Two Hearts, One Beat
by OnlyInAutumn

Summary

Robert’s Rebellion failed and Aerys only grew madder over the years. To protect her daughter, Rhaella sends her to Winterfell. The attraction between Jon and Daenerys grows and romance blossoms against many threats.
The Mad King's Daughter

“Ned.”

The way Lady Catelyn said her husband’s name alerted everyone, the sound of eerie trepidation spilling through her otherwise steady tone. Most of the Stark children along with Jon were in the courtyard, apart from Sansa who was off somewhere doing what stupid girls do as Arya would phrase it, her way of referring to needlework or poetry.

Jon had never seen Lady Catelyn in such a hurry, her steps so quick she had lifted her dress to her ankles to be able to walk better. There was concern riddled across her face, brows pulled together, jaw tight.

“Ned,” she said again, partly winded as she handed a scroll over to Ned. “From Kings Landing.”

From where Jon stood, he could see the seal had already been broken, a seal with the Targaryen sigil on it. They all watched as their father read the scroll silently. Him and Catelyn exchanged an ominous look.

Robb stepped forward. “What is it?”

Ned handed over the scroll and Robb wheeled the paper out to read it as well, Jon peering over his shoulder to get a look, though it was not his place to concern himself with Stark business.

The pretty penmanship said:

Lord Eddard Stark,

I write to you in great peril. The king, my husband, has descended further into madness with his age. He believes that his children are traitors. We are not safe. As I write to you, I am making preparations to depart from Kings Landing to Dragonstone with my son Viserys. My daughter, Daenerys, I believe will only be safe in the north, far from the reach of my husband. Dragonstone is vulnerable and keeping the heirs to the throne in separate places has been advised to me. From Dragonstone, I can send her elsewhere. Aerys would not dare venture all the way to Winterfell, and this is why I ask of you this vast favor. Protect her from her father. Keep her safe.

I will forever be indebted to you.

Rhaella Targareyn, Queen of the Seven Kingdoms

“What should we do?” Robb asked.

Ned looked around, seemingly troubled. Jon watched as his expression changed, knowing that even with reservations, his father would always do what he felt was right. “Make the preparations for the princess.”

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For the entire length of a fortnight, the castle was busy at work. Jon didn’t understand the grand fuss all over one person coming to Winterfell. Yes, it was Daenerys Targaryen, Princess of the Seven Kingdoms, but what was the use in cleaning the whole castle from top to bottom, every cobweb and speck of dust, if she wasn’t even going to be in most of the rooms?
Sansa, who was overjoyed that there was going to be an older girl around, had started making a cloak for Daenerys with the careful inspection of her septa and Lady Catelyn, which would be her gift to her upon arrival—one of many gifts Sansa was most likely preparing.

Jon had made himself scarce for most of the time, allowing himself to not get in the way of the hustle of people doing their jobs. For the most part, he was training with his sword with Robb, one of their favorite activities to pass the time. One that particular day, he was doing just that. Robb and him had gone out of the castle into the wide open field next to the road into Winterfell to practice.

“It’s going to be an interesting time with her here,” Robb commented after knocking Jon to the ground.

Jon took his hand after Robb extended it to help him back up. Once on his feet, Jon shrugged, eyes on the road behind him. In just a few days’ time Daenerys would be there.

“It’s got to be hard,” Jon said, thinking about the situation, “to be the Mad King’s daughter. Poor girl got uprooted from her life.”

“And has to come here.” Robb laughed and looked around at what was nothing for miles and miles. “How do you think she’ll take it?”

Jon hadn’t thought much of it.

“It’s a castle that’s protected so far north that no one comes here without a purpose. I don’t think she’ll find much to complain about.”

Robb had his doubts.

“She grew up Kings Landing inside the Red Keep with all the servants, dress makers, beautiful gardens, and everything else girls love. Don’t you think she’ll be vexed since it’s not like that here? It would be like taking Sansa and putting her in the Iron Islands. Can you even imagine the tantrums?”

Robb was more than amused by his comparison, but Jon thought about it for a moment, getting his sword into position to show he was ready for another round. “If it were me, I’d be happy enough just to get away from the Mad King, no matter where it was. Even if they shoved me Beyond the Wall.”

“You and your pretty hair wouldn’t last a fortnight beyond the wall,” teased his brother.

They dueled for quite a while after that. Jon got in a few good hits and disarmed Robb twice. As the days went on, Jon found himself growing better at fighting than Robb, and couldn’t help but feel pleased by that. At least there would be something Jon was better at than his brother. He knew that Robb was superior in every other way.

It wasn’t until the sun was setting over the horizon that they made a slow walk back to the castle, putting her swords back in the sheaths, tired from their day of training. Robb handed over a canteen of water as they trailed the dirt road, kicking the stones in their way.

“Think she’s pretty?”

The question seemed to come out of the blue, and it sounded more like Theon’s words than Robb’s.

“Does it matter?”

Robb looked over at Jon, almost disappointed. “She’s a girl around our age, yes, it matters. Might be nice to have someone to look at.”
Jon turned up his nose, balled his hand into a fist, and knocked it into Robb’s arm playfully. “You’ve been talking to Theon, haven’t you?”

Robb chuckled, showing his white teeth. “You can tell?”

“Yes.”

“That must mean I’m sounding shallow.”

Jon nodded at the conclusion. “You are.”

Robb held up his hands in surrender. “You’re right. Forget I said anything.”

But Jon wouldn’t forget it. Robb had planted the idea in his mind, though it didn’t make much of a difference. Robb was good with girls, always knowing what to say to make them blush, whereas Jon would stay in the background saying nothing to avoid awkward embarrassment. It was entirely innate for Robb, and Jon found himself jealous of the trait.

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Catelyn gave the strict order that they were all to be bathed, scrubbed, and clean shaven for the arrival. Not wanting to give her anymore reason to hate him, Jon had cleaned his hair twice and scrubbed his body until it was red and raw. His washed hair made the curls be more prominent and they stuck out in weird directions. In the morning, he did his best to tame them, Robb even suggested trimming off a bunch. Jon refused. He’d rather his hair be a bit longer since it distinguished him from Robb. Aside from that, Jon simply liked it that way.

He had no choice on what he was going to wear. Outfits had arrived early in the morning, as did the loud thudding knocks against his door. With a grumble, he had gotten up and grabbed the attire fit to been seen in by a member of the royal family—no mud, no stains, not a single blemish.

Once outside, there he was, groomed more than he had ever been in his life, waiting for Daenerys Targaryen. In the distance, the sound of horses trotting and wheels spinning grew louder. There was a tension in the air as they all waited patiently, the courtyard lined with people.

“Stand up straight,” muttered Sansa to Arya and Bran. “You’ll make us look bad.”

Arya turned around to glance and Jon, then rolled her eyes at the command given by her sister. Jon smirked at the defiance.

Jon was in the line of people behind the Starks with Theon to his right and Maester Luwin to his left. He was standing behind Robb, which was a problem since Robb was taller (something people liked to point out when given the chance). Jon had to stretch his neck to get a good look of what was going on, only to be swatted at by Theon.

Men riding on horseback entered in two formal lines, perfectly synchronized. The front four men on horseback were holding the Targaryen banner high, the three-headed dragon set in red against the pit of blackness. Jon had always believed that the Targaryen sigil was the most threatening of them all.

As more rounded the corner, all inhabitants of the castle fell to their knees as they waited. Jon started to count the horses and guards that came through the gate, and there were less than he had expected. Thirty, at most.

Jon averted his eyes momentarily as he felt the wetness of the mud seeping into his trousers due to him placing his lower leg against the ground as he knelt. He wondered if he had been the only one to
be as stupid, having now ruined the clean trousers. He would need to make sure that the cloak covered that part until he could change.

As the last of them had trickled in, Theon nudged Jon, taking him away from his annoyance at himself. “Look. That must be Jaime Lannister.”

Jon tilted his head to the right to get a better view, keeping his head low. Adorned with shiny and expensive armor, the eldest of the Lannisters got off the speckled brown horse he was riding with ease. He fit the description that had swirled the castle, longer golden hair that was parted in the middle, stern but handsome looks. He looked enormously tall from where Jon was, but being so close to the ground, anyone would look that way he supposed.

Jon tried to be as discreet as possible as he continued to watch.

Jaime went around his own horse to the white one on the other side of him. Jon hadn’t seen that one come in, the only white horse there, so he knew that was where the princess was.

It was hard to see from his angle, with Robb’s head and shoulders in the way, but he noticed that Jaime pulled someone—the princess—off the other horse and placed her gently on the ground. There were some words exchanged between them before he stepped to her side and the horses were towed away in a hurry. Jon’s face softened when Daenerys came into full view.

She was so tiny.

So innocent looking.

So… different.

Jon didn’t know what he had expected, but it wasn’t her. Daenerys was said to be the prettiest girl in all the lands, but Jon had chalked it up to the Targaryens wanting to attract potential suitors. That is, until he saw it with his own eyes.

Her pale hair was in waves that fell low on her back, a couple braids at the side of her head which were twisted together at the back. She had lighter eyes as well, and pale skin that had no flaws. He wondered if the pink in her cheeks was her normal tone or if it was only from the chillier climate.

She was far from the common looks. Jon never recalled seeing anyone quite like her. He would even go as far to say that it was fascinating. Despite all the rumors and truths of her family, she had an unexpected innocent, youthful look to her.

And Daenerys was no girl either, even despite her age of sixteen. The deep blue colored dress she wore was tight against her torso, hugging onto the curves, with the skirt flaring out at the hips.

Daenerys was beautiful, truly, and yet completely unattainable for someone like Jon.

But even behind the beauty, it was easy to see that she was misplaced and uncomfortable with her new surroundings. Her eyes darted around the sections of the castle that were visible, then to the many people. She was in a state of distress, and for that, Jon felt pity for her.

Ser Jaime Lannister was standing by her side when she approached the assembly line of Starks at the front. Everyone rose to their feet.


“Lord Stark,” she returned, her silky, small voice being another surprise.
“Welcome to our home,” Lady Catelyn said humbly after she curtseyed, resting her hand on top of Daenerys’s to show not only her affection, but as a way of portraying her sorrow of the ordeal.

“We are pleased to have you,” added his father sincerely.

They went down the line as Ned introduced his trueborn children, oldest to youngest. Jon would not be introduced, being a bastard, but he tried to not let it bother him. At least Theon and him were in the same position—shoved to the back, Lady Catelyn hopeful that they would be overlooked.

He watched as Robb had kissed Daenerys’s hand, as Sansa nearly squealed with enthusiasm as she came up from a perfected curtsey, as Arya struggled to match her sister, and how both Bran and Rickon smiled wider than Jon had ever seen before.

Daenerys had looked around, finding the gaps in between the Stark children as she gracefully made her way back to his father and Lady Catelyn. Jon had been staring without even realizing it until he caught her eyes and it struck him as if someone had whacked him across the face. Jon averted his eyes immediately, heart beat having rose.

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Upon her arrival, Daenerys was the topic of every conversation that Jon overheard as he made his way through the courtyard and inside to castle. At every turn, there was someone discussing something about her.

It was late then and Daenerys had been in the castle for half the day, kept out of sight as no doubt Lady Catelyn and her were discussing her arrangements and making sure she was settled in.

As the darkness grew over the landscape, Jon figured it best to get an early night. Who knew what the next day would bring now that Daenerys Targaryen was at the castle. And even though Jon was not held to the same expectations as his trueborn half siblings in the presence of a royal, there were some events and activities that he was expected to attend, if it was at his father’s will and Lady Catelyn didn’t forbid it.

There would most likely be a feast of some sort in the coming days as a welcoming. He wondered if he would be able to attend or not.

Jon was lost in thought about the matter as he rounded another corner, making the trek to his room. It was a bad decision, as he collided with someone, Jon grabbing ahold of whoever it was before they both fell to the ground, unable to balance.

“Oh!” exclaimed a female voice.

The flicker of nearly white hair made him realize who it was before he saw her face. And when he did see her, Daenerys so close to him, the violet of her irises, the darkness of her lashes, and the way her eyes fluttered open and closed took him off guard.

Jon paused for a moment before he took a step back and he removed his hands immediately and dropped them to his side, rubbing them against his trousers as if he had touched gold that didn’t belong to him. Jon knew touching a royal without permission could result in a whipping, no matter who the offender was, highborn or lowborn, trueborn or bastard.

“I’m very sorry,” she apologized.

“No,” Jon interjected, feeling skittish all of a sudden, the clumsiness not being a usual trait of his.

“That fault is mine. I was not watching where I was walking.”
There was an awkward pause and Jon struggled to find the appropriate thing to say to her. Daenerys, however, had already forgotten the accident.

She pointed a gloved finger at him. “You’re Jon?’

“Yes.”

“We haven’t formally met,” she explained. “And you’re Lord Stark’s son, correct? To be honest, I don’t know that much about the Starks. All my information has come from Jaime…and some from Viserys, but he exaggerates details so I never know what to believe.”

Jon swallowed. He wondered what might have been said of him—the bastard of Winterfell.

“Yes, he is my father.” Jon paused, then clarified. “I’m a bastard. Lady Catelyn is not my mother.”

Daenerys looked like she had heard that information before. “Who is your mother?”

Well, wouldn’t he like to know.

Jon rubbed the back of his neck. “I don’t know. My father refuses to talk about it.”

She nodded her head regretfully, bringing her hands together. “Oh. Forgive me, I shouldn’t have asked. It’s not my place.”

He might have been ticked off, had it been anyone else, but Daenerys had a calming effect. She wasn’t out to remind him of his status, she was simply trying to grasp her bearings and understand who was who in the castle so she would not mistake anyone.

“You’re the princess,” he remarked, voice light, gesturing towards her with a hand, “you can ask anything you like.”

She giggled, a hint of a smile appearing. “Anything? Well, now that you’ve mentioned it, I am lost,” she admitted, shoulders moving up, then back down into place. “How about I ask where my room is and perhaps if you can guide me there?”

He was shocked she had asked for his help. It wasn’t as if he was not inclined to do so, it was just that asking a bastard for aid in finding her room seemed rather unusual. She certainly was not like most members of royal families, he presumed, as most would have simply ignored Jon altogether.

“Oh of course.”

Though he had never been told where she would be staying, the only logical place would be in the east wing of the castle, where the grandest guest room was located at the end of a long hallway.

Jon guided her there and she filled the air with questions about the castle—how many people lived there, how many rooms, where did the family eat, was it true there was a Weirwood tree, and so on. There was a never-ending list. It did make him feel quite knowledgeable to be able to answer her inquires and watch her mull over the answers.

“This is it,” Jon said, pointing to the large crafted wooden door that looked to have been recently brushed new paint.

He looked around and found it odd there were no guards in the hall lit by candles. Jon would need to tell someone about that, even though he was fairly certain no one in the castle was out to harm the princess.
Daenerys opened the large wooden door and poked her head inside, almost unsure if it were true that it was her room. Satisfied after seeing her belongings were there, she entered and turned around, her hand lingering on the door like she didn’t want to shut herself away just yet. Honestly, he wouldn’t have minded spending more time with her either, but that was not up to him. The interaction they had was most likely going to be one of very few.

“Do you have everything you need?” he felt compelled to ask.

She hesitated. “Yes.”

He didn’t need to be very smart to know that her answer was not sincere.

“You can tell me the truth.”

Daenerys’s eyes sparkled. “Pillows,” she replied sheepishly, exhaling as if she had just revealed a big secret that had been weighing her down. “I have them here, but I always sleep with more. I know it sounds silly but it makes me feel safe. I didn’t want to be picky and ask for more…”

“I’ll make sure you get them.”

She smiled. “Really?”

He nodded and turned around on his heels and started down the hall. Jon should have told the handmaiden to get the extra feather pillows, as it was not his place to be fetching things for the princess, or even interacting with her. That was the strange part—she didn’t seem to mind Jon, or at least was not giving off a vibe that she cared about his status at the castle. He pondered it the whole way to the room with storage of fresh linens and furs.

It didn’t hit him fully that the situation was odd until there he was again at her door holding two pillows against his chest, breathing in the fresh scent, feeling a bit misplaced. Jon’s hand extended and his knuckles knocked against the door four times.

He swallowed the lump in his throat that had formed.

When she opened the door, Jon could tell that she hadn’t been expecting him back. Her dressing robe was thinner and more sheer in the soft golden color than normal dress material and it made the outline of her body more visible, though the dim candlelight masked most of it. Jon felt a wave of desire flood his veins. It shouldn’t be there, he knew. It was wrong of him to be staring, eyes glued to her like they were. It was completely inappropriate of Jon.

Tender awkwardness seeped in as Jon averted his eyes away from her chest, cursing himself for being obvious.

“I couldn’t find the handmaiden to bring these,” he outright lied, trying to cover up his embarrassment.

It seemed to be a believable one, as he was not questioned further. Jon handed over the pillows with the intent of getting away as fast as possible so the redness in his cheeks wouldn’t be visible to Daenerys. He said his goodnights and started to take a few steps away from the door.

“Wait,” she called. Jon turned around and saw Daenerys bite down on her bottom lip. “Can I ask another thing of you?”

He nodded and she pointed back inside her room, giving a puzzled expression. “How do I get this fire to stay lit? I don’t think I’m doing it right.”
That would be an easy fix.

Jon weighed the options in his head and ultimately decided to offer his own assistance once again. “I could show you…?”

She nodded like that was what she was hinting at all along. “Please.”

Daenerys opened the door all the way for him to come in, closing it behind him once he was inside. It was a cool night, but not cool enough for Northerners to light a fire to sleep, which Jon assumed was why Daenerys tried on her own. Again, he found that strange. She hadn’t sought anyone out to help her, opting to try on her own. It was only that Jon had stumbled upon her that she mentioned it.

Very curious that the princess didn’t want to be catered to. He might as well throw out any other prejudices he might have had of her.

Once he entered the room, the smell was the first thing he noticed. The scent was foreign and Jon was unable to place what it was. Definitely southern, but what?

He didn’t ask.

As he headed for the grand fireplace built of stone that was in front of the bed, Jon noticed a trunk in the corner that was unique, much smaller than the rest. The three-headed dragon was carved into the top, and an ornate steel plated symbol in the shape of a dragon was holding the trunk closed. There were candle holders attached to the side, three on each that cascaded downward in a line, new wax being burned in all of them. Whatever was inside must be important to her.

Again, he didn’t ask.

Jon got to work and stacked the wood so the fire would remain burning for most of the night, maneuvering his hands around the small flames that were already burning from her attempt. The whole time Daenerys had been watching him work, making him anxious. All he could remember was that soft violet color that was so distinctive.

“There, all done.” Jon moved back from the fireplace, still on his knees, and gazed up at her as she inspected, catching her thoughtful examination. “Guess you don’t need fires in Kings Landing,” he pondered out loud.

He noticed the light leaving her eyes. “Not this kind,” she replied grimly, staring back at the flames.

Oh.

Jon closed his eyes at his mistake. Why had he chosen those words?

“You make it look so easy.” Daenerys sighed, putting her hands out towards the fire, letting the warmth fill her. “I feel foolish.”

“Don’t.”

Jon got up and dusted off his hands, most of the smudges from the wood and char coming off. He felt as if he should have said more, but opted against it and settled for, “Goodnight, Princess.”

“Please, don’t call me that,” she begged of him as they walked towards her door. “It’s Daenerys, or Dany. Whichever you prefer.”

Dany, he thought with awe. The princess wanted him to call her by a nickname. Had he hallucinated
that she said those words to him or did it actually happen? It seemed so…intimate, too intimate.

Jon settled for her full name. “Daenerys,” he repeated, seeing she was happy with that. “Sleep well.”

“And the same to you.”
The Wolf with Red Eyes

Daenerys

When she woke up, Daenerys was confused as to where she was momentarily. The room felt significantly colder than what she was used to, not temperature wise, but the overall décor of the room. In the Red Keep, she had brilliant wallpaper with flowers, ornate candle holders attached to the walls, plenty of artwork and sculptures, large windows that overlooked the city, and her bed had been this massive canopy.

There at Winterfell, the walls were carved from gray stone, the room was dimly lit with the windows being shut to keep out the colder turning weather, and there were dark furs on the bed that had a wooden frame that enclosed it. The smell was quite different as well, the normal mix of ocean and flowers replaced by a particular mix of pine and burned wood. She had sprayed perfume upon arrival to make it seem more like home, but the scent had since dissipated.

The contrast was striking, but she found she didn’t mind.

From her bed, she could see that there were still some glowing embers in the fireplace. She had been so grateful that Jon had helped her with it last night, as her room had been sealed up with warmth all the time she had slept. She had been hesitant to at first. Inviting a man into her room would have made her brother, Viserys, most likely accuse her giving her maidenhood to another.

The thought of him was not a warm one.

It was under terrible circumstances, however, she found that for the first morning in many years, she would not have to fight off the fear of coming in contact with Viserys, who had begun to frighten her. But she was the only Targaryen in Winterfell, alone in the North. There was no one to be afraid of, except maybe all the dead that were in the crypts.

She did miss her mother, though. As she has packed onto the ship at Dragonstone, her mother had told her she loved her with all her heart, all of her being, and reminded Dany that their separation was not meant to be permanent. Her actions had spoken louder than the words. Rhaella had taken off her ring, which Dany had always admired since she was a girl, and gave it to Daenerys, which she then realized on the ship that she did so because it was something to remember her mother by if her departure was the last they saw of each other.

She couldn’t think about that.

Not ever.

It was too overwhelmingly painful.

Instead, Daenerys threw the covers off and her feet planted onto the ground. She quickly removed them, finding that it was shockingly chilled. The handmaiden who had been assigned to her upon her arrival was most likely still asleep, as the sun was just barely over the horizon. Daenerys had never been one to sleep in, mostly because she needed to accommodate her walks in the gardens before Viserys or her father were to awaken. It had become a habit over the years, which meant most days she dressed herself, opting for dresses that she could put on without added help. In the North, it was more difficult, as the climate didn’t allow for lightweight dresses that she could pull over her head and start the day.
Luckily, her mother had a few dresses made before leaving Dragonstone, ones with long sleeves and thicker material. Dany picked out a rich blue one that had small gold embellishments along the bodice, the neckline falling around her collarbones, and belted at the waist. It looked more complicated than it was. There were hidden buttons along the side of the bodice and Dany was able to fasten most of them once the sleeves were on.

Sleeves—she wasn’t sure how she felt them. With her arms being covered, it felt so constricting. Kings Landing had been warm for as long as she could remember and long sleeves were never part of her wardrobe. She supposed she would ought to get used to the thicker materials, as Jaime Lannister had told her that it she might be in the North for a long while.

And what was a long while? Months? Years?

*Things could be worse,* she reminded herself.

Daenerys glanced over at the wooden trunk next to the one that had her dresses stacked inside. The trunk had been made especially for the contents, with the Targaryen sigil carved into the top. It had steel wrapped around the sides. Inside had the three dragon eggs in them, given to the family in honor of her birth many moons ago. Her mother had them packaged and shipped them up with Daenerys despite the protests of Viserys. *They were a gift for her birth into the world, and they belong with Daenerys,* her mother had said.

Daenerys got down to her knees and quietly undid the dragon latch at the front, pulling open the trunk without a squeak of the hinges. Though there were stone, the eggs were marvelous to look at, standing out against the red satin surrounding them. Daenerys felt protective of them in a way, though she knew there was no life to them. They would have captivated the world had the dragons been born, and their fossilization was a mystery.

Pretty to look at, but a sad reminder that dragons would never again exist. Something as extraordinary would never bless the skies with their presence and strike wonder—and fear—into the hearts of the people of the land.

Her fingers glazed over the scales of the cream-colored egg before she once again shut the trunk. Dwelling on the past never made anyone happy or better off.

Daenerys sat down at the finely crafted wooden table where she had laid out some belongings. Looking at her reflection in the polished rectangular piece of bronze, she put in a couple of small braids to her hair and tied them loosely at the back of her head with a small piece of ribbon, opting for simplicity. In Kings Landing, she might have had her hair done in a more complicated manner with multiple tight braids with lavish beads weaved in, but there in Winterfell, there was no need to present herself in such a way.

She stood out enough. No need to make it more obvious to the eye.

With her hair done, Daenerys slipped on some shoes and headed for the door. She found that there were two guards standing watch, one of whom was switching out with Jaime, who was her normal guard during the daytime. Dany was grateful he was able to come with her to the North, in that she knew she could trust him and felt safe with him always, especially since he helped organize their escape from Kings Landing.

He cared up and beyond the scope of his role in the Kingsguard, and it showed immensely when the time came for it.
“Up early again?” he inquired, raising and eyebrow at her attire and how well she was put together. “I thought you might want to rest a while given our travels.”

It had been a long journey north on horseback and she was a bit sore from that still, but Daenerys had slept well and was eager to get back into a routine. She needed to try and find a sense of normalcy. “I want to get my bearings of the castle before everyone is awake,” she told him. “It will be easier without everyone pausing to greet me or stare.”

“No interruptions,” Jaime concluded. He extended his arm out to point down the wide corridor. “Alright, then, let’s get going. Better than standing here at the door.”

They began to walk down the hallway side by side.

“It must be dull for you to wait for me all the time,” she gathered, feeling guilty about it, “just standing there.”

“Don’t feel bad. I have it easier than most.”

It was true. If Jaime had been a common folk who was a steel maker or a farmer, the work would be more tiresome and straining. Then again, swearing to give his life for hers if necessary was a tremendous offering. Not many would make that vow.

He was true to it, though, she knew.

She recalled an instance a few years prior when Jaime had inserted himself between Viserys and her. Viserys had become irate for an unknown reason and had hit Daenerys across the mouth so hard she bled only because she had tried to calm him down. Jaime had come to her aid, unlike most guards who would have done nothing, and deescalated the situation. Of course, Viserys had sulked off in a huff, but that was all he could have done, as her brother would have been no match for Jaime’s superior skills.

He could have told their father and there was a possibility Jaime would have died for it, but he had risked it anyways so Daenerys did not receive any further beatings in his presence.

It was clear to her then after that had happened and he had pulled her off the floor that although Jaime could do nothing to protect her mother from her father, he could protect Daenerys from Viserys to some extent. He was brave and clever about the ways he did it, but every time, without fail, Jaime was there.

In truth, there was something very sibling-like between Jaime and her. Sometimes she felt as if he was the brother she never had, always there to be her constant protector and make her laugh when times were grim with his sometimes dark, but mostly ridiculous sense of humor. He filled the void that Viserys left behind. She imagined if her eldest brother, Rhaegar, had lived, Jaime and him would be very similar.

As Daenerys admired a large hanging fixture that was hung from the ceiling, one made of massive antlers, some wax of candles melted down the side, it prompted her to ask, “Have you ever been here, to the North before?”

Jaime scoffed, a low chuckle rumbling out of him. “No, but I’ve heard from many that it’s a wasteland.”

She shook her head softly, evading a smile at his choice of descriptive words. “And?”

“And it turns out they were right.”
She allowed the giggle to bubble out of her. “It’s much different than Kings Landing,” she argued, “but I like that about it. No one here is worried about keeping up with appearances. No one to talk behind your back.”

Jaime sighed next to he, giving her his all-knowing look. “Oh, I’ve heard some whispers already.”

“What about me?” she asked, gloomy, having to tilt her head significantly upward since Jaime was much taller than her.

She loathed the gossip that circled Kings Landing. Even the young girls she had associated with she was sure gossiped about her when she was not there, just as they did to other girls. They were deceitful, and she had come to understand that her secrets and dreams were not to be trusted with them. All it did was further isolate Daenerys, and part of her had hoped that Winterfell might be a change from that.

“Just some old hags jealous of your beauty,” he shrugged it off, holding a door to the outside of the castle open until she passed through. “Nothing to worry about.”

“I’m sure in their day they were pretty as well.”

Jaime snorted, amused. “I highly doubt that.”

**Jon**

Robb didn’t bother knocking when he barged into Jon’s room in the morning. The wide door swung open so quickly that Ghost jumped up from where he was snuggled in a ball, alerted by the sudden movement. He growled before noticing it was no foe.

“Go back to sleep, Ghost,” Jon told him.

He had just finished dressing, still messing with the cuff of his sleeve. His brother didn’t waste any time with a *good morning*.

“What were you doing in the princess’s room?”

Jon looked from his spot by the window like a deer that had just realized it had a bow pointed at it. He swallowed roughly before replying. “What?”

Robb shut the door behind him. “Don’t do that. Someone saw you coming out of her room last night,” Robb said quietly. “Do I have to ask again?”

Jon didn’t like the accusatory sound in Robb’s voice. “Nothing,” he defended quickly, “I was just making sure that the fire was suited for the night.”

Robb leaned up against the bed post, crossing his arms over his chest, watching Jon closely as if he could catch him in a lie. “Is that it?”

Jon made a face. “*Is that it?*” he mocked Robb sarcastically. “Yes, that’s it. She asked me to,” he further explained, feeling the need to put some emphasis on that part. “What would you have done?”

“Fair enough.”

Jon faced his brother and held out a finger, rigid in his stance. “Don’t tell Theon.”

“Do you think I’m an idiot?”
“Well, you did just come barging into my room making accusations about what I was doing in Dany’s room, so, yes, you can be an idiot at times.”

Robb cocked his head to the side, eyebrow lifting with curiosity, completely glazing over the insult. “Dany?” he said, as if it were a new word to him entirely.

Jon turned his head away and walked to the other side of the room to busy himself putting away some cleaned clothes. He tried his best to keep his voice steady when he replied, “That’s her name.”

“Her name is Daenerys.”

“Dany is just a shorter version of it,” he claimed, words coming out too fast, shrugging his shoulder as if it were no big deal. In reality, Jon was trying to get his brother off his back after letting the name slip out to easily. “She said I could call her that.”

Robb snuck up behind him and jabbed him in the ribs playfully. “When? Last night in her room when you were making her a fire?” He made sure he emphasized those last few words in a way that made it sound like something more unspeakable.

Jon snorted and pushed him away towards the door with some force. “Get out,” he muttered.

—

The sun wasn’t high in the sky yet when Jon left the room, letting Ghost run down the corridor to the outside. He tried to keep up, but those little legs were swift and Jon gave up once Ghost had been out of sight.

The morning air was dewy, droplets of condensation hanging onto every surface. The air felt thick in his lungs with every inhale. The sky was clouded over and it made Jon wonder when they would see snow again, as winter was coming, and was said to be a long one that was approaching. How long it would last, no one knew.

Jon was walking around for a while, headed nowhere in particular. That was when saw her up ahead by herself, the guards at the end of the walkway. She must had dismissed them in favor of wandering alone.

Her hair was her most noticeable trait, and the dress she wore was like no other in Winterfell or the whole of the North. It was a style, he presumed, from Kings Landing. The dark blue with hints of gold was very bold, overtly expensive, and attracted the eyes to the details.

But his eyes were not only admiring the dress, but her face, her figure, the sway of her hips that seemed like she was reeling him in and taunting him.

Jon knew he was attracted to her, who wouldn’t be? But that was all it would ever be—him admiring her.

There was a part of him that almost turned the opposite way to avoid her, but she recognized him before he could hide away somewhere, the conversation with Robb still floating through his mind. It was too late to flee.

“Jon,” she greeted, giving him a friendly smile as she hastened her steps to meet him.

There was something about the way she said his name, maybe it was just her southern, graceful accent, or maybe something else, but it made a cage of butterflies open up inside of him, the fluttering filling him. He had never felt that way before, not once. It was so strange and unfamiliar,
but enticing.

Addicting.

He pushed out the thoughts to focus. “Did you sleep well, I hope?” he asked, trying to be formal.

“Oh, yes, one of the best nights I’ve had in some time.”

Jon leaned on the railing and gestured towards the sky. “It’s the fresh air.”

“Very refreshing, I must say.”

There was a pause in the conversation and when the silence persisted, Jon opened his mouth to excuse himself, but was cut short when he heard a loud patter against the wood beneath their feet, the vibrations of something coming towards them.

Jon turned around to see Ghost coming barreling down the long walkway from where he had come up the steps, charging at them with his tongue hanging out. Daenerys extended her hand out, grabbing the crook of his elbow as she backed up and hid partway behind Jon. “What’s that?” she asked, panicked.

“Ghost!” Jon yelled sternly at him.

The direwolf, however, was a rambunctious pup. He didn’t slow down, even as he knocked into Jon’s boots and tumbled over, starting to bite at the leather straps as if it were a toy. Jon understood how Ghost would be intimidating to others—a wolf with red eyes.

“Jon?”

Her voice was so small when she said it. He turned to look over his shoulder, Daenerys staring down at the pup curiously. He had grown three times as big as when Jon first picked him up out of the woods just a couple of fortnights ago. Ghost was still smaller that all his brothers and sisters, but Jon liked that about him. He was different, like Jon.

A wild thing, Theon had said out of spite. Clearly the runt of the litter was the hardest to train as well. A good thing that Jon was willing to put in the effort.

“It’s alright,” he tried to say in a calming voice. “He’s mine. It’s a direwolf.”

Her eyes widened. “Yours?”

Jon reached down and scooped up Ghost, grasp firm, and kept him from squirming too much in his arms. Daenerys looked up at Jon nervously when he stepped forward and he gave her a reassuring nod. “He won’t bite, not when I’m here.”

She was hesitating, hand flexing at her side until she gathered the courage from Jon’s steadiness and extended out her hand slowly until her fingers buried into Ghost’s pure white fur. She beamed as the little creature twisted his head to sniff her wrist, then planted a few licks to her skin.

“See, he’s just a ball of fur. Nothing to be scared of,” Jon affirmed.

“Not yet,” Daenerys countered, taking one step closer so her other hand could pet his head. She continued to stroke him softly, fingers grazing over his ears, and Ghost fell calm under her touch, closing his eyes, which Jon was nearly stunned by. “How big will he get to be?”

Jon was reminded of the dead mother in the woods with the litter pups all around her. “Well, Ghost
was the runt of the litter so he won’t be as big as Grey Wind or Nymeria. Those ones might be as tall as you or me. Only time will tell.”

“Are those other direwolves?”

“Each of the Starks children have one, as do I,” he clarified.

She looked truly amazed, mouth parting. “Wow. I’ve never heard of such a thing.”

—

A few days had come and gone as Robb, Theon, and Jon had gone hunting. Jon was never one to take joy out of the act of killing another animal, but knew it was necessary to survive. Robb and him never killed just for sport.

Lady Catelyn insisted on a proper feast to welcome Daenerys, as Jon had suspected, which meant they needed enough meat to feed everyone. Three separate groups had gone out in different directions with Robb, Theon, and Jon having banded into their own. He would have much rather it been just Robb and him, but Theon was way better with a bow than either of them.

Theon, he was certain, also would have rather Jon not be there either. They were mutually competitive for Robb’s attention. They didn’t quite get along but endured each other, as there was nothing else they could do.

Their time in the woods made them all realize how quickly winter was upon them, as animals were growing scarcer, some having already gone into hibernation. Leaves were falling to the ground, going brown as they died and readied to rot into the soil which would have a cover of white soon. The woods were quieter than they once had been, even the owls in the blackest part of the night sounded softer with their calls.

It was almost haunting being out there as the forest prepared for winter, the three of them around the crackling fire waiting for sleep to wash over.

Normally, he would enjoy these outings in the peace and quiet, alone in the wilderness with his brother. That time around was different. As much as he fought it, his mind kept traveling back to Winterfell and to a particular someone who should not be in his thoughts at all.

Daenerys.

Her name alone evoked warmth inside of him.

But what was the harm, he eventually settled for. His thoughts were his own, and no one could break in to see what was going on under all his curls. With that, he allowed himself to think of her and only then did he drift off into slumber with her making an appearance in his dreams.

On the third day, they arrived back at the castle mid-day with two deer and a number of rabbits in tow. As they strolled through the courtyard, they were mostly silent until Theon began to cackle.

“You sound like an old woman,” Robb pointed out, watching him with a scowl. “Or worse, an old witch.”

“Look!” Theon choked out, still laughing to the point where tears were forming in his eyes. He pointed at something across the way. “Ghost thinks Daenerys is his mother. They’ve got the same hair!”
Jon looked over to where he had pointed. There Ghost was, trailing behind Daenerys as she walked through the courtyard towards the stairs leading up to the walkway. The pup tripped over his own feet at one point and took a bump to the nose as he hit the mud, only to recover and run to catch up with the princess.

No, Jon thought. Daenerys’s hair was a different tone, much warmer. He didn’t dare say that out loud, as he would be teased until the end of his days.

“Looks like you’ve got some competition for wolf love,” smirked Theon, and nudged Robb.

Jon didn’t mind. In fact, he felt better knowing that in his absence, Ghost must have been keeping Daenerys company. Both Robb and Jon had left their direwolves at the castle, thinking they might scare off or attack any game in the woods. It had been hard to leave them, as the attachment to the wolves had grown significantly.

“I’ll see you later,” Jon told Robb abruptly, ignoring Theon completely, bumping him as he walked by.

Before he could respond, Jon was already walking in the direction that Daenerys had gone. He began to follow her, catching up, his loud boots against the wood alerting her to the follower.

“You’re back,” she smiled, pleased.

Ghost bounced over to Jon enthusiastically and he knelt to pet the wolf. It was good to have him there by his side again. “Missed you, boy,” he addressed Ghost.

Daenerys

“He likes you,” Jon commented. “A wolf following a dragon, who would have thought?”

Daenerys giggled and looked down at the pup who was beside Jon, lovingly greeting him upon his return. It was clear that the wolf loved its master.

In Jon’s absence, Ghost had found her a number of times, when she least expected it. Now that Jon was back, she was a bit saddened that he would cling back to Jon, his rightful owner. Daenerys almost wanted a direwolf for herself, a companion to love her unconditionally.

“I’ve grown fond of him. He falls asleep on my lap,” she told him, remembering how Ghost had drifted off as she had written a letter to her mother, sitting on the floor of her room by the fire. She had even let him sleep in her bed that night. “Soon he’ll be too big to fit.”

Jon laughed, ruffling the fur of the direwolf. “Ghost might still try.”

She was going to tell him all about her adventures with Ghost in the past few days but their conversation was interrupted before she could get a word out.

“Ah, bastard, this is where you went to.”

Before she turned her head to see who was talking, she saw that the smile on Jon’s face had faded into a deep-set scowl.

Daenerys never liked that word. Bastard. It sounded so awful and cruel, a word designed to make people feel lesser. Dany abhorred that. And it was said to Jon, in her presence. She felt almost personally attacked, though she had no reason to. Still, she felt a bubbling inside her and felt the need to unleash some fire.
She looked at the boy who had said that word and recognized him from the description Jaime had relayed to her. “You’re Theon Greyjoy, yes?”

Theon stood up taller and a proud, cocky smile spread across his face. “I am.”

Daenerys forced herself to smile back, though there was spite behind the sweetness. “You’re Eddard Stark’s hostage, aren’t you?”

All smugness faded from Theon’s face, replaced by a more somber look. To her side, she heard Jon muffle a chuckle and try to pass it off as a cough. She felt somewhat victorious.

Theon’s eyes wavered between Jon and Daenerys. “Well, no, not exactly. I’m his ward.”

She knew what he was all along, but wanted him to know what it felt like to be on the receiving end of a terrible word, a label he would not want to be defined by.

“Not exactly?” she challenged. “So, you may leave anytime you please?”

Theon was at a complete loss for words. He had opened his mouth to reply, but had thought better of whatever he was going to say, knowing that anything she found to be remotely offensive could end bad for him. Surely, Daenerys was not Viserys who might have a boy killed for saying something rude, but Theon didn’t know that and was not going to take a risk.

Her reputation as the Mad King’s daughter altered the way people spoke and acted around her, afraid that if they did not tread carefully, they would end up burned alive for *waking the dragon,* as Viserys called it.

She nearly shivered at the thought. Daenerys couldn’t bear to think that people viewed her in that way—a girl to be feared because of madness running in the family.

There was an inaudible exchange between Theon and Jon before he spoke up again, that time with his head tilted down, eyes evading hers. “No.”

Daenerys didn’t press any further. “Jon and I were speaking, if you don’t mind.”

Theon nodded, bowed, and went back the way he came.

And that was that.

It was her first glimpse into her true power, her ability to make those around her bend into exactly her line of thinking, not to question nor to rephrase words she spoke. *Dangerous,* she thought. She would only use it for good, she promised herself. With Theon, she had seen it as a form of justice. It was easy to see that boy was purposely hurtful towards Jon.

It made her wonder if it were a regular occurrence, and if it were, maybe she had helped end it, at least for a time.

And as for Jon, he was looking at her as if he were bewildered. “What?” she questioned, a bit self-conscious. She hoped that the interaction hadn’t given the wrong impression of herself to him.

“Nothing.” He was thoughtful for a moment until he said, “I just don’t think anyone has ever been able to shut him up before.”

“He shouldn’t have called you that,” she murmured, then gained confidence in her voice, ready to say what needed to be said. “I feel as though it’s my job to stand up for people I feel are being
wronged. He should call you by your name, nothing more.”

There was an expression that passed over Jon’s face as she watched him, and it was something that Daenerys had never seen before. Suddenly, her heart rate increased, each thud growing closer together. If she had to guess, it looked almost like he wanted kiss her.

She knew he wouldn’t, not there with so many around them, but if he had, would she have let him? Her eyes slanted downward to look at his lips to ponder the question that had arose with great intensity.

Before she was able to fall on a concrete answer, Ghost yelped and Daenerys caught a glimpse of a much bigger direwolf running down below, that time the wolf being dark in color and very fast. Ghost took off then, leaving the pair standing there alone.

“I should make sure they don’t get into any trouble,” Jon mumbled, nodding in that direction.

They broke apart and went their separate ways, though her gaze lingered on him as he walked off.
She’s so pretty,” Sansa eloquently announced to them all as they ate breakfast, interrupting the silent rhythm of the morning. She placed her elbow on the table and rested her jaw on her palm, in a dream-like state. “I wish I looked like Daenerys.”

Sansa had continued to talk more but Jon didn’t hear much of it.

Daenerys.

Her name threw him into a spiral of thoughts. The previous night he had stayed wide awake in bed replaying the events of the day over and over again, every single word. Jon was shocked, simply put. Something in his core had become unsettled. No one had ever said anything before about being called what he was. He had lost sleep over the matter—over Daenerys saying he should be called by his name and not bastard.

Perplexing.

She had a differing view of the world, that was what he had come to realize, and it was people like her who made the world seem not so dim. She was a flash of light in the darkness.

“Do you think if I wrote her a poem she would like that?” Sansa pondered.

Arya stabbed a slab of butter. “I don’t know.”

“It’s a question that requires a yes or no answer, Arya, just pick one. It isn’t difficult.”

Arya, defiant, and looking to instigate, replied with a stern, “No.”

Needless to say, it was not what Sansa had been looking for. She huffed and turned her head across the table. “Don’t you think it would be a nice gift?”

For a moment, there was silence. Jon glanced up to realize that Sansa was looking right at him with her piercing blue eyes that looked just like her mother’s. It was one of the few times she had ever addressed solely Jon, and certainly a first time for her asking for his opinion on a matter she thought was important.

“Yes,” he said immediately, not wanting to disagree, fearing any small progress that might be made with Sansa would be dashed if he didn’t give the response she wanted. “She would love that.”

She glowed at the answer, sitting back on the bench victorious. She tilted her head towards the younger sister. “See,” mocked Sansa, content.

“We don’t care,” Arya spat out.
Her hand grabbed a piece of bread, picked off the crust, and tossed it at Sansa. She flinched away before it got trapped in her hair, but the tension in the room rose to a new level. “Arya!” hissed the older sister, her hand flashing out like a bolt of lightning as she swatted Arya, the sound of the contact she made with the younger one making Jon cringe.

Being trapped in the same room as the two fought was the worst place imaginable for pretty much anyone who knew them.

“That’s enough.” Robb intervened before it got too explosive, putting his large frame in between the two before the hitting or hair pulling started. “Off to get dressed,” he ordered, “both of you, go on. Now.”

Sansa threw a nasty look at Arya as they walked in different directions.

Robb shook his head at Jon, puzzled, and rubbed his temples. “If only they would just get along, things would be so much more pleasant around here. We never fought like that.”

“We liked each other,” Jon pointed out, and shoved some bread in his mouth and didn’t bother to swallow before he added, “They don’t.”

“They’re like Sunspear and Winterfell, complete opposites.”

It was true, the sisters even looked to be from different families. Sansa’s slim frame, blue eyes, and red hair was a contrast to Arya, who was petite with dark hair and eyes.

“They might get along one day,” Jon said, trying to be optimistic, though it was not his usual outlook.

Robb laughed, the boom of it echoing in the great hall. “The day they get along for good is the day I marry Theon.”

The pair chuckled over the impossibilities.

“Are you ready for the feast? It’ll be a quite the night. I can smell the cooking from down the hall. I’m sure they’re rolling out the barrels of wine already.”

Jon’s chuckle faded and he looked away. He started to pick at a stray piece of wood that had splintered from the table, careful not to lodge it into his skin. “I haven’t been told if I’m going or not.”

Robb stood still for a beat before he sat down at the table across from Jon, jaw going rigid with dissatisfaction. “I’ll talk to my mother,” he said in a soft, encouraging way. “You’ll be there. No reason for you not to be.”

Well, there was one reason and one reason only. It was the same reason that had stained him his entire life.

Bastard.

It was made sure that he never forgot who he was.

Jon tried to make it seem like he didn’t care, but knew that Robb saw through it. Jon pushed his plate back. “I’m going to go feed the direwolves,” he announced, making an excuse to leave.
Daenerys

Her handmaiden, Mya, was a nice woman who was older than Daenerys, but not by too much. She was tall, lean, and had light brown hair that fell at her shoulders. She had been nervous at first but had warmed up to Daenerys during her stay.

She had braided her wet hair the night before and allowed Daenerys to sleep on it, letting the hair take the formation of waves. Once undone, she combed through the hair to make it bounce, soft tresses tickling her shoulders. Daenerys had great admiration for the skill Mya had for creating elegant hair styles. She had pulled three braids on each side of her head to the back and formed a circle, where she had weaved in some painted violet beads because they matched her eyes.

Daenerys pulled a few pieces loose in the front to framed her face.

“Finished, Princess Daenerys,” she said, pulling back to inspect the work one last time. “Are you pleased?”

“Yes, thank you.”

She stood up and walked to the dress that hung on an iron rod. Once on, her silk dress, the color of wine that came from Dorne, deep and rich, was belted at the waist. Inside she needed no cloak, and with all the fires and candles burning, she wore the dress because it was the only one she had with her that required no sleeves, just a tie at the back of her neck that Mya secured in place with a small silver pin shaped like a dragon tail.

Daenerys, as the guest, was placed in the middle of the table that looked out at the rest of the people invited, seated with Lady Catelyn to her left and Sansa to her right.

As she arrived as the last person, candle wax had already begun to pour onto the table, hardening into surface. Mountains of food was spread out all along the table, most of it new to Daenerys, and not as cleverly plated for display. She found that the meat was tougher to chew so she stuck with nibbling on some desserts instead after Sansa passed her a lemoncake and declared it her favorite.

Sansa had occupied most of her attention for the first part of the night, asking many questions about Kings Landing and what it was like outside of Winterfell. It became clear that the girl wanted nothing more than to travel south one day, most likely to marry a Lord and have a fairytale life. Dany admired the optimistic imagination Sansa had, and hoped that her future would truly be as she wished.

She complimented Sansa on a dress she wore, though the girl was way more intrigued by attire Daenerys wore. She let her feel the fabric, and Daenerys promised her one of her own one day when she grew older and her figure filled out. It made Daenerys happy to see how Sansa lit up, bright eyes filled with delight. She excused herself and went running off to tell her friends.

As the night went on, the feast became chaotic and she found that was the only word that suited what she saw. People were up and about, some women being swung around by men to the violins being played near the entryway.

There was a lot of wine, and she meant a lot. Northerners drank more than Daenerys had ever seen. One man had even passed out on the floor before he was towed away after Lady Catelyn had shot a look to a guard to get him out of there. It would have been unacceptable in Kings Landing. No one would have dared to insult the King and Queen by drinking themselves so full they collapsed in the
great hall.

She felt entirely out of place.

Daenerys wrapped an arm around her waist for comfort, ignoring that her belt was creating lines on her skin from the pressure. She reached for her glass and had more wine poured into it—her second cup—though the taste was more bitter than she was used to. However, she would need it to make it through the night. It seemed as though everyone was getting somewhat drunk, and she might as well join in, as there was no one there to tell her what to do.

She smirked against the edge of her cup as she thought that. She was the only Targaryen there and only she could tell herself what to do.

When the dancing had started, that was when the wine kicked in for her. The tables lined down the middle of the hall were pushed further towards the wall so there was room. Those playing the music stepped up the beat to compliment the dancers rather uncoordinated moves. Daenerys wasn’t brave enough to get up and join in, so she enjoyed watching from her seat, giggling along with Lady Catelyn, who had spotted Robb dancing with Arya.

When it came to an end, Daenerys clapped loudly for them.

“You’re enjoying yourself,” commented Lady Catelyn. “I do admit, I was a bit nervous.”

Daenerys took another sip of wine. “Winterfell makes the feasts in Kings Landing look like a terrible bore.”

“I remember my first one here,” she recalled, the memory taking her back. “It was terrifying. I had never seen such a thing before. I sat right here in this spot and didn’t move. Ned stayed by my side the whole night and into the early morning until it ended. He knew how different Northerners were.”

Daenerys looked around and found Lord Stark over by a window talking to someone she did not recognize. “Looks like things have changed over the years. Now you’re the one who gets to stay by my side.”

She nodded along, glancing at her husband, then back to Daenerys. “I never completely felt like I fit in here, I’m afraid. I know what it’s like to be an outsider coming to a new place, especially here. I admire how much it seems you have adapted to the new surroundings, though I’m certain it is only temporary.”

“From what Jaime tells me, temporary could mean years,” she sighed, letting her hands fall to her lap where they fidgeted with a lace attached to her belt. Her fingers then twirled her mother’s ring around. She finally decided to ask, “Has there been any word from Kings Landing?”

Lady Catelyn’s eyes grew sorrowful. “I haven’t heard anything. If Ned received a letter, I didn’t read it. I can try to find out more, if you would like.”

“I would like that, no matter what it is.”

The thought of her family in danger sobered her up. The smile had left her face, and she settled into the back of her upholstered chair to get comfortable. Upon looking around at all the people, she found Jon across the table from a bunch of people down at the end of the hall. It looked like he was feigning a smile at some joke those around him started to laugh hysterically at.

Just then, Arya bounced over to Sansa’s previous seat and took it, reaching for some grapes in the middle of the table, the sleeve of her dress dipping into a dessert and catching the frosting.
Daenerys leaned over to wipe the sleeve with a cloth, taking the opportunity to be out of range of Lady Catelyn’s ear. “What is Jon doing down there?” she asked Arya quietly, knowing she would give her the truth.

Arya was sulky as she turned to Daenerys. It was clear that she did not like the circumstances either. Arya cupped her hand around Dany’s ear and whispered, “It isn’t fair, but he doesn’t sit with the rest of us since he isn’t trueborn.”

_How sad,_ she thought. Jon had been banished to the corner table while the rest of his family sat in the front overlooking everyone—overlooking him. There was a bubbling of anger inside of her again, a feeling she allowed to stay. She looked around at the Starks at her table, all seemingly enjoying themselves.

She then looked back at Jon. Daenerys didn’t need to put herself in his position to know the loneliness.

Her heart hurt for him, though she was certain his heart hurt more.

Suddenly, the room became intolerable to be in, feeling like the air was being sucked out and she was being smothered. Daenerys sat up abruptly, the chair that was too big for her making a loud noise as it scraped against the stone floor, and the room came to a deafening silence. All eyes were looming on her. People had stopped their hands halfway to their mouths, too eager to see what was happening to chew.

“Excuse me,” she said softly to Lady Catelyn, tilting her head in that direction. “I need some air.”

Daenerys walked down the pathway in between the tables lined with people, avoiding some empty wine glasses on the floor, heads turning her way as she walked, until she reached the doorway to the side, the guards at the door pushing it open for her. When they began to follow, she told them to stay behind, and dismissed her handmaiden as well.

Daenerys grabbed the iron handle and pushed open the heavy door to the outside. She was immediately met with the force of the evening winds, her bare arms exposed. She hadn’t brought a cloak with her, but found she did not mind the chill, not right away.

She went up to the top lookout points where if it were light out she would be able to see the full landscape beyond the confines of the castle. With the torches burning in the holders, all she could see was the path to either side of her, but it did not stop her from staring blankly into the darkness, hearing the rustling of the trees.

_Northerners,_ she scoffed to herself. They thought they were so different from the rest of the Seven Kingdoms, but they were a part of the same wheel that turned and turned.

Dany placed her hands out, them falling on the carved stone in front of her. There was a buzzing in her head from everything—her father’s betrayals, the separation from her family, the unknown future, the lesser treatment of Jon.

Her world was in turmoil, and why couldn’t she do anything about it?

“Did we scare you off?” came his voice. From the shadows, Jon emerged. “Feasts here can get a bit wild. Must be a shock.”

She gazed at him for a beat, but found it hard to muster a smile, even for him. “No, it didn’t scare me off.”
“Well, then, don’t tell me the wine made you sick. I’ve heard it’s not as good as it is from the southern kingdoms.”

“Not the wine that made me feel ill,” she commented, a bit bitter still. She turned her body to face him entirely. “What good is being a princess if you can’t do anything to protect the people you care about?” she asked him, breathless, letting her inner thoughts out.

“Sometimes there isn’t anything we can do.”

“I feel ridiculous being here, just waiting, not knowing what is happening.” Dany turned her head back to face the sea of darkness, letting the wind blow into her face and dry the tears that had welled up. She tried not to let her voice crack when she said, “Sometimes I wonder what life would have been like if my father had not gotten so…”

She trailed off and didn’t finish her sentence, fear of the judgement. Instead, her irritation got directed elsewhere. “How do you stand it?” she blurted out, anger boiling over.

Jon cocked his head to the side and took a step forward. “I don’t understand.”

“Viserys treated me like I was inferior, I know what it feels like.”

Jon dropped his head. He knew what she was talking about. It made her think that he was ashamed and that made her even sadder. “It’s the way things are here in Westeros.”

Yes, he was right. The world had already come up with the rules and there was nothing Daenerys could do about it. She must be so naïve to think up the ways she could change the world. Change was only met with fervent revolt.

But in a world so defined by its many rules, how could she feel so much for this one boy who she barely knew, feel the sort of connection that she did? She wasn’t supposed to, as she was supposed to live by her own set of royal rules, she knew that much. But still, her heart propelled in his direction in an uncalculated manner.

It only dawned on her then that he must be feeling something similar, after all, he followed her out there to check on her and no one else had. She realized then that she had fallen upon her answer from the other day, and, yes, she would have let him kiss her. Despite his status, something she did not agree with nor would like to acknowledge, Jon’s lips on hers was a welcomed thought.

These strange feelings made her want to open up, to allow herself to be vulnerable. All her life she had been told that vulnerability was weakness, that Targaryens were not weak, they were dragons.

But there was something so sweet about the vulnerability she felt.

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Jon

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“I think you and I are not so different,” she told him, tone much deeper than before.

He didn’t dare snicker at the words, he probed her for more. “How so?”

“We are both alone in the world.”

Alone.
It hit him harder than he could have ever anticipated. Could she really see through him so easily even though others did not?

“You don’t believe me,” she gathered. “I trust you not to mention this elsewhere…”

He was shocked by how delicately she said it. “You trust me?”

“Yes. I’m not sure why, but I do.” After a brief, fleeting moment, she carried on. “I hope you know that it isn’t easy for me—trust. I’ve had people who I’d call friends turn around and whisper terrible lies about me, my brother tells me he cares for me and then he hits me so hard I get bruises, my father says he would never let anything happen to our family and then he sends soldiers to hunt us down.” She took a moment, Daenerys visibly distresses. Jon wanted nothing more to reach out and embrace her but withheld.

“I once had a handmaiden steal a piece of jewelry from me. It was nothing grand, just a skinny, silver bracelet. The guards caught her and brought her to my father. She was the first person I ever saw burned alive. She was begging for forgiveness, but my father laughed at her, laughed until she turned to ash.” Daenerys stared down at the ground, shaking her head from side to side. “I wasn’t allowed to leave or to look away. I was ten. That was when I realized to the full extent of who my father was, what he was. A monster.”

For the first time, Jon got a good glimpse into her life—one that she allowed him to see. A terrible sight it was.

But despite all the Mad King was and what he had done, Jon saw Daenerys in a way comparable to how he saw the sun—necessary for everything good in the world to exist. Jon felt compelled to say his thoughts out loud, in his own, awkward way.

“He might be a monster, but you’re not. And maybe that’s the world’s way of finding a balance because…because you’re…” He couldn’t get the words out, face flushing.

“You’re what?” she inquired, waiting.

Just fucking say it.

“You’re the most wonderful being to have walked the Seven Kingdoms.”

He was not sure if the expression on her face was good or bad. Dany’s eyes squinted, skeptical. “You barely know me,” she cautioned.

“I know you enough to know it’s true.”

That time around, he didn’t feel any regret about what he said, no sense that he was overstepping. It was the truth, and she in that moment she needed to hear it.

Dany blinked at him several times, reassured of something. She stepped forward, but a thin layer of water was covering the stone, and she wobbled, nearly falling, her shoes not meant for the outdoor northern climates, easily sliding on the slippery surface.

But his reflexes were strong and grabbed ahold of her before she could topple over, and she grabbed a fistful of his leather jerkin to steady herself as she regained her footing, the heel of her shoe sounding like it had snapped.
Letting go of her was the obvious next step, but the silk dress was nice bunched against his fingers, and Jon found himself letting the tips of his fingers press in slightly more.

Daenerys grumbled to herself, “I shouldn’t have had that second glass of wine.”

Jon let out a half exhale, half laugh.

Dany tilted her head up to look him in the eyes, the tips of her long hair tickling the back of his knuckles. She was still there in his arms, so close to his face, almost unwilling to regain her balance entirely, instead favoring how close they were and Jon holding onto her.

It was as if his body was no longer his own anymore, not able to control his own movements. Jon took away one hand at her waist and brought it up to tuck a stray piece of hair behind her ear, letting his hand linger there, thumb brushing the far edge of her cheek.

Jon released a breath he wasn’t aware he had been holding in, too aware of the shift in the atmosphere.

The fluttering of nervous energy attacked his stomach again. He could chalk it up to being something completely unrelated, but that wasn’t a lie he wanted to tell himself, not that night.

She was looking at him looking at her, the violet in her eyes seeming to darken. Her body pressed in further, just enough for him to notice, and he had to hold a whimper in. It must have been evident on his face that the feeling of her body against his was enjoyable.

His mouth parted, searching for something so say, but nothing came forward.

“I have to go,” she said abruptly, releasing her hold on his jerkin, pulling away.

She left in a hurry and suddenly his world felt empty again once she disappeared, which made him feel this ache inside. He closed his eyes and rubbed his hands over them. He was letting himself fall further down a hole he knew he wouldn’t be able to climb back out of, yet it was completely out of his control.

Jon stood there facing the direction Dany had fled to until a voice from behind spooked him.

“I thought bastards were supposed to keep in the background,” Jaime said. It wasn’t quite a mocking tone, more of a challenging one. “Not talk to princesses alone in dark corners of castles.”

Before he had the chance to wonder how much of the conversation Jaime had heard, Jon took his own jab at him. “I thought members of the Kingsguard were supposed to protect the king.”

Jaime was unbothered by it. He actually smirked at the rebuttal.

“The King is not the one who needs the protection, believe me when I say that.” He leaned in, towering over Jon, the flickering of the flames reflecting off this armor. “Do you know what is happening right now? King Aerys has sent men to Dragonstone to do who knows what with his beloved wife and son. And if those men make it to Dragonstone…well, let’s just say it’s not the princess who I’ll be protecting anyone, she’ll be the queen.”

“Men headed to Dragonstone?” Jon’s face fell. “Does she know?”

“No.”

“Shouldn’t she?” he pressed.
Jaime shook his head, wary. “No, not yet. It will crush her. And she is not going to hear it from you.”

It sounded like a threat and Jon took it as one. He didn’t back down. “It almost sounds like you’re hopeful those men make it to Dragonstone,” he accused, knowing Lannisters only wanted one thing, and that was power.

“I would never wish harm to Queen Rhaella,” he retorted, purposefully leaving out the other Targaryen member at Dragonstone. “But hear me when I say this, Daenerys would do a lot better at ruling the Seven Kingdoms than her brother would. Viserys is just another cruel boy who would be another Aerys and the realm can’t handle that, wouldn’t you agree?”

Jon didn’t answer.

Jaime looked at him very seriously. “I wouldn’t mind hearing that was an option taken away. And judging by your friendliness towards Daenerys, I’d venture to say you wouldn’t like the idea of her crying in pain underneath Viserys as he put a child into her. Believe me, hearing Rhaella’s screams will haunt me for a lifetime, and I don’t intend on hearing the ones from Daenerys as well. She’s been through enough already.”

Jon winced.

What a vile thought.

The images flooded him, despite his efforts to keep them out. The idea of her in pain from the unthinkable—rape—made Jon want to punch the stone wall, no matter how bloody it would make him.

“You should head back to the feast before you’re missed,” Jaime suggested, patting him on the shoulder, the heavy weight of his hand a reminder of his strength.

As if he could set foot back in there again after what had just happened. “No one noticed me leave. Besides, why would I missed?”

He didn’t wait for any type of response. Jon walked off back into the castle and went straight to his chambers, closing the door behind him.

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He was in bed wide awake for another night. He understood the situation better, how the Mad King treated those around him, how the Queen suffered and how Dany was on that same path. After what Jaime revealed, Jon found it hard to think of the idea of them letting her go back into the hands of Viserys.

He pushed that out of his mind and let Dany be the only thing he thought of.

He could still feel the silk of her dress on his rough hands, feel the curve of her spine. Jon’s mind wandered what it must be like to feel what was underneath that dress of hers. Those legs that never showed, always covered by a dress. Jon wanted to settle in between them and drown out the rest of the world.

It was silly to have such a desire.

And despite all impracticality, Jon’s mind was consumed by her, and he felt that desire pressing against the furs that were on top of him, blood having rushed to his groin.
Did he dare?

And just like that he closed his eyes in acceptance of his defeat.

Jon chewed at the skin around his fingernails before he let his hand travel under the furs and to his cock. He slowly began to stroke himself, allowing the image of Daenerys to take the forefront of his mind. His breathing became heavier as he continued, hand going faster.

Jon tilted his head back into the pillow, biting onto his bottom lip too hard, holding back a moan as he climaxed. He cleaned himself off and rolled onto his side, knowing that what had happened would most likely become part of a night time routine, as pathetic as that was.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for all the comments! I read every one of them. Sorry if I don’t reply since I usually don’t have the time to.
Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

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Daenerys

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A fortnight had gone by since the feast until she was wandering about the halls again, bored of reading books provided to her. She considered exploring the crypts, but had not worked up the courage to go there yet.

It was mid-day as she wandered aimlessly through the halls, some which she had never been in before. She had been so focused on the architecture that was so foreign that she hadn’t been paying attention to which doors she walked through and down what halls she strolled.

It was not until she reached a dead end that she realized she needed to make an attempt to back track. She could have stopped to ask a servant along the way, but felt guilty pulling them away from their work, knowing they would most likely insist on stopping their work to show her the right path. Instead, she pondered her next move, deciding a trip to the godswood before it got to bitter cold out would be the adventure for the day, that is, if she ever found her way to the outside again.

When she heard a small growl, she came to a halt. Dany looked around in the open hallway, illuminated by the sun streaming in from the windows but saw nothing. She had heard about the tales of spirits of Winterfell that roamed about and had passed it off as a stupid story, but she was beginning to believe that perhaps there really was something lurking in the halls.

When nothing appeared, Daenerys took a couple of steps forward, glancing back a few times. There was something unnerving about the reclusively of some parts of the castle and she was regretting not stopping someone to tell her where she was.

Dany continued on, quicker with her steps than before, rounding a corner she nearly ran into something large and white.

“No!” Her hand flashed out to cover her mouth. She then removed it to put two hands on her hips. “Ghost,” she complained, heart still racing from the scare.

As the days went on, Ghost was becoming more and more sneaky. His name was starting to fit him in more ways than just the color of his fur.

“Trying to startle me, are you?” she talked to him, not feeling silly for doing so. She was convinced that the direwolf understood her language, though he obviously lacked the ability to communicate back to her.

His glowing eyes stared at her with wonder. She knew exactly what he was waiting for.

Dany got down to her knees to pet Ghost, him easing into her touch as she scratched behind his ear, a place she had learned was his favorite spot. The wolf’s head came up to her chest as she kneeled, becoming bigger every passing day. It was astonishing to watch him grow, as well as the other ones. Their personalities were coming out more as they aged as well.
Strange beasts they were, but so lovable, according to Dany.

“Want to keep me company today? I’m going to go see the godswood.”

Without warning, Ghost pulled away and sulked off down the hall, disappearing, leaving Dany there by herself.

“That must be a no,” she gathered, getting back to her feet, dusting off her dress.

She decided it was best to go the way that Ghost had gone. She passed by a number of doors that were shut until she stumbled upon and open one. Thinking there must be someone inside, Dany finally relented and was going to ask for some assistance.

Might as well before she fell through a trap door and was stuck inside the secrets of the castle, as Jaime liked to try and caution her about (but mostly just tried to spook her into caution).

She peeked in through the door, finding it to be a bedroom. It was much different than her own. The stone walls were not as cleanly carved, large stones of varying colors making it up. It was smaller as well, but decent size. There were a couple of swords in a corner, both different in length and width. The bed was centered, another wooden frame around it, though it lacked the detail of a craftsmen.

That was when Dany spotted Jon.

She saw him standing there, unaware of her presence due to his head hung downward and his hair created a curtain that obstructed his view of the door. His chest was gleaming against the sun that was coming through the window as he messed with the hem of an undershirt. Daenerys allowed her eyes to travel over his body and abdominal muscles. His face was still boyish in a way, but the rest of him was not, and the lean muscle peaked her interest.

How interesting it was that she got lost and ended up at his door.

He must have sensed her there in the doorway. Jon turned his head over his shoulder and met her eyes, frozen in place, and it shook her out of her gawking. All she could think to say in that moment was, “Jon.”

He blinked at her as if he wasn’t quite sure what to say either, taken aback.

She rushed into an explanation. “I was walking by,” she said, heat rising in her cheeks. She pointed back the way she had come. “I guess I got a little lost again.” Her hand fell slowly back to her side and she noted the clamminess, as if she had been down by the docks late at night when the fog rolled in. “I’ll just…”

She had turned halfway before Jon cleared his throat. “Trying to get even more lost?” he asked, light with the humor.

“Oh.” Dany brought her hands together in front of her, a nervous habit. “Right.”

“We should have had someone draw you a personal map of the castle,” he joked, adding a half smile.

Dany giggled at the thought. “That would be humiliating. I’d rather avoid being catered to.” Jon pulled the shirt over his head and Dany leaned her face against the wooden door. “I was thinking about going to see this weirwood tree in the godswood.” She paused, then added, “Will you join me?”
He grinned sheepishly. “Why don’t you make friends of some of the girls around your age here?”

Dany entered the room. “I think they’re afraid of me. Besides, the girls in Kings Landing were never the nicest. Besides, I think I prefer to be around you.”

Jon drummed his fingers against the table and looked around shyly. “People might start to talk,” he breathed out.

“Of what?”

He snorted, as if he were responding to what he saw as the equivalent of a bad joke. “The Princess of the Seven Kingdoms and Bastard of Winterfell alone together in the godwood.” He shrugged a shoulder in an attempt to appear uncaring. “It doesn’t have a nice sound to it.”

He tried to be nonchalant about it, but Dany could tell his title bothered him, especially in comparison next to hers.

“People gossip no matter what,” she sighed matter of factly. “Might as well have some control over what they gossip about.”

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The godwood was eerie, but not scary. It was a whole other world once they were among the trees, the castle out of sight. Ghost had followed them in after all, but disappeared among the trees. He did not blend in well, but certainly managed to stay out of sight when he wanted to.

Daenerys marveled at the complex environment. There were some birds hopping on the ground among some fallen leaves, searching for some bugs to eat. Dark moss grew on the ground and spread up the bark of the trunks of some trees, trying to beat out the vines for some space.

When Dany looked up, only small parts of the sky were visible, overarching branches with browning leaves still decorating the canopy. A magical place, she decided.

The Faith of the Seven was the dominant religion in Westeros, especially in the capitol. Dany adhered to it, as did the rest of her family ever since Aegon, but she also believed that people should be able to practice whatever religion called to them. The Old Gods was what Northerners worshipped. But whatever is was the looked down upon them must laugh at how quarrels started in the streets over the matter of what gods should be bowed to.

In truth, she did not know much about the Old Gods. It was on her mind until they arrived at the weirwood. It was more massive than she imagined, thick white branches looping outward, covered in red leaves that were still latched on. Even the roots overwhelmed the area surrounding it.

Enchanting.

“Watch your step,” Jon instructed.

His voice startled her, as she had forgotten he was there next to her since her focus had been on the weirwood. She carefully made her way around the roots, gathering her dress colored in light pink so it would not snag. Once in front of the tree, she reached out her hand, touching the sap that made the tree look as if it were bleeding, then pulled away as a chill ran over her.

With a rustle of the wind, Dany thought she might have heard a whisper among the trees. The wind
picked up more significantly, her one loose braid down her back having been tossed over her shoulder with the force of the air. Something was happening, she could feel it in her bones and as deep as her soul.

It was as if they were no longer alone.

Daenerys looked up, glancing around at all the trees. The whisper was there, telling her something, but she could not make out what the word was. She closed her eyes and attempted to focus, but the word was lost to her.

She looked at Jon, who was also intrigued by the shift in the air, but did not look alarmed.

“Did you hear that?” she asked.

“Hear what?”

*I'm losing my mind,* she tried to tell herself. Maybe it was the stress.

She suddenly felt herself in foreign lands once again. It were as if all the trees knew she was from the south, an outsider in their territory who did not belong.


She sauntered away from the tree only a few more steps to be closer to the pond, the water still and untouched with a few crumpled leaves gently floating around the edges. It was there that she sat down with her back to the weirwood tree in a patch of soft moss. Jon took his place across from her with his back to the pond.

Dany settled in to her place among the trees. It was a spiritual place, a place of forgiveness, and a place for her to bear all that plagued her soul.

Daenerys poked around the moss with a small piece of bark that had fallen, feeling a confession brewing up towards the surface. “When I told you about the handmaiden of mine that my father burned, that was when it started. He made Viserys and I watch after that incident. Not every time, but a lot of them. He said it was good for us to watch our enemies turn into dust before us.”

Her eyes surely must have looked haunted as she discussed her past. It must have been hard for Jon to hear it. She knew that he could not even begin to imagine what it must have been like to stand next to King Aerys as flesh melted of his victims and filled the air with vile scents.

“Their screams…” she began again, looking up at Jon who was looking back at her. “I still hear them sometimes. I dream of it. Those screams, you never hear anything quite like it. And not just of those being burned but my mother’s as well. He would go to her after the fire and…and…”

It was unspeakable. She couldn’t get the words out without choking up. Her mother had suffered so much. *Everyone* had suffered so much under his reign of terror.

“I know my father burned you grandfather alive. For that, I want to offer my sincere apology.”

“No,” Jon exhaled, shaking his head. “There’s nothing on your part to apologize for.”

“He is my father.”

“We are not responsible for what are parents do. Their sins are their own, no one else.”

She did not speak more of it. Her father’s sins were staining the Targaryen family. No one would
ever be able to convince her otherwise.

“Jaime tells me the Dornish march for Kings Landing. My mother sent a raven there explaining everything. The Tyrells might join, but nothing is set in stone.” Daenerys drew in a breath of the crisp air and let it fill her with the expansion of her lungs. “If this ever ends, Viserys and I will marry as soon as possible.”

She didn’t want it, but that was their way of life. Brother and sister married, the line kept pure. If he wasn’t so mean the she wouldn’t have thought twice about it. But he was mean, and Dany knew that the same that happened to her mother would happen to her as well. She would suffer the same fate of enduring cruelty.

“He’s horrible” she said, in a whisper so small that it would barely be heard, but she needed to get it off her chest and have it be known to someone. “He terrifies me sometimes.”

It was evident that Jon was bothered by it, him having a hard time hiding what he was feeling. His usual indifferent expression fused into deep frustration, hands balling into fists at his side.

It didn’t scare her, only made her reveal more.

“I know I’ll never be truly loved.”

“That’s not true,” Jon interjected. He slipped his fingers to hers and squeezed her hand firmly. He was frozen for the briefest moment, the muscle in his neck protruding as if he was cringing over his own words. He then clarified, “The people will love you.”

“I hope so,” she commented, voice trailing off.

It would not be the same, but perhaps she would be able to funnel all of her own love to the people, into trying to make their lives better.

Daenerys let out a small laugh in disbelief. “I don’t know why I’m telling you this.”

“Because you trust me,” he echoed her previous statement from the night she revealed more about herself after the feast.

“Yes,” she confirmed again. “I know I shouldn’t burden you with all of this, but it’s easy to talk to you, Jon. You listen. You hear me.”

She looked down at their hands together. He made no attempt to remove it and she decided that she wasn’t going to either. It was nice having the connection there.

“I didn’t want to come here at first. I wanted to stay Dragonstone with my mother and brother, but she said it was better to keep us apart. Dragonstone is closer to Kings Landing. If my father were to attack, well…do you think my father would kill Viserys?” she questioned.

“Dany,” he replied hesitantly, “your father is mad, as you said. He’s unpredictable.”

“That’s what’s scariest. I don’t know what he might be planning.” Jon opened his mouth like he was about to say something more but she sniffled and rubbed her sleeve along her nose. “But a girl being the sole heir is not desirable.”

Jon shook his head. “Never quite understood that.”

“No?”
“Girls are smarter than boys,” he simply put it. “They would probably make better rulers.”

She was pleased with the answer, stroking his thumb. “If only there were more who thought that way.”

Something about Jon calmed her worries, a new feeling overtaking her. She leaned in, fingers grazing his forehead with affection, then traveled around his temples, grazing the pieces of hair that had fallen in his face from the gusts of wind, and pushed them back. Dany moved onto her hands and knees, leaning over more. She kissed him, just like that, pushing her lips against his and moving them slowly.

He didn’t respond at first, she imagined from the shock of how foreign her lips felt on his and that fact that they belonged to her, Daenerys Targaryen. But when he did respond, it felt as if everything in the world was exactly as it should be.

He kissed her back, inexperienced, she could tell, but eager.

She wasn’t even sure how it happened but she ended up falling on top of him. Jon’s had caught the sides of her waist, careful not to move them elsewhere.

Dany kissed him tentatively as he became completely submissive under her, allowing her to take the lead. When she pulled away, his lips parted, and he exhaled in a way that made her think that he needed her to be able to breathe.

They stared at each other, knowing full well they were playing a dangerous game.

No turning back.

Chapter End Notes

I’m buried in work for my job and my graduate classes right now so I expect the next update will most likely not be for around two weeks. But I do have a pregnant Dany oneshot that I'll be posting sometime in between so keep an eye out for that :)
A Dynasty in Collapse

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Daenerys

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She stared at the entrance to the crypts, the darkness looming even with the torch in her hand. Arya was at her side, offering to explore with her.

“Let’s go before Sansa catches me and drags me to do needlework,” said the young girl, peeking around the corner to browse the courtyard.

“You don’t like that sort of thing, do you?”

Arya shook her head and wrinkled up her nose. “I’d rather poke out my eye with that needle than be trapped in that room.”

Dany grinned. Arya was not like most girls, which meant Daenerys found her easy to be around. Arya would rather get dirty outside than be kept inside learning needlework or playing with dolls. Daenerys noted that the girl already had mud under her fingernails and the backside of her light colored cloak was coated with dried mud.

She couldn’t blame her. Needlework really was dull (and painful, given Daenerys had always ended up poking her fingers).

“Let’s go.”

Nymeria got up from her sitting position and they headed in with only the torch in her hand and the candles along the pathway to lead them. Dany found that there was good reason to fear the crypts. It was a dark and dingy place, with spiderwebs decorating the corners of the walls. The arched ceiling was old, a few pieces having fallen around the edges, decorating the ground with the crumbled stones.

Having Nymeria by their side made Dany feel more at ease, knowing the wolf would sense anything that could be lurking in the darkness.

Arya started naming off the lords that were buried, each with a longsword across them to keep the spirits at bay, a wolf statue there by their side.

“Who is this one?” she quizzed.

Arya stopped short and turned to look at the statue, finger tapping against her chin. “That’s...uh,” she fumbled, not knowing the answer, then got clever and said, “It’s someone with the last name Stark.”

They both giggled and continued on.

It was much colder the further they went, a damp cold. Dany pulled at the cloak given to her when she arrived closer, one of two. She preferred the one she wore, maroon colored with a trim of silver furs that complemented the silver dress she wore, as opposed to the other, which was solid black one with jet black furs.
When Arya spoke, her voice echoed against the walls, making it sound louder than it actually was. “How long do you think you’ll be here for?”

Dany raised an eyebrow. “Have you been growing tired of me already?” she teased.

Well, mostly teased. Truthfully, she was hoping that she wasn’t too much of a burden.

“No,” claimed Arya, “not at all. Only curious. I thought maybe you might be leaving soon since I overheard my father say that the Martell army is planning to march on Kings Landing to kill the Mad King—” she paused, alarm filling her eyes. “I shouldn’t have called him that, I’m sorry.”

Dany shrugged her shoulders, letting them effortless fall back into place. “Everyone does. There is nothing to be sorry for. Besides, he is mad.”

Arya, in a low whisper, questioned, “And he really burns people?”

“He does.”

“Do you wish him dead?”

The question was so forward that Dany didn’t response right away. Arya had asked it in such a composed way.

It was terrible, she knew. It did not stop her from revealing, “Yes.”

Arya nodded, convinced it was the right answer. “I would too if he were my father. Don’t be concerned, the Gods must forgive us for wishing death onto those who cause harm. Well, if I were one of the Gods, I would.”

Dany side-eyed Arya suspiciously. “And have you ever wished death to someone?”

Arya thought about it, then answered, “I don’t think I have, although sometimes Sansa annoys me enough that I almost do.”

The topic of siblings made her think of Viserys. In her time away, Daenerys had enjoyed the solace it gave her. It were as if she was allowed to be herself entirely, not under the inspectful eye of others—mainly her brother.

She thought of Jon then. She remembered how tender he was when he had kissed her in the godswood. It was not at all like Viserys when he would grab her and tell her she was his and no one else’s, but that had only happened a couple of times. The saddest part was that he hadn’t always been like that. He was kind for a time, when they were children. They would play hide and seek together in the gardens for hours until the sun began to set and they were ushered inside for supper.

Then the game turned into Dany only hiding.

With a sigh, Daenerys let her free hand wrap around her side to keep the pain in. She moved the torch over to another statue, letting the flames lighten it up. “Who is this?” she asked Arya, welcoming a distraction.

“That’s my aunt, Lyanna Stark.”

She gazed at the figure. “Oh.”

Guilt stabbed her right in her stomach.
Her eldest brother, Rhaegar, who she had never met because he had died before she was born, had supposedly kidnapped Lyanna Stark and she had died during the unsuccessful Robert’s Rebellion. Dany felt as if the memory of the Rhaegar and Lyanna situation may be etched deep into Ned Stark, as he was the one who had found Lyanna in a pool of blood somewhere in Dorne.

The details remained solely within Ned Stark. Whispers of the events ran rampant through the capitol. After Ned had found Lyanna, he was forever changed and decided to withdraw from the rebellion, heading back north with his sister’s body for burial, marking Robert’s fate.

Robert Baratheon.

Her father burned him upon capture, of course, what else would have been expected after he started a rebellion and killed Rhaegar.

Daenerys was born soon after and all mention of the events before had been banned from being spoken about. She hadn’t even known of the rebellion until Viserys told her when she had reached her thirteenth nameday. It made her wonder what else had been kept from her, but she did not push for more.

Sometimes it was better to not know the horrific details for sanity’s sake.

Arya brushed off some dust around the statue, only to cause them both to cough and back away, standing side by side. “People say she was beautiful.”

“What else?”

Arya made a displeased face. “That’s pretty much all I’ve heard, only how she looked and she was good at riding a horse.”

"Most men don’t know how to compliment or describe a woman on anything other than looks.”

“Most men aren’t capable of thinking with their head. They think with other parts.” She twisted around. “Come on. Let’s keep going!” announced Arya, bouncing her way down the dark tunnel.

Daenerys noticed a few candles around the statue having melted down to the bottom of the wick. She grabbed a few from a holder in the hall nearby and placed them at the base of Lyanna Stark’s tomb. Dany gave the statue once last look and followed Arya.

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Jon

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His fingers brushed his lips. Jon could still feel her there. It was ridiculous, he knew, but it was true.

He had never been courageous enough to approach a girl on his own in the past, let alone kiss one.

Jon remembered everything about the previous day, the way her hair swayed with the wind, the way her hand felt in his, the way her body weight on top of him turned him on.

Those events had his mind in a fog ever since, which meant that as he reloaded arrows into their respective basket, he was taking more time than necessary, even missing the basket altogether, a couple arrows in the dirt.

In his daze, he did not hear Theon approach him. “Spar with me, Jon?”
He twisted as saw Theon there with a sparring sword dug into the ground, wanting an answer, as he was impatient nearly all of the time. Jon glanced at Robb off in the corner shaking his head, knowing that Jon was better with a sword than Theon any day and any time. It was a challenge that Jon could not turn down.

“It’s only sparring if you can keep up with me,” he joked, half serious.

Theon was smug. “Get a sword, we will see.”

Jon dropped the rest of the arrows back into the woven basket with confidence. He trudged over through the thick mud to where Robb handed a sparring sword over to him, trying not to smile. “Don’t hurt him too much,” he advised.

“I’ll try.”

Not likely.

Jon knew Theon’s moves too well, having watched him spar with Robb countless time. He knew exactly what to expect and when.

They got into position when his attention was brought elsewhere. He noticed that two figures emerged from the crypts and walked into the edge of the courtyard. Daenerys was unmistakable, as was Arya, who was always fidgeting about, unable to keep still.

Jon wanted nothing more than to walk right over there grab Daenerys, press her against the stone wall, and kiss her once more. Gods, he wanted to do way more than just kiss her, but that was something he needed to keep under control.

But since he had gotten a taste, willpower might not be enough for the restraint he needed.

When he met her eyes, the power of it struck through him, and suddenly Jon felt like he had something to prove as she watched from the corner.

Jon averted his gaze back to Theon, sword at the ready, his audience in mind.

The initial strike from Theon was blocked, Jon pivoting to gain the upper hand and throw Theon off. Theon was not as fast on his feet as Jon was, and it proved to be part of his downfall. He tried multiple times to find a way past Jon’s sword, but he met him with equal strength.

Jon was more agile than Theon, which meant his movements were more calculated and precise. He could easily dodge and land blows, one of which sent Theon’s sparring sword flying out of his hand and it was too late for Theon to react before Jon gave him a jab that knocked him to the ground.

As suspected, Jon was triumphant.

Jon could hear Daenerys clapping several times for him, Arya joining in. He turned his head over his shoulder, her smile warming his whole body. It was amazing how one look from her could make him feel like he belonged.

"Gods!" Theon exclaimed, getting up on his elbows and throwing up his hands. "What was that?"

"You getting your ass knocked into the mud," he smirked, too proud not to. He looked down at Theon, who was baffled. “Want to go again?”

"Very funny." He extended his hand. “Help me up out of this shit.”
He marched forward and yanked Theon upward and he dusted off his dirty clothes, in need of a change to some clean ones as soon as possible. “One day I’m going to beat you.”

“Ought to not aspire to impossible tasks, Greyjoy.”

Theon was about to say something more when the pair noticed that Jon’s father was walking their way, a scroll being tightly grasped in his hand, almost like he was angry at the piece of fine paper.


His father was disinterested. He turned his head slightly, gave a small nod, and then continued past them. Something was wrong. His mouth was pulled down into an abnormally low scowl and his eyes looked troubled. Even his step seemed to give off the illusion that he was defeated.

Whatever it was that plagued him, it wasn’t good.

When Jon watched as his father turned toward Daenerys, there was this feeling of nervousness in the pit of his stomach. His heart beat started to increase, anticipation getting to him.

When his father stopped in front of Daenerys, he began to talk to her, constantly looking away as he did. Jon watched as her face went blank, shock, he thought, and then she collapsed to her knees into the mud, soiling her silver dress. Everything happened to quickly after that. Jaime Lannister came rushing from across the courtyard with so much speed to his step he was almost a flash, nearly knocking over Theon in the process.

Ned surveyed the courtyard and then yelled, his voice booming throughout the area for everyone to keep moving. Jon didn’t take his eyes off where Dany was, but if he had he would have noticed that people had come to a stop, gawking until his father had instructed them not to.

When he heard this awful, high pitched, pain-staking gasp of a cry come from Dany, Jon’s sparring sword dropped onto the ground, his hand going limp. He saw the look on Arya’s face, who had turned away, how she was unable to process what it was that was happening, staring without blinking.

Jon started towards Daenerys, legs moving before he knew that they were, though his view was obstructed as Jaime moved to block, as did his father. He stopped short when his father noticed him coming that way and held out his hand, his way of saying to stay put.

It was not his place.

Robb was at his side in a moment, his arm nudging against his as he took a place at his right side. He said something to Jon, but he didn’t hear what it was, too focused on what Dany was doing and trying to see her from the spot he was glued to.

All he could do was watch as Jaime sunk to the ground and scooped up Daenerys and disappeared into the castle quickly.

“Did you hear me?” said Robb.

Jon turned his head slowly, tearing his eyes away. “What?”

“I said what do you think that was about?”

“I don’t have a clue.”
They both watched as Ned kneeled down in front of Arya, holding her in place as he talked to her, Arya trying to squirm away from his grasp. She agreed to something, and once freed, their sister went running off towards them.

Robb grabbed her by the furs of her cloak before she could make it past them. “What happened?”

Arya swatted away his hands, irritated. “Get off!”

Theon was upon them, throwing his hands into the air. “What’s the fuss about?”

“Men are stupid!” she outright asserted in a loud voice, stomping her foot into the ground, attracting the attention of some servants in the corner carrying wheat.

She went running off again, faster than Jon had seen her go before.

On the walkway, Jon caught a glimpse of Lady Catelyn standing there, her hand on the railing, her face seeming to be made of stone. She was troubled, also.

Jon realized then that there was only one explanation for the commotion, his mind traveling back to when Jaime had said that the Mad King has sent men to Dragonstone. Jon let out an exhale filled with agony.

*Why was the world so cruel?* he managed to think.

——

**Daenerys**

——

She couldn’t eat, her stomach was in tightened knots. The sight of food made her ill. Though, certainly the Starks were not going to let her starve as she had shelled herself up in her chambers. She would eventually have to nibble on something to appease them.

It was as if a sickness had taken over her. She stayed in bed for two days straight, not allowing anyone to enter her room. Jaime defied her on the second evening when he brought her in food, not saying a word, just gently resting it on her bedside. No doubt he had been outside her door waiting to hear if she were to need him.

She was the heir to the throne now—the only Targaryen left in the world other than her was her father, and he was the one who had annihilated the rest of her family members to begin with.

The sudden realization hit her like she had been slapped—the betrayal of it all.

Dany curled into a ball, the sheets tangling her body, and wrapped her arms around herself. There were no more tears that would come. She was dried up. Her eyes felt sore and were no doubt reddened. She could feel the puffiness around them.

She managed to fall asleep again, drifting off into a sea of nothing. No dreams, just blackness.

When she woke up, darkness had fallen over the castle once more. She managed to find the strength to pull herself upward and look around the room, all candles burnt out. The fireplace was burning, however, and it must have been Jaime who had gotten someone to light it, if he had not done it himself.
Dany threw back the furs and got out of bed, legs weak. She stumbled forward to grab a thin and long wooden stick that had been shaved down so she could light new candles. She did not bother with them all, just a handful. Daenerys got down to her knees and pulled open the chest of dragon eggs, igniting the wicks surrounded by molded wax.

Dany drew her knees into her chest and rested her head against the perch it created, fingers gliding over the scaled eggs. She remembered them being loaded onto the ship and her mother’s kiss on top of her head as she said goodbye.

The last goodbye.

There was a small knock at her door just then and it made Dany get up. She grabbed the metal handle and pulled open the door enough to look out, only the width of her head, expecting to see the handmaiden there. Instead she saw the brightness of the red hair that belonged to Sansa.

“I don’t mean to bother you during your time of grief,” she started, her blue eyes shy, “but I wanted to bring you this.” She held out an object, which Dany took. It was made of burnt red cloth and stuffed with wool, expertly stitched together in the shape of a dragon. “I have one like it but mine is a wolf. Whenever I’m sad I hug it while I fall asleep and it makes me feel better. I thought one of your own might do the same for you so I made it and finished it today.”

The kind gesture nearly brought the tears back to her eyes. “Thank you.”

“I’m so very sorry for your losses,” said the girl. “It is the saddest news.”

“Yes,” Daenerys croaked.

Death was so awfully permanent.

Sansa must have picked up on her state of shock. “I could brush your hair for you,” she offered gently. “When I get my hair brushed, it helps to soothe me.”

Dany lifted a hand to the side of her head and she felt how disheveled her hair had become. She nodded at the offer and widened the door for her to step in. Daenerys sat down and Sansa picked up a rounded brush decorated with flowers, marveled at the coloring, and then began working at the ends of her hair, slow and steady strokes. Her mother brushed her hair sometimes before sleep, as most likely Lady Catelyn did for Sansa.

She was right, it was soothing. Dany closed her eyes and breathed in deep.

“You have such pretty hair,” complimented Sansa, brushing through the waves. “It feels like silk.”

Sansa remained quiet the rest of the time she was there, the time they lost track of, as Jaime knocked on the door and relayed the request by Lady Catelyn that Sansa go to her chambers for bed. Sansa gave her goodnights, and wished her a good rest, again giving another apology for the loss of her mother and brother.

Jaime came in and closed the door behind him once Sansa left. Daenerys shifted in her seat to be able to face him and she watched as he tried to find the words to say to her, nothing seeming to be able to do any good. Honestly, with the way he stood, shoulders down, not standing straight as he usually did, he looked as drained and defeated as she did.

Dany was aware that Jaime wanted very much to keep Queen Rhaella safe from her husband, Dany’s father, and cared for her mother very much in the many years he had served her and was in her constant company. Daenerys had once thought perhaps his feelings went deeper than the
appropriate amount, but she never asked him about that. If it were the case, it was his information to
share, not for her to probe for. But it did make her wonder if he also had shed any tears over the
shattering news. There were no signs of crying, only grief.

“I would kill him for you,” he declared out of the blue, the statement filled with anger, “and I would
kill him for dishonoring your mother.” Instinctively, Jaime’s hand gripped his sword that was
attached to this waist, his nostrils flaring. “I wish I could have been there. I wish I could go back in
time and prevent it all from happening.”

“She wanted you here with me.”

“Yes, she wanted you safe. No harm will ever come to you, I swear by that oath and I swore it to
your mother before we left Dragonstone.”

Daenerys sat up straighter in her seat. She inhaled a few deep breaths. “My father,” she started,
knowing the words about to come out of her mouth was something she would be judged for at some
point in her life or death, “needs to die. I want him dead.”

“Then he will die,” Jaime said with conviction.

She immediately followed up with, “It has to be you who does it.”

Jaime retracted, visibly confused. “What?”

“Who else would be able to get to the Red Keep?” she motioned to his armor, the sigil of House
Targaryen that represented the Kingsguard stamped into it. “Who else would I trust? Who else is
capable?”

“I cannot leave you here—”

“You just told me that you would kill him for me,” she repeated, strong voice that time.

“I did.”

“Did you mean it?”

“Yes.”

Daenerys took a moment to organize her thoughts.

“If the Dornish army were to get to Kings Landing, it would be chaos, you know this. The
Kingsguard still acts to protect my father. Blood would run the streets red. Innocent people could get
captured in the crossfire and I cannot allow that. I know my mother asked them for aid and I know
your sister is married to Oberyn, but it was a mistake asking for their help. My father may be horrible
but he is still a Targaryen. And a Targaryen overthrown by a Martell army or a Tyrell army, even if
acting by my mother’s command, well…the implications of that could have a profound effect on the
years to come.”

Jaime was quiet, examining her while thinking through her logic.

Dany stood up and took his hand. “Only one person has to die. One person, to save how many?
Hundreds? Thousands? I know what I ask of you is breaking your vow—”

“Is it breaking a vow?” he pondered out loud, tilting his head to the side, golden hair following with
his movements. “I swore to protect the King, to protect the royal family, with my life, if necessary.
But as far as I am concerned, King Aerys is no longer the King of the Seven Kingdoms. You, Daenerys, are the queen. It may not be your title yet, but it will be soon enough. You are my queen, the queen I will serve until my last breath. I will protect you, keep your secrets, give my life for yours if needed. I swear that to you on this day."

Queen.

Queen Daenerys Targaryen, First of Her Name.

She had not thought much about it, but it was not a reality she would need to face at her young age. She would have blood on her hands, a stain that may never come out, but Dany also understood that being a ruler meant making tough choices. Those choices made had to always be for the better of the people.

Dany brought her chin up, voice small again, testing the waters of the new vow. “And if I command you to ensure that the Seven Kingdoms is ridded of my father for my protection and the protection of the realm? For the good of the people?”

“Then I shall do so.” He squeezed her hand. “Let us talk more of tomorrow,” Jaime decided. “Have you eaten yet?”

“Not much,” she replied, voice croaked.

“I’ll make sure something is sent here.”

As he went to leave the room, she called for him one last time. “Jaime?”

He turned.

Dany felt the lump in her throat forming. “How do you stop your heart from hurting?”

She saw the pain filter through his face. “You can’t stop it. You learn to carry it with you, I suppose.”

“Will it always feel like this, then?”

He approached her once more and gave her a caring stroke to her newly brushed hair. He wiped away a rogue tear. “No. The pain will ease in time.”

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Every turn she took, she was met with faces that looked at her with pity, even with as early as it was. Unbearable, that was the way she would describe it. Daenerys fled to the godwood that morning to avoid anymore looks, hoping that the escape to the trees would provide some form of comfort away from the eyes of onlookers.

It didn’t, but it had been worth a try.

So there she was way, huddled up against the weirwood tree in her black mourning attire with the black cloak on and a blanket on the ground beneath her, despite any earlier eerie feelings the tree gave her. Those feelings were still there, but there was a sense of protection out there that the tree cover provided.

Dany spent a lot of time staring at the small pond, watching as the leaves fell, a ripple scattering across the water until it came to a still once again. Her conversation with Jaime was still fresh in her
mind, her plan unchanged. She had come to realize that she would never see her father alive again. It was a thought that for most would bring tears to their eyes, but for Dany, it only brought consolation.

She decided out there in the woods that she would not feel guilty—there was no reason to.

When she heard someone approaching, she had a good guess of who it would be. Her intuition was correct when Jon’s figure came into view, striding towards her in wide paces.

He had the same look that Jaime had the previous night, of not knowing the right thing to say to her, but wanting to pour out whatever was was that was on his mind.

“Please, don’t say it,” she told him before he could speak as he came to a stop not far from her. “I cannot bear to hear another person in Winterfell tell me how sorry they are for me.”

Jon glanced around, figuring out something else to say. “You shouldn’t be out here alone. People have gone looking for you. Lady Catelyn is worried.”

“Jaime knows I’m out here.”

Jon hiked a thumb over his shoulder. “I noticed him by the entrance, that was how I knew you were here. I wanted to see you…wanted to make sure you were alright, well, not alright, you wouldn’t be given the circumstances, but I wanted to—” Jon rubbed the nape of his neck, knowing that he was beginning to ramble nervously. He squinted his eyes shut, recoiling at his inability to smoothly talk through his thought. Dany, of course, found it to be adorable. Jon exhaled and settled for repeating himself with, “I wanted to see you.”

“And here I am.”

“How are you holding up?”

*How was she holding up…*

Her mother and brother were dead and she plotted to have her father killed, but she did not tell Jon that. No one could know. Dany could not risk anyone finding out, as it would jeopardize Jaime’s life. They had not talked more of it yet, but the conversation would happen soon.

In the time since the previous night, she had thought about what her father might do next. She would be his focus, however, Dany was not even sure if he knew where she was. Spies could be everywhere, and it made her a bit paranoid. Some people would do anything for a few more coins in their pockets.

Her blank stare made him approach further. After some hesitation, Jon got down on his knees and got to her level. She turned her head, not wanting him to see her face after the amount of crying she had partook in the night before, eyes still puffy.

“I think he may plan to find me,” she explained ignoring his previous statement. “I’m sure my father would pay a lot for my return.”

Daenerys swallowed hard, fear stricken in that moment. There were only two things her father would do with her return—either kill her or take her for himself do make more Targaryens.

She shuddered that the thought, reminded again of how he could not live.

“No,” Jon stated as if it were the one thing in the world he was sure of. “He wouldn’t make it this far north even if he found out you were here. We are a thousand miles from Kings Landing. Even if he
tried to get here, the northern houses back Lord Stark. How could he get past the Riverlands? Lady Catelyn’s family rules there.”

“Seems as though it might be easier to hand me over,” she muttered, letting her insecurities get to her.

Jon blinked, apparently disbelieving she would even mention it. “No one is going to hurt you.”

She nodded, hoping it would ease her fear, but she would not feel completely safe until her father was no longer ruling.

Daenerys hoisted herself up into a standing position, and Jon followed her lead. “And if an army showed up threatening to—”

“No one has ever marched this far north, before. There is a thousand miles between Kings Landing and here. And besides, let’s say they did, I’d kill every last man who tried to get to you.”

Her voice was so soft when she inquired, “You would?”

Jon rushed forward and grabbed her cheeks, pulling her in to kiss her as if it were the last thing he would ever be able to do. Once he pulled away, he breathed out in this fulfilled kind of way, letting her know that he had been wanting to kiss her again for some time.

“Every last one of them,” he repeated, each word slow to make a point.

She wrapped her hands tenderly around his forearms as his thumbs stroked her cheeks. “And if you were unsuccessful at that task?” she probed lightly.

“I’d grab you and we’d run off and go past the Wall,” he joked. “No one would find us. We would hide there for a while, avoid the Wildings and any creatures that are lurking out there.”

“And what? Build a home from fallen trees?”

“Can’t be too difficult.”

She allowed a small laugh. “And food?”

“I’m not too terrible with a bow and arrow.”

“And what of the snows and storms? Shall we freeze to death?”

“Not if there is always a fire going.”

She raised an eyebrow at him. “It sounds as if you’ve thought through this plan of running off with me.”

“Maybe once or twice,” he admitted, bashful. “Just stupid fantasy.”

“Sounds like quite an adventure,” she mused. “I can hear the street storytellers now, or even those who put on the play. Princess Daenerys Targaryen fleeing Beyond the Wall, with her protector, Jon Snow to keep her safe from polar bears, Wildings, and freezing temperatures.”

“I don’t think anyone would ever believe it to be true.”

Dany released her hands and then fiddled with laces on his leather jerkin that was all tied up. Any original nervousness around Jon had vanished entirely. It felt natural being there with him, so close, so intimate.
Jon let his hands fall tentatively around the edges of her cloak then scooped underneath the material and to the small of her back. “I like this,” he murmured.

“Us?”

He nodded and Dany stepped forward to fall against him, his hands tightening around her. She let her eyes drift shut as Jon rested his chin on top of her head.

For a moment, it was peaceful.

But only for a moment.

“I know you said not to say it, but I am sorry,” he muttered. She could tell that he meant it. “I wish it could be different. They didn’t deserve to die like that.”

Suddenly, her head felt heavy on her shoulders. She pulled away. “Like what?”

Jon froze.

“What happened to them?” she squeaked, almost not able to get the words out.

She had been so consumed by grief that she had not inquired about the circumstances around the deaths. But Jon’s expression said it all—something truly awful had happened. Daenerys blinked and tears streamed down her face uncontrollably.

“Burn them?” she choked.

Jon shook his head slowly. “No.”

“Then what? How did it happen?” she demanded, raising her voice. “Tell me.”

Jon kicked the front of his boot into the dirt, unable to watch her. “Assassins that your father sent… they stabbed them,” he mumbled. “Robb told me.”

Her eyes welled up with more tears, knowing there was more that he was not telling her. “And?”

It was hardly audible when he muttered, “Their bodies were thrown off the cliffs and into the ocean.”

There was a spinning in her head as she digested the information—another stab to her heart. She felt like she might collapse. Dany stumbled forward and threw herself against Jon’s chest, wrapping her arms around his waist to stay upright, knowing the alternative would be to sink to the ground.

“What am I going to do?” she gasped, barely able to breathe, her lungs not functioning properly from the heaving that had started. “How do I go on? Every day there is worse news.”

Jon was using some strength to keep her up, Daenerys feeling weak in her knees. “You’re strong. You’ll get through it.” He brought her face back up and kissed her even though the tears were running into her mouth. “You’re strong,” he said again.

Dany took in deep breaths. You are strong, she told herself, convinced by Jon.

Going back to her room to shut herself away again was tempting, her default response, but she knew that it would do no good.

As the winds picked up once more, Dany thought she might have heard another whisper. She didn’t want to listen that time, and dismissed the trees. “I want to go back. Take me back, please.”
Jon nodded quickly, allowing her to take his hand as he brought her towards the exit.
Call of the Flames

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Jon

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Seeing how her face was twisted up with pain was the worst thing Jon had ever witnessed. He would never be able to forget it, not ever. His heart was hurting too, knowing that Daenerys was going through such tragedy.

It also made him angry because there was absolutely nothing that he could do. Not a single thing he could do or say to make anything different.

They were all left with uncertainty. The Mad King would make a next move, even as people were rising against him. No one talked about it, at least not in front of Jon, but everyone felt the cruel edge of anxiety that was strung among them.

Their task in the afternoon was fairly simple, and Jon needed the distraction. Two teams of men from the castle had scoured the surrounding woods a few miles off in search of large pieces of fallen trees. Hodor had lugged several massive logs from the bottom parts of fallen trees back to the outer area around the gates. Robb and Jon had chipped in to the effort, silently towing sleds of long dried up branches alongside a dozen other men.

An old tradition after the passing of an important Northerner was the building of a fire so big that anyone from miles away would be able to see it—a way to honor the dead. It had been Lady Catelyn’s idea, given that Daenerys had no way of giving a funeral to her fallen mother and brother. They were no northerners, but they would skip over that part of the usual requirement.

The triangular shape of the branches and logs was beginning to be put in place once Jon arrived outside the gates, far enough from the entry that when lit, the fire would pose no threat to what was inside the walls of the castle. The structures of long branches of trees was massive, five times the height of Jon, all coming to a peak.

Hodor let another log drop to the ground with a thud. “Hodor,” he said, looking at the others, pleased about something.

Jon was never quite sure what to say to Hodor, as he couldn’t make sense of what he was trying to say with the one word he could speak. Most of the time he would settle for a nod and then make himself scarce. Luckily, that time it was Hodor who left, headed for one of the sleds filled with large chunks of trees that had been hacked in half, assisting with putting them in place.

“Can you even imagine?” asked Robb, strolling up next to him, dusting off his hands. “A man so mad that he resorts to killing his wife and only living son.”

“I don’t understand it either. Monsters don’t make any sense, though.”

Robb looked around to make sure that no one was within earshot, then continued with, “Have you seen her since?”

Jon felt no need to lie. “Yes.”
“How is she?”

“How is she?” Jon commented, thinking about it. He was reminded of all she said to him in the godswood. “I think she’s coping but she doesn’t think she’s safe here.”

“Why?”

Jon rolled his eyes. As if it wasn’t obvious. “Because the Mad King is her father, that’s why.”

Robb cocked his head to the side. “I guess that’s reason enough.”

“It would be for me.”

Jon grabbed another sled filled with branches and pulled it up to where the rest were lined up to be emptied and placed strategically in order to be burned, Robb following behind him. With the construction the inner part of the structure underway where the thicker branches were, spare hay was already being weaved in and out of the branches at the bottom to be ignited. It was not quite a pyre, as no bodies would be burned, but in a sense, it was.

Jon had a hope that maybe it would bring some peace for Daenerys.

When he looked back, deep in thought, Robb was staring at him weirdly. “What?”

He stepped closer, throwing and arm across Jon’s back, hand falling on his shoulder to direct them away from the others who were getting Hodor to help lift up more of the heavy wood pieces. When they were enough paces away, Robb tried to casually mention, “I noticed you’ve been happier than usual lately.”

“And?”

“And I can take a good guess as to why.”

Jon sighed. Robb knew him too well. In a mumble, he pleaded, “Let’s not talk about it.”

“We need to talk about it.” His grip on his shoulder tightened. “You’re playing with fire, Jon. And what happens when you play with fire, huh? You end up with wounds and scars.”

“I appreciate the brotherly concern,” he told him genuinely, “but I have it handled.”

Robb managed to suppress a laugh, but he could not hold back the grin that showed his disbelief. “Oh, do you?”

No.

He didn’t.

Not even in the slightest.

“What do you want me to say?” Jon nearly whined, feeling like he was five years old again and getting in trouble.

“I don’t want to see you hurt. Daenerys is not going to be here forever.”

Reality was never on anyone’s side.

As much as he didn’t want Daenerys to leave, Jon knew that at some point she would. He
understood Robb’s concerns—Jon had a feeling her leaving might take a part of him with her, and Robb had caught onto that also.

He felt a confession boiling up to the surface then, and it was something that he could not keep in any longer, not when he so desperately wanted to tell his brother, his best friend.

“I kissed her.”

Robb’s mouth dropped open and he came to a stop as if he had just run into a wall, pulling his arm off of Jon and stepping out to look at his face. “Jon.”

He knew that it was meant to be a scold, but morphed into something with a hint of pride.

“I know,” mumbled Jon.

Robb ran his fingers through his own hair, tilting his head towards the sky. “Why are you doing this to yourself?”

It was a good question and Jon didn’t have direct answer.

“I get it, okay? I can’t have her, not ever. I understand. But—”

“No,” Robb interrupted, eyes going wide, shaking his head. “Whatever you are about to say, don’t say it.”

Jon wanted nothing more than to bury his head right into the dirt and forgo hearing what Robb might say to him. But, when he finally did speak, it wasn’t all that terrible.

“You know I can’t encourage this.”

“Yes.”

He took a minute to process everything, running his hands over his face, and all Jon could do was awkwardly stand there. “Listen, I won’t say anything, okay?”

“Aye.”

“Just don’t do anything stupid.”

Jon made a face at him. “Like what?”

He extended his arm to the side, palm facing upward, motioning at the obvious answer. Even though no one was close enough, Robb still kept his voice at a whisper level. “Like get her pregnant.”

Jon averted his eyes and busied himself with pulling apart some bunches of hay for the fire that were nearby, not wanting to show his face, because with only a mention, his cheeks had flushed. He was reminded of their earlier conversation in his chambers when Dany had just arrived. “I haven’t touched her, not like that,” he was forced to say again. “I swear.”

“You ought to keep it that way,” Robb cautioned, his brows furrowing with worry. He then added, “For her more than anyone.” Robb turned his head and straightened up. “Here she comes now,” Robb announced, stepping directly in front of Jon to face him and slapped his arm in a friendly manner. “Don’t look so mopey.”

He glared at Robb. “My face is naturally like this.”
“No, right now you look like I’ve just told you that you can’t have dessert. Quit it.”

Jon shook of whatever expression Robb thought he was wearing, and waited for Daenerys as she approached, two guards in tow. She was still in all black, mourning. How long were people supposed to mourn for, he wondered. When it was family, a mother and brother, did anyone ever stop mourning? Or were they trapped in an endless cycle?

The black looked harsh on her, Dany’s skin and hair too pale for the charcoal contrast. It made him miss the pretty colors of blue and red she had worn on separate occasions, but it also made him miss the smiles she had worn as well back when things were not so awful for her and the world was not falling down around her.

Jon’s hand bunched into a fist at his side at the thought, but then he released the tension before he got him mad. He was trying to not get angry at things which were out of his control—something he never quite learned. Being a bastard, one would think he might have gotten used to it by that point.

“Robb,” Daenerys greeted with a nod as she found a place in front of them, then turned her head. “Jon.”

She watched for a moment as the men behind them picked up the pace due to her presence. “Lady Catelyn told me there would be a fire.”

“It’s for your mother and brother,” Jon acknowledged, closely examining how her features did not change as he spoke. “It’s a tradition here. A fire to mourn those who are lost. It will burn for three days and three nights.”

She examined the tall branches being pushed up into place, men grunting to heave them into position, without saying anything.

Her eyes, those beautiful violet orbs, looked lost.

Jon glanced over to Robb for some help, and Robb, always equipped with something to say, offered, “We cannot begin to express our deepest sympathy over what happened at Dragonstone. Anything you need, please do not hesitate to ask any of us.”

When she spoke, her words sounded cold and distant, and mostly distracted. “Thank you. I do appreciate it.”

Robb exchanged a glance between Jon and Daenerys, getting the sense that Jon wanted him to leave the two. He excused himself, grabbing some bushes of hay before he backed away and joined the rest of the men.

The guards that had escorted Dany out were too close for comfort according to Jon, so he decided not to mention anything that may allude to what him and Dany shared beyond any formalities.

“It will be lit soon, if you wanted to stay.”

His jaw clenched tight as her eyes scoured the area, lost and confused. It was almost as if she had not heard him at all.

“Dany,” he whispered, knowing he shouldn’t have used the name, but it rolled of his tongue before he could have stopped it.

“I’m going to be okay, Jon,” she responded, sounding confident in her statement. “I know it. I just need time.”
It was one of those times when he wished that he was more like Robb, able to carry on a conversation and knowing exactly what needed to be said and how to say it. He could have said a common phrase like *time heals all wounds*.

But he was just Jon and kept quiet.

As they stood there side by side, Jon wished he could take all the sadness from her and bear it all himself. He couldn’t, and that really bothered him. He wanted to see Daenerys happy again and would give anything for that.

Her previous statement had him thinking and he had realized that although she was going through the toughest part of all her sixteen years, she was determined to not let it taint the future.

Daenerys was the future, this girl who stood next to him, this girl who he could no longer deny he loved.


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**Daenerys**

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On the third evening she decided she would go back to the fire one final time after she had twirled her mother’s ring on her finger, thinking about what she had lost. With her black attire still on, she was escorted out of the castle and to the left of the road where the fire still raged.

She watched the flames for some time. Dusk had fallen upon them quickly, winter shortening the days noticeably.

She remembered what Jon had told her—a fire that would burn for three days and three nights.

Large branches and parts of trees had been piled onto the sides continuously, the fire growing hotter with each day. The heat coming from it was immense, all consuming, yet she felt drawn to the flames for some unknown reason. She should feel the logical need to retreat and back away, yet the desire to move forward pulsed through her like the blood in her veins.

A strange sensation it was.

Just a couple steps she took, only a couple, and she heard the guards behind her become alerted. Dany didn’t make any more drastic further movements forward, though her fingers did stretch outwards in front of her, heat flickering against her fingertips. She closed her eyes, inhaling the scent of the burning wood that filled the air. With that breath, something washed over her, the scent a trigger.

She felt an overwhelming urge to go to the eggs.

When her eyes flashed open, all she saw were the flames and how they danced and swayed.

Fire.

It was the only word going through her mind.

*Fire.*

She knew then, clear as could be, that was what she had heard in the godswood. It was the trees with their roots filled with magic that all along had been telling her exactly what she needed to do.
Daenerys was quick, keeping her head down as she went back within the walls with her guards following behind until she found her way back to her chambers and the guards took their place outside her room, where they would be stationed until the morning.

With the door shutting behind her, Dany felt the sense of urgency. Her eyes narrowed in on the chest of eggs that were all carefully placed next to each other. Once kneeling down, she held the green one in her hand and she sensed that there was a greater hand at play. Some kind of divine intervention by the Gods, perhaps, guiding her movements.

*Fire.*

She could almost feel it, the calling of the flames. She felt it deep within her bones and her soul.

Her eyes flickered back to the door. There was no way that she would be able to do what she needed to with several guards around. The only way out was going to be down.

As Dany got back to her feet, she opened one of the wooden windows and looked at what was below. The vines that grew up the side of the stones were thick, strong enough that it would mostly likely hold her body weight, or at least that was what she was counting on. In her time at Winterfell, she had seen Bran climb many tower walls with just his bare hands, so surely it could not be too difficult.

She shook her head. No time to think it over.

Daenerys threw off the furs of her bed and took the sheet, quickly tying it up so she would be able to have it over her shoulders, the eggs easily nestled inside without them having the chance of falling out.

She kicked off her shoes and grabbed a hooded cloak that was lighter than her other ones, tossing it on as well as the sheet she made into a carrier for her eggs.

Back at the window, she paused, but only for a moment.

Daenerys was small enough that it was not any trouble lifting herself onto the ledge with the eggs in the blanket that was tied around her. She maneuvered in such a way that she sat on the ledge with her feet and legs dangling over the side, her head out of the window. Her small hand grabbed ahold of the thickest vine she could find and gave it good pull before she scooted off the ledge and completely onto the vines, a tiny squeal escaping from her in the process.

Her knuckles went white with how hard she gripped the vine, but she felt steady enough to continue, finding a good footing by letting her toes grasp onto the vines below.

As it turned out, she was a better climber than she thought she would be. Yes, a vine did pull away from the wall causing a momentarily panic, but she let go and grabbed another before she lost her balance entirely.

Her arms and legs were shaky by the time she reached the bottom, finally stepping off the vines and back onto solid ground, a small patch of grass below a welcomed feeling. She looked back up from where she came, realizing that it looked much farther from her angle from the ground then it did from her room.

She brought her head side to side after that, not seeing anyone around. Still, she pulled up her hood to hide her face and hair and walked towards where the entrance to the castle was, keeping out of the plain view and close to the walls.
She was stealth the whole time, but the sight of the guards standing watch made her step back before she would be seen and questioned. Daenerys drew in breath before she peeked around the corner once more to see that the Stark guards were talking and laughing with some of her guards, all distracted. Not exactly the type of behavior that should be engaged in when protecting the castle at night, but it served as an advantage in the moment.

Dany watched as a lean servant girl walked from under a roof covering and towards the entrance, carrying a basket of extra hay. The guards had not even noticed her leave. Daenerys knew it was now or never and walked the same way the servant girl had. She also easily slipped her way out, waiting on the other side of the castle wall just make sure none of the guards would follow.

They didn’t.

It should not have been that easy under any circumstances, but Dany could not care just then. She only had one thing on her mind.

And with the one thing on her mind, she had already forgotten that she was not alone out there. When she turned, the servant girl’s mouth dropped open and they stared at each other without saying anything.

Dany fell into a panic, knowing she could not come that far all to have her cover be revealed and her plan destroyed. She approached the girl and grabbed her arm. “I was not here, do you understand?”

The girl’s eyes widened and she shook her head swiftly. Dany felt bad for having frightened the girl, but there was little time to consider any other option. She could always apologize later.

When the girl ran off and was out of sight, Dany walked towards the fire and she dropped her makeshift bag onto the ground, letting the eggs clank together before they rolled apart. She got down to her knees, and picked up the black one with hues of red, fingers rubbing over the scales. She felt heat coming from it, just as she felt the heat from the fire at her back.

The fire that was deep within her.

Dany’s eyes fell closed again. She could not believe what she was about to do and all that had led up to this moment of spontaneity. But her thoughts were not quite focused. Her body was acting on its own but somehow she knew that this was what she was supposed to do.

She was blood of the dragon.

Daenerys managed to cradle all the eggs in her arms as she rose up from the ground. She could hear the fire crackling, the roaring, pieces of embers being spat upwards into the air only to die out moments later as they floated off.

Daenerys did not fear the flames. They called out for her—the power so strong and overwhelming that there was never a chance of ignoring it.

It was destiny, she realized.

Without a second thought, Daenerys walked forward, letting the flames engulf her.

—

Jon

—
The sound of Ghost whining woke him up out of a dream.

Jon rubbed his eyes and squinted with one eye at the direwolf who was scratching at the door upon Jon’s wakened state. He grumbled and sat up in bed, the sheets falling into his lap, eyes adjusting to the darkness, as the sun was not yet out.

There was this feeling in the pit of his stomach that something was off.

Whatever it was, he was not about to let it go, as his father had always told him to trust what he felt.

Ghost continued to scratch at the door until Jon threw off the covers, quickly throwing on some clothes and hopping into his boots, laces partly tied. “What it is, boy?”

He opened the door, the hinge squeaking loudly, and Ghost went dashing into the hallway. Jon grabbed a cloak and tossed it over his head, not bothering to close the door behind him before he took off after Ghost.

He followed him all the way to the chambers that Daenerys had been set up in, Jaime Lannister taking over for another guard for the morning. When he saw Jon approaching he gave him this you better have a good fucking reason why you’re here look, which Jon had to agree he had the right to do, all things considered.

Jaime looked Jon up and down, noting Ghost at his side, sarcastically asking, “Can I help you?”

“Something is wrong.”

Jaime hesitated, smiled, then took a step forward to be in front of Jon, clearly emphasizing the difference in height. “And what would that be?”

“I don’t know, I just feel it. Ghost was clawing at the door he wanted to get out so bad. He never does that. I let him out and he came here. Now, what does that tell you, huh?” He could not stress is enough when he repeated, “Something is wrong.”

A direwolf always knew.

Jaime moved his head to look at Ghost who was staring right back at him. He backed up, turned, and then opened the door to Dany’s chambers with hast. The cold air that seeped out was immediately noticed. Jaime marched in and Jon followed, eyes darting around the room only to find that Daenerys was nowhere to be seen, no candles were lit, and the window that was allowing for the draft was wide open.

Jon rushed past Jaime and threw his upper body over the ledge to look at the ground below. He saw nothing there and twisted back to Jaime and shook his head.

“Search the castle!” he commanded in stern, yet booming voice to the guards outside the door. “Find her. Wake everyone!”

The castle became chaotic in minutes, guards banging on room to rouse the sleeping. Rooms were being torn apart, servants looking under beds and in wardrobes, in the kitchen and in every hall.

Jon had gone outside, checked the stables, but found no trace of anything. Back outside, he was so unfocused that he was stumbling over his own feet again, catching himself before he fell into the mud. He tried to think about where Daenerys might have gone, not believing that she would have just got up and left for no reason at all.
She would have been motivated by something to have snuck out all the way down the side of the castle—which was completely mindboggling on its own. But the motivator itself, that was unknown.

What could it be?

In the middle his thoughts, Jaime found him once more. “Stables?”

“Nothing.” Jon told him, breathless, still trying to wrap his mind around the current situation. “What about the crypts? She was there a few days ago with Arya.”

“I’ll go there,” Jaime motioned. “You go check the godswood and take some men with you. Inside the castle is already being covered.”

Jon listened and started that way until he stopped mid stride. Ghost trotted past Jaime and over to him, circled around Jon, and then started towards the entrance gates. Jon twisted and saw the grey smoke lifting up towards the sky, right into the clouds that were parting for the sun that was over the horizon by that point.

Something clicked and he found himself walking towards the castle entrance, Stark men standing tall around it. Nothing looked wrong or out of place, but Jon kept up with his steps, Ghost waiting for him as he bended around the corner.

“Get Jaime Lannister,” he instructed the guards in a low voice, not waiting to see if they were actually going to obey the request.

He couldn’t see the fire anymore once outside the castle walls, just all the smoke that remained. It was thick in the air, Jon coughing into his sleeve a couple of times as he got closer.

Where the fire had once raged there only remained an irregular circle of burnt ground and blackened wood that had fallen from the original structure. Jon’s legs stopped walking when he saw what was in the middle of the charred land, the smoke clearing. Ghost had led him there and there she was. Her legs were to the side, hands planted on the ground, as if she had just been lying on her side amongst the ash.

Jon’s eyes fell over her. Her breasts were fully visible, though her lower regain was obscured. The creamy color of her skin was covered by smudged layers of gray and black, but her brilliant violet eyes still stood out, clear as day.

A shudder ripped through his whole body.

How long had he been staring for?

*Go to her.*

He tore the cloak off his back and approached with careful steps, the burnt wood cracking into bits under his boots. She watched him as he approached, eyes locked, until he gently placed the cloak over her back to cover her flesh.

She was not alone.

Tiny dragons were looking at up at him with curiosity, all moving to nestle in Dany’s arms. Jon felt unsteady at the sight. Even more so, the look she gave was so powerful that he thought he might faint. She was untouched by the fire.

Daenerys stood up from the ash and the dust, pulling the cloak tighter around her, two of the dragons
hopping on top of her shoulders. Jon fell to his knees into the soot in front of her, as they became too weak to hold his body weight. His mouth dangled open until he whispered, “My queen.”

A dragon queen, he then thought. A girl reborn.

A crowd had begun to gather behind them, he could hear that much, but there was not even a murmur, only the shuffling of bodies.

Silence.

Shock.

Hope.
The tiny green dragon stared at her and Daenerys stared back.

He needed a name, all three did. Yet, when she tried to think of names, nothing seemed to fit. How did one go about naming a dragon?

It was still a shock to everyone, these miracles that were stowed away in her room in cages that had been made just for them, spacious enough that they would not feel cramped. Her house sigil would now once again roam the lands and the skies. Daenerys wondered how big they would get, if they would possibly be as big as those of the past before they had been locked away in Kings Landing.

Daenerys would not do that. The dragons would be free creatures, as would she.

And in that moment, she decided to make that declaration out loud, taking the black and red dragon from his cage and carrying him to the table where she sat, setting him on the wood. The dragon stared at her as if he understood what she said, big eyes blinking at Daenerys.

With a knock at her door, she knew who it would be.

“Come in.”

Jaime appeared in the door frame, taking up nearly all the space with how tall he was in combination with the armor on.

She rotated in her chair to face him. “Are you ready to leave?”

“Just about.”

He entered and shut the door behind him. “I wanted to talk before I go,” he said dryly. “It will be a while until we see each other again.”

“What is it?”

Without any form of hesitation, he jumped right into what he wanted to say. “Are you sure it’s wise to be with his boy?”

“What boy?” Dany asked, distracted, running the side of her finger along the neck of her dragon, wings outstretched in enjoyment, little nose flaring.

“What boy?” Jaime laughed to himself. “Jon Snow. Who else?”

She removed herself from the table and place the dragon back in his cage to be able to turn and look at Jaime. “You know?”

“I do now,” he said, a bit cocky.

Daenerys sat back down in her seat. “Are you going to tell anyone?”
He gave her an absurd look, as if she had somehow sprouted another head. “I’m the Queensguard, I keep your secrets. That’s how this works, remember?”

“I’m not a queen.”

“Not yet, but you will be.” He stepped closer, leaning over her, concerned expression playing out. “Every House in the Seven Kingdoms is going to know you have dragons. A Targaryen with dragons, as we all know, is unbeatable. Once I get to the Red Keep, you’ll be the Queen of the Seven Kingdoms, Protector of the Realm…and—”

“And?”

Jaime tilted his head, scowling. “And you’ll break his heart when you leave to go back home to your rightful place.”

*What if I take him with me?* she wondered.

Daenerys knew that queens were not to have lovers, but she would be the only Targaryen left. A lone Targaryen. Who would be able to stop her if she took a lover? Who would ever find out? If she suggested Jon be part of the Queensguard, it could work. Jaime could train him well.

She almost smiled at the thought, knowing that she would be free to do as she pleased, a choice not given to her before.

“And you’ve been through enough already,” Jaime continued, “I don’t want you to feel an ounce more of hurt. An attachment to this Jon Snow—”

“Jaime,” she smiled, hushing him. “Please, I can deal with it. Let me.”

He nodded his head in agreeance, the concern only lingering in his eyes momentarily. “Alright.”

“Just promise me you’ll be safe on your journey.”

“Of course.”

“There is most likely a bounty out on your head,” she tried to remind him, knowing that sometimes Jaime was a little too full of himself and she did not want him to be reckless. “If anything were to happen to you, I would not be able to forgive myself.”

“No need to worry. Do you really think anyone would dare fight *me*?” he chuckled and shook his head dismissively. He approached Dany and kneeled down before her. “I am going to get to Kings Landing and make sure that no one will ever be a threat to you again. I’ll send a raven to let you know when it’s done.”

When it was done—when her father was dead—when the Mad King was finally no longer able to torment.

“How long will it take you to get there?” she inquired, knowing his route would be more direct than the one they took from Kings Landing to Dragonstone to Winterfell.

Jaime briefly looked towards the window, despite it being closed. “Depends on the weather.”

“I’ll hope for sun for you,” she whispered softly.

He kissed her forehead and pulled away, straightening up. “Keep an ear out for a raven,” he reminded her.
“I will.”

And with that, he left.

She would worry about him on his journey, but knew in her heart that Jaime was clever. Nothing was ever too dangerous of a task for him, not once he thought it through. There was no doubt in her mind that he would succeed. But there was always going to be the lingering fear that she would lose yet another one she cared for, and that was what she feared most in life overall.

Daenerys climbed into her bed and laid awake thinking. She stared at the tiny dragons for some time, bopping about in their cages before settling down.

It came to her then.

The green one she would name Rhaegal, after her eldest brother she never knew, but had heard many good things of. The white would be Viserion, after her other fallen brother. And the black one, that one was tricky, but Daenerys decided that he would be named Aegon, in honor of her ancestor who forged the Seven Kingdoms. Daenerys knew deep down that she would need to bring the kingdoms back together somehow. What better than to do so with Aegon by her side and his brothers.

She fell asleep, just a quick nap before she woke again. It was dusk by that point, an eerie glow of red coloring the clouds as the sun fell.

There was only one person who she wanted to see and she grew bold, having her handmaiden send for Jon.

Daenerys opened her door, leaving it open a small amount for his arrival. She busied herself until she heard the footsteps traveling down the hall and to her door. He knocked twice and poked his head in, only putting half of his body through the frame, waiting for her to invite him in.

“Don’t just stand there,” she cooed, waving him in, her gesture enough to have him pull the rest of the way into her chambers. “Shut the door,” she then added.

There was a gentle click to the door as it closed, and, finally, Dany felt like she could breathe again, despite Jon standing there, tentative to approach.

She was struck with the memory. “Do you remember helping me when I first arrived? When I couldn’t find my way?”

The shared memory brought him out of his shell. Jon took a few strides across the room to where a low fire was burning in the stone fireplace. “I could never forget.” He smirked to himself, reflecting. “I was nervous that night, could you tell?”

“Yes.” She raised an eyebrow and joined him by the fireplace. “Do I still make you nervous?”

He nodded. “Yes, but I think it’s a different kind of nervous.”

“A different kind?” Daenerys repeated, hoping for a further elaboration.

“Before, it was this tingling feeling in my stomach. Now, well, it’s more in my heart.” Jon traced a fingertip around one of the stones, watching the fire. “More intense now,” he then mumbled, almost like he had not intended for her to hear it.

She tried once again to prompt him into giving more details. “Oh?”
“I know I shouldn’t feel like this, but I think you should know that I—”

A loud screech came from behind them as a dragon woke up from a nap. Daenerys glanced backwards. She moved before Jon could finish, noting in her head to bring it up again later, and picked up Rhaegal because he was getting active in his cage. “You haven’t officially met them yet.”

Rhaegal screeched again as she approached Jon, and he stepped back. "Uh," he stuttered, unsure.

“Careful,” Dany instructed, “No quick movements. He’ll be fine. Rhaegal needs to know you’re not a foe.”

Jon closely examined the wings of Rhaegal, but did not reach out to touch. Daenerys understood the hesitation but nudged Rhaegal a bit closer with her arms extending to he would be closer to Jon.

“Rhaegal?”

“Yes, I named him after my brother, as I did with Viserion. He is the cream with gold colored one and Aegon is the darker.”

“Aegon is a good name for a dragon.”

She nodded in agreeance. “There are many men named Aegon in my lineage, but he is named for the first one, the conqueror who took the kingdoms and built one realm. He started all of this. A dragon should be named after him.”

Jon peeked over her shoulder to look at the one she called Aegon. “Mother of Dragons,” he whispered.

She leaned in, thinking she had not heard him correctly. “What was that?”

“Mother of Dragons. That is what Arya calls you now.” He tilted his head to the side and examined her with Rhaegal. “I think it may catch on.”

Mother of Dragons, she thought with interest, reeling in Rhaegal to cuddle him against her chest.

“Perhaps.”

Jon fell silent for a minute and watched Daenerys. She was trying to read his face, but had no luck. Jon was not the type to wear his emotions, instead, he was controlled and stoic, completely introspective at any given time.

A touch frustrating, she found. But it was part of the reason she was so drawn to him.

“Everything okay?”

Jon was brought out of a thought. “Oh. I was just remembering seeing you out there after the fire and with three dragons. One thing I never thought I’d see in my life.”

“Not something I ever thought I would experience.”

He glanced her over. “The fire…you didn’t have a scratch on you. How?”

“Fire cannot harm a dragon.”

It was that simple, she had come to understand. She remembered the fire around her just a few nights before, touching her skin with sharp flickers of red and yellow, yet never once did she feel the burn.
All she felt was power. And when she heard the cracking of the eggs, she had known she was there for a purpose.

She was meant to bring the dragons into the world.

“It’s a bit hard to believe,” Jon commented as Dany turned to place Rhaegal back, closing the crafted bronze cage behind him.

She approached Jon once more, closer that time. “Yet, here I stand, in front of you. Just as I did when you first found me after the fire died out.”

“I keep replaying it in my mind. Of you…”

“Naked?” she tried to finish his sentence.

His cheeks reddened and Jon went shy, surprised by her answer. “Uh…”

Daenerys liked seeing him that way. She decided to press a bit further. “Are you trying to say you think about me without clothes often?”

His mouth dropped open, struggling to find the right words. “Um…” He slicked back some hair, but it only bounced back into place. He gave her a bashful look. “If I said yes, would that be terribly inappropriate?”

“No,” she said, pleased, then added, “but it would be honest.”

Daenerys would have never engaged in such a conversation before, but ever since her dragons were given life, she felt new and reborn. She felt as if she were becoming the woman she wanted to be and knew that she needed to be—and that woman, well, that woman wanted Jon.

Her desire for him was on a more conscious level.

On a whim, she pushed forward, needing to satisfy some type of yearning. Jon had not expected her movement, and she felt his body stiffen until her hands were around his neck and she was pulling him into her. His lips were soft on hers, familiar, and the sensation was somewhat addicting.

She needed more.

Daenerys knew he was so guarded, so eager to protect himself as a result of his upbringing, yet, around her, Jon’s walls were cracking, tired of fighting. His hands roamed on her body, but carefully before pushing her into the wall. Daenerys wanted to tell him to not be so hesitant, that she was willing to have him touch all her wanted—everywhere and anywhere.

It was then that she realized how much she wanted to be touched, how much she was denying herself, and how much Jon was definitely feeling those same feelings—as he had shifted his pelvis against her and she could feel his hardness.

Well, that certainty did not take long at all—and Dany almost felt a strange sense of pride.

She flattened her palm against the side of his lower abdomen that was covered by his jerkin, then dipped her hand into his trousers to grab him, not sure what she was doing in practice, but she had heard plenty of tricks of how to please a man from the ladies in the Red Keep who wanted to prepare Dany for the future.

Jon sharply inhaled through his nose at the contact when her fingers brushed his cock, slowly
releasing the air loudly. Daenerys opened her eyes to see how his face altered, brows pulled downward in concentration before he tightened his grip on her waist, stepping into her so she was effectively pinned between him and the wall behind her.

He moved her hair and sucked on her neck as she continued with small hand movements, trying to focus, her fingers laced around his cock that had hardened so easily at her touch. She felt the slickness and small throbbing sensation in between her legs, thinking about how it would feel to have Jon inside of her until he could no longer stand it.

Daenerys wanted to get completely lost in that kind of feeling.

She gripped him tighter, her slow movements having the pace kicked up a notch, but suddenly, Jon grabbed her hand and withdrew it, holding her at the wrist. “I shouldn’t,” he exhaled, exasperated, as if he had been holding in his breath for a long time. Then, in a serious, but strained voice, he acknowledged, “We shouldn’t be doing this.”

She did not like that he looked as if he had done something wrong. There was no reason for him to feel guilty.

She kissed him once more, then bit his lower lip and tugged before releasing it. “And what if I want to be doing this? Have you not considered that?”

Jon’s eyes were searching hers until a knock at the door ruined the moment, Jon jumping away, turning away to situate himself. Daenerys took a moment to smooth out her dress before she went and opened it to find little Arya standing there looking up at Dany with hopeful eyes.

Her hair was messy, having fallen out of her braided bun at the back of her head, pieces sticking out in all directions. Dany would not have expected anything else.

“Can I see the dragons?” she asked, without any form of timidity.

“Of course.” Daenerys swung the door open wider and Arya snuck in under her arm.

“Jon?” was her first comment, noticing him there towards the corner of the bed, “Are you here to see the dragons too?”

“Yes,” he replied after a moment, motioning to them, trying to look enthused. “the dragons, yes.”

Arya poked her head around each of the cages, then retracted, smiling radiantly. “Look at them, Jon!” Arya called, eyes wide and fascinated. “They’re beautiful.”

Daenerys went one by one, calling off their names, explaining the meaning behind them. Arya approved, immediately launching into the stories of Aegon, Visenya, and Rhaenys and their designated dragons. It was clear she was intrigued, liking the fact that the sisters were dragonriders as well as Aegon.

“Will you ride them one day?” she then asked.

It brought up an interesting idea. Daenerys had heard many stories of all the dragonriders in her family lineage, but she had never contemplated it being an option since dragons were thought to be extinct. “I haven’t thought of it. Maybe.”

“I guess you wouldn’t know yet. You’d have to bond with one, like your ancestors did.”

Daenerys stuffed down a chuckle. Arya spoke as if she had studied many books of Targaryen
history.

“Will they bite?”

Dany evaluated the dragons, seeing that only Aegon and Rhaegal were awake, Viserion being still bedded down for a nap. Their temperament did not seem turbulent, only curious, as they had not seen Arya before and the energy she brought with her was new.

“I don’t think so. They would be more likely to breathe fire at you, but it hasn’t happened yet.”

And with that, Arya poked a finger inside Aegon’s cage, him leaning in to sniff the air around her before pulling back to analyze Arya more. “You could fly them here when they’re big and visit us,” Arya suggested. “I bet they’ll be massive.”

She peeked over at Jon while Arya was distracted, noticing he had been quite the whole time. Jon’s hand gripped the post at the end of her bed, his jaw tight, eyes clouded over with uncertainty—she could tell even though he was not even looking in her direction.

Dany knew that he had been reminded of her ultimate departure when Arya had questioned about her coming back to visit. Dany also was reminded of what Jaime had told her of breaking his heart when she left. She wished to reach out and whisper something to him, but could not.

She turned her attention back to Arya, engaging in the conversation again. “Would you like me to visit?”

“Yes. It’s nice having another girl other than Sansa around. All her friends are just as annoying, too.”

Jon shook his head while Daenerys giggled in a low manner. They exchanged a look, both knowing that their time together that evening was cut short and he would have to leave along with Arya.

Jon cleared his throat and went over to Arya, where he picked her up by under her arms and towed her towards the door. “Come on, you’ll need to be off to bed soon.”

“But I’m not even tired,” Arya complained in slow, drawn out words, body going limp as she resisted. She then thoughtfully added, “Read me a story and it might help me fall asleep.”

“Deal,” he agreed.

Daenerys thought their relationship was sweet. Jon was a caring brother. Viserys had read to her on occasion when she was very young. It made her wonder what he would have been like if her father was not mad and the circumstances had not driven Viserys down a crueler path.

But those were useless thoughts. The past was the past. The only way to continue was to push forward. The future was one she needed to carve out herself, mold it in the way she envisioned.

“Sleep well!” grumbled Arya back to Daenerys as she was set down outside the door with a huff.

“You as well,” Daenerys returned.

Jon’s hand lingered on the door, looking as Dany one last time before he closed it behind him. Daenerys collapsed backwards onto the bed, disappointed she couldn’t keep him there in her chambers all night.

—

A message from Dorne had arrived two days later. She read the scroll, which was declaring loyalty
to Daenerys. Her first thought was they must have received the message containing the news of the birth of her dragons. Dorne knew more than any other kingdom the kind of damage dragonfire could do to castles and land, and would not risk fragile peace. Giving loyalty was the smartest move to make.

The Martells were still unaware of her whereabouts, only Starks knew. And how was she supposed to repay the Starks for their hospitality? And better yet, would they expect it? The obvious answer would be for her to offer to marry Robb and seal an alliance, but Robb Stark was not the one of Ned’s sons she desired. Yet, the one she desired was not considered to be a son of Winterfell, not a trueborn, and it made everything complicated.

It would have to be a conundrum for another day.

Daenerys was sitting in the grass, large patches having already gone tan in color as winter approached more fiercely overnight and the lush hills went dormant until summer would once again come. She had taken a horse out of the castle, four guards as well, who had followed behind her as she found a spot in between two hills, guards flanking her to keep watch. They were not that close, unable to hear her if she were in a speaking voice, but close enough that they could get to her in a moment’s notice.

She came out there to get away, several miles off from the castle, needing some space. The dragons were not with her, and she found herself missing them, wondering if they missed her also. They were not yet a fortnight in age, but she felt a deep bond with her dragons, a bond so strange it was bewildering to even Dany.

And out there in the grass, she found herself in a calm, but cluttered state of mind. All she needed to do was wait. Jaime would save them all, in her name, in the name of the future. The waiting, however, was torturous.

She missed her home. Daenerys had been away for a long time, more moons than she would be able to remember at that point. It was all grass and trees, mountains and hills, wherever she looked. Daenerys missed the ocean, missed the sound of the waves crashing against the rocks. As a child she would play in the sand and the waters with Viserys, back when he was kind to her and would make her little boats that floated on the water with the tide.

She wondered how far she would have to ride, either west or east, to be able to reach the seas again.

*One day,* she told herself, *one day I will return to Kings Landing.* And on that day, she would go back to the beaches and feel the sand on her bare feet.

Dany was there in the field for so long that she lost track. She would have rode back but the sun was setting and it was too beautiful and calming to leave her seat among the grasses. She watched as the clouds were engulfed in color, the skies painted pink and orange as the sun descended.

She heard the trot of a horse approaching and twisted to see that there was no need for the guards of hers to be alerted. She could spot Jon anywhere. The curls were a giveaway, flopping in the wind in a rather magnificent way as the horse came to a halt.

“Am I being summoned back?” she playfully inquired, raising a brow.

Jon got off the horse and put a stake in the ground so it would not go running off. “Not at all.”

Daenerys planted her hand in back of her and leaned backwards, some hair falling over her shoulders in the process. “Were you worried I might have rode off to never be seen again?”
He looked over at the hills and surrounding area before he turned his attention back to her. “You were gone a while,” he noted.

“You’ve been keeping track of that?”

“Yes.”

“Where did you say you were going?”

Jon approached and sat down next to her, keeping his feet planted flat and knees up, body lunched over so he could fix the lace of his boots. “It’s easy for a bastard to sneak away. No one questions.”

Her jaw tightened. “You know I don’t like that word.”

Jon dropped his gaze to the space in between them, pressing his lips together. “Well, what else are we supposed to call it?”

She felt the pressure of her teeth pressing down as her jaw clenched. “Let’s not talk of it,” she said with haste.

“Very well.”

He stretched both his legs out in front of him, collapsing backwards to lay down. He put both hands behind his head for some support.

“If only I could be as relaxed as you,” she commented, reaching out to poke the side of his stomach.

He squirmed. “I wouldn’t do that if I were you.”

“Oh?” she challenged, fingers extending out, flailing.

Jon’s dark eyes narrowed at her and assessed the situation presented. Then, without any warning or any ability to escape, he launched upward back into a sitting position, arms extending outward, and he grabbed her, tickling her.

Though her thick dress provided some protection, it was not nearly enough, and Dany squirmed about, unable to get out of his grasp. She let out several happy squeals before finally relenting.

“Please, no more,” she managed to get out. “I can’t take it.”

He released her and Dany flopped onto her back so she could see the clouds, but more importantly, so she could see Jon. He settled on his side, propped up by an elbow, hint of a smile remaining. She laid there looking up at him, adoring every feature of his face. She wanted to stay right there forever.

Jon reached out and ran two fingers through a lock of hair. He looked to be deep in thought.

“What are you thinking of?”

“You.” He laid his head down next to hers and Dany shifted to her side so their bodies mirrored each other. “Always you,” he whispered, though the guards were not facing them and they would not be able to hear.

It might be one of the loveliest things anyone had said to her.

“Jon?”
He took her hand and stroked her thumb. “Hmm?”

“When we go back, will you take me somewhere we can be alone?”

—

Upon their arrival back to Winterfell, Jon and Daenerys snuck off together. Well, technically snuck off, as she had the guards remain outside the godswood.

It was dark by that point, but the moon was full and provided a soft glow. Jon guided her through the godswood into a deeper part than before, very close to where the wall enclosing it would be on the far end, opposite to the entrance. It was there that the trees and foliage became dense, small patches of light coming through. There was a distinct pine smell that was mixed with an earthy ground scent. Daenerys had one hand occupied by Jon’s hand, him towing her along carefully, and the other on her long dark blue skirts that was collecting all sorts of items strew about as she walked.

“Jon?” Dany asked quietly, almost afraid to disturb nature’s balance with her voice, squeezing Jon’s hand tighter.

“The next time you feel like running off—” he stopped, pulling a large bending branch out of the way, urging her to walk forward “—come here instead.”

Daenerys walked into a small clearing, vibrant and moist moss covering the ground still. There was a strange structure in the middle, a half dome shaped construction encased by branches, dried mud, and vines. The area above was clear of trees, a direct view of the stars.

Jon looked around, reminiscing. “Arya comes out here sometimes when she needs to hide away. So do I, but only occasionally. Not so much anymore.”

“It’s the perfect spot.”

They were entirely alone out there, exactly what she wanted—the true meaning behind what she meant had gone unnoticed by Jon.

She decided it was time for him to understand.

Daenerys approached him slowly, almost as if he were prey, using her allure, and backed him against a nearby tree. Off in the distance, a few birds were chirping back and forth to each other, the only noise that was audible.

Jon’s expression was unsure until she kissed him once, pulling away until he was forced to be the one to make the next move and kiss her, pulling her into and embrace. His hands remained steady on her waist, not venturing elsewhere like she knew he wanted to.

And, yes, she needed his hands elsewhere.

She got a little more aggressive with her tactics, pulling at the furs that outlined the cloak he had until Jon stumbled off the tree and she pushed him down to the ground, collapsing on top of him.

“I want you,” she said, just to make things clear.

Jon hooked a leg in between hers and rolled him so he was on top of her, the weight feeling good. But her skirts presented a problem so Dany desperately was yanking the material upward so she could shift Jon in between her legs instead of having him on top of her leg.
When she finally got her legs hooked around him, Dany knew it was what she was missing. The craving, the hunger she felt, it was her fiery desire.

Even out there in the chill, she felt nothing but heat. Jon’s rougher hand slid along the flesh of her leg, up to her mid-thigh, the dress being brought up further. His breathing was unsteady by that point. Daenerys let her head fall to the side when he went for her neck, and noticed that his other hand was gripping a fistful of moss, knuckles white from the pressure. She smiled, knowing it was his way of trying to maintain some control.

“Jon,” she whispered to him.

He pulled away to look at her, retracting his hand swiftly, having taken her saying his name as Daenerys wanting to stop, though it was the opposite was what she wanted. “I’m sorry,” he immediately apologized. “I shouldn’t have—”

“Shhh,” she gently hushed him.

She started to undo the round buttons that went down the length of the bodice of her dress, effectively making him stop talking. It was one of those dresses that split into two—the top part and then the skirts, which was convenient given the activity.

Jon looked mystified, understanding that she was going to surrender to him entirely. He blinked several times, watching her hands work at the many pearly white buttons in vertical fashion down the bodice.

“I—Are you…I mean, you really want to?”

She rolled her eyes and let her thighs squeeze him tighter. “Yes,” she nearly whined. “Don’t you?”

And that was all that needed to be said.

He attacked her lips again, this time with more force, impatient after being given full permission. She briefly wondered how many times he had imagined this.

Daenerys finally managed to shrug and wiggle the bodice off completely. She grabbed Jon’s hand and placed it on her breast, where he squeezed gently, then gave a small moan against her neck. Her own eyes rolled back and stayed that way as Jon shifted down her body, curly hair tickling her chest as he kissed her.

He planted his hands behind her lower back, arching her up as he got to her navel. She allowed him to do exactly what he pleased, exactly what he needed, and exactly what Dany herself desired.

Jon pulled backwards, up onto his knees. He took a moment to gaze at her there, bare before him, nipples in hard peaks, her hair strewn every which way, waiting for him. His lips parted, exhaling a few deep breaths. Daenerys let her eyes drift, only to find that she was frustrated how the bulge in his pants was no longer grinding against her.

Dany lifted up from her position to grab him, finding his mouth again. Jon molded back onto her, falling back into place.

She shoved her hands under the straps of the cloak and got rid of it. To her surprise, he ripped off his top layer as well. She thought it might be too cold for him, but Jon did not hesitate, pressing his body against her. She guided her palms into his back and murmured his name in his ear, shifting her hips around with impatience.
Dany then tugged on the trousers so Jon would get the hint. It took some time using only one hand, but Jon managed to pull his trousers down enough that his stiff cock was free, pressed against her thigh.

“You want this?” he questioned again, pulling his face away to look at her. “Tell me and I’ll stop.”

“Don’t stop.”

The next kiss was nice, tender, and Jon settled into place between her legs as she widened them. She ached so bad for him that it was a relief when he reached between them. When he entered her all at once, Jon grunted against her mouth, a sound so carnal that Dany had never heard it before.

His one hand went into her hair as he repositioned and Dany brought her legs in closer. Dany looped her arms around him, as if she were hugging him, palms plants firmly on his shoulder blades until they fell lower into a position that kept pressure on his lower back.

Though it was admittedly uncomfortable in the beginning, the feeling eased away and Daenerys found that she liked the feeling of him inside her. And even though Jon fumbled, inexperienced, it felt good.

His body was sealed up against her and all she could feel was Jon as he pushed in and out of her, panting, lips dragging across her skin as he did. He could not kiss her anymore, face pushed into the space between her neck and shoulder.

It was true that Jon was not very coordinated with him movements, mostly lacking a steadiness to the pace. He made several throaty grunts, and even more light moans as she encouraged him to go faster. And when he started to say her name over and over again in these long, drawn out syllables, she knew that pleasure was close for him.

Suddenly, he gripped her hair once more, and whined, “Dany.”

He was out of breath when his movements stilled, then he cursed, his weight relaxing on top of her. Daenerys lifted her head enough to kiss his shoulder, then the side of his cheek. She understood that he had not meant to finish like that, to spill into her, to take that risk. She whispered to him that everything was going fine, and Jon nuzzled her neck.

Above them, Dany saw the stars twinkling as she held Jon against her, and she thought to herself how her world was changing so quickly.
Robb’s face lit up when he saw Jon open the door to the inside castle, nearly running into him. “Jon, there you are. Where have you been?” questioned Robb, looking at Jon curiously, his disheveled appearance striking him as odd.

Jon froze up for a second, fear striking through him, letting the door behind him swing shut, allowing for a loud bang. “Nowhere,” he defended swiftly in a higher pitch than usual. He cleared his throat in an awkward attempt to push out the uneasy feeling. “Just roaming, I guess,” he trailed off saying.

Gods, he wanted to launch into telling Robb the details, wanted to tell him everything—how much he was in love, how much he wanted Daenerys, where he had just come from and how he was no longer a virgin (and didn’t that feel pretty fucking great because finally beat Robb at something). But there was the issue—the woman who he gladly gave his virginity to was the heir to the Iron Throne.

Sure, he wanted tell Robb, but he couldn’t. Not ever.

It had to be a secret between Jon and Daenerys about what happened. She had not said that to him, it was his own conclusion. He would never risk anyone finding out, even his own brother and best friend.

No, instead he rattled off, “I’m going to bed.”

“Really?” Robb wrinkled his face at him. “It’s still somewhat early in the evening. You’re usually up late.”

Don’t act suspicious, he reminded himself. “Long day,” he said back, rubbing his neck as if he were tired, looking at his shoes because he was too afraid of getting caught in a lie somehow. “Sleep well.”

He turned away, praying that he would not be followed, and Robb must have caught on that Jon wanted to be alone and wished him a well rest.

The castle had fallen quiet as the moon rose in the sky, clouds moving in and blocking out most of the light it might have provided. The winds began to blow strong, battering against the windows, but the castle was warm. There was the crackle of the flames in the grand stone fireplace among the many logs of wood.

As he passed through the many halls, it gave him time to think about everything. About how deep he cared for Dany, how lovely Daenerys looked stretched out on the ground, her pale hair reflecting moonlight, about how being inside her felt better than he could have ever imagined—about how he could have gotten her pregnant.

What.
Complete.

Idiot.

A true dumbass, no denying that.

He had not meant it to happen like that, really, he was taken by surprise, which was also somewhat of an embarrassment. It happened so quickly that his mind and body did not have time to react. Nonetheless, he felt bad about it. A bastard creating another bastard—he could almost whack his head up against the wall for his stupidity. And then there was the odd part of Daenerys not being overly concerned, only soothing him as he had started to apologize.

She knew the possible consequences, but Jon figured he was more sensitive to the issue because he was the result of an unmarried pair’s recklessness. And there he was repeating history.

When Jon found himself at his door, he locked himself away inside, collapsing onto his bed before bothering to peel off his clothes and shuffle under the covers. Instead of berating himself some more, he decided to give it a rest. Ghost jumped up in one swift motion, laying down lengthwise next to Jon, nose nuzzling his arm.

The overwhelming feelings he had for Daenerys were impossible to ignore. Jon understood that the emotional investment would one day cause a lot of pain.

Was he afraid of what would come after when he got shattered into pieces because of the reality of the situation?

Yes.

But, would it be worth it?

Yes.

The time he had with her now was changing him. He loved her, and that was etched into him. Jon could not imagine a day not loving her, not even if he ended up living past his hundred nameday.

“I need to tell her,” he told the direwolf, possibly hoping that he might respond with some wisdom.

Ghost gave a small whine before he relaxed his head down, seemingly agreeing with what Jon had said, or at least that was how he took it, and that was enough for Jon to be convinced. Tomorrow he would tell her.

—

There was this tingling sensation that flooded him with every step he took from his door to hers. He had not been invited, but he was going anyways, something he would not ever have dreamed of doing. Yet, there he was, still walking without a fumble.

His heart was racing, body jittery, but that was mainly due to the thought of seeing Daenerys again after their night together. Her company alone was enough to make him feel warm all over in a way no one ever had.

The moment her first saw her was always calming and exhilarating at the same time, as strange as it might be.

“Jon,” she greeted, not expecting him.
Her hair was down, brushed into soft waves that framed her face. It made him forget momentarily what he was doing there. Luckily, he snapped himself out of the daze, and when he spoke, his words were raced, “Can I have a moment of your time?”

“Of course.”

When door shut behind him, his nerves were making his fingers fidget at his side. He walked across the span of the room before he stopped himself from pacing. Next to him, he noted the dragons were bopping around, one taking particular interest in Jon. Rhaegal, wasn’t it? The green one was Rhaegal, right?

Anyways, if Jon was remembering correctly, Rhaegal had bounced to the corner of the cage, eyeing Jon with his head tilted upward to gaze in a peculiar manner. It made Jon wonder if he was being viewed as supper.

“He likes you,” Dany mentioned, interrupting his train of thought.

She clasped her hands together before approaching, admiring Rhaegal.

A dragon liking him? Doubtful. “Either that or he’s waiting for an opportunity to break free and eat me. With the way he is looking at me, I would say it might be a toss up.”

Daenerys shook her head in denial. “Or maybe he simply likes looking at your curls as much as I do.”

Jon restricted his hand from reaching up and tossing his bountiful lock around out of a nervous habit. Instead, he decided to test out the original theory and inch closer to the bronze cage and outstretched his fingers the same way Arya had done, in a non-threatening way. The dragon made this noise that Jon would not quite be able to describe, but it was similar to the noise that Ghost would make when he contently snuggled close at night after a long day.

Dany looked equally as puzzled, but that only lasted a moment. “You see,” she purred, “he likes you, just as his mother does.”

That reminded of him as to why he was there in the first place. Jon swallowed hard, a lump forming in his throat because of nervous energy. “Daenerys?” he said, trying to keep his voice strong and steady, turning back to her, “I want to tell you something.”

“Go on,” she encouraged. “What is on your mind?”

Suddenly, fear struck him and Jon was unable to make the confession. “I was thinking, well, actually, I wanted to, um, I wanted to…”—Well, wasn’t he just the master of forming a full fucking sentence”—wanted to make sure you were alright. We haven’t spoken since last night.”

Last night.

The night in the godswood.

The night that would forever be the best night of his life.

There was a pause, a pull of her brows and a few blinks of disbelief. “Oh, yes, I am perfectly fine.” There was another beat before she asked, “Are you?”

He nodded, and dropped his gaze to the floor, not sure what to do with himself.
Just say it.

But he didn’t know if he could anymore.

“You’re lingering,” she bluntly noted, examining him from her place. “That wasn’t what you wanted to say, was it? Please, you can tell me whatever it is.”

He took a second to recover, and then almost cracked a grin. It was the final push that he needed. Jon took in a deep breath, hoping the air would awaken his senses more. He was going to need to blurt it out before all courage was lost. “What I wanted to say and what I have wanted to say for some time now is that I’m in love with you.”

She had not been expecting that, he could tell instantly.

Dany’s lips parted, only for them to close shut. It appeared that her mind was racing. “Do you mean that?”

“Yes. I wouldn’t be standing here if I hadn’t been driven mad by the thought of telling you how I truly feel. I know that you’ll leave at some point, but I want you to know that it’s true, I do love you, every part of you. There is no woman on this continent quite like you.” Jon paused for a breath before he continued. He knew he was going to ramble even further, but the flood gates had opened, and there was no stopping them. “I think of you when I wake up and when I go to sleep, and even in my dreams you’re there. You’re everywhere.”

Jon abruptly turned around and ran his hands over his face, wondering for the first time how everything had happened, and recalled all that had led up to the point he was at. “I know who I am, and I shouldn’t be saying this or feeling this, but I don’t regret any of it and I hope that you don’t either.”

Snip, snip, snip, and the weight on his shoulders fell away.

But admitting it was only part of the battle, the other half was hearing the reply. Jon waited patiently, letting all his words sink in, watching every movement. When her lips began to turn upward, he knew then that he was going to get a better reaction than he initially thought.

“Jon,” she purred his name, voice velvety, sending a shiver through him. A wave of emotion grabbed ahold of him, and then Dany did. Her hands grabbed his. “I love you. I never thought I would feel this way about anyone, and here you show up into my life under circumstances which are entirely frightening and politically complicated…yet, you give me hope for the future, in your own way.

Jon stroked his thumb over her knuckles. “You’re much better with words than I am.” With an intentionally audible sigh, he mentioned, “This won’t end the way I would want it to. I think we both understand that.”

She shook her head dismissively, staring him down, not even blinking. They shared a moment where neither of them moved.

“Why would you think that?”

Jon exhaled, unable to keep the feelings to himself any longer. “You’re the heir to the Seven Kingdoms, and I know I’m just a bas—anyways, you’ll marry some lord of somewhere someday—”

“Stop talking.”
Jon shut his mouth, but was surprised to see that Daenerys was smiling at him. “Jon, how am I supposed to marry some lord somewhere when my heart belongs to you?”

*My heart belongs to you*

The words played over again in his head, the full meaning of it sinking in. Jon knew his own heart would never belong to another. It would be Daenerys until the day he died.

There was this peaceful mood that came over him, all anxieties washed away.

“Is this what has been troubling you?”

“Aye.”

“Don’t let it. Future arrangements can be made.”

He didn’t comprehend what she meant, but whatever it was, Daenerys had the future on her mind and somehow he was involved. At a later date, he would consider anything to be near her. After all, he had no formal duties to Winterfell. Jon was no Stark.

“I should go now,” he reluctantly said.

“Why?” her voice was laced with sudden alertness.

Jon opened his mouth but then quickly closed it. His hand wavered in the air in front of him like he was trying to bring forth the idea without actually having to say it out loud—that people might whisper about his whereabouts if anyone knew.

Jon sighed, scratching the back of his head.

“You should relax more.”

“I am relaxed,” he said with more force than necessary, realizing it, and immediately felt guilty for it.

“Oh, maybe I’m not.”

“I think I can help with that.”

She tilted her head upward, hair being down completely, no braids or twists, just pure white and waved hair that fell to her waist. Jon was sure her face was perfect as he studied it against the flicker of the fireplace and the candles. Being intimidated by beauty was something Jon had never faced before.

She put her hands under the straps of the fur cloak that locked around his chest in an x shape and pulled them up and over his head. It fell to the ground, effortlessly forgotten about. He lifted his arms up and let the rest of the garments covering his torso be pulled off.

There was something about the way she looked at him. It wasn’t easy to place what exactly it was that made Jon get a pit in his stomach when her full attention was on him.

But that look—that fucking look that she gave him, the smile and the bite of her lip as she cocked her head to the side. Daenerys had a way of making it feel like Jon was the only person in the world that mattered.

Her skin just seemed to gleam with a natural glow, just like how her eyes were so wide and bright and longing. And he was weak when it came to Dany so he could feel himself giving in as the seconds went by and she was still in his presence.
“Do you want me?” she asked, so casual, as if it were a part of normal conversation.

Yes.

Always.

Why bother to even ask?

But he didn’t actually get the words out because the desire that hit him in that moment was making his body feel like it might explode any second since she was standing there offering herself up.

Daenerys walked around him, fingertips grazing his skin as she revolved his body. Jon closed his eyes lazily and exhaled sharply as she did. Her hand went from around his abdomen, to his side, all the way up to his shoulder blades, up and across the end of his collarbone, and settled right overtop his heart. Meanwhile, his own hands balled into fists at his side in an attempt to keep in control.

And control was something he was struggling with.

His eyes trailed down her still clothed body. Her dress was one that he had seen before, one like all the others that hugged her waist and flattered her womanly figure. The urge to reach out and tear off that dress was hard to fight off.

Jon’s hands went to her waist and Daenerys wrapped her hands around his neck, lifting onto her toes. Jon could smell the scent of her hair as she did—a mixture of southern oils and the wintery smell of Winterfell, making him think she must have just come in from a stroll outside.

His eyes fluttered closed, nose nudging her cheek before his lips brushed onto hers and captured them. It made him forget everything else. He was just Jon and she was just Daenerys, there was no one else, no titles, no worries of the future or what it might bring. And what a freeing feeling that was.

As much as he wanted to tell her that this was not what he had come for that night, that all he thought of was talking, there was no way he would jeopardize not having her body again. Instead, he put his hands on her, everywhere he could get, pressing her against him harder because he couldn’t get enough. He wanted all of her, and maybe that was greedy of him, but when he felt the way he did, loving this woman who he proclaimed that love to, well, wanting every part of her came with the territory.

There was an obstacle in the way and that was the dress—the overcomplicated one—one with silver embroidered over teal color. It was some kind of puzzle that he would not be able to solve. Too many buttons and ties. Was there a hidden lace somewhere that would make it come off?

His brows pulled together in frustration and he pulled his lips away. “Take this off,” he pleaded, tugging on the material. “Please.”

Daenerys allowed an alluring smile to decorate her face. Her fingertips pressed into his abdomen, and with a little force and one step forward, she made him sit down on the edge of the bed that was neatly laid out with furs.

The anticipation nearly claimed his sanity.

She undid the laces down by her wrists first, impossibly slow, probably just to torture him. And all he could do was wait, eyes wanting to burn holes and scorch the dress off of her. But when the dress finally did come off, as well as the undergarment, it slid off her skin with such ease, that Jon watched the material sink to the ground in a pool by her feet until his eyes trailed back up to her nude body.
It was the first time he was getting a good look at her, breasts round, hips curved, not covered up by the darkness of night or ash from a fire. To be completely honest, Jon was not sure it was going to happen again. The first time was something of a miracle, a gift to him given by the gods or something of that sort. That she was interested still was almost a puzzle for Jon.

He couldn’t imagine it had been overly pleasant for her out there in the godswood, and Jon wanted to make an effort to have her feel good that time around.

He had to.

What kind of man was selfish enough to forget the other partner?

His thoughts got mixed up as Dany moved slowly, watching him to make sure everything was alright as she hooked a leg over the other side of his body and lowered down so she was sitting in his lap.

He instinctually smoothed his hand up the side of her thigh, settling this thumb at the point where her pelvis bone protruded before Jon’s hands immediately grabbed her waist, thumbs rubbing upward against the smooth, milky skin until he had the weight of both breasts in his palms. He squeezed gently and Daenerys moved against him in response and Jon bit down on his lip so hard there might have been blood drawn, then gave a throaty whine.

Was this the part where he begged?

“Daenerys,” he groaned, hips moving upward.

He was too impatient, too undisciplined around her. The lack of control was frustrating but invigorating all at once. Jon needed her.

He caught on that she was going to make him wait until the last possible second when he was eased down onto the bed, back hitting the soft furs. Dany kissed him all the way down his torso until her tongue ran across a section right above the top of his trousers. Jon groaned with anticipation.

“Please,” he exhaled, already nearly out of breath. Daenerys pulled at the laces of his trousers, grabbed the sides and yanked them down the length of his legs. Once off, she climbed back up his body and back into place.

She was watching him so closely, examining every twitch of his body with excitement in her eyes—the way his hips involuntarily jerked up when she stripped him of his breeches, the way his eyes fluttered when his cock rubbed onto the flesh of her warm inner thigh.

The way that her neck stretched slightly and her eyes fluttered partway closed with eyelashes dancing as she lowered onto him drove him wild. What could he have ever done to deserve it? She settled onto him so easily that the thought hit him—they fit too well together to not belong together.

Jon didn’t think it could get better, yet he found it could. Sex was so different this way with Dany on top of him and in control—mainly because of the view.

Her body moved with grace. Jon felt the digits of her spine along his fingertips when her hips grinded on him. Her hair swayed against his knuckles when her head tilted backwards, brushing ever so lightly that it reminded him to not grip so tightly to Daenerys. There was no need for bruises.

“Jon,” she murmured, so light and airy.

Seven Hells.
Why did she have to say his name like *that*. He was barely hanging on as it was, trying to make it last longer than the previous night, but that attempt was not working well.

Jon sat up, grabbing her, wrapping an arm around Dany while still supporting her movements as she shuffled herself. He had to kiss, had to taste her lips, and she was more than willing to accommodate to his needs.

But when he felt himself about to fall to pieces, Jon exercised his strength, flipping them to he was on top of her. A few more thrusts was all it took before he pulled out of her, not making the same mistake twice, and spilled onto her stomach. He bumped against her nose with his own as she held him there in place, in that position that made him feel secure.

“I love you,” he whispered again, the weight of the words in full effect.

She brushed some hair out of the way so she could see him. “I love you.”

Jon leaned over the bed and grabbed his shirt to wipe her stomach, mumbling an apology. She had none of that though—no need to apologize. She was about to grab the sheets to sink into a snuggled position, but his earlier thought fell back into place and Jon knew he couldn’t have it be over, not yet.

On a whim, the idea hit him. Jon yanked her down the bed with his hands cupping under her knees, effectively keeping her legs apart. She was surprised by the sudden aggression, as Jon was clearly not the dominant type, but her seductive smile was glowing with approval.

“What are you…?”

She never got a chance to finish her question.

Jon did not even know where his own confidence had come from in that moment, but he was grateful for the sudden change. What he found out was that his tongue could be used for more than one thing, that she enjoyed it when he reached above and palmed her breasts, and that she got quite vocal when her thighs clamped down around his head. When she grabbed at his hair, he was certain that he was doing something right, so he continued with it until her back arched and she moaned out his name, nearly making him hard again.

He picked up his head to watch her expression alter as her back nestled onto the bed again. Her eyes hazily slanted, eyebrow raised at him. “Where did you learn that?”

He climbed back in between her legs again so he could lay flat against her. He brushed a finger along her jawline, having small smirk play out on his face from his own success. Jon knew then he needed to trust in himself more. “Never learned it. It’s just been you, no one else. Just had the idea and wanted to test it out.”

He rolled off of her and onto his back. Daenerys nuzzled close to him and Jon let his head fall to the side to look at her.

The realization came to him. All said and done, he was just a man, and he was more than capable of selfish thoughts. Like the one where Daenerys stayed with him there in Winterfell forever and he can show her how flowers that far north actually do bloom in the spring.

Silly fantasies…

“Why did you do that?” she asked, sleepy.

“Do what?”
She let her hand fall to his chest, drawing circles. “After, with me?”

“Oh. I just, I thought maybe it would make you feel good as well. You liked it, didn’t you?”

She smiled before burying her face into his shoulder where he could feel her lips press against his skin. “Yes, very much.”

Time slowed down—a favor to him because he knew they were on borrowed time. Her fate was Kings Landing, the Seven Kingdoms, and his was undermined. He had highly considered going to the Wall before her arrival, joining Uncle Benjen as part of the Watch, being in a place where being a bastard meant not much at all. But he looked at Daenerys then, and suddenly from his perspective the world seemed so different.

He knew she was going to change things for the better, be the ruler who deserved to sit on the throne. Jon considered himself lucky to be able to carry a piece of her, the memory of their time together, with him for the rest of his life.

“I’ve been thinking,” Dany started, “about our similarities. We are both tormented. You, by never knowing who your mother is, and me, by knowing who my father is, what he is.”

Jon followed the logic. “Strange, isn’t it?”

“Very.” She propped herself up. “When was the last time you asked Lord Stark about your mother?”

“I can’t even remember. When you never get any answers, you stop asking questions.” He nudged her. “Will you give me an answer if I ask why you want to know?”

“Curiosity, I suppose.” He rubbed a finger along her cheek, prompting her to lean into him. “If I were you, I don’t think I would ever give up.”

When she laid back down, she was musing about something. He might have asked her about it, but he was enjoying the new silence with her there next to him. Every night he had slept alone, with the exception of Ghost, and Jon was somewhat eager to find out what it was like to wake up next to Daenerys. He let his eyes fall closed and Dany settled back in against him until their breathing became slow and dreams set in.
Dany did not think she should be concerned just yet. It had been nearly two moons since Jaime had left her and there had been no word. Her anxiety levels had been raised, but she kept herself as collected as possible. One night she had disclosed that Jaime had left for Kings Landing to Jon and the purpose behind what he had to do it. There was no judgement on his part, as Jon knew the tales of the Mad King, but she had sensed a bit of concern for her sake, as to if anyone else ever found out.

But the more Dany thought about it, the more she realized that not many others would give it a second thought. He was the Mad King. Period. No one would mourn his departure. There might even be secret celebrations after his passing.

Jon brought her some ease. He was still asleep and she had fallen into a habit of laying wake, pushing out all that might be troubling her, just for some moments of solitude until Jon would stir next to her. He would not be with her every night, as that would be too risky. But on nights that he did come, it was easy because she had the whole hallway to herself, as no other guests occupied the other rooms available. Only her guards were at her door, and she had two stand at the end of the hallway for privacy.

Having people find out was not much of a concern to Daenerys, but she respected Jon’s wishes to be discrete, knowing it was for the better.

As Jon stretched next to her, his arms went above his head. “You’re always awake before me,” he yawned.

“A good habit to get into,” she briefly noted. “Those who are in charge of many need to be up and ready for what the day will bring.”

Jon pulled at her waist and tugged her close to him and she slid across the sheets with ease. Dany enjoyed these moments the most, when the world around her was at a slow pace and it was only the two of them.

“I had a dream last night,” she began, suddenly remembering the peculiar visions that had played out while she slept. “It was rather strange. I was in a village but it was completely empty, no one in sight, as if everyone had just got up and left, all their belongings still left behind. There was a storm of snow, white blankets on all that could be seen. It felt quite eerie.”

Jon listened carefully, scooting his head over closer on the pillow to be more near her face. “An abandoned village? Where was this supposed to be?”

“I’m not sure. I didn’t recognize anything, but it did feel so real, as if I were actually there.”

Jon huffed, contemplating. “Winter is coming.”

“Indeed, it is. The first snow might fall soon.”
“Don’t let it worry you. It was only a dream.”

Daenerys shifted around, not able to shake the feeling. “Do you know the story of Daenys the Dreamer?”

Everyone in the Seven Kingdoms knew the tale, but she thought it considerate to ask first.

“Aye.”

“What if this is like that? What if I’m seeing the future and this winter is going to be a long and bitter one where many do not survive?”

“If it’s a vision of the future, not much can be done about it,” Jon reminded her truthfully, which meant there was not much comfort to his words, “because winter will be here and there is no stopping it. Winter is a force of its own.”

Daenerys scooted even closer, running a finger along his chest. She wanted to spend all winter snuggled up in a bed with him. “I hope the Tyrells have enough sense to have begun stocking wheat and grain. If I could send them a raven—”

“They most likely have. Don’t worry about it.”

What Jon did not seem to realize just then was that it was her job to worry about those things.

“I think Robb knows something is going on and I’m not telling him,” Jon confessed out of the blue.

It was not alarming to her even in the slightest. Robb was too close with Jon to mention the information elsewhere. If anything, he would most likely go out of his way to protect Jon in any way that he could—a sibling relationship Daenerys wished she could have experienced.

“Oh? Why do you think that?”

“He said he came to my room some morning and I wasn’t there. I made an excuse but I doubt he believed me. I feel guilty because I told him I wasn’t going to be involved with you.”

Daenerys let a giggle rumble out of her “You told him that?”

“I did,” Jon sighed. “In the beginning, I had high hopes that I would follow his advice. Evidently, it did not work out so well. I’m weak when it comes to you.”

Something about the conversation made her go deep in thought. If Jon had a true name, then there was the possibility of a future for them. She would have the power to give him a Stark name when she was on the throne, but she could never go around Ned Stark if that was not his wish. But on the chance that he agreed, Dany could find someone suitable for Robb first and then no one would question as to why she didn’t favor the eldest. Margaery Tyrell would be a good match, similar in age, both from a great Westeros family. Daenerys had never met her, as no one dared make a visit to the capitol without a direct invitation, but had heard wonderful things about her loving nature.

And with that marriage, Daenerys could ensure that the North be supplied with adequate grain for the winter, as the North could supply The Reach and Kings Landing with wood to burn fires.

She had gone outside to inspect the weather, eyeing the clouds, her dream still in the back of her mind. When she saw Ned Stark standing there on the walkway staring stoically, she was reminded of
what else it was that lingered in the back of her mind, invading her thoughts on occasion.

Daenerys had tried many times to tell herself not to do it, to bite her tongue and count herself lucky for the Starks taking her in, but it had become an itch too great to ignore. She had held her tongue for too long.

Ned saw her standing there and gave her a smile, which was a rare sight. She approached slowly and took the spot to his left.

“I never thought I would see a world with dragons,” he calmly expressed. “No one did. Yet, here they are in my home.”

She felt something off about the interaction. “Does this bother you?”

“Some are uneasy,” he commented, looking down at those who were at work. “The dragons will grow.”

“They won’t harm anyone,” she defended, feeling it necessary. “They may be dragons, but they will behave.”

“Dragons are hard to trust.”

“You have direwolves here within your walls,” she pointed out, trying to be not too sharp-tongued about it. She made sure that her voice was sweet when she continued. “There are six of them, whom you trust around your children. Why should my dragons be any different?”

“You make a good argument. I guess it would be hypocritical of me. I apologize.” Ned Stark humbly altered their conversation. “I never asked before, but may I ask where Jaime Lannister went to? I was not expecting him to leave as he did.”

Briefly, she considered revealing truth, but, in the end, Daenerys stayed quiet about the matter. “In the world right now, Lord Stark, the less you know, the better off you are. It’s a sad truth.” She hesitated for a beat, then continued. “Is that why you won’t tell Jon who his mother is?” she blurted out, her previous statement sinking in deep.

Ned looked at her like he had seen a ghost creeping up behind her.

“I’m aware it is not my place to say.” Dany knew she should not have mentioned it, that there in Lord Stark’s home she should not be questioning his secrets. Still, she had grown more brazen since her arrival, no longer a scared little girl. “I just keep thinking, well…it’s a cruel thing to keep that from a child,” she said more softly.

Ned nodded his head absently. His voice was gravely deep when he agreed, “Aye, it is.”

“I’m sure you have your reasons,” Dany pursued, treading lightly, “but are you going to let him go his whole life wondering?”

He looked, to put it lightly, shocked. Ned rested a tentative hand on the railing, thinking about what to say. “It’s complicated.”

“What is preventing you from telling him? I don’t think he would say anything to anyone else. He would swear not to tell a soul in sight, if needed. It is not as if Lady Catelyn would have to know,” she started, hoping maybe she could plant a seed in his mind.

“Cat is not the problem.” His face shifted after that, like he regretted saying what he did. “Like I
Lady Catelyn not being the problem? Daenerys was confused. She had assumed that the mother of Jon was being kept hidden was because the identity would only hurt Lady Catelyn.

"Princess Daenerys," the Maester Luwin exclaimed from the end of the walkway, effectively making the conversation come to an abrupt halt.

The Maester was a nice man, a gentle one. He was older in age, but had his wits still. Daenerys had turned and saw the sealed scroll that he had in his hands, stretched out for her to take. Even he must have known that whatever it was that was written on that scroll, it was going to be a game changer. Her heart nearly skipped a beat as Dany pushed herself off the railing and walked the short distance to him.

"Thank you."

She ran her fingernail under the seal and popped it open, recognized the writing.

Daenerys,

*The Seven Kingdoms has a new queen. It is time for you to come home.*

*Jaime*

Her fingers traced over the letters, her heart slowing, imagining Jaime writing it to her, just as he had promised when he departed Winterfell. She was able to draw in a breath and bring her head up. She expected to feel something, maybe some form of guilt or sadness, despite everything. The only thing that came was a wave of urgency.

"Is something wrong?" Ned asked in an alerted manner, inspecting her for signs of trouble.

"No." Daenerys stood up straighter. "My father is dead, Lord Stark."

His face was blank, probably not believing her, but then did exchange a look with Maester Luwin.

Daenerys dropped her eyes back to the scroll, letting the paper pull against her fingers. She knew what this meant, that her days as just being a princess had come to an end. As a ruler, Daenerys knew that duty, above all, needed to come first, and only then was a ruler an effective one.

And duty came before a Winterfell boy who she had grown to love. The Seven Kingdoms was without a proper ruler within the capitol, no Targaryen there. She *had* to leave, despite the pull on her heart to stay.

Daenerys held back any tears that might have worked their way into her eyes. "I need to make preparations to depart for Kings Landing."

—

Her handmaidens helped her pack most of the clothes she had brought. One trunk was open on her bed, the final pieces being tucked away for travel. She would spend one more night there at
Winterfell, possibly the last night ever. Every piece of clothing, jewelry and shoes she packed made her heart hurt more and her teeth grinded together from anxiety.

She had not told Jon yet, and the thought of that alone was what plagued her. She could handle anything along her path once she was home, she knew that, but leaving was going to be one of the hardest things she ever had to do.

When a knock came to her door not too long after, she hardly expected Ned Stark to be there when she opened it. In fact, he would have been the last person she expected.

“Lord Stark,” she greeted, glancing around, anticipating that there might be Arya or someone else at his side, but he was alone. “Please, come in.”

As he rustled through the door, Daenerys glanced around her room, which was beginning to look like it had when she first arrived. Soon, all traces of her would be gone, so she suspected that perhaps Ned Stark had come to make sure his position as the Warden of the North was to remain as so. However, he had an apprehensive expression as he lingered by the door.

She waited for him to begin what it was he wanted to say, but found he needed to be prompted. “Are you troubled, Lord Stark?”

He smiled faintly, but it was not true smile, just a gesture. “To be honest with you, I’ve been troubled for nearly eighteen years now.”

“Nearly eighteen years?” she questioned, the number striking her as odd.

He looked down at the floor near his boots in a way that reminded her of what Jon would do. But as Ned refused to make eye contact, she knew that it was because there was something of a more serious matter on his mind. “There is something you need to know.”

Suddenly, she felt an overwhelming sense of concern. Ned Stark coming to confide in her about the unknown was not a good sign. “What is it?”

“I’ve never admitted this to anyone, and I am not sure how to start this. I think the only thing that I can do is tell you that Jon is not my son.”

She retracted from the absurdity. “That is not a funny joke, Lord Stark.”

He sighed, shaking his head slowly. “Not a joke, just a truth. What you said to me earlier, I hope you can understand why I never said anything. You see, when I found my sister in Dorne, she had just given birth to Rhaegar’s child…” It was visible that this was difficult for him. “I considered telling Queen Rhaella, but then word came of what happened to your brother’s children, and I could not let it happen to Jon.”

Was the room spinning, or was it just her? Daenerys let her hand fall behind her to find the bed so she could sit down in stable place.

Jon Snow not Lord Eddard Stark’s son, not the Bastard of Winterfell, but the son of her eldest brother and Lyanna Stark?

It must be a dream, she convinced herself, that she must be having another one of those vivid visions, only to find that she was not going to wake up.

“I am telling you this now because I see who you are. You are not the Mad King. You are the farthest thing for him. You are the heir and it is my hope that this information does not sour your
She understood entirely.

If in Ned Stark’s shoes, she would have done the same. Jon was Rhaegar and Lynna Stark’s son and her father would have killed the boy when he was only a baby, no doubt, had he found out. Jon was not a full Targaryen, but some half breed, as her father would have said, not fit to take the kingdom. He would be no dragon.

She recalled Viserys telling her about her father’s outrage and disgust over Elia Martell’s children once Rhaella was pregnant again with her third child that she would be able to bring into the world, hopeful of a girl who could wed and give children to either Rhaegar or Viserys, or even both. It was then that King Aerys decided that Elia and her children were threats to the Targaryen line and she would be another woman brutalized by Dany’s father, the news of Rhaegar’s death officially sending him over the edge and after the children.

Dany still mourned the loss of them, though she never knew them. If the Gods were good, they allowed them peace somewhere.

Her father’s great wish came true shortly after, as Daenerys was born a girl and marked as the one who would further their line.

Many times she wondered what life would be like had the madness not taken her father. A dream, a wish, that she would never know, nor would the world.

Dany composed herself as best she could, despite her head swirling. “Are you positive of this?”

“My sister told me herself with her last breaths. Rhaegar never kidnapped her. Lyanna married him willingly. She would have no reason to lie.”

Her eyebrows flew up her forehead as she leaned toward him. “Married?”

“Aye.”

“No, that’s not possible,” she outright denied. “My brother was married to Elia Martell.”

“Lyanna mentioned something of an annulment as she told me what happened. I don’t know of this for sure, but she seemed to be telling the truth. It was no delusion.”

Daenerys was in a state of disbelief. How could a man keep this all to himself—and then unload all of the information onto her just as she was about to leave?

Dany let her head fall into her hands at the realization came. “He doesn’t know,” she confirmed out loud, the sound being muffled by her hands until she removed them.

“No, but I suppose I have to tell him now.”

Fear went through her. How would Jon take the news? They were blood relatives, yet, of course that part of the equation was not a deterrent to Daenerys. She had been expected to marry her brother, as most Targaryens did. It was their way of life.

However, no one else in Westeros observed the lifestyle her family practiced for generation after generation to preserve their unique features and control over the dragons. Sure, there were relative marriages elsewhere, as she knew of several Houses who married cousins or uncles and nieces, that was nothing new. Lord Stark himself was a product of a cousin marriage, at least she thought that
was what she remembered hearing from Arya one day as she talked of House Stark history.

Jon—what would he think of her knowing that she was his true father’s sister?

Dany’s arm wrapped around her stomach in an effort to cope with the anxiety that had taken over her nerves. She had to close her eyes to think about how her once perfect, secret romance was threatened by a secret held for so many years. It was her first real look into how things could so quickly become messy.

You must be a queen, she reminded herself, yet there was still a part of her that remained just a girl.

“Thank you for telling me, Lord Stark,” she exclaimed calmly, though she was far from that internally. “You’re right, I am not my father. I would never harm Jon in any way. He is your family as much as mine. When will you tell him?”

“I was going to ask you that question. Would it be better to wait until after you leave, or shall I discuss it now?”

She got the feeling that he was under the impression that something had transpired between her and Jon, though he would not know the full details and the extent of the relationship.

Regarding his question, in part, she wanted to flee first, afraid of the possibility he might not look at her the same way ever again once hearing what Ned would tell him. But the majority of her, the rational side, told her to stay and see where it was that the chips would fall.

He wasn’t a bastard.

That would be a lot to take in on its own. But being the son of Rhaegar Targaryen and Lyanna Stark was a whole other hurdle.

“Do it today,” she decided, telling him before she lost the nerve.

“Very well, Your Grace.”
Identity

—

JON

—

Lyanna Stark—his mother.

It was a turn of events that he could not have predicted. Jon had walked by her tomb countless times, never knowing that the question that plagued him for so long was right there in front of him.

But Rhaegar Targaryen being his father, well, that was an idea that never would have crossed anyone’s mind. It was so impossible, so illogical, yet so true. And it was Jon’s truth that he needed to deal with.

Daenerys was an aunt by blood.

He was her nephew by blood.

Jon thought he should feel different towards her with the revelation that came about, as if some romantic and sexual love should have left him at once upon the discovery. It didn’t—and that complicated everything further because he was already entirely smitten with Daenerys. Jon did not think there would be any turning back from that.

Targaryens—they wed brother and sister, and that was their normal way of life, no questions asked. However, Jon grew up thinking he was just Ned Stark’s son. Starks did not marry brother and sister, and he doubted anyone would agree to an aunt and nephew relationship in the present day.

Jon looked at Ghost who was below him at his feet. It was an odd parallel, him and his direwolf. There was Ghost, who was rambunctious at first, the smallest of the litter, then eased into a silent creature who was as big as his siblings. It mirrored Jon in a way. Once a bastard, quiet, never feeling like he fit in—now a trueborn, more of a man, knowing for certain that he was part Stark, not some outsider, and he belonged in Winterfell

But the whole fitting in part was still going be something to tackle.

“I don’t know what to feel or what to think,” he admitted to his father—his uncle—after a long pause of staring blankly after he told him about who his parents really were.

“Take some time,” he advised. His hand fell onto his shoulder and it made Jon look up. “I’m sorry it had to come out like this, that I waited so long, that it caused you pain growing up and even now, but I hope you understand my reasons. I made a promise to your mother, my sister, that I would protect you, that I would not reveal your identity. The Mad King would have had you killed.”

Promise me, Ned.

He had told Jon the whole story, every small detail.

When he first woke up, he had thought it would have been just a normal afternoon. Boy, was he wrong. First, he found out the Mad King was dead and Daenerys was leaving, and then he later found out that who he thought he was the whole time was a lie.
In a flash, it felt like the walls were caving in on him, and he was too overwhelmed to stay in that room any longer.

—

He left the castle grounds in a hurry, walking without much courtesy to the others in his path, in search of solitude elsewhere. He did not make it very far away, the castle still within sight. His stomach felt upset from all the news and Jon eventually sat down. He stayed there for a long time, staring at the road to his right, twirling some dead leaves in his hand, thinking.

Stark.

Targaryen.

It was not if he had to choose—he was both, but Stark was the only one of the pair he had ever identified with this whole life.

_Ned, listen to me, his name is Aegon Targaryen._

Jon bent over and placed his head into his hands. The name his mother had given him was not even Jon, but he was named after the conqueror of Westeros. He had already decided that he was in no way going to go by Aegon—he was Jon. In truth, he would rather forgo the whole surname part and keep it at only Jon.

Stark.

Targaryen.

Both.

Jon Stark.

Jon Targaryen.

Jon Snow.

It was enough to create a headache.

When he finally got cold enough to remove himself from the ground, Jon noticed that Lady Catelyn was approaching him, pulling her dark green dress through the mud to get to him. Under normal circumstances, he would have naturally braced himself, but the softness of her features told him that this was not going to be an ordinary interaction.

“Please don’t say anything,” she started out with as she came to a stop several yards away from him, her words forceful, but gentle at the same time. “I need to tell you this and I need you to not say a word until I’m done. Please.”

Jon nodded once with compliance.

Lady Catelyn drew in a shaky breath before she began, looking around at the wide open land before she began. “All this time I spent wishing that you weren’t around…thinking you were nothing but a reminder of Ned’s betrayal.” she shook her head, ashamed of herself. “And here, by marriage and law, you were family this whole time by being Lyanna Stark’s son.”

It wasn’t her fault, and honestly, Jon understood her hostility towards him growing up, even if he wished she had not been that way.
“I’m a terrible woman,” she declared, hands balling into fists, eyes welling up, mouth forming a thin line like it did when she was angry or disappointed. “I know in my heart it was wrong and I should have treated you differently. You were just a baby when I first saw you, a motherless child and I could have made a difference, but I didn’t. I chose not to.” Lady Catelyn sucked in a huge breath of air, turning around to compose herself so Jon was not able to see her. When she faced him once more, she looked rattled. Lady Catelyn approached him further until she was directly in front. “I know nothing I could ever say or do now would change the past, and I know that I shouldn’t dare ask for forgiveness… but I feel that it is necessary. And I promise from here on out, I will not isolate you. I won’t be the same woman I was to you all these years. I’ll work on it, and I’ll be better. I swear it right here and now.”

Her genuineness over the matter and the acknowledgement of the nature of her treatment towards him hit Jon in an emotional place. He shook his head at how fast everything was changing around him, his world spinning at an unusual pace that was hard to keep up with.

“We will move forward from here,” he agreed, knowing that the only way to go was forward and he could not to dwell too much on the past or he would find himself drowning in it all.

For a moment there, she looked like she might hug him, but that would have been too soon, so she took his hand in hers as an embrace and for the first time she looked at Jon with clarity. “Thank you.”

“Of course, Lady Catelyn.”

“From now on, just call me Catelyn. It will make it easier.”

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Robb took the news rather well, perhaps the best out of everyone who had been informed by the time he made his way back to the castle and to the interior, where he found Robb waiting in his room.

“You don’t look like an Aegon,” he judged, leaning against the frame of Jon’s bed as he entered the room. He looked some more as Jon came in and sat down in a chair, then continued, “You don’t even look like a Targaryen.”

“My name is Jon, Robb, continue to use it that way, please, for sanity’s sake.”

The door flung open behind them, hitting the back wall, alerting the two. Arya busted in, coming to a stop. “It is true?”

Robb nodded. “Aye, it is. I take it father told you?”

“Yes, he did.” Arya put her hands on her hips and directed her attention to Jon. “Are you leaving?”

He recoiled from the question. “Why would you ask that?”

She rolled her eyes, as if it were obvious. Arya liked to do that a lot to them. “Don’t Targaryens belong in Kings Landing? Are you going to rule? Are you the heir? What about Daenerys? What did she say?”

There were so many questions being thrown at him that Jon did not have time to process them all at once. “Arya,” he said, putting out his hand before she had the time to come up with more inquiries. “Slow down.”
Heir—where would she have ever gotten that kind of idea? To Jon, it was a ridiculous notion.

“He’s a Stark, too,” Robb pointed out. “Starks belong in Winterfell, in the North, they always have.”

Arya didn’t like the answer very much because she twisted her body towards Robb, hands glued behind her back, her aggravation coming over in the conversation easily. “I’m a Stark. Sansa is a Stark. We are Starks as much as you but father says one day we will be married off, and not to the North. Are you trying to say that only Stark males belong in the North?”

Robb shot Jon a look. Leave it to Arya to make sure they all knew the words were not sitting right with her, challenging his phrase. Jon also knew that in part, Arya was saying that so it didn’t make Jon feel odd about the situation. In her mind, he might be headed to the southern lands, even if Jon himself had not contemplated it.

“That’s not what I meant,” Robb defended, treading lightly, not wanting to push Arya into another speech because they both knew a lecture could be developing. “Forget I said it. You’re right. Starks are Starks wherever they go.”

Arya was satisfied enough with that, and hopped onto the bed, barely clearing the edge because she was so small, feet dangling far above the floor. “Daenerys leaves tomorrow. I don’t want her to go yet. I want to see the dragons get big. They’ll rule the skies.”

“Don’t want to see here go?” Robb repeated, and shot a look directed at Jon, cocking his head to the side. “You’re not the only one.”

Arya slid back down off the bed, not catching the comment directed across the room. “I have to go say goodbye to the dragons,” she announced, then disappeared out the door, her shoes clicking on the stone as she raced down the hall.

Robb pushed off the bedframe and closed the door behind her, turning serious since it was only the two of them there again. “Have you seen her yet?”

He wanted to see her. She was about to leave and the future was so uncertain.

“No.”

“You ought to.” They hadn’t spoked about the depth of Jon’s feelings for Daenerys, but Robb was perceptive and was most likely able to see it on his face whenever her name came up. “She leaves tomorrow.”

“I love her, and saying goodbye…” he started, then stopped. Even though Jon considered Robb to be his best friend, he still kept the more deeply emotional thoughts and feelings from him. And, of course, he had found himself more able to open that layer up to Daenerys, though he was no longer sure if he could even do that. “Everything is so messy now, Robb. I don’t know what to do.”

Robb was thoughtful for a moment. “Have you considered that she may have taken this news well? You should hear what she has to say, and besides, she does not seem the type of woman to let you off the hook that easy and just leave Winterfell without some form of a discussion.”

“I suppose.” Jon motioned for Robb to sit down across from him. He folded his hands together on top of the table as Robb took a seat. “I know you said not to get involved and normally I would have heeded that advice, but I couldn’t. It’s hard to explain even, there was this other worldly pull in her direction that I couldn’t ignore…”

“If this is the part where you apologize, don’t.” Robb cracked a smile. “I never saw you so happy. It
was pleasant, even if you ignored me half the time to be with her. There are no hard feelings about it, alright? I’m not going to give you yet another thing to be worried about. I can’t imagine what must be going on underneath all that hair of yours.”

Jon agreed, there really was a lot going on in his head, too much to handle. He wished that he could just wake up tomorrow and know all the answers he needed about what he wanted, but knew that would take time. Jon needed to figure out where exactly to go from there, even with as painful as it was going be.

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The following morning his heart raced in a similar way as to when he first met her. She was standing there before him like any other time, like when she asked him to explore the godswoods with her.

It occurred to him then that she was the same person that had been there all along—it was him that was different.

“I wanted to give you the night to sleep on the news, to give you some time before I came to see you.”

Jon grabbed his arm, close to his shoulder, and squeezed as if he had a muscle that needed tending to, but really he was just balled up with nervous energy by her presence, given the circumstances. “Daenerys…”

She kept her head up, neck straight, entirely composed. There was a gentle, small grin that appeared when he said her name. “Let me talk first,” she requested softly, folding her hands in front of her. Her heels clicked on the stone floor as she rocked forward onto her toes then back, her silver dress swaying. Her enchanting colored eyes went to the ceiling before they went back to him. “I know you’re figuring things out, but I just want to say what I have been thinking for a while now, and that this we belong together. We can be together, this news solidifies that.”

It was one of things that had passed through his mind, but he wasn’t so sure how he felt about everything—being a trueborn who was able to have the option of having someone else to share a life with. Being a bastard had been something built into his identity, and since the bastardhood was false, so was the identity. Jon didn’t know who he was anymore, and it was troubling.

And just like that, she answered the question that he had been pondering in a crisis since the previous day.

“You’re still Jon to me.” She laid a tentative hand on his chest as she stepped closer, and he allowed it, instinctively placing his hand over hers. “Nothing will change that. It is a lot to ask of a person, especially under the circumstances, but you are a Stark as much as you are a Targaryen. Winterfell is your home…and Kings Landing could be too if you wanted that…to be there with me.”

She was saying that because she knew what it was like to have to leave home and everything one ever knew. Jon was surprised by such an invitation, so much so that he stood with feet planted firmly on the ground with a puzzled expression taking over as he gazed down at Daenerys. Kings Landing was so far from his home, so foreign in every way, but it was Dany’s home and she was offering him a place there—there with her, just as she said.

Tempting, so tempting.

He almost agreed right then and there, but there were so many other factors involved that Jon tried to be logical and take it slow, to figure his life out first.
“Are you sure you would want me there?” he doubted, in disbelief, knowing he was going to keep it as an option in the back of his mind either way she answered. “Wouldn’t I get in the way and cause more problems?”

“More problems? You haven’t caused any, don’t be silly.” She shook her head slowly. “You would not be in the way. Don’t make a decision with haste. Think about it and take your time.” She withdrew her hand. “I have to leave now. I have to pick up the pieces of a fractured kingdom and try to put it back together.”

“If anyone could, it would be you,” he offered the support, knowing deep down she would succeed one way or another. The people would see who she was and follow her, even if she was the Mad King’s daughter.

“I’m nervous,” she confided in him one last time before her departure. "Why am I nervous? I'm going home.”

“It’s different now. You're going home with the realm on your shoulders, that's why.” Jon took the hand of the woman he still loved and squeezed. "You'll be a good queen, the best the Seven Kingdoms has ever known. I have faith in you.”

She looked to be moved by his words, and for the first time, Jon thought that he actually was able to manage to find exactly what it was that she needed to hear—the kind of thing that Robb would have come up with on the spot—and he wasn’t even awkward about it, not stumbling over the vowels or mixing up the word order.

“Thank you for that, Jon.”

The pair stood in silence, staring at each other for a few moments, some of the last moments before her departure. There was so much he wanted to tell her, could have told her, but kept it bottled up for the time being until he was ready to say all that needed to be said.

“I’ll say my goodbyes now,” she murmured, walking forward so she could wrap her arms around him to hug, not venturing upward for his lips because she was intuitive enough to know that it had the potential to do more harm than good by confusing him further, and Dany was not one manipulate to get what she wanted—which she made clear was him.

When she pulled away, Jon wanted to keep her there a moment longer, but let her go.

“Goodbye.”

She quickly turned, but Jon saw the water in her eyes. His own eyes had blurred over as she left his grasp.

“You’ll be a good queen,” he reminded her again, voice a bit shaky, just before she vanished out the door and down to the courtyard for her awaiting entourage.

She grabbed ahold of the door frame and nodded. “I hope so.” She started out, but then Jon heard the footsteps coming back to his room.

“Jon?”

He looked back up. “Yes?”

“I want you to know one more thing before I go, and that is I’ll always be waiting for you.”
And then she left. Jon stumbled backwards until he hit the edge of the bed and sat down in a somber manner, his whole body feeling heavy. Ghost came around the corner, seeming to know that Jon was having somewhat of an internal breakdown that had bubbled up to the surface, the tears finally falling onto his cheeks and down his chin when the sobbing hit—another wave of emotion from an emotional day.

His loyal direwolf stayed by him until Jon gathered himself.

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Daenerys had said the rest of her goodbyes to all and had headed out of the castle. Jon went to the top where the watchmen usually stood and he watched her go in a carriage attached to four horses, the dragons safely tucked inside, and all the guards on horseback in front of her and behind her. Jon watched the whole line of them down the road that led south.

An emptiness he had felt his whole life resumed inside of him once the last were entirely out of sight, and heartache set in deep.
Jaime’s face smiling proudly at her was a welcomed sight after a long and lonely journey of traveling. He was there at the capital gates as she stepped out of the carriage and down onto the grass, her legs a bit cramped from the ride since early morning.

She was home, and it had been gone so long that it occurred to her that she had even forgotten that her day of birth had since come and gone, as her seventeenth nameday was officially in the past.

Daenerys stared at the city ahead of her, the view of the Red Keep in the distance. Daenerys had left as a princess and was returning as a queen—the Queen.

She closed her eyes and listened, hearing the faint sound of birds in the trees and the waves crashing against the rocks along with the hustle and bustle of the city in the background. It was comforting, so familiar. The bottom of her skirts fluttered with the breeze, the sun beating down.

Jaime approached her, his Targaryen armor gleaming in the sunlight, newly cleaned. “My Queen,” he greeted her, bowing his head.

She stepped off the steps entirely and gave him a hug. “I’ve missed you. What are you doing out here?”

“I wanted to personally escort you back home.” He raised an eyebrow at her. “You’re late.”

“Don’t blame me,” she laughed, and pointed back into the carriage. “My dragons were being fussy this morning. I couldn’t get them to eat or have them return to their cages to get them to the Red Keep. I had to get stern with them and they finally listened.”

The dragons had grown quite a bit since Jaime had last seen them, their cages having to be made bigger to accommodate their size. She doubted they would need to be in them much longer. On their journey home, Daenerys had let them out so they could fly, always keeping close to where she was.

“Come on, let’s get you home,” Jaime offered, nodding in that direction. “I know you’re anxious to get there.”

It was warmer there in the capital. Some flowers were still in bloom along the walkways up to the Red Keep, which looked the same as it did when she left. Workers were busy preparing for her arrival all around, all pausing to politely welcome her back, some lined up along the hallways to curtsey as she walked through.

Daenerys recognized a lot of them, as she favored the workers over many of the guests, finding the workers had more interesting things to talk of, and were not ones to talk bad of her (at least to her knowledge). Her personal favorite, Jesyme, a girl not much younger than Daenerys, very tall with soft brown hair cut to her shoulders, noticed her and smiled widely at her return.

“Your Grace,” she greeted, holding out a basket she held in her arms, “I have fresh sheets for your bed, if you approve.”
Dany leaned over to smell them, that same fresh scent coming off the cotton colored light yellow that she fell asleep with every night she had been there. “Of course, thank you.”

“Your room will be ready for you soon.”

The friendliness and familiar faces brought a sense of warmness to Dany—a least for a little while, until she came to exactly were she wanted to be.

Daenerys stood in front of the Throne Room, doors shut, Jaime having followed her all the way there. With a heavy heart, she pushed the doors open. It was a grand place, the windows letting light in, walls elegantly painted with dragon skulls on display, and massive tiled floors, but as grand as it was, it was a room tarnished by cruel memories and lost lives.

“We need a proper coronation for you,” Jaime started, as they walked through the room. “From what I’ve heard the Lords are rather anxious to meet with you, their new queen. Most know you are not the Mad King by any means, but they have a right to be nervous. The majority have never even laid eyes on you.”

“The Lords are nervous? Who might I ask have you heard this from?”

“The one and only Varys, of course. He seems to know what happens everywhere.”

“Ah.”

Varys. He had always been sweet to Daenerys by bringing her small jewels from the market or a rose from the garden, complimenting not just her beauty, but her brain. Needless to say, she was fond of him.

Daenerys knew that in their world, beauty was seen to be the most valuable thing a woman could have. It was rather petty of the men who surrounded her, always looking at her like a prized possession. Not anymore. Now, she got to put that brain of hers to work.

Dany drew her hands together. “I’ll send ravens asking them to visit a week in advance of the coronation, when a date is decided upon. We can discuss any matters that may be concerning them.”

“That is a good choice. It will ease them.”

Suddenly, the idea hit her. “Is Ser Barristan Selmy here?”

“He is.”

“Have you talked with him?”

“I have. Ran into him when I first arrived.”

Dany came to a halt, her Targaryen red dress swaying as she did. “What happened?”

“He asked about you, if you were safe. After the news of Rhaella and Viserys came to the castle, he was very worried for you, especially knowing that there was nothing he could do from where he was. I explained things quickly, that you were safe, and I was going to make sure that you were always safe.” Jaime paused, looking around to make sure no one was in sight to hear the echo of their conversation. “I didn’t tell him specifically why I came back, but I think he knew. Why else would I be there? He let me walk right past him, no questions.”

The last thing she would want would to have Barristan Selmy angry with her, but it sounded like he
understood.

“He sees you as the queen, don’t worry. He knew who the Mad King was, just as we all did. It was a disaster waiting to happen. We were sworn to protect King Aerys II, but we were sworn to protect his family also. Barristan cares for you just as I do and he is ready to serve just as he always has, to serve you this time. But, let’s not mention the past to him. We have to move forward.”

Jaime was always good at calming her, but that time around, she really wanted to speak with Ser Barristan herself, for reassurance. She trusted him, and Dany wanted to make sure that he still put trust in her, especially as a new ruler. Animosity from Ser Barristan due to her decision was not something she ever wanted. He was too much of a true, warm soul and she needed that around her, especially with the many snakes that tried to get into the good graces of the royal family.

With a few more steps forward, Daenerys ascended the carved-out stairs that lead to the Iron Throne. Such an ugly thing it was, as Dany never did like the look of it. It was too jagged and dark for her liking, and seemed to be uncomfortable to sit in for long periods of time. Too menacing looking to those who were below her, even if that was the whole point. Perhaps, she could make a change to it eventually, but there were far more important things to take care of first. Her list of priorities was ever growing and altering.

Once at the top, Daenerys turned around, gathering her dress, and sat down to take it all in—the view from where her father once was, and all her other ancestors.

Everything was hers.

Everything was hers and all of her family had to die for it to be that way.

It hurt still—the memories. Daenerys slouched backwards in the throne, drumming her hands on the armrests. Not all my family, she thought to bring a little form of peace, her mind travelling back to Jon, who was still occupying Winterfell.

Gods, how she missed him. Dany wished him to be there with her more than anything else. But, as much as there was a hole in her heart without him there by her side, she still remained hopeful that their separation was temporary. Jon needed time and she could deal with that, she would give him as much time as necessary. She had a realm to mend, and that would keep her mind off of some of the heartache she was experiencing.

“You look good up there,” Jaime commented, coming before her, his voice booming around the walls.

Dany wasn’t quite sure what the view of her on the throne would look like, fearing she would seem like a little girl in such a big and threatening chair.

“Do I?”

“I always felt you were born to do this, Daenerys, don’t doubt yourself or your abilities. I have faith in you.”

She smiled at that. “You’re not the first man to say that to me.”

“Ah, let me guess, a boy from the North?”

She started to tap her fingers again. “Yes.”

“You miss him.”
It was a statement, not a question. Jaime knew her all too well.

“Yes.”

“Jon Snow really worked his way into your heart.”

Her eyes flicked up. Oh. He didn’t know yet. In fact, only a select few at Winterfell knew the truth other than Daenerys. She had so many things to explain to Jaime and the Small Council, several members who she would need to reinstate after her father got rid of them, saying they were useless in his state of madness—another priority that got moved to the top of the list.

“A scroll arrived for you from the Citadel today,” Jaime then mentioned, then wondered aloud, “What would they be contacting you about.”

Daenerys rose out of the throne, walking down the stairs, finding that her dress was making it difficult not to trip. “Come, Jaime, we have a lot to discuss before there is a Small Council meeting.”

They were only half way out the length of the room when the doors opened and they were met by a worker who was in charge of any construction done within the premises. “Your Grace,” he greeted with a bow, “how wonderful it is to see you here once more. Have you found you want to make any alterations to the Throne Room? I imagine a coronation will be set soon.”

The Iron Throne would have to be kept as is until Dany figured out if she should have another one made, but there was something that she wanted gone. There was a spot on the floor that was blackened, vaguely, but noticeable to the eye. It was the spot where the men were burned, mark that would not come out.

"I want this removed," she ordered, pointing over to the spot.

"At once, Your Grace," he said with a nod, then waved for someone to rush over.

Before she even left the Great Hall, there was a hammer hacking the tile away.

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“You must be joking.”

She should have known that would be his response, this voice bordering a plea. “No, I’m not. It’s not a joke, I’m serious.”

“Just when I think things are getting easier,” Jaime exhaled, pacing back and forth. “You know what this means, don’t you? Some of these Lords may be more interested in a male heir.”

Daenerys was sitting at the large desk her father once sat at to read and write scrolls. It was a table which was longer than her entire body, a Targaryen sigil carved into the front for the one who was seated across could see the detailing that was in the large chunk of wood. The desk was also decorated with various candles and other trinkets, even a tiny baby dragon skull at the edge, which Dany quickly stowed away into a drawer when she saw it—too morbid for her liking.

She had sat at a smaller desk before she had left Winterfell, sending a message to the Citadel to inquire about the claims made by Ned Stark, regarding the information that Lyanna had told him. Dany needed proof, as would many others. She knew that if Rhaegar truly had an annulment, the Citadel would be the place that would be hiding the secret away, which, in fact, they had, though
they had not even known about it until they found the personal diary of a Maester that had once been alive.

“I am aware.” Daenerys handed over the scroll from the Citadel to Jaime. “And, it’s all true. The Maesters at the Citadel confirmed it for me. Rhaegar had his marriage to Elia Martell annulled so he could marry Lyanna Stark. She would have given birth to Jon towards the end of the war.”

Jaime did look to be listening entirely, as he started to ramble in another direction as he leaned against a pillar. “Married or not, your father denounced Rhaegar before he was killed in battle, you and I both know this. The line of succession falls to you, end of story.”

Dany tilted her head to the side, somewhat confused by how passionate he was becoming, his voice gaining an irritated edge to it. “Why do you sound so worried, Jaime? Jon does not want to rule, I know him enough to say that as a fact. He told me I would be a good queen, the best the Seven Kingdoms has ever seen. That is what he wants, me on the throne.”

“Really?” he asked, raising a brow. “Well, it’s true, what he said. At least he’s smart.”

Daenerys leaned forward, putting her elbows onto the desk, clasping her hands together. “He’s very smart and very good to me. Better than most men, I would presume.”

“And just so we are clear, if Jon were to come here to King Landing it would be for me, because I asked him to join me here in this kind of life, not because he feels entitled to the throne. He sees me as a queen, just as you do.”

Jaime seemed to relax, his shoulders not so boxed off, and he sat down in the chair opposite of her, where Daenerys was sure she would entertain many guests in later days. “You invited him here? Do you mean to marry him?”

“Nothing is set in stone,” she began, biting her lip, tempted to overthink on the matter that sounded so lovely. “He’s figuring his world out. Can you imagine being told after years and years who your mother really is, and that your father is not your father? And on top of that, that your siblings are really cousins? That the woman you love is related to you?”

“I don’t think I’d mind all that much if I was told I had a different father,” Jaime answered truthfully. “Tywin Lannister is certainly no Ned Stark. There were no warm moments growing up with him.”

“Do you understand my point?”

“I do.”

“Good.”

As she began to sort through the papers left behind on the desk, she found there was an underwhelming amount from when her father was ruling. Everyone had been afraid to send in their troubles to her father, as they took the risk of being on his radar and brought to the capital, potentially being burned alive, as so many had been before.

However, there was another scroll still sealed that had the Tyrell sigil on it, which Jaime informed her had arrived a few days prior. Daenerys popped it open and read it at once, finding that the Tyrells were also anxious to reestablish a mutually beneficial relationship.

“I’ll leave you to your day’s work,” Jaime said before excusing himself.
“Jaime!” she called after him.

He poked his head back in the door. “Yes?”

“Was it quick?” she asked, needing to know. “With my father?”

He paused, staring at Dany as she waited for a reply. “It was. I knew you would want it that way. There was no suffering.”

Dany nodded, her face not changing. “Good.”

“Is there anything else?”

“Yes. Thank you, Jaime, for all you have ever done for me. I don’t think I could have gotten this far without you by my side.”

Jaime grinned, but dismissed that notion. “You would have.”

Once he left, Daenerys sat back down and pulled out some new paper and grabbed some ink so she could begin writing the very many scrolls the Lords of Westeros.

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It was many hours later when she finalized all the letters, sending them off to be sent by raven. There were some ink splotches on her hand, the sun setting in the background. The last letter she had written was to Jon, to let him know of her safe arrival in the capital, and to once again remind him that he was more than welcome to join her, but at no particular rush.

She hoped he might write her back.

In the midst of having him on her mind, Daenerys let her head fall against the table, her cheek molding against it. Just a quick rest, she told herself. That quick rest turned into a couple of hours, and when she awoke to a door opening, she blinked a few times to be able to catch the glimpse of a man standing there lighting a candle.

“Ser Barristan,” she exclaimed, wiping her eyes from sleepiness.

She moved to get up out of the chair, but he motioned for her to stay. Ser Barristan also looked the same as when she left, with his strong looks and aged white hair. He still had on his Targaryen armor that was adorned with the white cloak.

“You look as though you haven’t been sleeping,” he commented, sending her an endearing look as she continued to wipe her eyes.

“You look as though you haven’t been sleeping,” he commented, sending her an endearing look as she continued to swipe her eyes.

“For good reason,” she murmured. “Sleep hasn’t come easy recently. Too much on the mind.”

“You should take the rest of the day off,” he suggested with a wavering hand. “You just got here. It has been a harrowing journey for you all this time you have been away. Rest is good for the soul.”

Daenerys sat back in the chair even further—another chair that she felt looked to be too big for her. “Good rulers don’t get days off.”

“Don’t be ridiculous,” he immediately interjected, his mouth forming into a thin line. “Rulers need breaks. Bad rulers take indefinite breaks from caring about the people and good rulers take a few here and there to recharge. There is a difference.”
“Good rulers wait until things are settled,” she began, but he once again had a good retort.

“Good rulers listen to those they trust,” he hinted about himself. “Go. You’ve been travelling for weeks. The problems will be here when you get back.”

She relented, too exhausted to be able to stay awake much longer without becoming delirious. “I guess I could use a good night sleep,” Dany agreed. “May I ask you a question before I go?”

“You may ask anything you would like to. You’re the Queen of the Seven Kingdoms.”

She approached him, running her fingers along the white cloak that had signified the Kingsguard under her father’s rule, contemplating a choice.

“Are you fond of the white?”

He shrugged his shoulders nonchalantly.

“I’m going to change it to red. You are part of the Queensguard now, as long as you would still like to be.”

Daenerys thought it might be important to give him the option of opting out of protecting her after what she sent Jaime to do. Even if Ser Barristan was not completely aware of the circumstances surrounding the death, though she suspected he would rather remain unaware of that, there was no way he did not suspect that it was Daenerys who was the one to send Jaime, rather than him going on his own accord.

“My vow is until death,” he reminded her, “and it would be an honor to serve you.”

It was a relief to hear, knowing that Ser Barristan was not one to lie.

“I’ll be sure to have a new cloak for you as soon as possible.”

They both turned to head out the door, as he insisted on escorting her back to her chambers for the evening. “At least red will be easier to keep clean,” he lightly joked with her as they rounded the corner and out the door.

She knew then that Ser Barristan truly was going to be there for her, just as Jaime would.

—

Half a fortnight was all it took to gather everyone together for her first Small Council meeting. In truth, Dany had never been to one, and she certainly did not know exactly how they were supposed to go, or where to start.

As the guards propped open the door for her, Daenerys entered the large room to find all the members were seated around the table.

All were there, except the new addition she wanted to make. Daenerys had invited Dorne to partake in the advising process, and sent a raven explaining that if they wanted to, they could send someone, anyone they wished, who would be capable of giving input. A raven had been received back, but it seemed as though the travel from Dorne was taking longer than expected.

“Good afternoon, everyone, thank you for joining me on such short notice.”

Grand Maester Pycelle rose out of his chair slowly as she approached, leaning on the table for support. “Your Grace,” he greeted, then cleared his throat loudly, his whole body moving in the
process, making his chains clatter together. His shaky hands reached out to hers. “It is wonderful to see you here again, and in good health.”

She smiled kindly back at him. “Thank you, Maester. I trust you are also taking good care of yourself.”

He wavered his hands as they removed from hers. “When you are as old as I, the only thing you can do is pray to the Gods you get another day to serve.”

Lord Baelish, otherwise known as Littlefinger, was at the right of the Maester. Dany had always had a strange feeling about that one, as if he were lurking, waiting for an opportune moment. She considered getting rid of him all together, but without proof, she would be just like her father by tossing out members due to irrational suspicions.

It was true, Lord Baelish had vast amounts of knowledge about the inner workings of the city and other Houses, as well as trade patterns in Essos. He could be valuable, so Daenerys was willing to see were his loyalty would lie. After all, he had come to the capital many years ago and had somehow worked his way into her father’s circle of trusted advisors. He struck her as a man out for power, but also a man that would play his cards right.

“We are very fortunate for your arrival,” he told her, “as there are many matters to be handled after your father’s untimely departure.”

“Untimely or not, no one here is complaining,” Tywin Lannister said, his voice booming over all the others. “King Aerys died in his sleep of natural causes, those of which were caused by his madness.”

Tywin Lannister knew better than to believe that, but nothing good would have come from asking questions. After all, his own son was the one to have carried out the act that very few knew the true nature of. Of all the people, Tywin Lannister had more reason to shuffle the passing of the Mad King into the darkness to never be brought up again.

He was also the one she was the most interested in seeing, for Tywin had served as her father’s hand for many years. A smart man he was, and his House had much wealth due to the gold of Casterly Rock.

"We were just talking," announced Tywin, gesturing to the others before he kindly pulled Dany’s chair out for her to sit down.

Dany took her spot at the head of the table, placing her hands on smooth wood delicately. "Well, I certainly did not assume you were all just sitting here staring at each other waiting for me to arrive. Which matters were you discussing? We should start with the most important.”

“The people,” called Varys, before anyone else had the chance to talk. “It seems as though they are a bit unsettled by the events that have taken place.”

“We are all a bit unsettled,” she returned. “For many years the Seven Kingdoms has been unsettled. I would even venture to say it has been quite the mess economically and politically.”

If any of these men had thought she had been oblivious to the state of the realm as her father ruled, they were in for a grand shock.

Varys perked up. “We are so very happy to hear that you agree with us.” He shifted in his seat, tucking his hands into pockets. “It will take many years to get back on track, but I do believe with you that it is possible. But, getting back to the matter of the people, a thought of mine was that it would give the people more stability if you were to personally address them as soon as possible. Let
them see their new queen in person. It does not have to be long, just a quick speech, a few waves, nothing too serious…”

She nodded, finding that to be a wise course of action. “Very well.”

Varys looked surprised to see that she had agreed so easily, almost all of them did. She supposed it would take some getting used to. Dany was no Mad King—she was sensible and reasonable, not blinded by madness.

“There are other matters as well, Your Grace,” he chipped in again, granted a newfound freedom to speak on matters which were of concern rather than stepping on eggshells, as they no doubt did around her father, “as we have all received your information today that Jon Snow is no Snow at all, and given these recent revelations, what were you proposing to do with him?”

“Do with him?” she questioned the wording. Jon wasn’t some piece of furniture she was contemplating moving to another room. “What do you mean by that exactly?”

Varys looked around the table, only to find that no one else was going finish what he had started. “Well, he is Targaryen blood—”

“And Stark,” she interrupted with the reminder. “Both.”

“Yes, of course, Your Grace, but he is the only other man who has significant Targaryen blood in him. He is Rhaegar’s son.”

Lord Baelish leaned in. “I think what Varys is trying to say is that if we can’t predict what he will do, he could potentially make a claim for the throne, which is currently the last thing the realm needs.”

Jaime had the same concern, so Dany was well versed in putting the idea to rest. “Jon is not interested in ruling, he fully supports me. I know him well.”

“Well enough to be sure of this?” asked Varys, doubtful.

Dany drummed her fingertips on the table, about to lay the cards out for them all. “Jon loves me. I’m his queen, as he has said to me. I told him he was welcome to join me here in the capital and have a future together.”

They all went quiet.

Lord Baelish eventually interrupted the silence. “I take it that you love him?”

“I do.”

He seemed pleased enough with that answer. “Well, then there is great promise in that. If he were to be in the capital then the Targaryen line would be set to continue. It would be largely important that any children he were to have would be shared by you as well.”

She recoiled from his statement, not liking the last part. *Any children he were to have would be shared by you as well*—it rang through her head loudly. Him insinuating that Jon would have children with another woman sent a flame roaring through Dany, absurd jealousy taking over her for a brief moment, until she realized that she was being foolish.

Jon loved her. He would never jeopardize her future.

She turned her attention to the Maester. “Have you anything to add to this?”
He thought for a moment, almost too long of a moment, until he nodded his head, his shaky hand being brought up again, a finger wagging at Lord Baelish. “Daenerys is the only full-blooded Targaryen left. She has brought three dragons into our world and I have no doubt in this old mind of mine that she will put this continent back together. I don’t think this Jon Snow would ever give up an opportunity to—”

“A wedding may enchant the people,” Tywin finally said, getting to the point, throwing a glare to the others who were not brave enough to say it. “A wedding to distract from the coming winter and to take their minds off of the previous era of instilled fear. A young couple at the alter with the capability of bringing children into the world is a perfect example of what the people need to talk about.”

“As well as bring stability and solidarity to this realm. We all know it has been years without it.” Varys tacked onto the end of Tywin’s speech.

“When people get restless, they find ways to occupy their time,” warned the Master, “and that could be dangerous.”

Daenerys doubted a wedding would solve any problems at all. Giving something for people to talk about was not a solution, it was as if they were applying gauze to a wound without stitching it. And besides that, Jon was not even there to discuss the matter with them all, and Dany was not about to summon him down to Kings Landing to propose a marriage pact. She needed him to come on his own terms, and maybe then it was an option to bring up.

Her mind pondered the question at hand into the night and the next morning, finding that even her own bed would not lull her to sleep the same way it used to. She had been in Kings Landing for just over half of a fortnight and word of her arrival had spread throughout the city, as well as the other regions. She was no fool, and did not expect for everything to fall into place as soon as she arrived. The growing unhappiness of the people was her immediate concern, as she needed to find a way to make it publicly known she had their best interest in mind, always.

But how did one do that? It was not as if she could send a scroll to every commoner to assure them. Even if that were a possibility, most were not literate, which in Dany’s mind, was crippling Westeros and the economy. She immediately added it to the list of challenges to tackle at a later date.

She liked the idea Varys had suggested—a short speech to the people, but finding the words to say were difficult. There had to be something more than she could do.

And just like that, Dany knew what it was.

She had been in the hallway as she pondered the dilemma, an ultimate solution coming about, when she spotted Jaime and Ser Barristan walking side by side in the opposite direction. She hustled to catch up to them, bypassing several of the workers who were alerted by her running.

“What is it?” Jaime asked, concerned, which was his usual default response.

“I need to see the people,” she claimed, a bit out of breath, “and it needs to happen today.”

Ser Barristan nodded slowly at her words. “We can have that arranged. May I ask why?”

“We talked at the Small Council meeting and something stuck with me. They must know my allegiance to them if they are to trust me to rule”
It was all she revealed before she turned and headed back to her room. The whole walk there until she arrived at the large golden painted doors she was thinking about how it would be no simple task, but there was hope. Daenerys had to have hope, or all could be lost.

When she emerged, her elegant blue dress had been changed into a more simplistic one, a pale pink with little embellishments that tied in at the waist and had a bunch of material at the bottom that swayed in the wind, but would not pose the threat of tripping.

She was standing in front of the Great Sept of Baelor with the Queensguard at her side and in back of her. A large crowd had formed, mostly by word of mouth, all grouped together at the bottom of the many steps. Daenerys looked at them all, their faces colored from the long summer. They were awaiting some kind of speech but nothing Dany could ever say would convince them she cared for their safety and prosperity.

She had to show them instead.

*Enchant them,* she reminded herself, *show them who you are. Show them you are going to be better than all before you.*

She began to step down towards the crowd, much to the horror of those standing in back of her. Jaime grabbed her arm but she shook out of it. “Trust me,” she asked of him.

After a brief moment of contemplation, Jaime let her continue.

It would be a lie if she said she was not nervous. The crowd could have turned on her at any given moment, in a fit of rage, but she kept her poise, stepping down onto the cobblestone, making eye contact with as many as she could, making an effort to remember all of their faces.

The commoners there in the crowd all stared at her with perplexed expressions, a strange mix of confusion and fascination. The only noise audible was her heels clicking on the cobblestone, as a deafening silence had taken them over. They made a path for her with every step, ushering to the side to watch her go, unsure of anything else that they could do.

She was halfway down the street, approaching some fruit vendors, when a hand extended and landed lightly on her shoulder, which Daenerys did not shy away from. She looked to her right and saw an older peasant woman that was hunched over, with wild eyebrows and dark blonde hair. “My Queen,” she mumbled sincerely.

Daenerys lifted the hand off of her shoulder, placing both her hands around the woman’s fragile one, looking her square in the face. There was some kind of shared understanding there, that everything was going work out and Daenerys would try her hardest to make sure that each and every commoner throughout the Seven Kingdoms would be able to sleep soundly at night.

“My Queen,” she repeated again, with more vigor than the last time.

Those two words started to ripple through the crowd, setting off a chain reaction. A small child ran in front of her, tugged at her dress, and extended her arms upward. Dany bent down and picked up the child, who gave her a tiny yellow flower that she had picked from in between the cobblestone.

Dany began to walk with the small girl down the street more, as rush of whispers taking over the crowd before there were cheers of joy.

“My Queen!” shouted people from further back, two words that were repeated over and over as she
traveled to greet all she could.

A few flowers were tossed into her path, long stemmed ones colored yellow and blue that grew wild from the fields beyond the capital. Hands reached out to pat her on the arms, and Dany heard people praying, giving her blessings, thanking the Gods for no more suffering—the Mad King’s daughter was there to save them all.

The faith in herself grew, just as the grins from those around her did.
The new red cloaks for the Queensguard had a new addition to them with a black border, for the official House Targaryen colors. They were silky to the touch, enough fabric to make two dresses out of. Dany handed over the brand new red cloak to Jaime proudly as he stripped off the white one, letting it be tossed aside.

“Can I burn that?” he asked, half joking, speaking of the white material.

“No,” she told him with a straight face. “The remaining cloaks are being stitched into blankets for an orphanage in town who is low on supplies.”

Jaime seemed to look at her for longer than usual. “Sometimes I wonder if you’re too good to be true.” He ran his fingers over the red once it was place on his back, finalizing the outfit of the royal guards. “This is a good change. It’ll give me some color to my face” Jaime commented, ever light-hearted.

The curtains to the side blew in the breeze, bringing in the scent of flowers and sea water in. she knew better than to believe it would last forever, as winter would creep its way down to Kings Landing, frosting the flowers over until spring came again.

But it was to be a long winter, a winter which Daenerys had an eerie feeling about ever since her dream that she had back in Winterfell.

“I have a meeting with your father today,” she told him flatly. “He requested one.”

Jaime gave her a giggle of his eyebrows. “That should be interesting. Lord Tywin Lannister doesn’t waste a moment of time, does he?”

“I actually quite admire it. He likes to move fast and get to the point.”

His timing was also quite on point, because not soon after she finished her sentence, the guards at the door allowed Tywin into room, as she had asked if he were to appear.

“Your Grace,” he greeted, as he always did, standing tall with his hands behind his back.

“Father,” Jaime addressed Lord Tywin.

“Jaime.”

Daenerys let her eyes fall side to side between the two, picking up on the sound of their voices, Jaime especially putting forward a source of tension between them. From what she knew, there had been a strained relationship for a number of years regarding the fact that Jaime, who was the prized child of Casterly Rock, was a member of the Kingsguard, now Queensguard, and would not marry or ever have children of his own. The Lannister name being passed down fell to the little brother, whom Jaime was quite fond of. However, he had told her that Tywin did not exactly find the dwarf worthy of such a duty.
“Well, I’ll let you start your meeting.” He turned to Daenerys. “I’ll be right outside.”

Tywin looked to be in a particularly happy mood, despite his usual scowl, which was practically sown into his skin, as Jaime would like to phrase it.

“My son is rather protective of you,” he noted, watching him go, staring at the door, even when it had shut behind Jaime. “I’m happy to know that you were accompanied by him on your journey from Kings Landing to Dragonstone and Winterfell, even if I was left to wonder where in the world he had disappeared to.”

“I am sorry you were kept in the dark. My whereabouts were to be kept a secret. Jaime knew the cost when he left with us—”

Lord Tywin raised his hands up. “I have no complaints. He is safe, you are safe, and that is all that matters now.”

“It’s good to know you feel that way. Jaime is an excellent protector, you should be very proud of him for the sacrifice he makes every day.”

Daenerys was certainly thankful he was in her life, her constant protector.

“Did you know that your father had written to me,” he continued, “wondering where his wife, children, several guards, and my son had run off to? He accused him of treason. I half expected Targaryen soldiers to be lined up at my castle in the following days, wanting my head on a spike.”

“I’m glad your head is still on your shoulders,” she told him truthfully. “Your mind is valuable. I need advisers like you around to guide me.”

Lord Tywin let the corners of his mouth turn upward, and Dany thought it might have been the first time she ever saw even a hint of a grin coming from him.

“I hope to serve you well during you reign, and as long as I can. As you can see, age starts to creep up on us all at one point in time. But, I did not come here to talk about how the hair on my head has lost its true color. I thought I might take this time to make a bid to be your Hand. I know what I am capable of, and I would serve to the best of my ability, as I served your father for many years. I imagine this time around, we could get a lot more done.”

Daenerys had expected him to talk of that when he initially asked for the meeting a few days prior. She could not imagine what else he would have wanted to speak of.

“Did my father ever listen to you while you were Hand of the King?”

“I did my best to control his impulses, that is, until he sent me back to Casterly Rock and decided to not have a Hand of the King.”

She knew enough to know that Tywin Lannister had been around a long time and his input was valuable, but Daenerys was not so sure that she would want him as her Hand, not because he served her father, but because Dany needed to forge a new world, a new way of doing things. Someone like Tywin Lannister seemed to be the kind that would be stuck in his ways—the old way.

“You’re always welcome here under my rule, and I’ll consider your request,” she said, despite thinking that she already made up her mind.
“Hand of the Queen,” she pondered aloud to Jaime that night as she took some grapes from her plates, gnawing on the edges of the skin. “Who would be a good fit, if not your father?”

She sounded more exasperated than she had meant, but frustration was setting in. Five nights had come and gone since Lord Tywin had put forward his speech about being her Hand. There she was, yet another night, sitting at a table with only herself to occupy the seats.

The iron chandeliers were lit with candles, almost too many, and the breeze was strong enough coming through the open arches on the side of the room that it blew the rods attached to the ceiling back and forth in a gentle manner. She was sitting at the head of the table so she was able to let her head drift to the side and look out towards the balcony.

“I might know someone,” Jaime interjected from the side of the room.

“Oh?” She rolled her eyes, letting her head fall back from the sideways position to over to Jaime, expecting a joke. “And who might that be?”

“My father might not be thrilled by the idea, but my brother, Tyrion, might actually just be born for such a role.”

Dany let her head fall back sideways, slumping down, and let her arms fall off the armrests to dangle, not exactly pleased with the suggestion. “I hear he likes to drink.”

He chuckled to himself. “Among other things,” Jaime added. “Perhaps, you should bring him here, see what he is like. Tyrion has always been rather intelligent and clever. I’ve always envied him for his brain and his skills with dealing with people. Will you think about it?”

“Depends, will he end up in a brothel or drunk in the hallways in the afternoon if he comes here?”

Oh, she had heard about his behavior in other regions of the Seven Kingdoms, and it never did come back in a positive light.

Jaime tried and failed to suppress a smirk. “Maybe I’ll send him a raven to tell him what would be offensive to you if he were to come to Kings Landing.”

Dany sighed. “I’ll meet with him, but no promises.” She waved for him. “Will you sit down?”

“I can’t guard you if I’m sitting across the table stuffing my face.”

Daenerys shot him a look. “I don’t want to eat alone at this table another night,” she admitted. It was sad enough that the only person there she could really talk to was Jaime, not that she was ungrateful, it would just be nice if she were to have someone else to share her day’s troubles with. “And don’t say that I’m not alone because you’re here in the room, it isn’t the same.”

Jaime went into a teasing mode. “What will the others think if they knew you knew you were picking favorites out of your Queensguard members, dining with them and chatting them up?”

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Daenerys picked the vine of purple grapes from a silver platter and placed them into her palm. “I might just throw these at you one by one.”

“It’s too bad I don’t have a shield with me, only a sword. Perhaps, we should make that addition to the uniform.”

It was his wit that made Daenerys want to actually toss a grape or two at him. She was certainly not as quick when it came to humorous banter.
“If you won’t sit, feel free to leave,” threatened, bringing her cup of wine to her mouth with a smile, knowing he would pick the former rather than the latter.

True to what she had thought, Jaime had no more smart remarks, so he grabbed a plate and pulled out a chair opposite of her. Behind Dany, Rhaegal screeched in his cage, flapping his wings.

“How do you plan to contain them?”

Daenerys twisted in her seat so she could take a look over at her dragons. “I won’t keep them locked up. Dragons are free beings.”

“In a city like this, you know what would happen. That is why your ancestors built the Dragonpit.”

The Dragonpit was a ruin, mounted on top of Rhaenys's Hill. Dany could not imagine locking up Aegon, Rhaegal, and Viserion inside such a place if it were still functioning, not blackened by fire from the past.

“And then dragons wasted away to nothing,” she reminded him. “My children are not slaves. They don’t belong in chains. I would never betray them in such a way.”

Jaime found it strange that she called them her children, but Daenerys felt it was appropriate, given the bond she had with them.

“Well, you’ll need to figure something out before they get too big. I know it’s a sensitive matter, but if a peasant shows up with a roasted family at your feet, you’ll be facing an issue that you don’t want to.”

He was entirely right, she could not deny it. Dragons over a city of people was a dangerous mix. The question was, what was she supposed to do? What solution was there? The dragons would no doubt ever venture too far away, they would always come back to Daenerys, and her place was the Red Keep.

For now, she could put off the problem, as the dragons were not yet big enough to roam on their own, and she still fed them their meat. But, again, Jaime was right. Daenerys had read through a book detailing length and width of dragons of the past when she first arrived, and she knew that her dragons would not remain small for long.

—

“Prince Oberyn Martell is here to see you, Your Grace.”

That was certainly a surprise. It had been an entire fortnight since she sent Dorne the request to send someone to her Council, and for a little while, she was beginning to think that perhaps whoever it was they were sending had lost interest and returned back to the sands. Little did she know that the Prince of Dorne had been in the city for some time already.

“Send him in.”

Daenerys rose out of her chair, where she had been all morning looking over financial matters that she had requested from Lord Baelish, who had been serving as the Master of Coin for five years, but was confused by several aspects about where money was coming from and where it was going. Dany was grateful for the interruption, as her head had begun to hurt.

When Oberyn strode into the room, there was a certain way that he walked that was like no other man. He breathed confidence in his sun yellow attire, along with an edge of being completely
tranquil. He was a man who enjoyed many parts of life, as he had quite a reputation for being a skilled warrior, traveler, and also a charmer.

He bowed with grace before her. “Queen Daenerys, I believe it has been many years since I last saw you.”

She cocked her head to the side, not remembering such a meeting. “Prince Oberyn, I am very grateful to have you here. I’m sorry to say that I don’t seem to recall us meeting.”

“Please,” he cooed, taking her hand, bringing it to his lips, and kissed softly on the skin. “I go by Oberyn.”

A charmer, indeed.

“Oberyn,” she repeated back his name as he had requested after he released her hand.

“As for the last I saw you, you were just a small girl then, no more than four. I saw you playing down by the waters when I spoke with your mother one day.”

Daenerys had no recollection of that time, but somehow doubted this meeting with her mother was known to her father. After the Elia Martell incident, her father practically spat hate about Dorne every chance he had gotten, as Dany recalled overhearing several tirades about the Martell family.

“I did not realize you came to the capital while my father was ruling.”

“That was actually the last time I came.” He looked around, inspecting the room quizzically. “It’s good to be back.”

She narrowed her eyes before she walked back over to sit down behind the desk. “I don’t think you’re telling the truth about that last part.”

He chuckled deep in his throat, taking the humor for what it was. “I would never lie to you. I am here at your will.”

“Which brings me to what we should discuss. I am a bit stunned that Prince Doran would send his younger brother. I’m sure you are needed in Dorne.”

He cocked his head to the side, a quick motion, and added a shrug of the shoulder. “I offered to come.”

“We are happy to have you here,” she claimed, motioning for him to sit down across from her.

Oberyn started to make his way over. “I saw you walking in the crowd some many days ago,” he began, “and I was quite impressed. Not many would take a risk like that.”

“They needed to know that I am here for them, that I don’t see myself as this grand, high being sitting in a castle before them plucking lemons off of trees to put in tea and sit with my feet up all afternoon.”

“You are not your father’s daughter,” he said, the tone much different from before, evil memories most likely coming back to him. “For that, I am grateful, as are many.”

Daenerys pushed forward to the edge of her seat. “Did you come here seeking answers to questions about your sister’s death?” she asked, brazen about it, willing to extend an olive branch and give him some peace.
Oberyn was hesitant, fooling with the end of his sleeve before he looked up at her, pressing his lips together. “I’ve heard many rumors about what happened.”

Like usual, Daenerys had no interest in dancing around the truth, even when it was as horrible as the one she knew they were about to discuss.

"It was my father," she admitted.

It didn’t take him more than a beat to respond, jerking his sleeve into place before gripping the end of the chair he sat in. "I figured that much."

"Is it better to know now then left to wonder?" she pondered aloud. The last thing she wanted was to shake things up with the Martells at such a crucial time, but like the people, she wanted an honest connection and relationship. The days of keeping secrets locked away in the past were over. "I don't know what I could possibly ever do to make it right. What happened to Elia Martell was a tragedy in the highest form."

Oberyn's casual yet hard exterior seemed to melt before her, at least a little. "Yes, a tragedy it was."

"You named your first born after her, I hear,"

"Yes, my first daughter, the apple of my eye," he mused. “Cersei was accommodating when it came to my grief. In a way, her pregnancy shortly after the war might have been what saved me from myself."

"I hope to have children one day," she continued, being open up, finding it to be the best way to turn over a new leaf. "I wish to tell you something, because there is more to the story, and if you are to serve on the Small Council, if you still wish to, this information is important for you to know. Someday soon, many more will know."

Oberyn considered the offer once more, intrigued by her ambiguity. "I would not have come all this way if I did not have the intention of seeing this invitation through to the end."

It was settled.

"Have you heard of Jon Snow of Winterfell?"

"Ah, everyone has," he smirked. "Everyone likes to point out the stain to honorable Lord Eddard Stark's reputation. But, really, all those who view it that way act like they never made a mistake, as if they are better for it." Oberyn plucked an orange out of a basket on the table and tossed it into the air before it landed back into his palms. "Fools they are. Men have children with other women all of the time. It is nothing new. Those who talk bad must have many out there they do not even know of. I find people are funny that way, all hypocritical."

As he began to peel the orange, Daenerys let the words sink in. She knew that his rather subtle interest in the subject was about to hit more of a peak.

"Well," Dany shuffled in her seat. "Jon Snow is not a Snow," she confessed. "He is Rhaegar's son."

For a moment, she thought all hope for peace might have been lost. Oberyn's eyes flashed with anger and hostility, though he maintained a composed body. "Who told you this?"

"Ned Stark. Lyanna Stark is Jon's mother. He was there when they found her in Dorne, having just given birth."
"Rhaegar's son," Oberyn repeated, chin lifted. Dany could hear how his jaw moved as he reclined into the chair, it making a creaking noise as he did. "All that of her kidnap was true? So, he would be Jon Sand? Though, I don't think that the bastard name really matters. Dornish do not make a fuss over matters so trivial."

Dany strained her neck to give a quick check to make sure he was not armed before continuing. She knew that Oberyn would not hurt her, but checking seemed like a smart move to make. "It seems as though my brother got an annulment and remarried Lyanna. The Citadel confirmed this. I have the scroll from them."

For the first time, Oberyn went silent, his face going blank as he stared forward, not directly at Daenerys, but in her general direction. Dany knew it was a lot to swallow at one time, that his beloved sister had been left behind so her brother could remarry another.

"I understand this is a lot of information all at once," Daenerys explained, genuine. "It was for me, and it was for Jon. You loved your sister dearly, and if I could change what happened, believe me, I would, but I can't. It is my hope that you do not carry any resentment you might have had for my father and channel towards me or my House."

Oberyn was calculatedly careful when he did not respond right away, deciding for himself what he should do next.

"I do not hold you accountable for what happened to my sister and her children, only a fool would. The Mad King earned his name for a reason. You are not him." She was about to say something more, but Oberyn changed the track of the conversation. "Is Jon here?"

If only.

"No, he is in Winterfell."

He ran a finger along his bottom lip before biting slighting on the nail, pulling his hand away to examine it in a casual way. "I would like to meet him if he ever pays a visit."

Dany nodded. "I think he would take no issue with that. But, he might be here for more than a visit. In fact, he could potentially make a more permanent move to here."

Oberyn caught on. "Ah, right. He is a Targaryen."

"And a Stark."

She was almost irritated that she had to keep adding that addition on when people would mention it. Dany knew Jon would do the same.

"Yes, of course. What are your plans for the two of you?" He thought better of it and reevaluated what he said, adding, "If I am not prying into personal matters."

Daenerys appreciated the way that Oberyn said what he thought in the moment that it crossed his mind.

"I don’t have anything set in stone. I’d just like to get him here first and go from there."

"Young love," Oberyn mused, taking in a breath, "it is a wonderful thing. I have no doubt he will end up here one way or another."
The Southern Lands

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Jon

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He lifted the letter to his nose and inhaled the scent of her, the same as he had done many, many nights in a row, all before he settled in for sleep. Sleep never came, and he found he would look at the spot next to him and wish that Daenerys could have magically appeared there so he could hold her and breathe the scent of her hair.

He knew it was going to happen from the very beginning, that a part of him had left when she did—his soul, his heart, whatever it was, it was missing—and if he had felt lonely before, it was nothing compared to how he felt after Daenerys left.

It was why he found himself slipping out of bed, Ghost in tow, and shuffled into Robb’s room, opening the door just enough that he would not hit the point that it would creak. He had done that countless times as a child after they had been separated from sharing a room, their father saying they were too old and needed to sleep alone. That never stopped them from popping out of bed and sneaking down the hall to each other’s rooms.

“Are you awake?” he asked, climbing into bed next to Robb.

“I am now,” he said back, groggy.

Ghost trotted over to Grey Wind in the corner by the fire and bedded down. Robb rolled onto his back, pulling the furs to his chest.

“What is it?”

“I can’t sleep.”

Robb stretched out, loudly yawning. “And you thought a good idea would be to come to wake me to join you in that status?”

“Aye.”

“Very well, what’s keeping you up?”

So much kept him awake in past nights, but there was always one part that irked him the most. “I know what I want, I do, but there is this corner of me that doesn’t think I deserve it,” he admitted, exhaling deeply. “I’m scared, Robb.”

“I know you are,” his brother claimed, “but that’s a good thing.”

Jon snorted dramatically. “Good?”

“It’s normal, Jon. Your life was turned upside down in one day, with one secret. I’m half surprised you didn’t lose your mind.” Robb chuckled and nudged Jon into doing the same. “It’s okay to be scared. It’s not a weakness. If I were in your position, I would be terrified too.”
It was comforting enough.

“Just know that I’ll support you in whatever you decide, whatever it is that you want to do, go, be, I’ll support you.”

Jon let his head drift to the side, trying to examine Robb to be certain he was telling the truth. “You mean that?”

“Of course.” He reached over and pulled more furs onto the bed and tossed them Jon’s way. “Stay the night. It’ll be like we’re little again sneaking into each other’s rooms and playing until the early morning.”

Jon got comfortable, fluffing the pillow underneath him. “Honestly, I wasn’t planning on leaving anyways.”

“But if I wake up in the morning to find that you’ve stolen the covers, I’m throwing cold water onto you, you hear? You’ve always hogged them.”

Jon chuckled, promising not to take more furs than the equal split amount.

He thought more of what Robb said after he had fallen into slumber next to Jon, softly snoring, both Ghost and Grey Wind sleeping. He had all these options on the table, but the one he thought of most was following Dany back to Kings Landing, as scary as it was to leave Winterfell and go south to a place he had never been, nor had the skills to likely survive such a political and formal environment.

And then was another issue: Ghost. A direwolf in Kings Landing—wouldn’t that be a cruel request of Jon to make of Ghost.

Jon had truly felt inadequate in most areas of life—as a son, brother, swordsman, lover. He could never be the best at anything in his mind, but he had come to recently discover that his self-doubt was what was holding him back all along.

Jon had the connection to the one part of him, the Stark side, but he knew not all that much of Targaryen ancestors. Jon had asked many questions about Lyanna to this father, Ned Stark, who Jon decided was the best way to address him since he did raise him, even if he was not biologically his father. He asked as many questions his father could handle before the pain became too much.

As far as what Jon wanted, he wanted the chance to connect somehow to the other half of him, and the only way to do so would be to leave Winterfell, not forever, as he would visit plenty.

It went without saying that he still wanted Daenerys, maybe even more so since he missed her being there with him, her absence carried with him every day. Jon had the chance to grow alongside her, grow into the man he wanted to be, and all he needed to do was gather up the courage to reach out and grab what he wanted, as well as what was offered to him.

And that was exactly what he was going to do.

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He stood in front of the statue like so many times before, his mother’s bones within the tomb. Before he knew it, he had opened his mouth to talk to the stone figure for the first time. “I hope you’d approve of this,” he told her, though there would never be a response, “and I’d like to think that you would. You would want me to be happy, and Daenerys is the one who makes me happy.”

Jon’s hand extended outward and he placed his hand on the cold stone. Mother, he thought. It was
still strange to him, but a calmness had overcome him recently, the wondering he had always had lingering in the back of his mind finally was gone. When he thought of his mother, he knew who she was.

Once outside, he put his leather gloves back on to keep his fingers from freezing and his skin from drying out. It was going to be a stressful road ahead of long days of riding and short nights of sleeping. He threw his saddle onto the horse he always used when out riding, one that was a rich brown with small patches of white along the hind legs.

He had said his final goodbyes that morning, the goodbye to Arya being the hardest, as her face had sunk the day before when he explained that he was leaving, but that he would be back to visit at some point, or perhaps she could come to visit him when she was older. Arya had handed over a small sculpture made of paper, artistically shaped into a dragon that she wanted Jon to give to Daenerys the next he saw her, which he had tucked away in a bag slung over the horse.

He was taking a little amount of things with him—his sword being the most prized possession, newly forged with good steel. He looked down at the sheathed blade, gripping the pummel, wondering if he would ever have to use it in the place where he was headed.

Off to the side, Robb was walking towards him, standing tall and confident as he always did. That time there was something slightly different, as his eyes had the hint of sadness in them.

“You’re ready?”

Jon nodded in a slow manner. “I think I am.”

Robb grabbed ahold of Jon, pulling him in, and hugged him tight. ”You'll always be my brother.”

He pulled away, two hands on his shoulders. ”I hope you know that.”

The affirmation brought on a wave of calmness, a sense of new hope. “I do now.”

He grabbed Jon's face to force him to look at his own. ”Wherever you are, wherever you go, you are my brother until the very end. Always.”

That time it was Jon that pulled Robb in for a hug. “I’ll miss you.”

“Be sure to write me then. Besides, this isn’t goodbye for forever. I’ll be seeing you again in the future.”

They both pulled away, turning to the family that was looking down at the pair. Ned and Catelyn Stark were on the walkway side by side. Next to them was Bran, Rickon, Arya, and Sansa, who picked up their hand to wave when they caught sight of him watching. Jon lifted a hand to wave back.

“Safe travels, Jon,” Robb said, backing up so Jon could ready the horse. “Send a raven when you get there.”

“I will.”

Ghost trotted up from behind, positioning himself between Jon and Robb. His loyal companion, the direwolf who he knew would be better off in Winterfell than anywhere in the southern lands.

It tore him up inside to say it, but he had to. “You can stay with your brothers and sisters, Ghost. You don’t have to come with me.”
Ghost’s red eyes were unblinking as he gazed at Jon, turning his head and body to align with the horse, signifying his choice to come along. Direwolves truly were loyal.

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**Daenerys**

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Tyrion Lannister really was as clever as Jaime had said he was. She had yet to tell him his purpose there in the capital, as she wanted to get a good reading of his personality and abilities before she mentioned anything that might alter it.

The whole afternoon he had told her enchanting stories about his travels around the Seven Kingdoms, and one trip to Essos he took a few years back. He was quite the talker, and Dany found that all she needed to do was offer a few bits of comments here and there, and Tyrion would talk some more, for what seemed like and even longer time than the previous story he told.

They had been out in the gardens, seated by the cliffs in the fresh air on the patio with the trellis. The vines had grown more since she had last been there, her last afternoon walk with her mother. Since then, it seemed like more flowers had popped up here and there, shades of yellow and red, the ones that would bloom late in summer before the nights grew chilly.

Although she was entertaining her guest, and it would be rude of her to give her attention elsewhere, Daenerys felt her mind drift when he mentioned wanting to see the Wall. Jon had mentioned that his Uncle Benjen was there, serving at a member of the Night’s Watch at Castle Black, a place where Jon had once contemplated joining. She began to wonder how they might be faring so far North.

"Do you want to know a secret?" Tyrion asked her, sipping on some wine, noticing that her mind had begun to travel. "I'm rather relieved you're not tall."

She laughed and shook her head. “I’m rather relieved you’re not the drunken idiot some people have said you are.”

Tyrion raised his cup high. “I would say for at least the majority of the time.”

Their afternoon chatting had proven to Dany that Tyrion would be able to manage the demands of being a Hand. He was like his brother in a lot of ways, humorous, but serious, and quick to pick up on new things.

“I am sure you are wondering why it is that I asked you here to the Red Keep. You see, ruling like this requires a Hand of the Queen, a position which your father has made clear he would like.”

“Oh, I would assume so.”

“Hand of the Queen is a major responsibility. It requires dedication and a strategic mind, and before the coronation, I would like to have one in place so my Small Council is solidified,” she went on, “and your brother has made it clear to me that you might be a good pick for the job.”

Tyrion stopped his cup midair. He looked down into his cup and swished the wine around before he let it clunk back down onto their table, fingers rubbing his temples. “I think I may have just hallucinated,” he casually mentioned. “Is this Dornish wine?”

“No hallucinations. I’m asking if you would feel fit for the position. Of course, to be the Hand of the Queen, it would require you to move here to Kings Landing and advise me during times which could
be difficult. There is a lot of work that needs to be done for the better of Westeros, and I plan to make grand changes.”

She had never seen anyone look so shocked in their life.

“Why would you want me?” he asked, almost suspicious. “A dwarf, the Hand of the Queen. It sounds a bit absurd, if you don’t mind me saying.”

“I’m not offering the job to a dwarf,” she corrected him. “I’m offering it to Tyrion Lannister.”

“You never mentioned why me.”

“Because I need the best to serve me and my Council if I am to make the changes necessary for the people and the entirety of Westeros. I’m new to ruling and there may be cases when I don’t know the right course of action. I need people around me that are logical when the time comes that I don’t know the right answers.”

Tyrion nodded. “Out of curiosity, may I ask, does the idea of ruling scare you?”

“The idea of failing the people scares me,” she clarified. "I don’t know how to rule. I am figuring it out as I go.”

Tyrion narrowed his eyes at her. "You don’t know how to rule? Does anyone know how to?"

She let her shoulders shrug. “I don’t know.”

“All new rulers who are sane think the same thing as you do, no doubt in my mind about it. Besides, I have a good feeling about you. Well, that might be the wine, but nonetheless, a good feeling.”

Tyrion had the right demeanor for Hand of the Queen in her eyes, not taking himself too seriously, no boasting about himself or any accomplishments. He knew how to make a joke, which she appreciated, just as his brother did.

“I would expect an answer as soon as possible,” she started, handing over a platter of olives stuffed with cheese to him, “because if I need to consider another, I need as much time as possible.”

Tyrion plucked an olive off the platter and into his mouth. “I can make things very simple for you. I’ll accept. My father will be a bit put out, but that only makes it better.”

Daenerys smiled widely. “Very good. Now, I have a lot of information to fill you in on.”

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The next day was not exactly a day that she was looking forward to. When Lord Tywin entered the room where the Small Council met, Daenerys had him sit before her at the large meeting table.

“Lord Tywin, I appreciate your dedication to me and to my family, and for your service over these many years. I wanted to discuss you being my Hand, you see…”

“You think I would be better suited elsewhere,” he finished her sentence, raising a brow, unfluttering.

“Yes, given your time serving, your knowledge, and that you are the wealthiest man in the kingdom, I would see no better position for you than Master of Coin.”

He blinked, shoulders rolling backwards, near to no movement in his face. “I would accept that position, however, Lord Baelish is Master of Coin.”
She was not a fool. Tywin Lannister did not care who was Master of Coin, he just wanted a further explanation as to why she wished to replace Lord Baelish.

Daenerys had spent many nights trying to figure out the papers that Lord Baelish had given her regarding finances of the Crown and the realm, and countless nights she could not figure it out, finding that some parts did not add up. Not even Tyrion Lannister understood the missing gaps, as small as they were, he did not think it was an error either.

Her father may not have noticed, but Dany did. She was smart enough to see that something was entirely off.

“I have reason to believe that Lord Baelish has been committing treason by taking money that does not belong to him and funneling it elsewhere, and perhaps giving misleading numbers.”

He recoiled at her statement, his famous scowl returning to his face. “I’ve never liked that man.”

They had that in common.

“Small amounts of money are disappearing and there is no trace of where it is going. As the new Master of Coin, I trust that you would handle all finances with care, not neglect.”

“Well,” he sighed, rising from his seat, “it would not be a surprise if Lord Baelish were to be making his own grave all while thinking he was too clever to get caught. What will be done about him?”

That was the difficult part. It was suspicion that tipped her off, but proving treachery was not easy. It was not as simple as waving a finger and yelling traitor, as her father would do.

“I need to prove it first. Until then, I’m in a tight position.”

Tywin was thoughtful for a moment, gathering the data in his mind. “Varys could help you with that. His little birds are everywhere. If Lord Baelish has been up to something, those little birds would be able to find out. It may take some time, but we will get the truth.”

It made her wonder what that man was capable of, if he truly were using his position for self-benefit. She suddenly had a horrible thought of what if it was Lord Baelish whispering into her father’s ears during her absence, if he were the one to suggest that he go after his wife and son.

Daenerys got up and brought the two books with finances listed inside over to Tywin. “I would like for you to review the books as well, if you don’t mind, and with discretion.”

“I would be more than happy to.” Tywin propped open the book to take a quick glance before he said, “The punishment for treason is death.”

That it was. If true, Lord Baelish would be a traitor to the Crown, and therefore law marked him to be executed. The thought of having him executed was an unsettling one, but if he truly were to be a traitor, what other course of action was left? Treasonous people had no place there in the Red Keep.

“You’ll be seeing more of your brother around here,” she informed Jaime gleefully as they walked through the hallway to her chambers.

He nodded in approval, a small grin taking his face. “You won’t regret it.”

“I don’t think I will.”
She stopped at her chambers doors, twisting her hands behind her back, a bit nervous to even ask. “Has there been any news from Winterfell?”

He knew exactly what she was inquiring about. Jaime’s eyes fell as he shook his head, watching her reaction silently. He knew how much she wanted to hear something from Jon.

Something. Anything.

Daenerys bit at her upper lip, disappointed. “Goodnight, Jaime.”

Tucked away in her room, Daenerys glanced around. It was quiet, still, the winds not blowing as much as previous nights. She slipped out of her shoes and tossed them over to the side, headed for the bed, which had already been turned down for her.

She did not bother to wear anything to sleep that night, getting her gold dress off, removing her jewelry, all except her mother’s ring, which she kept on at all times, even there in her home. The canopy on her bed was what she stared at during the night after the candles had been blown out. The sheets were soft on her skin, the pillows molding her head, but she found the bed to be too big for her.

It was unwise for her to obsess, but not hearing from Jon worried her. It was there when she was alone when she allowed herself the time to feel the cold grip of heartache. She didn’t dare let a feeling of rejection hit her, as she knew that Jon loved her—he had said it to her many times during her stay. The trouble was that she did not know when she would see him again, and that was torment on its own.
King’s Landing was more crowded than he thought it would be. It was entirely different in every conceivable way possible.

Everything was foreign—the architecture, the smells, even the people all looked different. Maybe it was the sun kissed color to their skin, or the lighter clothes and richer colors they wore. The leather Jon wore was certainly uncomfortable in such weather. He should have thought about that before he left the North.

Jon had sent the four Stark guards that had accompanied him, by the request of his father and Robb, back to Winterfell where they belonged. He had made it to the city and finding the Red Keep would be no issue, as it was easily spotted.

It was tall, all the way at the ocean’s edge, a spectacular sight, especially for someone like Jon who was seeing it for the first time. It would take some time to get to the Red Keep, so Jon tried to not pressure himself into making a mad dash for it. After all, she was right there, in the same city as him after months apart, and despite the sense of urgency, Jon did not want to show up out of breath and sweating.

Exploring seemed like it might be a good idea. No one knew who Jon was, so he wandered the streets aimlessly. Of course, Ghost attracted attention, so Jon told him to stay close. When city dwellers finally noticed the direwolf, they either stopped entirely, or leaped out the way, contouring their body to be the furthest away as possible when they realized that it was a living animal—and not just any animal.

It was actually a bit funny to watch everyone react. No one in Winterfell had ever made such a big deal of it.

“Be good, Ghost,” he reminded him when a man with a cart of meat went passing by, Ghost catching the scent.

On his way to the castle, Jon stumbled upon an open market filled with fresh food and hand-crafted items like clothes and other trinkets. Jon started to browse, the idea striking him that he didn’t want to show up to the Red Keep empty handed.

He had wanted to give something to Daenerys back at Winterfell, something that showed that he cared, but his options had been limited, and she ended up leaving in a hurry amidst the reveal.

Jon ended up coming across a vendor selling jewelry, all of it laid out on a wooden table with a deep blue cloth underneath, the seller noticing Jon’s perusing eyes. “Someone special in your life?” he pried, enthusiastic, almost like he was trying to sing a song.

“Yes,” Jon answered truthfully, a finger running along a bracelet.
He had absolutely no clue what type of jewelry women liked, or even if Daenerys would be interested in such a gift.

“A wife?” the man questioned, trying to get a better idea of what Jon would be looking for.

“No.”

“Sister?”

“No.”

“Mother?”

Jon looked the man dead in the face, tired of the inquiries. “Queen Daenerys.”

The man did not believe him at first, face full of scrutiny, but he examined Jon further, noting his more expensive clothes and his sword at his side. He must have concluded that Jon was from a Great House, and might actually be telling the truth.

“The Queen, you say?” the man nodded, in approval. “I saw her in the streets many moons ago. People say she is a gift given by the Gods, come to restore us all after years of unrest.”

Jon made sure to keep his expression from showing any doubt. Daenerys in the streets? Was the man delusional?

“That’s very nice,” Jon decided to go with, not going to argue.

“The Queen…” The man held up a finger. “I have something for you.”

He dashed to the back of the building, his sandals almost catching on the stonework of the street. Jon looked around while he waited, thinking about how odd that man really was. When the man emerged, he had a necklace in hand, holding it out for Jon to look at.

“It is pure silver, a gem from Essos, found in the sea where a ship had been sunk for many years, before any around us were even born, or their parents.”

It was a radiant red, not like Jon had ever seen before, encrusted with simple, but ornate silver in an identical pattern on either side of the gem.

“It is a unique piece,” the man continued. He traced the detailing with his finger. “Some of the finest art to come from Across the Narrow Sea. Made by a woman over a hundred years old in Pentos.”

Whether or not he was telling the truth about the origins, Jon could tell that the stone and the silver was real, so Jon fished out the coins for it. The man handed it over wrapped in a small red cloth, wishing him Seven Blessings.

Jon tucked the necklace into his back pocket for safe keeping.

“For the Queen?” came a voice he did not recognize.

Jon turned to see a man standing there in an elegant red attire, a large sword there at his hips, and wearing a masked smile. He was tall with black hair, his eyes just as dark, and those eyes were filled with inquisitiveness. He approached Jon, Ghost watching the interaction closely.

“Oberyn Martell.” He held out a steady hand. “I serve on our Queen’s Small Council.”
Jon took his hand, embracing the firm grip. “Prince Oberyn Martell? The Red Viper?”

He had heard quite a number of stories about the hot-headed younger Prince of Dorne. In person, Jon could see that his name would have been well earned, as he certainly looked like he was a warrior who could take on any enemy.

“Aye, just the one. And you are?”

He faltered for a moment, not certain how to introduce himself, as he was so used to his Snow surname. “Jon.”

“Jon,” he repeated, not pressing for the surname, but he looked to be interested enough in the first, enough to repeat it again. His eyes narrowed at him, looking Jon up and down, then to Ghost, who came to his side. “A direwolf? I’ve seen many things in my life, but I can honestly tell you that I have never seen a direwolf before. Interesting choice of a pet.”

“He’s not quite a pet,” Jon argued, ruffling the fur of Ghost’s rich white coat. “More of a companion.”

It occurred to him then, a little bit slowly, that if Oberyn served on Dany’s Council, it meant he most likely knew who Jon was already.

“You know who I am,” he told the Dornish man point blank.

“I know you are the son of Rhaegar Targaryen and Lyanna Stark.”

The way that he had said it so coolly, without any hesitation or an uneven voice, made Jon almost go into a default submissiveness. That would not work, though, not after he had already accepted who he was. “I am,” he stated strongly, to show that Oberyn was not going to intimidate him, if that was a goal.

“My sister was left by Rhaegar, so he could go and remarry Lyanna and then have you.”

Jon looked around, avoiding his gaze. The interaction was something that he was not prepared for, and Jon felt trapped. “I’ve heard.” Really, what could Jon say to make the situation any better? There was no way to bring the dead back or erase memories of terrible fates. “I’m sorry for that. Losing the people we love is supposed to be the most tragic part of life.”

Oberyn motioned with his head for Jon to walk with him, continuing down the line of merchants, each selling something different.

“It is, indeed. Have you ever lost anyone you love?”

“No.” he said coldly, guard up. “I hope not to for a very long time.”

Oberyn begun to examine some fabric on a table, all different shades of bright red, orange, yellow, and a green with stitching and embroideries. Behind the table, the merchant’s blue eyes went wide when she noticed Ghost, freezing in her spot, almost missing that Oberyn was trying to pay for a roll of fabric.

“I hope that for you too.” At the next table, he paid for a couple apples, red in color, and tossed one to Jon, which he caught with one hand. “Now, are you headed to the Red Keep? I’m sure that Queen Daenerys is awaiting your arrival. We have spoken about you before.”

It made his heart hammer in his chest—the thought of seeing her again and the thought of being so
close. Jon bit into the apple, finding it to be much sweeter than the ones that got shipped up to Winterfell.

“Spoken of me?” he repeated, hoping that Oberyn would share more.

“Oh, yes. I told her how I wanted to meet you if you ever decided to come to the capital, but it looks like I happened upon you by chance instead.”

*Chance*, he wondered, was it really chance that had brought them together in a city that large? Chance or not, Jon would keep his guard up, as he knew that Oberyn would be doing the same.

“When people find out, you won’t be able to walk the streets like this.” Oberyn motioned to the streets around them, all the people walking around with their baskets and doing their daily chores. “It will be too dangerous.”

Jon smirked at that assumption. “You’re a Prince of Dorne, and you’re walking the streets right now.”

“I’m a good fighter. Besides, being a Prince of Dorne is different than if I were…whatever it is you plan on becoming here. If you are in any way attached to the Queen, there will always be at least one idiot willing to try his luck in slitting your throat. Best not to forget that.” Oberyn eyed the sword Jon had, tapping the pummel. “I hope you know how to use that.”

“I do.”

“Very good. For so many, a sword is just a silly trinket that have to prove that they are a man somehow, the sword going unused and collecting dust. When fighting starts, they are the ones who fall first.”

“I’ve trained with my brother most of my life,” he explained as they rounded a corner and walked out of the market. “I know how to fight.”

Oberyn moved Jon out of the way as woman from above threw water out of her window, it splashing down onto the cobblestone, filling in all the cracks of the narrow street.

“A word of advice from me would be to train harder during your time here.” Oberyn pointed to the castle ahead, the structures lined up in a way that gave a direct view, the Red Keep shining with the sun in the background—a brilliant view. “You’ve never been here before, have you?”

“I’ve never even left the North.”

“In that case, you may want to prepare yourself. The streets of the capital are just a taste of what it to come.”

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**Daenerys**

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She had a tree planted for her mother and brother, and even her eldest brother. Three trees in a triangle at the center of the garden next to a small pond, where the large, spotted lily pads grew yellow flowers, a small waterfall finalizing the scenery. Her mother had allowed Dany to play in the pond as a child in the hottest days of summer, and she fondly remembered splashing around until her fingers had gone wrinkled.
Lady Olenna had made an appearance there at the Red Keep after an invitation. She had been there for two days already, though they hardly had the opportunity to chat privately. Out there in the garden, she had finally managed to get Daenerys alone for some of her time, which was good, because she had a few things to discuss with the woman who was called the Queen of Thorns.

As Lady Olenna sauntered over with a wobble to her step, clutching her skirts to make way for her shoes in front of her with every step. “I was terribly sorry to hear the news about what happened to your brother and mother. A terrible shame it was.” She looked at Dany with compassion. “But, you’re still here, you persevere. That tells a lot, you know.”

“You’re very kind, Lady Olenna.”

Daenerys flagged down a servant, asking for some tea to be served. Daenerys motioned for the two to sit down at a small round table with two chairs, all made from iron and painted black, near to the pond. There were some trees with long, wide leaves that casted a shadow overhead, proving some shade for the pair.

Daenerys found herself asking, “Did you know my mother?”

“Oh, yes, I did. We had met on several different occasions. It always bothered me by how sad her eyes looked. But, like all mothers out there, she would be proud of you and how far you have come.”

Her mother had done her best to hide her dissatisfaction with her marriage and the way that she was treated by her husband. When she was around her children, however, Daenerys remembered that it was the only time she smiled.

It was her mother smiling that Dany would remember her by.

Lady Olenna put her fingers on her own chin, rubbing the underneath part. “Speaking of family, there are some **rumors** going around of another Targaryen boy around.” She raised an eyebrow at Dany “Is this true?”

“It is.”

Lady Olenna sat back in her chair. “Hmm, very interesting. Will he be making an appearance here in the capital?”

“I do hope so.”

The servant arrived back with the teas, arranging the sugar, milk, and lemons out on the table. Lady Olenna took the distraction as a chance to examine Dany. She waited until the servant had left to speak more on the topic.

“Does this mean a royal wedding is on the horizons?”

Daenerys took a sip of tea, playing her angle right. She could not give too much information away, but she had to admit that all the talk of Jon and weddings made her sad, reminding her that he was not there with her, and she had not received a letter from Winterfell yet.

“We shall have to wait and see.”

“It’s a bit of a pity,” Olenna said bluntly, throwing a hand out to the side to signify her discontent. “For a moment there, I was thinking about a marriage alliance between you and my grandson, the heir to Highgarden, Loras. Have you heard of him? He is one of the most eligible men in the Seven
Dany smiled sweetly. “I have heard of him, indeed. Are you still going to try to convince me to marry him?”

She gave Daenerys an all-knowing kind of look. “Ah, no, because Targaryens wed Targaryens. Believe me, I am old enough to know the drill by now. I see your heart is already set on another.” She waved her arm around, glancing about in an almost frantic manner. “But, I don’t see this boy here, and if he were to stay wherever he is now, what then? A wise woman keeps her options open.”

Daenerys knew exactly how to put the marriage talk to rest.

“I’m not going to give up my name,” she made it clear, “and marrying someone like your grandson jeopardizes your own future. My children will carry the Targaryen name. Who would carry on the Tyrell name? But, if you were to wait a few more years, Sansa Stark may be a good option for your grandson. She is rather anxious to make her way to our southern lands. I was also thinking of your granddaughter, Margaery. I have heard wonderful stories of her. Robb Stark would be a good suitor.”

“You’re rather keen on a Stark and Tyrell alliance, aren’t you?”

“It would be to your advantage as well,” she pointed out, ready for her speech. “The Targaryen boy you mention is Jon Snow of Winterfell. Obviously, he is not a bastard, but both a Stark and Targaryen. The Starks in Winterfell remain his family, the only family he has ever known. Let’s say I do marry him and Margaery wedded Robb, or Loras wedded Sansa. In reality, it would be more of a Targaryen, Stark, and Tyrell alliance solidified by marriage. We would all be family in one way or another.”

Olenna had a hard time not showing her interest. “That would be quite a powerful alliance.”

“Powerful Houses make powerful alliances. With the future in mind and my vision for Westeros, House Tyrell strikes me as a family that would be open to change, and wants to embark on the journey of creating a new world, one where Westeros is rejuvenated, flushing out the old and bringing in the new. With a long winter coming, we must all stand together as one if we are to survive.”

Olenna let herself grin, pressing her red lips together. “I’m particularly pleased to find that you’re smarter than most I’ve known, even with your young age. Do you know that some of these oaf Lords think that a sole woman ruling Westeros is absurd. Do you want to know what I think?”

“Please, do share.”

"I say it’s about bloody time a woman was in charge, wouldn't you?"
stones, large grass blades shooting up around the edge. Dany dipped her fingers into the pond, the large blue fish swimming below darting off because of the intrusion. She watched the ripple fluttered across the top, disturbing some bugs that were resting along the edges.

She could see her reflection in the water, her hair slipping over her shoulder, dunking in a few inches. Two yellow birds flew low in front of her, chirping away as they chased after each other, flitting from one low branch to the next.

Daenerys continued to draw her finger lazily along the top of the water. Her head pulled back up when a ripple came back her way, as if something on the other side had disturbed the water just as she had.

“Daenerys.”

She brought her head up, neck tilting it to the side, thinking that she knew that voice that called her name.

No, it couldn’t be.

He was standing there on the other side of the pond, watching her. Daenerys was motionless for a moment, not sure if her eyes were betraying her and her wishful thinking was overtaking her mind.

Everything came to a slow.

“Daenerys,” he said again, corners of his mouth turning up.

She planted to hands on the stones around the edge of the pond, hoisting herself up. Daenerys slipped out of her shoes, taking off running against the gravel, ignoring any pain from stray rocks hitting the soles of her feet. She was grateful the turquoise dress she wore had a bottom that floated with the wind, which enabled her to run to him as quick as she could manage.

“Jon!”

She collided with him, Jon picking her up, his arms securely around her, and she was lifted off the ground by his strong arms around her waist, hands gripping her back. She pressed her lips onto his, her hands molding around his face.

“Dany,” he exhaled, eyes half way open.

She was so happy that she might have been able to cry, emotions everywhere at once. She looked at Jon intensely, noticing he was the similar as in her memories. For a little while, she had begun to fear she might not remember. His face was still a wonderful sight, his hair not loose, but pulled back behind his head. In a way, he was the same, but he also looked more mature than she last saw him. What was only a hint of hair on the sides of his jaw and upper lip had since grown in, darker, and it made him look more like a man.

Dany wrapped her hands around his neck as she was placed back onto the ground. “What are you doing here? You didn’t send a raven. I was not expecting you.”

“I didn’t know what to say. Would you be disappointed if I said I was also trying to avoid some kind of a big entrance? I just wanted to get here.” He tucked some hair behind her ear so he could see her face fully. “I just wanted to get to you and to see you again without anyone else around.”

Humble, as always.
“No disappointment at all.”

He was right, as she would have sent Ser Barristan to meet him and to take him through the city, arranging a formal greeting at the Red Keep upon arrival.

“I hope the surprise is not too much.”

She was overwhelmed, but she would never think such a thing. “Not at all! I just cannot believe you stand before me. It feels like a dream.” Dany grabbed his hands, swinging them out to the side, feeling as if she were a little girl again with how giddy she was. “How did you like the city?”

“It was…different. I met one of your Small Council members.”

Her brows drew together, rushing into her inquiries. “Where? Who?”

“Oberyn Martell,” he said with a lag to his words, the bewilderment obvious, “in the market.” His face changed, as if he had remembered something important. “I have something for you.”

He withdrew one of hands from hers, reaching into his back pocket, pulling out a small piece of cloth. “For me?” she unraveled the cloth, letting a necklace fall into her palm, the stone landing directly in the middle. The sun hit it in the right way, sparkling a marvelous red. “It’s beautiful.”

Daenerys pulled her hair out of the way, Jon pulling the clasp together at the back of her neck. Her fingers ran down the silver pendant, all the way to the stone. Her constant smile was beginning to hurt her face.

“I’ll always wear it,” she told Jon, resuming her position looped in his arms. Her fingers pulled at the lace along his leather tunic. “Are you burning up in there?”

He chuckled, nodding. “Aye. I was not expecting it to be this warm, not when Winterfell gets colder every day.”

Just then, her eyes shifted to the edge of the part of the garden they were in and she noticed Ghost sitting over in the corner silently, partially blending in with a white foundation that was a dragon spitting out water.

“You brought Ghost,” she stated, astounded, her hand hitting over where her heart was. He was bigger than when she last saw him.

Jon looked over at his direwolf, who was sitting patiently. “Is that okay? He wanted to come.”

“Yes, of course. It’s just a bit shocking to see him here in the gardens. In King’s Landing. Will he get too warm with all that fur?”

“Winter isn’t too far off,” Jon smirked, bringing her in closer. “We’re bringing the cold with us. So,” he started, glancing around, “now that I’m here, do I get a personal tour of the Red Keep?” he joked.

She tapped his nose, huddling closer. “How about a personal tour of my chambers first?”

Chapter End Notes

I have officially mapped out the chapters and this story will have a total of 21 chapters. I
cannot wait to see the reactions leading up to the end and what I have planed for these two!
She had come to the definitive conclusion that Jon was addictive in the best way possible. Everything about his touch set her off. Daenerys felt partially bad because he had been travelling for so long, and needed to rest, but keeping their hands to themselves after months apart would have proved to be impossible.

Impossible.

Daenerys had tried to be discrete, not too rushed as she led him through Maegor's Holdfast to her chambers. It had taken some time to get there, which was irritating, but they both managed to not look too impatient, slowing down when workers and servants where in the halls.

When the door to her chambers finally closed shut behind them, neither paid attention to where Ghost went to settle down. Jon had taken one grand overview look of the room and all the intricate detailing, then plowed his body against hers.

Part of her dress was open, a summer dress, exposing her back, apart from the two pieces of material that hung down from the bow at the base of her neck. Jon’s hand flattened along her spine before dipping underneath the dress to grab her ass, the fabric just loose enough to allow for it. He made a husky sound in the back of his throat when he did, lips moving to her neck as his free hand push her head out of the way, Dany letting it hang to the side.

Oh, how she had missed him.

Her hands went to remove the breeches he wore, brushing the bulge in the front to tease him. Jon’s head hung down to watch as she fiddled with the laces intentionally slow. She could hear him in her head saying just rip them off.

When she took too long, Jon picked her up her, her back hitting the wall decorated with flower wallpaper with the kind of force that jolted her body and knocked her head. Jon got a good grip on her before he brought her to the bed, tossing Dany onto the soft sheets. A small giggle echoed out of her, Daenerys becoming playful.

Daenerys spread out all her limbs, stretching as she watched Jon pull off his clothing, panting hard, eyes locked with hers with nothing but want filling the orbs.

She bit her lip, waiting.

Once free of his clothes, Jon climbed up onto the bed, and knocked her leg to the side with his knee. He had her pinned, hands holding her wrists down above her head, her elbows bent. With the ache she felt, it was no good to have him there hovering above her and not between her legs.

“Jon,” she whined, moving about as much as she could.
He looked to also be struggling to contain himself, eyes dilated nearly all black. When his fingers finally loosened, Dany took the opportunity to latch her legs up and around him, flipping them both so she was on top and Jon was pinned beneath her, head flopping down onto the feather pillows.

She refused to stand them teasing each other any longer, shifting her body to grab his cock and take him inside of her. Jon’s mouth opened at how swiftly she was around him, Dany hunching forward to rest a palm flat onto his chest to revel in the feeling that made her whole, the necklace he gave her hitting her skin as she began to move.

His hands ran up her turquoise gown made of fine silk, grabbing her breasts as her hips snapped back down onto his. Jon moaned, raspy and deep, sinking further into her bed. His hand gripped her thigh, fingers stroking her skin before it disappeared under the fabric of her dress, thumb rubbing her.

There was a sense of urgency that filled both of them, too desperate to take anything slowly. Between all the moans that echoed in the air, there was whispers of I love you.

As night fell over the city, Jon and Dany remained in bed, all tangled up in expensive golden sheets, staring over at the dragons perched on a thick wooden table, situated so they would be able to see the stars. The dragons required an even bigger cage since their arrival, one they were already almost outgrowing. It was Rhaegal who yawned into the silence, tossing his head back, Daenerys noticing that his eyes settled on Jon. He had remained curious.

“Rhaegal likes you.” Daenerys rested her head on Jon’s chest. “You should bond with him.”

Jon laughed, Dany’s head bobbing with his chuckle. “Ghost might get jealous.”

Dany picked up her head and examined Ghost, who was curled up and sleeping on a pile of pillows. “He looks to have made himself at home.”

Jon brushed his fingers along her arm, then to her hair. “I think it might take me longer.”

“That’s to be expected. I remember how it felt arriving in Winterfell and everything was different. Take all the time you need. There’s no rush.”

The pair drifted off soon after, waking only when the light from the sun was no longer streaming in, but darkness had fallen, and no candles were lit. Only light from the fullest moon allowed them to see each other when they stirred awake. Neither wanted to part from each other, so they stayed in their spot all snuggled together.

“I have a problem,” she confided in him, voice sounding groggy.

“What is it?”

“Lord Baelish, he is the Master of Coin, and I have a suspicion that he is stealing money for his own gain. The records he gave me do not make sense, and neither Tyrion or Tywin Lannister can understand where the money is going. Lord Varys is scheduled to meet with me tomorrow about it.”

“Lord Varys?”

“Master of Whispers,” she explained quickly, almost feeling shameful that they needed people to be spying. “He has spies everywhere, and I mean everywhere. Even Essos. I swear that man knows everyone’s secrets.”

“Good thing I don’t have any secrets,” Jon commented.
She propped herself up on an elbow, bringing the silk sheet with her, lifting a brow. “Really? The son of Rhaegar Targaryen and Lyanna Stark who was raised as Jon Snow in the North has no secrets?”

Jon moved his mouth to one side, caught with the mistake. “Well, I don’t have any secrets for much longer,” he corrected himself. “Now that I’m here, what do you do? Make an announcement to everyone in the castle?”

“You would be surprised the information that can travel by word of mouth. The whole castle will know by tomorrow night, know who you really are, and know that I’m yours.”

Jon shook his head. “No. I share you with millions.”

Her face fell, woeful, and suddenly alarmed. “Is that how you feel?”

Jon massaged her cheek with his thumb, fingers spreading out along her neck. He smiled genuinely, her panic endearing to him. “It’s not a bad thing, Dany. Don’t take it the wrong way. I only meant that you’re the Queen, and you’re the people’s Queen.”

She thought through his logic. “Yes, that may be true. The Queen belongs to everyone, but Daenerys belongs to you,” she then clarified. “There’s a difference.”

Dany twisted to her left and pressed her lips against the inner part of his wrist.

“I’ll remember that.” Jon snaked two arms around her back, pulling her closer to him. “Now, back to what you were saying,” he urged, wanting to know more.

“Varys was tasked with finding out if there was any evidence of treason. Do you know what happens to people who commit treason?”

Jon hesitated, his breathing slowing. “Your father burned them.”

She winced, the reminder not pleasant. “Have you ever thought about how my father is your grandfather?”

Jon’s face twisted, squinting at her. “How about how one grandfather burned my other grandfather alive? It’s a very strange world for me these days.”

She gave him a rueful grin. “Who knew your relatives would be crazy.”

It was nice that they could laugh about it.

“Anyways,” she started through a smile, getting back on track. Her face went default into a more serious façade. “The punishment for treason is death—beheading this time, no more burning. I have enough memories of that.”

“So, you’re going to have him executed if Varys confirms what you think you already know?”

Daenerys sighed shallowly, letting her head fall back down onto Jon’s bare chest. She began to run her fingers over the lean muscles of his biceps, drawing little imaginary shapes. “Part of me keeps hoping it’s all a big misunderstanding. I’ll still give him a trial, which I’m not sure he even deserves, but his fate would be set.”

“That’s what makes you a good queen. You’ve got a gentle heart, but you’ll do what is necessary.”

Jon was quiet for a moment, until something triggered his mind. “What if he demands a trial by
“What about trial by combat?”

She had not thought about that part. Trial by combat—it was ridiculous, really. She was not even sure if her father had gotten rid of that altogether, given that he would rather get right to the execution part and no trial at all. It would be something to look into at another meeting.

Another meeting.

Dany almost wanted to sink into the bed and never come out.

“Let’s not talk about it anymore,” she quickly moved to change the subject. “Have I mentioned how happy I am that you are here now?”

Jon held her tighter, thumb picking up her chin to kiss her. “Yes, you have. Have I mentioned that I’m happy to be here with you?”

“More than once, I believe.” Dany got comfortable in her place, preparing to nod off to sleep once more. “I’ll be gone when you wake up,” she told him. “My meeting with Varys is early.”

“Should I wait here?”

“That might be dull for you, don’t you think?”

“Well, if I need something to do, Oberyn mentioned that it might be wise to train more while I’m here. What do you think? Know of any good trainers?” he asked, half joking.

Without a beat, she said, “Jaime of the best fighters I know of, and I trust him the most with someone as close to my heart as you are. I’ll see what I can pull together for tomorrow.”

—

Jon

—

Jon woke up in her bed in the middle of the night, jolted awake from a dream, and Daenerys was still there with him. Every night he had wished her there next to him, and Jon knew that they never had to be apart again, which lulled him back into slumber.

The next time he woke up, it was light outside, and Dany was gone, as she had told him. Jon rubbed his eyes, seeing Ghost over in the corner still curled up in the same position he was the entire evening before. Upon realizing that Jon was awake, he came over and licked Jon’s hand, urging him to get out of bed.

“You might be the luckiest direwolf who has ever lived,” he told him, thinking about how spoiled he might become around such riches.

No direwolf had ever made the Red Keep a home. Jon would have to bring him to the small godswood there to see how Ghost liked it. Jon had not seen it yet, but knew that there were elm and alder trees. It would not be like Winterfell by any means, but it might feel vaguely familiar for Ghost.

Before he could lay in bed any longer and mull over the topic, two servants propped open the golden double doors to come inside without warning, one with a fresh pair of clothes that were put on a chair, and the other with breakfast platters. Jon sat up, pulling the sheets around him to make sure his naked body was covered, staring at what unfolded before him. The servants said nothing, did not
look at Jon, and once they left, he was in a daze. He wondered if he would ever get used to the lifestyle.

Jon got up, towing the sheets with him, too paranoid a servant might come back in again. He threw the sheet over his head to get dressed, removing it once his breeches were on. He noticed a small, flat scroll underneath a platter. He removed it and looked at a note, Dany’s penmanship written down on it.

*Jon*

*I’ll be occupied until dusk. Jaime is going to meet you in the White Sword Tower today until I am finished with my meetings.*

*Daenerys*

—

Instead of trying to find where he was going on his own and waste half the day, Jon decided it was best to stop someone to ask. The first people he came across was a pair of women dressed in matching green dresses with oversized white hats to block out the sun.

“Pardon,” he interrupted politely. “Can you tell me where to find the White Sword Tower?”

They pointed him in what Jon hoped was the right direction, Jon reciting the directions in his head so he would not forget and have to stop someone else. He was only a few paces away when he heard the girl behind him speak again.

"Did you hear that accent?” she giggled absurdly, trying to stay quiet, but not succeeding. “A Northern for sure. What is he even doing here?”

Jon stopped and glanced backwards at the ladies huddled close to each other, speculating. He understood what Dany meant about the whispering girls of Kings Landing.

Almost immediately as Jon resumed walking down the hallway, another unfamiliar face came from around the corner, glancing at Jon once, then another time as he stopped. Jon stopped too, alarmed by the sudden halt by the shorter man. He caught a glimpse of some sort of bird made of silver that was pinned to the material around his neck, but it was too small to make out what type it was, given that Jon was too far away still.

After another moment went by and nothing was said, the man let his sharp features soften, shaking himself out of his tranced state. “Forgive me. It’s unusual for me to not know a face here in the Red Keep.” He approached Jon in a few strides. “I’m Petyr Baelish. I serve as Master of Coin.”

Jon made sure that he did not react to the name or the title, disguising his internal alarm that went off after the information that Dany had told him. Giving off any hint of mistrust could be dangerous for Daenerys.

“*You must be Jon, are you not?”*”

Word did travel fast.

“Yes.”

He gave him a smile, but his eyes were unchanging, an eerie mixture. “Let me guess, you don’t know you’re way around yet. It’s big castle.”
Jon turned his head to look through an archway that opened up to the outside, numerous vines growing downwards around the pillars, spiraling inside. “It is. I’m headed to the White Sword Tower, wherever that may be.”

“Ah.” He motioned with his hand the correct direction. “Walk with me, I’ll show you the way.”

Jon swallowed any hesitance and begun to walk. He felt it necessary to add, “I’m supposed to be meeting Ser Jaime there.”

Lord Baelish inched closer, making Jon tense out of discomfort. Jon could smell the mint on his breath when he muttered. “Have you ever wondered how close they actually are? To me, it always seemed like Ser Jaime was interested in our Queen. He spent a lot of time with her when the Mad King was still walking these halls.”

He was trying to seep doubt into Jon, and he did not appreciate it. *Don’t let him get to you,* he reminded himself, *he might not have a head come tomorrow.*

“As a Queensguard member, and even back when he was serving the Mad King as part of the Kingsguard, I would say he was unusually close with her.”

Jon’s vein in his neck protruded, but he withheld from knocking a few teeth out of Lord Baelish’s mouth, his hand forming a fist at his side, out of sight. Believe him, it was a difficult urge to suppress.

Lucky for both of them, as they rounded a corner, another man who was overweight and lacked hair strolled in front of them, his hands casually tucked into his long sleeves.

“Lord Baelish,” he cooed, but there was nothing sweet about it. “May I have a word with Jon?”

Whatever might have been playing out on Lord Baelish’s face, if there was anything at all, Jon did not see it. He was too busy examining the newcomer to the trio to be bothered to see if Lord Baelish had been rattled.

With pleasantries exchanged, Lord Baelish walked off without looking back.

“Be careful around men like him,” the bald man warned.

“Men like him?” Jon repeated, looking the man up and down. “Are you not in that category as well?”

“No,” he claimed, “because I whole heartedly support Queen Daenerys.” He looked over his shoulder. “You might find that not everyone is.”

“You haven’t mentioned who you are.”

“Varys. Master of Whispers.”

Jon remembered what Dany had told him about the man—the man who knew everything that there was to know. It explained how he knew who Jon was without an introduction—either that he had overheard Lord Baelish and Jon’s conversation.

“Daenerys said she was meeting with you today.”

“We just finished.” Varys looked over his shoulder again, straining his neck before he turned back to Jon, lowering his head as he leaned in. “You’ve come here at an interesting time. May I ask, why now? Why travel from Winterfell to here?”
Jon started to walk again, Varys alongside of him, who swayed as he walked. “I love Daenerys. I didn’t want to be apart from her. That’s all there is to it.”

“And not because you want to gain power?”

Jon retracted, the question utterly laughable. "That's absurd. Daenerys is the heir. She is the Queen of the Seven Kingdoms."

“Some might not see it that way. We live in a time that puts boys ahead of girls. It is a sad, but true reality. Even if not voiced, there will always be a fraction of people who will prefer you to her.” Jon got the feeling that he was about to tell him what the whole meaning of the conversation was about. People like Varys were like that, skimming over the details at first, building up to a bigger, overarching idea. "Marriage has been brought up."

"Marriage?"

Varys nodded swiftly, closing his eyes as he did. "Our Queen does not want to bring it up to you, fearing it would be overwhelming and too fast. Truth of the matter is that you are the only male with significant Targaryen blood in you, and Targaryens wed each other, that is known. But, you see, it is more than that. If what you say is true, and you do love her, true love may bring peace and stability to the realm. It is the type of love than people will sing songs about in years to come. Nothing is more important than the good of the realm. And then there is the matter of more Targaryen heirs...little ones, that is."

Children.

He had never really thought much of it. Yet, there it was, being dangled in front of him.

Children with Daenerys…the images of her swollen up with child, *his* child, filtered through his head, the thought of having his own family taking over for a moment—a wonderful moment.

“Should you be telling me this?” Jon found himself asking.

Daenerys did not seem to trust many people, so Jon thought it wise to do the same.

Varys hummed. “There was never an instruction to keep this to myself. Sometimes people need a little push from an outside source. Do you understand?”

Jon thought about it for a beat. Was he trying to say that he wanted Jon to bring it up to Daenerys?

“Aye.”

Satisfied enough with the response, Varys held out his hand to the side. Somehow, without Jon even realizing it, they had arrived at the White Sword Tower, the meeting area and sleeping courters of the Queensguard members.

“Before I leave you, I want to tell you one more thing, and that is some advice. It is one of the last things you want to hear, but Kings Landing is snake pit, filled with scaly, deceitful people who are out for nothing but their own interests. *Be careful.*”

Jon paused, nodding. He inhaled the sweet air around him, potted red flowers blooming not far off. “Wolves sometimes eat snakes,” he said in a deep voice, confident.

Varys smirked. “Good.”
“Lucky for us, they only serve real meat here,” Jaime Lannister interrupted.

The tip of his sword thudded down onto the ground as he leaned an arm up against a tall pillar, watching the two. As tall and muscular as he was, Jaime had the ability to sneak up on them, but seeing him there without armor on was almost like seeing a cat with no hair. It was bizarre.

Varys excused himself, and off he went down the path they had come from.

“Odd man, isn’t he?” remarked Jaime, watching him go.

Jon shrugged. “I don’t mind him.”

“That’s good, seeing as you’ll have to get used to him always being around.” Jaime looked at Jon, an eyebrow raised. “Here to get some real training?”

“Real training?”

Jaime nodded, smirking, stepping out into the sun so the light bounced off his golden hair. “You heard correctly. You need real, proper training. Now, I can do that. However, I’ve got to mention that I promise I’ll be sending you back to Daenerys with lumps and bruises all over you. That’s how it works.”

He tossed the sword he had to Jon, one not made for sparring, and Jon narrowly caught it. “I’ll consider myself forewarned.”

That was how it was going to be, Jon realized. As good as Jaime was, he was certainly cocky in a know-it-all kind of way, and he was going to get under Jon’s skin on purpose. He briefly wondered how Dany was able to stand him being around all the time, pondering if maybe he was a different person around Daenerys, and simply arrogant around everyone else.

Lord Baelish’s words rang back through his ears—to me, it always seemed like Ser Jaime was interested in our Queen. He spent a lot of time with her when the Mad King was still walking these halls—taunting him now that Jon was alone with Jaime.

Jon told himself that it was preposterous to contemplate that what Lord Baelish had said, but it did make him wonder why Jaime was so protective over Daenerys and close to her, even if he was a Queensguard member. Jon would be lying if he said that it didn’t him a bit insecure, after all, insecurity was a feeling Jon had been used to most of his life.

Yes, Jon knew that Daenerys loved him and was fully committed to him, but he began to question how Jaime felt towards Daenerys.

Before he could allow himself to think more of it, Jon followed Jaime as he walked over into an open part of a courtyard, the center filled in with large slabs of smoothed over whitish-gray rock. Around them were lush, green bushes that enclosed the area.

“Let me see what you’ve got in you,” remarked Jaime. With his own sword, he motioned for Jon. “Come at me.”

Jon did not know what to expect from Jaime, and was even partially regretting mentioning the whole training idea to Daenerys. He hoped that he was not about to make a fool of himself.

They spent most of the afternoon there in the courtyard. Jaime hit Jon in such a way that he lost his footing several times, falling backwards. He knew the bruises would come easily.
Jaime truly was a good swordsman, better than anyone Jon knew of. It made Jon want to train harder, be better, and get to the level that Jaime was, however long it might take. Lucky for him, Jaime said that Jon was a quick learner as they came to the end of their session and *not a waste of time*, as he had mentioned.

A quicker learner he was, and Jon knew it.

Chapter End Notes

Okay people, bad news is that updates might be a bit slow coming out from here until the end BUT the good news is that I finalized the first chapter of a new Jonerys AU so (hopefully) you can look forward to that too as we approach the conclusion of this story. I'll give a heads up when it gets posted because I'm pretty excited for it :)


Whispers from the Streets

—

Daenerys

—

The news came as a shock.

It had all started with Varys coming to her and saying, “There is something you need to know, something I did not want to say in front of the others.” That something she thought might be related to Lord Baelish, more whispers coming from the streets from the little birds that Varys had trained, but it was not. That time it was not anything that she was prepared for.

There as they strolled through the gardens, passing through an archway made from limestone that summer had decorated with white flowers encased by vines, Varys was careful about the words he chose, sensitive to the subject. “I’ve been waiting for the right time to tell you this. It’s about Jon.”

“Go on,” she urged, hurrying him to continue.

“Your mother, Rhaella, was no fool. She suspected Jon was Rhaegar’s, but there was nothing she could do but wait until Aerys died to say anything. It pained her to know that he had to be hidden away in the North, however, in what world would Rhaella risk her potential grandchild’s life? It is in part why she trusted Lord Stark with you.”

Daenerys stopped in her tracks. Her mouth was open, dropped out of astonishment. “That can’t be possible. How would she have guessed that?”

“Much like you, your brother was close with your mother. Rhaegar loved her dearly. He was her first born. There were very few people that he trusted, but he did trust me enough to get a message to Rhaella. Had he lived, he would have overthrown your father, but fate had other plans.”

Daenerys blinked, at a lost for words. She sat down on a bench surrounded by ferns, her hands clutching the stone edge in the front by her legs. It took her a minute to be able to collect her thoughts, as she felt slightly weak, but it did not seem to come from the news he shared.

“Why would she not tell anyone?”

Varys lowered his chin, the answer obvious. “If anyone knew, you know what would have happened. She was waiting. As the years went on, she wanted you to marry Jon, if he was indeed Rhaegar’s, and she would have Viserys marry another, perhaps Margaery Tyrell. Jon and yourself were always going to be brought together, but it seems fate itself has sealed that, the way it was intended to be.”

It had been her mother’s hope to bring Jon and Daenerys into union, and that brought a smile to Dany’s face, knowing that she would have approved of her daughter’s current relationship.

“And you’ve kept this to yourself all these years?”

He nodded. “I may not be much of anyone here in Westeros, but I was entirely loyal to your mother. I see that the future she was unable to create fell into your hands, and you are entirely capable of bringing your vision to life.”
“Not much of anyone? You shouldn’t say that. You are very important.”

He looked to be touched by the sentiment. “I thank you, Your Grace.” He pressed his thin lips together, glancing around, about to alter their conversation. “There is other news.”

She did not like the way that he said it. It made her heart sink a little bit, a cold feeling of dread seeping in.

“What is it?”

“There have been some disturbing reports from the Wall.”

“What kind of reports?”

“Word of White Walkers from Beyond the Wall and dead bodies piling up.” He held out a scroll. “Lord Commander Mormont was very serious in his letter. A Council meeting has been arranged for tomorrow. We must address this as soon as possible and find out as much information as we can.”

It was difficult to believe. White Walkers were supposed to be nothing but stories to frighten children. But with the Lord Commander of the Night’s Watch issuing such a warning, that had to mean nothing good. White Walkers or not, something was causing a disturbance.

Daenerys lifted herself back off the bench in a hurry, but there was a feeling that overtook her that she had never felt before. Her head started to pulse, her fingers pressing against her forehead as some dizziness set in. When she felt a wetness at her nose, she rubbed the back of her index finger along the nostril. She pulled her finger away, a red color staining her skin. She rubbed some more, and more blood came off, the scent of it filling her nose.

Daenerys opened her mouth to say something but could not, tasting the blood that dripped down onto her lips, a horrid coopery taste. Varys’ eyes widened with fear at the sight before him as she turned back towards him, jaw dropping, horrified.

“Your Grace!”

Everything blurred over until it went black. She felt herself hit the ground, but after that, there was nothing.

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Jon

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“You’re pivoting too sharply,” Jaime pointed out, a sword pointing to his feet. “All you have to do is lose your balance, one misstep and the enemy has you.”

Jaime gave him so many tips that it was hard to keep track of them all, and it was to the point that Jon thought that Jaime was nitpicking out every little that he possibly could. Ser Rodrick had never made such a fuss. Either it was true that Jaime was noticing where Jon could improve or he was just being an ass on purpose. It was never easy to tell the difference.

“Pivoting too sharply?” he barked, it comical to him.

Far off there was a screeching from the dragons that was audible, a sound like no other, as it was
both frightening and alarming. Both Jaime and Jon came to a still in their spots, everything forgotten, as Jaime looked over his shoulder. There was a commotion going somewhere unseen, raised voices shouting in the distance.

“What’s going on?” Jon asked.

Jaime did not answer, as he took off running in the direction of the noise, Jon prompted to follow close behind him. Jaime was by far quicker than Jon, his legs more muscular and longer, and he could find his way through the Red Keep and the gardens even if his eyes were closed. Jon would have no such luck. Still, he was able to keep several paces behind Jaime the whole time, Jaime’s urgency troublesome.

As they approached, Jon could hear familiar voices. A grim sensation attacked his stomach as he caught up to Jaime, stopping next to him to see the sight. Daenerys was on the ground and was being held up by Varys, her body motionless, head tilted backwards, drops of blood staining the rocks below, as well as the gold material that made up the attire Varys wore. When Jon saw the crimson color on her face, he felt his whole world start to whirl.

Varys immediately said, “I’ve already sent a servant to get the Grand Maester.”

“What happened?” boomed Jaime.

Varys shook his head back and forth, processing the events that had just happened. “I don’t know. One moment she was fine, the next…” he looked down at Dany as a swarm of servants began to surround the outer perimeter, drawn in by the noise, gasps rippling through them. “Only poison would do such a thing, I am sure of that. The blood came from her nose.”

Varys exchanged her body with Jaime, Jaime lifting her up into the air in his arms, cradling her with care. Jon felt like he returned to his body then, ready to take action, and got back to his feet.

“How would she have been poisoned?” Jon racked his brain for the answer to his own question. “We’ve eaten the same since I’ve arrived. If it were the food, I would have the same reaction.”

“Wine?” Varys questioned.

“No.”

Jaime started to walk off when Varys stopped him. “Wait.” He quickly examined her body. Varys let his chubby fingers wrap around the necklace Jon had given her and ripped it off of her, a small pink oval in the shape of the gem left behind on her pale skin. “Look. It’s been poisoned. When was this given to her?”

“The necklace…” Jon stepped back, his skin prickling. “It’s my fault.”

Jaime looked like he might have grabbed him by his collar and knocked him to the ground if he did not have Daenerys in his arms. “What?”
“I gave it to her a few days ago.”

It showed on Varys’ face that something had clicked. He held up the gem into the sun, examining it further. “The poison has been slowly seeping into her, but there’s still time. Quick, go!”

Jaime paid no more attention to Varys, heading his request to leave, and started to walk back for the Red Keep where preparations were being made. “It’s in her blood,” he explained to Jon. “We have to drain it out of her.”

The words were horrifying sounding. “Drain it out of her?”

Jon kept glancing over at Dany as she was carried through the Red Keep by Jaime, looking forward every few moments to make sure he was not able to plant his face into the ground or into a pillar. As Jon opened the door to bring them inside, Jaime began to ask questions in a rushed manner, both of them beginning to grow out of breath as they raced.

“Where is the necklace from?”

“The market?”

“Who was it that sold it to you?” growled Jaime.

The lump in his throat was preventing Jon from speaking up, going into shock, and it took Jaime yelling his name for him to snap out of it. “From the market,” he spit out, repeating himself. “It was just an average man selling jewelry.”

It was the least specific identification possible. Plenty of men sold jewelry in King’s Landing, but Jon could picture the man in his head clear at day. Jon just could not find the words to depict him to Jaime when his mind was so focused on Dany’s state.

Jon was not certain how they ended up where they needed to be, but Jaime kicked a door open to reveal that servants were readying a table with cushions and sheets, with Maester Pycelle ushering him in, patting the place for her to be laid down. Jon was about to follow when a hand landed on his shoulder firmly and grabbed him, yanking him backwards, the door shutting right in front of Jon. He turned and saw Ser Barristan standing there, who had just arrived.

“Stay here. You’ll only get in the way.”

“In the way!” he yelled, enraged. “Don’t tell me what I can do! I love her! She needs me.”

“There is nothing you can do but wait.” He held out a hand in front of the both of them. “Calm down.”

Jon started to hyperventilate, his arm covering over his stomach, feeling the heaving. Calm down —what an absolute mad thing to say.

Jon shook his head back and forth, looking at the older man, the Lord Commander of the Queensguard, who also looked to be distraught by the events that had taken place. Rightfully so, as it was his job to protect the Queen, and there she was, poisoned from Jon’s own stupidity.

“It’s my fault,” he said again, that time the emotion slipping through, the reality of it all sinking in to his heart and his soul.

Jon’s hand slipped in back of him to get support from the red painted wall, feeling the cracks in the paint against his palm, only to slip down to the ground as lightheadedness came over him.
It’s my fault. I gave her the necklace.

The guilt set in with full force.

“The necklace…I—”

Jon could not even get the words out of him. Instead, he put his face into the palms of his hands, fingers pressing into the corners of his inner eyes.

Ser Barristan knelt down in front of him unexpectedly. “Breathe, Jon,” he encouraged, voice serious, but it was evident that he had assessed the situation and knew that Jon in a panicked state would not work in his favor.

Breathe.

Jon sucked in some deep breaths and exhaled shallowly. It did not help his heart or mind, but it alleviated from stress on his body, adrenaline still pumping through.

He found it to be amazing that some people much like Ser Barristan managed to keep himself together, as if nothing had happened. Even Jaime had reacted in a way that was mostly collected, focusing on what needed to be done rather being caught up in terror like Jon was.

Jaime reappeared through the doors and Ser Barristan rose from his crouched position. “What does it look like?”

“Grand Maester Pycelle is confident she’ll live. He’s dealt with poison before,” Jaime told him, sounding partially relieved, trying to be reassuring. “We have a job to do. We should round up all the guards we can find. The person we are looking for is a street vender selling jewelry. He would not have acted alone in this.”

The rational side took over, Jon knowing that Jaime was right and it would not have been a one man show. There had to be others. With there being nothing that Jon would be able to do for Daenerys until the Grand Maester extracted the poison out, his mind switched focus.

“Petyr Baelish.”

Jaime turned to him, as if he suddenly was aware that Jon was on the floor losing his mind a moment earlier. “What of him?” There was annoyance in his voice, but Jon looked past that.

Jon blinked through his watering eyes as he sneered, “Who else would have planned something like this?”

Jaime sharply turned to Ser Barristan. “Where is he?”

“He should still be in the castle.”

Jon did not hear the rest of the conversation, anger pulsing through him at a rapid rate. So many emotions had flooded through him in that short amount of time, but the anger was by far the most overwhelming. He wanted Lord Baelish dead, and he vowed that he would make sure that he was, one way or another.

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It was a long night.
Jon stayed outside of the door where Maester Pycelle was still at work, several female servants assisting him with whatever he was doing behind the doors. His eyes grew tired, as the lids kept trying to shut. Jon forced himself to stay awake, not wanting to miss anything, paying careful attention to all the noise that he could hear from the other side of the door. It had quieted down tremendously as the moon took a place high in the sky, then began to descend.

Jaime and Ser Barristan had gone in search of the man that Jon managed to describe later on. Even Oberyn Martell decided to join, as he had seen the man and could also identify him if caught. Jon wanted to go with them, but the thought of having to actually leave Daenerys was too painful. Instead, he waited to see who would be rounded up come the morning.

And as for Petyr Baelish, he was arrested, because otherwise Jon was going to grab a knife and jam it right into the man’s throat. Jon knew he had to be behind it all. He was the only logical one to be pulling the strings.

Before he could let himself get angry about it again, the doors behind him opened inward, and Jon fell backwards onto his side as the door took him. He looked up to see that several servants were carrying Daenerys out quickly, not paying any attention to Jon, just simply walking around him as they hurried down the hall.

Maester Pycelle hobbled towards him, yawning. He glanced down at Jon in his crooked, hunched state, stroking his long beard in a way that was unsettling to Jon. “Have you been here this whole time?”

Jon planted a hand onto the tile to aid in him getting up and off the floor. “Yes.” He poked his head back around the door and into the hall, looking back the way that Dany had gone. “How it she? What happened?” he demanded to know.

Maester Pycelle straightened up his back a little bit, looking proud of himself, dusting off his hands. “I am pleased to announce that our Queen will definitely survive. I had to take a lot of blood from her, and I injected her with several other concoctions, which will help the toxin work its way out over the next several days. I believe that whoever made this poison did not do it properly. Lucky for us, it was not potent enough.”

“She’ll survive,” Jon repeated, letting it ease him.

“Even better, she will fully recover, but it will take some time. Half a fortnight, maybe. We will have to wait and see how it goes. It seems that my interest in poisons has finally paid off.”

Indeed, it had.

“Thank you, Grand Maester,” Jon exclaimed, deeply grateful.

“It’s what I’m here for. Might as well make some use of me once and a while.”

He started to talk about something else completely unrelated, but before he had the chance to try and strike up a conversation with Jon, he quickly interrupted him, the good excuse of needing to see Daenerys working perfectly. Maester Pycelle was not at all offended, not as if Jon would have cared right then, and off Jon went in the direction the servants had gone.

Jon’s first instinct was to find his way back to her chambers, which he was able to find. The servants were tucking Daenerys into her bed when he arrived. Seeing her there was beyond difficult, a punishment of his own making.

Everything had happened so rapidly that day, it was hard to have it all catch up and come to a slow.
A female servant approached him, one he recognized. Jesyme is what he thought he remembered her name being, but was not certain. Jon got a good look at her, seeing that her eyes were blood shot from watering eyes. Clearly, he was not the only one who cared for Daenerys there in that room, and that brought him some comfort.

“There is water on the table for her if she wakes,” she told Jon in a mellow voice, turning back to see her Queen lying there without a muscle moving. “Grand Maester Pycelle says no food for a day.”

“Aye, I’ll make sure of it.”

Jesyme sniffled before she cleared her throat, attempting to keep herself composed. “You should stay with her tonight.”

He had already planned for that.

“I will.”

When the girl left, Jon made his way over to the bed. At the edge, he sat down carefully, trying not to disturb her too much. Dany’s breathing was slower than normal, but the color in her cheeks was returning, a good sign that Maester Pycelle had been telling the truth. Jon put a hand on her forehead to feel her temperature, finding she was hotter than what he was used to. He took it as a good sign, as her body was fighting off whatever was left of the toxin that was inside of her still.

“Dany,” he whispered in a broken voice, even though he knew it risked disturbing her.

To his surprise, she mumbled something back to him, something that sounded much like his own name. “Ouch,” she then grumbled more clearly, her hand going to a bandage that was wrapped around her inner arm.

“Don’t,” he instructed back, catching her hand.

Her eyes opened partway, gazing around the room absently before the violet orbs settled on him. “What’s going on?”

“You were poisoned, but Maester Pycelle says you will recover,” he told her, leaning in, trying to put it as gently as possible, even though there seemed no such way.

How anyone—Baelish—could think to poison her, one of the most wonderful people he knew of, was still beyond his wildest dreams.

More like nightmares.

"It was the necklace,” he confessed. “There was poison in it.”

Her fingers went to trace the spot where it used to be on her neck, brows pulling together in confusion.

“I’m sorry.” He broke down in front of her, though he had been trying not to. It was not the sort of thing that a man was supposed to do, but the emotion swamped him. “You could have died and it would have been my fault.”

"There was no way for you to know."

“I should have—”

“There was no way to have known,” she repeated herself, trying to get him to see it her way.
Daenerys brought her other arm out of the cocoon of sheets, reaching out for Jon. “Come here.”

As if he could have resisted. Jon kicked off his boots and laid himself down next to her on his side.

“What happened while I was out?”

“Jaime and Ser Barristan have not come back yet. The City Watch and them are looking for the man who sold me necklace to me. Lord Baelish is behind this, I know he is.”

“Did you kill him?”

“I didn’t get the chance,” he admitted. “He’s in a guarded cell right now.”

A guarded cell was more of a courtesy than anything because of it were up to Jon, or even Jaime, Lord Baelish would have his head on a spike.

“Jon,” she croaked, “forget the necklace. There are more important things to be concerned about.”

“What?” Jon was confused. Her life had been at risk, hanging in the balance, yet there she was thinking about something else. “More important? You could have died and I—”

“The Lord Commander of the Night’s Watch says there are White Walkers. A scroll arrived today explaining it. I need you to go in my place to the Small Council meeting tomorrow to figure out where we go from here.”

“Me?”

“I trust your judgement.”

“Can’t the Small Council figure things out?”

She squeezed his hand. “I need you there. I don’t think that Lord Commander Mormont would be lying about this, nor is he delusional in any way. It’s like the dream I had. Do you remember? It’s a sign…or prophecy…”

Her eyes started to flutter, and Jon knew she was falling asleep again. “Shhh,” he hushed her. He brought her hand up to his mouth and kissed the soft skin. “Go back to sleep.”

“Tell me you’ll go tomorrow. I need you to.”

He placed his hand around the side of her head, drawing in close, “Yes, I’ll go,” he whispered against her ear, “and I’ll be here when you wake up.”

As her eyes shut, Jon crawled under the covers, holding her body close to him.
When the Wolf Leads the Pack

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Jon

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He wouldn’t say that he was nervous about the meeting. The anger masked much of anything else that might have been felt, leaving him tense. Jon’s head still pulsed with the thoughts of Petyr Baelish meeting his end. The fact that he was still alive made Jon on edge.

He had left a sleeping Dany that morning, not about to wake her, her body needing as much rest as possible to recover. Feeling her breathing normally was enough to get Jon up and out of bed to complete her wishes. He told Ghost to stay with Dany even though he had prepared to depart with Jon. It made him feel better knowing that his direwolf would be there to protect if necessary, or even just to snuggle next to Daenerys. Ghost obeyed and headed back over to the area in the corner laid out with blankets to keep watch.

When he approached the Small Council chambers, the guards beat him to opening the doors, and Jon walked through to find that everyone was there in their seats waiting for him. They all were expecting Jon to be there, as he had sent word in the early morning so that no one was surprised with his presence there.

It was a room that Jon had never been in before. It was darker than he expected, especially due to the overcast that had descended over King’s Landing overnight, thick clouds hanging low in combination with fog that crept up from the shores. The eerie hue bounced off the walls, the chandelier overhead needing to have candles lit for all to see each other properly, a metal holder with ten candles already burning on the table.

Jon’s skin pricked as he approached the group, Tyrion, Tywin, Oberyn, Grand Maester Pycelle, and Varys all seated, all with their eyes inspecting Jon as his boots hit the stone and echoed against the walls.

As he sat down at the head of the table, where Dany would sit, he was unsure of how to begin. Jon had never been in a leadership position before, never quite expected it, and definitely not one the scale that it was then. Daenerys had put a significant amount of trust in him to be there in her place and he did not want to mess anything up on her behalf.

Varys was to Jon’s immediate left, looking at Jon in a slightly uncomfortable way, still wondering that his angle might be. Jon didn’t blame him for being suspicious, he decided, after all, it was his duty to be. Jon was there and was sitting in Dany’s place after she nearly died from something that was Jon’s own mistake. The Master of Whispers was always on guard, always watching.

Lucky for Jon, Tyrion noticed Jon’s uneasiness and started off their conversation. He clasped his hands together on the large table, leaning in. “This is a troubling time, but we still must carry on until the Queen is better. Tensions are high, that can be acknowledged, but there are two pressing matters to be addressed here today.”

Jon jumped in with the reminder. “Lord Baelish needs to die,” Jon said without any fear of being perceived as harsh. “That’s one matter solved.”
No one spoke up right away, and Jon took to tapping the underneath of the table, waiting for a response of some kind.

“Agreed,” sounded off Lord Tywin.

Oberyn slowly waved a hand through the air as if he were instructing a musical group. “Lord Baelish has proven to be a dangerous man, one who does not even have to use a sword to be a risk.”

“His weapon is his mind,” Lord Tywin sneered dryly, his mouth shifting from side to side in between his pauses, “and his ability to manipulate those around him.”

“It could be that he was aware of our knowledge of his treason. We could all be targets,” Varys chipped into the conversation with the warning. “Including you, Jon—”

He gave Jon a strange look as he dragged out his name, it coming to an abrupt end. There was the slightest movement of his eyebrows, as if he were questioning something. Jon was in no mood for it. He wanted Varys to spit out whatever it was that was on his mind.

“Tell me, what is it?”

He shifted around, looking at the others before back to Jon. “We aren’t sure how to address you properly.”

Jon closed his eyes. Not this again.

“Jon works fine for me.”

“For now, yes, but if you are staying here, and from what I know that is the plan, you may want to decide on a surname, or a title. This is King’s Landing, not Winterfell. Here there are a lot of people you will meet, and those people ought to not be left wondering what the proper way to address you is.”

It was an odd time to bring something like that up, but Jon had to admit that he had been thinking about it also. From the time he could remember, he wanted to be Jon Stark. All along, in a way, he had been. Lyanna Stark was his mother. It seemed like a natural fit, him with a Stark name—but there were more important matters to attend to.

“We need to focus on the problems,” he told them all, a bit gruff, in a way that showed his irritation, not wanting to get off track. “What of the merchant? Jaime told me this morning that he was found late last night.”

Tywin cleared his throat. “The City Watch scoured every house, yet this man was found boarding a small boat.”

Oberyn added, “It was him, I am sure.”

Jon nodded slowly. “I’d like to confirm that myself.”

“As long as you are unarmed when you do so,” Tywin said as he lowered his head, his fierce eyes warning Jon.

Jon’s hand clenched below the table, but he forced himself to release the grip. He felt antsy sitting there, feeling like he needed to get up and walk around to get rid of the feeling.

“It seems as though the merchant no longer wishes to speak, but what he did say last night was that
he claims to know nothing of a Lord Baelish or that the necklace was poisoned,” Varys told them all. “The likely story.”

Jon sat back in the chair with a loud thud. “Knows nothing of Lord Baelish? Of course not. For all we know, Lord Baelish could have threatened his family if he said anything to anyone. There could be an assassin out there waiting to strike.”

“You make a good point,” Oberyn claimed, his chin raised as he contemplated Jon’s words.

“Someone must have tipped off the merchant if he decided not to flee until last night,” Tyrion added thoughtfully.

It made Jon wonder how far the plot to kill Daenerys ran—a thought that scared him.

Maester Pycelle loudly coughed, clearing his throat for longer than necessary, everyone’s attention going to the old man who had been silent up until then. He moved his torso in towards the table, hunched over, the chains bumping against the wood. Jon caught the look of annoyance on Lord Tywin’s face. “Is this merchant of any value? He poisoned our Queen. Jon is right. He must not live another day. Why make matters complicated when they are simple?”

Tyrion quickly interjected, turning to Jon with a hopeful face. “Jon, filling in for Daenerys, this would be your decision. Yes, the merchant could die today on your order, but there may be more we do not know. Lord Baelish may be a treacherous man, but he no doubt had friends in high places. We would need proof of his involvement in this scheme if we were to execute him for it, or else we are no better than the Mad King.”

Jon saw why Daenerys had chosen Tyrion Lannister as her Hand. Jon had heard wild stories of the Dwarf of Casterly Rock, yet he was proving to be a sensible man, one who strategized in his head, playing out every scenario, seeing where there were holes that needed filling.

It was funny, really. The Bastard of Winterfell and the Dwarf of Casterly Rock, both who had lived as outsiders their whole lives, but fate had managed to throw them into the same world. They had made their way, with some stumbling, forging their own paths around the highest of people in the lands.

The Dwarf of Casterly Rock, now the Hand of the Queen of the Seven Kingdoms.

The Bastard of Winterfell, the legitimate son of Rhaegar Targaryen and Lyanna Stark—and lover to Daenerys Targaryen.

Lover.

Suddenly, Jon was left wanting more. The idea of marriage fell back into his mind for a moment before he realized that Tyrion was still waiting for a response from him.

Jon leaned in once more, coming to the realization that he could not let rage blind him from sensibleness. As much as he might want Lord Baelish dead, there was a course of action that should be followed. He drew in a deep breath and let the decision wash over him, trying to let the aggravation go. “Find out more on the merchant, who his family is and where he is from. Say that we will have his family relocated and protected if he decides to find his tongue again.”

It was strange how Jon felt that he was not all that bad at the job and delegating the tasks. As frustrating as it was that they had no proof at the moment that, Jon realized that it was only a taste of the stress of being in charge.
“We do know, however, that while the Mad King was here, Lord Baelish was using money…”

Tywin gave a look of disapproval, shooting an icy glance at his son “…to fund brothels.”

“Brothels?” Jon asked, disgusted. That was where the money was going? “Are you sure?”

“Indeed,” Varys affirmed. “My little mice in Essos report that he has been investing in several brothels in slave cities as well.”

“Why would Lord Baelish take money to fund brothels?” Jon asked the group. “Out of all the places possible, that was were he chose to invest?”

It didn’t make much sense for a wise man like Petyr Baelish to waste his time establishing such places where women sold their bodies to whatever might walk through the door.

“Brothels make money,” Tywin explained darkly, “and money buys a lot, especially secrets.”

“Are you saying he could be gathering and selling secrets?” Jon asked.

“Indeed.”

“In that case,” Tyrion noted, not put off by his father’s scolding that was delivered with his eyes and tone, “we don’t know what he might have told others, perhaps those in high places in Essos.”

“It would be of our concern to ensure that whatever Lord Baelish might know dies with him,” Maester Pycelle chipped in again, his bushy brows moving upward.

Jon didn’t see any particular threat from Essos or anyone in power from there. Daenerys had three dragons, ones that would be full grown in the years to come, perhaps becoming as large as Balerion the Black Dread one day. Jon doubted anyone from Essos would ever use any of those potential secrets while dragons rode the skies and shadowed the grounds below. Dragons made Daenerys the most powerful person in their world, an idea he wondered if she had thought about, as it had just dawned on him.

“Let’s not be concerned over what may or may not have been sold as a secret,” Jon decided. “Lord Baelish will be dealt with soon enough, but for now he will remain in his cell. Now, Daenerys mentioned White Walkers. What of this?”

Maester Pycelle made a sound at the back of his throat as if he were choking that made everyone look over at the man one again. It looked like he was not made aware of the White Walker information yet. It also looked as if Tywin was disappointed that Pycelle had not fallen out of his seat choking until the point of being unconscious. It was more that obvious he disliked the Maester.

“Agreed. We should discuss this letter from the Lord Commander of the Night’s Watch. He claims White Walkers are among us again,” Tyrion announced, handing the scroll over to Jon. “Apparently, they have risen up out of the snow and ice and grow in numbers with every passing day. According to him, of course.”

“Sounds like folklore,” Oberyn sighed, skeptical.

Jon briefly skimmed the words on the scroll, troubled by the urgency he noticed from the ink. “I’ll write to my Uncle Benjen,” Jon told them. “He is First Ranger at the Wall. He might have more too add to the story.”

“I would urge you to send the raven today,” Tyrion told him, taking the scroll back. “It says here that fire destroys these dead men.”
“Fire?” questioned Oberyn quizzically. His eyes went to the ceiling as he thought. “Why fire?”

“It doesn’t say. Apparently regular weapons don’t slow them down all that much. Only fire will get rid of them.”

“Are we under the impression that these tales are true?” mocked the Maester with a laugh.

“The Lord Commander of the Night’s Watch would have no reason to tell lies to us. What would he gain? He is sending us a warning,” Tyrion pulled another scroll out from his pocket, holding it out for Jon to take. “As well as an invitation to come and see it as proof. They need aid in manning the Wall if there is a war to come.”

Jon hesitated. “A war?”

“Against the dead,” Tyrion finished, the kick of humor in his voice.

“Absurd,” Maester Pycelle commented firmly, accentuating the syllables.

Jon was beginning to get irritated with the Maester and his remarks, even if he had saved Dany’s life, he was being nothing but a nuisance. Jon didn’t even understand why the Grand Maester had to be there at Council meetings. It was not as if he was offering any sort of valuable information. And if anyone knew the feeling, it was Tywin Lannister, who had resorted to staring Pycelle down with a look that could make a snarling dog start to cower. Jon hoped maybe it would keep him quiet before he had to say something.

“I would be happy to journey to the Wall if it would be of service.” Oberyn bit at his lip as he toyed with the idea. “Out of all of us here, I have no shame in claiming I am the most skilled fighter. If these dead men exist, it would be wise to send someone who can fight them off and be able to make it back to King’s Landing.”

“What of your family in Dorne?” Jon questioned.

“Yes, what of my daughter and my grandchildren?” Tywin questioned, laying a hand flat onto the table. Jon sensed the attitude. “Have you forgotten about them?”

“I would never forget them. Cersei knows what being on the Council entails. She knows she is more than welcome to come here, but she has made Dorne her home. Our youngest is still only the age of ten. She does not think uprooting her would be wise.”

“So,” Tywin sighed, “you plan to be as far North as North goes and be away for months at a time and—”

“Enough,” Jon demanded. “You can talk of this on your own time.”

“Apolologies,” they both said at the same time.

Jon addressed Oberyn. “For now, you’ll stay here. I will see what my Uncle Benjen says and we will go from there. We need more information, but we should see what we can do about sending more men. I remember overhearing at Winterfell that the Wall hasn’t been manned the way it should in many years.”

“That is already in the works. Daenerys saw to the start of that. As the next moon comes around, we should have a few hundred men to send from King’s Landing and The Reach. Men with some sort of skills, not the usual thieves and other criminals that have been sent in these recent years.”
A few hundred men would not be enough, but it was a start. Something was better than nothing.

Tyrion sat up straighter in his sit, beckoning for Jon’s attention again. “They die by fire,” he repeated, an idea sparking inside his head, it noticeably playing out on his face. “What about wildfire?”

“What of it?”

“It can be made in large quantities. Perhaps this is something we should table for now until we know more, but keep as an option in the future. If a dead army is really upon us, one that dies by fire, then wildfire would be our aid.”

“Yes,” Varys nodded, following the train of thought. “The alchemists can begin the process of making and storing it.”

Wildfire, Jon thought. A strange thing it was. He had heard of the concoction that had a green glow that could not be put out. He had not been aware that it was something that the alchemists would be able to create, as he always had suspected that it was just a story used by Targaryens to keep their power.

Jon inquired quickly, “Can it be transported?”

“I would suggest not. Wildfire is extremely unstable,” Tyrion explained, looking to be somewhat intrigued by the idea. “One careless move, and, well, tragedy strikes.”

“Having it stored in the city is dangerous,” Jon said, shaking his head. “We cannot take such a risk.”

There were too many lives at risk, and Jon knew that Daenerys would never agree to such recklessness. It was not something that Jon would be willing to risk either.

They die by fire—and dragons breathed fire.

White Walkers and dead armies had to be some sort of magic, and the only way to fight magic was with magic, if there really was such a thing. But the dragons, well, Jon would have to consider them a type of magic. They had all been nothing but stone at one point, but were living beings that grew amongst them all currently.

A strange world it was… and it seemed like he kept thinking that over and over—and more frequently.

—

He needed a moment to himself, just to breathe and to understand that his life was changing even as he lived in King’s Landing. He had thought the hard part was over, the part of leaving Winterfell and his family, but he had been wrong. The hard part was finding a place. Jon reflected about the meeting earlier with the Small Council, how they all seemed to follow his lead without question. He wondered if he was a good leader or if they were all pretending it was that way to appease him. In King’s Landing, it was hard to tell what people really were thinking.

All he hoped was that he had done a good job in Dany’s place. Jon wanted her to be proud of him, wanted her to see that he was more than just the boy she fell in love with in Winterfell—and that was something that was beginning to stir inside of him, something that was entirely unexpected. He was not sure how to handle it, to be honest.

As Jon was about to step back inside, he noticed a patch of flowers growing in the garden amongst
the others, these ones standing out from the rest. The majority of the color was purple, the multicolored middle poking outward being a mixture of maroon and yellow. On impulse, he plucked the flower from the large stem, it nearly the size of his fist, petals extending outwards and curling at the ends. Jon knew little of romance, it was true, but giving flowers to girls was something of common knowledge.

When he arrived back to Dany’s chambers, she was nestled on her side in bed with a book in her hands. He smiled at the sight.

“You’re awake,” he noticed happily.

All the stress from the day melted away into nothing, Jon leaving that stress at the door as he kicked off his boots and tore off the clothes on his upper half.

She put the book down, not saving the page she was on. “How did it go today?”

“Better than I thought it would,” he told her honestly.

He approached the bed and handed over the flower. Daenerys took it, lifting it to her nose to breathe in the scent. “I love these ones.” She brought it down to lay against her chest. “Thank you.”

Jon climbed into bed next to her as she tucked the flower into a cup of water that was on a table on the other side of the bed, placing the book there too.

“So, you said the Council meeting went well?”

“I believe it did.”

“I knew it would. Perhaps, your presence can be more regular at these meetings,” she shamelessly hinted.

Honestly, he wouldn’t be opposed to it. “As long as you want me there, I can be there. As long as I wouldn’t be overstepping.”

“Don’t be ridiculous. You wouldn’t be overstepping.”

She ran the backs of her nails along his arm as he switched over to his side, cuddling her body as she turned to lay on her back, facing the canopy of white above.

“Did someone come and tell you what all happened at the meeting?” Jon inquired.

“No.”

He started to chuckle to himself. “Varys didn’t come running to you to right after to give you all the details? No transcription of every word spoken?”

That made her crack a smile, just as he had hoped. “We should be fortunate that Varys is loyal, given all he knows. His support is crucial. But, no, he did not come to relay everything that happened. I can hear that from you. So, tell me. What of the White Walkers?”

Jon rolled in the bed next to her, the sheet catching on his foot as he moved into a position on his back with his hands resting on his abdomen. “It was mentioned that fire can kill them. It was suggested that the alchemists begin created wildfire in preparation if there really are those things lurking about on the other side of the Wall. I said it was a bad idea.”

“Wildfire is too dangerous,” she agreed, a bit sleepily.
“Those were precisely my thoughts, especially since we know so little of what is going on Beyond the Wall.” Jon tilted his head to the side. “How do you feel?”

“I felt weak when I woke, but now I just feel tired.”

“You should sleep,” he offered.

Daenerys pouted. “I’ve done enough of that already. I have not been awake for very long.”

She slipped the straps of her gown down her arms, pulling ever so slightly at the waist to pull the material down her arms just enough so that he got a good look.

Jon groaned as he placed a hand down onto the bed to prop himself up further. “Don’t do this to me.”

“Do what?” she asked innocently.

He smirked wildly. “If only people knew how demanding of me you were,” he joked.

“Demanding?” she laughed, fingers tapping at his chin. “Ah, yes, the Queen commands you to remove your clothes.”

He raised an eyebrow. “Does she?”

“Yes.”

“And I won’t be hurting you?”

She stuck her fingers right into his mouth and Jon bit down lightly.

“I was poisoned, I didn’t fall off a horse and break a rib. My body still wants what it wants, and that is you.”

Resisting Daenerys was obviously not an option for Jon. He rolled halfway onto her body, throwing a leg in between hers. With a brush of his thumb against her cheek, he molded against her entirely, testing his weight just to make sure that there were not any side effects that would cause her pain with him on top of her.

Jon’s right hand slid the gown down all the way to her waist, kissing her slowly, pulling at her bottom lip until she moaned. His touches were bold, but tentative. Their desire for each other was intense, a flame that was always growing, escalating to a new level. He knew what it felt like to be scared of losing Dany, of losing that part of him that had found a place that was safe. She had his heart—all of it.

“I need you,” Daenerys murmured, clawing at his back.

His breeches were gone in an instant, and Jon bucked his hips up into her warmth with a smile, Daenerys arching her back as he did. He made an effort to not put too much weight onto her, keeping a steady elbow planted on the bed, a hand in between them, fingers rubbing circular motions against the spot he knew from the sounds she made was exactly what would give her pleasure.

To his surprise, it wasn’t long until she started to squirm and say his name. They went back and forth whispering the other’s name until the movements came to a still and they were left breathless.

The pair laid there tangled in sheets after, forgetting all that was going on outside of the room. It was just the two of them.
“I love you,” he told her, a declaration he made frequently.

Her nose brushed his. “I love you.”

“I want to ask you about something that came up today at the Council meeting. It seems that people are not too happy with just calling me Jon.”

“Ah.” It looked as though Daenerys had that mentioned to her before. “Go on.”

Jon was hesitant to but pushed himself to get the words out because he wanted to address it. Jon had been learning that he should not be keeping things bottled up, instead he needed to try to share this thoughts. “It’s more regarding a surname. I’ve been thinking about it recently too, I wanted to know your thoughts.”

“It’s not up to me,” she explained. “It’s your choice. I’ll support what you want.”

He was almost hoping that he wasn’t going to have to make a decision himself, but did appreciate that Daenerys gave him the reins to make his own choice and that she would support that choice, whatever it might be.

Jon took her hand, pulling it across to his chest as they drifted to sleep.

Stark, he told himself as he began to slip away, he would write to his family and tell them that he was going to choose to wear that surname. It was the natural choice.
Nearly another fortnight went by, one which was overwhelmingly busy for Jon as he managed the Small Council, navigating through the White Walker debacle that was unfolding, along with Lord Baelish finally being executed as Daenerys regained her strength. Jon had been right, as the merchant’s family had been threatened with their lives if he were to tell a single soul about the plan. With his corroboration, they had enough on Baelish to throw his head onto the block.

Jon was there when it happened, as was Jaime when Lord Baelish tried to talk his way out of death up until the point Ser Ilyn Payne grabbed his sword, ready. It was a relief when it was all over with, and Jon would dare to say that he enjoyed watching Lord Baelish be executed, as he had looked dumbfounded at his downfall. Jon would have laid the sword to Lord Baelish’s neck himself if it weren’t for the royal policies. Ser Ilyn Payne was there for a reason. Best to not take over his role, even for a day.

They kept it a quiet matter though, not wanting it to be public knowledge of Daenerys suffering the assassination attempt. Ser Barristan and Tyrion thought it might send the city into a nervous fit. The people loved Daenerys, they believed in her and the reign to come, and they might have even stormed the gates just to get to Lord Baelish had they been made aware. Jon would have liked to have seen that. A quick and easy death was not suitable for a man like Petyr Baelish, yet that was what he had gotten.

Yes, he was still bitter about it. And, yes, it was obvious, even days after the fact.

But a good thing to come out of the execution was that there seemed to be a common breath of relief that trickled through everyone in the castle. They could all fall back into a rhythm.

All was well in King’s Landing too—apart from the knowledge about situation on the other side of the Wall. That was a whole other story that had yet to have all the pieces put together. There was not a whole lot of clarity, but with the information they did have, it didn’t sound too good. His Uncle Benjen’s letter had finally arrived that day, telling him about dead men he had encountered that walked as if they were alive.

Jon didn’t want to believe it, but there was no other option but to see the threat as a truth.

The letter was still in his hands when Tyrion came waltzing through the doors, looking to be in a particularly happy mood. He had a hard time not showing it.

“I just spoke with our Queen,” he disclosed. “She looks exceedingly well.”

Jon nodded at the comment. “She feels that way too.”

_Thank the Gods._
“Here. This came for you,” Tyrion announced, taking the seat across from Jon at the desk that Dany would sit at. “From Winterfell.”

Jon took the scroll immediately. Jon’s eyes glossed over Robb’s handwriting. It was mostly updates about the family. Bran was improving with his archery skills, Arya had taken up horse riding with dedication, and both Sansa and Rickon were hoping to visit sometime soon, but mostly it was just Sansa who was talking about coming to King’s Landing nonstop.

All was well, plain and simple.

Jon focused in on the last words, the letters burning into his eyes.

I miss you,

Robb

It made his heart ache. Jon did not know when the next time he would see Robb or his family. He wondered how old the younger ones would be the next time Jon would visit them, how much they would change as they grew. The stress from the many weeks had only made him feel homesick. Jon wasn’t sure if the feeling would ever pass. It would just be something that he would get used to.

He tried to look on the bright side, counting himself lucky to have people to miss, to have a family that cared. Not all were as fortunate. Even then, telling himself that made not much of a difference.

The letter he had planned to send about using the surname Stark had gone unwritten, unsure of how to word it, and also unsure of that decision altogether. He thought it would have been simple, the simplest decision to have ever been made, yet it was not, to his disappointment—his extreme disappointment.

His face must have shown the uneasiness because Tyrion cocked his head to the side, eyeing Jon with concern, as if he were trying to put the puzzle that was Jon’s head together. “Is everything okay in the North?”

“Perfectly fine.”

“And that bothers you?” he asked, confused.

“No, not at all. I just miss them.”

“And?” he pursued further, trying to get Jon’s thoughts out of him—not an easy task to do.

Jon pulled a new piece of scroll paper from the stack of them and dabbed into some ink, ready to write Robb back with his own stories of what was happening in King’s Landing. “It’s personal,” he said with his head down.

Unfortunately, Tyrion Lannister was not someone who was easily swayed by Jon’s persistent avoidance. Probably another reason why he made a good Hand of the Queen.

“Ah, there’s no such thing here in the capital.” He motioned around the room with two hands, adding a small chuckle. “And certainly not within these walls. So, I’ll ask again. What’s bothering you?”

Jon sighed, slightly aggravated, but also touched that Tyrion was concerned. “You wouldn’t understand.”
Tyrion leaned over and poured himself a glass of wine, a glass that was noticeably filled quite high. He then picked up another goblet and poured the same amount into another, pushing it towards Jon slowly, as if he were trying to entice him into drinking. It made him wonder if Tyrion thought that was a normal amount to drink or if he were purposefully trying to get Jon drunk so he spilled his secrets.

“I might not understand, but I’m a good listener.”

Jon looked up at him, leaving the wine untouched. “I’ll keep it in mind, but for now…”

He trailed off and Tyrion got the hint. “I see you’re busy.” He hopped down from the chair and headed for the door, taking his wine with him, two hands wrapped around it to keep the wine safe from spilling over. “You know where to find me if you need me.”

Hopefully not passed out in the gardens, he thought to himself with a smirk.

If there was anyone Jon knew he could talk to, it would have been Robb. Jon imagined that he might be the only one who might have a relative understanding of what Jon was thinking. It was too bad that he was a thousand leagues away and not down the hall like he had been for nearly all their lives.

—

Jon had his arms rested on top of the stone wall that acted as a barrier between the castle grounds and the sea that was below. It was not an angry sea that day, the waves gently rocking up and over large boulders. Jon had been out there for some time, the sun dipping down below the horizon, torches lit behind him in its place. Ghost had followed him, in need of being outside. His loyal companion followed close to him the whole time, sitting down at Jon’s side.

The only thing heard from that place was the waves that hit against the wall, a slow gurgling and sloshing. Jon had tucked himself away in the farthest part of the boundary, just to stare out at the sea and be alone with his thoughts.

That was until Jaime marched himself down to the spot and interrupted—and how he had even thought to look for Jon there was perplexing.

“Jon Stark, is it now?”

Jon turned his head over his shoulder as Jaime took a spot along the wall a few yards from him. “It’s more of a consideration for others. I was told that I should have a surname, given that Snow is incorrect.”

“Why Stark?”

It was a valid question, but being interrogated about the choice was not something that Jon was in mood for. In fact, most anything Jaime said Jon felt he was not in the mood for.

“It’s the only name I’ve ever known,” he admitted. “I am both Stark and Targaryen, but Starks raised me. My mother, Lyanna Stark, died giving birth to me and Ned Stark took me. I was raised in the North, in Winterfell. Stark felt like the natural path. To me, just having the surname Stark doesn’t make me any less Targaryen.”

“Does it? You might think that’s true,” Jaime told him, “but what does it tell others when they hear the name Stark and not Targaryen?”

Jon turned away, aggravated. “Have you ever considered that it doesn’t matter to me what others
Jaime laughed at one might have thought had been a hilarious joke. “It’s crossed my mind, but I don’t believe it for a moment. You care, you’ve always cared what people think of you. The Bastard of Winterfell, never able to measure up to the golden Robb Stark. You care. Don’t lie. Nothing has changed.”

Jon stayed silent.

“You see, me?” He shook his head back and forth, one shoulder raised up. “I don’t care what people think, apart from Daenerys, of course. That’s because I have one job and one job only. Protect her, protect you, by any means necessary. That is going to be my life, as it has been for years now. But you, Jon, you have to care what people think, especially of those closest to you. You’re a part of something bigger now, Jon. Don’t ever forget that.”

“Then what am I supposed to do?” he snapped loudly, the sound echoing off the rocks, his voice carried out to the sea. “I thought saying I’m a Stark would solve the problem and relieve the anxiety.” Jon shifted so that he leaned his back against the wall, crossing his ankles, mumbling, “It has brought nothing but more trouble.”

“And for a reason,” Jaime told him as he got closer, standing in front of Jon, his body blocking out the light from a torch behind him. “Your mind is fighting your heart, don’t you see that? It is just like you said, you’re both Stark and Targaryen. Why not honor both and have both names?”

Jon’s jaw dropped, the corner of his mouth twitching. “It’s so simple for you, isn’t it?”

“Not at all, it was only a suggestion. Jon Stark Targaryen doesn’t sound like too bad of a name, now does it?”

Jon shifted from one foot to the other. The whole conversation was making him feel uncomfortable. “I don’t feel like a Targaryen,” he admitted into the wind, closing his eyes as he made another bottled up secret known—to Jaime, of all people.

Ghost, who had been silent the entire time, could sense the tension, laying down at Jon’s side with a whine that sounded sad.

Jaime’s eyes softened a touch and he was more even toned when he spoke next, almost soothing, which was odd for Jaime. “Perhaps that is because you haven’t tried,” he offered, pointing out a truth that had gone unnoticed by Jon. “You need to find a connection or you’re always going to feel lost and out of place. I don’t want that for you, and I know for a fact that Daenerys doesn’t either. She worries.”

“How do you connect with an ancestry when only one person in the whole world shares that ancestry significantly, and that person happens to be the person I love?” Jon bent over and picked up a few small pebbles, tossing them off the ledge into the water below. “How?”

“Learn the history, ask questions. I knew Rhaegar, not closely, but I was here when he was alive. Ser Barristan knew him even longer. There is so much you do not know, and I’m thinking it’s because you’re afraid to know it. You think you’ll be losing yourself in some way, but really, truly, that it not the case. You can only gain from here on out. Think about it.”

The advice seemed to have come out of thin air. Jon stood there unable to formulate any words into a sentence in response.

“Stop holding onto the idea of Jon Snow. That is the past, this is the present. Be the man you need to
be. Allow the transformation to take its natural course.”

There was silence for a few beats as Jon thought through what had been said. It occurred to him that Jaime had sought him out with the purpose of giving the speech that he did, that it had not been an impromptu sort of deal. Shockingly, he seemed to care, which was a bit of a baffling idea to Jon given their past conversations and Jaime’s cocky attitude.

Jaime, feeling as though he had done what he came there to do, started to walk back the way he had come. Jon could feel Ghost stirring down by his feet, like he was urging him to continue the conversation.

“Why are you being nice to me all of a sudden?” he questioned, skeptical.

Jaime turned back around. “Because I know you’re going to be sticking around. Ser Barristan watched Daenerys grow up, protecting the royal family. I hope to one day watch Daenerys have her children and to be able to protect them, to watch them grow. They’ll be your children too, little Targaryen children who will one day play in the Spring air. You want that, don’t you?”

“Yes,” he confirmed.

Jaime tossed a hand into the air. “Then stop ignoring what is right in front of you. Telling yourself to accept you’re both Stark and Targaryen is different from feeling it, from really feeling it deep in your bones. It’ll take time, so don’t rush it. Everything will fall into place.”

Jaime turned and begun to depart back towards the castle, but once again Jon prevented him from going further.

“What is it you said?” he called after him.

Jaime abruptly came to a stop. “About what?”

“Jon Stark Targaryen, was it?”

He nodded. “Think about it.”

“I will.”

Jaime took in a breath, a deep one, filled with ocean air. He then looked at Jon like he was struggling with how to say what he wanted to. Jon knew how that felt more than anyone.

“Listen, no one said this was going to be easy. Living in King’s Landing is not easy. It takes a lot of dedication.” He motioned back to the castle with his thumb hiked over his shoulder. “Being in charge of a group of power hungry individuals is not easy. Making decisions that will affect the realm is not easy. That’s how it is. Loving Daenerys is not easy.”

Loving Daenerys is not easy.

“It’s worth it though,” he confirmed, never wavering on that. If he knew one thing, it would be that. “I love her. Everything that comes with it is…well, it is what it is. I understand now that her job is difficult. I’ve only been helping for a short time. It’s stressful. It gives me a headache, to be honest.”

Jaime pointed up to his head. “Maybe you’re just tying that too tight.”

Jon’s hand instantly reached behind his head to the bun while he shot a glare at Jaime. “You’re funny.”
“You’re not the first person to tell me that. Maybe I can be the Royal Fool as well as a member of the Queensguard. I’d have to run that by Daenerys.”

Jaime was never out of comebacks. Never.

“Do you love her?” Jon asked point blank.

Jaime smiled, as if he were anticipating that question for a long time. “Of course I do, but not in the way you think. It’s more of a familial type of way, not romantic. Her mother, Rhaella, however, there was something there, some feelings, at least on my part there was.”

“You never told her?”

“No, never acted on anything. I’m a knight, was a member of the Kingsguard under her husband’s rule. I stayed true to my vows.”

“And you never regretted that?”

“Sometimes yes, sometimes no. It depends on the day.” Jaime pulled half of his face into a smile, glancing at the ground. “Come on, Jon, let’s go back inside.”

Jon waved for his direwolf, ready to depart. “Come on, Ghost.”

They walked back in total silence, but Jon thought the whole way back to the castle doors that it seemed like there was a newfound respect between the two of them through their conversation. Something had shifted for the better.

—

She stood there on the balcony looking out when Jon arrived back at her chambers, the room where he had stayed consistently since his arrival. He wasn’t even sure if he had his own room there in the Red Keep but didn’t dare ask because he didn’t want one.

Jon let the door shut lightly so she wouldn’t hear him come in. Daenerys was back to herself again, as if nothing had ever happened. She might not be too concerned about the events of the past moving forward but Jon knew that the incident would mark him until he died, always an edge of paranoia there in his mind.

Maybe it was a good thing…or maybe it would just end up annoying Dany.

But, there when they were alone, there was no worry. She was staring out towards the city below, the wind brushing her hair backwards.

“Dany,” he called.

There was a smile on her face before she even turned around. “There you are. I’ve been waiting up for you.”

“I’m sorry I took so long,” he apologized.

Ghost trotted over to the usual spot he bedded down for during the night as Jon collapsed into a chair around a circular table with two burning candles in the middle.

“Long day?” she asked, but it mostly was not a question.

“I’m ready for you to attend these meetings again,” he admitted, half laughing about it.
Daenerys came behind him, her hand patting his head before she kissed the top. “You’ve been quieter recently,” she started off, thumbs pressing into his back as she massaged. “What’s on your mind?”

“Am I worrying you? You are the second person today to ask that question.”

“Hmm,” she hummed, “and am I the first to actually get an answer out of you?”

Jon smiled. “Yes. I’m just thinking about Jaime said to me.”

“Regarding?”

Daenerys always knew not to push, knew when to give him the space he needed. That also meant that Daenerys also knew when to push, when and how to get him talking. She had the art of getting the words out of him, one way or another.

“Do you remember when I was talking about the surname I’m supposed to have? That your Small Council members see it fit that I choose?”

“I do.”

“Well, I thought that I had, I told you that. But, I’ve made another recent discovery. Jaime made me realize that I don’t actually have to choose.” He tilted his head backwards so he could look her in the eyes. Dany let her fingers go back into his hair as she pulled the bun loose, curls bouncing out every direction. “I want to ask you about it.”

“You keep asking me what I think.”

He took her hand and rubbed it against his cheek. “I love you. That is what happens. The rest of my life I’m going to be asking your opinion.”

Daenerys pressed her lips together. “Go on.”

“Jon Stark Targaryen. Does it sound…strange?”

She smiled down at him, the corners of her eyes wrinkling. “Not at all. That is who you are. There you have it. That is my opinion.”

He kissed her soft hands. “Thank you,” he whispered.

She pulled him out of his seat, headed for the bed, her violet dress from the day dragging on the floor as he trailed behind her. They both readied for a night’s sleep, the silky curtains blowing with the wind. The nights where the time when the approaching winter was most noticeable. The constant breeze from off the sea turned chilly in the dead of night, several more blankets added to the bed. Soon they would need to have a fire going inside to keep warm once the first frost came. Robb said in his letter that a snow had already fallen in Winterfell, a white blanket covering the ground. That would be King’s Landing in time. There was no such thing as escaping a coming winter.

When Jon finally flopped down onto his back, Daenerys joined him, her head falling against his chest. “We should go to Dragonstone once everything settles down. It would be good for you to connect with the Targaryen ancestry.”

It echoed back to what Jaime had told him. Jon briefly wondered how much Jaime told Dany before coming to Jon, or if it was just noticeable that Jon lacked the connection.
Jon had heard tales of Dragonstone, of the monstrous fortress build on an island made from volcanic rock, surrounded by the sea. It was the Targaryen seat ever since they arrived in Westeros, before the doom of Valyria. Other than that, Jon knew very little of any other details other than rumors that circulated about the castle.

“The dragons would love it,” Jon mentioned, seeing that they had grown significantly, ready to take to the skies. “But what of everyone else? Surely, you can’t just up and leave…”

“Tyrion is my Hand. He is more than capable of handling matters here for a short while. Besides, it would be a good test for him. I can see how he does.”

“You’re sure of this? You want to go to Dragonstone? Just us two?”

“Yes, I want to show you around. The Throne Room, the caves, the beach there. Plus, it would be good to get away for a little while, wouldn’t you say so? Have you gotten sick of King’s Landing yet?”

“Not while you’re here,” he put her concerns to rest.

Jon let his head sink further into the pillow, following Dany’s eyeline out the archways and to the darkness, where the thousands of candles would be burning in the windows of all the homes of King’s Landing residents.

“I agree. Let’s go to Dragonstone.”

Chapter End Notes

Three chapters left. Get ready!

Any predictions? Make them now :)

You can thank the double Nor’easter storms that hit New England for this chapter. It was lovely having no electric. Not. But I did charge my laptop the night before in preparation and that is why this chapter exists so quickly. At least I had something to keep me occupied, right?

But, please, no more snow and ice and severe wind. Thanks, but no thanks.

That is all. Continue on and go read before I start to rant.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

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Jon

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Jon liked the seclusion that Dragonstone offered. A few months had passed before they departed from King’s Landing. As soon as they had marched their way up the long and narrow pathway that lead to the castle, Jon felt like he was able to breathe again. The exterior was harsh looking, not decorated in the way that the Red Keep was, but in a way, Jon felt that it reflected himself. He was Dragonstone and Daenerys was the Red Keep, different in most ways. He had the hardened exterior like the fortress whereas Dany was always bright and smiling like the gardens.

They had only been there a half of a day, arriving just before sunset the previous day. Jon had walked outside later in the morning, having slept in after a deep slumber.

Aegon and Viserion continued to fly above, circling the castle, but Rhaegal landed next to Jon on a large gray stone wall that acted as a lookout point, head tilted to the side. He was as big as Ghost by that point, and his wingspan made him even larger. Jon reached out his hand, smoothing over the green colored scales as the dragon made a noise that indicated his approval of the touch. There had only been a few times that Jon had dared engage in any contact with the dragons, them being so unfamiliar to him. He was not as brave as Daenerys was with them, but Jon had grown used to them, and ventured a touch here and there.

He still thought they might try to take a few fingers from him (or a couple limbs, given how they were growing) but his hesitance was less and less every time.

The dragons were happy to be outside, roaming the skies as they were meant to be. Jon was worried that they would not want to leave—or worse, they would follow Daenerys back to the city and refuse to be tamed. Daenerys had said that dragons were not slaves, not to be bound or chained up, however, dragons could not be allowed to terrorize citizens in the capitol either. It was a tricky situation that would play out in the coming months now that the dragons were acclimating to being free to roam were they pleased—but that was a matter to worry over another day. Daenerys and Jon both promised each other there would be little to no talk of political matters while they were away.
“There you are,” Dany announced, rushing to Jon.

She caught him from behind, wrapping her arms around his waist, squeezing tight. They were both visibly happier there at Dragonstone, more playful and energetic. It almost felt like they were in Winterfell again with all the giddy and new feelings they experienced. Ever since Winterfell, their relationship had evolved, the feelings deeper.

Jon laid his arms overtop of Dany’s, then decided he wanted her in front, looping her around so he was the one with his arms around her. He put his chin on top of Dany’s head as Rhaegal nuzzled her outstretched hand before he took off again.

It made him look out to the sea, thinking how a part of him wished they could get on a ship and travel the world, forget about all that was behind them. There was too much at stake, though, and Daenerys was the best chance that Westeros had for renewal. As much as Jon would have liked to depart with her somewhere else, he also wanted to see what the future was going to look like with her as the Queen, and he wanted that way more than the other option.

Dany questioned, “What are your impressions of Dragonstone so far?”

“It’s certainly an interesting place, like no other.”

“I haven’t spent too much time here, only the occasion trip growing up. My father never came, it was only my mother and brother.” She pointed down to the beach. “We would spend all day down there just playing in the sand and the water. All back when I was too small to know what was going on around me, why my mother was sad, why I was mostly kept away from my father. Do you ever wonder what it would have been like to have grown up in King’s Landing? If Rhaegar had lived, or Lyanna, and my father died a long time ago?”

Jon hadn’t thought about that, at least not with much depth. Jon wouldn’t go as far to say his childhood had been unhappy just because he was jealous of Robb and constantly dealt with the looks that Lady Catelyn gave him, but he briefly considered what his childhood would have been under the circumstances that Daenerys had mentioned. What would life have been like? How different would he be? He would have never had the bonds he did in the North, but he would have others he never experienced. Was it those experiences that shaped him, or would he have been the same Jon he was used to being?

Too many questions.

Never any answers.

“I think it’s dangerous to ponder scenarios that could have happened,” he settled on. “You can only change the outcomes of the future, not the past.”

She tilted her head to the side, her exposed ear falling against his collarbone right above his shoulder. “Spoken like a wise man.”

He chuckled at that comment. “Sure,” he scoffed.

“I mean it,” she added, wiggling free of her position. Daenerys instead looped her arms around him, lacing her fingers together behind Jon’s back, her thumbs rubbing his spine. “Years after we are gone people will say that about you. What a wise man he was. I can hear them now.”

“I think they’ll be busier talking about you.”

“No,” she dismissed, “they’ll talk of us.”
It was a fascinating room, to say the very least. It had a cold feel to it, not decorated with personal touches, much like the rest of the castle. The map of Westeros was carved with an expert level of detail, centered in what seemed like a cave. Jon’s fingers grazed the sides, almost afraid to touch more. It was a marvelous table, even for it being in such a dark room.

“Aegon had this made,” Dany’s voice echoed, rivaling with the crashing waters they could hear, even from that high up. She looked around the room with awe. “He spent a lot of time planning the Conquer of Westeros in here, or so we are told. It is quite incredible to be standing here where he stood many years ago. If not for him, we would not be here. Aegon had carved the way for a dynasty, one that lasted nearly three hundred years up until this point.”

How one man and his sisters were able to take an entire continent and bring it under one rule was one of the greatest stories ever told in Westeros.

“Hopefully for another three hundred.”

“And more,” Dany added, shooting him a look of approval.

Jon caught sight of the large dragon carved into the wall, stopping to stare at it. “It’s still strange to think that I somehow fit into that. Sometimes it doesn’t feel real at all. I still sometimes think I’m going to wake up and be back at Winterfell in my room.”

“Oh, Winterfell.” Daenerys took a seat at the table, the legs making a screeching sound as it was pulled out. “I need to ask, do you feel confined?” she questioned him, serious.

It was an odd question to ask. “What do you mean by that?”

Daenerys exhaled as she sank down into a chair. “I fear you feel confined in King’s Landing. I see how you are when you read the letters from your family. You miss them. You miss Winterfell. I don’t want you to think that I’ll feel you’re abandoning me if you go to visit, even if you stay for a long time. You’re welcome to, anytime.”

Jon altered his view over to the spot on the map that marked Winterfell. “I don’t feel confined, that’s not the right word. A bit out of place still, yes, but in time it shall pass. And when I go to see my family, I want to bring you with me, and the dragons, for Arya’s sake.”

“I don’t have a family anymore, not in the sense that you do. My mother and brother’s bodies were thrown out to sea on this very island.” Her gaze drifted out to the sea that was visible, the rocks carved out to give a view. “I find myself thinking about the losses recently even though quite some time has passed now. I know what family means, and I know what you left behind, to some extent. I guess I wonder sometimes if I am enough to keep you here. You left everything in Winterfell…”

Jon never saw Dany as being insecure, but there was something that was so humanizing about it. She was the Queen, the love of his life, the only one that ever was able to break through his façade, yet she still had doubts like the rest of them. Endearing, he thought, that she did not think she was enough.

Utterly preposterous.

His mind shifted back to the comments about her family. She had not talked about it in a long while, at least not to Jon. He still remembered when the news broke up in Winterfell, watching Daenerys process the information about the deaths. It was clear in his mind, the pain, the agony over such an act.
Jon noticed the dampness in her eyes, Daenerys trying to hide that. She picked up a figure of a
dragon created from marble, representing House Targaryen, that was laid out on the table, shifting it
from hand to hand to keep herself somewhat distracted.

Jon walked the span of the nearly fifty foot table to grab the Stark piece, examining it before he
moved next to Dany. He held out his palm, Daenerys looking up with her clear violet eyes, a bit red
on the edges from tears filled with salt. She handed over the dragon piece. Jon set them down, one
next to each other, sparking a tiny smile from her.

He leaned against the table, taking her hand. “I’m sorry you had to go through that,” Jon found
himself saying. “I wish I could do something to make it easier for you.”

“I wish you could have met my mother,” Dany said as she stared downward at the table. “Varys told
me my mother knew about you. Well, she suspected about who you were, as she had no definite
proof. She planned to have us marry when my father died and she would be able to confirm that you
were Rhaegar’s.”

The revelation shocked him. He wondered if he had ever heard her correctly. “What?”

“Rhaegar got word to her that he was having another child with Lyanna.”

“He did?”

“Yes.”

“Why didn’t you tell me Varys told you that?”

She shrugged, body caving into itself, vulnerable. “He only told me right before I collapsed in the
gardens from the poison. I spent a lot of time thinking about that conversation. By telling you, I
didn’t want you to think I was holding you to any obligation.”

“An obligation of marriage?” he tried to clarify.

“Yes,” she said, the word nearly silent. “I didn’t want you to think that your fate was sealed some
way. You’ve already given up so much and putting more pressure on you was the last thing that I
wanted to do.”

If only she knew how much the idea of marriage had rotated through his own head.

“Dany, don’t worry about it. I promise, I’ll tell you if I’m ever uncomfortable. I hate that you feel the
need to protect me in that way. You have enough to worry of.”

She accepted his plea. “Very well.”

Jon stood there, feeling the damp breeze coming through the open part of the cliffs, refreshing to his
senses. “Speaking of family, we will have a family someday, our own family,” he told her, the first
time he had talked about it out loud to Daenerys. “I want a family with you. I never thought I would,
with anyone, but you changed everything. I have thought about every now and again ever since I
met you.”

Dany rose out of her seat and snuggled against Jon. “I want that too.”

He pushed forward, catching her lips. When his hand placed on her waist rounded her backside,
Dany giggled. “Don’t tell me we are trying to start now,” she laughed as he grazed her ear.
As tempting as it might have been, they were not ready for that responsibility.

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Daenerys

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She was awake with Jon asleep next to her. The room she had chosen had a high ceiling and two fireplaces, in one of the highest towers that overlooked the sea to the East. At the side, in between the bigger fireplace that had a crackling fire, was two vertical elongated openings in the shape of a rectangle that opened up to the outside. Wooden planks fastened with metal had been boarded up against it to keep out the draft, though sometimes the gusts of wind were too strong and funneled from the sea, finding a way in through the wooden cracks.

The bed posts had dragon heads on each side, intricately carved, the teeth visible, sharp upon the lightest of touch. It had been a room unoccupied until they arrived, everything covered in sheets and dust until the floors and walls got scrubbed, the servants who were in charge of the upkeep getting to work upon Dany and Jon’s arrival.

She remembered the better part of the day, before the sun had said goodbye to them until the morning.

“This is nice,” Jon murmured. He looked up to his side to see Jaime standing, watching over them in a non-conspicuous way. “Apart from him lurking,” Jon added.

Daenerys giggled, her whole body shaking. “Consider yourself lucky. Had Ser Barristan come with us, he would have been right over there.” Dany pointed to a large piece of driftwood that looked like it had a smooth enough side to sit on. “Jaime knows to give space.”

“I don’t reckon there is any danger on this island. There isn’t more than thirty people here, us included.”

“I’m afraid have to correct you, as there are actually thirty-six people. Jaime, you, and I makes three. Three cooks, fifteen guards, four who are solely in charge to the upkeep of the grounds, and then there’s—”

“Do you really keep track of all these people?” he interrupted.

“I try too. But, I have to admit, I see your point. It’s nice to have a break from constantly being surrounded by people.”

It was chilly outside of the blankets that surrounded her body, but she still slipped out of her shoes and dug her feet into the damp sand. Ghost trotted up next to her after he had been roaming for a long time, laying down behind Jon and Dany. She could feel his hot body radiating heat.

“How long is this break going to last?”

“Eager to get back?” she teased.

Jon wrapped the blanket made of wool and dyed dark green around her tighter, the breeze picking up, the clouds in the distance indicating a storm on the horizon. She leaned her back against Jon, warm arms cuddling her.

“Not at all. Just wondering how long I might have you to myself.”
Daenerys had never set an amount of time and that was for a reason. If she were to be needed back shortly, she could get there, and it would not be too much of a disappointment. However, that meant if all was going well, Daenerys was free to stay at Dragonstone for a more extended time. Tyrion would write to her soon, letting her know how everything was going for him.

She tasked Varys with writing a letter too. Daenerys figured he would give her the honest, harsh truth, if need be. Tyrion seemed like the type that might gloss over the facts and downplay any severity that he might be facing. But she did doubt that he would need her back quickly. After all, Tyrion would not give up an opportunity to prove himself to his father, even if Lord Tywin would never quite accept his son.

Why were noble families dysfunctional? she wondered, unable to fall asleep.

It was mostly likely the wind that was keeping her up, a storm rolling in from off shore. It was nothing like the storm that hit Dragonstone when she was born, that had been a monster of a storm, as she had been told.

Mid-thought, Daenerys got up once she heard a nose at the door where there was a little space underneath. Dany smiled to herself, quietly lifting out of the bed to open the door. Ghost’s large body slipped through and Dany laid out a large gray wool blanket for him to lay on by the fireplace.

Turning around on the balls of her heels, Dany’s bare feet were almost silent against the large slabs of stone as she crept back into bed. She was not as sneaky as she could have been, as Jon’s eyes batted open.

“I didn’t want to wake you,” she claimed in a whisper, settling back under the covers.

Jon yawned, stretching his neck to notice Ghost sprawled out by the fire on top of the blanket. “For a direwolf, he had sure gotten used to being comfortable inside.”

“He would still be fine if he were to be back in the woods.” Daenerys laid onto her side, facing Jon, who was on his back. “What you said earlier, about having a family…” she started, feeling a bit timid around the topic of being husband and wife, “you never mentioned your thoughts about marriage.”

“I thought it was implied.”

It was not—and that was the funny part about Jon. He thought things but never gave any indication of what those thoughts were.

“And what were you trying to imply, exactly? The Small Council thinks a wedding would bring renewed hope for the people. I have not heard that last of it, I am certain of that. It has already been mentioned to me numerous times.”

Jon played with a lock of her waved hair that laid free of any braids or twists. “And I.”

“And you?”

“Varys works quickly.”

“Varys,” she mused, “of course.”

“Are you sure you’d want to marry me? You’ve got so many other options out there. You’re the most eligible woman in the kingdoms.”
She knew he was only joking, but she still landed a hand down onto his chest, a delicate smack. “Don’t say that. I don’t want anyone else but you.”

“Good. I feel the same about you. My real question is, do you want to marry me because you’re being told that you should, or because you really want to?”

Daenerys did not need to think about it to come to a conclusion. “I want to marry you because of how I feel for you. Yes, the Small Council thinks it to be a good idea, but to me, that is more of a bonus. Think of it this way, if they said it was a bad idea, I would still marry you if that was what you wanted also. You’re legitimate, we know that now and we have sufficient proof thanks to the Citadel, and that makes you able to marry me without any pushback.”

“So, what’s stopping us?”

His reaction surprised her.

Royal weddings were glamorous affairs, people from all over the kingdom invited to the expensive gathering. It took months to prepare.

Varys had told her that a wedding would mark rebirth for the realm, a promise of a future. A wedding stood for something bigger than the union of two people. It was solidarity of a realm, all seven kingdoms brought under a ruling pair.

“Do you really want thousands of people staring at you as we say vows to each other?” Jon continued, caught up in the idea.

She shook her head. “No, but—”

“But it’s our duty to the realm to show it off,” he sighed, looking somewhat defeated. “I understand.”

Daenerys had an idea strike her in the moment. “Well, there could always be two weddings. One for us, one for the rest. No one has to know apart from those closest to us.”

Her eyes travelled to one of the trunks filled with gowns that she had brought with her, one that was mostly white with gold trim that she knew had been packed. It would suit as a wedding dress, she supposed.

The pieces started to fall together even more as she thought how Jaime was already there, a septon could be brought to Dragonstone within a reasonable timeframe, and it would be beautiful, set there with the dragons above and Ghost watching over. It was all they really needed.

“You do realize if you marry me that makes you King, right?” she suddenly asked, wondering if Jon had thought it through at all.

His position in King’s Landing would change drastically, and she was not so sure he was ready for that.

"Not necessarily. I just want to be your husband, that is all. No title of King. That sounds ridiculous.”

"The rules don't work like that."

"You're the Queen of the Seven Kingdoms. You make the rules.”

"Some rules were made by ancestors,” she mentioned. She poked his shoulder. "You're making this difficult."
He unexpectedly laughed at her. "I think it is you who is making it difficult."

"I'm the Queen, marry me and by default you're the King."

"King?" He made a face that showed his discomfort. "It doesn't suit me. I think we both know that."

She twisted her legs upward as she rolled onto her stomach, locking her ankles in the air, forming a tent with the covers. "Lord of the Seven Kingdoms," she thought out loud.

Jon was not turned off by the title. "That's not bad."

"No?" she squeaked, surprised.

"It could work," he agreed.

"Jon Stark Targaryen, Lord of the Seven Kingdoms and Protector of the Realm." She tacked on that last part to make it more royal sounding. "Would you be okay with that?"

He nodded slowly, visibly thinking about it. Jon tilted his head towards Daenerys, who was eagerly waiting a response. "I could live with it—or live up to it, whichever it might be."

Daenerys let her fingers brush his jaw. "Does this mean we to be married?

"Yes, we are."

Chapter End Notes

P.S. I wrote a three-part series AU for Jonerys Week 2018 (Day 10 free choice) so if you need something to read in between chapters, the first chapter of that is posted :)

Additionally, the new AU multi-chaptered fic I told you all about a few chapters back is getting posted very soon, mostly likely by the time the next chapter for this story is out. Only two more chapters!
Three Dragons, a Direwolf, and a White Dress

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

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Jon

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After days of multiple storms pushing through and past the island of Dragonstone, a clear day finally came, the horizon clear of any clouds. The grounds were still wet, soaked from constant downpours that came on and off, but the little amount of grass that there was had become greener, a more lush color. The smell in the air was a mixture of the dampness and the sea.

The sun was setting again on the other side of the castle, the big yellow dome descending quicker and quicker. Jon’s hair blew wildly in the wind as he waited at the edge of a wide cliff on the eastern side. It was chilly enough that his original Winterfell cloak did not make him hot when he wore it, but just warm enough, the sides taking to the wind. Next to him was Ghost, patiently seated in the tall grass that swayed with the gusts, his nose up in the air to catch all the scents. They were both waiting.

Jon turned to his left, silently brooding about how Jaime’s freshly short cut hair did not fly around in the wind and get in his eyes like Jon’s was. Jaime had been there with the septon before Jon had walked over with Ghost. Jon was glad that Jaime was there to witness the union. As annoying as he could be sometimes, Jon had found common ground with him. After all, even behind all the irritating remarks, Jaime cared. That had become entirely clear.

Just that morning he had approached Jon with a sword, a wedding gift, he called it. The pummel had a wolf, but the beautiful steel had dragons carved into it. A sword Rhaegar had once used, Jaime had told him, one that had been kept out of sight for many years. It deserved to have a new owner, the only other owner it could have, and Jaime had a new pummel put on so that Jon still had both family sigils. The sword was Jon’s now, strapped to his hip, another small piece of a connection he was building.

“Are you nervous?” Jaime asked him.

With a content breath in, Jon replied, “No, I’m not.”

He thought he might have been nervous on the say, standing there waiting for Dany. He thought he might have felt that he didn’t deserve it or uncomfortable with the idea of what he would become marrying the Queen of the Seven Kingdoms. When those feelings never came, he realized what it was due to. It was meant to be that way, Daenerys and him, and after everything, Jon was ready. Ready for all of it.

The idea made him wonder what was going through his mother’s mind as she married his father, Rhaegar, and vice versa. They must have had a similar ceremony, tucked away with just the septon there to witness.

It made Jon then think of his family members. He wished his family could be there at Dragonstone to witness the enormous step in his life, but knew that they would be in attendance at the more grand wedding that would be planned in King’s Landing. Since half of Jon was Stark and many Northmen
would end up being in attendance, unlike previous royal weddings, Daenerys and Jon both saw it fit to incorporate both Faith of the Seven and the Old Gods ceremonial aspects to make it a blended ceremony.

There at Dragonstone, there were limited resources, so they kept it simple, no feast planned for afterwards, as there was not really anyone else other than Jaime who knew both closely. They would carry on like a normal day—and by that, Jon meant they would spend the evening locked away in their chambers.

But before that could happen, they actually had to be wed.

Rhaegal, Aegon, and Viserion were flying above, their calls most likely able to be heard from miles away if any fishermen or ships transporting goods were nearby. Jon watched as they would fly up then turn into a dive, plateauing out right above the sea before they started the playful process over again. Jon wondered if there was a way for the dragons to sense the emotions of Daenerys that day, and maybe even himself. It looked like they were more active in the area near the cliff Jon was at, as if they too wanted to witness the union.

Although everything else was going in a faster pace—the wind howled, the seas rushed up the cliff edges and tumbled back down, the dragons called on each other from overhead, everything fell into slow motion for Jon. He felt his pulse inside his body as he caught the sight of Daenerys over one of the hills, walking his way. He would be accepting that woman his wife in only mere moments.

The dress she wore had long lace sleeves and lace around the neck. On the thick bottom part of the skirts, there were little flowers with a tiny bead in the middle, each petal popping off the dress for texture, the tiny petals moving with the winds. There was a small gold satin band tied around her waist that had embellished dragons all along the front and back. Hundreds of hours of work must have gone into the dress and there was no one in the world that would not be able to appreciate the craftsmanship.

She was a sight that would forever stay will him until his last day.

Her hair was all tied back in a braid, it impossible to wear such long tresses in the wind by the cliffs and be able to see at the same time. There were several braids going around her head, all fused into one that went down her back with white and gold beads woven in. Her lips, which were naturally more of a bright pink, were colored red.

A truly stunning sight.

Jon considered himself lucky that in that moment he didn’t lose his balance and stumble back off the cliff’s edge.

“Daenerys,” he whispered, at a loss for words other than what her name was.

He reached out his hand, her smaller one slipping into his. She grabbed a bunch of the dress off the ground as Jon helped her maneuver past a dip in the cliff that had some muddy water pooled. Dany squeezed his hand as they took their place facing each other. He had not taken his eyes off her, so he saw the wide smile she had, Jon matching hers.

It was not an entirely normal ceremony. The septon, an old man with a gentle voice, was very accommodating to their wishes. They skipped the cloaking of the bride, as it was unnecessary. Daenerys was not taking a new name or being absorbed into a new House.

The ribbon that was tied around their joining hands was soft to the skin, and the septon begun. “Let it
be known that Daenerys of House Targaryen and Jon of House Stark and Targaryen are one heart and flesh, one soul. They are bound as one for eternity. You may look upon each other and say the words.”

_Father, Smith, Warrior, Mother, Maiden, Crone, Stranger, I am his and he is mine from this day until the end of my days._

Jon had been unfamiliar with the vows that those from the Faith of the Seven said, having never even been to a wedding ceremony that used the language before, so he had practiced it over and over in his head up until that point.

_Father, Smith, Warrior, Mother, Maiden, Crone, Stranger, I am hers and she is mine from this day until the end of my days._

With their hands intertwined, Daenerys looked up at Jon, taking a step forward. “I take this man,” she whispered, incorporating a small part of the tradition of what those who worshipped the Old Gods did in their own personal ceremony.

Just like that, with a few words, they were married—and everything in the world felt right.

Jon caught the glimpse of Jaime smiling, nodding at Jon to show his approval. Jon took ahold of Dany’s other hand, reeling her in against his chest to kiss her for the first time as her husband.

“This was always meant to be,” she murmured against his lips, just so he could hear, echoing his earlier thoughts.

Yes, it was.

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There in the hallway, there was only one room off the stairs—their room. Jon had chased her up the many spiraling stairs that were chiseled from stone, the weight of her dress dragging behind her, keeping Daenerys from getting too far away, him finally catching part of her skirts to halt her. He hooked an arm around her waist, twirling them once at the top of the stairs, hauling her over to pin her between him and the wall right near the door.

There was a large window off to the side, one that extended up into an arch, the moon rising in the sky aligning perfectly. Normally, he would have gone over to look out and take in the view, but he was certainly otherwise occupied.

Jon bent down, hands slipping under the dress, pulling her upward. Her petite frame was heavier with the dress on, but he still managed to hold her up with hands on her bare thighs, thumbs stroking the skin. They kept laughing every time that Daenerys would begin to sink down too low on the smooth stone wall, Jon having to hoist her up again and again.

It was not rushed, but there was urgency in the kisses and other movements, like usual. Dany had both her hands sealed around the sides of his head, directing him as she moved her lips, fighting him for control when she saw it fit to do so. He sucked on her bottom lip, tugging on it as Dany’s hand felt around until she recognized the design of the wood. Pulling the latch across, that opened the door, it swinging outward until it whacked the wall. Jon carried her in, not bothering to close the door behind them, as no one would be venturing up the tower on their wedding night.

Jon plastered Dany to the wall once again, keeping her balanced. His tongue licked all the way up her neck, her fingers grabbing his hair.
Grinding his hips into her, Jon groaned, “Daenerys.”

She hooked her legs around him tighter to keep herself up so Jon could get the breeches he wore down, the material falling to his ankles. He reached down to guide himself into her, Daenerys straightening her back up against the wall, arching.

His eyes fluttered into a closed position, lips staying on her neck, arms still carrying her as she sealed herself around his member. Not the easiest position to be in, he concluded. After hoisting her up after the silky material of her dress was allowing her to slip on the wall with each slow thrust, Jon finally got tired of that and they sunk down onto the floor.

The fire next to them was burning loudly, crackling as wood pieces shifted around, newly lit.

“Take this off,” Daenerys ordered, fingers swiftly undoing the white circular buttons on her dress that went down the side of the bodice.

“Why do you always wear these complicated dresses?” he muttered through a smile. “You really do like to make it difficult for me, don’t you?”

Her laugh was muffled by Jon yanking the material up and over her head impatiently, finally freeing her. Daenerys let her arms fall to the side, stretched out against the rug beneath her. Her chest rose and fell as Jon settled overtop of her, feeling every inch. His hand extended out as well, dragging his fingers along her open arm, across her shoulder, then breast. Jon shifted his weight to the side, fingers slowly making their way downward across her flat belly, to her womanhood, burying to the folds.

Daenerys moaned, arching again. Jon bit down onto his lip as his cock was guided into her core again. His left palm and fingers fell to the side of her face as they found a rhythm. His eyes kept locked onto hers, wanting to watch every passing emotion and thought.

Daenerys, his wife.

His thrusts became deeper and quicker, both of them releasing multiple sighs and moans. He had gotten good at pleasing Daenerys over the course of time they had known each other in such an intimate way. He knew what she liked, what she didn’t, and exactly how his fingers or mouth needed to move to get her to his level of desperation and enjoyment. As Jon neared the end, he felt her begin to her quiver, mouth parting, eyes widening. Her hands wrapped around his back to hold him closer, if it were possible.

It hit her like a wave rolling into the beach, spreading fast. Wrapped up in her, Jon felt all her walls tighten against him in the most wonderful of ways, claiming him just the same.

“Dany,” he whispered effortlessly, and he came undone inside of her.

After, they were snuggled there by the fire, watching the flames take on different shapes, the logs slowly fading away into a heap of black, embers remaining bright underneath. Neither of them was dressed again, but a blanket had been pulled from the corner of the bed to cover them up and to keep cozy. Daenerys was molded against Jon, her back to his chest. Her hair had come apart from the braid, Daenerys slowly pulling out each bead until there was nothing left. She threw her fingers into her hair, tossing it free.

“I love it here,” she finally said, lying her head back down.

“Me too.”
“I was thinking it might be an option to spend more time here,” she told him. Daenerys grabbed his hand, pulling his arm over to embrace her. “Splitting our time does not seem like an outrageous idea. Though, it needs a bit of a redecoration in here. It’s too dark, especially compared to the Red Keep. We need some tapestries or…or something.”

He laughed at her. “It could use a few personal touches, I agree.” Jon pushed up with his elbow and stole a kiss, lingering over her mouth. “But it’s plenty light when you’re in the room.”

“Who knew you would become such a charmer,” she complimented, rolling herself onto his body. Jon licked his lips, placing two hands onto her waist as she sat to straddle him. They could never get enough of each other, that was definite. By the end of the night, they would both be physically spent.

—

He woke up to find Dany missing from the bed. When he reached out, the sheets where she would have been were cold, and he knew that she had been gone for some time. Jon peeled himself out of bed, dressing to depart the warmth and go in search of Daenerys, wherever she might have disappeared to. Sometimes she could be as mysterious as the castle itself.

The stairway down and out of the tower was narrow, the steps in a spiral, though they have been carefully maintained over the many years since the construction. Ghost had gone first down the steps, his large body taking up most of the space.

The castle was still new to Jon, but with Ghost’s expert instincts, he made his way just fine. Jon unhooked a big door made of six inch thick wood trimmed with metal, shoving on it with his shoulder a few times to push it outwards, a gust of wind blowing inside. Ghost slipped through the open part and picked up Dany’s scent. He led the way and Jon followed behind. Ghost would occasionally turn his head back around enough to make sure that Jon was still there, traveling close.

When they found her, Daenerys was seated out by the cliffs in a spot close to where they said their vows to each other. She was resting on a large boulder that jutted out from the cliff, overhanging on the edge, but looked sturdy enough to not have moved in hundreds of years. The surface was smooth, a multicolored rock with stains of light green fungus growing around the sides.

Daenerys heard Jon approaching, Ghost getting to her first, sitting down with his tail tucked under to her left side.

“What are you doing out here?”

She waved him over, patting the free spot next to her. “Watching the sun come up. This is the best place in all of Dragonstone to see.”

Jon looked out, the sun only a sliver of the way over the horizon, a deep orange color contrasting with the sea that looked almost black from that far away. He sat down at her side, Daenerys scooting over to share the blanket she had with her all laid out on the boulder.

“This is the first sunrise we see together as husband and wife,” Daenerys cooed proudly.

Jon smiled widely. He grabbed the side of the cloak he wore and draped it over her shoulder, his hand pulling her in. “That it is.”

Off on a distant cliff, the dragons were still sleeping, all nestled together. Ghost was looking over in that direction until his front legs stretched out in front of him as he padded down onto the rock, seeing that the pair would be staying for a little while. Daenerys stroked his fur from front to back,
“He is so pure white. It brings me back to the dream I had last night. It was snowing in King’s Landing,” she told him, voice shallow. “When I woke up, I was a bit frightened and I don’t know why. I came out here to relax. The sun, it’s an interesting thing, isn’t it? It always rises and falls without fail. Everyone in the world can see it from every walk of life. We all have it in common with one another.”

“I hadn’t thought much of it,” Jon admitted.

Daenerys laid her head down onto his shoulder, looping her arm around his while she kept the part of the cloak over her to block the wind. “In my dream, there was no sun, just snow and whiteness.”

Jon felt uneasy about her dreams becoming more frequent. “What else was happening in the dream?”

“I don’t quite remember this time. I just remember it being cold and snow covered everything. That was all there was.”

Jon tilted his head back, letting the wind sculpt his face. He wished he had an answer, some type of response that would make it better.

“What are we going to do, Jon? What about the White Walkers? What if these dreams—”

Jon tilted her head up towards him with his index finger under her chin. “Daenerys, listen, whatever we have to fight, we will be prepared for. Whatever it is at any time in the future, we will fight it together.”

“Together,” she repeated back to him, having newfound faith in their abilities to overcome challenges.

“Together. Always.”

Chapter End Notes

Just one more chapter and this journey is concluded. I still cannot believe it. I've been waiting to write this chapter and the last chapter ever since I wrote the first and now it's here! I hope you will all love how everything wraps up...I'm not going to lie, I think I might be getting a little emotional about it.

Also, the first chapter of the new AU is up, so check it out if you'd like ;) I've noticed a bunch of you already have, so thank you again!
When the Snows Fall

Daenerys

They alternated their time between King’s Landing and Dragonstone, retreating to their volcanic island whenever they wanted time to themselves. Tyrion had proved to be one of the best decisions Daenerys had ever made, navigating easily when Jon and she were away. After two years, they all settled into their positions.

It was just past her twentieth nameday when she figured it out, as they had just arrived back at Dragonstone to send Jon off. A joyous day it had been, although Jon was not there to share it with her.

As more and more troubling news had come from Castle Black, and then Ned Stark, Daenerys knew that it had come—the darkness from her dreams. She could sense Jon’s discomfort with doing nothing and told him if he wanted to then he should go North to fight the battle alongside his brother. The North had already begun to prepare and gather up men.

They had departed back to Dragonstone, where Jon would take a ship up to White Harbor and then ride the rest of the way to Winterfell to further assess the situation quickly unfolding.

“I’ll be back,” he promised.

Her hands were intertwined with his on the beach. Her heart said not to let him go but her mind knew it was the right decision.

“I’ll be waiting.”

They had not been apart since she left for King’s Landing from Winterfell. It was opposite then, Jon the one leaving to go back North.

It was hard to watch him board the small boat to row out with several other men towards the ship in the harbor, anchored in place. A part of her was leaving with him and yet she discovered that he had left a part of him with her.

She would only spend a few more nights before heading back to King’s Landing to await the arrival of a raven telling her that Jon arrived safely and that he was back with his family. It happened so clearly, walking up the tower to her room on the day he had left. Suddenly, as she approached the top, her steps slowed down until they came to a stop.

When was the last time she had bled?

Daenerys thought back, trying to recall. Was it one moon ago, maybe two? Her hands went to her stomach, fingers spreading out to cover as much as possible.

Could it be?
The whole night she was awake, lying with her back against the bed, wondering if it was true and if her suspicions were correct. What other option was there?

It was upon her arrival back to the Red Keep that she put all other matters aside to consult the Maester. It was beyond certain that she was, indeed, with child.

—

“Why are you so happy?” Jaime questioned her.

He caught her smiling to herself as she walked the outer perimeter of the Red Keep in a daze.

“I didn’t think you’d send him packing back to the North so quickly,” he teased. “Pleased he’s gone?”

It was all a joke, but she still rolled her eyes. “No, it’s not that.”

“Then, what?”

“Take a guess.”

He thought about it, looking around for possible signs of her cheerfulness. “Considering you should be more in a despondent mood with Jon gone, it has to be something of a larger scale,” he mused.

Daenerys gave him the hint and put two hands onto her stomach. Jaime’s eyes connected with hers as he made the realization.

“You’re certain?”

“Yes.”

Jaime smiled widely. “Well, looks like I’ll be protecting more than you in the coming months.”

—

Once he wrote to her about his arrival in Winterfell and the scroll was brought to her just before dawn, Daenerys was tempted to write back to Jon, to tell him about the pregnancy and share the wonderful news. The trouble was that she knew that he would come back just as soon as he had arrived, that he would feel guilty for being away, and Dany knew better than to do that to him. They needed him in the North.

It looked bad, he had written. The Night’s Watch members had dwindled down in numbers due to attacks beyond the Wall. The dead had marched closer. His brother, Robb, and him were about to depart for the Wall with men gathered up from all the Houses in northern territory and he would send more news from there.

It was looking worse.

Daenerys became anxious.

“You shouldn’t worry,” Jaime tried to tell her. “It’s not good for the child.”

Daenerys let her hand fall to her stomach, once flat, but had grown a small bump only noticeable if she were to be bare. Thinking back, she must be around three months. “How do I not worry when my husband is off trying to navigate this mess? White Walkers, Jaime! An army of people who are dead! How do we stop that?”
She started to sob at the possibility that Jon might not come back, that this dead army would slaughter them all, that everyone she cared for would be killed. She was stuck in King’s Landing trying to rule and contain any news coming from the northern territories that might cause alarm in the city.

Everything looked so bleak for a moment.

Tyrion proved to be surprisingly good for emotional support. He was there at the table in the room with Jaime and her. He reached out and grabbed her free hand. “We will find a way to beat them. We have more in numbers between the all the regions in the Seven Kingdoms. We will find a way. It’s not impossible.”

Jaime lingered over by the side of the room. “He’s right. We will find a way,” he echoed his little brother’s words.

Yes, we have to, she encouraged herself, stuffing down the doubt. With a large inhale in, Daenerys agreed.

—

Her panic subsided but the anxiety remained. What they knew was that the Night King was leading an army south but had no way that they knew of to get past the Wall. The magic kept them away from civilization, but what was the point of marching towards the Wall if the Night King had no way of getting around it?

It did not make sense.

It kept her up at night.

Although no more dreams came, Daenerys suspected it was due to the dreams having already become a reality. Winter had come. Snow covered the North all the down to Riverun, blanketing the grounds in white. King’s Landing would be soon. They had spent the past short years stocking up to survive whatever winter might bring, yet there was always the knowledge that lingered that not everyone would make it, just like every winter that came and past.

—

It was the Small Council that decided it was best to inform everyone of the impending danger. People were sent into the streets to announce the threat that lurked on the other side of the Wall. As expected, there was panic. Some could not even get through their speeches before the shouts and screams from the city dwellers became so loud no one else could here rational words, everyone wanting more answers that were not available.

Some violence took place, a few small fires set in response to stealing food and other resources and that was when the City Watch began patrolling the streets even more, strictly enforcing laws.

Tyrion saw it best to pull at the heartstrings of the men—tell them that by heading North they would be protecting all those they left behind before the enemy had the chance to appear. They considered themselves lucky that enough volunteers were willing to leave and Daenerys did not have to issue an order that all able-bodied men were to pack up and head North. Out of the initial chaos, there was more renewed hope and a sense of unity.

The goal was to get the men North, then train as best they could. Jaime left departed on the Kingsroad with them, begrudgingly, of course, on Dany’s orders. If anyone knew how to help lead an army, it was Jaime. Ser Barristan would take over in his place while Jaime travelled to
the Wall with the collective men from Dorne, the Reach, the Westerlands and King’s Landing. They had to leave before the roads became impassable due to the winter weather.

Many would not come back. Tyrion estimated near one in four would never come back. There was always a price to pay in war. Daenerys had an ominous feeling that that number of survivors would not be so high.

She finally caved and wrote to Jon, who was still at the Wall with his Uncle Benjen and Robb. She gave it to Jaime to deliver in person.

Jon

_I did not want to tell you this because you were needed elsewhere. I don’t know how long you will be gone and I don’t want you to feel bad for not being here with me. I am carrying a child, our child, our heir. I was not aware until you had left. I won’t be giving birth for some time now, so please, don’t rush back._

_By the time you get this, I hope Jaime will be able to talk some sense into you. Stay. Fight the battle, then come home. I’ll be waiting, just as I told you before._

_I love you, always._

Daenerys

—

She kept the letter he sent back to her by her bedside and read it every night.

Daenerys

_You were right. Jaime did talk me out of leaving. Robb tells me the quicker we defeat this army the quicker I can get back. That is the only idea that I am hanging onto right now._

_Every part of me wants to be there with you and watch you grow. I cannot express how happy I am. I’ll be thinking about you and our child every moment of every day until I return._

Jon

—

The plan was to let the Night King approach. Admittedly, not the best plan, but it was hard to strategize when the enemy was a magical being. The Wall gave them the high ground and The Haunted Forest was full of ample wood to burn. Fire killed them, and fire they would use. They had constructed catapults to light the forest up—and even better, Rhaegal had followed Jon. Daenerys had not even noticed, as the dragons liked to stay at Dragonstone, occasionally reappearing by landing on the Red Keep right outside Dany’s chambers. She had just assumed that Rhaegal had stayed at Dragonstone, not ventured up North.

It did, however, make her feel a bit better in some way. Rhaegal wouldn’t let anything happen to Jon, as they had naturally bonded in the past couple of years.

Tyrion would read out all the letters arriving by raven until they stopped completely. The weather was in blizzard conditions up near the Wall and even the best raven would not be able to navigate.
With no communication, they were left in the dark about the status in the North. It gave her a chilling sensation.

There they were, just Daenerys and Tyrion sitting at dusk with no way of knowing what was going on, both their loved ones so many leagues away.

Daenerys had the last letter sent in her hands, tracing over the words with her fingers. “What do we do?” she asked.

“We wait,” Tyrion replied.

They sat there at the table filled with mostly untouched food (but not untouched wine for Tyrion) for quite some time, staring out down onto the city where only half the windows had candles burning. She was thinking of Jon when she felt the first movements of her child. It surprised her, hunching over, hands cupping her stomach.

“Oh!” she exclaimed.

“What is it?” Tyrion asked darkly, alarmed by her sudden reaction. “Is something wrong? Are you in pain?”

“No, no pain.” Daenerys smiled, sighing contently. “She’s moving.”

Tyrion raised an eyebrow at her. “She?”

“Or he,” Daenerys clarified.

Tyrion saw it as an opportunity to take her mind off of the war going on so many leagues away from them. “Have you thought of names?”

She smiled for the first time in what was feeling like a long time. “I have, yes.”

Several moons later it was all over—at least, for another many, many years. No one saw the Night King die, it was said he simply vanished. The dead army was, well, _dead_ in the more natural sense of the word. In a letter that reached her from Jaime before he departed back, he explained that there was no clean up or burials necessary, as there were no bodies left over, just snow and ice.

Everyone could go home.

Jon kept his promise and returned alongside Jaime, both looking different in some way. Daenerys could not quite place what it was, but perhaps what they had seen had left a haunting effect.

Nonetheless, the return was more than welcomed, as Dany was due to give birth any day, and actually Maester Pycelle said she was most likely overdue for the delivery. She would like to think that it was because she would ask every night before she slept that there not be a birth until Jon came back, poking at her stomach so the child would hear her.

There in the safety of their chambers, that very night he came back, Jon’s hands ran over her large stomach. There was nothing more soothing than his touch, his palm sculpting her belly, and she announced the good news.

“There’s two in there,” she declared to him quietly.

His eyes widened. “Twins?”
“Yes. I can feel them kick in different spots at the same time.”

She moved her hand to her upper left part of her belly, guiding Jon’s with her. “Here is one.” Then to the lower right. “And the other. Twins.”

She knew it was twins, it was no mistake. She felt them both moving around, quite a lot towards the end. Plus, an obvious sign was that her stomach was significantly bigger than if she were only carrying one child. Tywin had told her that his wife carried the same way when she was pregnant with her twins. It was a clear indicator Daenerys was carrying two heirs, not one.

As Dany had grown more and more close to the day she would delivery, the Maester had advised she stay in bed, as twins were more tricky and difficult on the body. That did not happen. As big as she was, she made her way around just fine.

—

One more night went by and Daenerys made it known to Jon that if anything were to happen during the delivery, she wanted him to make sure that their children knew how much she loved Jon and the twins. He told her not to say something like that. Nothing bad was going to happen, he would not allow it. They were about to start the beginning of their own family that they were forging together.

They ended up falling asleep for a while until Daenerys woke with a feeling she had not felt before. She managed to hobble up into a sitting position, bringing the pillows behind her for support. Dany looked down at her swollen belly. She knew deep down that it was the beginning, that the labor was starting.

“Jon.” She placed a hand on his shoulder and shook him awake. “Jon?”

“What is it?” he asked sleepily, rubbing his eyes, trying to let them adjust to the darkness.

She looked over at him and smiled. “It’s time.”

—

She was scared about the delivery, just as every woman was. Jon was right there with her the whole time, nearly a full day and night. The pain was intense, like nothing she had ever experienced before. The dragons came back to the city, perhaps sensing her pain, circling the Red Keep.

All she wished for was it to be over.

Eleana and Damien Targaryen were pulled from her in the early morning, just as the first snowfall came to King’s Landing, dusting every surface. She could have sworn that she heard the dragons calling from the skies in a way that made her think that they were welcoming the new additions.

Daenerys collapsed backwards into the pillows, sweaty and weak. All the pain faded instantly as two little ones were placed in her arms all wrapped up in their individual blankets. Jon kissed her cheek and they both stared with awe.

“They’re beautiful, Dany.” He eased onto the bed next to her as she was covered up by a clean sheet. “Beautiful…”

“Look at us,” she marveled. “We have a family.”

Jon dragged his lips across hers, tenderly kissing her. Ghost came up to his side and laid his large head down on the bed, watching. Daenerys knew that Ghost would be a good protector over their
children in the years to come.

“What are you thinking about?” she asked quietly.

“How I never thought I’d have this,” Jon honestly replied. “I’ll be entirely grateful until the day I die.”

She smiled. “Me too.”

Daenerys handed over Damien over to Jon, who carefully took him into his arms. Both twins had stopped crying, their eyes shut tight. Eleana was moving her feet and hands around inside the silk swaddle.

“I love you,” Jon said to her.

“I love you.”

She thought back to how they ended up in the place that they did. Daenerys could have never imagined that her journey would have been as extensive as it had been. When she had finally departed for Winterfell years ago, Jon had been an unexpected addition to her life, proving to be one of the best parts. Life had been rather dull before she had met him and they ended up learning so much from each other along the way—how to love, how to rule.

In such a short amount of time, she had become so many different things at once.

Queen.

Wife.

Mother.

Daenerys wondered what else was on the horizon. But there in their room, everyone clearing out to give them some time alone, all she could think of was how Jon and her would need to shape the future to the best it could be. One day the crown would be passed to their children.

Daenerys let her head fall sideways against the propped-up pillows and onto Jon’s shoulder. Outside the snow was falling lightly. Winter was there but comfort came in knowing that Spring would come one day.

Chapter End Notes

This is by far the longest fic I’ve ever written. 21 chapters?! How did that happen? And this girl had been writing fanfiction for nearly a decade for multiple different fandoms, so I would have to consider this an accomplishment.

Anyways, I’ve been waiting to write this ending just as I started it. The first snowfall with the birth - nothing was more fitting to me. I knew it would end in the place that it did and hopefully you have found it to be a good conclusion also. I never wanted to dive too deeply into the whole White Walker storyline but needed to wrap it up in this final chapter.

And twins! Can we just talk about this for a second? I have developed a need to see this
play out on the show. Anyone else?

Alright, alright, I’m not going to write too much more, only that I’m onto the next story now, for those of you who don’t know, the new AU Jon/Dany fic is already posted (What Lies Beyond) but if I don’t happen to see you over there, it’s been great having you read and comment for this story. I deeply appreciate every one of you :)

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!