike petite and cute Lyanna, Elia Martell was a majestic woman, and she was almost as tall as Rhaegar.
“We are going to be late because of you,” Elia tried directing the blame as she swatted at Rhaegar.
“Oh wow, I didn’t realise,” Rhaegar rolled his eyes at her and pulled her along towards the movie hall. They were extremely late, but the tickets had been expensive, and Elia hated wasting money. Much to Rhaegar’s disappointment, they had to watch the movie fifteen minutes late, but as Elia kept taunting him; it was a romantic movie, how did it even matter where they watched it from? Rhaegar loved romantic movies, and if he could tolerate her moth-balls, she had to tolerate sappy love stories as well.
“The movie was good wasn’t it?” Rhaegar asked, large smile plastered all over his face. The movie had been beautiful, as was the night, as was his date.
“It was stupid,” Elia scoffed.
“No, excuse me; Purge has a discourse on crime and society. What does this have a discourse on? You can only fall in love if you’re poorer, dumber and younger than your man? Seriously, it’s pathetic,” Elia countered.
“That’s what you took back of course,” Rhaegar sighed.
“What else would I have taken back?” Elia asked sceptically.
“I don’t know, the true love, the sticking together even if there are differences, the you don’t walk out because of a silly fight.”
“And the Lolita complex,” Elia snidely commented as she opened her own car door.
“Elia, do you even believe in true love anymore?” Rhaegar softly questioned as he got into the drivers’ seat.
“I never did,” Elia shrugged, pulling the seatbelt.
“What do you mean you never believed in true love?” Rhaegar questioned taken aback. This lady had been his lover once, and he had been head-over-heels for her, still was.
“I never did Rhaegar. It’s simply not something that I found to be very… appealing. I mean, it doesn’t really exist. I’m not saying that it shouldn’t, it should exist, but it doesn’t, and there are more important things you know,” Elia explained.
“Such as?” Rhaegar questioned.
“Global warming; ever heard of that?”
“Yes, I have actually. But that doesn’t have anything to do with love,” Rhaegar tried to argue.
“Exactly, and thanks to these stupid love stories, things like that get neglected,” Elia made her point. “I am no zealous environmentalist though, I am simply pointing out.”
“I don’t understand you,” Rhaegar huffed.
“Well you could stop trying to,” Elia suggested sarcastically.
Rhaegar went silent. Elia understood that her comment had been unfeeling. Over the course of the past weeks, she had been trying to ignore things that were presenting themselves in plain light in front of her eyes. Rhaegar’s constant presence at her office, their dates, the interactions, the crackling chemistry that Westeros used to dig; it was all coming back. And Elia Martell was no stupid woman. She understood exactly what was going on. She was however, certainly content with not thinking about it. This was extremely unlike Elia actually, who loved to over-think any and every situation that she faced.
“We’ve almost reached your place,” Rhaegar announced in a defeated tone at the end of an uncharacteristically silent car ride. Generally, Rhaegar and Elia loved interacting with each other.
Rhaegar’s broody moods only came out in front of Lyanna Stark, who was not intellectually capable of conversing with him.

“Oh yes, I didn’t notice sorry,” Elia snapped out of some reverie too.

“You were lost in thought?” Rhaegar questioned sharply.

“Yes, I think too Rhaegar,” Elia snapped back.

“I have never doubted your thinking abilities,” Rhaegar countered thoughtfully.

“Oh my, I had never noticed before,” Elia sarcastically commented.

“Elia, I have never doubted your mental faculties, not once,” Rhaegar argued.

“No, of course not, you’ve simply denied its’ existence,” Elia nonchalantly shrugged.

“I have never done anything of the sort!” Rhaegar shouted.

“This is going to blow up into a big fight, you know why, because the two of us can’t do anything without fighting. We were never meant to be Rhaegar, it’s not something that you or I can control. Trust me, there is still nothing I would like more, but I guess there’s nothing meant to be done,” Elia shrugged, completely defeated. She had had enough of drama with Rhaegar. Elia wanted nothing more than to be able to make things work with Rhaegar, and for various reasons; but there was nothing to be done here. Elia had tried, and she had failed, and it was a failure Elia Martell did not particularly pride herself on.

“I didn’t know you were a defeatist,” Rhaegar calmly replied. His demeanour scared Elia.

“I know where to pull my lines,” Elia coolly replied.

“And this is how we always end up,” Rhaegar ran a frustrated hand through his hair.

“Exactly, Rhaegar, this is how we always end up. I’m leaving,” Elia announced, hopping off the car.

“Elia, I love you,” Rhaegar blurted out in a desperate attempt, practically tearing off the seatbelt and sliding down the driver’s seat as fast as possible.

“Rhaegar behave yourself!” Elia chided.

“I love you. You should know that. I don’t care what happens after this, you should know that,” Rhaegar sniffled, tears free-flowing now.

“I, I… love you too,” Elia softly replied. “But love is not enough. And until you stop watching all those romantic movies, it’s something you’ll never understand.”

“Do I have to let you go again?” Rhaegar pleaded.

“Karma catches up doesn’t it? The last time, I remember, you threw me out,” Elia smirked.

“Yes I am aware of that. I am also aware that I am paying the price for my stupidity. But I’m happy that you know I love you,” Rhaegar gave out a small smile.

“Good night Rhaegar,” Elia kissed his cheek before she left. There were no movie date-nights after that.

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“Rhaenys you need to have greens. There’s really no point in hiding you know,” Rhaegar called out as he walked around the maze of a wardrobe that he had. His cheeky little viper-dragon was in hiding after spotting a spinach tart at the lunch table. Well she was not exactly ‘little’ any more, but to Rhaegar, she would always be.

“Papa, I’m not hiding,” the young lady giggled at her father’s daylight blindness. She was standing right next to him, in fact.

“Well what are you doing there then?” Rhaegar playfully chided his adored first-born.

“I’m putting moth-balls in your clothes. I want you to have pretty clothes,” Rhaenys pouted softly.

“You… you put the moth-balls in here...”

“Yes, every time I come here Papa, I put some new mothballs for you. Actually, I love them. See the smell,” the little girl held out her two hands full of mothballs for her beloved Papa. Whatever she loved, he needed to love tenfold.

As Rhaenys held up an overflowing pair of hands with mothballs, Rhaegar felt himself tear up so entirely that he had to take a very deep breath and exit the wardrobe leaving poor Rhaenys believe that she had done something. Then again, wasn’t it Rhaegar’s perennial habit to leave? He was an
escapist, and always had been. A slight change of behaviour and attitude there, and he would probably still be holding Elia tight in those muscular arms of his. On Rhaegar’s part, he was sitting on the bed, a couple of tears having spilled out already and the rest threatening to although a voice constantly kept telling him his little girl was right there.

It had been Elia all along. Whether it be in the form of herself, or in the form of Rhaenys, it had been her all along. There had never been any escaping the raven-haired, sweet-talking, tall, dominating, uptight, sophisticated, and for a change brilliant Dornish woman who he had always been supposed to love. Rhaegar had never done what he was supposed to, not without a fight at least, and for the first time in his life, he realized the magnitude of his mistake by having done that. He was a stupid man, this he knew, but the fact that his stupidity had ruined his life completely; this was a bitter truth which would take some time to digest.

“Papa, are you crying?” Rhaenys was an obedient daughter. She dutifully stood by her father.

“Yes my love,” Rhaegar sniffled.

“Papa, don’t cry. Tell me what’s wrong, and we’ll fix it,” the viper-dragon had a smile that was so bright it lit up the entire room.

“You want to fix it with me?” Rhaegar copied her smile instantaneously and also received an extremely wicked idea in his head.

“Yes Papa, of course.”

“Hmm, well let’s call your mother up. You call her up, I mean, tell her to bring Aegon over because you feel like seeing your younger brother; and also tell her to bring a few packets of mothballs just in case…”
I know I am super late again! Really sorry about that. College has made my life busier than it ever was before. Plus, I have come down with a bout of terrible sickness and have a lot of work to catch up to. Still, I feel super guilty about not uploading earlier. So sorry.

All the Love.
A.

Quarths

“History is made by great men,” Rhaegar dreamily stared at the ruins of the Great gate in front of him.
“Yes, and also the labourers that made the gate,” a stoic feminine voice beside him commented. “I mean, don’t get me wrong, I’m an architect myself, and I love the planning part of it all, but people work their ass off to get those perfect curves and designs. I’m not romanticising, I’m not a very romantic person to begin with but I believed we had all moved forward from the heroes and great men stuff.”
“Hi, I’m Rhaegar Targaryen,” the fascinated man extended his hand.
“My name is Elia Martell,” the young lady smiled.
“You’re an architect here?” Rhaegar asked.
“Oh no, I am on a field trip with a couple of Uni friends. What are you doing here? Won’t Uncle Aerys be sad that you’re not helping him run the country,” Elia teased with a smirk.
“You know my dad?”
“Everybody knows your dad,” Elia replied, laughing.
“Well, your Uncle Lewin, and I are here on a University trip too. As in, he’s here as my bodyguard, and I am here on a field study trip,” Rhaegar laughed cheekily.
“Ah, you figured out who I am,” Elia looked at him impressed.
“Everybody knows you,” Rhaegar rolled his eyes.
“That is reassuring,” Elia chuckled playfully.

The banter carried on all afternoon. They were two very different people, this Rhaegar realised. Where he admired great men and their singular deeds, Elia wanted to walk with everyone; she called warriors murderers, absolutely blasphemous in Rhaegar’s eyes, and she called war bloodshed merely, nothing else, that too was a difficult pill to digest. Rhaegar was heavily irritated at times, as was Elia, but it was simply so refreshing.

“Now if you’ll excuse me, I have a parlour appointment to keep. Looking like this takes time,” Elia formed her glossy lips into one of those pseudo-glamorous pouts and Rhaegar shook his head, eyes bright with mirth.
“I thought this was all… natural,” Rhaegar frowned. Elia seemed to be glowing from the inside; she had this beautiful nude palette gracing her porcelain skin.
“Oh trust me, you don’t want to see the naturals,” Elia smirked with a lopsided smile.
“I like naturals, I believe make-up is very fake,” Rhaegar deepened his frown.
“Well then I’d like to inform you, you’ve never seen a skilled hand working at it. I mean, don’t get me wrong, but it’s an art like any other, or do you not believe that because it is not something men achieve in sweat and blood,” Elia mocked him.
“Oh, we are back to that again,” Rhaegar sighed, rolling his eyes.
“Well you know, you continue that hero worship in peace, I have to go and get ready,” Elia smiled, walking towards her hotel.
“What do you need to get ready for?” Rhaegar inquired curiously.
“The engineer’s summit that I am here for,” Elia glared like it was obvious. As in it was quite obvious actually, the sign was glaring at them from behind a neon board, right in front of the hotel.
“Oh I thought you were here to build something.”
“This place has enough buildings trust me, and plus, I am the kind of architect who is only called when some avant-garde somewhere wants to make something fancy. I don’t see a lot of avant-garde’s in Quarth,” Elia commented.
“So what were you doing at the ruins?” Rhaegar suspiciously asked. After all, at the end of the day, he was a Targaryan.
“I was sightseeing! Are you really that stupid?!”
“Oh, so you were sightseeing things built by great men,” Rhaegar grinned like he had emerged triumphant in this war of words which was a long way from over actually. Some of the most intelligent men in the world had been defeated in a verbal skirmish with Elia Martell. She really was that good.
“I was sightseeing structures planned by intelligent men who laugh at hero worship, trust me on that,” Elia intelligently informed.
“You know, the two of us could be at it all night if we wanted to,” Rhaegar sighed.
“Eww, the way you say it, sounds like a euphemism,” Elia giggled playfully.
“I’ll see you again once you’re done with the… fancy dinner,” Rhaegar commented.
“It’s not a fancy dinner. It’s a business meal,” Elia explained.
Rhaegar did something he never thought he would have actually; Rhaegar waited for the elegant and quite opposite young lady he had been conversing (or arguing, whichever way you put it) for so long. He waited till she was dolled up for what she called a simple dinner, and then he waited for as long as she was in that dinner lasted, and it was only when he had dozed off in the plush maroon-beige couch that Elia’s nail-varnished and well-manicured fingers were waking him.
“Rhaegar are you alright? Did you lose your keys?”
“Yeah I’m fine. I was thinking of going for a walk,” Rhaegar groggily replied.
“Well you were sleeping,” Elia informed him.
“Yeah, I was thinking of going on a walk, with you,” Rhaegar shrugged and tried to make the situation look normal. They had met that very day.
“In that case, I am not very fond of walks; especially at night, it’s cold out and I can catch pneumonia. Plus, this is a foreign country, I am sure there are germs my immune system has never encountered meaning I am much more susceptible to them.”
“Did you have friends in school?” Rhaegar asked.
“Oh I had many,” Elia informed him, beaming.
“It must have been the face,” Rhaegar commented softly, not hoping that Elia would have heard him. As luck would have it, she heard him.
“It was that, and the money,” Elia added nonchalantly.
“And you are extremely casual about it,” Rhaegar was surprised.
“Well at least I had friends, unlike someone else…” Elia trailed off.
“How did you know about my childhood?” Rhaegar was beyond bewildered.
“Wow, you really are a lonely pathetic little thing. No wonder all that hero worship simply oozes out of you,” Elia wisely remarked, and possibly a little too insensitively also.
“What in the world does hero worship have to do with being an introvert?”
“Oh you know, you’ve never witnessed the magic of communalism; the magic of the people, and their indomitable strength when they get together. Instead of reading pointless things and not absorbing them anyways, you could have used your intelligence to absorb what was around you. The books make much better sense after that. Or sometimes it’s the opposite, you understand what’s going on around you much better after you read something, but if you never try it, you’ll
“I was called a prodigy in school,” Rhaegar weakly announced.
“Well I was accepted into all of the Ivy Leagues, you were accepted into one. This has nothing to do with being a prodigy and everything to do with being what you were meant to be- a social animal. Stop being a hero Rhaegar be a human for once,” Elia softly explained. At the end of the day, Rhaegar seemed to be more understanding than most of the men she had met. With a little wisdom, he could be transformed into a different man completely.
“But have you ever tried a hand at fighting? It feels glorious to be a warrior,” Rhaegar argued, seeing as that was the only thing he had ever known.
“It also feels really stupid,” Elia snidely remarked.
“I believe the two of us are very different,” Rhaegar drew a conclusion.
“Yes that’s true, and I am smarter, but I guess neither of us is wrong or right,” Elia shrugged.
“Of course, you’re smarter,” Rhaegar rolled his eyes.
“I mean, you’re not bad, academically, but I am definitely more intelligent. You rote learn,” Elia snidely commented.
“Excuse me, what gave you that impression?”
“Well the way you were rattling off names when we were walking around the monuments. It’s easy to understand that you, you know you know them all by name. That doesn’t happen if you don’t rote learn,” Elia explained.
“Thanks a lot, I feel like an absolute idiot now,” Rhaegar shrugged.
“Well you should. Anybody who hero worships, well they should,” Elia stated coolly. The argument continued.

Valyria

“It’s always good to be back home isn’t it?” Rhaegar turned around to face a face he had never imagined he would be coming face to face with again.
“Hi, Elia… what are you doing here?”
“I’m on a family vacation,” Elia informed.
“Whoever has heard of a Rhoynish family vacationing in Valyria?”
“Eh, I don’t know, I have a strange family,” Elia laughed.
“You’re talking to a Targaryan, I think I win,” Rhaegar laughed back.
“Oh come on, your family is not ‘that’ weird,” Elia countered.
“Young Lady, what is your definition of weird?”
“Oh I don’t know, maybe the strange root-less people of our generation,” Elia shrugged.
“Wow, you’re talking like a grandma,” Rhaegar was slightly taken aback.
“Errm, that’s a nickname I seemed to have gathered over the years. I am proud of it though,” Elia stated vainly.
“I am not surprised,” Rhaegar muttered.
“Anyways, see you around,” Elia rolled her eyes.
“Oh wait, where are you staying?”
“Umm, Marriot, why?”
“Oh, I’m staying there too,” Rhaegar informed.
“Why aren’t you staying at your place?”
“Well maybe because this is not King’s Landing,” Rhaegar replied.
Elia was a little taken aback. Rhaegar was an archaeologist; surely his sense of History was good enough for him to know that the Targaryans belonged to Valyria. She had never liked History and she knew that. But she momentarily decided to let it slide because the last time they had bumped into each other on an exotic locale, they had had prolonged discussions of hero worship, with both of them having starkly different points of view.
“So, what are you doing here?” Elia changed the topic.
“I am on a job, like you were last time,” Rhaegar smiled. “I wonder, aren’t you going to begin meting out a prolonged lecture on something.”
“I was thinking of asking you a controversial question but I shall refrain. I am the one on the holiday this time,” Elia cheekily informed.
“Ask away please,” Rhaegar surrendered, “last time didn’t exactly ruin my vacation.”
“I hope it enriched yours. I am sure that’s more wisdom than anybody has ever exuded to you in your entire life. Well, barring Mr. Lannister of course, if he even bothers to talk to you,” Elia condescendingly replied.
“Which Lannister do you mean?” Rhaegar asked.
“Listen Rhaegar, Jaime is my best friend, and I love him, but when I talk about a Lannister exuding wisdom, I mean his father. My best friend is not the brightest bulb out there I’m afraid,” Elia explained.
“Hey I didn’t know you were close friends with Jaime,” Rhaegar exclaimed.
“Oh it’s been me, Jaime and Varys for the longest time ever,” Elia beamed.

Now Rhaegar was a little taken aback at the unusual trio but dwelling on it for a couple of minutes made him realise that it was not as unusual as all that. Varys was lurking about in the shadows all the time, perfect ally to the already gossip-y Elia, Jaime was a little stupid, but every genius had a stupid friend, and that boy too was pretty clever sometimes. Maybe they didn’t make such unlikely friends after all. As Rhaegar was done mulling over that, he was flung into a verbal skirmish with Elia. This was about roots, tradition and belonging.
“A tree without roots is just a piece of wood,” Elia huffed, happy to have the last word.
“Where did you learn that?” Rhaegar eyed her suspiciously.
“It’s a proverb. I’m surprised you haven’t heard of it,” Elia replied surprised.
“Why am I supposed to be familiar with it?”
“Well I had heard rumours that you were slightly well-read. However, the more I interact with you the more I come to pass them off as rumours,” Elia commented.
“Hmm, thank you for the compliment. And no, I have never come across that proverb,” Rhaegar tried his best not to look offended.
“Well you should read more.”
“Maybe you and I read very different books.”
“Even if we read the same book, Rhaegar; we’ll always be on very different pages,” Elia smiled.
“I still didn’t get what you were saying about the trees and the roots,” Rhaegar sheepishly confessed.

So then Elia proceeded to explain her theory about how people were losing their basic touch with their own traditions and what was being cultured was an honestly idiotic homogenised culture and how she believed it was extremely important to learn from their ancestors, both mistakes and conquests. Heedless to say, Rhaegar was far from convinced, but she made sense, and Rhaegar absolutely hated that. He was a free bird, liberal would be an understatement for him, and this was a woman who felt her presence illuminated all kinds of society- the high, and the home and the hearth.
“...We are so different from one another,” Rhaegar mused.
“Yes, but that does not make you right and me wrong. We are just… different,” Elia simply stated. The two of these extremely different souls stared into the deep Valyrian abyss, soaked in the sunset, at times felt uncomfortable with how comfortable they were with each other’s silence; and finally quietly held hands as the Sun set. Now Rhaegar knew this was probably nothing, especially since he had made it his life’s mission to steal his cousin’s girlfriend Lyanna Stark; but he did keep an eye out for Elia the entirety of his trip, and never caught sight of her there. Then he noticed she had been tagged on a picture by Arthur around a week later, and they were all partying in Dorne.
“Whose wedding are you shopping for?” Rhaegar gaped at the mountain of shopping bags Elia was carrying around. There was not a colour in the world that was amiss in her trousseau or whatever that was.

“My best friend’s, how did you know?” Elia was surprised at bumping into this old acquaintance. “Well I figured that was not for a birthday party,” Rhaegar shrugged.

“Yes I suppose. Then again, there’s nothing less I buy for myself on my birthday,” Elia announced. “I am not surprised,” Rhaegar rolled his eyes.

“And why is that?” Elia was suspicious.

“Well, you seem to be slightly materialistic,” Rhaegar commented.

“I am very materialistic,” Elia proudly commented.

“Well, I was trying not to offend you,” Rhaegar rubbed the back of his head.

“I am happy being called that. Feel free to whenever you want,” Elia shrugged.

Rhaegar did not quite understand the way this woman and her wonderful mind worked. However, for the first time in his life, he was happy with not understanding something. He walked beside her quietly, not daring to ask her any further questions. What could you ask a gold-digging shopaholic when she was concentrating so much on which scarf she should have gotten? Strangely, he could not even term her as ‘shallow’. What if, none of these women were actually shallow? Maybe he had been wrong all along; not just him but all those millions of people who passed them off as bitches. Or maybe they were all right and Elia really was a bitch, along with Cersei and all the others.

“You’ve spent forty minutes here,” Rhaegar announced looking at his watch for the umpteenth time.

“I haven’t decided on what I want,” Elia announced right back at his face. “It’s just a scarf,” Rhaegar stoically spoke.

“It’s a Gucci scarf,” Elia emphasised.

“Listen, it’s all the same to me,” Rhaegar rolled his eyes.

“Hello hypocrite, that’s a fine Burberry trench coat,” Rhaegar reddened at Elia’s comment. Following such quibbles, the two finally managed to make it out of the shopping complex. Elia was a little confused as to why Rhaegar was following her around when he was in Highgarden. There were so many things to do and so many places to go. Why did the dragon suddenly turn into a lost puppy that had found its’ owner? Plus, Elia was hardly his owner. She was not even his girlfriend. The point being that if Elia was ever intimate with a man, she would make it a point to own him.

“Can we sit down somewhere? I am kind of exhausted,” Rhaegar huffed.

“I am going to sit down in the car. You can sit wherever you want to,” Elia shrugged her shoulders. “Oh, you’re leaving now,” Rhaegar softly sighed. The boy clearly needed someone to talk to. He had not been doing okay after the break-up, and Elia was the most wonderfully responsive listener he had ever met.

“Yes I am leaving now… unless you want me to stay,” Elia stared hinting at Rhaegar. “Oh I was merely wondering you know, if you would want some coffee,” Rhaegar shrugged. “I don’t drink coffee,” Elia flatly informed.

“Are you even human? I, well I meant what kind of a person doesn’t drink coffee,” Rhaegar replied.

“I drink tea, and I am proud of myself,” Elia puffed her chest up.

“We really are very different…” Rhaegar trailed off.

“Well, I am proud to be your opposite,” Elia immediately rebuked, to which Rhaegar merely rolled his eyes. He was used to her arrogance by now. Secretly, he even enjoyed it a little.

“Well can we then, for coffee?” Rhaegar pressed.

“That’s not even a proper sentence. And yes, in case you were wondering, I’ll go. But we have to go to a place that serves tea,” Elia informed him.

“Hmm, I would never have guessed,” Rhaegar spoke under his breath as they began to walk towards a conveniently placed Starbucks. Elia could perceive, from the corner of her eyes, that
Rhaegar had a problem with Starbucks, it was possibly too ‘mainstream’ for him; but she loved it, so that’s where they were going to go. Highgarden was a very pleasant place, and it was heaven if you knew how to indulge yourself. Elia and Rhaegar indulged in each other without understanding it, and by the time the shop was closing down, they weren’t even done with their debate. And boy didn’t they have a catalogue of things to debate about. Possibly, their only common ground was their choice of poets and their distaste of Petry Baelish (but that was a common ground many would have shared with them). Rhaegar liked having this sort of an annoying constant presence, it strangely felt like home, and Elia was simply fascinated by how a man feigned to be genius could have been so juvenile.

“I also believe you think women who indulge in make-up are stupid,” Elia spoke, cutting Rhaegar’s defence of Lyanna mid-sentence.

“Well I mean… not exactly…”

“You did, before you met me. Or you probably did even after you met me. You thought I was yet another talkative and gossipy face-painted bitch didn’t you? Don’t lie to me,” Elia crossed her arms in front of her chest.

Rhaegar had never felt so ashamed his entire life. When Elia left the café laughing at his reaction, he only felt more ashamed of himself. He made it a mental note that he was going to apologise to all the women who he could possibly have hinted at as having no brains because their outer appearance was simple perfection. Olenna Tyrell and Cersei Lannister were some to begin with, but didn’t he also have to apologise to Elia? What seemed to be so familiar about her? Why couldn’t he bring himself to look at her as simply another woman who was to be apologised to? Rhaegar spent the whole night thinking, and by morning, she was gone.

________________________________________

Dragonstone

“Why is everything so cold and wet?” Elia leaned in to whisper into Jaime’s ears. She had been to Dragonstone earlier as well but that was ages ago. She was here now in a proper group and with a tour-guide and everything, but Jaime was a far more valuable guide. He knew the Targaryans better than this paid man did.

“Because your crush lives here, and you know how he is,” Jaime rolled his eyes.

“Rhaegar is not my crush,” Elia swatted him.

“Oh I’m sorry, he’s your love,” Jaime gawked.

“Will you stop with that? There is nothing going on between the two of us. Just shut up and guide me,” Elia rolled her eyes.

“Yes I know there’s nothing going on between you two. But he broke up with that irritating Stark so the field is open for you to play. Play whatever you want, soccer, basketball, tennis, whatever,” Jaime grinned.

“Are you insisting that Rhaegar Targaryen is a sport or a sports-field?” Elia laughed hysterically.

“Who is suggesting that Rhaegar Targaryan is a sport?” Rhaegar’s voice boomed. Everybody turned their heads to greet the handsome son of the Prime Minister. Women swooned and the men cheered. Only Jaime and Elia stood at a distance and rolled their eyes.

“Hello Mr. Targaryan,” everybody cooed.

“Welcome to Dragonstone. Have a pleasant trip. Look around and let me know how you like it,” Rhaegar warmly greeted.

“Wow, so he’s a tour-guide as well,” Elia smirked.

“And a melancholic writer whenever he feels like it,” Jaime scooped some more gossip in.

“Oh, he’s a melancholic writer. No wonder he’s always like that,” Elia made a face at which Jaime doubled over with laughter.

“Hello,” Rhaegar walked over to greet them and Elia and Jaime immediately straightened themselves up. It is always rude to laugh at the host.

“Hello Rhaegar,” Elia smiled politely. Rhaegar was a tad bit unsettled. Elia was not generally
polite’ to him.

“Hey can I talk to you for a minute outside? Without Lannister, of course,” Rhaegar glared at the
golden-haired boy who was beyond confused. Why was Rhaegar angry with his presence all of a
sudden?

Elia followed Rhaegar quietly. She knew better than to question the whimsical Targaryan
sometimes, especially when he was looking like this. Rhaegar looked a little distraught, a little
nervous, and extremely melancholic, far more than general. If he was contemplating suicide, Elia
did not wish to bear witness to that. She was curious as to what was troubling him though. They
had a strange relationship; they only met on foreign lands and that too while quenching their
wanderlust, and strange conversations took place, and they grew a little more attached to the other
one. It was a macabre relationship, but Elia had come to care for this macabre.

Rhaegar walked with a pace that was a little hard to keep up with in stilettos. She was slightly taller
than him in her heels. Elia and Rhaegar were the same height, which was strange, because he had
always been described as this tall, pale handsome face that made every woman melt. He wasn’t
nearly as tall as she had expected. Then again, she was pretty tall herself. When she stopped
thinking about height, she noticed where he was taking her. It was inside the estate, but outside the
palatial mansion. The locale overlooked the Sea, and it was beautiful, and the wind was blowing
violently, and Elia had no idea as to what they were doing there.

“Rhaegar, what did you want to say?” Elia tried to shout above the wind.

“I am going to tell you,” Rhaegar replied, shouting equally loudly.

“Well then tell me,” Elia replied.

She crossed her arms in front of her chest and watched as the dragon stood queasy and uneasy. Elia
didn’t like that look on Rhaegar’s face. All jokes apart, they may have their differences, but she
didn’t like if he looked so worried. Her brows knit into a proper frown as well. She wondered why
he was so hesitant. Was he commissioned to assassinate her?

“We are arranged to be married,” Rhaegar finally, flatly spoke.

“Well I, I had heard rumours but I didn’t know if they were true…”

“They are true.”

“Can’t you talk your father out of it?” Elia suggested.

“You hate me that much?” Rhaegar asked.

“It’s not about me hating you. And I don’t hate you. I am sorry if I’ve given off some vibe like
that. The thing is, Mr. Rhaegar Targaryan, you look terribly uneasy, and I am sure you’re not over
your first love. Let me know, I understand,” Elia reasoned.

“You don’t have to be so reasonable all the time,” Rhaegar sounded like a whiny little child.

“I am sorry, but that’s just how I am,” Elia was a little taken aback.

“Is there no place for love inside you? It’s all just calculations, like your architecture,” Rhaegar’s
eyes watered up.

“What’s wrong with you?” Elia crossed her arms in front of her chest.

“I want to marry you, that is what is wrong with me,” Rhaegar sulked.

“All we know about each other is that we don’t see the world the same way.”

“I think that’s a wonderful thing. We’re equals, and maybe that’s all that matters.”

“Stop Rhaegar, you sound exactly like me.”

“I know, and I have never been more proud of myself.”

Elia allowed her wilful lips to part in a small smile and her cheeks lit up. Rhaegar found it slightly
irresistible. He pecked them slowly and drew apart. It was a strange feeling, nothing electrifying or
burning; it was soft, warm, and lasting.
Anniversary

Chapter Summary

Happy New Year! I know I'm late, again, but a lot of things have been going- like my first semester exams and my music career trying to start off and a family wedding (which last for days here by the way) and basically a lot.
I'm really really sorry for being so late!
I love you guys! I'm sure you've had a wonderful 2018 and shall have a wonderful 2019 as well!!
All the love.
A.

Elia looked down in distaste as she herself unconsciously scraped off some of the pale-pink polish on her well-manicured nails. Now there would be a little patch of her long claw out raw and she didn’t like it. Elia abhorred anything out of place or routine or convention. Her well-made brows knit into a firm frown as she stared down at it. Maybe she was only directing the anger that was bubbling at Rhaegar towards her poor nails. She was distraught, embarrassed and on the verge of tears, something that could never happen in front of so many people.
“Excuse me,” she politely spoke as she stood up from the grand table and walked towards the spiralling staircase. She could feel her mother-in-law’s sympathetic eyes follow her trail but she was not in the mood of conversation- of any sort.
“I hate Rhaegar,” a sharp Western accent spoke. She looked up to find a familiar handsome mass of gold-blond hair.
“Well that makes two of us,” she smirked snidely. Maybe a conversation with Jaime was alright. It was as comforting as it was cathartic.
“Did you call him?”
“I left him twenty-three missed calls,” Elia grit her teeth.
“Can’t you track him down with that app you secretly installed on his phone?” Jaime sat down beside her.
“I don’t want to. I think I know where he is. No application or Northern Wolf in this world knows Rhaegar better than me,” Elia fumed.
Jaime understood immediately what Elia meant by that allusion. Rumours had tirelessly been doing their rounds in the office that real-estate mogul Rhaegar Targaryan really was cheating on his Business Consultant wife with a young Northern social worker who had dropped out of college- oh and she also happened to be a Stark.
“Then let’s go and confront him,” Jaime decided.
“No, I will go and confront him. Please, I need you and Varys here to handle everything. Tell Mom, but nobody else, please. Let them think I have gone to fetch Rhaegar… from a sticky situation like I always do.”
“I don’t want you to face that alone, in case you’re right,” Jaime worriedly sighed.
“I won’t be alone. Elia Martell always has somebody helping her up there,” Elia smiled softly. Jaime was sitting close enough to see some salt-water at the edges of her eyes and sensitive enough not to comment on them.
So Jaime promised to help manage the crowd while Elia slipped away making a shady excuse. Varys had just about begun to spy on Petyr Baelish, the man who boiled his blood, when he was approached by Jaime to manipulate the crowds. Reluctantly, he agreed; after all, Elia was
practically family to him at the end of the day. Elia was enraged, and hurt, and seething, but she was Elia, she managed to keep a cool head, and drive in silence. This was the silence which screamed saying ‘I’m the calm before the storm’. Rhaegar was having a really bad day.

“Baby stay please, you never stay the night. Don’t you want me?” Lyanna pouted and whined. “Baby, there’s not a thing in the world I want more. But tonight is anniversary night, I told you that,” Rhaegar tried to reason with a Stark. That was an improbable task.

“When are we going to have our anniversary?” Lyanna wrapped her arms around him as Rhaegar choked on the water he was sipping.

“As soon as we get married, but you’re still young. You have your education to complete,” Rhaegar replied cautiously.

“I don’t want to do anything like that! All our lives I’ll shoot arrows and you cheer for me!”

“Yes that sounds wonderful as well,” Rhaegar nervously replied.

The bell rang sharply through the awkward silence of the room. Rhaegar looked up in fear, his purple irises dilating in panic. Nobody could catch him here on his anniversary. While Rhaegar did not care about his own reputation, he cared about Lyanna, and that was enough to make him panic. The bell kept ringing incessantly, and he decided to take the fall.

“Just hide yourself, I’ll handle things,” he kissed the top of the young wolf’s forehead. She was so much shorter, she looked absolutely adorable.

“No baby, I can’t let you do that,” Lyanna vigorously shook her pretty head.

“Baby I have to do this. Go hide, and I’ll tell them whoever it is, that I was waiting to submit some documents to you to give to your father,” Rhaegar reasoned.

“But baby, what if they don’t believe you?” Lyanna cried.

“Baby, I promise they’ll believe me,” Rhaegar was incredibly irritated but tried not to wear that externally.

Lyanna seemed to be momentarily convinced and walked away, rushing up to her room to hide. Rhaegar almost knew for certain she was going to be hiding under the bed. Lyanna, and children, always seemed to think that that was the safest place. But he was relieved that she had left. Now whoever it was, he could deal with. After all, unlike his lady love, he was a mature and responsible adult. Surely, he could handle other adults. The idiot, however, was not prepared for what he saw when he opened the door.

“Happy Anniversary Rhae,” Elia beamed.

“Hi Eli, I was just umm... actually, Rickard Stark needed some documents so I was…”

“Ahh, Rickard Stark’s inside? Oh my god I really needed to speak to him. I told all the guests at home that you must have been caught up with some work. Come on now, call Rickard. I need to speak with him. Once I’m done, the two of us can return together,” Elia innocently mused.

“Oh no you don’t understand, Rickard is in Winterfell. Lyanna is here and I was only dropping off some important documents…”

“It took you three hours to come from your office to Lyanna’s place?” Rhaegar was extremely intimidated. Elia knew what he was up to, and he knew that. After all, if there was anybody in this world who knew Rhaegar in his marrow, it was Elia, and if there was any other person in the world who knew Elia better than she knew herself- well there was none, but Rhaegar came pretty close. The handsome Targaryan man shifted his weight from one foot to the other, at an absolute loss of words.

“No, how could it take three hours? Her condo’s right next to my office see,” Rhaegar pointed to his office, lit up with expensive LED.

“Oh, so you were working after hours on our anniversary?” Elia folded her arms in front of her chest.

“Elia please, I cannot do this right now,” Rhaegar pleaded.

“Of course, I’ll wait till you’re done fucking her,” Elia casually commented.

“Elia please, let’s not talk about this here right now,” Rhaegar widened his eyes.

“There’s a designated place for wives and husbands to discuss the other woman?” Elia asked.

“No there’s no… please Elia not here…”
“Is she hiding under the bed?”
“Hey, how did you know she wa-”
“Wow, you have a girlfriend who hides under the bed?” Elia was not as surprised as her expression made her out to be.
“Yes, I mean no that is none of your business,” Rhaegar frowned, nodding his head.
“Once you’re done with your Lolita, come back home, apologise to the guests, and think of a good excuse, for the both of us. I need a break from you. I’m going away on a Yoga retreat. Convey this to Jaime and Varys, but not your mother. They’ll send me my stuff. My phone won’t be available for the week because they don’t allow phones,” Elia stated, with no emotion.
“Elia I want a divorce. A ‘break’ is not going to do it,” Rhaegar also equally blankly stated.
“You can try, but I swear, I am going to make your life hell if you do.”
Rhaegar could not believe his eyes, or his ears, as Elia walked away. Her stride was so graceful it was hard not to keep watching. Lyanna called him though, which he thought was amply smart of her, and then began chiding himself because he was thinking like Elia. Lyanna was a brilliant young woman, despite what his jealous wife thought. He walked back inside the house with an extremely defeated heart, and even heavier head.
“Baby who was it?” Lyanna asked emerging from underneath the bed.
“Elia.”
“Oh no, she knows about us!”
“I think she always knew about us. She knows everything,” Rhaegar blankly stated.
“But Baby, you said she was a dumb b-”
“I never said anything of the sort,” Rhaegar sharply returned.
“Oh sorry, Ned said that,” Lyanna remembered. “Or it was probably Brandon.”
“Why would your brothers call my wife a ‘dumb bitch’? Her IQ is higher than the entire Stark lineage combined,” Rhaegar regretted the words as soon as they left his lips.
“Oh, you think Starks are dumb!” Lyanna screamed the loudest Rhaegar had ever heard her, and she was a very loud girl.
“That’s not how I meant it. I was only comparing the world with Elia. I am dumb when compared to her, I fall pale,” Rhaegar miserably tried to defend himself.
“That’s not possible Love, nobody is as intellectual as you are,” Lyanna smiled proudly.
“Oh don’t worry, Elia, is,” Rhaegar emphasised, knowing what he was talking about. Elia was the most brilliant woman he had ever encountered. She was not the usual sparks of spontaneous brilliant kind, more of the slithering, quiet, cold and calculating kind. When Rhaegar had realised that that brilliance was greater than the occasional sparks of genius he had; well, he found solace in the arms of Lyanna Stark.
“You keep praising her,” Lyanna observed.
“Oh no it’s not that Lya, babe, I promise,” Rhaegar tried to control the massive damage that was being inflicted, although he was trying not to.
On the other hand, Elia was in the car, and she was not going to any retreat. She did not even know where she was going. For the first time in her life, Elia wanted to get lost. She didn’t want to come back. She didn’t wish to be the scorned wife, sympathised by some and snidely termed, ‘barren Dornish mare’ by others. Now this statement sounded a little ironical given that she was pregnant, and had been once earlier as well. The thought of Rhaenys gave her the rightful impetus needed to ask the chauffeur to stop driving. Now she didn’t know where she was going, but the instructions she had given her driver were not safe and she had a very young daughter at home.
“Eli, what happened?” Jaime shot up from slumber as soon as Elia entered the house. All the party lights had been switched off. It was strange how a house could go from looking radiant to resembling the inside of a dungeon in a few hours.
“Did Rhaegar come back?”
“Yes, about ten minutes earlier. What happened there?”
“That’s a very long story,” Elia announced, before walking up the steps. She had always been a very delicate woman, but there was a certain distraught in her stride that Jaime had never noticed
before. It was like Elia Martell was not walking for herself towards her dreams (like she always
did), but for something else entirely.
“Where are you going?” Elia questioned as she entered the room to notice clothes and belonging
strewn about everywhere, and Rhaegar packing… in her suitcase. Well it was probably extremely
dark in the room to notice the pale pink suitcase.
“I’m leaving. I believe I have caused you enough pain and I don’t want to anymore,” Rhaegar
shook his head in dismay. Elia’s deep grunt-like laughter shocked him.
“You don’t want to cause me any pain?” Elia’s laugh was bordering on hysterical now. How much
more pain do you think you could have caused me? You’ve taken everything from me, and I’ve
given you, I admit it. I’ve given you because I needed things in return. Now you don’t get to walk
to the arms of a young dumb slut who’d build a shrine and worship you if she could because now
it’s my turn to cause the pain,” Elia spat at him. Rhaegar stood dumbfounded.
“Mama,” Rhaenys burst through the door.
“Hello love,” Elia’s tone changed immediately. “Can’t sleep?”
“No mama, it’s very dark tonight.”
“The darker the night, the brighter the morning,” Elia scooped her daughter up in her arms.
“Tonight, Mama, Daddy and Rhaenys are going to sleep together.”
Rhaegar remained so guilt-ridden the entire night that every single text from Lyanna Stark was
promptly deleted. Having said that, he was also fuming at Elia for separating him from his true
love. It was a bad night for Rhaegar the hypocritical Feminist, basically, because he couldn’t come
to value either of them women in his life. The sleeping three-year old right next to him didn’t bring
any peace either. She only reminded him that he had responsibilities to fulfil.
“Elia, I’m going. And I’m not going to Lyanna. You can do whatever you want, I can’t live in
King’s Landing anymore,” Rhaegar spoke in a hurry as soon as his wife opened her eyes in the
morning. Then he walked out- with her suitcase. Elia groaned as her head hit the pillow again. She
really liked the colour on that suitcase. It was trendy.

“Does Aegon know who his father his?” Prime Minister Martell asked her daughter in a hushed
whisper as Rhaenys and Aegon ran about her marbled front porch, playing with her other
grandchildren. Life had come to a clean circle for her, besides the pale stain of a failed Targaryan
marriage.
“Unless he is as stupid as his father, he must have made a connection between that white hair,” Elia
remarked.
“Where has he seen Rhaegar?” Elia’s mother was shocked. To the best of her knowledge, Rhaenys
and Aegon were kept away from their Papa, and Rhaenys was never to mention him.
“On television Maa,” Elia rolled her eyes.
“Oh, I am sure he has made no connection at all. He sees Valyrians on TV all day. I don’t suppose
your son thinks he has twenty fathers,” the gracefully aged Lady informed her daughter with a
gentle smile.
“How does my son see Valyrian people on TV every day?”
“Oh you know when he comes to live with me. I see all those Valyrian soaps and…”
“Oh my Lord mother, you make him watch that trash!”
“Hey it’s not trash!”
“Of course not, except there’s characters on those who have nothing better to do but fall in love all
day. I watched an episode and there is a CEO of a company, mind you, a CEO who spends the
entire day checking out his employees on the CCTV footage and stalking the love of his life. Like
seriously, I’d say animation was more realistic,” Elia argued.
“Oh come on, just because you don’t believe in Love anymore doesn’t mean it doesn’t exist,” her
mother placated.
“Well then Maa, I shall be glad to inform you that I never believed in love. Not the kind that’s so
harped about anyways,” Elia retorted.
“Well then what about Rhaegar?”
“What about him?”
“None of what you shared with Rhaegar ever meant anything?”
“It meant a lot to him and he cheated on me. What’s the point of meaning if you’re going to throw it away anyways? I was the perfect wife, and I am proud of myself,” Elia crossed her arms in front of her chest and her plump pink lips formed a small pout. For the first time in all these years, she was feeling light, even when she talked about Rhaegar.
“Today is your anniversary,” her mother spoke after a long silence.
Now this had been wiped clean off of Elia’s mind and she wondered how. People said Elia was worse than an elephant when it came to remembering things. In the past four years, she had never forgotten her anniversary. She made it a point to poke the Starks indirectly and make them a little uncomfortable and then sit down with her favourite horror-comedies and ignore the rest of the world. This anniversary something had changed; either she had moved on, which was impossible because she was not the kind of woman that liked to move on, or she had too much work on her hands. The latter was very probable.
“Hey guess what, I quit my job,” Oberyn skipped into the scene happily before Elia could say anything else.
“What do you mean?” Their exasperated mother asked.
“I mean I couldn’t take the pain of working under an uptight Braavosi anymore. I quit the job. I’m going to open my own lab. Anyways, I have my life full of uptight people alright, there’s you and Eli, and Dory and I don’t need any others. I’m going to be an independent toxicologist and I promise you, I’m going to be the best Dorne has ever seen,” Oberyn grinned. Elia could see stars in her brother’s eyes, and she didn’t know if she should have said anything.
“I’m not going to spend any money on your lab,” Prime Minister Martell flatly stated.
“Mother, let’s not curb his enthusiasm please,” Elia gently nuded her mother’s foot.
“Do you think it was a bad decision?” Oberyn was bolted out of the blue. Now this took both his sensible mother and sister a little time to process, the fact that he thought it was a good idea.
“Now Oberyn, we can discuss this with a cool head sometime alright. As for now, you’ve made a big change in your life and maybe you’d like to celebrate?” Elia used her best disaster management tone.
“He doesn’t even realise it’s a disaster,” their mother groaned in despair.
“Please Maa, not now,” Elia glared.
“Why is it a bad decision?” Oberyn was adamant now.
“We can talk about this later,” Elia began placating again.
“No the two of you have to tell me what you think! I am not the naïve young boy anymore, even though you two may be equally scheming and clever!”
At this their mother got frustrated and left and Elia groaned through the chiaroscuro formed as her fingers engulfed her face and she sat in an action of utter despair. This day was strangely queer. She forgot her own anniversary, which had never happened before, and then her brother quit his job… and now she needed a break from this madhouse.
“I’m going out. I might be late,” she informed Oberyn curtly and left.
“I thought we were going to celebrate,” Oberyn’s voice was small and disappointed and Elia didn’t hear it when she left; otherwise, she would have stayed.
Elia’s feet found themselves to be quite worn by the time she reached ‘The Viper Retreat’. She never walked that much. A trip to ‘The Viper Retreat’ nearly always meant by car or, if Oberyn was available, even by a motorbike. She had never walked this far, but she was too distraught to try and explain her sudden physical vigour. Instead, she walked in with a roll of her tired eyes. Her eyes scanned the familiar den for an empty seat, and that was relatively easy to find, given that nobody came down here much anyways.
“Happy anniversary.”
“Rhaegar, what are you doing here?”
“Hmm, it’s nice to meet you too,” Rhaegar sat down next to Elia. She hadn’t asked him to.
“I cannot say the same about you,” Elia flatly replied before sipping on her over-expensive mineral water. Everything was over-expensive about this place, and she loved it.
“I do understand that,” Rhaegar nodded his head.
“You’re not a very understanding person Rhaegar, don’t even try,” Elia smirked bitterly.
“Madam, you seem to be extremely snappy today. It’s our anniversary,” Rhaegar crossed his arms in front of his chest. It was a strange playfulness that had taken over him. This was not the juvenile mindless kind he used to share with Lyanna.
“Rhaegar, I don’t know what you want, but leave me alone,” Elia snapped.
“Okay, somebody rained on your parade. Do I want to know who it was?”
“Rhaegar stop tempting me to throw this at your face,” Elia motioned to the warm glass of lime water she was having, and Rhaegar surrendered.
The waiters seemed to be pleasantly surprised. Elia and Rhaegar were old company, and they had missed having these two young lovers around. Some of them had been living under a rock because they clearly did not know what had happened between these two ‘young lovers’. They probably even failed to notice that neither was as young anymore.
“Mr. and Mrs. Targaryan, shall we get you your regulars?” An old good-natured waiter asked.
“I haven’t been called that in the longest time,” Elia smirked.
“Yes please get our regulars,” Rhaegar quickly dismissed the man as he looked back at Elia with the tiniest fringe of a smile on his lips. “I’m being called Mr. Targaryan in the office all the time. What do they call you around the office?”
“Why do you care?” Elia snapped all of a sudden. The entire event unfolding in front of her eyes was all too familiar, and she did not like it.
“Wow, somebody is moody today,” Rhaegar laughed.
“Just shut up, I’ve had a rough day,” Elia rolled her eyes as she sat back. If there was no escaping him, she’d rather grin and bear.
“Remember how wonderful anniversaries used to be. Our first time, we went to that yoga retreat and then we were up at that sauna—”
“And the Guru kept talking about spiritualism but you were visibly more interested in me,” Elia laughed remembering.
“You could have concentrated on the spiritualism if you wanted to,” Elia suggested.
“What kind of a crazy man would want to be an ascetic when you’re around?” Rhaegar smirked.
“Well I don’t know about that, but he sure can be an infidel can’t he?” Elia returned.
“Well thank you for making things awkward,” Rhaegar scratched the back of his head.
“Thanks for giving me the opportunity to. But honestly, today’s our anniversary, let’s be a little happy,” Elia raised an empty glass. To Rhaegar, that seemed to be a metaphor.
“It’s an empty glass Eli,” he spoke his mind.
“Oh yes sorry, didn’t notice,” Elia nonchalantly nodded. Rhaegar could sense the condescension in her voice.
“You know, there are better ways of insulting me,” he smirked bitterly.
“You know what, let’s forget all that. Today is our anniversary, and regardless of what may have come to pass, let’s enjoy our old regulars together. I badly need it,” Elia stated and Rhaegar was more than happy to oblige.
After a round of their beloved snacks and mock-tails in the tiny haunt, they turned to one of their favourite watering holes right beside it. Now while Elia was not a fan of alcohol whatsoever, she drank when she was with Rhaegar, and she drank tonight. Rhaegar was slightly taken aback by her enthusiasm and a little envious voice inside of him pricked and curiously, silently inquired as to whether some other male had incited the habit of alcohol into Elia. But he decided to ignore himself tonight.
“We were perfect. Why did you have to ruin everything?” An inebriated Elia spoke.
“I don’t know. True love does that to you,” Rhaegar’s speech had begun to slur but he was still in
his senses.

“What true love Rhaegar? Where is your true love now?”

“She is travelling. I let her go,” Rhaegar tried puffing his chest in pride.

“Yes, because it feeds into your delicate ego,” Elia eyed him distastefully.

“No… that’s not true,” Rhaegar fumbled.

“Was she better in bed? Could she have been? A piece of wood and a Dornish viper, hmm, I wonder,” Elia drunkenly surmised and Rhaegar looked down in shame. He couldn’t admit, even with his dying breath, that Lyanna had been terrible in bed. She was far too young and excited, but true love was supposed to oversee all of that. Clearly, it had not, but the topic still rendered Rhaegar guilty. Elia took Rhaegar’s silence for what it was, the affirmative. “Oh, she was not.”

“I never said that!”

“Have you looked in your eyes?” Elia giggled. She loved observing Rhaegar’s lies. It was solid entertainment.

“Have you ever bothered to look in my eyes Elia? Or understand my dreams, or lay on the grass with me and share them with me? Have you ever gone horse-riding with me or shown me gymnastic stunts? Have you ever wondered how amazing it must be to do manly things, instead of cowering for your pleasure only?”

“I’m sorry, I didn’t know you were interested in men; and I also didn’t know that to be a strong woman, I needed to stop being one.”

“That’s not what I was insinuating,” Rhaegar began to defend himself.

“Then what the hell were you insinuating?” Elia mocked him.

“I don’t know,” Rhaegar was slightly drunk and began crying by this point.

“Okay, Rhaegar don’t cry. We’ve talked about this, you don’t cry in public,” Elia tried to calm him down. But the boy had become uncontrollable at this point.

“I try, I really do but I just can’t seem to help being the absolute ass that I am. I knew what I was getting into was wrong, not only for moral standards, but as a man and as a person, I was doing a wrong thing. Sometimes Elia, you know you’re bad, you’re very bad, and that just seems liberating. It’s no excuse for being the monster that I was but you understand this feeling, I know you do,” Rhaegar blabbered on and on.

They ended up spending the night together. This was in the most sensuous manner possible. It had been a long time since they had had anybody; honestly, leave alone the electrifying company of each other, with all that impeccable chemistry. When the morning dawned and Elia fluttered her pretty eyes open, she was feeling good- for herself, not for Rhaegar.

“Is this your hotel room,” she nudged Rhaegar awake.

“Yeah, looks like it,” Rhaegar groggily groaned out of his sleep.

“Thank god, I wouldn’t want to give Maa any false hope,” Elia sighed the sigh of relief. “Plus with Oby’s new decision things are a lot heavier there, no more shocks for them.”

“Hey, what do you mean ‘false hope’? What kind of false hope are you talking about?”

“Well you know, my mother still fantasises about us getting back together; so us sleeping would seem to her to be a step in that very direction,” Elia explained.

“Well, what significance does last night hold for you?” Rhaegar asked feeling a little agitated.

“Oh well there’s two parts to this- firstly I completed the anniversary sex that you owed me, remember, when you were fucking Lyanna Stark instead? That was the part regarding you. The second part is with regards to Lyanna. She’s not going to want you back when she comes back from her short period of allowed freedom (because she only wants you), because she won’t be able to forget the fact that you did in fact sleep with me. Oh and if by some manipulative miracle you happen to get back with her, I’ve recorded every single thing you said last night about how she’s a wooden board in bed. The main point here is that you two loners can live out your miserable lives in whichever way you deem fit, I can live happy.”

When she left that morning, Rhaegar didn’t hate himself because he had a grudging respect for the mastermind that she was; he simply hated himself for not seeing that earlier.
Chapter Summary

I am so so so so so so so so SORRY. Like super colossally apologetic. I am pretty sure most of you thought I had abandoned this. Heck, through this entire stretch of time, even I had thought so; but I love Elia and her Rhaegar far too much to ever do that! I promise I am never going to take so much time ever again. However, I dare proudly say, I had good reason for all of this delay. Me and my band, we released our very first single! So we're signed to a label in New York and we were super busy with the recording, mastering and release. If any of you are interested, I'll link you to the song. Plus there was college, and a sudden family vacation to South Africa. As you can tell, I have been busy. And yet that was no reason for me to be SO irregular with this update.

By the way, this chapter is pretty special to me because it's a homage to my favorite novel, 'Gone Girl' by Gillian Flynn. I have even used an excerpt from there. I highly suggest you read it if you haven't yet. The movie was pretty good too!
All rights go to the author and the novel, I own none of what I have quoted.
All the Love.

A.

“It’s my favourite book, you should really try it,” Rhaegar turned around sharply at the interruption of a soft voice. He did not like to be disturbed when he was spending time with books, but this was an attractive woman.
“I’m really not into thrillers, but if you’re recommending, I’ll consider it,” he replied politely, with a small smile playing on his lips.
“It’s not a conventional ‘thriller’. Well it’s not a conventional anything really. I don’t know what kind of books you like, I can’t guarantee that you’ll like what it’s trying to say, but you’ll be thrilled for sure. Maybe that’s why it’s called a thriller,” Elia replied.
“Do you work here?”
“Excuse me; do I look like someone who would work here?”
Rhaegar looked the woman up and down. He was not much of a social butterfly, so he never really observed people well; but at the stinging rhetoric the young woman had thrown at him, he was bound to evaluate her appearance. She was rich- this much was clear. Her pointy heels seemed to be from one of those personalised designers his mother loved visiting so much, and the sleek, short black dress with a strange cut at the sleeves seemed to be straight out of a vintage heiress’ wardrobe, but the dead giveaway was definitely the small string of fat pearls sitting heavily on her dainty olive neck. She was a beautifully well-groomed classy young lady, and no, she certainly did not work for this shady small bookstore.
“I’m sorry, I hadn’t noticed,” he humbly apologised.
“How do you work here?”

Rhaegar looked down in a giddy and embarrassed manner which made Elia laugh quite generously. Rhaegar decided he liked the sound of her laughter, and through the unfolding of their meeting, he also began to like her. Her presence was not jarring, and she challenged him in how intelligent she was, but not half as dreamy. It was strange, and fascinating to the young man. He bought the novel she recommended, although he wasn’t sure about whether he would like that.
“Do you come here often?”
“Oh no, my car broke down. I live in Dorne, this is my first time in King’s Landing,” Elia chuckled, and explained her presence.

“Are you Elia Martell?” The richness and abundance suddenly struck Rhaegar. Plus he was expecting a woman at the King’s Landing Square in half an hour and this bookstore was really close by.

“Yes I am. But how could you have guessed that? Don’t find me creepy but I guessed who you are right at the beginning. I think it’s the hair,” Elia chuckled vigorously.

“Well I’m expecting you at the Square in about thirty minutes so I guessed it must have been you. Your pearls were a dead giveaway,” Rhaegar joked.

“I hope they would be in Dorne as well, but almost all the women are wearing pearls all the time!” Elia laughed. “Tell me; don’t women wear pearls in King’s Landing?”

“Besides my mother, I’ve never seen too many. Probably Mrs. Lannister when she was alive,” Rhaegar reminisced.

“Well I’ll get to meet Tywin Lannister. I am looking forward to that,” Elia beamed.

“Why would you be looking forward to something like that?” Rhaegar looked aghast.

“Well, he is a great man and despite his faults, his pragmatism is something I admire. Don’t you?”

“Well I don’t know. That man lives in our mansion and I don’t like him one bit. He’s not bad to me, he’s even pushy, but I’ve just never… been able to appreciate people like that.”

“Well something in your eyes says you’re beginning to appreciate me,” Elia gently nudged what could have been the delicate boundaries of flirtation. She doubted Rhaegar would understand or subsequently respond.

“Yes I do appreciate you. I mean I’m talking to you for so long, that doesn’t happen with a lot of people,” Rhaegar grew flustered.

“Well let’s just say Tywin Lannister and I share common traits,” Elia stated eloquently.

Rhaegar brushed that comment away with a slight flick of his purple eyes. There would come a time when he would fiercely wish he had listened to her as she gave him the warning signs. And then there would come a time when he would come to appreciate these warnings more than life itself. They would not be bad warnings anymore, simply a flash of brilliance which his stupidity at some point of time may have mistaken to be the certified character of a complete bitch. When this second realisation was to hit Rhaegar, he was to loathe himself as a complete idiot. But on that first day, it seemed to be a simple and amusing comment.

“You do know why I was sent to fetch you right? I mean, I’m not even a doctor.”

“I’m not a doctor either. I am a hospital pharmacist,” Elia rectified.

“You didn’t go to Med. School?”

“Why would I go to Med. School? I studied pharmacology but I’m not a retail pharmacist, I only work with hospitals,” Elia was a little taken aback at the lack of knowledge.

“Well, I am a railroad detective,” Rhaegar simply announced.

“I thought you were a cop,” Elia replied.

“Well yes, but my rank is detective and I specialise in and around transportation systems, especially railroads. I’ve always loved trains. I cannot bear the thought of anybody messing with them,” Rhaegar explained adorably.

“Well that is cute,” Elia laughed and was met with a glare from the man himself.

Now, neither of them wanted to admit it, but Elia was glad Rhaegar had been sent, and Rhaegar was glad he had come to fetch her. By the end of the night, when they finally found their way back to the main city where he had to drop her off at Lewin Martell’s posh uptown apartment, there was a glint in her nieces’ eyes which Lewin was quick to notice, but kept quiet. After all, he was a detective as well.

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“Oh no, we didn’t meet in college,” Elia began explaining to a lady who was extremely eager to know how she had ‘bagged’ such a husband. Rhaegar was highly annoyed.

“Well then where did you bag such a young and handsome thing?” The Old Lady proceeded.
“Excuse me, I am not a ‘thing’ and my wife did not ‘bag’ me and we are on our honeymoon and would love to be left alone,” Rhaegar interrupted, finally not being able to take it.

“Rhaegar, that is rude!” Elia chided.

“Oh no, he’s just a young man who can’t wait to bed his wife. Well I hate to burst your bubble but this is not the kind of train where you can. And I’m sorry too, I totally understand your emotions. The honeymoon period and she’s quite an attractive woman isn’t she?” The old lady chatted away.

“Oh dear god,” Elia flushed red, but this Rhaegar found to be extremely amusing.

The old Lady finally needed to use the loo, and Elia heaved a sigh of relief. By this point in time, Rhaegar was fascinated by the exchanges, and considering how much they made Elia redden, he was enjoying it. He pulled her closer by the hand and gently let his lips linger over the top of her enclosed fist, intertwined with his. Elia was busier looking out for when the old Lady might come back because she did not wish to be embroiled in any sexual conversation any further.

“Your utterly handsome husband is sitting right here, and you are looking for what?” Rhaegar whispered into her ear, letting his lips linger there as well.

“That lady is what I’m looking for,” Elia muttered.

“My, my dear wife; why did you not reveal your true nature to me before marriage? I’ll die if you are ever to apply for a divorce?” Rhaegar feigned distraught and Elia swatted him.

“This is not funny. This old Lady behaves as if I’m a nymphomaniac. Maybe it’s because I’m Dornish,” Elia mused in a small and disappointed tone, as she played with a loose strand of her crochet dress.

“Hmm, and I love how Dornish you are,” Rhaegar gently brushed his hand against her thigh.

“You think so too!” Elia angrily pushed his hand out of the way, a natural wrathfully adorable pout forming.

“I think you are as Dornish as a Septa!” Rhaegar exclaimed. “I am trying to teach you a thing or two, pay attention.”

“Excuse me; I am no Septa whatsoever. Seven Hells, can’t a woman be a normal person! And don’t you worry about teaching me, I’ve learned just fine,” Elia cockily replied.

Now it was Rhaegar’s turn to turn red as Elia skilfully ran her leg down his under the table and brought him closer to her. Rhaegar grasped her other toe and pulled her in for a kiss, but it had to be kept short and chaste because by this time, the old lady had returned and they did not wish to get teased any longer. Elia concentrated on the steaming cup of tea she had been trying to normalise the temperature of and Rhaegar went back to the non-fiction prose book he had been trying to read.

The lady sat down with renewed interest.

“The two of you seem ruffled enough. Maybe I should leave and come back some time later?” She cackled sweetly.

“No, there’s no need. Although the washroom is always open in case you need to use it,” Rhaegar sarcastically expressed, and earned himself a kick under the table from his wife. Elia was far too fond of politeness and social conduct.

“Understandably you want to get rid of me, but I can look the other way,” the old lady kept up her relentless teasing.

“Do you happen to be related to Olenna Tyrell?” Rhaegar finally asked caving in. of course, there were no odds that any elder lady with a sharp tongue was going to be related to Mrs. Tyrell but he was going to try his luck.

“Yes, we went to the same boarding school, how did you know?” The Lady smiled with glee.

“I also went to the same boarding that Mrs. Tyrell went to! What a coincidence!” Elia beamed. Rhaegar smiled because it was good to see his Ice Queen of a wife smile from time to time. She exuded the warmth of the Sun.

“Ahh, now I see how you’re so ladylike. Otherwise most girls today are just…” “Intolerable.” Elia finished her sentence.

“Yes you little lady, absolutely!”

“I know they’re all just ‘cool girls’. Have you read Gone Girl by the way?” Elia inquired.

“Olenna told me about it. I think she’s going to gift it to me, for my birthday,” the lady grinned.
“Well that is wonderful. Do get back to me about whether you liked it or not,” Elia smiled warmly. Rhaegar was appalled at the way the mention of the novel never failed to light up her face. The rest of the road was spent with Elia trying to explain the significance of the book without giving out too many spoilers and the old lady absorbing it all up like a sponge. Rhaegar had not touched the book. Somehow he felt like if he read it, the entire fun of Elia egging him on to read it, or trying to analyse the main themes, meandering around the plot because apparently it was the kind of plot whose description would give away the main twist; would be lost. Rhaegar loved playing these games with Elia, and he wasn’t going to stop any time soon.

“Now the two of you go along, and enjoy yourselves. The poor boy is practically bursting,” the old lady stated and then both the ladies laughed over the pun and Rhaegar rolled his eyes because they thought he couldn’t hear them.

“Thank you so much ma’am,” Elia finally shook hands with her and they parted ways. Rhaegar heaved a great sigh of relief, something that Elia understood, and subtly elbowed him in the abdomen, trying to teach him public manners. Rhaegar continued to argue that his public manners were impeccable given that he had not strangled the lady in the course of the journey, and Elia continued to occasionally drive her stiletto into his suede shoes in the hopes of disciplining him. Their entire day was spent trying to navigate the confusing hill station and when they finally reached their secluded wooden cottage, Elia finally gave up all hopes of disciplining the man, and let him do precisely as he pleased her, all night long. It was the beginning of a wonderful honeymoon; one that Elia would come to wish, had never ended.

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“It’s your birthday next week. Let’s just the two of us take a jet into some secluded island, for old times’ sake, come on,” Elia wrapped her arms around Rhaegar’s torso and placed a gentle butterfly kiss on his shoulder. The silver-haired man squirmed out of discomfort.

“Actually, we’re going to be bogged down with work that day,” he began, trying to sound convincing. It was a tough feat, lying to a viper.

“But it’s your birthday! And you’re the most important man in the city. I am sure all work can wait. Come on, it’s on a Friday; we can take the weekend off. I’ll tell Uncle Ty, don’t you worry,” Elia began planning internally already.

Rhaegar hesitated, and Elia was an intelligent woman. That was the first night when Elia took a quick glance at her partner’s phone. It had been lighting up one too many times. The clever man had put it on ‘silent’ or ‘vibrate’ she couldn’t make out which one. There seemed to be a massive ridge between them and building bridges took time. It was usually easier to find a twisted route along to the back of the other side- and burn it. Elia was a patient woman, and she was willing to burn Rhaegar’s world.

“What would you do if I told you I was pregnant?” Elia quietly asked as he drew circles on Rhaegar’s chest. His hand was loosely around her waist; as if this was not the waist he wanted to hold.

“Well Baby, that’s impossible. I mean we haven’t really, you know, in the longest amount of time, so I guess I’d laugh at your weird attempt to make a joke,” Rhaegar nervously spoke. There had been a shift in his vocal tone, considering, he had been humming a melancholic tune before this. But Elia noticed two things- the first being that he called her ‘Baby’, Elia hated that endearment more than anything; and the second being that Rhaegar was of the opinion that she was not funny, and her attempt at a joke could be labelled ‘weird’ at best.

“Well you do remember the Lannister party three months ago right? We were both quite drunk, plus you left without talking to me in the morning. You were actually looking guilty for making love to your own wife,” Elia played with her words, and her hair.

“Yes I do remember,” Rhaegar froze at the memory.

“Well, then there’s your possibility,” Elia shrugged.

“Elia… you really don’t mean…” Rhaegar’s voice quivered.

“Rhaegar, look at you, you’re so pale! You do want a child right?” Elia sat up.
Elia, it’s a wonderful thing. But then, maybe the two of us are not ready yet,” Rhaegar tried to reason.

“How many more years do the two of us possibly need? Plus, your parents are always up my throat and honestly, I wouldn’t mind,” Elia shrugged.

Rhaegar was swift to sit up. This tone that his wife was assuming did not seem to be safe at all. It was not time yet to expose his affair with the young and pretty Lyanna Stark at all. Rhaegar only ever wanted her to be safe and with the marriage between him and Elia being such a perfect one, and at the peak of its’ social media zenith, he knew people would tear Lyanna apart. That is what happened to young girls on the internet. Rhaegar could not risk it. On the other hand, he could not be having a child with a woman he did not love.

“Yes, are you pregnant or not?” He asked, exasperated.

“Yes, yes I am pregnant! Please tell me you’re happy,” Elia beamed and glowed.

“Yes, I am happy,” Rhaegar tentatively replied. He was honestly confused. He should be happy, but he couldn’t bring himself to be so.

“For an expecting father, you do sound awfully confused,” Elia laughed, placing small butterfly kisses on his face.

“I am excited, I’m also very young,” Rhaegar grumbled.

“You’re not that young,” Elia rolled her eyes.

“Elia you are serious, yes?” Rhaegar raised an eyebrow. That’s when Elia sat up.

“Yes Rhaegar, I am serious. Why are you acting so strange about this?” Elia sharply asked.

Rhaegar decided never to bring that topic up again. He only smiled and allowed the festivities to begin pouring in. There was going to be a Targaryan-Martell child, it was the perfect diplomatic triumph. Lyanna was devastated and it took Rhaegar a lot of hard work to convince her that he was not cheating on her- with his own wife. That was a strange conversation.

“Elia, are you sure you want to stay with this asshole?” Jaime growled.

“Yes Jaime, I want to stay with this asshole- I need to stay with this asshole. I need to teach him a lesson,” Elia rubbed her swollen belly.

“He didn’t show up for such an important sonogram!” Jaime began shouting again.

“And honestly, he’s planning to call the baby Rhaenys. Like he doesn’t even care about her, but he’s planning to call her Rhaenys. That’s ridiculous,” Varys groaned.

None of her friends approved. Elia’s mother was happy that she had made the decision to stay, and that she was staying discreet, but more than once, the Prime Minister of Dorne had suggested to her daughter that she slip in a few drops of Dornish venom into Rhaegar’s steaming cup of tea… Elia had politely declined, although it was a thought which had occasionally crossed her mind as well. But Elia grew weaker in the course of her pregnancy, and had to resort, at great lengths, to her bed.

“My sister has been spirited away,” Ned Stark grit his teeth as he banged his fists upon Rhaegar’s well-arranged table.

“Excuse me, I am not a magician. And why have you come to me?” Rhaegar deepened his frown.


“I honestly do not know where your sister is,” Rhaegar countered.

“If we don’t get her back by the evening, I promise you, it’s not going to be easy,” Ned warned before storming off.

Now Rhaegar was in a complete dilemma. He began calling Lyanna but after first the couple of missed calls, the phone appeared to be switched off and by the waning twilight he was extremely worried about where Lyanna could be. The first thought which flashed across his brain had been his father’s whim, but then an argument from the previous night flashed into his mind- it must have been Elia! Granted she was six months pregnant, but she was a crazy woman, she was capable of anything!

“Elia Martell, where are you?” He demanded over the phone.

“I am at home. Where else would I be?” Elia was perplexed.
“Where have you hidden my Lyanna?”
“Excuse me, are you high?”
“Elia, please tell me the truth. I’ll never see her again I promise, but I can’t live knowing she is not safe,” Rhaegar choked back multiple sobs.
“Rhaegar, stop being such a fool and hang up the phone. I’m feeling really sick,” Elia replied, irritated.
“Elia Martell, you tell me what you have done with the love of my life right now! I demand it!” Rhaegar hollered.
“Rhaegar, you have lost your mind, stop shouting at me, it’s not good for the baby,” Elia pleaded.
“Elia, listen to me, if anything, and I mean anything happens to Lyanna- you will pay!” Rhaegar threw the phone across the room, and instantly regretted it. Although he couldn’t quite put a finger on what he exactly regretted.

Elia on the other hand was so extremely shaken that she had to get up from the comfortable position she had been occupying on the bed. The ‘Cool Girl’ speech was playing on the large screen in front of her. There was a well-used weather-beaten copy of Gone Girl splayed on the bed in front of her. All of a sudden, Elia knew what she had to do, but she wasn’t going to fake her own death. She had not planned all that meticulously and Rhaegar, along with everybody else, knew that plot far too well. No, Elia would get to work immediately, Rhaegar and Lyanna would get the punishment they deserved, but she was also going to have to work fast.

“Father, you had no right doing something like this!” Rhaegar growled.
“Great, now my cheater son is going to teach me right from wrong,” Aerys smirked.
“Not a cheater, he’s a lover; that’s not a crime,” Lyanna moaned.
“Shut up imbecile. Where did you find her Rhaegar? She’s fit enough to be your daughter,” Aerys shook his head.
“Father that is enough. Now please return Lyanna to her home, her family, and end this matter. I’ll get a divorce as soon as the custody of my child is ensured,” Rhaegar announced his plan.

Lyanna’s eyes were sparkling.
“First handle this child properly,” Aerys gaped.
“Sir, there are cops at the door,” the head-butler came in to inform.
“What do you mean by ‘cops’? Not the police surely,” Aerys was ready to dismiss the man doing his job.
“Yes, the police Sir. They are looking for your son, and Miss. Lyanna,” the butler cordially informed; he looked quite pleased with himself.

The entire room seemed to be extremely confused. Aerys was a little relieved they were not looking for him, but he also reminded himself that he could be next and he was not being paranoid. Rhaegar and Lyanna seemed to be startled, more than anything, but when they did not receive any intimation from Aerys, they both moved towards the door where the butler was graciously waiting for them. Rhaegar could hear foreboding music in his ears already. Elia had been silent for too long, especially after the terrible chiding she had received from him. Something was terribly wrong; he could feel it in his bones.

“Go, find out what the police want from him,” Aerys ordered Varys who had been silently standing in a corner.

When Varys came back, he could hardly suppress his laughter. Both Rhaegar and Lyanna had miraculously become implicated in a fraud and theft plot that was linked to some of the major stockholdings that the Martells had. Neither could be exempted easily, and it was in everybody’s best interest that they shifted quite far away from each other. Elia, obviously, had to be given the best treatment for the media was dead sympathetic towards her. She lived in Rhaegar’s house, and was tended to quite carefully by his confused parents.

Rhaegar had been fuming and crying vociferously by turns. He had been duped by a wife he only considered to be ladylike and light-headed at most and witty at best. He had been separated from
the love of his life, and he had to spend a week in prison before any bail plea would even be entertained. It was on his fifth day that Rhaegar received a well-packaged note in the neatest handwriting he had ever seen- and he knew who that hand belonged to. There was an immediate frown on his face, but having nothing better to do, he read on:

“Men always say that as the defining compliment, don’t they? She’s a cool girl. Being the Cool Girl means I am a hot, brilliant, funny woman who adores football, poker, dirty jokes, and burping, who plays video games, drinks cheap beer, loves threesomes and anal sex, and jams hot dogs and hamburgers into her mouth like she’s hosting the world’s biggest culinary gang bang while somehow maintaining a size 2, because Cool Girls are above all hot. Hot and understanding. Cool Girls never get angry; they only smile in a chagrined, loving manner and let their men do whatever they want. Go ahead, shit on me, I don’t mind, I’m the Cool Girl.

Men actually think this girl exists. Maybe they’re fooled because so many women are willing to pretend to be this girl. For a long time Cool Girl offended me. I used to see men – friends, coworkers, strangers – giddy over these awful pretender women, and I’d want to sit these men down and calmly say: You are not dating a woman, you are dating a woman who has watched too many movies written by socially awkward men who’d like to believe that this kind of woman exists and might kiss them. I’d want to grab the poor guy by his lapels or messenger bag and say: The bitch doesn’t really love chili dogs that much – no one loves chili dogs that much! And the Cool Girls are even more pathetic: They’re not even pretending to be the woman they want to be, they’re pretending to be the woman a man wants them to be. Oh, and if you’re not a Cool Girl, I beg you not to believe that your man doesn’t want the Cool Girl. It may be a slightly different version – maybe he’s a vegetarian, so Cool Girl loves seitan and is great with dogs; or maybe he’s a hipster artist, so Cool Girl is a tattooed, bespectacled nerd who loves comics. There are variations to the window dressing, but believe me, he wants Cool Girl, who is basically the girl who likes every fucking thing he likes and doesn’t ever complain. (How do you know you’re not Cool Girl? Because he says things like: “I like strong women.” If he says that to you, he will at some point fuck someone else. Because “I like strong women” is code for “I hate strong women.”)

Gone Girl- Gillian Flynn.
From your not-so-cool Woman
Elia. Love and kisses.

Rhaegar was about to crumple the paper and throw it away but his hand rebelled against everything he wanted to do. Rhaegar couldn’t find the strength to throw away the piece of paper that was so profound and pricked his conscience so greatly that he had to bite down on his lip to choke the flood of sobs of guilt that were threatening to pour. What had Elia done to him? He had fallen in love, which was not a crime, and he was a good man, not Robert; so why did he feel like so much of an asshole?

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Rhaenys was the most beautiful creature Rhaegar had ever laid eyes on. Her tan skin was so purely sun-kissed, and the laughter erupting from her plump pink lips was a high, jovial gurgle, better than anything he had ever heard; her countenance was that of a bright sun, she truly was a Dornish child. When Rhaegar first held her, the little thing gurgled so happily that Rhaegar’s guilt twisted and turned into absolute happiness. There was a giddiness inside him that was not light. It was bubbling yes, but not light- it was heavy, the happiest he had ever been.

“I am such an idiot; such an asshole, such a horrible and horribly stupid person!” Rhaegar groaned, to nobody in particular.

“Self-realisation is beautiful isn’t it?” Aerys mocked bitterly. The child was smiling, but nobody was really happy in the room.

“Yes father, it sucks,” Rhaegar was extremely surly.

“So, exactly what is going to happen to the child?” Jaime was as confused as ever.

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“Not now Jaime, we’ll discuss that tomorrow,” Elia’s tired voice finally spoke.
“So, she’s going to be called Rhaenys, isn’t she?” Varys asked tentatively.
The entire room turned to look towards him. Varys put his guard up and pretended not to notice that he was being haplessly scrutinised. Elia was feeling sourly distasteful about the name, as would have been a normal reaction for any Dornish parent. Oberyn was seething at the corner of the room; at least he was not tearing Rhaegar apart that Elia had tried her best to ensure. Aerys was proud, that his extremely Dornish granddaughter that one good Targaryan thing about her. Jaime was simply nervous about all the mixed energy and Rhaegar was a hopeless puppy. Blissfully unaware and completely happy was the lovely little angel. Rhaenys even gurgled, caressing her tiny fingers over her father’s face, and for a moment, Rhaegar forgot everything else.
“She’s a lot like Lyanna isn’t she?” Jaime smirked.
“Jaime, cut it out,” Elia warned even as Aerys and Varys cackled over the joke. The rest of the night was spent among these mismatched people, all united by the power of a tiny little girl. Elia was one proud mother.
“I will call you. Then we can discuss a possible living plan,” Rhaegar began.
“There’s nothing to discuss Rhaegar. Would you really like to divorce the wife you stole from?” Elia asked innocently.
“You and I both know it was not me,” Rhaegar rolled his eyes. Elia was a twisted woman, through grudging respect; he had even come to admire it.
“Please Rhaegar, I cannot play the blame game right now. I have just given birth, how can you come and charge me likes this? I understand that you needed the money then Rhaegar, but you should have asked me once,” Elia began in the sweetest tone.
The sudden change of voice from cold to warm alarmed Rhaegar greatly. He knew neither of them bought the bullshit she was spouting, but something was very wrong. His eyes immediately flicked to her phone which was recording… of course, she probably thought he was wired by the cops. She was a smart woman, and she was also building blackmail material against him. Why did Rhaegar want to kiss her out of spite? At this point of time, he was not even sure whether it was spite at all. He sucked in a deep breath. Something needed to be done if he wanted more time to figure out exactly what he felt towards Elia, and he needed both Elia and Rhaenys right next to him while he was at it. He was a selfish man, and probably always would be one.
“I am sorry,” he spoke tentatively.
“Is there anything else you would like to say?” Elia asked amusedly. Rhaegar had been silently hovering, and it made her uneasy.
“Where did I go wrong? How did things so completely fall apart? I was a good man, I promise I was Elia. What kind of love changes a good person into an absolute monster? I know people will say there’s nothing wrong in what I did, and Ashara and Lyanna shall vouch for my innocence and inherent good character till their last breath. But I know what I did; I know that I can’t go to sleep at night for it. How does that happen Elia?” Rhaegar asked in absolute desperation.
“That happens, where love begins, but humanity happens to end Rhaegar. It’s worse than hate.”
The Player

Chapter Summary

Oh my god I am royally late this time!! I have no defense except the fact that juggling a music career and college can be a major pain in the ass and even then I know I should have been more regular. I could have been but I was simply too lazy. I love all of you so much and if you are still around to this site and still like to read ASIOAF fan-fiction then do hit this up. I have missed all of you so so much!! Mwah!
All the love.
A.

The vapid stench of overused deodorants, cigarette-camouflaging gum, and teenage excitement floated around the securely sealed bus. The cacophony of over thirty-five students singing in their own scale and octave was a sure-fire recipe to distract the driver. He almost did not notice the puppy in the middle of the road and the bus came to a screeching halt. The singing stopped, and for a few moments, everybody was dead still. A group of four or five reckless young people running over a spell-casting woman at the dead of the night and getting killed off one by one was one thing, but some of the most reputed students of two of the most posh institutions in Westeros, getting embroiled in a road conflict was a completely separate matter. The speaker in the middle of the seats screeched as the driver reassured the children that nothing was wrong. A collective sigh of relief was heaved.
“I almost thought we’d be sent to jail,” Jaime heaved a sigh of relief.
“No Jaime, I am almost sure a Lannister wouldn’t have to spend an hour even, at a correctional home,” Varys mocked.
“Cut it out both of you,” Elia silenced them.
That stopped that conversation and Elia resumed her deep watch outside the window. The soft wind let her loose locks gently sway. Varys and Jaime laughed among themselves because they knew whenever Elia did that she felt like she was an actress straight out of a movie. Elia did notice them, but pretended not to.
On the other hand, the rich kids from King’s Landing High were trying to distract Rhaegar from whatever thick novel it was that he was so completely engrossed in. Arthur and Jon tried blasting some of his favourite music but Rhaegar Targaryan was a man of moods. When he would feel musical, not a soul could stir him. Now was not that time.
“Hey, did you know we ran over a dog?” Arthur finally tried.
“Art, that’s a terrible thing to say,” Rhaegar commented while turning a page.
“Well, we actually almost did,” Ashara validated her brother.
Rhaegar seemed to be extremely bothered by that fact, but he tried to shrug it off. Now, no puppy really died, and he could go back to reading his book in peace. He was pretty fond of puppies though, it was a shame his father wasn’t. Lately, Rhaegar had gotten to contemplating; what was his father fond of at all? Maybe Wildfire, and the stench of burning flesh; nothing Rhaegar detested more in this whole wide world.
The young enthusiasts poured out like classy champagne when the bus came to a final halt because the destination was here. The destination was like this elite summer camp, which took place in a five-star hilltop resort. There were going to be a host of fancy programs for the fancy kids to participate in, and some very specially designed, super safe nature activities. The best part was the food though, and the children were promised something new every day.
“It’s too sunny, I like it,” Rhaegar trudged up a rocky pathway. His efficient, expensive backpack was trudging along with him.

“I love it too! I love everything about nature, the trees, and the horse-riding with the wind blowing through my hair, and just the simple joy of being in nature,” his ex-girlfriend Lyanna Stark was trying to keep up with his long legs. She was not extremely successful. Actually, they still had feelings for each other; it was only that they had been forced apart by Rhaegar’s parents—father, mostly.

“It’s amazing, the number of similarities you share with monkeys,” Jaime snidely commented before smoothly walking past both Rhaegar and Lyanna.

“That is not nice Lannister,” Rhaegar shouted back, as Jaime had made it up the pathway already. “I’m a Lannister, I don’t even need to be paid to be nice; not that I’m ever going to try,” Jaime called out as he blew a raspberry.

“Don’t mind him, he’s a kid,” Rhaegar looked back and gently consoled Lyanna who seemed to be greatly affected by the statement.

“How can I not? He is one of the best athletes in school, I really want to be like him and he hates me,” Lyanna sniffled.

“He doesn’t hate you. Nobody can hate you,” Rhaegar explained.

“Do you hate me?” Lyanna asked innocently.

“Why would you ask such a question?” Rhaegar mused out too loudly.

“Because she’s an idiot, just like you,” Varys answered, having quietly slipped his steps beside them. With equal stealth, he walked up higher than them. They were far too disgusting to be in the same vicinity of.

“Don’t listen to them,” Rhaegar softly said before walking ahead of Lyanna. He couldn’t be seen talking to her for too long. That would spell trouble for them both.

“Rhaegar Targaryan, he’s the one,” Jaime exclaimed as he plopped down beside Varys. They were both panting after the long trudge upwards. The summit seemed sweet, although it was less summit and more resort at any rate.

“You mean for the bet?” Varys cocked an eyebrow.

“Yup; he is handsome, a famed ‘popular player’ at least till he met Lyanna Stark, and right now he is vulnerable and hurting so it would be absolutely amazing to watch Elia take him down,” Jaime grinned.

“You know what, I think I agree with you,” Varys nodded slowly.

“Elia is perfect,” Arthur mused.

“Art, keep it down. Although Rhae may not show it, being the rebellious boy that he’s trying to be, and going all over Lyanna Stark and stuff, he still has the secret hot-s for her,” Jon Connington warned.

“I am talking about Elia, for Rhae. That little crush I had on the woman was a young and childish thing Jon, I’m over it. Plus, Elia never felt anything for me. As a child I thought she was just being cruel but now I feel like she’s not capable of feeling at all,” Arthur mused.

“Then how are we going to pair them up?” Jon asked puzzled.

“I just feel like they’ll help each other out. One man feels way too much, and one woman doesn’t feel anything at all. If you think about it, it’s perfect. The universe wants balance my friend. And plus, it’s not like we’re asking Rhae to get married. Every year at this camp one popular guy and one popular girl date each other and secretly try to dump each other first. Considering that Elia hangs out with those two twisted people Varys and Jaime, I’m pretty sure they’d be enthusiastic as well,” Arthur explained.

“Well, if you say so. But Art, what if they fall in love?” Jon pressed again.

“Then we will be happy for our friends,” Arthur reasonably replied.

Jon seemed to be a tad bit cynical about the whole ordeal but he didn’t say anything. The ‘player game’ was a ritual at this summer camp and this was their first time— they had to make the most of it. He only hoped Elia’s friends were not as enthusiastic about this whole idea; after all, he was a little more attached to Rhaegar than he should have been, and he didn’t like his friend around girls...
that would never understand him.
“Rhaegar Targaryan, he’s perfect,” Varys explained.
“That is a statement more disturbing than I can explain to you,” Jaime gagged.
“Not for me, please Jaime, I’m not crazy; I’m talking about Elia,” Varys defended himself.
“So you think she’s crazy,” Jaime laughed.
“Well I wouldn’t know that,” Varys made a face which clearly spelt out ‘not going to risk my life by calling Elia crazy’ and then went back to speaking, “but I know she’s perfect for Rhaegar. Even the Mad King can see it.” The Mad King was a cute nickname for the Mad President, also known as Rhaegar Targaryan’s father.
“Do you think these two should be picked out for the Player games?” Jaime came to the point, “is that what you were hinting at?”
“Yes, that is precisely what I am stating. But who will break it to Elia?”
As if on cue, Elia entered the room. The three of them were sharing the same room. This was the best part about the summer camp- friends could live in the same room; heck even lovers could choose to do so, as long as they passed off as friends in front of everybody. There was also the occasional lone wolf who didn’t like any disruption in their life and chose to stay singly; one such creepy person was Petyr Baelish. Elia laid her pink suitcase down gently and frowned at the sudden silence which had descended upon her chatty friends.
“Did I miss something?”

The spirit of a reluctant man working on compulsion, honour and tradition appeared clearly on his face. Rhaegar wore a scowl for most of the next day, once his friends had announced that he had been chosen for the Player games. He tried to argue that Robert was a better fit, Robert was hedonistic and in his hedonism had garnered significant popularity but all discussion and argument seemed to be squashed when his friends showed him his empty Instagram page which had more followers than most of the other popular boys added up together. Rhaegar was highly weary, but he did hold tradition in some sort of regard, and agreed to get over with the thing. He was also highly disappointed when he realised he had had to ‘seduce’ Elia Martell. She seemed to be awfully boring and high-brow- not as intellectual as him, but simply high-brow. That was a kind Rhaegar could not tolerate.

On the other hand, Elia would not stop laughing at the idea. She found it fascinating that the pseudo-intellectual son of the President would actually agree to something like this. From what she had seen of Rhaegar, he was a man too secretly proud of the occasional charity that he did and suffering from an inflated ego which came from the constant admirations of his personal puppy Lyanna Stark regarding his voice and his brains and Elia could not care less for somebody that pompous but she found the offer to be far too enticing to let go. Somebody needed to put Rhaegar Targaryan in his place.

“I feel highly disgusted right now,” Rhaegar crossed his arms in front of his chest as various young boys gave him tips on how to woo a woman he would steer clear of if he had the choice to.
“Oh come on Rhaegar, take it sportingly,” Arthur rationally consoled.
“Well what do you think I am doing here? If I hadn’t taken it sportingly, I wouldn’t be going through this terrible orientation program or whatever it is,” Rhaegar rolled his eyes.
“Listen, she’s a dominating woman; let her have her way in the beginning,” Robert suggested.
“And how would you know that?” Rhaegar raised an eyebrow.
“Are you possessive already?” Oswell When exclaimed and the entire company laughed. Rhaegar hoped his eyes would still be in their sockets when he was done rolling them.
“Listen, tonight is the night, so be prepared. You have one week, and take this seriously. The reputation of King’s Landing Academy depends on you, don’t let the Dornish school win,” Jon interpolated, and this made all the boys present feel extremely inspired. At the end of the day, this was always going to be an inter-school competitive thing.
“Elia are you ready?” Varys egged his friend on.
“Oh I was born ready. Have you observed Rhaegar? The boy is a fool,” Elia shrugged nonchalantly. Varys only prayed her over-confidence would not get to her head and what is an extremely competitive competition would not turn into a love story. Although, honestly, there is nothing either him or Jaime would like more than to see Elia happy and somewhat settled.
“Well, I only want the best for you. Remember, the moment it feels like he’s going to—”
“Dump me, I’ll dump him first; yes V, I remember the rules,” Elia cut him short.
“Are we ready?” Jaime came up to the duo and snuggled right between them.
“Elia was born ready,” Varys commented, and Elia flipped her hair.
All three of them laughed, and then walked right on ahead. The reputation of the Essosi and Dornish School rested on them now. Jaime had no idea as to why he was not enrolled into King’s Landing High but boy was he glad.

“Do you find me to be boring?” Elia casually asked as she was playing with a strand of her hair and Rhaegar was also yawning. They were currently comfortably seated on the desolate side of a large bonfire, away from all prying eyes.
“Oh no, not at all,” Rhaegar shook his head trying to appear interested.
“It’s alright, I understand. Women since the beginning of time have been expected to be more childlike, spontaneous, and even closer to animals than humans because they can’t really be rational- you know the Lyanna Stark types. It is ingrained in your system, most of our systems actually, I don’t blame you,” Elia shrugged gently. Rhaegar sat up with a bolt.
“But I… I never thought about it that way,” he raised an eyebrow, to quite high heights.
“Well, nobody really thinks about it that way. I’ve just had a rough day and I should not be venting to you yet here I am,” Elia chuckled in the bitterest tone she could muster.
“Elia, it’s alright, you can vent,” Rhaegar quietly held her hand.
“Look at you; did you suddenly get a redemption arc or something?” She smirked condescendingly.
“No I didn’t. It’s just that what you said was so true that it hurt, and that generally does not happen to me,” Rhaegar tried to explain.
“Rhaegar, it’s getting late, and really, really cold so I better get going,” Elia said, frowning and getting up. The last thing she needed was a pity party from Rhaegar Targaryan, who would rather jump into bed with a ‘cool girl’ anyway, and then say ‘oh, she’s different from the rest’. Elia would rather puke. At any cost, if she stayed out in this wind for too long, she would fall sick.
“Here, take this,” a chivalrous Rhaegar offered his jacket. He was wearing an extremely sheer linen material white shirt beneath it; forget about protection against the cold, that didn’t even provide him with protection from Elia’s eyes. But Elia had no idea as to what was going on, and decided to try and ignore the episode. She accepted the jacket though.
“Thank you Rhaegar,” she gave him a small smile and started walking towards the Essosi part of the resort.
“Are you sure you don’t wish to linger any longer?” Rhaegar delicately asked.
“Why are you speaking in archaic expressions?” Elia raised an eyebrow.
“Well, the way you walk, it’s so dainty and ladylike and I also love using archaic expressions but I cannot because people are way too modern and prosaic,” Rhaegar pouted.
“You know, when you’re not being a royally sensitive-masculine hypocrite, you’re actually pretty cute. Or even better, charmingly endearing,” Elia laughed.
“You can be pretty archaic yourself, madam,” Rhaegar countered.
“Oh don’t you know, I was born ancient,” Elia informed his seriously.
“I try to be old-fashioned, I really do. It’s just such a task! Especially when you’re with your friends,” Rhaegar explained. “Also, they make it a point to remind you that everything old is bad.”
“Then please do choose your friends wisely,” Elia advised him snidely.
“You know who my friends are, I don’t think I had much choice there,” Rhaegar grumbled.
“You have no choice when it comes to friends, you told Arthur that when it came to falling for Lyanna, you had no choice either- what choice do you have Rhaegar?” Elia was puzzled.
At that Rhaegar felt so entirely ashamed that he ceased to answer and Elia smirked in ideological victory and walked inside her hostel building. Rhaegar did wave at her, and she also took a split second out of her precious time to turn back and wave at him. Now this was completely unlike Elia, she would never turn back for another person- so much caring or longing was not in her nature, generally.

“Have you ever been kissed before?” Rhaegar asked, popping a peanut into his mouth.
“What kind of a question is that? I’m Dornish,” Elia frowned.
“That’s not even a proper answer. I’m Valyrian and I’ve kissed before,” Rhaegar explained. “Being Dornish is not even a criterion.”
“Hey, that’s correct common tongue,” Elia pointed out.
“What?”
“You said ‘criterion’ and not ‘criteria’. That’s the singular and it is correct common tongue,” Elia smiled.
“Well, I’m not that stupid,” Rhaegar reminded her.
“A lot of intelligent people I know make that mistake. It doesn’t mean you’re smart, it means you’re careful; which is a good thing all by itself, to be honest,” Elia cajoled him.
“You’re so sorted, in your head, I mean. You always know the right things to say and do, and how do you manage that?” Rhaegar asked.
“I don’t know, there’s like compartments in my head, and they work together most of the time, but they are also kept apart because otherwise they wouldn’t be able to work together,” Elia explained.
“How are you so sorted all the time?”
“It’s easy, stop blaming people and life around you for making it a mess, take things in your hand and try your best to control it. You may not always make it, but most of the times, you will,” Elia shrugged.
“That is the most abstract advice anybody has ever given me,” Rhaegar drew a blank face.
“Hmm, that’s because most of the people you hang out with are stupid,” Elia observed. Hurt as Rhaegar was by that statement, he had to agree there was truth in it to some degree. Especially after he had begun mingling with the Northerners, they were no match even for his intellectual calibre and after meeting Elia he knew there were people sharper and smarter than him, by a lot. So yes, she was right, he had stupid friends, but he was in love, with Lyanna, right? For some strange reason, that statement felt more and more like a lie with each passing minute.
Rhaegar hated this, his entire life had been built around certain rosy theories, and they were all crumbling in front of his eyes. He had jumped to conclusions about Elia, and now he realised he was wrong about them all.
“I’m going for a walk, you interested?” He asked standing up. He needed to clear his head.
“No, it’s very chilly. I suggest you put that jacket on,” Elia pointed her eyes towards his striped navy jacket. She had a habit of doing that, pointing with her eyes.
“I like the chill,” he commented.
“Yes, but you’re going to fall sick,” Elia noted. Rhaegar smiles, he knows Elia is not saying this because she cares about him; she cares about nobody but herself; no Rhaegar knows Elia is saying this because she wants to be bossy. He likes it when she bosses him around. And he would hate to admit it but he would have hated a woman bossing over him even around two weeks ago. Even Jon thinks there’s been a change in him. Jon appreciates it and Rhaegar preens.
“I think I’ll be fine,” he reassures Elia.
“I’m not lending you cool Dornish medicine if and when you fall sick,” Elia states blandly. She will hold that above his head for the rest of his life.
“I think I’ll make it out alive,” Rhaegar gasped in feigned fright.
“You could be funny, really, you have the potential. If only you weren’t so stupid…” Elia dragged her voice and Rhaegar decided maybe it was time to take that walk. But he didn’t want to walk
without her.
“Would it really freeze you to death if you walked outside with me right now?” He asked.
“Yes it would Rhaegar, that’s a disturbing thought,” Elia frowned.
“Well I would like it if you took a walk with me,” Rhaegar suggested politely.
Elia knew this would be a good chance to dump him. After all, they had been running circles around each other for the past few weeks and she needed to make the move fast or Rhaegar was going to do it and she was a competitive woman. Elia always knew an opportunity when there was one, and she never let it go. So, despite the freezing weather, and her absolute faith on the fact that she was going to get pneumonia, she decided to take this walk. Everything depended upon whether she could save the reputation of her school, and establish herself as the unchallenged Queen Bee. Elia had the hint of a proud smirk on her face but she decided to wipe it away.
“Yes, I’ll go with you, come on,” she announced, before she begun to stand up.
“Okay, I am glad,” Rhaegar stuttered because he had not actually expected her to take up on the offer. Maybe he should be on his guard right now. Her evil little mind might be scheming something at this very moment.
The weather outside was cold, Rhaegar could feel it cut through his bones, and Elia, who was donning a much lighter shawl could barely hear herself over the shiver of her own body which she tried to hide because she thought it was unattractive, although she was going to break his heart; she wanted to look good while she was doing it. She wanted the memory etched into his mind so deeply that he would tell his children about it, and he would cry while he did so. She shook that disturbing image from her mind and concentrated on trying to fight the wind. Rhaegar was also immensely cold, and it showed.
“I told you this was a bad idea,” she cockily stated.
“I’m sorry, do you want my jacket?” Rhaegar replied.
“And then I shall be responsible for you freezing to death. No Rhaegar, thank you very much,” Elia rolled her eyes.
“Okay come on, we’ll share a jacket. If that’s not too romantic for you,” Rhaegar opened up one of his arms so she could squeeze in.
“We are dating, nothing is ‘too’ romantic for me,” Elia rolled her eyes. Rhaegar made a face that was so mocking and surprised that she smacked him lightly.
“Come on in,” he opened that side of the jacket even further, and Elia slinked in. it was nice and warm, because it wasn’t just the jacket, there was Rhaegar’s body warmth as well.
“Well, our pace is much slower,” Elia commented softly. This was the worst way to break up with someone. Her initial plan was to just say it and walk away. Now she was trapped, literally, in his arms. Rhaegar on the other hand, did not want to break up. He wanted to stay like this; he liked the expensive cologne that Elia reeked of. It was such a fresh change from all the stale pine and forest that was perennially Lyanna’s smell. Romanticism is alright but when you don’t take a bath, it’s kind of hard, the whole intimacy part.
“It’s alright; we’re not running a marathon. We are out for a walk. Enjoy the evening, soak it all up. We might not even be here next year. Heck, we’ll most probably be in college or something,” Rhaegar wistfully commented.
“Hmm, I like skyscrapers,” Elia commented. She really didn’t like the forest. There could be a thousand unknown creatures here, and even Rhaegar romantic Targaryan may not know how to battle all of them.
“Elia, it’s not that bad, come on. Soak in the quiet and the pleasure,” Rhaegar motioned with one hand and took in a deep breath to acknowledge the beauty.
“You could try the sleeping pods at the Braavosi airport, they’re super peaceful, plus you can request your favourite opera and they play it at the softest, most perfect volume,” Elia informed cockily.
“Yeah, but this is natural, and you don’t have to pay for it,” Rhaegar rolled his eyes.
“Where is the opera?” Elia taunted.
“You don’t even like opera that much,” Rhaegar commented slyly.
“And how would you know that?” Elia was surprised. Yes they had been bonding for over a week now but they had never spoken about the opera. And at any cost, if Elia spoke publicly about the opera, she was pretentious enough to pass off as if she liked it.

“I’ve seen you make faces whenever your father takes you there. I go with Uncle Barry,” Rhaegar replied daftly. “He’s the only one interested and old enough to take me.”

“And why does Rhaegar Targaryan pull his eyes towards me when he is supposed to be concentrating on the opera?” Elia asks still surprised. “Why does Rhaegar Targaryan notice me at all if I am as uptight and sophisticated and boring as he secretly claims I am?”

“What can I say? Rhaegar Targaryan secretly also admires how much of natural brilliance just reeks out of you. He also appreciates how much of an old-fashioned Lady you are amidst this technological, concrete jungle. And above everything else, Rhaegar Targaryan thinks you’re very attractive to his Valyrian eyes when they are so used to seeing Andal faces.”

Elia had been taken aback momentarily, but then she recovered. This was just a bit of good old-fashioned flirting they always carried on with each other and it was harmless really. However, there was a strange sense of habit that had become attached to Elia’s everyday routine when it concerned this very flirting. Their heavy vocabulary laced verbal banter, and the occasional pulls into each other’s arms, and the constant conflict of ideology, her pragmatism to his idealism; it was all so strange when she thought about it, and yet it felt so familiar. Elia gave Rhaegar a half-smile because she didn’t want to betray how warm his playful tone had made her feel.

Rhaegar on the other hand seemed to be a little dismayed at the treatment meted out to him. He was at least expecting a peck on the cheek. Neither of them had planned for the walk to take this sort of a turn, but it did. Out of sheer frustration, Rhaegar felt his entire being urging him to do something, and he listened to his brain for the first time and although it wasn’t as sharp as Elia’s, he felt like it was telling him to do the right thing- the nice thing- the warm thing- the perfect thing. Rhaegar caught Elia by the arm and pulled her to his lips which happened to be easy considering they were already wrapped up in each other. Elia possibly gasped a little but he found that maddeningly attractive.

Their lips were plump and well-glossed and she tasted of oranges and he tasted of cinnamon and the combination was absolutely heavenly and there was a complete drunk moon hanging low in the sky and for a minute, that quiet serene woods was turned into a passionate little world all of their own accord. Elia and Rhaegar wrapped themselves around each other so beautifully that they practically resembled one person; an ignorant passerby would not be able to tell where Rhaegar began and Elia ended.

Rhaegar allowed his hands to pull the silken fabric of her top closer to him, and Elia twined both of her olive hands on his neck. They didn’t break the kiss, even when they were out of breath. They took small shallow breaths when they could, but they didn’t break the kiss. They knew as soon as they kiss ended, one of them would have to end this and win the bet. One of them would emerge the greater player and neither of them was ready to do that. Elia let out a small gasp- Rhaegar was such a good kisser, it wasn’t even fair.

Varys looked like he had seen a ghost. Elia wasn’t even exaggerating, Varys looked like he had seen a spirit of some sort- his face was pale and expression completely dead-pan. Elia’s pretty hazel irises flit from one friend to another. Jaime had his mud-blond brows knit into such a frown that Elia could have made furrows into the thing. She was nervous, so nervous that she was seen fiddling with the hem of her dusty-rose sweater. Elia didn’t even like sweaters, but it was a chilly day outside and she was not positively sure about receiving Rhaegar’s denim jacket.

“Elia do you realise what you are saying? Children from Dorne High do not simply quit the Player challenge,” Jaime shook his head vigorously.

“It will just be a year with no winner,” Elia shrugged.

“How is that possible? One of you must have won,” Varys grumbled.

“No, none of us won. Varys, maybe we don’t want to. We both parted ways amicably, at the same
time. Nobody dumped the other,” Elia rolled her eyes.

“Elia why are you doing this? Just dump him, if you need to date him, date him after. For now, dump him and let’s win this thing,” Jaime pleaded.

“I could do that… but I don’t think I can,” Elia mused.

“You know this makes no sense right?” Jaime argued.

On the other hand, the King’s Landing High crowd seemed to be in a very similar situation. Jon and Arthur were beyond perplexed and Lyanna was bawling her eyes out over losing the ‘love of her life’ and Rhaegar was plain disturbed and pissed at the entire scenario. He huffed, crossing his toned arms in front of his chest, and his lilac eyes tried not to pay any attention to any of the pandemonium going on around him. It was just a simple bet, why were people making such a big deal out of it?

“I don’t understand why this is such a big deal. Nobody won, nobody lost so it’s not like a loss of prestige,” Rhaegar rolled his eyes.

“No Rhaegar, you’re right, it’s not, but we have never had a tie at the end before. Somebody always caves in and admits to being the first one to dump. Now both of you are so smart and stubborn we can’t say anything,” Jon reasoned.

Rhaegar was about to open his mouth to argue but a strangely familiar citrus scent wafted into the room and shut him up. Elia entered the room and everyone gave her the fine look of contempt. Never before had there been a tie, and half of that was her fault. Elia flashed her usual charismatic smile and then with an eye-roll silently spoke everybody out of the room. Rhaegar was still astonished at how she commanded people with her eyes. She was like a tigress- and he found it borderline creepy how turned on he was. Elia walked up to him and he hoped she was not here to dump him or anything- knowing her though, he wouldn’t be surprised if she was. She cared a lot about her public image and if that meant dumping someone she had genuine feelings for, she wouldn’t hesitate. Once again, Rhaegar found it creepy that he was so turned on.

“Rhaegar, there has never been a tie before-”

“I know, plus the reputation of your school; its fine you can break up with me, I won’t mind,” Rhaegar informed. Elia’s face darkened a little bit, but she controlled herself.

“That is super mature of you Targaryan, I am proud,” she smiled softly, and turned to go. Rhaegar clasped her wrist tightly.

“Plus, we can always get back together once we go to college. I hear you’ve been accepted into the same Ivy League as me.”

“I’ve been accepted into every Ivy League I applied for,” Elia haughtily replied.

“Well aren’t you a show-off,” Rhaegar smirked, before pulling her in and kissing the living breath out of her. When he pulled back, and Elia’s nose was red for want of oxygen, he placed a kiss there too. “I’m really hoping you’ll go to mine.”
I am truly and extremely sorry for the CRAZILY LATE update. College has been so crazy for the past two semesters and I had to go to Europe for the a very long trip, but I am finally back and Happy New Year guys!!
I Love You and I have missed you all so very much. Updates will be much more regular now guys I promise you!
Mwuah!
All the Love.
A.

“I am so sorry ma’am, I would be thrilled if I could sell this place to you but the top-floor penthouses are reserved for married couples only.” This was the most pathetic statement Elia had ever come across in her entire life.
“I am willing to pay double the amount,” she softened her barely audible voice anyways. There was a seductive undertone in everything Elia said, and it wasn’t even by choice. She was in possession of a unique female baritone, and it made persuading men a great deal easier for her. She was also extremely subtle and classy with her body language, so her lacquer- manicured nails softly traced the smooth surface of the lavender-lilac floral couch she was already in love with.
Everything about this penthouse was perfect.
“I understand ma’am, and if this was up to me, I wouldn’t think twice…” the young man fidgeted with the ring on his finger, which Elia was quick to notice. She immediately straightened herself up. She was not a Lyanna Stark, she could never be.
“It’s alright, I am sure there are better accommodations,” she spoke curtly and walked out of the elaborate living room. It took some time decidedly with the magnitude of the place and the plethora of corridors that led the living room to the front door.
Elia walked out to the porch-like space with large potted plants and stood in front of the gold-embossed elevator ruminating at her reflection. She wasn’t really flirting with this man; she was simply trying to juice out some extra preference so she could buy the house she really liked. What was the prickling thing in her chest that plummeted when it noticed a wedding ring? Why would a puny man like Rhaegar and his betrayal continue to haunt her in the strangest of places? She frowned and leaned her head close against the wall, glad to hear the gentle tinkling of the elevator. Someone else was coming up. She straightened herself and smoothed out the silk lilac kaftan she was wearing. She concluded it must have been someone else coming to see the same property and for their sake, hoped he or she was married.
“I have a thing for the top-most floors,” a very familiar voice spoke as two men exited the elevator and stood in front of the penthouse. Rhaegar suddenly caught Elia’s reflection on the doorknob, standing by the wall beside the elevator and he turned to face the woman he had scorned- about a year ago. Wounds were still fresh.
“Oh I am so sorry ma’am, I wasn’t aware of any other visitors today. Are you here with an agent?” Rhaegar’s real-estate assistant spoke.
“Yes she is here with me,” her agent interrupted. He had been puzzled by Elia’s sudden reaction and had now come out to join the awkward party on the porch.
“Well, I had not been informed,” Rhaegar’s agent spoke.
“It doesn’t matter, only married couples get this place,” Elia blurted out of spite. Twelve months
down the line she was still spiteful.

“Is that true?” Rhaegar turned to face the young, Lannister-resembling man he had come with.

“Yes Sir it is, and I have been trying to tell you for a very long time but you were occupied with the idea of the top floor,” the real-estate fixer simply doing his job tried to explain. He didn’t know if the Son had the father’s temper but he was not willing to find out.

“He likes the view from the top, also the Sunshine is just about bright enough for him here,” Elia replied suddenly. Rhaegar turned to look at her and she was chiding herself so very terribly.

“Well ma’am, Sir, I am very sorry but regardless of your preferences I am unable at this moment to be able to sell this to either one of you,” both of the estate agents began speaking at the same time.

“If we were to marry, Sir, would you be more comfortable?” Rhaegar suddenly started.

“Do the two of you happen to be engaged?” Elia’s agent looked pleasantly surprised. He had taken a very sweet liking to Elia and he was wondering as to whether the sweet woman was single or not.

Elia eyes fluttered to Rhaegar and back to the eager man like a small butterfly. Rhaegar had lied, put her in a false position, and yet conjured up a very convenient situation which was lucrative for them both. Elia wondered if this was the only impression she had left upon him in their five years together. She would consider the infidel relationship a success then. At least she made a man out of the monkey. Rhaegar on the other hand wondered what this highly unethical, and yet obsessed with social image woman was going to do now.

“No actually, we are married. It’s just that we still cannot find an auspicious enough date for the social marriage so our families have forbidden us to speak about it. It is simply because you insist on following these rules so stringently that we must break the promises we made our parents,” Elia convincingly lied.

Now both of the real estate agents seemed to be in a bit of a compromised position. Important families were important families at the end of the day and no normal young professional wanted to be on their bad side. They looked to each other and then back to their conning clients again. This was a difficult spot they had landed themselves into.

“Now you must understand that while we are signing these papers for the apartment, you must also sign a disclosure agreement with us…” Rhaegar trailed off confidently. Every time he was around Elia, he simply felt like a better man, and god knew he used to hate that feeling, especially compared to how weak and stupid his being was in front of Lyanna.

“Oh yes sir, you must trust us,” both of them practically bowed. The young and very ‘married’ couple looked at each other.

“Elia, I know we agreed on pink but this is too much pink,” Rhaegar whispered to his ‘wife’ not wishing to cause a scene in front of the colour advisor.

“The only reason we are getting this apartment is because we are supposed to be married and that means you’re my puppet and you do exactly as I wish. Now keep quiet, puppet,” Elia whispered-chided her play husband.

“One dash of lime-green here, it’s not going to hurt you,” Rhaegar begged, flicking a finger across the delicate pastel pattern Elia was carefully scrutinising. She gave it a small thought. Rhaegar’s eyes lit up as he realised she was entering a pensive mood, meaning she was considering his words. Rhaegar knew that in plain terms, Elia absolutely loved the combination of pink and green.

“Well you’re right; it is not going to hurt. I’ll think about it,” she narrowed her eyes looking at him.

“You’re the best!” Rhaegar cheered her on.

“Could you put a dash of lime green on that please,” Elia ordered the paint expert and they both laughed at how much it sounded like she was cooking.

When the wall was done, it looked aesthetically pleasing enough. Rhaegar and Elia admired it from a distance, and various distances. Their apartment was beginning to look like a home now. There were bits and parts of Elia and Rhaegar in it, but mostly Elia. Rhaegar would nudge her in any corner that her influence seemed to be predominating. They were both pretty classy, and that made for a very good-looking home. So much so, that it made Rhaegar a little uncomfortable. His dream
house was supposed to be the shabby looking loft that he had temporarily moved into with Lyanna. “Rhaegar, could you fetch two glasses of, please,” Elia ordered, heaving sighs as she comfortably planted herself into a particularly soft bean-bag Rhaegar had brought into the house. In the beginning, she had given him too much slack for it.

“Already here ma’am,” Rhaegar sat down next to her on the floor with a bottle of rose and two exquisitely designed glasses. Rhaegar knew what Elia meant when she said ‘glasses of’. He was the only one who knew what Elia meant when she said that.

“That’s nice of you,” Elia was pleasantly surprised.

Rhaegar sat by Elia’s knee which was also practically touching the floor because of how low the bean-bag was. Elia generally did not prefer such slouchy pieces of furniture but she was willing to make an exception on moving day because every nerve on her being was aching due to exhaustion. Rhaegar softly laid his head against her knee, and did not even realise what he was doing. The wine slid down their throats effortlessly and they were both sophisticated enough not to get drunk. They were a little tipsy though, and extremely tired, and possessed a goofy smile plastered on their face.

“Do you remember Robert?” Elia softly asked.

“Yeah well, I hooked up with him once. I mean I was bitter about you at that point of time, but that wasn’t the real reason. It was a strange mixture of sympathy and empathy that led me to do it,” Elia confessed. It was most probably the wine talking.

Rhaegar was slightly stupefied. When he regained his senses in a moment, he actually found himself toying with the idea- it was fascinating. Elia and Robert were as far apart as two real human beings could be. And yet, the aftertaste he had left was so bitter that she could find solace in him. Rhaegar was also outraged, but mainly because he was feeling slighted. Elia was home… there could be no jealousy about Home.

“How was he?” Rhaegar finally asked. Elia began laughing hysterically, and his mood soured even more.

“Why are you asking? Will you run after Robert now? I suggest Jon Connington though, poor man has been pinning after you for forever,” Elia gasped between her splits.

Rhaegar turned around and tried to tackle the vigorously laughing Elia and she practically slid off the bean bag. His glass of wine knocked down into the new beige rug and then there was silence. Rhaegar knew how particular Elia was about cleanliness, and more so when a new, super expensive rug was in the equation. His eyes flitted from the deepening blotch of dark colour to Elia’s surprised face that was agape. Rhaegar’s eyes held that look of guilt which it seemed was the poor man’s brunt to bear his whole life.

“You know, I can explain this…” He trailed off.

“Rhaegar, I haven’t caught you cheating again. It was an accident, calm down and clean it up,” Elia regained her regal position on the bean bag and commented.

“That was surprisingly reasonable of you,” Rhaegar commented softly as he was mopping up the mess he had made on the floor.

“Oh dear Targaryan, you never did understand women did you? Lyanna Stark is perfect for you, because neither does she,” Elia threw her head back and laughed with such condescension that Rhaegar felt extremely attacked.

Rhaegar mumbled a little to himself because he felt extremely out of place and a little awkward. He began mopping the mess with more passion and while Elia initially seemed to raise an eye at his silence with the added change of behaviour, she let it slide, and concentrated on her drink. She sipped on it slowly and watched him with an intent eye. At that moment, Rhaegar seemed to be the most fascinating creature she had ever laid eyes on.

“You want some help?” Rhaegar asked his supposed Mrs. Targaryan as Elia seemed to be performing a Herculean task with a wind-charm on a wooden stool.

“Yes, I would love it if you did but you’re too busy all the time,” Elia commented in a snarky
manner.

“Well I’m sorry, the bakery is particularly demanding this time of the year. It’s the peak time of the year, and it’s my job,” Rhaegar mocked back.

“Oh I’m sorry, but I run a newspaper. Every single day is peak time of the year,” Elia rolled her eyes right back. Every time Rhaegar mentioned his bakery, memories of how she had caught him with Lyanna in the sugary kitchen came sweeping back and she tried to erase them from her mind.

“I don’t have time to argue with you right now,” Rhaegar rolled his eyes, making his way to the dining room where he intended to gorge on a substantial breakfast before leaving for work.

“It’s all we’ve ever done anyways,” Elia spoke under her breath, and then, as if to not let Rhaegar have the last word, she craned her neck towards the direction of the dining space, “you should be used to it by now, Targaryan.”

As Elia hollered, the impact of her voice was probably too large for her fragile body and she slipped. She squealed in surprise as she fell and Rhaegar was there in as little time he could have mustered. Thankfully, she hadn’t fallen on the cold carpet but on Rhaegar sitting on that carpet. Still, he had rebuking eyes and she knew he was going to chide. There were rare occasions when Rhaegar chided her, either she hurt herself or she hurt Lyanna. She wondered how both of these contrary things could cause him equal pain.

“You could have seriously hurt yourself,” Rhaegar spoke under his breath, to emphasise how serious he was about what he was saying.

“Are you Flash?” Elia asked blankly. She was blown away by his speed.

“No, this is how fit people are,” Rhaegar rolled his eyes.

Elia practically blew a raspberry and began laughing profusely so Rhaegar felt stupid for trying to help her and gently let her down. Elia’s feet tingled as they touched the soft carpet. She had hoped for a much rougher landing on the floor had Rhaegar not been present. But he was offended by her laughter and that was precisely what she was hoping for.

“As much as I appreciate that, it still makes you dumb,” Elia snidely commented.

Rhaegar gently let her down on a chair in the dining room and walked to the kitchen. He was hungry and he needed to start with the semblance of a positive note somewhere. Elia was still a little shaken from the incident but she was also anxious to decorate her house. She tapped her painted nails impatiently on the wooden table so as to irk Rhaegar. He was the reason she had been dragged to this end of the apartment. She wanted to get back to the wind-chime.

“What is it?” Rhaegar snapped.

“I’m going back,” Elia announced.

“Don’t stand on that tool, you’ll hurt yourself,” Rhaegar warned.

“Well I cannot leave my house looking like an unkept jungle,” Elia retorted.

Rhaegar huffed a little before answering, “Look around you, this house looks beautiful. You don’t have to hurt yourself in the process of beautifying it,” he argued.

“Then you do it,” Elia simply stated. Rhaegar tried to pretend like he didn’t hear it. “Listen, either you do it, or I’m climbing up on this life-threatening tool again,” she warned.

“That’s called blackmail,” Rhaegar complained as he stepped out of the kitchen, yet again without gathering his breakfast.

“I don’t care. If it gets my work done, the ends justify the means,” Elia shrugged.

“Oh you Machiavellian villain; you’re going to be my ruin,” Rhaegar groaned, as he walked towards where she was standing.

Elia smirked and then laughed good-naturedly as Rhaegar did exactly how she wanted. This was how she loved him best, when he was bending and moulding to all of her rules. Elia knew that was wrong, but there were some people in this world who couldn’t help being wrong. If it was a man, he made for a fancy handsome anti-hero, and if it was a woman, she was just a… bitch. At that sudden thought, Elia felt a little strange and looked away. Rhaegar noticed that, and stepping off the stool, stood behind her. His breath ever so slightly fanned over her neck.

“Rhaegar, I think your breakfast is ready. I smell something burning,” Elia began to walk towards the kitchen.
“Will you have breakfast with me?” Rhaegar ever so gently wrapped his arms around Elia. She stood frozen for a little while, and then both of them waddled down to the kitchen together. There was a feeling of contentment in the air after a very long time.

“I think I’m staggering,” Rhaegar laughed, Elia’s subtle insistent pull on his collar reminding him that he was more than staggering… he was drunk.

“This is ridiculous! You’re not an animal Rhaegar, you’re the son of Aerys Targaryan! This ridiculousness may have been tolerated by Lyanna, but it is not going to be tolerated by me,” Elia coldly stated as she pushed him on the couch where he comfortably sank among the fluffy cushions. The ecstasy of a tipsy haze was still upon him.

“I’d much rather be tolerated by you, than be adored by Lyanna,” Rhaegar’s tongue was slipping all over itself, and his words were absolutely eating into each other, but this much was clear to Elia’s ears, as much as she wished it hadn’t been.

“Don’t speak nonsense,” she chided him and dragged him along to the bedroom. “Now, the room is yours tonight, go change and slip into bed. Do what you will; I’ll sleep on the couch. You are too inebriated to negotiate with even.”

Rhaegar was in a state of incomprehension but Elia was loud and clear. In his utter state of vulnerability, he did not wish to be left alone, especially when he had told this woman loud and clear that he needed her company. Thus, with a small grunt, Rhaegar took a hold of Elia’s free hand that was hovering around him because he was so tipsy, and his pull was pretty strong so they landed on the bed. They both absolutely loved the mattress they had picked out, it was the softest-an ideal for romance. Rhaegar let out a small chuckle at the situation. Elia also looked as vulnerable as he did, and he absolutely loved that. He took his index finger and wrapped it around a loose curl falling on her face. Elia had stopped struggling by now, and slowly she let her head dip into the small of his neck. He was so soft there, and he smelled strongly of cinnamon musk.

When Rhaegar’s eyes fluttered open the next morning, the throbbing of his headache was overcome by the sudden surge of warmth, and home and love that he felt towards a slumbering Elia on top of him. Their union last night had been so tender and personal that he could cry out of confusion and bliss. He softly kissed her hair; because it was so thick he couldn’t reach her head, and then let a few tears slip down his cheek. And then his sniffles awoke her. Elia sweetly looked up at him. Rhaegar may have been the person drunk last night but she was suffering from morning gogginess. She began rasping out a few syllables and Rhaegar held her face very close to his. His breath was raspy and he was crying now.

“What is going on?” Elia was extremely puzzled.

“I love you,” Rhaegar burst out.

At first, Elia was silent. Then, she thought she might have been dreaming, or it was a bad joke Rhaegar wanted to play, plus she was confused and groggy and she didn’t like seeing Rhaegar cry so she had to do something and she burst out laughing. Rhaegar was extremely confused, his eyebrows knit together beautifully and his pupils frantically searched her face for any clues but her laughter was so extremely confusing, he couldn’t take it anymore. He clenched her tighter, and softly kissed her cheek. He understood she was uneasy and unbelieving and he wanted to change that.

“Rhaegar, good joke,” Elia laughed, especially with the kiss on the cheek. Now she was completely confused.

“Elia, I’m not joking!” Rhaegar snapped.

Elia was a little bit taken aback at the sudden rise of volume. But what she was really scared of was the things Rhaegar was claiming to feel. She was stupefied. Rhaegar Targaryan was the last person who could have been in love with Elia Martell. Like real true love, it was a preposterous idea! She opened her mouth to say something, and then closed it again because she was too distraught to say anything at all. Plus, it had been a turbulent night and she was exhausted.

“I’m sorry Rhaegar… that’s the alarm clock,” she pointed towards the sudden blaring noise that
invaded their silence. The two individuals stretched away, and Elia reached for her phone, disabling the alarm clock as soon as possible. Rhaegar had also drifted away, coiled back into a shell he was practically shooed into by Elia’s behaviour. In a voiceless, silent manner he drifted off the bed and walked out of the room. Elia’s eyes followed his steps, her heart ached, but her entire being was very relieved. She had cancelled out the possibility of a second chance between them a very long time ago—when they had come into the house together and she had known they were going to fall in love.

“Ma’am, I really do not understand why you have to leave. After all, the place is perfect and you will not find another apartment like this one,” the real-estate agent begged. Elia was a great client and he did not wish to show completely callous and ridiculous clients that beautiful home. “I have work, and I must shift,” Elia politely explained. “But I am sure you could work from home,” her agent began pouting. She glared at him to remind him of propriety. “Give me the papers please,” Elia crossed her legs, sitting in a matter that screamed ‘impatient’. “Elia, we need to talk,” Rhaegar burst into the scene. The agent seemed to be greatly relieved and Elia was plain annoyed. Rhaegar pulled her by the hem of her ruffled silky satin blouse. Elia, with her eyebrows furrowed was busy chastising him. Rhaegar pulled her into the empty waiting room, and even he had to admit, the office was so well-decorated. His estate agent was a freelance worker who had a small apartment downtown. How did Elia always get the best deals?

“What is your problem?” Elia crossed her arms in front of her chest. “Okay, look, do we have to give up the place?” Rhaegar bit his lip. “What sort of a ridiculous question is that Rhaegar?” Elia asked astonished. “No look, it’s such a lovely apartment and we fit in so well, I don’t see any reason of moving away,” Rhaegar pleaded. “Well, I do. If we don’t move out before tomorrow, your friend Brandon Stark is going to leak this news in the media and I don’t want that. I am not crazy; I certainly do not want to be seen in a live-in relationship with you!” Elia growled under her breath, not wanting to create a scene in the posh office. “Well then let’s get married. My father came to know because Rickard told on us, and he wants us to get married. He’s always loved you for me, and maybe I’ve always loved you for me but you know young people; the young people who you hate so much— they never want to do what is right for them,” Rhaegar offered. “And also, Brandon Stark is not my friend.”

Elia was surprised, but only pleasantly so. A gasp between a chortle and a realisation hit her plump glossy lips and Rhaegar looked at her with hopeful eyes, hands crossed attractively in front of his chest. The young couple looked at each other and then roamed their eyes around the room again. This was an awkward silence that Rhaegar decided to break with a kiss since the sexual tension between them so was intense anyways. Elia, who was extremely taken aback at the action, wrapped her arms dutifully around his neck and surrendered as he deepened the kiss. She hadn’t kissed anyone in years— it felt so good. Pulling back for breath, a stupid giddy smile was plastered on her face and Rhaegar felt even more encouraged so he went back for a second kiss. The apartment wasn’t sold to some preposterous tenant after all. Everyone involved in the settlement then lived happily ever after.

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