Northern Conqueror

by CadenceIX

Summary

What if Lysa Arryn sent Sansa Stark to the Wall rather than risk her seducing Petyr Baelish? What if Jon returns from Hardhome to find her waiting for him? What if Daenerys returns to Westeros to find her brother's secret son claiming for the throne?

Jon Snow works to bring Westeros together under one banner to survive the Long Night and reclaim some of what was stolen from him by Eddard Stark's lie.

Notes

This is based largely on show canon to the point there are direct scenes from episodes in multiple chapters, but altered by the circumstances. Generally, consider all other story lines happening as they are in the show, bar the North and the Vale, until the characters show up in the story.

Any original characters will be smaller roles (squires, guards, etc.) with existing in universe (book or show) characters taking priority, though they may be altered somewhat for their role. The shift in story line will surely leave some characters feeling slightly OOC but hopefully sensibly so. There will also be a reintegration of some book elements to characters and plots.

The story is firmly a Jonsa one for the first part, but I'm playing with making a shift toward
Jonsanerys in the second to play on Aegon parallels. I'll alter tags as necessary once it's written and set in stone. Character and other tags will be added with chapters as well.

I have a Tumblr under CadenceIX, so feel free to ask questions there as well if it's easier than leaving a comment. I'll try to answer both as best I can. I'd even consider giving updates or previews of future chapters if that's of interest.
“Your mother always had a sweet tooth, you know?” Lysa Arryn said, letting Sansa take a lemon cake from the tray she’d brought. Pouring her a drink as she spoke of Catelyn getting fat before being put on a diet.

She’d seemed so sweet and caring until Sansa asked where the she got the lemons.

“She feels responsible for you,” she said holding Sansa’s fingers, cutting her off to ask, “Why? Why does he feel responsible for you?”

No matter how she’d answered, Lysa barely listened. She was hurting her fingers, Sansa fighting back tears as she pleaded for her aunt to believe she was a virgin, that Petyr loved her, that she was nothing more than a stupid little girl with stupid dreams who never learns. She was nearly as shocked as she was relieved when Lysa got to her feet and hugged Sansa to her chest.

“Shh, shh, shh. It’ll be alright. It will all be alright. You’ll be a widow soon…” Lysa looked to the head of auburn hair against her chest, lighter than her own, just like her sister’s, and she knew. She knew she couldn’t take the chance. She couldn’t lose Petyr, not now, not ever. She wanted to obey him, trusted everything would be alright if she did as he said, and yet she couldn’t trust this girl.

“I bet you miss your family, don’t you?” Lysa asked, her voice sweet again.

Sansa looked up, still shaken and uneased by the sudden shifts in her aunt. “I do. Every day.”

“All of them?” Lysa asked carefully.

Though confused, Sansa nodded. “Of course. I loved all of them.”

“Even the bastard?” Lysa’s brow arched, managing to keep her tone from being too accusatory.

“Jon?” Sansa’s brow knit, frowning. He was the only one left alive as far as she knew, the only one not taken from her, not lost or betrayed. With a hint of shame she nodded. “I was awful to him growing up, but I do. He’s the only one left.”

For a moment she thought her aunt was about to slap her, fighting back a wince before Lysa’s hand settled against her cheek and she beamed. “Would you like to see him again?”

The fire in her aunt’s eyes was unsettling, as though Sansa’s answer didn’t matter. Still, she nodded. “Of course.”

“Then you will,” she said firmly. “You’ll go to your bastard brother. You’ll go north, stay hidden away there, far from the rest of the world. Far from those awful lions.” She stroked Sansa’s cheek, sighing contently, satisfied with herself.

“Aunt Lysa,” Sansa started, but Lysa cut her off.

“I’ll send some men with you, ones who can keep you secret, keep you safe. It will take time, but you’ll be safer there, at the edge of the world.”

There was no fighting this. No arguing with her. That was clear from the look in her eyes, wide,
joyous, frantic.

Pushing her lips up into a smile, Sansa nodded. “Thank you, Aunt Lysa.”

XOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXO

Alayne Stone traveled slowly across Westeros, making her way through the Vale and Riverlands, skirting the edge of both to keep away from the Kingsroad. She’d hoped it would be easier in the North, when she was home. Instead it got worse not long after they slipped past Moat Cailin.

They had camped the night and preparing to leave after sunrise when they heard them. The barking. The screams. The men.

Two men, knights dressed down to keep from drawing attention, hurried toward the noise while two more stayed with her. They heard the yells, the clash of steel followed by pained screams.

With a shared glance the men at her side went into action. The larger one drew steel and moved toward the barks while the shorter one grabbed Sansa’s arm and dragged her toward the horse they’d brought to hold their supplies. “Lady Stone, hurry. Leave. Go back through the swamps and they’ll lose you. Go with the wind as much as you can, keep them from picking up your scent.”

She couldn’t find her voice. She wanted to ask if he’d join her, but she knew he doubted that as much as she did. He stood resolute, brave, sure he would die but willing to try.

Her knuckles were surely white beneath her gloves, clutching her reins harder than the thread of hope she clung to every day since she left the Eyrie. She had no place to go, no course to follow, no haven waiting for her. Only north. Only the Wall.

She could barely remember the path they’d taken around Moat Cailin, but she managed. Somehow she trekked through the bogs and mud, ignoring the bite of bugs. The shriek of it’s inhabitants had twisted her stomach their first time through, but they were nothing compared to what she’d heard past Moat Cailin. The terror and pain in those women’s screams.

Even once she had passed it, once Moat Cailin was no longer visible on the horizon, she rode. Surely it would be safer back in the Eyrie. With Petyr, who had saved her from King’s Landing. If Aunt Lysa still wanted her near the Wall, then Petyr would give her better guards, let her sail their, whoever hunted through the woods of the North.

Her bag was emptied, her waterskin empty, so she made for the roads. Her hair was still dark, she could play at Alayne still, play the bastard girl who lost her way. Play on their pity if she needed to, if the silver stags left in her bag weren’t enough.

With her stomach twisted in hunger, she made her way to a crowded in. Once she entered she made her way to a table and ordered something cheap and filling, deciding the rest would need to go to supplies. She smiled as a young girl came to her along her path, accepting the offered mead.

“Lady Sansa,” a female voice called firmly, drawing her gaze to the tall blonde woman dressed as a knight. “My name is Brienne of Tarth.” Stepping beside her table, she knelt beside Sansa. “Before your mother’s death, I was her sworn sword. I gave my word I would find you and protect you. I will shield you back and keep your council, and give my life for yours if need be. I swear it by the old gods and the new.”

Looking past the lady knight, she saw Podrick Payne and her breath caught in her throat. “No, no,” she turned back to Brienne, tears stinging her eyes. “You’ve come to take me back.”
Brienne shook her head, “I swear I haven’t, my lady. I swear, I am here to protect you. To help you however you need.”

“I know him,” she said looking to Podrick, who shrank where he stood.

“Podrick is my squire,” she said, realizing what she thought. “He is loyal to me. And I am loyal to you, not the Lannisters or Baratheons. You.” She reached for Sansa’s hand, taking it gently. “I swear, I am here to help you however I can. You need only ask.”

Brienne’s earnest sincerity held Sansa’s gaze. She’d seen plenty of people lie, their eyes alight with amusement at their false words, aloof and empty to keep from betraying themselves, cold and hard with false assurance. Brienne had none of that. Only a warm, pleading honesty that reminded her of home. Of Mother and Father. Of Robb. Of Jon.

Her throat shifted as she took a breath, nodding carefully. “If what you say is true… then I vow that you shall always have a place by my hearth, and…”

Seeing her searching, Podrick supplied with a solemn smile, “meat and mead at my table.”

She glanced at him before meeting Brienne’s eyes again, continuing, “Meat and mead at my table. I pledge to ask no service of you that might bring you dishonor. I swear it by the old gods and the new.” With a breath she gave a quick nod. “Arise.”

Brienne’s face warmed, her jaw shifting as she got to her feet. “Where shall we go, my lady?”

She could have continued on her path. Returned to the Vale, her aunt. Asked for Petyr’s help once again. But she knew it would be best to avoid being in his debt even more than she was. Best to avoid her aunt’s paranoia over his involvement with her. Best to stick to her original goal.

“The Wall,” she answered firmly. “Take me to Jon Snow.”

Chapter End Notes

Originally I just had the idea what if Lysa sent Sansa to the Wall to get her away from Petyr, but then it built from there. How long it takes changed a lot, but I decided she needed Brienne, so the timeline may be a bit wonky in places. Hopefully it’s not too jarring.
Sansa had never felt safe during the start of her travels. Being alone with four men, even knights of the Vale, left her fearing what she might wake to most nights. What might happen should the men decide they were far enough from the Vale their knightly vows no longer mattered. When Petyr was right and their desires outweighed their honor.

That was gone with Brienne and Podrick. Podrick may have been a man, but he didn’t seem the type, almost childish despite Brienne once asking if he wasn’t too old to be a squire. Even if he tried, Brienne would surely cut him down.

Still, she wasn’t safe. She remembered the screams, the barking dogs, the yells and clash of steel.

The second time she heard them, she froze. Her heart stopped beating, her breath stuck in her throat, threatening to choke her. When she saw Brienne leap to her feet, ready to rush off and help the screaming woman, Sansa dashed to her side and grabbed Brienne’s arm.


“Again?” Brienne asked, brow furrowed, shifting slightly as she glanced toward another scream.

“The others, the knights I was with before, they rushed off and died. I heard them die.”

Brienne nodded, looking to Podrick. “The horses.”

They ran west, traveling with the wind, through a stream and the fields of a small farmstead.

Once Brienne was sure they weren’t being followed anymore they stopped to rest for the night. Even as the sun set she stood vigilant until Podrick took her watch. The dogs had chased them through the afternoon, driving them further from their destination yet again.

When the sun rose and Sansa stirred, Brienne knelt beside her while Sansa looked over her hair to make sure it was still dark. She only had so much of the dye, and it had to last until they reached the Wall.

“I had a thought, my lady, if you’d hear me.”

“Of course, Brienne.”

Brienne removed a small sheathed dagger she’d tucked into the back of her belt. “If they should come upon us at night, we may not be able to run. They could come as a pack, a group of them large enough that Podrick and I would not be able to stay at your side, or would be forced to ask you flee while we stayed behind. I’d ask you take this, keep it at your side, so that if the worst
Sansa looked at the small dagger she’d seen Brienne use to skin the game found during their travels.

It was that dagger she pushed through the eye of the mutt that threw her to the ground weeks later. It was that dagger she aimed at the man in Bolton armor before Brienne’s sword pushed through his neck. It was that dagger she clutched as she walked behind Brienne and Podrick when they came upon the half-flayed woman, watching Brienne hold back tears as she slit the writhing girl’s throat to end her slow misery.

And it was that dagger she returned after taking the sword and dagger from a dead Bolton man with a silent vow to drive them into her own throat if they ever caught her.

They took what they could from the men they killed, took their provisions, their coin, let whoever found them think bandits took their lives. Yet they hounded them, Brienne telling her the dogs might have caught their scent from their last battle and tracked them. Again and again they came, again and again the Wall remained a distant dream.

She found herself dreaming of it, of stepping through towering black gates. In her mind it was grand in its own way, Castle Black. Surely it would match the others she’d seen, glorious in its stoicism. Like Jon, surely. He’d have done well, made a name for himself.

If she was kind to herself, willing to let herself be a fool again, she imagined the gates opening and him standing there with arms open, ready to embrace her. If her dreams were honest then she imagined him confused, glad to see a familiar face but disappointed it was her, wishing it was anyone but her that survived. He would put aside his annoyance with her, with the petulant child she’d been when she last saw him, and he would protect her. No matter what he felt he would take care of her, do what was right to make sure she survived.

Yet she found herself faltering the longer it took. They stayed in a home that stank of the flayed corpses hanged outside, hoping it would mask their scents long enough to let them rest a day without being hunted. Laying there in a dead man’s bed, unable to sleep because of the stench coming through the window, was the first time she wished she wouldn’t wake.

Every time they were forced back, force to prolong their travels and pushing her further from Jon, despair pulled at her heart, telling her it would be better if they got her. It would hurt, likely for a long time if the bodies they came across were any indication, but maybe she was wrong, maybe the gods did exist and she’d be with her family once she bit through her tongue or cut open her neck. Maybe she’d be with the rest of them watching over Jon and even Arya, if she’d somehow survived on her own after Brienne lost her.

But Starks endure, and she was Sansa Stark. She’d swear the weeks and months of traveling had worn it all away, torn the stupid little girl she was apart, but she still found hope when she thought of the Wall.

She would make it through this and find Jon Snow. He would save her from this, he would make her feel safer than Brienne and Podrick could. He would be her salvation. He had to be.

And yet as they saw the Wall peak over the horizon she knew it would have to wait. She couldn’t arrive as Sansa Stark. She couldn’t ride in there with a dagger on her hip and a sword on her saddle. She needed to be a lady, even a bastard lady, so she took the last of her dye and gave Podrick her stolen weapons.
Though nothing like she’d imagined, the run down remnant of Castle Black was a relief.

“Sometimes a man has to make hard choices,” said Sam. “Choices that might look wrong to others but you know are right in the long run.”

“You believe that?” asked Olly.

“With all my heart,” he answered with a hint of a laugh. Seeing Olly leave Sam grabbed the tray he brought. “Try not to worry, Olly. I’ve been worrying about Jon for years.” With a smile Sam declared, “He always comes back.”

Olly was barely out the door when they heard the horn. The men calling to open the gate.

Sam’s brow knit as he got to his feet. “He can’t be back so soon. Must be the southern gate.”

He made his way to the yard, watching the three riders pass through the gates. Two women and a man, though the taller woman wore dark armor.

“The Night’s Watch welcomes you, Lady…” Alisser Thorne looked to the hooded woman on the female knight’s right.

She looked to the blonde knight who sat tall. “Lady Alayne Stone, niece of Petyr Baelish, Lord Protector of the Vale. Escorted by her sworn sword, Brienne of Tarth and my squire, Podrick Payne.”

“And why have you come?” Alisser asked gruffly.

Alayne dismounted with Podrick’s help. “To meet with the Lord Commander and discuss trade.”


Sam noted Alayne’s eyes scanning the courtyard, searching. “Are you Lord Commander?”

Thorne’s face contorted in a flash of anger, gritting his teeth. “No, I’m afraid I’m not. Our Lord Commander isn’t here presently.”

There was a hint of disappointment when her eyes finally returned to Thorne, having not found what she sought. “Then perhaps I should wait to meet him.”

Thorne looked at the trio, thinking it over before looking to the men gathered. Just as he’d started to turn to return to his room, Thorne spotted Sam. “Tarly.” Sam winced before turning to him. “Show our guests to a room. One near the wildling girl.”

Sam nodded, making his way down to their guests. “If you’d follow me.”

They shared a look before following him. Once the brothers had started to return to their duties, Alayne moved toward Sam. “What did he mean about the wildling girl?”

Sam frowned, looking over her. “There’s another who stays here. Gilly, she’s… She’s from beyond the wall. Her and her baby have been here for ages.” Seeing the confusion on her face, Sam slowed to a stop, an assuring smile taking his face. “I swear, my lady, she’s nothing like the stories you’ve heard. She’s a quiet, sweet girl. Beautiful and nice and brave. Braver than I.”

Alayne glanced back to Brienne, sharing a solemn smile before Alayne returned her attention to
Sam. “I doubt that, Ser Tarly.”

Sam laughed, starting to walk again. “I’m no Ser, my lady. Just a craven.” He smiled sadly. “I’m no Jon Snow. Just Sam.”

Alayne tensed slightly. “Jon Snow? Do you mean the bastard of Winterfell?”

“Aye, Lady Stone. He’s the bravest man I know. It’s why we voted him Lord Commander.”

Alayne stopped mid stride, a slight gasp escaping her. Brienne and Podrick shared a surprised look. “He’s Lord Commander?”

Sam grinned, pride clear in his face as he nodded.

“And where is he now?” Alayne asked. “That man said he wasn’t here.”

Sam’s smile turned solemn as he nodded. “He’s beyond the wall.”

Shock forced his brow to rise when Alayne grasped his wrist, stepping close to him. “Is he alive?”

The hint of panic and fear in her voice confused him, but he nodded. “I don’t doubt it, my lady. He’ll return, I promise.” His head tilted slightly. “Did you know him?”

Alayne took a moment to gauge him. Tarly was a southern name. He was a brother of the Night’s Watch. She couldn’t trust his neutrality, couldn’t trust he wouldn’t tell someone and they would trade her to the Lannisters for support or supplies.

“I saw him in passing,” she said with a small smile. “I was a handmaid for Queen Cersei when she traveled to Winterfell.”

Sam chuckled, “I see.”

Turning to continue leading them to their room, he couldn’t help but shake his head and laugh. Even with her dark auburn hair frayed beneath her hood and weary from travel, Alayne was one of the most beautiful women he’d ever seen. Of course she’d remember Jon after seeing him in passing years earlier.

Chapter End Notes

Originally I just figured I’d have her arrive early on in season 5, but decided I want Jon to go to Hardhome. It’s one of the things I like better in the show and think it adds a lot.

That meant her trip had to be way longer than I ever intended, but I think it works out. She’s not with Ramsay or in the Vale with Petyr, but she’s still facing a hardship. She has the constant fear of the hunting parties which make her journey terrifying, arduous and frustrating. It also gave me a chance to have her rely on Jon in a way before she ever met him again.

I was reluctant about giving her any kind of weapon since it’s so outside of her character, but I thought it made sense. Don’t worry, she won’t suddenly end up on the front lines cutting down Boltons with Jon.
Also, fuck Olly.
Warmth At The Wall

Chapter Summary

Jon returns from Hardhome.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Few things felt as cold as the top of the Wall. Even beyond the Wall, the air wasn’t as thin or harsh, threatening to throw him over the edge if he got too close. When Jon did, it felt as if he were truly standing at the edge of the world, at the edge of life itself, daring death to take him.

And now he’d stared into death’s eyes and knew it was coming for him.

The Night King would come, and with him a hundred thousand corpses armed and undying. A hundred thousand things waiting to kill him, to end the life of anyone they saw and make them join their ever growing army.

There was no hope for victory, only retreat. They couldn’t cross the water, that was obvious, otherwise they might have crossed the bodies to either side of the wall by now. They would have found a way to reach the boats and kill everyone fleeing Hardhome. They couldn’t cross the Wall and they couldn’t cross the water.

Hope was south of the Wall.

Yet passing through the gates to Castle Black he felt only dread. The Night King would come, but now he’d have to face Thorne and the others, make them put aside their concerns and see reason. He’d have to convince them to work together, or they’d all die. At least he’d had the sense to open the gate and let them return.

“Every one of them is alive because of you,” Sam told him as they watched the free folk pass through the gates. “And no one else.”

“I don’t think that fact’s lost on them,” Jon said with a slight nod to a group glaring at the free folk. He watched Wun Wun pass through, saw Olly angrily hurry off.

Sam went to speak but stopped and stepped aside when he saw Thorne approaching.

“You have a good heart, Jon Snow,” he said dismissively. “It’ll get us all killed.”

Watching Thorne leave, his attention turned to Sam as he stepped to him. “We received a guest while you were gone.”

“Is it King Tommen this time?” Jon asked with a derisive laugh.

“No. A girl, says she knows you. In passing,” Sam clarified with a laugh. “Alayne Stone, came to trade on behalf of her uncle.”

“Trade what?”
“Gilly says she’s mentioned the Vale has supplies that could help us. Enough that it’s become a bother to store it all, so she says.”

Edd sighed. “I bet she’s pretty.”

“She remembers Jon from seeing him in passing,” Sam said shaking his head. “Of course she is.”

“Where is she?” Jon asked, ignoring their teasing.

“I suggested she stay in her room until they’ve passed. Thorne mentioned we housed a wildling girl and she seemed a bit worried, so I thought it best not to frighten her.”

“Surprised a southerner would even know what a wildling is,” Jon said dismissively. It seemed as if the southron kingdoms didn’t even know the Night’s Watch existed until they came to empty their cells.

“You said she’s from the Vale?” Edd asked. “Her name’s Stone?”

“Niece to the Lord Protector.”

“Send her to my solar,” said Jon.

Sam placed a hand on his shoulder. “You alright Jon?”

Jon offered a weak smile. “I’m alive. That’s enough.”

Back in his solar he removed his cloak and downed nearly half a mug of ale to help warm him as he stood before the hearth. The chill he’d felt since Hardhome lingered. It felt as if something had attached itself to him, marked him and was draining all the warmth from him, waiting to leave him cold and dead as a wight. Pulling all the warmth from the world until it was as cold as the Night King’s eyes.

He barely heard the knock, setting the mug above the hearth. “Come in,” he called out, taking a breath.

The door opened, Jon turned, and warmth returned to the world.

She was different. Older, taller. She’d always been pretty, but it was different now. Mature maybe, leaving behind pretty for beauty. Understated by her simple gown and hair, but apparent and undeniable.

There were no words, barely a noise apart from her shaky breath as she watched him walk toward her. He came to a stop a meter from her before his hands shifted and they dashed toward one another, Sansa throwing her arms around his neck while he embraced her.

Behind her Brienne lowered her gaze until they broke apart. Sansa held him, looking him over with a somber smile. “You’re real,” she marveled. “You’re real and you’re alive.”

“For now,” he said with a small laugh. “What are you doing here?”

She glanced back to Brienne, who closed the door for them. With just the three of them there and Podrick outside the door, she smiled. “I’m Alayne Stone.”

Jon looked from her to Brienne and back. After a moment he nodded, stepping back. “I suppose that means no trade with the Vale?”
Sansa smiled. “Sorry, I had to say something to stay here. To talk to you.”

“How’d you get here?” He frowned. “I heard you disappeared from King’s Landing. Where were you?”

“I was at the Vale,” she said quietly. “Littlefinger, Petyr Baelish, he helped me escape and brought me there. But Aunt Lysa, she’s…” She shook her head. “She sent me here to be with the last of my family only days after we arrived.”

At first he’d nodded, but then furrowed his brow. “Wait, how long ago?”

Sansa sighed. “I made it past Moat Cailin with the knights she sent to guard me, but they were killed by one of the Bolton’s hunting parties. I made it back, I was going to go back, but Brienne found me. She swore her sword to me, helped me keep going, but there were more parties. They kept forcing us back, but her and Podrick, they kept me safe. It was…” She took a breath and shook her head, sniffing.

Jon saw in her eyes that she’d seen awful things on her way here. It had been harsh, constantly on the run, being hunted and hiding. His gaze turned to Brienne, offering a smile. “Thank you. I can’t thank you enough for protecting Sansa.”

Brienne bowed her head briefly. “I was only doing my duty, Lord Commander.”

Looking to Sansa he reached over to squeeze her shoulder. “You stay here. I’ll go get us something to eat. Something warm.”

Sansa nodded, turning to watch him leave. Brienne remained, glancing at Sansa as she looked around the room.

“I knew he’d do well here,” she said looking at his cloak, half-ragged and tattered. “Even still it’s hard to believe it’s really him.”

“Does he seem different?” Brienne asked, tilting her head.

Sansa quickly shook her head. “No. Sure he’s older, less… gangly than I remember him, filled out I suppose, and he didn’t have that scar, but he’s just as I thought he’d be.”

“I’m glad you’re so happy, my lady.”

Sansa turned to her. “Hm?”

Brienne smirked. “You haven’t stopped smiling since Sam told us to stay inside.”

Brienne left them to enjoy their time together, Sansa sipping at the bowl of soup he’d brought her. He’d finished his and moved on to his ale as they reminisced on Old Nan’s kidney pies and shared a smile.

“We never should have left Winterfell,” he declared facing the hearth.

“Don’t you wish we could go back to the day we left?” She took a breath, thinking of herself then. “I want to scream at myself, ‘Don’t go, you idiot.’”

“How could we know?”
Sansa looked to him. “I spent a lot of time thinking about what an ass I was to you.” He looked down, avoiding her gaze. “I wish I could change everything.”

“We were children.”

“I was awful, just admit it,” she said, humor in her voice.

Jon chuckled. “You were occasionally awful.” He met her gaze with a smile. “I’m sure I can’t have been great fun. Always sulking in the corner while the rest of you played.”

“Can you forgive me?” She asked, swaying her head slightly.

“There’s nothing to forgive,” he assured.

“Forgive me!” Her brow rose, a playfully demanding lilt to her voice.

“Alright,” he relented, “I forgive you.”

She smiled wide, victorious. As it shrank she reached out for his hands, and a moment later choked on the mouthful of ale she’d downed. Jon chuckled, taking it back.

“You’d think after thousands of years the Night’s Watch would learn how to make a good ale.” His smile faltered and fell as he looked to the fire.

“Is it okay if I stay here for a while?” She asked quietly, not wanting to break whatever thought had him looking so somber, but feeling like she needed to ask.

He turned to her and smiled. “You could be Queen of the Night’s Watch if you’d like. I’d never throw you out and I’ll never let anything happen to you.” He snickered. “If I did Father’s ghost would come back and murder me.”

“I can’t stay here, not forever.”

“You’ll return to the Vale?”

“There’s only one place I can go.” She answered his arched brow, “Home.”

“Should we tell the Boltons to pack up and leave?” He asked with a laugh.

She frowned, thinking. “You could help me take it back.”

“Sansa,” he sighed. “…” He should have said he couldn’t get involved, that he’d taken a vow and had a duty. Instead he shook his head. “How? I don’t have an army.”

“How many wildlings did you save?”

“They didn’t come here to serve me.”

“They owe you their lives,” she challenged, getting to her feet. She turned to put her bowl on a table. “You think they’ll be safe here if Roose Bolton remains Warden of the North?”

“Sansa,” he said pleadingly.

She turned to him. “Winterfell is our home. It’s ours and Arya’s and Bran’s and Rickon’s, wherever they are, and it belongs to our family. We have to fight for it.”
She stared at the back of Jon’s head, sinking forward slightly as it shook. “I’ve just brought thousands of wildlings through the gate. I can’t go running off to fight a war to the south. I’m Lord Commander. I need to be here. I just…” He got to his feet and turned to her, his brow knit, the hint of anger across his face deepened by somber shadows. “I just watched thousands be slaughtered and rise again, all of them set to come here and slaughter us all.”

Sansa started to argue then stopped, blinking. “What?”


Brow furrowed, she shook her head. “Like from Old Nan’s stories?”

“He’s real, Sansa.” He sighed. “I looked into his eyes and all I saw was death. He raised his arms and everyone the wights had slaughtered rose. They all stood up at once. Tens of thousands of them, the biggest army in the world, and we can’t stop them. Not without dragonglass. I barely managed to survive fighting a White Walker.”

“You fought a White Walker?” She asked stepping closer, shocked.

“I only killed it because of Longclaw.”

“Longclaw?” She asked, following his eyes as he looked to the sword belt on his bed. “Your sword?”

“It’s valyrian steel. The White Walkers, I saw them shatter steel axes like they were glass, but Longclaw stopped them. And there’s barely any others like it, and we’d need a mountain of dragonglass to even stand a chance.” He leaned against the back of chair he’d occupied moments earlier. “The only thing keeping us safe is the Wall. This is my fight now. And it’s one I’ve already lost.”

His despair left her shaken for a moment, terrified by the truth in his words. She’d been right. Through the sorrow of the deaths he saw, the fear and knowledge that he would lose, the determination to fight because of the risk rather than in spite of it, though all of it was the earnest sincerity she saw in Brienne’s eyes months earlier. The honesty pleading for her belief as much as he dreaded the truth he spoke.

She took a light breath, just barely shaking her head as she stepped toward him. “If we don’t take back the North we’ll never be safe. Not from the Night King or the Boltons. I want you to help me… but I’ll do it myself if I have to.”

His jaw shifted, keeping her gaze as he nodded. “I’ll help.”

Surprise broke her firm expression. “You will? What about your vows?”

“Wouldn’t be the first time I broke my vows,” he sighed, “but at least I’ll know it’s worth it if it means you’re safe. Just give me time before we ride off to war. Let’s make sure we at least can win the battles to the south and hope the Wall keeps the others out while we’re gone. For now, how about we go see Ghost?”

In that moment her brilliant smile seemed like it would be worth whatever might come.

Chapter End Notes
Sticking with Hardhome meant a few things remained as setup. Stannis still rode to Winterfell and sent Davos away before putting Shireen in a pyre. I'd written a bit where Brienne tells Sansa about his use of blood magic while suggesting they avoid Stannis, so just assume that happened off screen if it bugs ya. But Stannis died to some Bolton schmo instead of Brienne.

I guess some things are inevitable.
Chapter Summary

Treachery.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Sam left two days later, off to Oldtown to become a Maester after he dropped Gilly and Little Sam off with his family. Davos’ return had been a surprise, but Melisandre’s had destroyed his hope that Stannis would win Sansa’s war for them.

It was difficult enough handling the Wall, but nearly impossible to try and plan against the Boltons when he had no idea how many men they had. Two thousand wildlings might be able to face three, maybe even four thousand if they were lucky and planned well, but for all he knew they’d march to Winterfell and find ten thousand armed and armored men waiting for them. At least it was only Roose Bolton leading them, or else Stannis and his men would be among those waiting for them.

He set down a letter from Eastwatch and rubbed his forehead, wishing he could sleep forever when the door burst open. “Lord Commander,” Olly said as he entered. “It’s one of the wildlings you brought back. Says he knows your uncle Benjen. Says he’s still alive.”

“Are you sure he’s talking about Benjen?” He asked, his chair sliding back as he rose.

“Said he was first ranger.” Jon made for the door as Olly followed. “Said he knows where to find him.”

Thorne was waiting at the bottom of the stairs as Jon pulled on his gloves. “Man says he saw your uncle at Hardhome the last full moon.”

“Could be lying.”

“Could be. There are ways to find out.”

“Where is he?”

“Over there,” Thorne motioned toward the group of men standing crowded together.

Jon pushed through, and all the hope that had been building in him the past few days froze over and shattered when he saw the sign.

TRAITOR

He knew. He knew the moment he saw the plank nailed to the beam. He knew what would happen when he turned around, and he knew who it would be. And still he wanted to ask why, even as Thorne thrust the dagger into his abdomen.

As if to answer his unasked question, Thorne said firmly, “For the watch.”
The dagger was ripped out of him, only for another to pierce his stomach. “For the watch.”

The second was barely gone was the third struck. “For the watch.”

The fourth felt quicker then the others. “For the watch.”

The fifth seemed to linger before it was torn free. “For the watch.”

He scanned the crowd, wishing he could fight them all, wanting to strike at them, but his body wouldn’t move. Instead of charging forward, he fell to his knees.

The crowd parted and he saw Olly make his way toward him, stand in front of Jon and stare at him with every ounce of hate he held pushing away any regret he might have held.

The cold had started to return, all the warmth he’d found in the last few days pouring out of him, through his fingers. He was at Hardhome again, dead eyes meeting his. He wanted to say something. He wanted to be warm again.

“Ghost,” he whispered before Olly drove the dagger into his heart.

His eyes flicked toward the King’s Tower, where Ghost would be in Sansa’s room. He’d keep her safe as much as Brienne and Podrick. He’d do what Jon couldn’t. They didn’t know yet, she was still Alayne to them, so they wouldn’t hurt her. She could get out safe with Ghost and Brienne and Podrick and Edd. She could go to the Wildlings and find someplace safe. Davos and Tormund would take care of her.

He swayed slightly before falling back into the snow, the world collapsing into darkness as his eyes clouded and the cold claimed him.

XOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXO

Sansa sat up as Ghost howled and scratched at her door. “Ghost,” she said patting the bed to try and get his attention and quiet him. He ignored her, clawing at the door and howled again, sounding agonized and mournful.

If it were any other wolf or dog she might have gotten annoyed, but this was Ghost. Quiet, gentle Ghost who barely made a sound despite being nearly as big as a horse.

Something was wrong.

Once she’d put on her robe she opened the door and Ghost bolted from the room, nearly knocking Podrick over. He and Brienne stood on the small walkway in front of the tower door, shock on their faces as she noticed Davos rushing down the stairs into the yard.

Sansa’s fell on the figure laying in the yard, and she shook her head. “No,” she whispered, making her way toward the stairs. Brienne reached for her but Sansa pushed her away, holding her skirt as she sped down the stairs. “No, no, no!”

“It’s the Lord Commander!”

Davos took a knee to look him over while Sansa felt her knees soak in the bloodied snow around him. “Jon,” she begged, clutching his arm as his cloudy eyes stared lifelessly ahead. Tears stained her cheeks, shaking him gently as though he were sleeping. “Jon, please, gods, no! Please!”

“Help me get him inside,” Davos told the men that had come, Podrick helping pick up his body
while Brienne helped Sansa stand. It was only then she saw the sign. She was trembling, feeling as thought she’d collapse if not for Brienne guiding her after the others.

Once they were inside and Edd had closed Jon’s eyes, she stood beside him, her fingers going numb as they dug into his jerkin, sobbing while she pressed her forehead to his chest.

“Thorne did this,” Edd said, bile in his throat, venom in his words.

“How many of your brothers do you think you can trust?” Davos asked.

“Trust?” After a moment Edd answered, “The men in this room.”

Davos looked to Brienne, stood behind Sansa with her hand on the girl’s back while Podrick frowned beside her. Her reaction surprised him, baffled him in a way. They seemed friendly enough, but she wailed like a widow.

There was a knock and Sansa’s head shot up as the brothers drew steel. A female voice called through the door. “Ser Davos?”

With a glance at the knight, Edd opened the door and Melisandre looked past him, stepping inside. Her curiosity sank to sorrow as she approached the table, Sansa standing straight but staying next to him, her fingers still clutching his side.

“I saw him in the flames,” she said disheartened. “Fighting at Winterfell.”

Sansa looked to Melisandre, brow furrowed. How did she know? They’d been careful not to let the others know they planned to retake it. If anyone but them, Brienne and Podrick were in a room they spoke of false trade. They hadn’t even spoken to the wildlings yet, Jon wanting to let them mourn their dead before he asked them to lose more.

“I can’t speak for the flames,” said Davos, “but he’s gone.”

Melisandre touched his cheek, looking as if her dreams had died with Jon, just as Sansa’s had.

She could continue, try to make it without him, but what was the point? Why should she bother? No matter what she endured, how much she grit her teeth to bear it all, it always ended with death. Why not let it end with hers, here, beside the last person who mattered, beside the last of their direwolves.

All of her hopelessness was mirrored in Melisandre’s eyes when she looked to Sansa mournfully, shaken to her core before she turned and left for her room.

“My Lady,” Davos said carefully. “I’d suggest you and your guards leave Castle Black as soon as you can. Send someone else to trade if you must, but-”

“I’m not leaving him,” she practically growled, her jaw set as she looked to Davos.

“Lady Alayne, please-”

“I’m Sansa Stark,” she cut him off. The others went wide eyed, Davos arching his brow as her anger melted and she looked at Jon. “I came here for his help. I won’t leave him, not like this. I’ll die before I let them touch him again.”

Ghost whined softly, pressing his snout to Jon’s hand before doing the same to Sansa’s arm. She glanced down, smiling sadly as her right hand released his side to rub Ghost’s head. A moment
later her left released Jon’s jerkin, moving to grip his hand instead.

She looked to Brienne and Podrick, both wearing somber expressions. “I’m sorry Brienne, Podrick, but if I’m to die I’d rather it be beside him. I release you from your duties to me if you wish.”

Brienne stood taller than normal as she shook her head. “With all respect, I refuse your dismissal, my lady.”

“Me as well,” Podrick said with a nod and a grim smile.

Sansa smiled despite her tears as she returned her gaze to Jon. “Then let the Starks die here as a pack.”

Chapter End Notes

They'd already planned this the moment Jon left surely, so there was no avoiding this. I'd considered bringing in more book elements, like having his planning to go to war for Sansa or even a fake Arya be a part of their reason, or at least have them all be in tears, but I kind of like that they're all so self righteous, the pricks.

Also fuck everyone involved with making and letting Jon's last word be Olly in the show. Olly is like the worst kind of OC put into a fan fic. So I made him say Ghost, as it should have been. I had a version where it was Sansa after Ghost, but it felt better as Ghost. Fuck Olly and fuck whatever writer was jerkin' themselves off over having their OC be so important to the story it stole an amazing piece of media from us. That clip of Jon whispering Ghost as he is stabbed would've been amazing.
Mutiny and Miracles

Chapter Summary

The Boltons receive news while at the Wall Melisandre performs a ritual.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“Are we certain these are the same bandits?” Roose asked Harald Karstark.

“As best we can tell, my lord,” Harald nodded. “We tracked them, but we lost them to the north. They could be hiding in the Gift.”

Ramsay’s eyes flickered. “They could be heading to the Wall.”

“To take the black?” Roose asked dismissively.

“To find the last Stark,” declared Ramsay.

“Jon Snow’s a bastard, not a Stark.”

Ramsay tilted his head, his arms crossed. “So was I, Father.”

Harald Karstark frowned. “Your hold on the North will never be secure so long as a Stark could walk through that door.”

Ramsay approached his father. “Castle Black isn’t defended on the southern side. The few men left are barely men at all. Farm boys and thieves. With a small force we could storm the castle, kill Jon Snow—”

“Murder the Lord Commander of the Night’s Watch? You’d unite every house in the North against us!”

Ramsay shrugged. “We don’t need every house in the North. The Umbers, the Manderlys and the Karstarks command more soldiers than all the others houses combined. With their support, none could challenge us.”

Harald nodded warily. “The Starks lost my house the day King Robb took my father’s head. It’s time for new blood in the North.”

Ramsay grinned at Harald. “Well said, good father.”

Roose noticed Harald could barely make himself look to Ramsay and nod. He’d heard the things his son did with Alys Karstark. Saw what the girl had become.

The North had always believed Winterfell needed a Stark, but with the Stark daughters dead or missing, the only option was to play on House Karstark’s Stark blood stemming from their founder, Karlon Stark when he started the cadet branch. That would be enough to quiet the people’s demand for Stark blood, at least keep them from using it against them.
Getting to his feet, Roose looked to Ramsay. “If you acquire a reputation as a mad dog you’ll be treated as a mad dog. Taken out back and slaughtered for pig feed.”

The clink of Wolkan’s chains heralded his arrival before his words. “My lords, Lady Walda had given birth.” He managed a smile, the best he could after all these years among the Boltons. “A boy!” Ramsay’s eyes shifted, his jaw set and firm as Wolkan continued. “Red cheeked and healthy.”

“Your congratulations, Lord Bolton,” Harald offered.

Roose turned to Ramsay, who approached him. After a moment Ramsay embraced him. “Congratulations, Father. I look forward to meeting my new brother.”

Once they separated, Roose placed a hand on his shoulder. “You’ll always be my firstborn.” The words were bitter on his tongue, his mind flashing to Domeric. The first son he’d lost, the better son.

Ramsay thought of him as well. His brother, the weak boy who’d rather play a harp than hunt a woman. Even though he’d shared their father’s cold instincts and could have matched Ramsay in the yard, he was a soft heart, friendly and polite. The pathetic fool had wanted nothing more than a brother. And he choked on his bloated tongue as Ramsay smiled down on him.

Roose knew, but he had no choice. Mad and born from the rape of some waste of flesh who’d failed to keep Ramsay away as he paid her to do, he reeled the boy in, let him have his outlets. Crafted him from a wild bastard to a lord.

“Thank you for saying that,” Ramsay said meeting Roose’s gaze, “it means a great deal to me.” For a moment Roose felt pride at the emotion in the boy’s eyes.

And then he drove a dagger into Roose’s side, between his ribs and into his heart.

Roose gurgled and gasped as Ramsay’s fingers dug into his shoulder, pushing the dagger as far as he could, feeling it scrape at bone and tear at flesh before he ripped it out. Sinking to his knees, Roose wished he’d done what he wanted years ago and skinned the dumb woman after he’d taken her. Domeric would be alive and so would Roose.

Lord Bolton fell back, Ramsay breathing heavily as he wiped the dagger clean. “Maester Wolkan. Send ravens to all the northern houses. Roose Bolton is dead. Poisoned by our enemies.” When Wolkan stood staring at the corpse of his lord, Ramsay turned to him, demanding, “How did he die?”

Wolkan turned to the boy he’d seen grow into the cruel madmen before him. “Poisoned. By his enemies.”

Harald Karstark pulled his eyes from Roose, his hand trembling as he looked to Ramsay, and then Wolkan. He had no choice, not now. “You’re talking to your lord. Use respect.”

“Forgive me, my lord,” said Wolkan.

Ramsay’s jaw set as he nodded. “Send for Lady Walda and the baby.”

“She’s resting, my lord.”

Ramsay’s chin rose, eyes boring into the fool who dared speak back to him.
Wolkan took a breath and nodded. “At once, my lord.”

Harald Karstark held his breath as Ramsay looked over his shoulder to his father’s corpse before turning to Harald with a smile. “You can leave, good father. I must mourn my own.”

Once the man had left, Ramsay turned to the broken excuse of a human being stood in the corner. “Reek,” he ordered, “have the men prepare the kennels. Tonight we feast in honor of my father while my dogs feast upon him and my mother.”

“A-As you wish, my lord.” Reek shakily bowed his head, departing in a rush.

XOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXO

Edd left to ask the wildlings for help and thankfully Podrick returned from Brienne’s room with her armor and supplies before Alisser Thorne turned up to offer them until nightfall to decide whether they’d leave in peace or die alongside Jon.

Once he was gone Davos looked the them. “Boys, I’ve been running from men like that all my life. In my learned opinion, we open that door—”

“And they skin us alive,” Sansa finished, drawing their eyes. “They’re murderous butchers, same as the Boltons.”

“They want to come in,” one brother nodded, “and they’re gonna come in.”

“Aye,” Davos nodded, thinking. “We don’t need to make it easy for ’em.”

“Edd is our only chance.”

“It’s a sad fuckin’ state if Dolorus Edd is our only chance,” a brother groused.

After a moment Davos decided, “There’s always the Red Woman.”

Sansa looked to the man as another asked, “What’s one redhead going to do against forty armed men.”

Davos’s gaze rose to meet the man as he declared, “You haven’t seen her do what I’ve seen her do.”

His eyes turned to Sansa, confused by his words, not daring to let hope claim her and lead her astray. Her hand squeezed Jon’s, Ghost nuzzling her side as she reached down to stroke his chin.

“Whatever it takes.”

Night came and so did the Watch. Thorne banged on their door declaring time had come, asking them to open it. Offering to set Ghost free north of the wall.

“I’ve never been much of a fighter,” Davos told them as he took Jon’s sword. With a nod to Sansa he offered, “Apologies for what you’re about to see.” And Longclaw rang as he and the others drew their swords.

Brienne and Podrick moved to the other side of the table, blocking Sansa. Ghost growled near Jon’s head while Sansa kept one hand in his and the other clutched her dagger.

The door buckled and cracked, but before they could attack she heard the bangs. The splintering wood. The bolts and grunts and swords and breaks. The scream and splat.
Once it had all settled Brienne returned to Sansa’s side, placing a hand on her shoulder once she’d sheathed Oathkeeper. With a shaky breath, Sansa set her dagger down on the table, her hand trembling too much to properly sheath it.

Davos and Edd led Tormund into the room, his eyes stuck on Jon before raising. He looked to Sansa with sympathy and regret, almost apologetic, and then his eyes found Brienne and widened slightly with carnal admiration. The lightness that claimed his face when he saw Brienne quickly faded once he looked at Jon again.

“ Took a lot of knives.” Raising his gaze he declared he would prepare a pyre for the bodies.

Davos left shortly after, leaving Brienne and Podrick with Sansa, Ghost and Jon’s corpse.

“Thank you for staying,” Sansa said quietly, looking from Brienne to Podrick. “Both of you.”

Podrick smiled. He’d known she was wary of him at first, skeptical of his loyal, so her thanks meant near as much as they could to a person. “Of course, my lady.”

Brienne wore pride in her squire’s thanks. The boy wasn’t particularly skilled, but he’d survived the long, dogged trek north with her. He’d taken his first life, earned his first scar on his hip. He’d come a long way from the boy all but forced into her service, though he still annoyingly called her lady.

She was equally impressed by the woman before her. She’d been scared, weak and alone when they found her. Sansa had been a girl barely a woman when they started, before she’d killed a dog to save herself, before she’d survived long cold nights on the road. Now she was a woman, stood fiercely protective and ready to die with a dagger in her hand. Perhaps not a true Lady, but a woman whom Brienne held with respect above any she’d met, even Lady Catelyn.

When Davos returned, the Red Woman joined him alongside Edd and Tormund.

“Strip him,” she said firmly. “Fetch me a bowl of water and a rag. His wounds should be cleaned.”

She came to stand beside the table and met Sansa’s eyes. “You’ll need to stand aside, Lady Sansa.”

Something in her voice made it clear that Melisandre had known who she was the moment their eyes first met when she returned to Castle Black.

Sansa backed away, letting them strip Jon of his clothes, turning her head until Brienne nodded once they’d placed a cloth across his hips. She watched Melisandre carefully bring the wet cloth across his chest, wiping away the dried, cold blood. Seeing the holes in his torso, tears slipped silently down her cheeks. Without a sound she wept, and without a sound Ghost rested his head on her lap, licking her hand and nuzzling against her stomach, letting her pet him.

The Red Woman spoke a foreign language as she clipped his hair and trimmed his beard, throwing his hair into a flame. She spoke again as she wet his hair, letting the water drip through it into a bowl and brushing her fingers through the ends that hung over the edge of the table.

Placing the pitcher back on the table, she stood beside Jon and carefully placed her hands on his chest. She spoke, and seemed startled that nothing happened before pressing her hands and speaking again. She looked to his face and spoke again. And again.

And again.

And again.
And again.

Finally with a sigh she whispered, “Please.”

With no movement she withdrew her hands and looked from Sansa to Davos regretfully. Sansa choked back a sob, glancing at Ghost who looked unconscious, laying with his eyes closed on her lap. Tormund huffed and left, followed by Melisandre and Edd.

Davos looked at Jon, his jaw shifting as he looked to Sansa. “I’m sorry, my lady.”

With a nod to Brienne and Podrick, he left the room.

Sansa sniffed, brushing her fingers through Ghost’s fur.

“Lady Sansa,” Brienne whispered.

After a long time sat in silence, Ghost’s eyes snapped open and he whined. He took a step back, away from Sansa as he turned to the table just as Jon’s eyes snapped snapped open and his gasp filled the room.

Sansa felt a rush of emotion flood her, leaving her feeling flushed and unsure how to breath. Brienne stood frozen in shock and awe while Podrick’s eyes were large as saucers, his hands trembling.

Davos returned, looking intent to say something, when he saw Jon breathing before he sat up and looked from Davos to Ghost to Sansa. He saw them staring at him, his eyes falling to his chest where he felt the wounds, struggling to breath properly.

Davos rushed forward, wrapping Jon in his cloak and catching him as he tried to get off the table. “Easy, easy,” he said helping the Lord Commandeer sit.

Melisanre came through the door, eyes wide as she looked from Jon to Davos and back.

“What do you remember?” Davos asked as Sansa got to her feet, carefully walking around to watch Jon.

“They stabbed me,” he said staring toward the floor. “Olly put a knife in my heart.” He searched his memory, replaying it and shaking his head. “I shouldn’t be here.”

“The lady brought you back,” said Davos.

Jon looked from him to Melisandre, who rushed forward and knelt, clutching his hand. “Afterwards. After they stabbed you, after you died, where did you go? What did you see?”

Jon looked into her eyes. “Nothing. There was nothing at all.”

Melisandre met his gaze. “The Lord let you come back for a reason. Stannis was not the Prince who was Promised, but someone has to be.”

Watching the man’s head sink, his jaw shivering with contained emotion, Davos asked, “Could you give us a moment?”

Melisandre was pulled from her reverent stare, glancing at Davos before looking at her prince and standing to leave the room. Davos closed the door behind her and looked to Sansa and her companions before grabbing a stool and placing it in front of Jon, sitting before the man.
“You were dead, now you’re not. That’s completely fucking mad, seems to me. I can only imagine how it seems to you.”

“I did what I thought was right,” Jon said, clutching Davos’s cloak in hopes of stopping his trembling. Riding himself of the lingering cold still clutching at him. Raising his gaze to Davos he continued, “And I got murdered for it. And now I’m back. Why?”

“I don’t know,” said Davos, meeting Jon’s eyes. “Maybe we’ll never know. What does it matter? You go on. You fight for as long as you can. You clean up as much of the shit as you can.”

Jon shook his head. “I don’t know how to do that. I thought I did but…” He looked to Sansa, tears streaming down her cheeks as he declared, “I failed.”

She frowned, watching his head sink in defeat.

“Good,” said Davos. “Now go fail again.”

Hesitantly raising his head to look at Davos, he took a breath and turned to Sansa. “I’m so sorry, Sansa.”

She couldn’t help but smile. Of course Jon would apologize for being murdered.

Wiping her cheek, she rushed closer and wrapped her arms around him, careful not to press too tightly in case he was in pain. “I’m sorry I wasn’t there for you.”

“You were,” he said reaching a hand out from the cloak to rub her back. “You are.”

Davos wore a fond smile as he watched the pair. “Lady Sansa’s stood over you the entire time.”

Jon smiled at the sheepish look Sansa wore as she moved back. He met her eyes as he said, “You and Ghost.”

Sansa nodded. “I wouldn’t let them touch you.”

“I know,” he said, not quite sure how he knew, but he did. He knew she’d stood over him, he knew she’d held a dagger, ready to fight for him alongside Brienne and the others. He knew she’d been terribly sad, and only seemed to smile whenever Ghost nuzzled at her or licked her hands, begging her to pet him, to be happy, to forgive him for making her cry.

Davos helped him dress, Podrick having run off to get him clothes. The sun had risen on a new day and men filled the courtyard as Jon left the room with Davos and Sansa behind him and Brienne and Podrick behind them.

Tormund claimed they thought him a god, teased him about his pecker, earning his first laugh of his new life. His first smile had gone to Sansa. As had his first hug, his second going to Edd.

“Is that still you in there?”

“I think so,” said Jon. “Hold off on burning my body for now.”

Edd chuckled. “That’s funny… You sure that’s still you in there?”

Jon laughed, glancing back at Sansa, who beamed at him. Was it still him?

Chapter End Notes
This chapter is mostly scenes from the series with smaller changes laced throughout. I kept the opening scene largely to show the changes in the Bolton's story since they don't have 'Arya' or Sansa, and the changes that stemmed from that. All the stuff for Jon's return is the same because the setup is still basically the same. The changes have been small so far, but grow the further along we get, messing with the timeline of events and changing some entirely.

Domeric is one of my favorite 'could have been' characters in the series. I wish more stories used him when they have altered events or characters going back in time. I imagine him as about as cold as Roose but without being a murderous shitheel, the opposite of Ramsay who even at his coldest seems to be running hot and holding back anger. He loved the harp and wanted to meet his brother, even if he was a bastard. He might've been the one good Bolton and Ramsay murdered him. Domeric and Jon could've made interesting buddies, especially if Ned saw Domeric teaching Jon the harp.
His Watch Is Ended

Chapter Summary

Ramsay receives a gift and Jon serves justice before his watch is ended.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“Why have you come to Winterfell, Lord Umber?”

Small Jon stepped forward. “The Bastard Jon Snow let an army of wildlings past the Wall. We’re farther north than any of you fuckers. Wildlings come down, we always have to fight them first. I like fighting wildlings, been doing it all my life, but there are too many for us to beat back alone.”

“So now you’ve come seeking help?”

“We need to help each other.” Small Jon pointed to the northern window. “The colder it gets, the farther south those goat fuckers will roam. Won’t take them long to get here.”

“You think a horde of wildlings can take Winterfell?” asked Harald.

“If they get Jon Snow leading them, maybe. He knows this place better than we ever will.”

Ramsay looked from Karstark to Umber. “Pledge your banners to House Bolton. Swear your loyalty to me as Warden of the North and we will fight together to destroy the bastard and his wildling friends.”

“I’m not kissing your fucking hand.”

“Traditionally a bannerman kneels before his lord,” said Ramsay.

“I’m not doing that either,” said Small Jon.

“Why would I trust a man who won’t honor tradition?”

Small Jon stepped forward, pressing his gloved knuckles to the table. “You father honored tradition. Knelt to Robb Stark. Called him King in the North. Was Robb Stark right to trust your father?”

“Then it appears we’re at a bit of an impasse.”

“Fuck kneeling and fuck oaths.” Small Jon backed away and nodded to the man at the door. “I’ve got a gift for you.”

“A girl, I hope.” Ramsay grinned, glancing at his good father before watching Small Jon. “I prefer redheads.”

“A girl, aye. A wild one.” Small Jon laughed, pulling the sack from the woman’s head, letting her look around frantically.
Ramsay got to his feet. “I like them wild.”

“And the boy, nice and young. The way Karstark likes them.”

Harald rose and Ramsay looked back, stopping him while Small Jon took off the boy’s hood.

“Who is this?” Ramsay asked walking forward.

“Rickon Stark.”

Ramsay stopped in front of the boy, bringing his hands together as he leaned forward with a slight smile. “How do I know that’s Rickon Stark?”

Small Jon backed away, returning a moment later with a direwolf head impaled on a hook. Dropping it on the table, he turned to Ramsay, who smiled as he looked to Rickon. The boy’s gaze had fallen upon Reek, who looked terrified in the corner. As though he’d seen a ghost.

“Welcome home, Lord Stark.”

Sansa watched Jon look over the bloodied jerkin full of thin dagger holes until there was a knock at the door and Edd entered. “It’s time.”

Jon got to his feet, tossing the jerkin on the table and taking Longclaw. Sansa followed him, joining Brienne and Podrick outside, following them to stand in the crowd with the others, watching Jon make his way up the platform before the four men in nooses.

Standing beside Bowen Marsh, Jon told them, “If you have any last words, now is the time.”

“You shouldn’t be alive,” declared Marsh, “It’s not right.”

Jon turned his head to meet the man’s eyes. “Neither was killing me,” he said, leaving Marsh shaken as Jon moved to Othell Yarwyck.

“My mother’s still living at White Harbor. Could you write her? Tell her I died fighting the wildlings,” he pleaded.

Jon moved to Alisser Thorne, meeting them man’s eyes.

“I had a choice, Lord Commander. Betray you or betray the Night’s Watch. You brought an army of wildlings into our lands. An army of murderers and raiders.” Thorne looked to the wildlings among the crowd before sinking his eyes toward Jon again. “If I had to do it all over knowing where I’d end up, I pray I’d make the right choice again.”

“I’m sure you would, Ser Alisser.”

“I fought. I lost.” Thorne nodded. “Now I rest. But you, Lord Snow, you’ll be fighting their battles forever.” With his peace said, Thorne raised his head, ready to face his fate.

Sansa watched Jon move to the youngest boy, his face twisted in spiteful indignation, seething with hate while Jon simply looked saddened by it all. Disappointed in the boy.

Jon walked to the rope, drawing Longclaw. He stared at it for a moment, the air tense before he took a breath, steeled himself and swung the sword. The board under them fell away and their bodies dropped, snapping their necks as they choked on their final breaths, their faces turning blue.
and bloated.

Jon exhaled as he looked at the corpses and walked to Edd.

“We should burn the bodies.”

“You should,” Jon said, removing his cloak.

Edd looked at the cloak Jon handed him. “What do you want me to do with this?”

“Wear it. Burn it. Whatever you want. You have Castle Black.” Jon turned and descended the stairs, passing through the men in the yard with a steady stride as he declared, “My watch is ended.”

Sansa wanted to follow, but decided to give Jon time to settle his thoughts. Time to settle her own. She returned to her room, Ghost joining her alongside Brienne and Podrick.

“What happens now?” She heard Podrick ask quietly when she entered her room.

Brienne didn’t give an answer, and neither did Sansa. She wasn’t sure what to do anymore. She’d been so sure that they had to reclaim Winterfell, but that had all disappeared when she saw Jon’s corpse.

It didn’t matter anymore, none of it did. Winterfell had been her home, but it didn’t matter a much as Jon or Arya or Bran or Rickon. She’d take them all and run away, hide in Braavos so Arya could find another dance instructor, live out their days in warmth and peace far from the Boltons or White Walkers.

She made her way to his room later and found him packing his things, having changed into something shockingly not black. Jon looked to her and she smiled while Edd picked up Longclaw.

“You look well.”

“As well as can be expected for a recently dead man,” Edd said walking toward the window.

Sansa entered the room, looking from the bag to Jon. Her heart sank at the thought of him leaving, but steeled herself. “Where will you go?”

Jon tucked his gloves into the bag and turned to her. “Where will we go.”

She felt like she could breathe again, her lips sliding back in a contained smile as she corrected herself, “Where will we go.”

“Home,” he said placing a hand on the table as he turned to her. “We’ll retake Winterfell.”

“Jon.” Edd placed Longclaw on the table, shaking his head. “I was with you at Hardhome. We saw what’s out there. We know it’s coming here. How can you leave us now?”

“I did everything I could,” said Jon, “you know that.”

“You sword a vow!”

Jon leaned forward to match Edd. “Aye, I pledged my life to the Night’s Watch. I gave my life.”

“For all nights to come.”

“They killed me, Edd! My own brothers.” Jon sighed. “You want me to stay here after that?” His
eyes flicked to Sansa, taking a breath and standing. “I have family I need to protect south of here.” Placing a hand on the man’s shoulder, he met his gaze. “I trust you to keep my brothers here safe behind the Wall. And while you do I’ll be heading south to reclaim Winterfell and try to find us help. I won’t leave you here alone with this.”

Edd frowned, any anger quickly leaving him before he nodded. Even if he wouldn’t have tried to help, it was clear Edd trusted Jon, respected him enough to accept his choice.

Once he left, Sansa looked to Brienne who nodded and closed the door before moving closer to them.

Jon looked to Sansa as she walked to the table. “You’re sure about this? We could run, go somewhere safe or warm or both.”

“I don’t think I’ll feel either for a long time,” Jon said pressing his hands to the table.

Sansa frowned, reaching for his shoulder. “Jon. Whatever you want I’ll do, I swear.”

Jon looked to her and saw she would give it up for him. She would find her safety not in Winterfell, but at his side wherever they went. Part of him wanted to accept it. Take a ship from Eastwatch and leave, but he couldn’t. He’d made a promise to her before he died, let that be the reason he returned. To help her. To make her happy.

“I want to take you home,” he said firmly, reaching over to pat the back of her hand on his shoulder.

Sansa smiled, watching Jon’s hand slip away before retracting her own. “Then I should get to writing our letters.”

“Will they be safe?”

“Brienne will ride south before heading to the Vale to meet with my aunt Lysa.” She glanced back at Brienne, only noticing the unease in her eyes due to their months of familiarity. Turning back to Jon she continued, “We’ll meet with Davos and the others to figure out the rest.”

Jon looked to Brienne as though he would ask if she would be okay, but stopped himself and gave a nod to show his trust in her and Podrick.

“I’ve sworn to protect you, my lady,” Brienne implored while following Sansa to her room.

“You know we’ll need the men,” said Sansa, “and we can’t risk the Boltons shooting down the ravens. You’re the only one I trust with this.” Entering her room she sighed, sitting on her bed and looking to Brienne. “My Aunt is unstable, but she’s still a Tully, she’ll send us help and if she won’t then we’ll use what she’s afraid of. Ask Petyr Baelish to help me and he will.”

That unsettled Brienne, who squeezed the hilt of Oathkeeper. “Are you certain that’s wise, my lady? Trusting him? The things you said of him, he doesn’t seem worthy.”

“I trust in his self interest,” she said with a smirk. “And if I am his interest, then so be it. We can talk of trade and the like as well, but I doubt you’ll need it. Lysa should come because her Tully heritage demands it, but if not then Petyr’s desires will. If you absolutely must, you can try to suggest to my aunt that it’s best she choose to help me so that Petyr doesn’t, so that I won’t owe him anything, but if you do make sure it’s not so… obvious. Let me think and I’ll find how to best suggest it.”
Brienne smiled, impressed with her lady’s guile as much as her bravery. Yet her smile faltered, something Sansa noticed.

“What is it?”

“I don’t like leaving you here alone,” she admitted.

“With Jon?” Sansa asked.

“Not him,” Brienne assured. “He seems trustworthy, if a bit brooding perhaps, even before everything. Though I suppose it’s understandable considering.” She walked toward the window before turning to Sansa. “The others though… Davos and the Red Woman helped a man murder his own brother. With blood magic.

“And when Stannis paid for his crimes where were they? Already out looking for a leader with better prospects. And that Wildling with the beard,” Brienne said incredulously, remembering how he’d stared at her the entire time they broke fast after Jon’s resurrection.

“Jon isn’t Tormund,” Sansa said before she could continue, her hands pressed into the mattress behind her. “Jon isn’t Davos or the Red Woman or Stannis for that matter. Jon is Jon. He’ll keep me safe, I trust him.”

Brienne looked at Sansa, her absolute trust in Jon seeming unshakable. She smiled somberly as she was reminded of another pair of siblings but assured herself she was wrong. They were wolves, not lions. “You must love him greatly.”

Sansa blinked, sitting up. “Hm?”

“I know how much you want to return to Winterfell,” Brienne answered. “You were willing to set that aside for him.”

“He didn’t deserve this,” Sansa said looking to the floor. “Jon deserves better, but I’ll do what I can to make sure we go home together.”

Chapter End Notes

Altered show scenes stop for a while at chapter 8, for anyone wondering. I’ve been trying to post quickly to get away from them and give you guys more new stuff. They’ll still pop up, just not as frequently as the first few chapters.

Generally scenes skipped or cut to midway are as they happen in the show, and I considered skipping the hanging, but I thought it was needed for catharsis after Jon’s murder. Other changes like the Vale will be revealed much later once everyone starts to find out what happened in the North.

Hopefully Jon and Sansa swapping desires to leave or stay here feels natural. I hadn't really planned for it but thought it amusing. I really love Sophie Turner’s readings of her second "Forgive Me!" (used earlier) and "Where will we go" in the reunion scene of episode 604, so I tried to make sure I kept both and hopefully did them some justice. "Jon is Jon" is another thing I wanted to keep as soon as I started.
Sealed Letters

Chapter Summary

Jon receives word from Winterfell, he and Sansa makes plans and depart Castle Black.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Brienne was suffering through another meal with Tormund gazing at her when the door opened and a brother held out two letters for Jon. “Letters for you, Lord Commander.”

“I’m not Lord Commander anymore.” When the man remained, relented and took them, letting the man leave. The others watched as he examined them, one with a flayed man seal and the other with a Karstark sunburst. Glancing at Sansa he opened Ramsay’s letter.

“To the traitor and bastard Jon Snow,

“You allowed thousands of wildlings past the wall. You have betrayed your own kind and you have betrayed the North. Winterfell is mine, bastard, come and see.

“Your brother Rickon is in my dungeon…” Sansa’s breath stuck in her throat as the words left Jon’s lips, looking to her. He saw she was frozen in fear, imagining all the awful things the Boltons could be doing to their brother.

Turning back to the letter Jon continued. “His direwolf’s skin is on my floor, come and see. I hear of your love for wildlings. Have you taken a lover? You bastards never were good at keeping vows. Come claim your brother, let him take the black with you and I will not trouble you or your wildling lovers.

“Ignore me and I will ride north to slaughter every wildling man, woman and babe living under your protection. You will watch as I skin them living. You-”

Sansa noticed his eyes darken as he stopped. “Go on.”

“It’s just more of the same,” he assured, but she grabbed the letter and unrolled it.

“You will spend the rest of your days in my dungeon, until you are no longer yourself. You will watch as I peel the flesh from your brother. You will beg and smile when I end your hunger with his skin.

“You will ride with me to find your sisters and watch my men take turns raping them. You will watch as I cut their bastard babes from their wombs and feed them to my dogs. And you will smile and kneel as I spoon out your eyes and let me dogs do the rest. Come and see.

“Ramsay Bolton, Lord of Winterfell and Warden of the North.” She let the letter roll into itself as she fought back the tears burning her eyes. “He has Rickon.”

“We don’t know that,” he argued.
Sansa’s eyes sank from his to the unread letter in front of him.

Jon reached for the sunburst letter and broke the seal, unrolling it. All the anguish that had filled him when he read the bastard letter faded, replaced by confusion as he shook his head before reading it aloud.

“To Lord Commander Snow,

“I will never forgive your brother, but I’ve learned there is worse than an empty headed Stark in this world. My daughter has married him. Every day she wakes with another scar. Every night I hear her screams. Some days I think of driving a knife into his heart. Others I think of driving one into hers to end her suffering.

“I’m not foolish enough to ask the mercy of a Stark, whether in blood or name. I only ask you spare Alys the pain I’ve damned her to. Give her a better life, one in peace in Karhold. She’s suffered enough. I will give you my life and the life of every man I command if you come and free her.

“I saw Ramsay thrust a dagger into his father’s heart. I saw the empty husk he’s made of Theon Greyjoy. I saw your brother when Small Jon Umber brought him and gave Ramsay his direwolf’s head. I’ll do what I can for your brother, but I make no promises, not until you and your wildling army are here and Alys is safe. I can’t risk it, I only have a thousand men to his four.

“Until I see you on the battlefield I am your enemy and you are mine. There you may hear a horn four times. There you may see Karstark men turning their back on you and facing flayed men. There you may find Alys and Rickon riding to you, away from here.

“Until then, I pray you a better man than me, one who can spare a child from the crimes of her father. Spare her from the suffering I’ve sold her to. Be a better man, Jon Snow.

“Harald Karstark, Lord of Karhold.”

Watching him drop the letter on the table Sansa frowned. “Poor Alys.” She shook her head. “If this is true, if there are a thousand men waiting to betray him, there’s a chance. We can't wait.”

Jon turned to Tormund. “How many do you have?”

“That can march and fight?” Tormund took a moment to think. “Two thousand. The rest are children and old people.”

Jon looked to Sansa and she saw him thinking it over. “You’re the son of the last true Warden of the North. Northern families are loyal. They’ll fight for you if you ask.”

His eyes fell, thinking of the daggers again, of their betrayal.

Sansa reached for his hand, squeezing it as she spoke, pleading. “A monster has taken our home and our brother. We have to go back to Winterfell and save them both.”

Jon’s eyes shifted in thought, meeting her gaze with a nod. “We won’t rely on him though,” said Jon. “We’ll be ready for him to turn on us. For all we know it’s a trick to leave us open.”

“Whatever it is we’ll use it,” Sansa agreed. “We’ll kill them all if we have to. Make sure the North remembers there’s nothing more dangerous than a pack of direwolves at their doors.”

XOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXO
After sending word back with Karstark’s rider, Jon joined Sansa, Brienne, Davos, Edd, Melisandre, and Tormund around a table with a map of the North and small disks for each house.

“We need to take Winterfell. We can’t survive the White Walkers to the north and the Boltons to the south,” Jon said tossing a piece down, pressing his knuckles into the edge of the table. “We’ll need more men. Even if we can trust Karstark we’d barely have enough for a chance.”

“Aside from the Starks and the Boltons, the most powerful houses in the North are Umbers, the Karstarks and the Manderlys.” Davos brought the Umber disks to Winterfell. “The Umbers have already declared for the Boltons so we won’t have much luck there.”

Sansa, sat with her hands entwined, declared, “The Umbers gave Rickon to our enemies, they can hang. But the Karstarks have reached out to us and Brienne will meet with the Manderlys who will join us the moment we ask.”

“I beg your pardon, my lady, but you can’t know that.”

Sansa sucked in her lips as she took a breath. “How well do you know the North, Ser Davos?”

“Precious little, my lady,” Davos said sinking back into his seat.

“My father always said northerners are different. More Loyal,” she said pointedly, “more suspicious of outsiders.”

“They may well be loyal, but how many rose up against the Boltons when they betrayed your family?” Her ire cooled as her gaze shifted away from him. “I may not know the North, but I know men. They’re more or less the same in any corner of the world and even the bravest of them… don’t want to see their wives and children skinned for a lost cause. If Jon’s going to convince them to fight alongside him, they need to believe it’s a fight they can win.”

“There are more than three others houses in the North,” Jon said pointing to the map. “Glover, Mormont, Cerwyn, Mazin, Hornwood. Two dozen more. Together, they equal all the others. We can start small and build.”

“The North remembers. They remember the Stark name. People will still risk everything for it,” Sansa said with a wave of her hand, “from White Harbor to Ramsay’s own door.”

“I don’t doubt it,” Davos assured. “But Jon doesn’t have the Stark name.”

“No, but I do,” said Sansa. “Jon is every bit as much Ned Stark’s son as Ramsay is a Roose Bolton’s. And there’s also the Vale. They’re not Northern but my aunt Lysa is a Tully, she’ll do anything to help family. And if she won’t… Others will make sure she does.”

That garnered looks from the others, curious over what she left unsaid.

“That’s good,” Davos said rising to look over the map. “The Vale Knights’ support would mean a great deal. Stark, Arryn, a few more houses… almost starts to look like a winning side.”

Pride colored Sansa’s smile.

Jon stepped beside her, moving his hand along the map as he spoke. “We’ll avoid Last Hearth, Karhold and Winterfell. The Mountain clans will come first on our way to the Mormonts, then Glover. Head south, try to meet with those we can and send ravens to the rest. Brienne will carry letters for the eastern houses and send them from White Harbor.”
Brienne nodded, confirming her part. “I’ll convince the Vale lords to send help. Lady Sansa has counseled me on how to best go about it.”

Glancing to Sansa, Jon pointed to White Harbor. “We’ll end at White Harbor. If they won’t join us, then better to keep the sea to our backs, keep the North in front of us. If they’re loyal then we’ll try and wait for men from the Vale and the Neck. Then we’ll ride north up the White Knife.”

Sansa practically radiated her approval of his plan as she looked up at him while Davos looked the map over and nodded. “That’s making a lot of assumptions.”

“Half the smaller houses are in ruins,” said Sansa. “I saw enough villages and farms with flayed families to know they’ll want a change. The ones that don’t can be kept quiet if we kill their ravens and stop any riders.”

As grateful as he was to have her here, Jon hated to think of all Sansa had been forced to see on her way to him. “The North is large enough for us to put some distance between us if we need to. If we can’t meet at White Harbor, we’ll fall back west, meet north west of Torrhen’s Square.”

Looking over the map he pointed to the Neck. “If we do this, if we get even half of what we’ll try, we could outnumber them. If we win, then we’ll have to send forces to man Moat Cailin. Keep the southern armies out until we figure out how to convince them to help with the White Walkers.”

“Could we show them one?” asked Sansa.

The room looked from her to Jon, who glanced at Edd, answering the man’s raised brow and Sansa’s question with a nod. “It’s possible. The first wight I saw was here, in Castle Black.”

“So they can survive crossing the wall?”

Edd’s raised brow sank morosely when Jon arched his. With a sigh, Edd nodded. “I’ll see if I can muster a few rangers to try and find one.”

“Don’t let them risk themselves for it,” said Jon. “It can wait until we’ve retaken Winterfell.”

Edd nodded. “I’ll still send them to scout and wait for your word.”

XOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXO

Jon was in his room preparing the last of his things when he heard a knock on the door and turned to see Sansa entering. She looked ready to leave, her hair braided for the ride and cloak draped over her dress, though she held something in her arms.

Turning from his bag he gave her a quick once over and saw she wore a dress that seemed to be made of emerald velvet, likely softer than anything he’d worn since even before he left Winterfell. Giving it a once over he noticed a gray direwolf embroidered on the chest and quickly nodded to stop himself from staring.

“New dress.”

“I made it myself,” she said looking down at it, brushing a hand along her stomach before smiling at him. “Do you like it?”

“Yeah, I was…” He motioned to her chest, “I like the wolf bit.”

She glanced at her embroidery and felt a flicker of pride the type she hadn’t felt since early in
King’s Landing. “Good, because… I made this for you.”

When she held her arms up to present the cloak, Jon took it and saw the Stark sigil on one of the straps.

“I made it like the one father used to wear. As near as I can remember.”

Jon examined it before meeting her eyes. “Thank you, Sansa.”

That pride she felt grew, mixing into the warmth in her chest as she smiled. “You’re welcome.”

Feeling a bit embarrassed, as though he could see what she was feeling, she turned and left the room. Jon looked at the cloak and smiled, glancing at the other he’d intended to wear laying on the table.

Sansa was mounting her horse, holding back a smile as Brienne turned away from Tormund’s openly admiring stare, when she noticed Jon enter the courtyard wearing her cloak. She felt the pride and warmth grow, making her squeeze the reins and look down, brushing the horse’s mane with her fingers to busy herself.

Jon came to a stop near his horse, awaiting Edd as he approached. Looking round he asked with a laugh, “Don’t knock it down while I’m gone.”

“I’ll do me best,” assured Edd. The two looked to each other before exchanging a brotherly embrace, patting each other’s back and shoulders. His hand on Jon’s arm, Edd gave him a firm nod. “Good luck.”

Jon returned the nod and went to mount his horse, leading their group from Castle Black, beginning Sansa’s trek south, one that wouldn’t end until she was either dead or back home in Winterfell with Jon.

Chapter End Notes

This chapter presents one of the larger reactionary changes for this section of the story. Hopefully people noticed it’s not out of nowhere. Part of the reason for leaving the first Ramsay scene was because throughout it Harald was clearly unsettled where in the actual scene he’s fine with everything going on. I originally had a bit when Reek leaves where he overhears Karstark telling someone to discreetly ready a rider for the Wall but await his letter, but opted to cut it as I thought it too on the nose.

I imagine that Sansa, even as broken as she was with Ramsay, still challenged him. She’s the kind of girl who told Joffrey ‘maybe my brother will give me your head’. Alys here isn’t like that, so Ramsay doesn’t have anything really holding him back, not even whatever games he played to try and screw with Sansa. So while Harald is definitely a shithole, here he’s still a father, and has been made to regret his choices and seek help now that it presents itself.

Also wanted to introduce a version of the wight hunt earlier. It won’t be like the show, it won’t even really be shown, but they need wights.

At this point I think it's also important to remember they're moving earlier than they
were in the show and have slightly less pressure due to Sansa not having been with Ramsay. Jon doesn't have this constant reminder of what could be happening to Rickon whenever he looks at her, and Ramsay isn't likely to chase them down to get back his lost wife. Which means they have more time to build an army and meet lords they didn't in the show.
First Blood

Chapter Summary

Jon and Sansa meet with Northern houses and draw first blood in the War for the North while Brienne travels to the Vale.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Sansa stood with Davos beside Jon as he and Tormund convinced the Free Folk to prepare for war. She stood beside him and Davos as they traveled to meet with the Wulls and she convinced the mountain clans to join their cause. She stood beside him and Davos as they sailed to Bear Island and convinced little Lady Lyanna and her sixty two men to join their cause.

Glover turned them away, saying he wouldn’t fight with wildlings and half-wildling mountain men.

They kept their distance from Winterfell as they met with the Tallharts, who pledged themselves to their cause. Then came the Dustins, lead by Lady Barbrey Dustin, who greeted them in Barrow Hall.

“So, you’re planning to kill my good brother’s bastard?” She asked looking over the trio before her. She was a tall, older, handsome woman with few wrinkles and graying brown hair tied in a widows knot behind her head.

Jon and Sansa shared a look before he nodded. “In a sense.”

Barbrey leaned forward. “And how exactly do you plan to do that? A bastard oathbreaker and the wife of a southern fugitive.”

“With three thousand men,” said Jon, unphased by her bitter tone. “And a giant.”

Barbrey’s thin brow arched even more than it did naturally. Before she could speak, Sansa added, “We’ve sent a messenger to meet with the Manderlys and my aunt in the Vale. They’ve sent letters to the houses we haven’t already sent word to or don’t plan on meeting. Even without the Vale, we’d have almost as many men as the Boltons. With them we’d outnumbers him.”

Barbrey’s lips thinned as she sat back. “Why come to me then? Sounds as if you’ve already won.”

Sansa looked to Jon, who stepped forward. “Because you’re of the North, and the North won’t be safe so long as Ramsay Bolton lives. This is a battle all of us have to fight, together, because it will only be the first.”

Barbrey’s eyes narrowed. “What do you mean?”

“I’ve been freed of my vows to the Night’s Watch,” Jon said carefully, “but I haven’t abandoned them. I can’t, not after what I’ve seen beyond the wall.”

A bitter laugh left Lady Dustin’s throat as she shook her head. “And what’s that? Giants?”
“White Walkers and a hundred thousand wights marching on the Wall.”

Barbrey’s dismissive smile faded as she met Jon’s eyes, the fear creeping into her expression telling Sansa Lady Dustin saw the same honesty she had when he first told her. With a breath, Barbrey sat up. “You can’t be serious.”

“The new Lord Commander’s already said he’d send out rangers to scout for them. Once we retake Winterfell and reclaim the North, we’ll go and capture some to bring south and prove their existence to whoever needs it.”

“Jon’s fought them,” Sansa said firmly. “He’s killed a wight to save Jeor Mormont, he’s fought off wights at Hardhome, fought and killed a White Walker by himself.”

“You’ve killed a White Walker?” Barbrey scoffed. “I thought them undying ice made flesh.”

“They shatter steel like glass, but they can be stopped. It requires dragonglass or valyrian steel, but it’s possible.”

Barbrey’s jaw shifted. “So if you win this war, you plan to lead us all North? Beyond the Wall?”

“No,” he answered firmly. “I’d keep us behind the Wall as long as we can. Man the castles along it as best we can without worrying about the South. When the Night King marches on the wall, and he will, we’ll be there to meet him. It’s either that or we leave. Every man woman and child start building boats and sail wherever they can, let the Night King kill whoever’s fool enough to stay behind.” He exhaled, finishing, “Including me.”

Sansa looked to Jon with a somber smile before looking to Lady Dustin. The bitter woman’s face had hardened slightly as she listened to Jon, examining him before shifting her gaze to Sansa. “And you?” She answered Sansa’s arched brow by asking, “Will you stay to die as well?”

A smile played on Sansa’s lips as she nodded. “There must always be a Stark in Winterfell.”

Barbrey observed her for a moment before rising to her feet. “Then let House Dustin’s banners fly beside Stark and whoever else will help us murder that mad dog,” she said with a sneer, “though I ask you make Ramsay die in pain like the nephew he stole from me.”

XOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOX

They broke up their growing army as much as they could to stay unnoticed as long as possible.

Jon and Sansa kept with the smaller heads of house while the larger ones kept with their men. They hoped that if word reached Ramsay they would assume Jon had gathered only a few small, broken houses to bolster his untrained wildling army. Let them think Jon a fool destined to fail. Sansa knew when the time came she would sit at the high table alongside Jon while Stark banners flew over Winterfell again.

Her first chance to see Jon fight had been when they came across a group of Bolton taxers coming from the Neck. The moment they spotted Jon’s host the riders broke into a charge north.

Jon dug his heels, leading the brief chase while drawing Longclaw. Sansa followed with Brienne, Podrick, Tormund and a dozen more. She managed to see Longclaw slash through the neck of one rider, her horse turning to avoid the fallen body and startled horse.

Tormund moved toward the right, bringing his axe into the back of another rider. The man seemed stuck to the axe, pulled off his saddle until he dislodged and fell. His head snapped when he hit the
ground and was dragged by his foot stuck in the stirrup.

Another rider let out a scream that was silenced when Ghost pulled him from his horse, dragging him aside and swiftly ripping his throat out before speeding toward another rider. The second had reached for a sword but Ghost bit through his arm and pulled him from his saddle, leaving the arm hanging by a strand of flesh before Ghost bit through his jaw, crushing bone and letting man choke on the flood of blood in his throat.

Coming up alongside the last rider Jon parried a blow with ease. Jon seemed to stand in his saddle and press his palm into the pommel of Longclaw. He drove the sword through the rider’s armor to pierce his chest, the tip tearing the back of his cloak before Jon grabbed the reins of his horse and sank into the saddle, making the horse turn away from the still charging steed to rip the blade from the rider’s corpse.

Word spread quickly from those who saw him, leaving no doubt that Jon was capable in battle. It seemed to bolster their spirits knowing Jon was a fierce as his direwolf.

However the first true battle of the War for the North happened in White Harbor after Wynafred Manderly married Rhaegar Frey.

Wynafred Manderly played the part of the reticent wife wed, her dark braided hair standing out against her white dress. Her sister Wylla, standing out with her dyed green hair, played at soothing her sister’s concerns. The Freys called for a bedding and carried Wynafred off toward her room while Manderly women ushered Rhaegar Frey after her.

The door opened to Wynafred’s room and she was tossed inside, clutching at her torn small clothes, ignoring the dozen men in the shadows, out of view of the Freys in the corridor.

She closed the door and rushed aside as one of the men leaning out a window tapped his axe on the window of the neighboring room. A Dustin man opened her door and Tormund charged out of the room, bringing his axe down on the crown of a Frey man’s head calling for Wynafred to ready herself for her husband.

The others backed away, their confusion growing when they heard the door of the neighboring room open and the Manderly women backed away as Jon Snow rushed out of the door to drive Longclaw through Rhaegar’s throat. The Frey choked as the blade was torn free while Jon’s men rushed from both rooms, slaying the Frey men in the corridor and hurrying toward the hall.

With the women gone to carry Rhaegal, it left mostly men in the hall. They all rose to slaughter the Freys left behind as the doors burst open and northerners with bloodied swords and axes filled the hall.

Outside, the Stark forces rode down any fleeing Frey. No raven left White Harbor with word of the slaughter. White Harbor stayed silent, letting Frey blood run into the sea.

The Stark’s first victory was as quick and quiet as Ghost.

Relief shook Wyman Manderly as he wrapped his arms around his daughters, looking to Jon after holding them. “Thank you,” he said shakily, near tears. “I can never repay our debt to you, Lord Snow.”

“I’d cast aside your debt and ask you let us stay here, unite and reclaim the North together.”

“Of course,” Wyman said with a nod as he released his daughters. “Whatever you need, House Manderly is yours.”
Even with all Sansa had told her, Brienne felt unsettled looking up to the woman sat beside her son on a throne that seemed nearly as twisted as those sat upon it. At her side was the slender Petyr Baelish, who examined her and Podrick with a gaze that felt devouring, as if he was trying to pick them apart until there was nothing left for them to hide. The small smile tugging at his lips made her skin crawl.

Looking up from the letter, Lysa glanced at Petyr, reaching out to grip his arm. “You’re her sworn sword? Why should I believe any of this? For all I know you’re some harlot come to try and claim me beloved.”

Brienne’s brow furrowed, glancing to Podrick. “I swear, Lady Arryn-”

“Baelish,” she corrected.

“Forgive me, Lady Baelish, but I was sworn to your sister Catelyn before she sent me away to bring the Kingslayer south. After Joffrey’s death he sent me to find her and take her somewhere safe. The knights you sent with her were slaughtered by a Bolton hunting party and she was on her way back to the Vale when I found her.” She noticed Lysa sneer while Baelish’s eyes flickered and he grinned. “I swore myself to her and helped her continue her journey north as you wanted. It was arduous, but she survived. I’d say she’s even stronger now than she was when I found her.”

Lysa looked Brienne over with a dismissive snort. “Hopefully she’s still a lady as her mother taught her.”

“The truest lady I know,” Brienne assured.

Baelish finally spoke. “This is wonderful news, dear wife. Our dear Sansa’s intent to reclaim her home sounds as though it could work, but I fear without our aid she is doomed.” As if expecting the anger that started to boil within Lysa, he turned to her with a smile. “I know you would never let your own niece face such peril on her own. Surely one or two thousand men would be enough.”

Brienne saw Lysa’s gaze drift off in thought, trying to work out what to do, how to best avoid helping Sansa. With a glance toward Baelish, Brienne knew she couldn’t risk placing Sansa even more in his debt, not with how he looked the moment they mentioned her name. She had to keep him away from her as much as she could, even if it meant risking a trip through the Moon Door Podrick had warned her of.

“If it pleases you, Lady Baelish,” Brienne offered carefully, “I’d be willing to personally escort Lord Baelish and as many guards as he desired to confirm Lasy Sansa’s identity. He could even join us during the march and I would vow to keep him as safe as I will Lady Sansa. I’ll make sure both are secure.”

The panic that flooded Lysa’s face was almost frightening. “No! No,” Lysa shook her head furiously, digging her hands into Petyr’s arm, pulling him to the throne.

She turned to face Baelish, who furrowed his brow while Robin frowned and looked away, clearly knowing what was coming. Brienne and Podrick’s eyes widened as they watched Lysa’s hand wrap around Baelish’s neck.

“You can’t leave me,” she pleaded, shaking him by the neck lightly while he patted her arm, his amusement clearly put on. “You can never leave me!” She pulled him by his neck into a kiss, her hands sliding up to his hair and clutching it as she shoved her tongue into his mouth, looking like a
fish trying to swallow him.

When she finally pulled herself away, Lysa turned to Brienne with a victorious grin. “My beloved is too precious to risk on a march to Winterfell, but I’ll trust your word and call for men to sail with you to White Harbor.”

“Thank you, Lady Baelish,” Brienne said bowing.

She was thankful to have avoided calling on Baelish himself, but she was unable to avoid him when he approached her while they were departing. The lord found her on her way toward her horse after meeting with Lord Royce.

“I’m glad to hear you aided Lady Sansa on her travels,” he said, making Brienne turn to him as he stepped away from the wall where he’d been waiting. “I had sent out men to search the Vale for her after I heard of her guards’ deaths, but when she couldn’t be found and we heard nothing from Castle Black I feared we had lost her for good.”

“Lady Sansa is a survivor,” Brienne said with a nod. “Even if I hadn’t found her I’ve no doubt she would have found a way to the Wall.” Not to the Vale, not once she realized what he was and what he wanted from her.

“And how is she now? Does she ride with her half-brother?”

“I don’t know where they are currently,” she offered carefully, “but I’ve no doubt she is safe and healthy. Protected by Lord Jon and the others.”

Baelish’ jaw shifted slightly, noting her unwillingness to say where she is. “Mm. Do tell her to write to her aunt and cousin. They miss her dearly. I’m sure once things have settled they’ll want to see her again.”

Brienne fought to keep from balling her hands as she nodded. “I’ll let the Lady know, My Lord.”

Chapter End Notes

I skipped the free folk camp scene cause it's basically as is in the show, same with the Lyanna Mormont scene, just with her only calling Sansa Lady Lannister and not Lady Bolton. Where Jon convinced the free folk and Davos turned Lyanna, I gave her the Mountain Clans due to their loyalty to 'the Ned'. I tried writing it but couldn't get anything I liked, so skipped it for pacing.

I'm prioritizing what I imagine show versions of book characters like Barbrey Dustin and the Manderly sisters might be over purely book versions, so pardon if they seem altered from what you know in the books. I'm basically using Barbrey as a source on Ramsey since Sansa wasn't with him.

Originally I was going to save a scene in the Vale until after the Battle of the Bastards, but after some questions and comments I decided to expand upon what was originally just Brienne's description of her meeting with Lysa to give an idea of what's going on in the Vale. There's a bit more but hopefully what Brienne saw is enough for now.
War Council

Chapter Summary

Brienne returns to White Harbor, and Jon leads a war council.

White Harbor was large enough and had enough supplies to help arm their forces. They still lacked horses, but they had enough to make sure every man had a blade and a shield. They managed to whittle a tree into a cudgel for Wun Wun and gave him armor that was little more than shields bound together in places, but thick enough to stop most arrows and bolts.

Days after the Freys were killed, ships approached White Harbor’s docks, and from them hundreds of Vale Knights disembarked. Jon greeted Lord Royce while Sansa smiled at Brienne and Podrick’s return.

“You were missed.”

“I heard some of the Manderly men speaking of a battle,” Brienne said looking around, as if she would see dead men littering the streets.

“There was,” Sansa nodded. “The Freys are gone from White Harbor. Feeding fish at sea.”

Brienne frowned. “I should have been here.”

Sansa shook her head. “I’m fine, Brienne. You did as I asked, you brought the Vale. I’m proud of you.” She turned to gaze to Podrick. “You as well, Podrick.”

“I thank you, my lady,” he said bowing his head.

Sansa looked around to make sure they were too far for anyone to overhear before asking Brienne, “How was it?”

With a sigh, Brienne held the pommel of Oathkeeper. “Disturbing. She was as you said… worse, perhaps. Whenever I saw her she was clung to Baelish or frantic to find him. She even accused me of being a harlot come to take her beloved from her when we met.”

Sansa frowned. “I’m sorry you had to deal with her.”

Briene shook her head. “I’ve heard worse, my lady. Words like that mean little when spoken by people so lost.” Her gaze shifted slightly, surprising Sansa with the hint of guilt that flashed across her face.

“What is it?”

“I know you told me to speak to Baelish before I tried to use him against your aunt, but I didn’t.” Brienne looked to Sansa sternly. “I couldn’t stand to add another debt to him, so I suggested he come identify you himself.”

“Was she angry?” asked Sansa, glancing at Podrick who gave a confused, uncertain nod.
“At first I thought she was choking him,” Brienne told her, “but then she was kissing him and agreed to send the men. When we were leaving he found me and asked after you, said you should write to your aunt and cousin who miss you and that they’d want to see you when things settled. No doubt speaking for himself.”

Sansa stepped forward, reaching for Brienne’s hands. “Thank you, Brienne. That was a risk you didn’t have to take. Thank you for taking it to keep me from another debt.”

“Of course, my lady,” Brienne said flush with pride. She turned her gaze to where Jon stood with Wyman Manderly, Yohn Royce, Barbrey Dustin and the stout, gruff Old Torghen Flint with hands as big as hams. Davos was speaking to them while Tormund arched his brow at Brienne and smirked, earning an eye roll before she turned back to Sansa. “Things have gone well on your end I assume?”

“For the most part,” Sansa nodded. “The Glovers turned us away, but they’re the only rejection we’ve gotten so far. The Hornwoods and Ryswells have sent ravens and will join us, but we haven’t heard from the Lakes, Condons and Cerwyns. Everyone in the Neck as well.”

“I’m glad to see you’ve done so well, Lady Sansa.” Brienne looked the young woman over, a somber smile taking her lips. “Your mother would be proud. Your father as well. Anyone would.” She glanced at Jon, adding, “Both of you.”

Sansa made her way through the halls of New Castle as flames flickered in the sconces, light dancing off the walls. Looking through the empty corridor she took a breath before knocking on the door.

After a moment it opened and she was greeted by Jon, his lips quirking up in surprise. “Sansa. Everything alright?”

She put on a playful pout. “Is it so odd for me to seek your company?” When Jon seemed to flash her an apologetic look, she shook her head and nodded toward her room. “Ghost hasn’t shown up yet, so I thought it best to seek out his master to keep me company in his stead.”

“That’s where he’s been spending his nights?” Jon laughed as he turned and made his way into the room. “I knew he was a turncoat.” Standing by the table, pouring her a glass of wine, he turned to her with a smile. “I wouldn’t worry too much. He does this every so often. Gets caught up in a hunt and ends up disappearing for days, even weeks sometimes. But he’ll show up when it matters.”

“Yes, but I was so used to having the extra pillow,” Sansa said, chuckling as she took the goblet from Jon. “Though I fear if we went any further south it’d be too warm to appreciate it.”

“Well then I guess you’re glad we’ll start north soon.”

“Only if he’s back in time,” Sansa said taking a sip of wine. “I don’t think I could manage sleeping in tent on the cold fields without him.”

Jon turned to her, frowning. “Sansa, you don’t have to ride with us. You could stay here, let them ready a ship to take you to the Vale if the worst should happen.”

Sansa set her goblet down, meeting his eyes. “I won’t be left behind. I swore back at Castle Black that I’d die at your side. I can’t ride into battle with you, but I can stay with the archers, far from the fray. I can stay in the camp if you truly mean to force me off the field, but that’s it. I won’t stay here, I won’t leave you to ride alone.”
Watching her, Jon tapped the table beside him. “If you’re certain, then I’ll assign you some guards I can trust. Guards you can trust. Let them stand beside you on the field, and if things take a turn for the worst, let them guard you as you flee.”

“I won’t flee.”

“Sansa,” he groaned, walking from the table to the chairs by the hearth. “I can’t fight a war if I’m worried about you.”

“Then don’t,” she argued, following after him. “I made it past Moat Cailin on my own. I made it north with Brienne and Podrick. I don’t need you to worry about me. I need to be there to see that you’re okay.”

Jon’s brow knit as he turned to her. “What?”

Sansa sighed, looking like she’d said too much but steeling herself and committing now that it was said. “The last time I got comfortable you were murdered.” Meeting his gaze, she took a breath. “I spent a day clinging to your dead body. I never left your side, and I vowed that if they made it into that room I would slash at the first man to come near you, and then I’d drive my dagger into my neck and die atop you. If the Starks are going to die, let us die as a pack.”

“Sansa,” he sighed, looking ashamed of his own murder. His eyes lingered on her in silence, his hand gripping the back of a chair. “I’ll bring you with me. I’ll give you a guard and let you watch over the battle. I’ll let you command a company if you so desire, but you have to promise me that if I die and you make it through this, you’ll stay alive. You’ll claim Winterfell and make sure the northern lords man the Wall and Moat Cailin. Send some spare men to Edd, let them bring a wight back and send it south.”

“It’s not as if I want to die, Jon. I just… I know I can’t survive this without you.” She frowned, crossing her arms over her stomach. “The list of people I trust has grown since I left King’s Landing, but you’re the first. The one above all others. Above Brienne and Podrick and Davos and Tormund.”

“I…” Jon sighed. “I’m the same. After I came back it felt like I had to second guess everything. Everyone. But not you.”

Sansa felt her chest tight when he looked to her for emphasis. Not wanting to let it show, she smiled. “And Sam.”

“And Sam,” he admitted with a laugh. “Edd too. Davos had certainly earned my trust, Tormund too, even Melisandre in a way. And I trust Brienne when it comes to you. Pod too.”

“Brienne said they’d be proud of us,” Sansa said with a smirk. When he arched his brow she clarified, “Father and Mother.”

The moment the word left her mouth she wanted to wince, wishing she could have grabbed it and pulled it back into her lips. But it was gone, and Jon’s smile faltered, just barely, but enough for her to notice.

“I suppose she’ll be the captain of your guard,” said Jon. “Shame we won’t have her in the field, but at least I’d know you’re safe.”

Shoving aside her regret she nodded. “Thank you, Jon.”

He shook his head. “It’s fine. This is your fight as much as mine. I’ll make sure you see it end.”
She’d been around him long enough to notice small things in his expressions. He generally kept a stoic expression that she and many others would tease was sullen, but it was different when something actually upset him, when he tried not to let it show. From what she could tell, her mention of her mother still unsettled him. Or maybe it was because it made him think of his own? The truth of her identity was lost the day their father lost his head.

“Jon, I…” Her hand clenched slightly before she shook her head. Taking a breath she offered him a smile, stepping forward to take his hand. “Whatever happens. We do this together, right?”

With a nod he repeated, “Together.”

Sansa stood among the growing war council surrounding the large map of the North stretched across the table of the Merman’s Court, New Castle’s great hall. Having been one of the first to arrive with Jon, she found herself looking at the various sea creatures decorating the floor, walls and ceiling, some of which she couldn’t name.

Eventually the lords and ladies all arrived and Jon remained standing at the end of the table, looking down the lines of them. Davos sat to Jon’s left with Tormund while Sansa sat to his right beside Brienne. For a moment she felt out of place alongside such a gathering of lords, and yet she had no doubt that she had earned her place there.

Lyanna Mormont’s presence had been enough for Wynafred and Wylla to convince Wymen Manderly to let them sit at the table as well. Beside them sat Barbrey Dustin and Rodrik Ryswell, with Eddara Tallhart and Harwood Stout across from them. All the mountain clan leaders had join them as well, though Sansa had mostly spoken with Old Torghen Flint and Big Bucket Hugo Wull. Yohn Royce and a few other Vale lords took the end where Melisandre sat scanning the group before her eyes settled on Jon.

Sansa doubted there had been a gathering of northern lords quite like this, especially when half were ladies.

“Once we march, they’ll know we’re coming,” Jon said setting the Bolton marker over Winterfell. “Glover’s vowed to keep out of it, but we know the Umbers have sworn to the Boltons. We haven’t heard from the Condons, Cerwyns, Cassels, Mollens or Pooles… but they could just too close to Winterfell to risk being seen moving men here. Either they’ll join us as we near, or they’ll be vanguards for the Boltons. Whatever they choose, we’ll find out when we march.”

“I knew their daughters,” Sansa said pointing to the Cassel and Poole markers. “They’re loyal to the Starks. They’ll help how they can or stay out of the way.”

“The Karstarks are Bolton’s men as well,” said Rodrik Ryswell.

Jon shook his head, tapping the Karstark marker. “Perhaps not.” That garnered a few looks from the others. “When I was at Castle Black I received a letter from Ramsay taunting me, but I also received one from Harald Karstark. He wrote that when we were on the battlefield he’d sound four horns and his men would turn on the Boltons.”

“Cunt’s lying,” Torghen spat.

“I don’t think so,” said Jon, frowning as he looked to the others. “He wrote that his daughter had married Ramsay, likely to keep Stark blood in Winterfell. He wrote that every night he heard her screams and ever morning she had a new scar. He offered his betrayal of Ramsay only if I showed
up with an army to free Alys and end her suffering.” Seeing the doubt drain from their faces, he shook his head. “I think when the time comes he’ll do what’s right for his daughter rather than risk her spending another night with that monster.”

Jon nodded to Davos, who started laying out pieces for the house of every lord in the north and all the vale men attending. Once they were set, Jon picked out the ones that hadn’t responded to their letters and set them alongside the Glovers.

“As it stands, these houses are all to be considered neutral at best, but possibly working with the Boltons. If we assume they are, and add them to the Bolton, Umber and Karstark men that will be there, they’ll likely have six or seven thousand men. Karstark makes up a little over a thousand of those, but we can’t rely on him, so we’ll count him as theirs for now.”

Jon gathered the remaining markers, a mishmash of lesser houses and the simple design used to denote the free folk. “All of our forces together comes out to about six thousand thanks to the men of the Vale and the Free Folk.”

Tormund smirked. “Sounds like a fair fight.”

“It’s not,” Jon said pointing to Winterfell. “If he’s smart this will be a siege, but we can’t risk it. Winter is coming and I won’t have men dying in the cold. We also can’t risk them getting reinforcements from the south.”

“We could divide our forces,” Davos said looking over their markers.

“To what end?” asked Tormund. “How do we use that to avoid a siege?”

“We could give them something to hunt,” Sansa offered.

“Use one of smaller groups as bait?” Wyman asked with a laugh. “You think it would work?”

“During my journey to the Wall after I escaped King’s Landing, we kept running into hunting parties.” Those who knew of them had their faces darken while she continued, “Ramsay and his men hunt people for sport. Usually women, but a few times we found them hunting men.”

“So take a smaller force to draw them out of Winterfell, then hit them from the side,” Davos said looking at the map.

“You could hide most of our army, let the Vale Forces and bulk be a surprise and surround them,” Sansa suggested.

“Could make the Boltons think you failed to get some of the houses, or they only committed a small amount to shut you up,” Davos said nodding. “Make him think less of you so he’ll act out.”

“You won’t need to bother with that,” said Lady Dustin. When they looked to her questioningly she pointed to Davos and Sansa. “Any of that. Luring him out, making him act rashly.”

“We can’t just show up and expect him to meet us,” Manderly said before blinking. “Can we?”

“Ramsay is a bastard,” Barbrey all but spat, looking as if she’d eaten a sack of lemons when she said his name. There was a brief tension among the lords, who looked to Jon. Sansa was glad to see him arching his brow in amused surprise as Lady Dustin looked to him. “And unlike Jon Snow, he isn’t just a bastard in name. Ramsay is everything they tell us to fear of bastards. He is all the worst parts of his father untamed.
“You could show up with twenty men or twenty thousand and he’ll act the same. The Night King himself could ride down with his army and Ramsay would claim that he could end it all with just him and his dogs. The boy is an arrogant fool desperate to prove his worth. He’ll play some game to try and frustrate you and make you act rashly, but he’ll meet you outside of Winterfell because he is rash.”

Jon gave her a nod of thanks before looking to the map. “Even knowing that, I think there’s merit in dividing our forces somewhat. Not to lure him out but to flank him. It’s basic enough, but if Lady Dustin’s right he’ll likely bring all his men together right in front of Winterfell. We could send the Vale knights and about a thousand of our men west, let them wait until the battle begins and then ride in from the northwest. Push the Boltons toward us, but leave the east open for them to flee."

“Why not take them from all sides?” asked Sansa. “Surround them.”

“It’ll only lead to more of our men dying,” said Davos.

“It’s like backing an animal into a corner,” Jon explained. “We’d force them to fight until one of us was all dead. If we leave a gap for them to retreat they’ll have a place for men to leave, leaving those that stay weaker.” He tapped a spot near a branch of the White Knife river. “We’ll send some men here, have them handle any who flee. Kill those who put up a fight but accept surrenders as well.”

“You’d let them live?” Lady Dustin asked, eyes narrowed.

“Any forced to fight may find mercy if they speak the truth. The rest will be given a choice to either take the black or face the North’s justice. I’ll swing the sword myself. Let them have their final words.”

There was no North’s justice, but there was a King’s Justice. Jon was looking at the map so he didn’t notice the look the rest of the table shared, or the smile that flashed across Melisandre’s lips. The entire time they’d been gathering houses to their side he spoke of himself on the front lines, but also made their well being his responsibility. It was doubtful he even realized what he was doing, it was just natural for Jon.

The doors opening drew their eyes as one of the guards entered. “Pardon, my lords, but there are riders from the Neck.”

“How many?” asked Wyman.

“Over a hundred,” the man answered.

“Their banners?” asked Davos.

“Flint, Fenn and Reed.”

“Perfect,” said Jon. “We can use some to be out net on the river.”

“Camp their men with the rest,” Wyman ordered, “we’ll meet their heads of house here.”

The man nodded, closing the door as he left. Looking around the table, Jon nodded to himself, as if deciding. “When we meet with Ramsay before the battle, I’d ask the lords of the Vale stay with their men to keep their presence quiet.” The knights nodded, and Jon turned his attention to the others. “I’d also ask anyone willing to ride with me to meet him.”
“I’m afraid I’d have to sit that out,” Wyman said with a self-deprecating laugh.

Jon smiled kindly. “Of course, my lord.”

Sansa felt her stomach curl oddly as the older Manderly girl smiled at Jon, “I’ll go.”

Catching her eyes, Jon nodded. “You’re more than welcome. Having you there, unwed to a Frey, could show we’ve pushed them out of White Harbor and startle a few men.”

“And show anyone with half a brain that Jon Snow’s begun to avenge the Red Wedding,” said Lyanna Mormont.

That garnered a few supportive nods that pleased Sansa, but she felt her stomach tighten again as Wylla leaned forward and smiled at Jon. “I’ll join you as well.”

“Wylla,” Wyman groaned. “I can’t have both my granddaughters ride off to war.”

“Do you fear they’ll lose?” asked Wylla. “That you’ll need me to secure our safety? I’d rather sink to the bottom of the Narrow Sea than marry some Bolton loyalist or some southron lord.”

Seeing Wyman’s face flush with anger, Sansa offered, “She could ride with me.” The lords turned to her, so she smiled. “I’ll ride with Jon, so he’s agreed to let me have a personal guard. I’ll even be on the edge of the field during the battle, so anyone could join us there as well if they wish.”

“Lady Sansa,” Wyman started.

“Thank you,” Wylla cut her grandfather off, her tone making it clear she’d ride off whether he liked it or not.

When the doors to the hall opened again, they found three lords making their way inside lead by a small man with short brown hair and green eyes. Older than Jon or Sansa. The steward motioned to the men, “Lord Lonnel of House Fenn, Robin of House Flint, and Howland of House Reed.”

The green-eyed man hadn’t taken his eyes from Jon as they approached. “You’re Jon Snow,” he said after brief greetings to the other lords.

“I am.”

Howland extended his hand with a somber nod. “We have much to discuss.”
Once they went over their plans with the lords of Neck the council decided they would march in two days. After quick words with Davos, Tormund and Barbrey Dustin, Jon departed from the hall, glancing back to see Sansa and Brienne speaking with Lyanna Mormont and the Manderly sisters.

In the corridor he found Howland Reed waiting for him. “Lord Reed,” Jon said with a nod.

“Could we speak in private?”

“Yes, of course.”

They walked through New Castle, making their way to Jon’s chambers. Once inside, Howland quietly paced around them, scanning the walls as if worried someone would be in them. Looking at the man, Jon fought back a frown as he remembered what Sam had told him of Bran being with the Reeds.

“My lord,” Jon started, “it’s been a long time now, but I thought you should know back at the Wall, one of my brothers saw your children.”

Howland came to a stop across from the hearth. “Jojen and Meera?”

“They were with my brother Bran, helping him get beyond the wall.” Jon wore an apologetic frown. “I’m sorry I couldn’t stop them, but the man who met them said they seemed determined.”

A solemn smile took the small man’s lips as he nodded, moving away from the wall. “They were. Jojen’s greensight made him more confident than I might have liked at times, but Meera has a good head. If she’s with your brother then I’m sure he’s safe.”

Jon couldn’t help but smile at this man’s confidence in his children being such that his concern was more for Bran.

Seeming satisfied they were alone, Howland took a breath and looked the boy over. “Do you know who I am?”

“Howland Reed,” Jon said with a nod. “You were with my father when he found his sister and killed Arthur Dayne.”

The man searched Jon’s face for a moment. “Did Eddard ever tell you about your mother?”

Jon’s brow furrowed. “No. He said he would when we met again. That was before he went to King’s Landing.”
Howland sighed, his head sinking as he stroked his forehead. “Would you like me to tell you who she was?”

Jon’s jaw shifted as he glanced down asking, “Was?”

Howland answered with a frown.

Jon was quiet for a moment, his head down as he thought. As much as he wanted to tell him it didn’t matter, it did. It always would, and if either of them died during the battle he’d regret not hearing it. Looking to Howland, he nodded.

“I rode with your father to Dorne at the end of Robert’s Rebellion. Everyone thought Rhaegar had kidnapped his sister Lyanna and locked her away in a tower in Dorne. When we arrived there were kingsguard waiting outside.” Howland looked to Jon’s eyes. “Do you understand?”

Jon shook his head.

“There was a maid there who told us that Rhaegar hadn’t kidnapped her. She’d run off to be with him, to get married in secret by the High Septon before everything went wrong. Before Aerys killed Ned’s father and brother, committing us to a war built on Robert’s lie.

“But when we arrived Aerys was dead. Rhaegar was dead. Rhaella and Viserys were on Dragonstone, but the kingsguard were in Dorne.” Howland looked to Jon and saw his brow furrow, starting to put it together. “They were there to guard their king.” He paused before clarifying, “To guard you.”

Jon’s eyes darkened as he stared into Howland’s. “Me?”

“The son of Rhaegar Targaryen and his wife, Lyanna Stark,” said Howland. “Ned called you Jon, but before she died your mother named you Aegon Targaryen.”

Jon felt like he was being choked, his breath growing heavy suddenly as he turned to clutch the back of a chair and keep himself standing. His eyes burned nearly as much as his chest, his stomach twisted into a knot that felt like it reached his throat. His right hand reached for his face as he winced, gritting his teeth.

Howland could only frown, giving the man space. “I’m sorry, Jon. He told me she made him promise to keep you safe, to hide you from Robert. He’d already murdered Rhaeger’s other children… your half brother and sister. He made me swear to keep it secret as well, but with him gone I thought it best you know the truth.”

His head shifted before rising and shaking. Jon sucked in a breath and turned to Howland Reed, his expression ice. “No. Thank you, Lord Reed. Thank you for telling me. I needed to know.”

Howland would wonder that, but nodded. “I’ll go prepare my men for the march north.”

Leaving the room, Howland lingered outside the door where he heard what sounded like a table being turned over, letting the pitcher smash against the floor as Jon yelled. With a frown, Howland left, hoping he’d made the right choice.

XOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXO

Sansa sat at the high table with the Manderlys at they gathered for supper, but she found herself, like many others, looking to the empty seat between her and Wyman on he left. Jon’s seat. Her concern wasn’t for the slight the lords might take from his absence, but the fact this was the first
time he’d done so. If Jon hadn’t come he had a reason or something was wrong.

She felt relieved when the doors opened and Jon made his way to the table with nods to the lords. “Pardon my tardiness, not even the maids couldn’t rouse me from my sleep.”

Wyman looked at Jon and laughed. “Don’t worry, lad. We all deserve a good nap sometimes.”

However her concern returned as the meal continued and she noticed Jon was quieter than he usually was. His expression forced or restrained, hindered by something. At least he wasn’t normally as boisterous as Tormund. If anyone else noticed they’d surely take it as him being thoughtful, weighed down by thoughts before their march.

Once they finished their meals the lords and ladies lingered, enjoying themselves. She could see Tormund standing, one foot on his seat as he waved his arms and thrust his hips while the mountain clan leaders laughed. Brienne was smiling as Lyanna spoke, though she seemed surprised when Barbrey Dustin cut in with a comment that had Eddara Tallhart choking back a laugh. Davos wore a somber smile as he spoke with Howland Reed, Robin Flint and Rodrik Ryswell.

Sansa noticed Howland glanced toward Jon, frowning slightly before returning his attention to Robin Flint. Looking to Jon, she found him sat back in his chair with a hand on the top of his mug of ale, tapping his finger on the rim. His brow was knit in thought, his eyes aimed at the table but likely not seeing anything, his mind clearly somewhere else.

Seeing his right hand resting on the arm of his chair, Sansa reached over and picked it up. That seemed to break his trance, making him look to her. She offered a smile he tried to return but he barely moved his lips before his eyes sank.

“Is something wrong?” She asked quietly, tugging on his hand.

Looking to her he shook his head. “No, just… a lot on my mind.”

Sansa nodded. “It’s okay. You don’t have to worry. You’re doing great, Jon. They all believe in you. I don’t think any of them would mind saying if they didn’t.”

That earned a hollow laugh from Jon, who nodded. “No, but I’m glad they wouldn’t.” His eyes met Sansa’s and he was reminded of everything he’d felt that first time he saw her. Everything he’d felt when he came back from the dead.

“Sansa,” he said quietly, “I spoke to Howland Reed—”

“My lords and ladies,” Wyman boomed as he rose from his chair. “I thank you all for being here, for all you’ve done and all we will do together in the days to come, the kingdom we will reclaim and remake as it should be. Any thanks you hold for me, I must be honest and ask you direct them to my grandchildren, for when I feared what may become of White Harbor if we did as Lady Brienne offered, it was my granddaughters who reminded me of the debt White Harbor owes the Starks of Winterfell. A debt that can never be repaid.

“So for Lady Sansa and Lord Jon I did what I could. I drank with Jared, japed with Symond, promised Rhaegar the hand of my own beloved granddaughter…” Sansa glanced at Jon as she felt him twitch at Rhaegar’s name, only then realizing she was still holding his hand. “But I never forgot their part in my son’s murder. I will never forget, because I am of the North, and the North Remembers!”

“The North Remembers!” The hall cheered, raising their glasses.
Sansa released Jon’s hand even though he hadn’t moved it, using his left hand to raise his mug along with the others. Noticing the room starting to look at Jon, she smacked her hand against his leg. When he looked at her she subtly motioned to the room, making him realize they expected him to speak.

Jon got to his feet, looking around the room. After a moment he seemed to gather his thoughts, taking a breath. “Whenever we were riding to a new house I would remind myself of something Sansa said while we were at Castle Black. She told Ser Davos that her father told her northerners are different. More loyal.” That earned a murmur of agreement as well as a few nods toward Sansa. “I remembered her words and told myself that you would listen, you would know ours was a just cause, worthy of your support, and you would help us… but you didn’t have to.

“None of you had to keep faith. You could have turned us away, you could have taken Sansa and turned her in to the southron king. You could have claimed me a deserter and taken my head. Instead you all met us, listened to us, and put your faith in us. I’m sure you all respected Eddard Stark, but his name alone isn’t enough to bring you all this far. Loyalty, trust…” He glanced at Sansa, a smile tugging at his lips as he looked back to the others. “That’s what has brought us here.

“When we ride for Winterfell we do so together! Knowing that this isn’t a war we want to fight, but one we need to. We do it knowing we are stronger together than we ever could be on our own. And when we win, when Ramsay Bolton lays dead at our feet, let the rest of the world remember that when it mattered we stood together and returned a Stark to Winterfell!”

“Winterfell!” They roared.

Sansa beamed proudly up at Jon, feeling tears prick at her eyes as she watched him sit. When he glanced at her she quickly mouthed ‘thank you’ and the small smile it bought him made her warmer than the wine she’d drank.

Though the lords lingered, Jon was one of the first to excuse himself. Sansa followed shortly after, remembering that he’d seemed to have something important to say before Wyman interrupted. In the corridor she found Ghost waiting for her and reached over to rub his head.

“Good to see you again, Ghost,” she said scratching under his jaw. Normally he enjoyed it, but he let out a small whine. “What’s wrong, boy?” She asked, coming to a stop and rubbing behind his ear.

Ghost looked at her then turned and went to sit beside Jon’s door. Sansa chuckled, scratching his chin as she knocked. The door opened and Jon arched his brow, pushed aside by Ghost as he made his way into the room.

Jon seemed to stare at her, thinking something over before he looked up and down the corridor and waved her inside. Once she was in he closed the door. “Sorry, but I spilled my wine earlier and never managed to ask for more.”

“It’s fine,” Sansa said walking toward the hearth. “I thought I’d come speak with you. It seemed like you had something you wanted to say earlier. Before Wyman got up. Something about Howland Reed.”

“Oh,” he nodded, gripping the back of a chair. “I spoke with him after he arrived. You remember who he is, right?”

“One of father’s friends,” she said with a nod, turning the chair in front of the fire to face him before she sat. “He was with him when he killed Arthur Dayne and aunt Lyanna.”
“That’s not all they found in Dorne,” Jon said somberly.

Sansa’s brow knit as she sank into her chair. “What do you mean?” She knew Jon had been born in the south and her father brought him north when he returned. However his tone made it clear it was more complex then him thinking he should be named Sand.

“When we spoke he asked if I wanted to know about my mother.”

Sansa's brow rose. “He knew her?”

“I told him I wanted know,” Jon said taking a breath to steady himself as he looked to Sansa, “and he told me about Lyanna.”

At first confusion shaped her brow, but that quickly gave way to disbelief. “What? Lyanna couldn’t be your mother, father would never…” She stopped speaking, a trembling breath escaping her throat as it clicked. “Rhaegar.”

“The maid told them she’d left to marry him, before all the deaths.” A bitter laugh made Jon shake his head. “I was never a bastard. My name isn’t even Jon.”

Sansa’s stare broke with a blink. “It isn’t?”

Jon shook his head. “Before she died, she named me Aegon Targaryen and made your father promise to keep me safe or else I’d die like Rhaegar’s other children.”

The sorrow and anger in his face seemed so obvious now. Sansa put a hand over her mouth as tears of sympathy stung her eyes. “Oh, Jon…”

Jon turned toward the hearth, both hands gripping the back of the other chair. “I was never a Stark or a Snow. Everything I was… everything I am is a lie. I wasn’t even a Targaryen. I’m no one.”

“You’re not no one,” she said firmly, getting to her feet. Her hand found his arm, squeezing it while she tilted her head to look on his face. “Whoever gave birth to you, whatever your name, it doesn’t matter, not to me. It doesn’t change who you are. You’re Jon, the man I’ve stood beside from the Wall to White Harbor.”

Jon turned to her with his left hand on the chair and a smile on his lips. Her tone lost it's pleading edge to grow softer as she slid her right hand to his cheek. “The man I trust with my life, the man I’d follow beyond the Wall and across the sea if he asked. It doesn’t matter if you’re a Targaryen, a Snow, a Sand, a Stark… You’re Jon. You’ll always be Jon.”

She felt frozen under his gaze, and yet she managed to bring her lips to his. His hand fell from the chair as she pulled away, opening her eyes to find shock on his face.

“Sansa,” he whispered in surprise.

Her stomach twisted in disgust and shame. She’d let her emotions go untamed and now she’d ruined it. How could she be so desperate? She didn’t want him to leave her or distance himself, but he didn’t deserve this.

“I-I’m so-” She was cut off by his hand sliding into her hair as he pressed his lips to hers. The knot in her stomach eased, replaced by another that stretched to her chest, her fingers shaking before they sank into his curls.

She’d been so sure she hated kissing. While there had been a few she enjoyed when she was still a
stupid little girl dreaming of a golden haired prince, ever since she’d traveled south every kiss had been vile, awful things forced upon or stolen from her. A weapon used against her to make her stomach turn in disgust and fear. She thought she’d never enjoy it again, and yet with Jon’s lips she felt as if all those awful things had been pushed away, leaving her lighter than ever.

When he pulled away, taking a breath and opening his eyes to meet hers, she sighed, sliding her hand down to his jaw. “I spent every day going north dreaming of you and it never lived up to what I found. I won’t let this take you from me.”

“I doubt much could,” Jon said smiling solemnly. “This won’t.”

Sansa slid her hand over his heart. “You promise?”

Jon held her head, pulling it forward to press his lips to her forehead. “I promise.”

Chapter End Notes

I think I went through three versions of the first reveal. I considered adding filler to break it up so he told Sansa next chapter, but I think his bit about trust at supper pretty much cemented he was telling her ASAP.

The second 'reveal' is probably early for some, but also isn't a declaration of love or anything. Once the chapter ends they don't rip each other's clothes off and go at it or something. It's a pair of kisses that reveal they hold deeper feelings for each other. Things'll take a kind of slow build for now, especially compared to Weirwood Wife.
Sansa joins a meeting of Jon's inner circle and learns the nickname of her personal guard.

After she left his room Sansa tried to think of what to do with what she’d learned and what happened. He wasn’t her brother but her cousin. He was was rightful heir to the Iron Throne. He’d kissed her back. What she wanted and what would happen would be different, but she still found herself hoping, just like that naive girl with a head full of songs.

It was easy enough to avoid him the next day. Jon spent most of his day riding around the camp and checking supplies with the lords while Sansa, Brienne and Podrick met with those Jon had assigned to her guard. To her surprise she found mostly women and two men, spearwives and free folk she recognized. Ones Jon was closer to, ones he trusted, so she trusted them as much as she could.

Supper was somber, quiet compared to some of the others they’d had. Eventually they all retired for the night, and though she’d contemplated going to speak with him she decided to let him rest before they marched out early in the morning. To her joy she found Ghost waiting beside her door to join her for the night.

Dawn came and she rode beside Jon with the other lords, keeping with him until they settled for the night. Podrick and some of her guard took to raising her tent before she had even dismounted, setting it beside Jon’s. After thanking them all she and Brienne joined them around the fire for supper.

She was laughing at one of their crude jokes when she noticed Jon stride over to Davos and Tormund, pulling them from their conversation for a quick word before departing. Her smile faltered, but she pushed it back as she turned her attention to her guards and laughed at Laul’s rude gesture to a passing Thenn.

Once they’d finished eating, Sansa made her way toward her tent and heard voices from inside Jon’s. Curiosity got the better of her and she tried to listen in but their voices were quiet until Tormund scoffed.

“Don’t see how it changes anything. You’re still a southron prick.”

Jon laughed. “Thanks, Tormund.”

Realizing what was happening, Sansa called into the tent. “Jon?”

After a moment he called back. “Come in, Sansa.”

Opening the flap to enter she found Jon stood with Davos, Tormund, Melisandre, and Howland Reed. Sansa looked to them all before turning to Jon. “They know?”

Jon seemed pleased she’d put it together while the others seemed shocked she did. “I just told them. I was thinking of telling Brienne as well, but I felt it wasn’t my place to call on your sworn
sword.”

“Why make it a secret?” asked Tormund. “What does it matter whose cunt you came from or whose prick planted you there? S’not as if knowing means you haven’t lived the life you have, become the man you are. Crow, free folk, southron shit, it doesn’t matter. You’re Jon Snow.”

Sansa had never appreciated Tormund as much as she did then, seeing Jon’s lips quirk into a smile, casting a brief glance her way before he nodded. “Thank you, Tormund. Truly.”

Tormund gave him a firm nod, seeing it had affected Jon. “Still have a little prick for a god.”

Jon sighed, shaking his head and looking to Davos and Melisandre. The Red Woman wore a smug smile, as though she’d always known the truth. “King’s blood flows through your veins, Jon Snow. It’s no wonder not even death could stop you. Men will tremble before you, earth will quake because you demand it, the sun will rise because you make it. You are the Prince Who Was Promised, hidden by a lie.”

Davos sighed as though he agreed with her but wished he didn’t. “This could work either way. They may turn against you in the end, fear you’ll be another southron king come to take what isn’t his. Or they could see all you’ve done for them, see how much you take from your mother and the man who raised you as his son. I can’t say I know which they’ll think, but I believe only a fool would deny the man you are.”

“I’m not king,” Jon said shaking his head.

Davos crossed his arms. “What else would you call yourself? Forget who fathered you, think of all you’ve done. You’ve brought together more than half the houses of the North to march beside the free folk and reclaim your home. They know you as a bastard, and yet every lord here comes to you. The men all look to you as much as their own lords. You’ve seen more than any man here, you’ve died and risen again, you know what lies beyond the wall and the kingdoms below. Who better than you to be king when the Long Night comes?”

“I’m not a king, I’m-”

A bastard. They all knew the words that hung on his lips, the lie her father had told them all. The lie that colored his entire life. The lie that made her mother hate him and made Sansa ignore him. Sansa had never been more disappointed in her father than she was watching Jon struggle to admit what he was.

“You’re my king,” said Sansa, drawing their eyes. “When we win and retake Winterfell I’ll be the Stark in Winterfell. I don’t believe they’ll doubt you, but if they do then they’ll be loyal to me, and I’ll always be loyal to you. You’re a king, Jon. Maybe not in name, not yet, but you are. The same way you’ll always be a Stark, no matter your name.”

Tormund grinned as he nodded, looking to Jon. “We ain’t kneelers like you southron shits, but free folk would never move for a man who hadn’t earned it.” He placed a hand on Jon’s shoulder with a grunt. “No crow or lord’s earned it before, only Mance, but you’re the one got us past the Wall. I doubt there’s any more deserving your Iron Throne either.”

Jon looked to each of them, taking them in with a breath. “Aegon Targaryen. Jon Snow. I’ll be whoever I need to help us win.”

“And that’s why you deserve it,” Sansa said walking over to placed a hand on his elbow. “If you can’t trust yourself… trust us, Jon.”
They were the only ones Jon told his secret, deciding it best to wait until the first war was won before they risk losing the next. Sansa found herself watching him more than usual, taking note of how he sat tall no matter who he rode with, spoke as equal to soldier and lord alike. He held their attention when he spoke.

She found she enjoyed the company of her guards as well, though at times she felt a pang of sorrow at how much some of the spearwives reminded her of Arya. Ever since they first saw the dagger she kept with her as they rode, the spear wives had taken to her as well. Laul spent an hour every day talking about how she should fight, telling Sansa of how she’d fought off a dozen men before letting Rothin take her as his wife, how she still had nightmares that she would see him again with blue eyes and rotted flesh.

“I see you’re getting along with your fireguard,” Tormund said one day as they sat around a fire.

Looking up from her stew she asked, “Fireguard?”

Tormund snickered. “Your little guard group. Jon told us about how you kneelers have a kingsguard and he wanted to make one for you. Some of the lads took to the name once they saw you.”

“After they saw me?”

“You’re kissed by fire,” he motioned to his hair, grinning, “like me.”

Sansa chuckled. “I suppose so.”

“It means we’re lucky.”

Sansa nodded. “That we are.”

“I suppose it’s best he surround himself with us,” Tormund said with a nod to Jon, sat between Lyanna Mormont and Harwood Stout. “Not many I’ve met had worse luck, even before he died. Riding off to war after you’ve been murdered is a special kind of fucked.”

Sansa’s snicker grew to a laugh, her shoulders shaking. Glancing over to Jon she remembered he was doing this for her. She’d been the one who wanted to retake Winterfell. She’d started him on this path before he died, before she wanted to run from it all, but he kept her to it. He knew there’d always be a part of her that wanted it.

“I guess we’re meant to make up for it all.”

Tormund looked to her with a smirk. “Maybe we are.”

Once they’d settled in for the night, Sansa made her way to Jon’s tent. Opening the flap she found Jon sat on his small cot swirling the ale within the mug he held between his legs.

His eyes rose, barely lit by the candle burning in the corner. “Sansa?”

“How many have you told so far?” she asked, holding the flap until he shook his head and she stepped inside. She made her way toward him, sitting next to him on the bed. “How many have you told so far?”

“No one else since Brienne.”

Sansa smiled remembering the tall woman’s gawking face before she knelt and called him ‘your
“Grace”. He’d smiled and asked her not to call him that, saying she was one of a handful who knew so far and he’d rather not have people thinking he assumes himself their king.

Sansa held the edge of the mattress, leaning forward slightly to look at Jon. “I don’t regret it,” she said quietly. He turned to her and she clarified, “Kissing you.” Facing forward she sighed. “I’ve wanted to do that since Castle Black. It was mostly out of relief when I first saw you, and again when you woke up. After that… I wanted to kiss you like that when you said we would go home.”

Jon’s head slipped forward, smiling. “It was there when I woke up,” he admitted, making her turn to look at him, shocked. “I worried maybe I’d come back wrong or twisted, but it was like I knew you hadn’t left me and I didn’t want you to leave, not ever again. After that it just… grew.

“When Howland told me about the lie I was angry because of what it did to my life. I was sad because it stole the only family I ever knew. I hated myself because even knowing what he said I keep thinking of every story they told us growing up, how Rhaegar took her and raped her, and I wondered if maybe Howland lied too and I’m just a bastard born of rape, the same as Ramsay.”

“You’re nothing like him,” Sansa assured.

A hollow laugh came from his throat. “The only thing that made me glad for it wasn’t the throne, but the thought that it meant maybe I wasn’t as awful as I feared.” He looked to her. “Maybe it wasn’t all bad.”

“Maybe not,” she said reaching for his cheek, leaning forward where Jon met her with his lips.

Jon let the mug drop from his hand, his left hand pressing into the mattress as he turned to deepen their kiss, slipping his right through her hair. Her right slid along his jaw to the back of his head, her left pressing against the muscles of his chest through his jerkin and tunic. Their tongues brushed as she went to brush hers against his lips.

The leather on her palm and the feel of his chest beneath made her want more. She wanted to touch every part of him, to have him touch every part of her.

Instead he pulled his lips from hers, sighing as he rested his forehead against hers.

Her fingers brushed through his hair while she caught her breath, keeping her eyes closed until she felt him move back and met his gaze. Slowly a wry smile crept across his lips. Sansa snickered, shaking her head as they separated.

“I’ll see you in the morning,” she said placing a kiss on his cheek before rising to leave. “I don’t want my fireguard to worry.” That earned a laugh from Jon, who picked his mug off the floor.

She felt like a girl again, half worried her mother would suddenly walk through and find them. Gods, her mother would be so angry… but she was a fool. Even if her father lied to them, Jon never deserved her mother’s anger. Then again it seemed Jon rarely got what he deserved.

Maybe she could help him find the happiness he deserved.
Bastard Parley

Chapter Summary

Jon parleys with Ramsay. Sansa gives Jon gifts the night before battle.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

After a few days the Vale knights separated from their army along with a small number from each house, bringing them below four thousand as they approached Winterfell. That number grew slightly when the Cassels, Condons, Mollens and Poolers joined them along with the Hornwoods.

Finally the day came and Sansa sat mounted atop a gray palfrey beside Jon and a dozen other lords. They watched as a party rode toward them from Winterfell. At the front rode Ramsay Bolton with Small Jon Umber and Harald Karstark at his sides.

When they came to a stop, Sansa barely noticed the briefest of smiles tug at Karstark’s lips seeing the lords. He was theirs. Not only had Jon brought his wildling army, but every other house in the North. He’d kept his word relayed by Karstark’s rider, and he would be his daughter’s hope for a better life.

“It’s her,” said one of the men behind Ramsay, his eyes locked on Brienne. “The one who killed Hunnel and Lorik on that hunt. The one who got away from us.”

Ramsay looked from the man to Brienne, his lips stretching into a vile grin. “Wonderful!” His gaze turned to Jon, briefly flicking toward Sansa, making her skin crawl. “I thank you for bringing me this wanted criminal. Now dismount and kneel before me. Surrender your army and proclaim me the true Lord of Winterfell and Warden of the North. I will pardon you for deserting the Night’s Watch. I will pardon these treasonous lords for betraying my house.”

Jon and every lord simply stared at Ramsay.

“Come, bastard. What can you do with half an army, most of them horseless wildlings wielding stone axes and brittle steel sword. You don’t have Winterfell. All you have are lords foolish enough to follow a deserter. Why lead those poor souls into a slaughter? There’s no need for a battle. Get off your horse and kneel. I am a man of my word.” His eyes shifted to Sansa. “I’ll let you watch.”

Sansa stared at Ramsay, not letting him see her discomfort. She, like the others, looked to Jon, who exhaled.

“You’re right. There’s no need for a battle.”

Ramsay grinned, eyes gleaming with gluttonous guttural glee.

“Thousands of men don’t have to die. Only one of us.” That earned a smirk from Tormund. “Let’s end this the old way. You against me.”

A few of the other lords exchanged looks while Davos and Tormund focused on Ramsay and his
men, Sansa glancing at Jon. Small Jon’s lips twisted into a smirk while Karstark remained impassive.

Jon stayed locked on Ramsay’s eyes, ice on ice, neither breaking until Ramsay laughed. “I’ve heard stories about you… bastard. The way people in the North talk about you, you’re the greatest swordsman who ever walked.” He smirked, shrugging. “Maybe you are that good… Maybe not. I don’t know if I’d beat you… I know that my army will beat yours. I have six thousand men. You have…. Four? Three? How many of them are untrained wildlings and broken men from your brother’s war?”

“Aye, you have the numbers,” said Jon. “Will your men want to fight for you when they hear you wouldn’t fight for them?”

The humor drained from Ramsay’s face before restraining himself, waving a finger. “He’s good. Very good!” He spoke through grit teeth, then seemed to regain his composure. “Tell me. Will you let your little brother die because you’re too proud to surrender?”

“Why should I trust the word of a coward?” asked Jon.

Ramsay’s eyes narrowed, his jaw shifting, grinding his teeth. His hands squeezed the reins of his horse. Sansa kept her eye on him while some of the others shared brief glances, wondering if he would accept Jon’s offer or even try to attack him.

Instead, Ramsay exhaled and looked to Small Jon. The man seemed unimpressed with Ramsay’s display, but wordlessly reached back and tossed Shaggydog’s head toward them. Jon and Sansa gave it a glance, her stomach twisting at her hope of it being a lie gone.

“Now,” Ramsay nearly yelled before calming himself, saying more evenly, “if you want to save him, surrender.”

“When morning comes I’d suggest visiting Old Gods, bastard,” Jon said pointedly, “they’ll be the only ones who might grant you mercy.”

Ramsay’s hand trembled slightly, his lips thinning as he stared into Jon’s eyes. After a moment they twisted into a grin, his eyes leaving Jon to look toward the lords. “I see now why you followed him. He’s a fool, but a brave one. It’s a shame you’re all going to die, but I’ll make sure it’s not too soon. Too much fun to be had,” he said with lingering looks to the women, his grin growing when he found Lady Dustin’s sneer.

“I’m sure Domeric will be happy to see you once my men have finished with you and I’ve made a cloak of your wrinkled skin Lady Dustin. And you, little Lady Mormont, I’m sure you’ll grow into a fine bitch. My men will have so much fun with all of you, I promise!” Ramsay smiled, his eyes settling on Sansa. “But I’ll keep you for myself, Lady Stark. Don’t you worry.

“As for the rest of you… well, you’re all fine looking men! My dogs are desperate to meet you. I haven’t fed them in five days. They’re ravenous! I wonder where they’ll start? Your eyes? You balls?” He laughed, though no one else did. “We’ll find out soon enough.” Taking his reins in hand he gave Jon a curt nod. “In the morning then, bastard.”

Jon sat impassively watching as Ramsay and his men turned to leave, galloping toward Winterfell. Tugging on his reins, Jon slowly turned his horse toward the lords. “Double the guard. He’ll send people in the night.”

Sansa turned her own horse and saw a grin stretch across Lady Dustin’s lips. “Good to see it was as
obvious as I thought.”

“You sure that was smart?” Rodrik Ryswell asked. “Provoking him?”

“No doubt he’ll come to meet us now,” said Davos. “Thought he might have drawn on you a moment there.”

“One of the perks of having more lords on our side is more swords here and now,” said Eddara Tallhart.

“Thank you all,” Jon said with a nod to them. “Now I suggest we return, finalize our plans and prepare as best we can. We’ll have a fight tonight, and a war to end tomorrow.”

XOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXO

To no one’s surprise the guards caught a group of twenty-five men trying to set fire to their supply tents. The moment they were found men from all around the camp arrived and the few that survived the initial fight and fled were shot through the heart, throat and eye as they ran.

The lords all gathered around the map in the main war tent and went over their plans for the morning. Once their plans were set a rider left camp to meet up with the Vale knights while some of the crannogmen started toward the river.

Jon made his way to his tent, the candles already lit as he removed his gloves, tossing them on his mattress. With a quick glance toward the flap of his tent he raised his hand, passing it over the flame of a candle. It barely touched his hand before he yanked it away, sucking a breath through his nose.

Of course Sansa would come in as he shook his hand. “You okay?”

Turning to her he squeezed the side of his hand the flame touched. “You know I’m going to disband your guard if this keeps up.”

Sansa giggled. “What are you talking about?”

“If you can sneak away from them then someone can sneak past them,” he said briskly, walking away from the candle.

Sansa furrowed her brow. “You think they’ll come all this way, make it past an entire army to find my tent?”

Jon’s eyes darkened. “You saw how he looked at you. What he said to you and the others.” Jon’s hand clenched. “I should have strangled him there.”

“Then you would have done what he wanted,” she said walking to him and placing a hand on his shoulder. “You did the right thing, Jon. You played him well.”

Jon sighed, letting his hands fall to his sides. “I hope Karstark keeps his word. Otherwise I don’t know what he’ll do to Rickon.”

Sansa frowned. “I… You can’t worry about him, Jon. You can’t let your concern for him let you make a mistake. If you die everything will fall apart. It’s hard enough making them all work together.”

“You’d manage,” he assured.
“Maybe,” said Sansa. “But there’s more at stake then just the North.”

He glanced at the bundle of dark cloth in her left hand. “What’s that?”

Sansa perked up and stepped back, holding the bundle out for him. “I know you won’t wear the cloak I made you into battle, so I started on this a few days before we got to White Harbor.”

He took it and held it up, letting it unravel, revealing a black tabard with gray embroidery along the edges. On either side of the split along the legs and on the chest were white Stark direwolves with red eyes.

“I thought it serendipitous that it has stark colors as well as black and red.”

Jon looked it over and smiled, meeting her eyes. “Thank you, Sansa.”

She beamed with pride as she did when she gave him his cloak.

He slung it over his shoulder and stepped forward, Sansa biting her bottom lip in anticipation of him brushing his fingers across her cheeks as he brought his lips to her. Her left hand gripped his jerkin, holding him in place for a moment before they separated with a sigh. Sansa quickly reached into her sleeve, removing a small folded blue ribbon. “Here.”

Unfolding it he smirked. “You want me to tie my hair back with this?”

She groaned at his teasing tone. “It’s one of my ribbons.”

Jon carefully set the tabard on his bed before turning to her. “Help me,” he said wrapping the ribbon around his right wrist and held it out for her to tie. When she arched her brow he explained, “I’ll be safer under my glove and vambrace.”

Sansa nodded, carefully tying the ribbon tight enough to be secure but not enough to be bothersome. Looking it over he gave an approving nod. “And now I could face them alone and walk away unharmed.”

Sansa pursed her lips. He sounded a bit too sincere for it to be pure teasing. “You’d better come back without a scratch.” She brushed a hand over his chest, frowning. “You already have enough scars for a lifetime.”

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“You want to avenge your king, don’t you?” Tormund asked as he and Davos walked through the encampment.

“It wasn’t the Boltons defeated Stannis. It was Stannis himself,” said Davos. “I loved the man. He lifted me up and made me something, but he had demons in his skull whispering foul things.”

“You saw these demons?” Tormund asked, making Davos come to a stop.

“What?” Tormund turned to the knight who shook his head. “No, it’s a manner of speaking. Not… actual demons.”

After a moment Tormund said, “Huh. Well you loved that cunt Stannis, but I loved the man he burnt. Mance didn’t have demons in his skull. He didn’t torch people or… listen to some red witch. I believed in him. I thought he was the man to lead us through the Long Night. But I was wrong, just like you.”
Tormund started to go into his tent when Davos spoke. “Maybe that was our mistake. Believing in men playing at king.”

Turning back to Davos, Tormund noted, “And Jon Snow’s a king playing a bastard, just as he was a crow playing a free man.”

“So he is,” Davos said turning to him. “Yet it seems in the end his true colors always show.”

Davos spent his night walking through the camp, nearly twice as large as it might have been if they hadn’t traveled south. He avoided a peak were a group of guards had built a fire using bundles of charred wood as kindling.

Light broke the horizon and war horns sounded as dawn rose on the final day of the War for the North.

Chapter End Notes

Rather than rewatch the episode again and again I actually looked up a transcript for Battle of the Bastards and came across the Emmy script. Reading that really clarified a lot of what I don't like about Sansa in the show. There's a bit where they write "If Jon would kill Ramsay, Sansa would skin him living."

It was confirmation for me that they have no idea what to do with Sansa, just like many other characters. They want her to be vindictive and use Jon to get her revenge, then feel slighted by his being crowned king, but barely show any of that. They want her to seem as smart as Littlefinger but keep her from doing anything smart or decent, make her likely cost hundreds or thousands of lives, and want us to feel sympathetic for her and support her.

It's like the worst fan fiction. They ruined this really interesting character to try and do whatever they want, which is just a black hole dragging down everything around it. It feels like she should call herself Ebony Sansa and be going out for dates with Vampire Jon and Draco Joffrey.

There's so much potential with the book storylines. Sansa becoming Alayne could play out in a ton of ways that lead to interesting duel mentality moments, Ramsay could make a great foil for Jon, and the devastation when Jon realizes he went to war and was murdered for a girl who isn't even his sister could be heart wrenching.

It might have even been interesting if she was so indoctrinated by Petyr she was Alayne doing all this, since his daughter might be that kind of shitty person, and you'd have her struggling to be Sansa, moments of hope that she's still in there. Instead they seem to want her to as bad a person as her mother ever was to the point she's arguably villainous.
The sun hadn’t even risen when the men began to stir, preparing for the battle to come. Jon woke and glanced at the blue ribbon tied around his wrist before gathering his things. Unlike some of the lords he didn’t have help putting on his armor. Instead, dressing felt like a ritual as he took his time making sure everything was in place and secure. Wyman Manderly had commissioned some extra armor for him, so it took a bit longer than it usually did.

Sansa had her own preparations. She choose a Stark gray dress, one she could ride in comfortably. While in White Harbor she’d procured a haubrek with steel ringlets ending near her elbows which she wore beneath a steel gorget and sleeveless white jack of plate not unlike Jon’s longer coat. Brienne had secured her a sword and dagger held on a belt around her waist. She carefully plaited her hair, finding secret joy in tying it with an azure ribbon. While Jon wouldn’t be wearing the cloak she’d made him, she secured her own ermine cloak as she left her tent.

Her fireguard were preparing their horses when she arrived. Any concern Brienne had gave way to a proud smile at the sight of Sansa looking every bit a lady even in armor with a sword on her waist. The other fireguards had stuck with lighter leather and hide armor like most of the free folk, leaving Brienne and Podrick the only ones in plate and steel.

“My lady,” Brienne said bowing her head with Podrick.

“Ha! You look like a proper spearwife,” Laul said with a grin.

“It’s for the best,” Rila chuckled. “You’ll be fighting men off once they see you like this.”

Sansa curtsied to Brienne and Podrick before looking to the others. “Thank you. I’ll take those as compliments.”

“That’s be the proper way to take ‘em,” Rila said with a laugh. “Sure you’re fine with the sword and dagger? I could steal a spear from one of these kneelers.”

“I shouldn’t need it,” Sansa said shaking her head. “If everything goes right we’ll be far from the battle.”

“Things rarely go right,” said Laul, “especially in war.”

Sansa noticed Jon’s horse being lead toward them, easily spotted by the round shield painted gray with a white wolf attached to the saddle. The young man guiding the destrier had come to them with House Dustin, a bastard named Willam rumor said was Barbrey’s. He was only a few years younger than Jon, but clearly looked up to him, having become his unofficial squire.

It was barely a moment later that she noticed men separating, going quiet to watch Jon stride past them with Ghost trailing behind him, their heads turning to follow him.

Beside his usual attire topped by his coat of plates and gorget, he now had spaulders and
vambraces engraved with stark direwolves. The tabard Sansa embroidered went over his coat of plates, secured by his sword belt while a sallet helmet hang from his left hand with the visor raised.

“Thank you, Willam,” he said pulling on and securing his helmet before taking the reins and mounting his destrier. Turning to Sansa he looked her over, surprised by the armor and sword belt over her dress. He flashed her an impressed smile, and spotted the ribbon at the end of her hair so raised his right hand in a wave. She answered with a quick curtsy before he guided his horse away with Ghost following him.

Over time they all left camp and made their way to the Wolf’s Field outside Winterfell. At one end stood the Stark forces with their backs to trees and across from them with their backs to Winterfell was a mass of Bolton soldiers.

Both armies stood still and silent until Ramsay road forward holding a rope. Reek rushed forward to take the horse’s reins, handing them off to a soldier after Ramsay dismounted. With a look back he tugged on the rope, forcing Rickon to follow.

They watched as Ramsay reached behind his back, drawing a dagger which he held up to them. Jon dismounted, walking ahead of the others while Rickon lowered his head and closed his eyes, waiting to feel the dagger cut him. Instead Ramsay cut the ropes around his wrist, quickly tucking the dagger back behind him.

“Do you like games, little man?” asked Ramsay. “Let’s play a game.”

Reek, his head downcast, let his eyes shift toward Ramsay as the man grabbed Rickon’s shoulder, pulling him closer and pointing across the field.

“Run to your brother.” Rickon glanced up. “The sooner you make it to him, the sooner you get to see him again. That’s it. That’s the game. Easy!” Ramsay looked to Rickon, shaking him lightly. “Ready?” He guided Rickon forward, letting the boy take a step. “Go!”

Rickon took a few more steps before he looked over his shoulder to Ramsay, Reek’s eyes shifting between Ramsay and Rickon.

“No, you have to run, remember?” Ramsay said playfully. “Those are the rules.”

Ramsay turned as a soldier brought him a bow which he took, letting Reek hold the quiver of arrows beside him. Rickon took a breath and started running as fast as he could. Ramsay drew the first arrow and Jon turned, rushing to his destrier and leaping onto it, digging his heels in and galloping into the field, alone.

Ramsay took his time nocking the arrow, letting Rickon run, looking back over his shoulder as Ramsay loosed. The arrow landed a meter to Rickon’s left, though Ramsay shrugged, having barely aimed.

Reek watched him take another arrow, looking across the field to Jon Snow galloping toward his brother. Ramsay drew, but turned to Reek, his lips stretched into a playful smile as he loosed the arrow and turned to see where it landed. Nowhere near Rickon.

Jon held out his right hand as he got closer, Rickon breathing heavily as he pushed himself to keep going.

Reek watched Ramsay draw the bow string back, closing one eye as he angled it.

And then Reek hit him.
It wasn’t very hard, didn’t make him bleed or likely hurt much, but it was enough to make his arrow shoot far to the right. Far from Rickon. And it was surprising enough to make Ramsay stumble back.

The soldier that had brought him the bow rushed forward to grab Reek, drawing his sword until Ramsay held out a hand. “No!” Ramsay glared into Reek, who stood in tears, terrified of what he’d done. “Throw him in the kennels, but keep them caged. Let him work them into a frenzy.”

Jon looked past Rickon as he heard Reek scream while he was dragged away, “RUN!”

Ramsay picked an arrow off the ground, stood firmly in place and loosed his fourth arrow.

Rickon’s hand reached out and grabbed Jon’s, his feet leaving the ground as Jon pulled him up with his right hand while his left tugged on the reins of his horse. The destrier started to turn when the arrow pierced it’s left eye, pushing through it’s right cheek.

His horse came to a stop, it’s front legs buckling first and their army watched in horror as Jon and Rickon were thrown off the horse flipping over itself.

Sansa gasped watching Jon roll his shoulders so Rickon landed on top of him, taking most of the impact for the boy. A moment later they were standing. Ghost stood on his haunches, growling.

Tears were streaming down Rickon’s face. “Jon,” he sobbed.

With a glance toward the grinning Ramsay, Jon tore off his helmet and put it over Rickon’s head. He grabbed Rickon’s furs and nearly dragged him to the downed horse. Jon pulled the shield from the saddle and handed it to Rickon, making him hold it behind him and turning him toward his army.

“Run,” Jon commanded.

Rickon took a shaky breath, looking back at him in shock.

Jon pushed him, pointing toward Sansa. “Run to Ghost!” Jon backed away from him and yelled, “GHOST!”

The direwolf broke into a sprint, becoming an ivory streak as he sped into the field.

“Go!” Jon commanded, turning to face Ramsay. Rickon winced, hating himself as he turned and did what Jon asked, running toward Ghost.

Ramsay tilted his head, smiling as Jon began walking forward. He wasn’t charging or running or dodging, just walking. Challenging Ramsay, who couldn’t help but reach for an arrow with a chuckle.

Jon stopped and tilted his right shoulder back, barely able to track the arrow which passed half a meter from his shoulder. Once he heard it hit the ground, he started walking again.

“What the fuck he is doing?!?” Rodrik Ryswell asked, practically rocking in his saddle.

Barbrey Dustin’s eyes traveled from Jon to Rickon, running from Jon as Ghost ran to him. “He’s baiting him,” she said thinking back to their war council. “He’s baiting the bastard to let the boy escape!”

Ramsay broke into a laugh, turning to hand his bow away and walk past his archers, who raised
their bows and loosed a volley of arrows on the field.

Davos looked to the men readying to charge. “DON’T! Not until the boy’s safe!”

Jon watched the wave of arrows soar toward him, his hand twitching to grab his sword and swing, as though he could deflect any. Instead he took a breath and kept walking, raising his arms over his face and chest. He sucked in a breath as an arrow pierced his left spaulder, digging into his shoulder while Jon snapped the shaft.

Ghost nearly slid as he came to a stop, turning and lowering himself to let Rickon leap onto his back. The moment he was on and holding Ghost’s neck the direwolf pushed up and sped away from the field.

“GO! GO!” Davos bellowed. “Follow your commander!”

Men on horses with Ryswell, Harwood, and Dustin caparisons charged the field.

Tormund let out a roar, drawing his sword and leading the free folk and infantry into the field, Wun Wun roaring as he raised his cudgel.

Atop his horse again, Ramsay leaned his head toward his lords. “Now.”

“Cavalry!” Harald Karstark called out. One of his men brought a horn to his lips, blowing four rapid blast before Harald yelled, “Charge!”

Sansa’s eyes widened, shifting from Rickon and Ghost to Jon walking in the field. “The signal.”

Jon came to a stop, exhaling and giving himself a small nod as he drew Longclaw and stared down the line of cavalry charging toward him. They must have been a hundred meters away when half of them turned, their horses running to the left and right of the field, leaving only the Bolton and Umber horses charging toward Jon.

Ramsay sneered as he watched the riders split off, leaving his men behind. ”Turncoats,” he spat, gritting his teeth tight enough they might have cracked.

Jon seemed resolute and ready to face the remaining cavalry on his own, but his riders sped past him, clashing with the Bolton men. Pikes and spears pierced men, throwing them off horseback while others fell because the horses collided.

While most of the Kartsark men were turning back toward the field to join their army, Sansa noticed one of them riding toward her.

“Damn it! Loose!”

Another volley of arrows soared into the field, Jon picking up a round Ryswell shield off one of the fallen men, raising it. Thankfully the arrows all missed him.

Sansa dismounted as Ghost approached, coming to a stop and letting Rickon get off. Once the boy was off his back Ghost turned and sprinted back into the field.

Rickon watched Ghost run off, flinching when he felt a pair of arms wrap around him and turned to see Sansa with tears streaming down her cheeks. “Rickon,” she gasped.

“Sansa?” He asked, confused and scared.

“It’s me, sweetling,” she nodded.
Rickon took a shaky breath as his own tears fell. “He told me to run,” he said, begging her to believe him. “He told me to run.”

“I know,” she assured, brushing her fingers through his wild hair. “I know.”

“We may as well be taking shits back here,” Davos declared, dismounting as he started forward. Drawing his sword he roared, “FORWARD!”

Ramsay’s eyes narrowed, watching his archers fire volleys into Karstark cavalry, most of them falling aside. Small Jon laughed when he saw Harald Karstark tumble of his horse and get to his feet, drawing his sword and making his way toward Ramsay. He barely made it ten meters from Ramsey before arrows pierced his jaw, neck and collar.

“It’s time,” Ramsay commanded, watching Karstark’s corpse fall while Small Jon drew his sword, walking ahead of the infantry.

“Who owns the North?”

“We do!”

“Who owns the North?!”

“We do!”

“Show me!” Small Jon yelled, turning and aiming toward the field, his men charging past him.

Jon grunted when he ran Longclaw through a man’s throat, pushing him away to tear it free through the side of his neck and turned to parry the slash of another. While the taller man’s arm was pushed aside, Jon slashed up, Longclaw slipping between his breastplate and spaulder to cleave his armpit.

Jon heard a yell and turned to find a man charging him with a spear until a flash of white slammed into him, turning slightly in the air. Ghost landed and slid in the mud, his fur stained brown and red as the man’s throat fell from Ghost’s jaw. The direwolf looked to Jon, like a puppy begging for approval, so Jon gave him a nod and Ghost sped off, a streak of snow weaving through the battlefield.

Another soldier charged him, but Jon raised his pilfered shield, letting the blade scrape across the surface while Jon thrust Longclaw through the soldier’s pelvis. He thrust the shield into the screaming man’s face, ripping Longclaw free and turning, bringing it up just in time to press the edge through the leather gorget of another Bolton soldier. Turning, he tore through the man’s throat, his foot digging into mud while he raised the shield to take the overhead slash of another.

The sword dug into the wooden shield deep enough it took a moment for the man to yank it free, but when he did he stumbled into the sword that pierced the back of his head. Tormund kicked the man’s back, yanking his blade free. Behind him Wun Wun swung his cudgel, knocking aside a line of three men, one of whom died from the impact while the other two screamed from their broken, jutting bones when they landed meters away.

Just as the Bolton men with large pavise shields started moving to surround them, horns blared from the west. Ramsey’s eyes followed the thump of hooves, sitting up as he saw almost three thousand men charging the field, most of them on horseback.

Sansa watched the lone Karstark rider come to a stop beside them, her fireguard aiming spears at the slim soldier who threw her helmet aside to reveal the gaunt face of Alys Karstark.
“Thank you,” she wept, practically falling off her horse to approach Sansa, clutching her hands. “Thank you.”

Small Jon found Jon on the field, grinning at the man who’d impressed him again and again. He charged at Jon, hitting his shield hard enough to make Jon’s arm numb and nearly cleave the shield in two. Quickly backing away, Jon tossed the shield aside, looking for a replacement when he heard Tormund yell and clash with Small Jon.

An Umber soldier flipped through the air, thrown by Wun Wun’s cudgel. His wooden splint armor spotted with arrows, Wun Wun grabbed handfuls of spears, breaking the small shield walls the men tried to make while his cudgel slammed into their sides, mowing down the ones not impaled on cavalry spears.

Ramsay frantically assessed the field. He watched a red haired wildling shove a sword into Small Jon’s side with such force the massive man was lifted off his feet and thrown into the mud gasping for his last breath. His infantry was being knocked aside by a giant, torn limb from limb by a muddied white direwolf, beaten by knights, northern soldiers and wildling men and women. His cavalry was non existent, the few remaining unhorsed. His archers fired wildly, but were being picked off by an old knight leading their archers.

His army was broken.

His eyes moved across the field where he saw the northern lords that hadn’t joined the fight sat watching. At the head of them stood Sansa Stark and her honor guard, her left arm around the shoulders of her youngest brother. Ramsay nearly choked when he realized the gaunt woman beside her in Karstark armor was his wife.

Anger seethed through his every pore as he turned his gaze to the field and found Jon Snow yanking his sword from the stomach of a fallen Bolton soldier. As if feeling his gaze, Jon turned to stare at Ramsay sat atop his horse. Tormund came up to Jon’s right, looking from him to Ramsay as Ghost came to stand on Jon’s left and Wun Wun towered behind him.

Nearly his entire body splattered with blood and mud, yet Jon’s eyes were clear as they met Ramsay’s. Standing tall, Jon raised his right hand, holding Longclaw in the air as he roared, “WINTERFELL!”

“Winterfell!” Men and women called across the field, more and more chanting it, like a wave stretching out from him.

Ramsay tugged on the reins of his horse and turned in retreat. If this had to end in Winterfell then so be it.

Seeing Ramsay retreat and Jon call for men to follow him, Sansa pulled Rickon to her horse, mounting it and helping him into the saddle. The others all seemed to realize what she was doing, taking reins and following her around the battlefield to make their way toward Winterfell.

Ramsay came through the gates of Winterfell as the reserve he left behind readied their bows along the walls. Dismounting he watched them close the gate. “Their army is useless.”

“Our army is gone,” said a soldier.

“We have Winterfell,” said Ramsay. “We can wait them out.”

There were shouts from the walls as men started firing arrows before a thunderous crash came from the shaking gate. The archers manning the battlements signaled for others to switch out with
them, firing more arrows below as there were more bangs on the gate.

With a crack a giant hand comes through the gate, Ramsay’s eyes widening as he backed away. The archers all began firing toward the giant, who continued to hammer the gate until the ancient wood splintered and it fell over.

The giant entered Winterfell, his armor littered with arrows as he stood and roared, Jon leading a group of infantry through the gate behind him. While the others rushed into the battlements, Tormund followed Ghost to stand beside Jon, coming to a stop to stare at Ramsay, who was reaching for his bow. He watched as men of the north slaughtered his reserve, nocking and arrow and aiming it past Jon, loosing it toward Ghost.

The direwolf’s bared teeth were blocked from view by Wun Wun’s hand, Ramsay’s arrow barely making it through the leathers wrapped around his palm.

Ramsay’s eyes frantically looked to the men surrounding him, aiming bows at him, baring swords and axes. He turned to Jon, smirking. “You suggested one-on-one combat, didn’t you? I’ve reconsidered. I think it sounds like a wonderful idea.”

Jon sheathed Longclaw and took a step forward.

Tormund looked to him. “Don’t.”

Jon ignored him, raising the Mormont shield he’d picked up on his way there as he dashed to Ramsay. An arrow pierced the shield, stopping inches from his collar. Ramsay started to nock another arrow when Jon reached him and thrust the shield through his bow, snapping it before he backed away, meeting Ramsay’s eyes, daring him to keep fighting.

Ramsay stared at him, smirking as he swiftly drew his dagger and tossed it to his left hand while his right drew the falchion on his waist.

Sansa and the other lords rode in on their horses just as Ramsay dashed forward, slashing at Jon, who blocked Ramsay’s falchion. When he thrust the dagger as him, Jon sidestepped it and grabbed Ramsay’s extended wrist, pulling his left arm up and driving the side of the shield into his elbow. Ramsay grunted as his arm bent the wrong way and the dagger fell from his grasp.

Ramsay lunged at him with the falchion, slashing wildly. Jon seemed to dodge the strikes with ease, the bastard too angry to be clever or quick. When he finally raised his shield, Jon took hold of the straps of his shield in both hands, taking a strike from the falchion before slamming the shield into Ramsay’s hand hard enough to break his fingers.

The sword fell away and Jon stepped back, throwing the shield aside. Ramsay could have given up and begged for mercy, but instead he dashed forward and swung at Jon with a guttural roar.

Finally Jon balled his hand into a fist, pulling it back as he stepped forward after a missed swing, driving his fist into Ramsay’s stomach hard enough the bastard tasted bile and blood as the air was forced from his lungs. Curling to the ground, Ramsay looked up to the gate and saw the North watching him.

Sansa Stark sat atop a horse with Rickon Stark in front of her. Brienne and her fireguard surrounded her, Alys Karstark, Lyanna Mormont, the Manderly sisters and Barbrey Dustin, who wore a vicious grin when she saw Ramsay doubled over in pain.

Jon looked back and saw a familiar face among those who stormed the gate with him and Tormund. “Willam,” Jon called out, turning his gaze to Ramsay and drawing Longclaw, “fetch me
A pair of men rushed forward, gripping Ramsay as he struggled while Willam rushed to find an uncut log and bring it back into the courtyard as the lords gathered around and men filled the walls. Willam set it on the ground, backing away as a wildling and Ryswell man forced Ramsay onto his knees with his neck over the log.

“Any last words?” asked Jon.

Ramsay looked up at him, his lips curving into a grin. “You’re just like me. A lord raised a bastard. Abandoned and ignored even though we’re better than the rest. You’re no different than I am, you’re just on the winning side this time, bastard.”

He laughed, keeping his smile and locking his eyes on Jon.

“In the name of the North, for your countless crimes, I sentence you to die.” Jon stared into Ramsay’s eyes as he brought the sword down, severing his neck.

They watched as Ramsay’s body twitched one last time, his head rolling in dirt soaked by his own blood.

None looked away.

Finally catching his breath, Jon gripped his scabbard and sheathed Longclaw. The others watched in silence as Jon walked to where Rickon and Sansa stood. He looked both over before giving a firm nod. “Lady Stark, Lord Stark. Winterfell is yours.”
Rickon had wrapped his arms around Jon, who had an arm around him while Ramsay’s body and head were taken away. Sansa fought off tears, sharing a smile with Jon before he looked down to rub Rickon’s back. After a few moments Rickon pulled himself away from Jon, sniffling and wiping his nose, backing toward Sansa, who held his shoulders.

“Lord Jon,” a man called out to him, drawing the attention of the yard.

Sansa gasped as she watched a soldier step into the courtyard with a gaunt, broken Theon Greyjoy. The soldier held Theon with an arm around his shoulder to keep him from collapsing as Theon’s feet dragged behind him. He was conscious, staring at Jon, Rickon and Sansa, but frozen in terror so severe he couldn’t make himself move.

“Theon?” Sansa asked in disbelief, anger laced in her voice. Rickon sneered at him while Jon’s glare was relatively less severe.

“Theon died,” he said weekly, dragged before them but unable to meet their eyes. “I’m Reek.”

“Reek?” Jon asked.

“Poor fool,” Barbrey Dustin said coming to a stop beside the Starks, looking Theon over. “I can’t believe he made another one of you.”

“Another one?” asked Sansa.

“Roose had this awful soldier who stunk endlessly, so he gave him to Ramsay’s mother to help raise him. Bethany, my sister, said him and the man they called Reek were inseparable, training together and going on their hunts together… He was dead a month after Ramsay poisoned Domeric.” The often bitter Lady Dustin seemed to pity Theon. “He’s tried making others, but they always just killed themselves or went mad, if they even made it through the dungeons.”

Jon looked from her to Theon, his jaw shifting as he looked to the men holding him. “Lock him in a cell,” he ordered before looking to Sansa. “We’ll decide what to do with him tomorrow.”

She nodded, watching as Theon quietly followed the soldier toward a cell.

“We need to gather the bodies and burn them,” Jon told the lords and captains gathered around them. “Strip what we can, keep anything useful. Armor, clothes, anything…” When he noticed a few of them looking confused, he clarified, “We’ll need to the arm the Free Folk and resupply ourselves before our next fight, and the rest can go to the Wall. We can’t waste supplies just because they belonged to the enemy.”
“Our next fight?” asked Daryn Hornwood.

“The Night King is still coming. I’d rather us be ready when he does.”

The yard began to empty, the men returning to the field to help gather the dead while the lords prepared letters.

Maester Wolkan collapsed into a chair when he saw Jon Snow enter his room. “Oh thank the gods,” Wolkan sighed. Looking to Jon he asked, “I pray he’s dead?” Once he nodded, Wolkan rose and hurried over to grasp Jon’s hand. “Thank you, my lord. Thank you.”

“I take it you’re not loyal to the Boltons?”

“As loyal as a frightened man can be,” Wolkan frowned.

Jon nodded, wondering just how many Bolton men died on the field out of fear for what might happen if they turned and Ramsay won. Looking around the room, Jon asked, “Have you maintained the rookery? We’ll need ravens.”

Wolkan smiled weakly. “I have, my lord. I am at your command.”

A dozen ravens left Winterfell while piles of bodies burned in the Wolf’s Field and their camp was moved to the fields around Winterfell. Bolton banners fell and Stark ones raised, men came to and from, clearing out as much as they could from the Boltons.

“What should we do with the Dreadfort?” Davos asked as they gathered, watching men ignite the pile of Bolton banners.

“Burn it,” spat Barbrey Dustin.

“We can’t afford to lose it,” said Jon. “We could clear it out, leave it for someone else to take once things have settled.”

Exchanging looks with the other lords, Lady Dustin turned to Jon. “It should be yours.”

“What?” Jon furrowed his brow. “I can’t.”


Barbrey looked from her father to Jon, nodding in agreement. “Besides, it’d make him even angrier if he knew you took claim of the home he always wanted.”

Jon glanced at Davos, who gave him an encouraging smile. With a sigh he looked to the lords and nodded. “We can make a final decision once we’ve all gathered, but I thank you all for the offer.”

They all ate whenever they could, too busy to gather everyone at once. Sansa finally managed to get Rickon to stop wearing Jon’s sallet when she saw him struggling to stay awake and took him to their old rooms. Ghost had been following them after cleaning himself somehow and Rickon called for him to join them on her bed. Watching him clutch Ghost’s paw, she knew he’d have to live with the same little hole in his heart she had since Lady died, but at least they’d have each other.

XOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXO

She woke when dawn came, but Rickon stirred only after she slipped out of bed and Ghost turned over. After a moment he shot up with a gasp, looking around panicked before settling on Sansa and
nearly falling over Ghost as he climbed out of bed and hurried to her. “Sansa!”

Wrapping her arms around him, Sansa rubbed his back. “Shh, shh, shh. It’s okay, sweetling. You’re safe now.”

“I thought it was a dream,” he sniffed, leaning his head back to look at her. “Jon’s really here too?”

“He is,” Sansa nodded, brushing her fingers through his hair. “Do you want to find him?”

Rickon nodded furiously, clutching her hand as Ghost followed them out of the room. Walking toward the courtyard they noticed the maester, who turned to them and bowed his head with a smile. Spotting Ghost, he looked worried, but steeled himself.

“My lady,” Wolkan said with a nod.

“Maester,” she nodded, still unsure his name.

“Wolkan, my lady,” he smiled kindly.

Sansa nodded. “Thank you. Do you know where Jon Snow slept?”

Wolkan frowned. “I don’t believe he has, my lady, but last I saw him he was on the western wall.”

Sansa squeezed Rickon’s shoulder, biting back questions about why Jon hadn’t slept. “Thank you.”

“Pardon, my lady,” he said hesitantly, holding out a small rolled scroll. “I just received this for him. It seems it was delivered to White Harbor, and they sent it here with our returning raven.” When she took the letter he added, “I thought you should know, there was also a white raven from the Citadel.”

Rickon perked up, looking to Sansa with a solemn smile. “Winter, right?”

Sansa nodded. “Thank you, Maester Wolkan.”

“My lady,” he bowed and left her to continue toward the courtyard.

Sansa and Rickon found Jon looking onto the fields where Melisandre watched over mounds of burning corpses. Hearing them, he turned and flashed a quick smile. Rickon dashed over to Jon, who turned and moved his arms to accept the incoming hug. After a few firm pats on the back, Rickon stepped away while Sansa stood a meter away and turned to watch Melisandre. Rickon looked from one to the other before looking to the fires.

“I’m having the Lord’s chamber prepared for you,” he said with a glance toward Sansa.

“Mother and father’s room?” asked Sansa.

“And Robb’s old room for you,” he said with a smile to Rickon.

“You should take the lord’s chamber.”

“I’m not a Stark,” Jon said with a shrug.

Sansa looked to him while Rickon turned shaking his head. “You are to me!”

Jon gave Rickon a thankful smile, then turned to Sansa. “You’re the Lady of Winterfell for now. You deserve it. We’re standing here because of you. They may have followed me on the field, but
they never would have met me if you weren’t at my side.”

Sansa rolled the letter in her fingers, holding him up to him. “This came for you. It was sent to White Harbor first but arrived this morning alongside a raven from the Citadel. A white raven.” She smiled solemnly. “Winter is here.”

Jon laughed, taking the offered letter. “Well, father always promised, didn’t he?”

Sansa smiled from memories of her father as much as in relief hearing Jon refer to him as that.

Watching him unroll the letter she slid her arms around Rickon’s shoulders, smiling at the crown of his head as she hugged him from behind. He leaned his head back, holding her forearms since he couldn’t return the hug fully.

“He found it,” Jon said looking to Sansa, pulling their eyes to him.

“Who found what?” asked Sansa.

A flash of guilt came to Jon’s face, remembering he’d never told Sansa or anyone else what he’d done. “I sent a raven to Sam at the Citadel and asked him to look for proof. He couldn’t find anything about dragonglass or valyrian steel yet because it’s all locked away, but the High Septon’s records aren’t so he went through them all and found it.” Jon looked at the letter and laughed. “I’ll need to send someone to retrieve it.”

Rickon looked up, confused as Sansa slipped her arms from him. “What are you talking about?”

Both looked to Rickon, their smiles fading. “Rickon…”

“Rickon,” Jon said firmly, placing a hand on his shoulder. “I found out who my mother was.”

“She was different from mine, right? I forgot why everyone treated you differently, but Osha told me it was because you had a different mother.”

Jon nodded. “She was. But it turns out father lied to us about me.”

Rickon frowned. “Father lied?”

“To protect me from someone who wanted to kill me when I was baby,” Jon added quickly.

“Why would they want to kill you?”

“Because of who my father really was.”

“You remember when you were little and mother and I would tell you stories about the Targaryens, the dragon knights and old kings?” Sansa asked with a smile while Rickon nodded. “His father wasn’t the same as ours. He was a Targaryen.”

Rickon looked heartbroken as he looked between them. “Jon’s not our family?”

“He is,” she quickly assured, “just not our brother. His mother was our father’s sister, Lyanna. So he’s not our brother but he’s still our cousin by blood.”

Rickon looked from Sansa to Jon. “And you want proof of that?”

Jon nodded. “I need it to help us.”
Rickon looked to the floor. “I’d rather you be my brother.”

Sansa clenched her hand hearing his heart broken voice, watching Jon quickly kneel and place a hand on Rickon’s shoulder to make him look at Jon. “I’d gladly be your brother by choice. Whoever gave birth to me, I was still raised by your father, and I’d still be your brother if you’ll have me.”

A smile stretched across Rickon’s face as he shifted and gave a large nod. “You promise?”

“I promise.”

XOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXO

Reek sat in a cell staring at the wall until he heard the doors open and quiet voices speaking with the guard. A moment later a familiar man and woman stood by the bars looking in on him, but he couldn’t bring himself to look their way.

“Theon.”

Reek stilled, digging his fingers into his legs hard enough that they might have hurt, if he could still feel it. If it wasn’t barely existent when compared to the things the Master had made him feel.

The man sighed. “Reek.”

He turned and saw Jon Snow and Sansa Stark watching him. He heard them say Jon Snow had killed his master. Did that make him Reek’s master now? Not wanting to risk upsetting his potential master, Reek got to his feet and hurried closer, standing with his head lowered, unable to stop himself from trembling.

“Yes, my lord?”

“Obviously, we know you didn’t kill Bran and Rickon.” Again Reek froze at Jon Snow’s words. “You betrayed Robb and killed everyone loyal to him at Winterfell. You still killed two boys.”

Sansa saw the trembling man who had once been her brother’s crude, foolish friend. “What did he do to you?”

When he remained silent, his shoulder slumping forward, Jon slammed a hand into the bars. “Tell us!”

His demanding yell made Reek wince, so he told. He told them of everything he did to them. Every hope stolen from him. Every piece of him peeled and cut away. Tearing him piece from piece until Theon Greyjoy was gone and Reek remained.

Jon kept a stern face as Reek spoke, but Sansa went from holding a hand over her mouth in surprise to gripping Jon’s wrist.

“When you were on the field,” Jon said once Reek had stopped speaking, “I saw what you did. What you tried to do.”

Reek turned his head, ashamed that he’d dared to hurt his master. He closed his eyes awaiting his new masters’ demand he should die.

“I died at Castle Black,” Jon said firmly, making Reek look up in shock. “I died and I saw nothing. Endless nothing. I’m sure what you went through was painful… but you should be thankful for it.
Because it means you’re still alive. You can spend the rest of your life trying to make up for it, even if you never can.”

Reek’s eyes burned with tears that sank across his cheeks as he watched Jon place a key into the cell lock, opening it but leaving the door closed.

“I can’t forgive everything you’ve done, but if you promise to do what’s right, to protect the family that raised you, then I’ll forgive what I can.”

Reek’s eyes shifted to Sansa, who gave him a nod that made it clear she agreed with him.

At that, Theon sobbed.

Chapter End Notes

The first section of this chapter was originally the second half of one with the Winterfell section of the Battle of the Bastards. It's not as smooth a combination as I'd like, but I think it was worth it to keep the battle as one chapter and it gets the job done for now.
King of the North

Chapter Summary

The northern lords gather in Winterfell.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

On the fourth day in Winterfell Jon, Sansa and Rickon sat at the high table while lords filled the great hall. He’d hoped fighting together would unite them, but he’d forgotten about those who hadn’t.

“You can’t expect us to sit aside and let wildling invaders take our lands,” groused Robett Glover.

“We didn’t invade,” Tormund said from his seat beside the window. “We were invited.”

“And now we have to open up our homes to you? Raiders and murderers?”

“And should we open up our homes to you, Lord Glover?” asked Barbrey Dustin. “I’d welcome Tormund and his wildlings to Barrowton gladly. I can’t say I’d do the same for those who’d rather hide in their homes then fight when it matters.”

Glover shot her a glare at her until Cley Cerwyn got to his feet. “The Boltons are defeated,” he said looking from Glover taking his seat to the others. “The war is over. Winter has come! If the maesters are right it’ll be the coldest one in a thousand years. We should ride home and wait out the coming storms.”

“The war is not over,” Jon said rising from his chair. “And I promise you friend, the true enemy won’t wait out the storm. He brings the storm.”

Cerwyn sank back to his seat as the others started murmuring. Jon looked around the room before glancing at Sansa, who frowned and gave him a small nod. Pressing his hands into the wood, Jon turned to them.

“The Free Folk, the Northerners, and the Knights of the Vale fought bravely, fought together, and we won. None of us could have done that on our own.” He took a breath, standing straight. “Eddard Stark used to say we find out true friends on the battlefield. I think it’s time we all trust each other. To help that… I think it best you all know a truth. One I only learned of in White Harbor, and held because I thought if I died it wouldn’t matter. But it could be of use, so I need you all to hear it.”

The lords fell quiet, concerned confusion coloring their faces as they looked to Jon.

“I’m sure you’ve all heard the stories of Eddard Stark riding off with men to retrieve his sister from Dorne, only to return with her bones. Heard the whispers of him killing Arthur Dayne and the Kingsguard to reach her.” His eyes scanned the crowd, seeing the recognition in their faces. “I’ve no doubt you’ve all heard of it, but I know none have heard all of what happened there, not from the lips of the men who survived. Promises kept them silent. Promises that ended with Eddard Stark’s death.”
All eyes turned to Howland Reed as Jon looked to him, answering Howland’s questioning look with a nod. Rising to his feet, Howland approached the high table and turned to face the lords.

“I rode that day with Ned, Willam Dustin, Ethan Glover, Theo Wull, Mark Ryswell and Martyn Cassel. We found the Kingsguard waiting for us and I was the first to fall that day,” Howland said with a sigh. “I thought I’d die slowly, watching as they carved through each man until only Ned and Arthur Dayne remained. Ned… he was well trained, but Dayne was better. He’d have killed him, but I managed to come up from behind and push a dagger through Dayne’s throat.”

That garnered murmurs and gasps.

“Ned picked up Dayne’s sword, Dawn, and ended his suffering before heading into the Tower of Joy. I followed behind slowly and saw it was mostly abandoned. The only people there had been the kingsguard, maids and Lyanna. It was one of the maids who told us Lyanna was never stolen by Rhaegar. She ran to him a girl in love and married him without anyone knowing.”

That caused a few outraged yells, but Howland continued.

“The kingsguard weren’t guarding a prisoner! They were guarding their prince’s wife… and their future king!”

The growing murmurs fell silent as the lords gasped.

“Lyanna named him Aegon Targaryen, but asked Ned to keep him safe, fearing Robert and the Lannisters would kill him just as they had Rhaegar’s other children. So Ned swore us to secrecy, called the boy Jon and raised his sister’s only child as his own, claiming him a bastard.”

Howland looked to Jon, who rose again, giving him a thankful nod, letting him return to his seat before looking out to the lords gaping at him. “I considered hiding this, but after all we’ve been through and knowing what’s to come I know I can’t. I’ve had word there is proof of the wedding, and if possible I’d like to send riders to retrieve it all. Once I do, I’ll send word out to every other kingdom and beg them to come to our aide to help us fight the war to come.”

“What war?” Robett Glover asked shaking his head.

“The Long Night,” said Jon, sending a chill through the hall. “Ask any of the free folk and they’ll tell you about the White Walkers and their wight army. I was there, beyond the wall at Hardhome when the Night King and his wights arrived, slaughtering thousands and raising them as his thralls. He and all his dead will march on the wall, and when he does he’ll find me and anyone I can find willing to fight for the living ready to meet him.”

Sinking to his chair Jon said with relenting resolve, “I’ll claim for the throne if it means a chance for more men to join me in stopping the Long Night so that when dawn comes again, the North still stands.”

The room was silent, somber as they heard his sincerity, saw the truth in him. When no one spoke, Lyanna Mormont rose to her feet and looked to Robett Glover.

“You swore allegiance to House Stark, Lord Glover, but in their hour of greatest need you refused the call.” She turned to Cley Cerwyn. “And you, Lord Cerwyn, your father was skinned alive by Ramsay Bolton, still, you refused the call.”

Cley lowered his head in shame while others watched Lyanna Mormont with amusement.

don’t care who sired or birthed him, Ned Stark raised him and Stark blood runs through his veins.”
Lyanna looked to Jon, declaring, “Whether he rules at Winterfell or the Iron Throne, he is of the
north and he’s my king. From this day until his last day.”

Wyman Manderly rose from his seat. “My son died for Robb Stark, the Young Wolf. I didn’t think
we’d find another king in my life time… but Jon Snow saved my granddaughter from suffering a
Frey husband forced upon her by the Lannisters. He freed White Harbor, and gave us a chance to
help reclaim our honor along with the North.” Wyman looked to the others, pointing to Jon sat at
the high table. “Jon Snow avenged the Red Wedding! He is the White Wolf!” Wyman drew his
sword and knelt. “The King of the North!”

Alys Karstark rose from her place beside the Manderly sisters, turning to face Jon. “I thought I’d
die here, I’d wished every day Ramsay would kill me. I knew my father regretted it, wanted to help
me get away, but we couldn’t risk Ramsay slaughtering a thousand men and their families to free
me.” She trembled as she spoke, clutching her skirt with white knuckles. “I thought it would never end… but Jon Snow kept his word to my father. He could have let me suffer for my father's crimes,
but he brought an army, let me feel safe for the first time since my wedding night. He gave me
back my life, but I will gladly give it for him.” She drew her sword, kneeling beside Wyman.

Barbrey Dustin rose from her seat. “Jon Snow could have run when he left the Night’s Watch. He
could have fled to Essos or Dorne to spent the rest of his life warm. Instead he came to Barrowton
with a growing army and promised me a chance at vengeance for the murder of a boy I loved like
my own son. He swore to see a home returned to it’s family, and see justice done to those who
ruled over us with fear. Jon Snow or Aegon Targaryen, his name doesn’t matter. I, House Dustin
and every northern house now free from living in terror of Bolton rule will forever be indebted to
him.” She knelt and looked to Jon with what may have been her first warm, pure smile in years.

Robett Glover rose to look at Jon. “I did not fight beside you on the field, and I will regret that until
my dying day. A man can only admit to when he was wrong,” he said shakily, “and ask
forgiveness.”

Cley Cerwyn and the others looked to Jon, who gave a slight shake of his head. “There’s nothing to
forgive, my lord.”

Robett took a shaky breath, relief washing over him as he looked around the room. “There will be
more fights to come. House Glover will stand behind House Stark as we have for a thousand
years!” The others murmured as he turned to Jon. “And I will stand behind Aegon Targaryen.” He
drew his sword and raised in the air, “The King of the North!”

He took a knee alongside Wyman before another yelled, “The King of the North!”

The lords all rose, drawing their swords and chanting, “The King of the North!”

Jon glanced to Sansa, who smiled to him, proud for and of him. Jon had earned this, he would
prove himself worthy. She knew it.

While Jon felt a swell of pride at their cheers, he also felt the pressure weighing on him, adding to
everything that had already been there. Still he steeled himself, rising from his seat as the men
quieted.

“I’ll need riders. Men we can trust as much as they can move quickly and quietly. They’ll head to
Old Town and retrieve whatever proof found at the Citadel. Once they return I’ll send word for
any loyal to House Targaryen or smart enough to abandon a queen who murdered hundreds with
wildfire.”
Pressing his fist into the table, he took a breath. “I’ll also need men to go beyond the wall.” The lords exchanged looks, confused and afraid. “I’m sure some of you still doubt what I’ve said about the Night King. Imagine what the southron lords will think?

“Lord Commander Eddison Tollett has sent our rangers to track the wights. If he hasn’t already, we’ve planned to capture one or more. I’ll need men to help capture them and bring them back so any who doubt the war to come can see for themselves what we’ll face. I think it would be best if the free folk helped along with at least one man from every house. Let this be another chance for us to stand together.”

Once it was decided they would meet again with their suggestions for riders north and south the lords began exiting the great hall. Jon sank back in his chair, letting out a sigh.

“Does this mean you’re king now?” asked Rickon.

Jon snickered. “I think it does, little brother.” He turned to him with a teasing grin. “Which makes you a prince.”

“It does?” Rickon asked with a blink. “What does that make Sansa? A princess or a queen?”

Both shifted as Jon asked, “What?”

“Well she’s older than me, right? Aren't adult royalty kings and queens?”

His genuine confusion eased their concerns. “If anything it would make me a princess,” said Sansa.

“And she’s still Lady of Winterfell,” Jon clarified. “At least until you’re ready to be lord.”

“You’re not Lord of Winterfell? Even though you’re king?” When Jon nodded, Rickon asked, “Does that mean you don’t have a home?” Rickon looked to Sansa. “He can stay here, can’t he?”

Sansa chuckled, smiling. “Of course he can, sweetling. He can stay as long as he likes. We can’t leave our king homeless.”

Jon glanced back at her, a teasing look shaping his gaze as he turned to Rickon. “I think I do have a home, actually. After we took Winterfell some of the lords suggested I claim the Dreadfort since I killed Ramsay. I suppose I could always go there.”

“You’re going to leave?” Rickon asked, eyes wide with fear.

Jon winced, having intended it to tease Sansa, not Rickon. “No,” he said reaching out to squeeze his brother’s hand. “Not for a while. Not until I have to.” Seeing the boy calm, Jon sat back, looking between him and Sansa. “For now I’m home.”

Chapter End Notes

Reused King of the North, but I like the small change having a large difference in meaning, since Jon isn't just King in the North, but is a King of the North.

I know this is about where the show ended season six, but I’m going to extend it a bit before I go into season seven stuff, try to do a few things and close off with the end for my season six I guess. Should be around chapter 18, then I want to have two chapters
away from Winterfell as a kind of interlude before returning to start season seven stuff.
Chapter Summary

Riders arrive at Castle Black and Oldtown. Jon finds council after a conversation with Sansa.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“Open the gates!”

Lord Commander Tullet made his way to the courtyard where he found Tormund leading a group of thirty men from various northern houses and some free folk.

Greeting the red haired wildling, Edd smirked. “I guess it went well?”

“You kneelers have a new king,” Tormund said with a shrug.

Edd's face fell. “It’s true then? Jon’s king?”

“As much as a man with a fake name can be,” Tormund laughed. Seeing Edd’s confusion, Tormund clarified. “His mother named him Aegon Targaryen, though he still wants to be called Jon.”

“Targaryen?” Half the yard broke into whispers as the rest were left silent in shock.

“Said his father Rhaegar stole his mother Lyanna from Winterfell, married her in some southron ceremony and she died giving birth.”

“He was a fucking prince the entire time?” asked a brother.

Tormund shrugged as some of the northern men snickered, glad their own shock wasn’t misplaced. “Not like he knew. Man who raised him lied to stop him being murdered by some cunts killed his brother and sister when they were babes.”

There was a moment of silence before they started to snicker and laugh. “Of course Snow would be a fucking prince.”

“Pretty enough to be one for sure.”

“That cunt gets all the luck, I swear it.”

“First his wildling wife, and then that other redhead-”

“That was his sister.”

“Cousin now.”

A brother scoffed. “Sister or cousin. I wouldn’t care. Not if she looked like that.”
And now he’s a fucking king.” Another brother laughed, looking to Tormund and the men with him. “At least the prick didn’t forget us.”

Edd shook his head. “Jon wouldn’t do that.”

“Aye, he hasn’t,” said Tormund. “Said you sent some men out to scout for wights?”

“They came back three days ago,” Edd nodded, motioning to the barracks. “They saw them heading east, but if we hurry we could catch their rear.”

Tormund grinned. “Always enjoy takin’ ‘em from behind.”

Brienne couldn’t help be awed when she first saw the Citadel stretching above Oldtown. It reminded her of the Wall in a way, not only for it’s height but because it felt almost otherworldly. It seemed impossible to think the city around it could be anything but normal, and yet she found it wasn’t too far from the others she’d visited, only untouched by war.

Though she’d met him only briefly before his departure from the Wall, she felt a small relief upon seeing Sam.

“It’s hard to believe,” he said with a laugh as he handed her a satchel filled with copies of everything he could find supporting Jon’s heritage.

“I can’t believe I never bowed to him,” Gilly fretted.

“He wouldn’t want you to,” Sam assured. After a moment he looked to Brienne, worried. “Would he?”

“He seems uncomfortable whenever someone does,” Brienne said with a smile. “They call him King Jon rather than Aegon. I’m sure he’d prefer you think of him as you knew him.”

“I can’t imagine how awful he must have felt when he found out.” Sam’s frown turned with a laugh. “If anyone could feel bad about finding out he’s king it would be Jon.”

Sansa asked standing with Jon on a walkway looking over the courtyard as Theon walked with his head down, carrying a bucket. “I know what he went through is awful, but… How do we know we can trust him?”

“We don’t. No more than we know we can trust anyone else here. But I saw him try at the end, so I’m sure there’s some part of him that cares for us in his own way. I’m sure he just wants to feel safe, same as any of us, but hopefully whatever regret he may feel will keep him loyal. He grew up wanting to be a Stark and was raised one in all but name, it’ll keep him loyal.” Jon leaned against the railing with a sigh. “I know I would be.”

His tone made Sansa turn to him, frowning. “You’re nothing like him.”

Jon shook his head. “Aren’t I? Theon was a hostage as a ward, and I was a bastard out of fear for a man father called his friend coming to smash my head against a wall and murder the rest of you. We were both raised by the same man but never part of his family, no matter how much we wanted it. I could’ve become everything your mother feared and ended up like him or Ramsay.”
“Jon,” she said firmly, grabbing his shoulder and turning him to look at her. “You are not Ramsay. You’re nothing like him, or Theon, or anyone else.” She sighed. “I can’t take back what happened before, but I promise I’ll do everything I can to make sure you know you’re always a Stark.”

Lost in her azure eyes for a moment, his lips quirked into a smirk as he said, “Hopefully not too much. I’d rather not have them think us Lannisters.”

After a second of confusion a teasing grin took her lips. “You are a Targaryen. I doubt they’d be surprised.”

“And yet it was the Lady of Winterfell who demanded I have a room closer to her.”

“I can’t let the king of Westeros sleep in the room of a bastard,” she said letting her hand slip from his arm. “I don’t want the lords thinking poorly of me.”

Jon took a step forward, letting his hand slid across the railing, stopping at the beam that must have seemed to separate them. “And what would they think if they knew you came to your king’s solar every night and never leave without a kiss.”

Sansa felt heat stretching through her, coloring her cheeks. “I’m sure many ladies would be envious.”

“As would many lords if they knew how much I enjoyed you lips. How much I’d like to let my lips taste every inch of you.”

Her throat shifted as she took a breath, fighting her flush before playfully glaring at him. “Maybe you are a bastard. Only a bastard could be such an awful tease.”

Jon chuckled. “I’m no tease, my lady. I’m a king raised by an honorable man.” His right hand shifted forward just enough that when her left matched it he could stretch his finger out to touch the back of her hand. “All you need do is ask and I’ll prove myself a man of my word.”

Sansa bit her lip, turning her head, his gaze unbearable. The swirling heat in her stomach grew as she thought of what he might do, but it shrank as she thought of what would come after that. She could see the frays of the dream she was living, the silver edge of duty coming to sever the thread holding them together.

“And then what?” she sighed. Sansa frowned as she stepped back. “What are we doing, Jon?”

“Being happy,” he said confused by the shift in mood.

“For now maybe, but what about a when all of this is settled? What happens when Cersei and the Night King are dead? What happens when you’re on the Iron Throne? I can’t… You’ll have the North’s allegiance, but what about the south? If Margaery lived then the Tyrells would try and sell her to you. Dorne will want you to marry some princess and I’ll probably end up sent to live in the Reach while Rickon takes over Winterfell.”

“Sansa,” he said stepping forward. “I won’t let that happen.”

“You may be king,” she said moving her hand away when he tried to take it, “but I know you, Jon, and I know you’ll do what’s best for the realm. You’ll need to do this to assure alliances.”

It hurt watching his eyes darken, shifting to the cold mask he wore when he didn’t want to let his emotions show. Something she so rarely saw when it was just them. It left her feeling cold and alone.
“You’re right. It would help assure alliances,” he stepped toward her and she suddenly felt small, anger and sorrow leaking through the ice of his eyes, “but don’t say you know me and then prove you don’t.”

Sansa was left blinking as he walked past her, throwing open a door that swung shut as he stormed down a corridor. She pressed a hand to her stomach as it twisted, leaving her nauseous, disgusted with herself while fighting back tears.

This would be easier, wouldn’t it?

XOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXO

Even as snow fell Melisandre stood atop the walls of Winterfell in one of her many red gowns, content that for once she’d been right. After every time she’d been proven wrong in her reading of the flames, it was a relief to feel sure again.

That relief grew as she heard the crunch of snow beneath boots, drawing her eyes to Jon as he walked along the walls after sunset. “You grace,” she said with a smile.

“Lady Melisandre,” he said with a nod, coming to a stop beside her. “I hope I’m not interrupting?”

“Only my content thoughts,” she said turning to him. “I’m glad you’ve kept me in your service despite Davos surely telling you to beware my influence.”

Jon nodded. “He did say something like that. I think he forgets I saw what Stannis was before the end.”

Melisandre’s smile faltered. “I fear my mistakes led to that.”

“Your mistakes?”

“The Lord of Light shows me what he can, but it is up to me to determine what he means. It’s not as simple as him whispering in my ear or showing me you sat atop a throne. He shows me snow when I ask for a savior or dragons when I asked for salvation.”

“I don’t think I can offer you salvation,” Jon said with a laugh before giving her a once over and nodding toward her, “but I could give you a cloak. Though I assume your Lord’s flame still keeps you warm?”

“It does, your grace, but I thank you for the offer.” She looked past him for a moment before tilting her chin slightly. “May I ask, your grace, why you’re walking the walls rather than relaxing in your chambers?”

The humor left his face as he sighed, pulling his cloak around him and turning to the darkened fields. “I felt the cold air would ease my mind.”

Melisandre tilted her head to look at his face. “I’d offer to bear the burden of your thoughts if it would ease it as well.”

Jon glanced at her, his arms crossing as he took a breath. “Growing up there was a part of me that assumed being in charge meant you were the most free, but it seems like every day another chain wraps around me, forcing me to do as others please.”

Melisandre’s brow arched before a smirk took her lips. “Surely it’s not your assumptions as a child that leave you uneased?”
He shook his head. “It’s the chains. It feels wrong to just give up what I want so easily, even if it’s
what others may want. I know I have to be responsible for the whole realm, or at least the North for
now. They’re accepting me as their king, I can’t ignore their needs for my own.”

He turned to face her when she took a step toward him, smiling. “Do you know why it’s said
king’s blood has power? Because a true king, one born to it and deserving, is rare. They aren’t cruel
or crazed or craven. They’re kings because they’re fair, intelligent, kind and brave, with an
unstoppable will that means nothing can keep them from their throne. If you desire something and
you know it, you won’t let anything hold you from it. I have no doubt you’ll be able to endure
whatever comes after.”

Jon nodded, his jaw shifting slightly before he asked, “And if what I desire won’t be had?”

Melisandre’s lips curled into a grin, a knowing glint in her eyes. “I would say a king could always
take what he pleased, but I know you’re not that kind of man. Instead I’d say few would deny a
king’s will. Fewer would deny a king when he is what they want. Even if they think it their duty to
ignore it for her family.”

Jon’s lips flickered with a smirk. “You see that in your flames?”

A laugh rose from her throat. “No, I saw it every time we sup or break fast, every time I see you
walk through the yard, even as we marched to war. I dare not ask the lord what I already know
when there is so much else I could learn.”

With a sigh Jon nodded. “I fear I have much to learn sometimes.”

Melisandre smirked as Jon turned to leave. “It seems you know something after all, Jon Snow.”

Chapter End Notes

There’s a small time jump here, but it’s skipping mostly them starting repairs at
Winterfell and getting things in order. Nothing major, and no big advancements in the
relationship of Jon and Sansa beyond kisses after they meet at night to discuss business
of the North.

For any curious I figure the battle happened after Sam got to Oldtown and Cersei blew
up the sept, but before Arya reached Westeros. She hasn’t moved on Walder or the
Freys yet.

I’m sure some will think this sudden pointless drama, but I think it makes sense with
the characters and has narrative purpose beyond angst for angst sake, building toward
the end of part one before any season seven stuff starts.
“Come on,” Laul said dragging Sansa through the halls by her hand. “Let me at least give you a proper lesson for once. Let them see you training with the rest of us. It’s only right now you’re letting your girls train as well.”

“That was Jon’s decision,” she said with a frown. He hadn’t consulted her on that, or anything else lately.

“And it was one of his best yet,” Rila said with a grin. “Smarter than any kneeler before him if he’s the first to think of it.”

Sansa laughed. “I doubt he’s the first to think of it. Just the first to make it known he expects it.”

Making their way to the training yard she heard the clang of steel and saw a small crowd gathered. Her stomach twisted, not surprised that when they moved around to find Jon with a blunted sword in hand. He held up his shield to block blows from Rickon swinging his own blunted sword at Jon with a grunt for every thrust and slash.

“Come on, lower. Don’t go where I am, go where you want me to go, where I’m open.”

Rickon groaned when Jon brought his shield forward, knocking Rickon’s sword back. “You don’t have openings!”

Jon laughed. “You know that’s a lie, but if you don’t think I do then make them. Force one for yourself.”

She watched Rickon throw his shield aside, gripping his sword with two hands and putting more power into each strike. He barely got his third out before Jon lightly thrust his foot into Rickon’s stomach, making him stumble back.

“If you’re going to fight two handed you can’t be angry. Without a shield you need to be twice as careful, twice as sharp. Everything you do has to be offense and defense.”

“You’re never angry in a fight?” Rickon asked wiping away the few bits of mud Jon got on his jerkin.

Sansa noticed him glance toward two free folk girls stood watching, two girls Jon told her were the daughters of a free folk chieftess who died at Hardhome. They’d come with Tormund, who seemed to care for them, leaving them at Winterfell with Jon. The sisters stood with some of the younger residents of Winterfell, including Lyanna Mormont who arched her brow, her gaze more on Jon while the elder free folk girl flashed Rickon a brief smile.
Jon chuckled. “I’m always angry during a fight. I just control it. Angry men are dumb men more often then not, but if you control it then you can use it. Let it make you stronger, push you through pain and exhaustion.” Seeing Rickon's frustration, Jon walked over to squeezed the boy’s shoulder, leaning in slightly. “You can do this. It just takes time, but keep it up and people will fear you with a sword more than they do Ghost. Though he looks ridiculous with a sword.”

Rickon laughed, as did half the crowd while Jon backed away and waved for him to attack.

Watching him twist and shift to block Rickon’s attacks, Laul let out an appreciative, “Mmm.”

“He isn’t too bad for a kneeler,” Rila said, grinning as she continued, “wouldn’t mind showing him how I look kneeling.”

Sansa gasped. “Rila!”

Laul nodded. “I’d rather see him kneel.”

“Hopefully his last wife trained him well,” said Rila.

Sansa turned to her. “What? His last wife?”

Rila nodded. “Back when he was a crown he took a free woman, shared skins with her. Tormund talked about it. He was a green boy until Ygritte got to him.”

Jon caught Rickon’s sword on his shield, but Rickon thrust his shield to Jon’s stomach, making him take a step back to avoid it. That was when Rickon dashed forward, letting his sword slide up Jon’s shield, set to slam into Jon’s cheek if he hadn’t moved his head at the last moment.

The onlookers gasped but Jon laughed, reaching over to smack Rickon’s shoulder with his sword. “Good!”

Rickon’s eyes flickered toward the crowd, where he spotted Sansa and grinned, standing straight and waving at her. Sansa offered a small wave in return, but when Jon turned to look at her Sansa’s smile fell.

“Maybe we can train tomorrow,” she said heading back inside, leaving Laul and Rila to share confused looks.

XOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXO

When Brienne and her group returned to Winterfell Sansa was among those gathered to greet them. While many were surely interested in the proof her band carried, Sansa was equally pleased to see her companions north return safely.

“Lady Sansa,” she said with a bow.

“You’ve been missed, Brienne,” Sansa said with a smile.

It always made Sansa sad to see such a simple thing make Brienne smile as though she’d never experienced it before, unsure how to respond. “You as well, my lady.”

With a kindly smile, Sansa looked to the satchel hanging on Brienne’s hip. “Is that it?”

Brienne placed a hand over it and nodded. “Samwell said this was everything he could find, though from the size of the Citadel I wouldn’t be surprised if there’s more somewhere in there.”
“I’m sure it will be enough.”

Brienne nodded, looking through the crowd. “His grace?”

“Busy, I imagine,” she said. Staying away so I can greet you without feeling uncomfortable around him, Sansa thought. “He should be in his solar. I’m sure he’d welcome your return there.”

“Then I will be on my way to him,” Brienne said with a nod, making her way inside as Sansa welcomed Podrick back.

Knocking on his door Brienne entered when he called to her and found him turning in the chair as his desk. A brief smile took his lips. “Welcome back, Brienne.”

“Thank you, your grace.”

“How was your journey?” He asked rising from his chair. “Not too hard, I hope?”

“Of course not,” she said shaking her head. “It was brisk, but the Citadel is nearly as awe inspiring as the Wall.”

Jon smirked. “But not Oldtown?”

She looked down, surprised he’d caught that. “It’s a city as any other. Interesting in it’s own way.”

Jon nodded. “And Sam? Gilly? Little Sam?”

“All well. Sam seemed a little tired, but determined to be of use. He worried after you as well.”

“Of course he did,” Jon said with a fond laugh. “I’m sure if I wrote to him he’d risk losing his chains and his head to come console me.” Shaking his head, he looked to the satchel. “That it?”

“It is.” She carefully removed the bag, setting it on his desk and opening it. As he pulled them out she picked her memory for what Sam had told her of each. “That’s the High Septon’s journal. That’s a record of annulment. A record of marriage. That’s a log from the Lineages and Histories of the Great Houses of the Seven Kingdoms, with… I forget the rest,” Brienne sighed. “He said he’d copied all the instances of Targaryens without the traditional colored hair and eyes to show it’s not especially uncommon.”

Once they were unpacked he looked the documents over with a nod. “I hope it’s enough.”

“Shall I send the maester?”

Jon shook his head, sinking into his chair. “No. I’d like to take some time and think over my words once I’ve read it all.”

“Of course.”

“Thank you, Brienne,” he said looking to the female knight. “I trusted no one more with this than you. You’ve never failed to make me think my trust in you well placed, with this and Sansa. Thank you.”

Brienne felt her chest stir, giving a quick nod. “Thank you, your grace.”

“Go rest, get warm and enjoy some decent food,” he said with a smile that didn’t reach his eyes as he turned toward the desk. “And let them know I’ll take my supper here again, if you could.”
Brienne’s brow furrowed as she took the implication that it had become a frequent occurrence, but nodded before departing.

XOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXO

Night came and Sansa sat at the high table with Rickon and a few other lords while others occupied the lower tables. Jon’s seat beside her remained empty, as it had for nearly a week while he took his meals in his solar.

Seeing Brienne approach, Sansa perked up, smiling to her sworn sword as she took her seat beside Sansa. “You look rested.”

“I am,” she said pleasantly. “It’s nice to be in fresh clothes after a bath.”

Sansa laughed. “I still have dreams of that first bath at Castle Black.”

“I’d feared you’d fallen asleep,” Brienne said with a smirk, remembering how she’d been so relieved when Sansa answered her knock after hours in the tub the Night’s Watch gave her.

“I might have if I wasn’t so anxious.” Sansa sighed. “I can’t decide if I long for another bath that feels that good or dread what I’d have to go through for it to be matched.”

Brienne smiled, nodding to the maid that poured her wine. “How have you been, my lady?”

“Busy,” she sighed. “I spend half my day wondering if my parents had to deal with anything like the problems we do, wondering how they would handle them.”

“I’m sure you’ve been doing as well as they would have.”

Sansa set down her goblet after taking a drink. “Every day it feels like I’m trying to grasp at water to drain a stream, barely keeping any in hand while it never stops.”

Brienne glanced to the empty chair between Sansa and Rickon, thinking back to the image of Jon sat alone at his desk in his solar. “And the king?”

Sansa’s exhausted expression grew to a frown. “He’s… preparing for the wars to come,” she said without an ounce of conviction. “It’s kept him busy.”

“Hm,” Brienne nodded, failing to hide her doubt.

Sansa frowned, gripping her knee. She knew it was a poor lie, but what else could she say? That their king had taken to solitude so he didn’t have to see her, or even worse, to spare her having to be forced to sit beside him. That she’d ruined the little happiness they had since leaving Castle Black. That some awful part of her was glad he was upset, because it would hurt even more if he just showed up as if nothing had happened. As if she’d never mattered.

Was that what she wanted? To not matter anymore? If she kept this up he would show up and she would hate herself more than she already did. Could she bare losing him just because she thought it was the right thing to do?

Was it really easier to be alone and settle than to face whatever ever came together?

Chapter End Notes
So originally I toyed with having hints of Rickon with Lyanna, but as much as I like them I thought on it and decided I prefer the idea of Lyanna having a slight crush on Jon and pairing Rickon with Johnna, the older daughter of the Free Folk Chieftess, Karsi. She's show only and only shows up in Hardhome, but I liked her a lot so figure her daughters should be cool too.
Sansa felt like a caged wolf pacing her room and tugging at the cuff of her left sleeve, her brow knit so tightly it hurt. “I’m a Stark,” she whispered to herself as she went to her door. “I’m a Stark.”

With a breath she knocked on Jon’s door, looking down the hall until the door opened and she turned to find him holding the door. He’d removed his jerkin and boots, leaving his breeches and tunic.

She’d expected some surprise, maybe even hoped for him to stutter and go wide eyed or smile with relief. Instead he maintained his even expression. “Mm?”

It shook her, but she was a Stark. She could endure the cold. “Am I interrupting?” She asked with a glance past him, seeing papers strewn about his desk. His dinner lay half eaten on his tray, though the mug of ale brought with it was turned over and empty.

He looked past her, into the corridor. “Is everything alright?”

Sansa frowned. “I hoped we could speak.”

He’d been so quick to let her in before, yet watching him clearly think it over she wasn’t sure if that was good or bad. At least he had to think instead of readily refusing her.

Without a word he pushed the door open and made his way back to his desk, letting her step inside and close the door herself.

She watched him look over the papers, picking one up and tossing it back down, shaking his head and heading over to the hearth. He stood in place for a moment, his arms crossed across his chest.

With a glance to his desk she asked, “Are those the documents Sam found?”

Jon turned to her and nodded. “Most of it.”

“Most?” She asked, putting on a smile, making her way to the desk.

“There’s a letter or two,” he said with a wave of his hand, “and some reports on the Dreadfort.”

Sansa came to a stop, looking from the papers to Jon. “Reports?”

“They’ve cleared out the dungeons, taken down everything linked to the Boltons.” He shrugged. “It should be ready in a few weeks.”

She quietly took a breath to replace what had left her so suddenly. “Are you leaving?”
Jon’s jaw shifted, turning back to the hearth. “I haven’t decided yet. I might head back to the Wall to check on Tormund’s group. I’d like to have a wight before any southron lords send someone to meet us.”

Her chest grew tight, struggling to breath. She hadn’t just driven him from her, but driven him away from Winterfell, driven him to the Wall and beyond.

Jon stared at the wall, but it wasn’t until he closed his eyes that he realized how long she’d been quiet. Arching his brow, he turned and felt his stomach drop when he saw her stood with her head leaned forward into her hands while her body shook silently.

In a burst of movement he rushed across the room, wrapping his arms around her. Sansa let out a sob the moment she felt his arms brush her back, taking her hands from her face to clutch his tunic as she pressed her face to his shoulder.

“I’m so sorry,” she said with a sob, “please don’t leave me.”

“Sansa,” he groaned, not wanting to argue with her.

“Please,” she pleaded into his shoulder.

Taking a breath, he steeled himself and pulled her off him, shocking her. “I can’t just stay here forever, Sansa. You and Rickon will be fine here without me.” His jaw shifted slightly as he declared, “I won’t stay where I’m not wanted.”

Sansa shook her head. “You’re not unwanted. I swear, you’re not.”

Jon took his hands from her shoulders. He bit back the things he wanted to say that had more bite to them. He wouldn’t hurt her just because he was angry. Instead he asked, “What’s changed? Nothing’s different from when you told me this was pointless. I won’t waste whatever time we have arguing with you for something you didn’t care to try.”

She felt it all slipping through her fingers, making her chest tighten even more. “Jon, please, I… I can’t stand another day. I tried, but I can’t. I don’t care what happens, I want to be with you.” Sansa grasped his hands, squeezing them as she met his gaze. “Whatever comes, I want to be at your side when it does.”

“And what happens after that?” He asked, her own words like a slap. Yet his somber tone felt like a victory. “What’s changed?”

“I don’t know. I don’t care. I only know I’d be by your side when it does.”

Jon stared into her eyes for a moment before exhaling. “You’re sure?”

“Gods yes,” Sansa said stepping forward, sliding one hand up his neck as she pressed her lips to his while the other slipped under his arm to keep him close.

His left hand pressed the small of her back while his right slipped through her hair, his tongue brushing her lips. While before that had been about the limit of what they did, she felt his hand slid to her hip and rise to press her breast, making her gasp against his lips.

She felt like she might stumble as he pressed forward, making her step back again and again before his hand slid from her chest to press against the wall. Jon pulled his lips from hers and pressed his hands to the stone wall behind her, his chest heaving as he stared at her.
“What do you want?” He asked quietly.

Gods, how could a question make her feel like this? Her chest heaved, body flush and head a fluttering mess, making it difficult to find the right answer. “You,” she said shaking her head, “just you.”

His eyes darkened with intent as he leaned toward her. “If you like your gown then remove it.”

She’d never found her laces faster, letting the gown go slack before it fell to her feet. At once she felt both under and over dressed, embarrassed yet wanting to strip until she was bare for him.

He’d stepped away to pile the papers on his desk and toss them on his chair. The moment she raised her head to look he’d returned to catch her lips in a passionate kiss, pressing her against the wall. She felt his hand hold her side, his thumb on her breast while his left hand clutched her thigh and suddenly he lifted her and turned, setting her on the desk.

“Jon,” she asked watching him sink to his knees, “what are you doing?”

He pressed a kiss to her knee, running a hand up the inside of her thigh as he told her, “Proving I’m a man of my word.”

XOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXO

Redressed and sat before Jon’s hearth, Sansa took a long drink of the wine he’d offered her and let out a content sigh.

“You didn’t have to do that,” Jon said sinking into the seat beside her.

Looking over she found his grin more than worth the odd taste lingering even through the wine. “It’s fine,” she said shaking her head, “I liked it.”

“Did you?” He asked arching his brow. “It wasn't just you trying to return the favor?”

“It was, but that doesn’t mean I didn’t enjoy it,” she said with a shrug. “What about you? Did you enjoy me?”

Jon’s grin returned. “I did.”

“You should thank Rila,” Sansa declared suddenly.

“For?”

“When we saw you in the yard with Rickon she made a joke about wanting to show you how she looked kneeling,” Sansa revealed, looking to him with an enticing smile. “That’s what made me think I could do it.”

Jon sat back nodding as he took a sip of wine. “I should thank Rila.”

Sansa giggled and Jon smiled at her, having missed her laugh as much as her company.

Setting his glass aside he leaned forward. “Sansa, what do we do now? What do you want from this? From us?”

With a solemn smile she reached over, taking his hand in hers. “I told you already. You. Just you.”

The fire flickering beside them cast shifting shadows across his face as Jon stared at her. “Would
you marry me?’”

Sansa sat up, her eyes widening. After a moment she took a breath and set her glass aside before looking to him, turning her chair but not releasing his hand. “Is that something you’d want?”

“I never thought I’d have a wife,” Jon said with a laugh. “I’d be lucky to have one like you.”

Sansa’s smile faltered when she thought back to the training yard. “But you’ve had a wife before.”

Jon’s brow furrowed. “What?”

“A wildling woman.”

Realization flashed across his face, followed by sorrow and regret as he sank into his chair, his hand slipping from hers, rising to rub his forehead while he sighed. “She wasn’t my wife. Even by free folk custom, I never stole her, not really.”

Sansa nodded, shifting in her seat. “Did you love her?”

Jon took a moment to think. “I don’t know. It felt like it at the time, but then I left her. I was sure she loved me before I left. Before she died.”

Sansa frowned, having suspected that from how Laul and Rila spoke of his wildling wife, but suddenly felt awful for whatever jealousy she’d felt. “What do you feel for me?”

Jon’s gaze turned to her, his hand falling from his head to hold the arm of his chair. “Love. Different from Rickon or anyone else. Different from Ygritte. You make me happy and I want to make you happy. I want to give you the kind of life you deserve, one better than you’ve had to suffer these last years, better even than we had before we left if it were possible. I want to be with you in every way I can, but I don’t want to harm you or do anything that might reflect poorly on you.”

Sansa clutched the arm of her chair under his gaze, giving a small nod as he finished. “I want to be with you too. Any way I can. I want to help you every way I can. I want to ease the burdens you bear, give you respite and council whenever you need and peace and solace when you’re worried or upset.” Sansa reached over to take his hand from the arm of his chair. “I want to marry you.”

Jon’s lips stretched into a smile, turning his chair and leaning forward to pull her hand up and kiss it. After a moment he raised his head and looked to her eyes.

“Could we announce it tomorrow?”

Sansa blinked. “So soon?”

“Just announce it,” he clarified. “The lords here now should be the first to know, but I think a good way to avoid proposals for us could be to include it in the letters I send. Make it part plea for aide, declaration of my intent for the throne in time, and part betrothal announcement.”

Sansa took a moment to think before nodding. “I think it could work.”

“Good,” he seemed relieved by her agreement. “I’ll leave your aunt and the Vale to you but I’d ask your help with the others as well.”

“Davos was at Dragonstone with Stannis.”

Jon grinned. “He already gave me a list of houses in Dragonstone and the Stormlands he thinks
hold loyalty to the Targaryen name.”

“Now we just need the Riverlands and Iron Islands and we’d have the Lannisters surrounded on all ends.”

Jon’s brow knit. “You might be able to call for some houses aide. I’m sure there’s some that were loyal to Targaryens during Robert’s Rebellion, those and the ones loyal to the Tullys could flee here, regroup. And if Theon ever gets better he might be a way into the Iron Islands.”

Sansa shook her head, laughing. “If this works… we might be able to let the southron armies take out the Lannisters from all sides while the northern houses focus on the Wall.”

“If it works,” Jon said with a laugh, “but it won’t. Something will happen. It always does.”

Chapter End Notes

It wasn't really planned, but I like the idea that when Sansa rejects him Jon contemplates going back to the Wall for a bit, as he did when Catelyn made it clear he wouldn’t have a place at Winterfell without Ned. I think his fear of Sansa falling into her mother’s actions as she did when she was a kid could be an interesting, subtle unconscious fear for him, especially if people keep remarking on her similarities to Catelyn. Don’t think I’ll play with that much, but thought it was interesting.

This is basically what I’d consider the end of Part One, essentially the end of Season Six. I have two chapters planned as an interlude. They cover some stuff from the start of Season Seven, but I’d say Part Two starts when it returns to Winterfell. Might change the summary a little to go along with it.

Post might slow down slightly for a bit while I try to make a more thorough outline for the rest of the story and decide if I’m going to do Jonsanerys or not and figure out how to handle the villains properly. Like Season Seven a lot of characters will come together so even though it’s likely longer than Part One, I’m still going to try keeping it from doubling or tripling the length by keeping the focus mostly on a few main characters with occasional scenes away from them. It might leave a few supporting characters' stories lighter than some might like, but I’ll try to make sure no one’s forgotten.

Part Two is likely to be the calm before the storm that is Part Three, the Season Eight equivalent. There probably won’t be many battles in Two but I imagine Three will have lots of combat. I’m also considering playing with some weird stuff for the end, but nothing I don't think fits the possibilities of the world.
Crossroads

Chapter Summary

News from the North spreads through Westeros.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The blow of a horn woke Castle Black in an instant, the men all leaping from their cots and reaching for their weapons. It was only after a moment when no second blow sounded that the tension eased and they all seemed to let out a sigh. Until they realized the only riders they’d sent out were the ones hunting wights a few weeks ago.

When Edd first joined the Night’s Watch he’d never have thought he’d feel relieved to see a wildling walk through their gates, yet that was what came when he saw Tormund, even if only twenty of the thirty men he left with returned.

The yard filled with men, their hands on their swords as they stared at the writhing figures bound by thick rope being dragged by the men.

“We had three others,” Tormund said with a frown, watching men toss the wights into crates. “One of the men hit a walker with a hammer, a full swing to the back of the prick’s head, and the fuckin’ hammer shattered. I grabbed this,” he said pulling a small dagger from his furs, “and stabbed the fucker, and that made just about every other wight around us drop except for the four we got.”

“That valyrian steel?” asked Edd.

“One of those lords had it, gave it to his man on Jon’s command, but when he died I picked it up.” Tormund turned to Edd with a smirk. “Think he’ll let me keep it?”

“Not once the lord finds out it killed a white walker,” Edd laughed, looking to the King’s Tower. “We received other guests before you arrived.”

“From the south?” Tormund asked skeptically.

“From beyond the wall,” answered Edd. “Ones heading to Winterfell.”

XOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXO

Though they’d recently gotten ravens telling them to expect riders from southron kingdoms, the men of Moat Cailin were shocked to find one arrive barely a day after they received word of them. The only place that might have received a raven and sent a rider by then were houses of the Neck, and they already had lords at Winterfell.

Nor would any southron houses send a lone rider.

When he approached the castle gate, a group of ten men were ready. The horse came to a stop and they saw it was an old man wearing a tattered cloak, his face locked in a grimace as he looked them over. His eyes scanned the walls of Moat Cailin, his brow furrowing when he saw Stark
banners hanging beside black and red Targaryen ones.

“What the hell are those?” He demanded, turning his eyes on the soldiers. “Why are you hanging Targaryen banners with Stark banners?”

The men exchanged looks before proud smiles replaced their confusion. “We’ve been stationed here by King Jon on behalf of House Targaryen and his betrothed, Sansa of House Stark.”

“What?” The man scoffed. “Who the fuck is King Jon?”

The men chuckled. “King Aegon Targaryen, but everyone called him King Jon because he spent his life in hiding as Jon Snow, the bastard of Winterfell.”

The rider’s eyes widened. “What?”

“Where are you coming from?” asked the captain. “What’s you name?”

The man turned to them, squeezing the reins of his horse. “Brynden Tully of Riverrun. Now let me through to see my grandniece.”

“Does that mean she’ll be Queen?” Sweetrobin asked, sat on his mother’s lap as she lovingly stroked his hair.

“It does, my sweet.” Lysa’s smile was etched with victory. “Don’t you worry. She’s in a love with the boy and says he treats her well, which is a blessing for one raised a bastard like him. Catelyn must have kept a firm hand if she managed to keep a bastard in line.”

“Does he have a dragon?” asked Robin.

“No,” Petyr answered, looking up from his desk. “Though it seems he has a direwolf near as tall as a horse.” Seeing Robin’s eyes glitter with wonder, Petyr’s lips twisted into a sly smile. “Would you like to see it?”

“Can we?” Robin bounced on his mother’s knee, making her wince slightly. He was too big for her to be comfortable, but she couldn’t deny him her lap either.

“I doubt they’ll have time to come visit,” said Lysa.

“I’m sure our new king would like to thank you for your support,” Petyr said looking to Robin. “If our lord wished it surely his knights would escort him to see his king.”

“I do!” Robin nodded to Lysa’s despair.

“Perhaps you’ll even be able to attend their wedding,” Petyr suggested.

“When will that be?” asked Robin.

“Soon no doubt,” he said, adding with a prideful smirk, “only the truly hardy find patience in love.”

“We have to go!” Robin bounced more, Lysa shifting him slightly, a panicked look on her face.

Petyr looked to Robin with a sweet smile. “If that’s what you wish my lord, then we shall visit your cousin and wish her love and happiness with her kingly husband. I’ll speak to the lords and
Kneeling before a weirwood, one of the few remaining in the Riverlands, Lord Tytos Blackwood opened his eyes and turned to find a tall, gangly young man waiting for him to finish. Rising to his feet, his raven-feather cloak shifted around him as he turned to his son.

“What is it Hos?”

Hoster stood straight and made his way forward. “I didn’t mean to disturb you, father.”

“What couldn’t wait?” He asked, his salt and pepper beard making him seem even sterner.

Hoster took a breath. “Winter came for House Frey.”

Tytos’ eyes widened. “What?”

“House Frey, all their men are dead. Poisoned by someone… pretending to be Walder.”

“Pretending?” Tytos asked with a scoff. “They couldn’t tell a fake from their father?”

Hoster frowned. “The maid who was there saw Walder pull off his face, and where Walder stood was a girl who told her The North Remembers.”

Tytos’ brow knit. “A faceless man? That… That can’t be true.”

“And yet Mariya Darry has taken her household North. Her husband and son died with the rest of the Freys, so she’s taken her household north… to join the Targaryens and Starks.”

Tytos turned to look at the weirwood tree, his nostrils flaring as he took a breath. “Have the men discreetly prepare, and send a reply to the raven from Winterfell. We aided Aegon the Conqueror, and we aided House Stark in the War of the Five Kings. Let them know that Blackwoods stand firm.”

“What happened to you, Arry?” Hot Pie asked, watching her wipe her mouth and stare at him.

“You got any ale?”

He’d barely gripped the pitcher when she got up and took it to pour her own mug and take a drink. He watched, surprised to see a girl eat and drink as quick and sloppily as some of the soldiers that came through the Crossroads.

“Where you headin’?”

“King’s Landing,” she answered.

“Why?”

“ Heard Cersei’s queen now.”

“ Heard she blew up the great sept. Must ‘ave been something to see.” For dramatic effect he added, “Boom!”
“Mm.”

“Can’t believe someone would do that,” Hot Pie said shaking his head.

“Cersei would do that.”

“I thought you’d be heading for Winterfell.”

Her vacant expression shifted with her gaze sliding toward Hot Pie. “Why would I go there? The Boltons have it.”

“No… the Boltons are dead.”

Arya looked to him, frozen for a moment before wiping her mouth. “What?”

“Jon Snow came down from Castle Black with a wildling army and rounded up all the other houses to win the Battle of the Bastards. ‘Course, turns out he was never a bastard at all,” Hot Pie said with a laugh. “Turned out he was a Targaryen. Named Aegon or Aemon, but people still call him Jon.”

Arya’s eyes shifted as she tried to piece together what he’d said. “You’re lying.”

“Why would I lie ‘bout that? Heard he’s even marrying you sister.”

“What?” Arya gaped.

“People joke he’s a true Targaryen after all, but some say it’s to keep the North loyal since they only knew him as a bastard and hate Targaryens.” Hot Pie shrugged. “Others say it’s cause they love each other after she rode to war with him.”

“Sansa?” Arya asked, and when Hot Pie nodded she turned to shake her head. She had to go north and find out what was happening at Winterfell.

XOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXO

Looking over the sea of green surrounding Highgarden, Willas Tyrell held his cane in front of him and sighed. A glance back made him frown, as he always seemed to when he looked at Garlan now. He reminded him too much of poor Loras, which made him think of their brother, father and Margaery dying painfully in an explosion of wildfire.

“Do you believe this?” Garlan asked, looking up to his elder brother.

“I believe nothing without proof,” Willas said turning to make his way to the table, leaning on his cane to stay up. “That’s why you’ll ride north and find out if any of it is true.”

“You want me to go north?” Garlan’s eyes narrowed. “What about the Lannisters? What about Grandmother and the Targaryen queen? She has three dragons!”

“Three dragons I haven’t seen,” Willas answered calmly, though his jaw shifted. “If this is true, then he has a better claim than some Targaryen who never spent a day of her life on Westeros. Hells, maybe her dragons will even listen to him too. Who knows? For now we need to make sure we know everything so we don’t make the wrong choice. Go north and find out if he is who he says he is, and if there’s any truth to his story about the undead.”

“If it’s true, then we might have a better option to be rid of the Mad Queen then settling for a foreign one.”
Her room alight with flickering flames, Arianne Martell stood beside a table reading a letter. Daemon Sand wondered how he was the only one fool enough to swear himself to the short, buxom Dornish beauty.

Seeing the sandy-haired man enter, Arianne smiled, waving him forward. "I have a task for you, Daemon."

"Anything you like, Princess," he said with a grin.

"None of that," she sighed, holding out a letter.

Daemon took it and gave it a quick read before furrowing his brow and giving it a second more thorough one. "This can't be true."

"That's what I need you to find out," she said conspiratorially. "If it is then perhaps they can help me find vengeance two-fold, for my cousins and this king's supposed half-siblings as well as for my father."

Daemon's blue eyes darkened. "Arianne... Ellaria and the Sand Snakes have control of Dorne."

"I have those loyal to me," she said simply. "Loyal to House Martell."

Daemon set the letter down, shaking his head. "I'm your sworn sword, I can't just leave your side."

"You must," she said firmly. "Without this I'll be forced to live the rest of my life under the control of the vile imbeciles who thought the best way to get vengeance for my uncle, their father, was to kill my father and steal control from him. Whatever my feelings for him he never deserved that."

Daemon saw the pain in her eyes and sighed, knowing he could never deny her. "As you wish, Princess."

Chapter End Notes

This chapter and the next were originally mixed, but I decided to go from north to south, almost following the kingsroad. I considered showing a bit of the wight hunt, but I think I got what I needed from the opening.

Brynden isn't really a necessary change, but I like him so he's alive because Brienne wasn't there to take the last boat.

Vale scenes I found a bit hard to write, but I think I'm just saying screw it. It's not like Petyr's betrayal of Ned had a ton of obvious setup scenes, so I'm not going to worry about spelling out his plans too much. I don't think he's a character half as clever as some people think he is, and no where near the omnipotent puppet master some fanfics make him into. So I'm just going to have fun with my interpretation of him.

The Blackwoods are mostly there to talk about the Freys and will likely have a super minor role, mentioned in background stuff, but the Tyrells and Martells should have minor support roles, I imagine. They won't be major characters here and are more like what I imagine show versions of them would be, but I like them and thought they
could prove interesting.
News arrives to the Crownlands along with Targaryen ships.

“Lies,” Cersei spat, pacing through her solar while Jaime stared at the letter.

Setting it on her desk he let out a laugh. “I met the boy. Back when we went to bring the Starks here, I saw him, teased him.” Jaime scoffed, shaking his head. “I thought he was just some dull northerner too stupid to realize what he was giving up by going to the Wall.”

Cersei turned as Jaime started to laugh, leaning forward so his hand pressed against her desk. “What exactly is so amusing?”

Making himself stop, Jaime took a breath and sighed, looking to her. “Honest fuckin’ Ned Stark. He could have raised the boy and taken the throne, been the boy’s regent for years, but he let the boy be sneered at by Catelyn Tully and then sent him to live with rapists and thieves all so his fat fool of a friend could keep the throne he won for someone who never cared for him. To think that sanctimonious shit ever looked down on me.”

“You can’t actually believe this.” She walked back to the table. “Don’t tell me you believe that nonsense about White Walker and an army of the dead. I bet it’s all Sansa. The whore’s opened her legs and now she’s using her idiot brother to get what she always wanted.”

Jaime stood, arching his brow. “What she always wanted?”

“To be queen,” Cersei said firmly.

Jaime thought a moment before shaking his head. “Whatever he is, he was still raised by Ned Stark. He’s either too honest or too stupid to pull off a lie like this and convince the North to follow him. Hell, I’m surprised they didn’t just slit his throat for what the Targaryens did to the Starks, even if his mother did run off to marry Rhaegar.”

Cersei’s hand balled into a fist as she remembered the silver prince she’d dreamed of marrying. “Fucking Lyanna Stark,” she spat the name of the woman who seemed to claim the heart of every man she’d ever wanted. All but Jaime. Turning to him, she declared, “I want you to kill him.”

Jaime furrowed his brow. “What?”

“He’s a bastard making a false claim,” she said with a huff. “Take our men and slit his throat… but bring Sansa back. I’ll make that murderous whore suffer for what she did to our son.”

“Cersei, is it really worth it?” Jaime’s question shocked her. “Winter’s here. Let them freeze up north and when summer comes should they try marching south they’ll find our army there to stop them.”
Her eyes were locked on Jaime, barely containing her anger at his denial of her order. “Fine,” she declared, walking to pour herself wine. “They say they can produce proof of his identity and their undead menace and ask us to send trusted men to see. You can go.”

Jaime tilted his head. “Me?”

Cersei turned to him, one arm crossed over her stomach while holding her goblet. “You’re the only man whose word I trust. If you go north and tell me they actually have some proof then I’ll consider waiting for summer.”

Jaime knew she was trying to punish him, have him put his life at risk heading into the wolf’s den where they may well kill him, likely hoping to force him to kill Jon to survive. He could have put up a fight and tried to talk her down, but instead gave a relenting nod. “I’ll set out in the morning.”

XOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXO

The constant clangs and dings of the street of steel had been soothing after months of rowing. People barely seemed to remember Robert Baratheon himself, so who would look for his bastard among the ash covered faces along Flea Bottom’s smithies.

Most of Gendry's days were spent at the forge, the walls of his shop lined with some of the better steel in Flea Bottom. On the nights his arm grew heavy and his fingers numb from the reverberating hammer, he made his way to local taverns and kept to himself. It was there, tucked away in a corner or sat at a bar, ignored by guards too stupid to realize who he was even if they weren’t drunk, that Gendry kept an ear open for the world beyond.

It was how he’d learned Winterfell had been taken by the Boltons, leading to him working through the night until his hands were raw and bled just to avoid thinking of what might have happened if Arya had made it there. It was there he’d heard about Joffrey’s death and Sansa’s disappearance. It was where he learned Robb Stark had his direwolf’s head stitched in place of his own while his mother had her throat slit to the bone.

He’d been separated from the world on that boat and it was there in the shadows of taverns that he learned what he’s missed. It felt as though he’d spent so long there he missed his calling. If the Brotherhood hadn’t sold him to Stannis and his witch he could have been there to help. He’d been a fool to trust them and the only one who seemed to question it was Arya, who he let down in every possible way. He could have done something.

Instead he now sat in a tavern in a city ruled by the people who killed his father and almost everyone in the family of the man considered his father’s greatest friend. The family of the little lady that he knew he wanted to see again as much as he wanted to swing a hammer.

It was there he heard the guards laugh, “Fuckin’ Targaryens and their Starks!”

“They took back Winterfell so of course she’d spread her legs for him,” said another guard. “Think they’ll come for us next?”

“With an army of northern savages?” The first laughed. “I’d like to see their faces when their stone axes bounce of gold plates!”

“What happened in Winterfell?” Gendry barely realized he’d said it out loud until the men looked to him.

The man sneered at Gendry. “What do you want, boy?”
Gendry’s eyes widened, quickly pointing to their mugs. “To buy you a drink and hopefully hear what you’ve heard of Winterfell.”

The guards shared a look. “What do you care about some northern shithole?”

Gendry frowned. “I knew a girl from the north.”

The guards’ grinned haughtily. “Ah, I see.” The thinner one stroked his scraggly beard and nodded. “Buy us a round and I could speak some.”

Gendry set the coin on the bar and took the empty seat beside them, motioning for the barman to get them another round.

“Word is Sansa Stark’s marrying someone claiming to be a Targaryen,” the man explained with a laugh. “Two of ‘em went ‘round gathering up all the houses and slaughtered the Boltons. Supposedly they’re securing the North, but eventually they’ll come here.”

Seeing Gendry’s shock, the second man snickered, leaning onto the bar top. “Don’t worry boy, they won’t make it here and if they do it’ll be with an army of men with sharp sticks facing down knights and men of the crown.”

Seeing the barman refill their mugs, Gendry gave them a nod. “Thank you. Enjoy the drinks.”

The guards snickered at Gendry as he got up and left the bar, making his way back to his shop. With a determined stride he grabbed a bag and started packing what he could, pulling a purse of coins he’d hidden away, and grabbed a large cloth and rope. Yanking a few swords from his racks and found his personal war hammer, with a shaft about as long as his arm with a stag engraved black iron head.

Wrapping the hammer and swords in the cloth and tying them, he left his shop behind intending to find a ship that would carry him to White Harbor. He’d row if he had to, but no matter what he was going north.

XOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXO

On the deck of their ship Varys stepped forward with his brow knit in confusion at the sight of Targaryen banners soaring over Claw Isle on their way to Dragonstone.

Tyrion gave an impressed nod while Daenerys laughed. “I guess Illyrio wasn’t all lies after all.”

Varys turned to her. “Pardon, your grace?”

“He always spoke of the people of Westeros secretly toasting to our return, awaiting the day they can hang our banners and welcome us home,” she said with a smirk. “I assume this is the work of you and your birds?”

Varys looked to her for a moment, then shook his head. “No, your grace.”

Daenerys’ smile faded as Tyrion furrowed his brow and stepped toward Varys. “What? You mean they just happen to be flying our banner?”

Varys shook his head, looking to the banners in the distance. “Something must have happened.”

Coming to Dragonstone’s shore they were greeted by a small group led by a solemn looking young maester. “Welcome to Dragonstone, Princess,” he said with a polite smile and bow. “I am Maester
Pylos.

“Thank you for the welcome,” said Tyrion, “but she is a queen.”

Pylos raised his head. “Oh?” He looked at Daenerys, frowning. “Has the king taken another wife besides Sansa Stark?”

Tyrion’s brow furrowed and looked back to the others, who seemed equally confused. “Sansa? She’s married Tommen?”

“Tommen?” Pylos blinked, standing straight. “My lord, he killed himself after the Sept of Baelor was destroyed by wildfire.”

“What?!” Tyrion’s question boomed.

“Queen Cersei rules in his place,” Pylos looked to the Targaryen banners flying across the castle with a wry smile, “though clearly Dragonstone has claimed for the King.”

“What King?” Daenerys demanded.

“King Aegon,” he answered. “Son of Rhaegar Targaryen and Lyanna Stark, wed in secret after his annulment from Elia Martell. Born in the Tower of Joy in Dorne and kept hidden as the bastard of Winterfell to avoid his siblings’ fate.”

Daenerys’ heart twisted as her eyes widened and she sucked in a breath. She wasn’t alone? Rhaegar had another son?

Tyrion’s eyes felt like they might fall from his skull. “Jon Snow?!”

Varys’ held back a gasp, his brow furrowed as he tried to think of how it was possible he hadn’t known. “Where did you hear this?”

“He sent letters to almost every house from Sharp Point through The Whispers. Likely others as well, but I couldn’t say for certain, my lord.”

Daenerys felt her stomach turn in a mix of emotions as tears stung her eyes, looking almost hopeful as she asked, “Where is he?”

“Likely in Winterfell with his betrothed, your grace. I imagine he’s waiting to show whoever rides to him the proof of his parentage and the White Walkers.”

Tyrion gaped at the man. “White Walkers?”

Pylos nodded. “He says there is an army of at least one hundred thousand undead men marching toward the Wall. In his letters he spoke of having sent men to retrieve a wight to prove their existence.”

Daenerys scoffed. “An undead army?”

Pylos frowned. “I’m afraid so.” His eyes shifted toward the sails of their ships. “I beg forgiveness, but when I saw your sail I assumed you were sent by the King. If that’s not the case, then...” His eyes widened as he heard the screech of the dragons soaring toward them from the horizon.

“You stand in the presence of Daenerys Stormborn of House Targaryen, Rightful Heir to the Iron Throne, Rightful Queen of the Andals and the First Men, Protector of the Seven Kingdoms, the Mother of Dragons, the Khalessi of the Great Grass Sea, the Unburnt, the Breaker of Chains.”
Pyllos looked to Missandei and nodded. “Hm. Well…” He looked past her to the armed men and ships carrying thousands more. “I suppose Dragonstone is yours.”

Daenerys looked to Tyrion, who looked shocked as they followed Pylos to the castle. “What is this?” She asked quietly.

“I don’t know, my queen,” Tyrion frowned. “I knew Jon Snow, but I suppose I knew only a mask cast upon him.”

“I’ll need to meet him,” she said firmly. “Write to him. If this is a lie he'll regret it, but if it isn't... I need to meet Rhaegar's son.”

Chapter End Notes

I hope Cersei and Jaime came off alright, I was surprised how much I liked writing their scene, it's fun trying to make Cersei as cruel and dumb as she is and hint at Jaime's complex feelings about all that's going on, which I want to explore a bit more later.

I love that Lyanna is this constant presence robbing men from Cersei. She stole her dream husband in Rhaegar, she kept Robert's heart so he never cared about Cersei when he married her, and now there's potential for Lyanna's child to steal away Jaime.

I liked that when Gendry was reintroduced in the show he spoke of getting ready for something to come, so I played with the idea of him and his purpose. He missed so much of the what happened and might've felt like he let Arya down in a way by not helping her family, so rushes off once he hears they're alive.

Also, screw whoever gave Gendry that dumb mallet from the show. Actual war hammers that look like long hammers can be so cool, just look up some art of Bobby B. War hammer and shield looks so dope, but even two handed long hammers or polearms look fine when it's not the dumb stout mallets dwarves use in every other fantasy world.

I also had fun writing the last scene. Everyone's confusion was really fun to play. Don't get your hopes up for evil Daenerys or anything, nothing about her story to this point is different and it would be ridiculous to make her suddenly evil or mad like Aerys. She's not going to bend over easily, but she's not going to ride to Winterfell and try to kill Jon.

Also pulled the trigger on going Jonsanerys largely cause people were whinging so what the hell. For those worried it won't be cheating based or anything too out of character. I've changed the tags and summary as well.
First Arrivals

Chapter Summary

Winterfell receives its first guests after sending word to the houses of Westeros.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“Are those… Targaryen banners?” Meera asked sat in the back of a horse drawn sled beside Bran, nodding to the black and crimson banners hanging from Winterfell’s walls.

Bran sat up, taking them in with a nod. “So it was true. He found out.”

“How?” asked Meera with a glance to the other sleds holding crates the men said held wights they’d captured.

“I don’t know,” Bran said with the slightest hint of frustration. “We haven’t stopped near a weirwood. I can’t see properly.”

Meera frowned as she looked to Bran, the same slate expression he’d worn for weeks plastered to his face. Hopefully meeting his family would break that. Bring back some of the boy she’d known.

XOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXO

A small crowd had gathered around the training yard as their queen to be thrust a blunt training sword at Theon Greyjoy. When she managed to break past his defense and hit his chest, both broke away and Brienne stepped forward. “That was a good feint, my lady, but slower than it should have been. You hesitated on reacting after the fake.”

“I know, I know,” she sighed.

Brienne turned to Theon, who frowned. “Good dodging, but I think you fell into a pattern that left you open.”

With a quick nod, Theon lowered his gaze. “Sorry.”

Sansa shook her head. “Don’t be sorry, Theon. I remember how good you were when we were growing up,” she said, offering a kindly smile when he dared raise his eyes, “why do you think I asked you to help me?”

Because she needed Theon to be on their side. Because she wanted to show support for Jon’s initiative to train women and children. Because she knew she’d never beat Brienne. Because she wanted to fight a man so couldn’t ask the spearwives. Because she didn’t want to embarrass herself against one of her male fireguard or Podrick.

Thankfully he didn’t seem to think of those. To make sure he didn’t, she continued, “It’s why I asked you to help me with the bow yesterday as well. I remembered you were quite the marksman.” There was truth in her words, just not the entirety.
Theon smiled sadly at the memories of who he had been. “Thank you, Sansa.”

“Sansa!” Rickon called out as he rushed toward them, the crowd separating to let him past. He leapt over the railing keeping them out, stumbling as he landed and rushed toward her. He took a moment to catch his breath as he clutched her arm. “R-Riders. From the north. Bunch of them.”

“Tormund,” she whispered.

Brienne’s eyes widened. “Alright, that’s enough for today.”

The crowd let out a few playful jeers as Sansa handed Brienne the training sword and pulled at her skirt to leave the yard. She did her best to move quickly while not quite breaking into an unladylike run.

She passed Wylla Manderly, who wore a teasing grin as she called to her. “Off to see your husband?”

“Not quite yet,” Sansa answered with a laugh. “Riders from the north.”

Wylla gasped. “They’re back?!” She turned, rushing off to find her sister and grandfather.

Rushing through Winterfell Sansa didn’t bother knocking when she arrived at Jon’s door. She found him sat with a fist to his chin while the other tapped the desk, eyes looking over the letters that had arrived so far in response to what they sent out. Hearing the door open he turned and smiled once he saw her, sitting up and motioning to the letters.

“Seems we’ll have many guests soon.”

“We already do,” Sansa said leaving the door open. “Rickon said there’s riders from the north.”

She followed Jon on his trek to the courtyard, Sansa smiling to herself as she realized Jon could have moved much quicker, but he walked so she could keep pace. She wondered if he even realized what he was doing.

The gates opened and Tormund lead the men in, quickly hopping off the horse, looking wary of it as he handed the reins to a stable boy. “Jon!” He called out, waving for the king as he made his way to one of the sleds. “We brought a friend.”

That earned a few curious looked before Jon moved to the sled, his eyes widening. “Bran?!”

Sansa and Rickon shared a look, rushing to his side and spinning to see Bran look at them from the sled. A small smile played on his lips as Rickon climbed the sled to hug him, joined by Sansa a moment later. “Hello Rickon, Sansa.”

Stepping off the sled Meera gasped as she looked into the crowd. “Father?!”

“Meera,” Howland gasped, rushing forward to meet her for a hug. She was taller than him, yet still looked a girl in the arms of her father.

Tears flooded her eyes as she pulled away. “Jojen…”

“I know,” he sighed. “He told me, before you left. Once I found you were gone… I knew.”

“I’m sorry.”

“Don’t be,” he said with a nod. “I’m proud of you. Few could make it beyond the wall and back.
And few could claim a better cause to do so.”

Glancing back at where where Jon hesitantly joined the Starks’ hug after Sansa waved him over, Meera said, “I take it you’re the one who told him.”

Howland arched his brow. “I am. How’d you know that?”

“Bran… He saw it. Jon’s birth, his mother’s death. You and his father fighting Arthur Dayne. He saw it all. He’s…” She frowned. “He’s the three-eyed raven now.”

XOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOX

Jon, Rickon and Sansa watched Bran as he sat beside the weirwood tree, his eyes clouded until he blinked and looked to them.

“They were married,” he said with a nod. “I guess you’re not a Sand after all.”

Jon nodded, gripping his knees. “How… How did they look?”

Bran’s head shifted in a hint of confusion before answering. “Happy. In love. Like they never could have imagined what would come from it.”

“Jon?” Rickon asked with a blink.

“The war,” Sansa answered. “They didn’t know doing that would cost so many lives.”

Jon stared at the snow between his feet, taking a moment. Sansa wanted to reach out and hold him, she could see he was holding back, his mind a torrent of thoughts whenever he was forced to think on his parents.

Finally he looked to Bran. “How far back can you look?” When Bran gave a questioning look, Jon clarified, “Can you find out what the Night King is?”

“I already know,” said Bran. “He’s a man. The Children of the Forest put a shard of dragonglass into his heart to try and make a weapon to fight off the First Men. Instead they made him. They couldn’t control it, so they worked with the First Men to stop it before.”

“How?”

Bran frowned slightly. “I’m not sure. I still can’t spend too long in there, and I don’t know when it ended so I can’t just go there to find out.”

Jon was quiet for a moment, his brow sinking as he thought over his question. “Can you go back… Four hundred years?”

Sansa tilted her head. “That’s specific.”

“The Doom of Valyria,” Jon said keeping his eyes on Bran. “Could you find out how they made Valyrian Steel?”

Bran’s head shifted downward in thought. “It should be possible.”

“Look in Valyria. Find a smith. Would it help you if I gave you Longclaw? Help you trace it or something?”

Bran shook his head. “No, it shouldn’t be necessary. Give me time. I’ll tell you once I’ve found
something.”

“Thank you, brother.”

Bran’s head rose to Jon, his lips quirking in a small smile. “Of course.”

XOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXO

“You think they’ll last?” Davos asked looking at the quartet of crates housing dead men stored in the cells of Winterfell.

Jon looked to him. “I don’t think they’ve been ripe for a long time.”

Davos chuckled. “I meant do you think they’ll survive. Or whatever you’d call it.”

“I think they will. Unless something kills whichever White Walker they’re tied to. We’ll keep guards on them and leave the cell locked. I don’t want any-”

The door opened as a guard quickly scanned the room, stopping when he saw Jon. “Your grace, rider from the south. He’s alone.”

Davos arched his brow, following them up to the courtyard for the second time that day where they found fewer onlookers than before. Sansa made her way to Jon’s side, ready to greet all who came to Winterfell as it’s Lady.

The gate opened and they watched the rider dismount his horse and throw back his hood, looking as if he saw a ghost when his eyes fell on Sansa. She seemed to recognize him, but was clearly unsure who he was.

“Welcome to Winterfell, Ser…”

The man let out a snort as he stepped toward her. “Brynden Tully.”

Sansa’s eyes widened. “Uncle?”

“Granduncle,” he said with a gruff nod.

Sansa smiled nervously, surprised when he stepped forward and wrapped his arms around her in a brief hug. After a moment he stepped back and gave her a look over with a nod. “I’ve no doubt your mother would be stunned to see you.”

Her lips flickered in a conflicted smile. “Thank you.” Once the Blackfish stepped back she motioned to Jon, stood off to the side. “This is Jon-” She winced slightly, correcting herself. “King Aegon Targaryen.”

“Jon,” he said with a nod, extending his hand to the old knight.

Brynden gave him an examining look before shaking his hand. “Hm.”

“We’d heard Riverrun’s siege was broken,” Sansa said with a frown. “We feared you and Uncle Edmure died.”

“Edmure,” Brynden scoffed. “Little shit gave Riverrun to the Lannisters. I managed to sneak out on the last boat.”

Jon crossed his arms. “Could you retake it?”
Brynden turned to him with narrowed eyes. “What do you mean?”

“The Freys are dead, the Riverlands are open. If we sent some men with you, could you retake it? Get them in however you got out?”

Brynden’s lips pulled into a sly smirk. “Could be done.”

Jon turned to Davos. “Manderlys would be best, right? They’ll know how to work boats.”

Davos wore a pleased smile as he nodded. “I’d imagine so, your grace.”

Jon thought back, looking to Brynden. “Do you know Tytos Blackwood?”

“Rode with Robb. Held Raventree against a siege from Jonos Bracken until the Lannisters broke it for ’em and they surrendered.”

“He said he’d stand with us when we moved south. Do you think he’s being honest?” asked Jon. “He could draw eyes away from wherever you’d get in. Leave more of our men to slip inside instead of splitting them.”

Brynden looked at Jon for a long moment before laughing. A second later he nodded. “It could work.”

“Rest and relax as long as you need,” Jon said with a nod. “We’ll gather some men and I’ll write to Tytos once you’re ready.”

Brynden nodded. “Thank you.”

Davos noticed the man eyeing Jon, as if looking for him to be slighted by the lack of formality or honorifics. Instead Jon smiled, turning to Davos. “Now to find Manderly and ask Wolkan for more ink.”

Brynden watched the men leave before turning to Sansa. “I’ll show you to your chambers, Uncle.”

With a nod he followed her inside, eyeing her with a somber smile. She reminded him of Catelyn, but only just. She held herself with a confidence Catelyn had always lacked, smiled easier than her mother had. Her eyes held a strength different from her mother’s. She wasn’t frayed like her mother, Sansa was steel coated in ivory.

“He seems good.” Seeing her look back questioningly, he clarified, “Your betrothed.”

Sansa’s cheek flushed slightly as she nodded. “He is. Supposedly there’s even a song about Good King Jon, though I’ve yet to hear it. My fireguard have said there’s even a bawdy version.”

“Fireguard?”

“When we rode for Winterfell I wanted to be on the field, so Jon assigned me a personal guard. It was made up of my sworn sword, her squire and some of the free folk,” she explained. “They say people with red hair are kissed by fire, so they ended up being called my fireguard and it stuck.”

Brynden watched her speak, smiling ruefully. “You love him?”

Sansa glanced back, nodding as they turned a corner. “I do. I… I know it must seem odd since he was raised as my half-brother, but… I was the only one who took after Mother and kept my distance from him. I was never as close as the others. I guess that left room for things to develop as they did.”
Brynden nodded. “Suppose a Targaryen wouldn’t mind either way.”

Sansa smirked and shook her head as they came to his room. “You’re as far from the first to say that as you are the last.”

Chapter End Notes

Sansa training isn’t going to end with her fighting off a battalion of wights alone or anything ridiculous but I think it fits here and gives me some stuff to play with.

Also a little pointless factoid. Story was originally called To the Wall and Back, and that’s what the folder holding the chapters and outline is called, but I didn’t like it and went with Northern Conqueror since To the Wall and Back only fit the season six section.

Bran looking into valyrian steel has two purposes, so I hope people don’t mind it or find it too bog standard. First is the basic “We making valyrian steel now!” moment to come, but also it keeps him busy. Generally if he isn’t in a scene he’s under a weirwood or wherever training and searching through Valyria.
“You think it’s really Tyrion?” Sansa asked looking up from the letter Tyrion had sent them. “It could be someone trying to lure you into a trap.”

Jon was stood near the railing looking out on the yard where Theon helped some of the children train in archery. “Read the last bit.”

“All dwarfs are bastards in their father’s eyes,” she read. “What does that mean?”

“It’s something he said to me the first night we met.” Jon tapped the railing before turning to her. “You know him better than any of us, what do you think?”

She stared at him a moment, surprised he would bring up her first marriage, sham that it was. With a glance to the letter she shook her head. “Tyrion’s not like the other Lannisters. He was always kind to me… but it’s too great a risk.” Looking back down to the letter she read, “The seven kingdoms will bleed as long as Cersei sits on the Iron Throne. Let us unite. Together we can end her tyranny.”

Davos reached for it, taking the chance to look it over again. “Sounds like a charmer. Of course the casual mention of a Dothraki horde, a legion of Unsullied and three dragons… a bit less charming.” He paused, brow rising slightly.

“What?” asked Jon.

Davos looked to him. “Fire kills wights, you told me. What breaths fire?”

Jon turned back to the yard while Sansa looked to Davos. “You’re not suggesting Jon meet with her?”

“No,” Davos said quickly. “Too dangerous.”

“But?” Jon said, and Sansa couldn’t help but smile thinking back on their conversation about everything before but being bullshit.

“What if the army of the undead makes it past the Wall. Do we have enough men to fight them?”

Looking to the yard he saw Theon helping a boy keep his grip steady, hitting the second ring from the bullseye and cheering. When the boy thanked Theon, he saw the broken man smile and bow his head as he moved to the next boy.

“I can’t leave,” Jon said turning to them. “I need to be here for when all the riders arrive… but I
can’t let her come here.”

Sansa frowned. “What do you mean?”

“I can’t go there and end up stuck on an island when I’m expected to be here to prove our cause and I can’t have her come here and risk her dragons burning us all.” Jon crossed his arms. “There’s got to be some compromise. Somewhere for us to meet in the middle.”

“White Harbor?” Davos offered.

“Too many people,” Jon said quickly. “It’ll need to be somewhere out of the way but not some field where we have to camp.”

Sansa closed her eyes, picturing a map of Westeros. “Widow’s Watch,” she said looking to Jon. “It’s far east of White Harbor, less populated but still an impressive castle. It’s right on the peninsula between the Shivering Sea and the Bite. She could sail there from Dragonstone and you wouldn’t be trapped on an island, but she could always flee if you tried something.”

Davos thought on it, his northern geography not as quick as Sansa’s. “Should be a fair spot. A travel for both of you.”

They looked to Jon as he thought it over. “Write to the Flints at Widow’s Watch,” he told Davos. “We’ll leave in three days. If we ride hard we could arrive within a week or so. When could they arrive from Dragonstone?”

“By the time they get the raven?” Davos took a moment to think. “Around the same time as you, depending on winds.”

Turning to Sansa he asked, “Could you occupy anyone who arrives until I’m back?”

“I won’t go with you?”

Jon smiled solemnly. “Sansa, if anything happens to me, you’re my heir. Then Rickon.” Bran had made it clear he wouldn’t be a lord, a prince or a king. He was the three-eyed raven.

Her surprise was short lived, Sansa’s brow sinking as she stepped forward. “You’ve only done that so I have to stay.”

“I’ve done this because I trust you, we share Stark blood, and you’ll be queen if I don’t die before wedding you.”

Sansa’s jaw shifted, pouting before she gave a relenting sigh. “How long will you be gone?”

“A week there, a week for talks, a week back? Maybe a month?” Jon looked to Davos, who nodded uncertainly.

“Should I wait for your return before showing them everything?”

Jon smiled, placing a hand on her shoulder. “Whatever you think is best, I trust your judgment, Sansa.”

XOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXO

Another letter from Sam complicated the upcoming meeting with Daenerys as they now had to find a way to get her to let them have the dragonglass beneath Dragonstone.
For a moment Sansa had wondered if they could have those that had originally been ready to pledge to Jon mine it without her noticing, but she felt a fool the moment it came to mind. Jon had looked at her confused by her sudden laugh as she imagined the people of Dragonstone setting up a mine with none of her people noticing, thinking the sounds mice that plagued the keep.

Thankfully the lords seemed to accept Jon naming her his heir, though it helped when he told them should he die to consider her Queen in the North. Their desire for independence had lessened with the prospect of a king raised in the north, but without him they’d want someone to stand for them. Sansa found herself more pleased with his clear trust and respect for her than the idea of being queen. She’d seen what being king did to him.

They had taken to meeting nearly every night in his solar. More than a few times he’d spent the first five to twenty minutes of their time finishing up at his desk. Sometimes he’d ask her to look over things for him, give him a second opinion. Other times she found he let her talk, listening as he always did, quiet as ever, yet she could see how exhausted he was. There had even been a handful of times where she excused herself because she noticed him fighting to stay awake and listen to her.

They’d moved their seats closer to each other in front of his hearth, letting her sit with her head on his shoulder, their hands entwined on the neighboring arms of their chairs. Occasionally while they sat, after he took a drink or during silences, he would pull her hand up and lean down to kiss the back of it.

There were plenty of times where that would lead to her turning to kiss the base of his neck, which made him turn to catch her lips, and then things would end with them stripped to their small clothes. This night, before he left for Widow’s Watch, she simply squeezed his hand and reached over to place her right hand on his arm, snuggling as close as she could.

“Do you remember when we were children? I remember you always used to play Ryam Redwyne and Aemon Targaryen. Not kings, but gallant knights, legends in their time.”

“I never even imagined I could have this,” he said letting his thumb rub the back of her hand.

“I wish I could go back and play with you, just so I’d have more memories of you then. I could have been Naerys. I could have had you be the Florian to my Jonquil instead of Robb.”

“I think he would have murdered me for steeling his place,” Jon said with a laugh.

Sansa laughed quietly, rubbing her head against his shoulder with a sigh. “I wish I hadn’t wasted so much time.”

Jon turned his head to place a kiss on the crown of her head. “What do you mean?”

“I wasted so much time dreaming of a different life with a golden haired prince when all I ever wanted was here. A man who’s brave, gentle, strong, everything a knight should be. One who makes me feel complete, even with Lady gone. Who makes me feel like every time they humiliated me or beat me never mattered or was worth it because in some way they brought me here.

“I wish I could go back to that little girl and tell her to stop being such an idiot. To stop following her mother and see you for what you really are. If I did, if I hadn’t been so blinded by my need to be everything my mother wanted, I’ve no doubt I would never have gone south. I never would have let you go to the Wall. I would have run away with you if they tried to stop us.”
“I’m sure that would dispel your mother’s worries about me,” Jon said with a smirk. “A bastard stealing away his younger half-sister.”

“We might have suspected the truth sooner.”

Jon groaned. “You too?”

Sansa grinned. “It’s too easy. Blame your ancestors.”

Shaking his head he glanced at her. “I wish I’d have known earlier as well,” he said quietly. “I… I used to wish I was closer to you. I hated that I was an embarrassment to you and your family. Part of me hated every time you went to Robb for help when you were scared or in trouble. I wanted to be there for you as much as he was, but I knew I couldn’t. It’s part of why Arya was such a relief for me.

“She always acted like she was a boy, but then she’d get scared and cling to my leg and I felt like a big brother again. I felt like someone needed me, that me existing made someone’s life better for once.”

Sansa’s hand squeezed his, raising her head and turning to him with tears in her eyes as she reached up to stroke his cheek and make him look at her. “You’ve made my life so much better, Jon. I don’t know what I’d do without you.”

Jon frowned, leaning in to kiss her quickly. “I’m sorry I’m leaving.”

“I know you have to,” she sighed, resting her head on his shoulder again.

They sat in silence for a long moment before she spoke again.

“I’ve heard she’s beautiful.” Feeling him shift to look at her and picturing his questioning look she clarified, “Daenerys.”

“So are you.”

Sansa closed her fingers around his hand to stroke the back. “What if she wants an alliance through marriage?”

“I’m already getting married to the most beautiful woman in Westeros,” he said resting his cheek on her head. “I won’t give her up, not even if it’s for the most beautiful woman in Essos.”

Sansa frowned. “It would be unwise to not consider it. She has armies and three dragons. We’ll need them, not just to take Westeros but when the Night King comes.”

Suddenly she felt him shift and was pulled into his lap, facing him. “Sansa,” he said meeting her eyes. “The only thing that could stop me from marrying you is you not wanting it. And not just because you’re trying to do the right thing, but because you truly don’t want to. Is that the case?”

“Of course not,” she said firmly.

“Then I’m marrying you.” His hand slid into her hair, pushing her close enough for him to catch her lips in his.

Her fingers dug into his tunic, both to keep herself steady and feel his chest beneath, feeling the rise and fall of it once they parted. With a sigh she turned, resting her head on his shoulder as he wrapped his arms around her.
After another long silence he noticed a sly smile take her lips, the kind she got when she knew she’d found a way to prove a point and win an argument. After a moment she noted, “Your name is Aegon.”

“It is,” Jon nodded.

“Aegon had two wives.”

Jon stared at her. At first he’d thought her teasing, but there was no hint of it in her tone or face. Then he wondered if it could be some kind of test. A way to challenge his commitment to her, but that didn’t quite make sense, and didn’t seem like something she’d do. Maybe when she was younger she might have been that kind of girl, but not now.

With no idea how to answer, he decided to go with facts. “They were both his sisters. I don’t have sisters.”

Since he was trying to avoid a proper response, she teased, “Are you suggesting you’d like Arya as a second wife?”

Jon shivered dramatically. “Uck.”

“I’m going to tell Arya that was your reaction,” she snickered.

“She’d probably retch.” Jon tightened his grip around her waist. “It’s different with her.”

“I know,” Sansa nodded slightly. “But it won’t be like that with your aunt either. She’s just a person who happens to have a Dothraki horde, a legion of Unsullied and three dragons that would help us survive.”

“Sansa I… I can’t just marry someone to gain their allegiance. I couldn’t make her suffer through some loveless marriage where she knows I only took her because of what she could give us.”

“Then don’t,” Sansa said sitting up to meet his eyes. “But if you feel anything toward her think on it and if you think it best, offer it to her.”

He searched her eyes for anything that told him she was forcing this. That some part of her was closed off, crying, wishing he’d use this as a chance to proclaim his love for her in some dramatic way. Instead he found only honest support, trust in whatever decision he made.

“If that’s what you think is best,” he said with a solemn nod. “I’ll think on it when I meet her.”

“If you find you have some love for her,” she said letting her fingers brush through his beard while keeping her eyes on his, “then so be it. I’d rather share you and have us live happily than risk dying and damning everyone to their deaths for the sake of propriety. Whatever happens, I am yours and you are mine.”

Jon smiled, pressing his lips to hers as he whispered, “I am yours and you are mine.”

XOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXO

“Do you have to?” Rickon asked, frowning at Jon.

“I do,” Jon nodded. “I need to see if I can convince her to help us. And if not… well then I’ll have to figure out how to steal her dragons.” When Rickon chuckled, Jon glanced across the field to where Lyanna Mormont was stood with a group of free folk girls.
“Tormund’s at Eastwatch and I’ll be gone,” Jon said with a teasing smile. “You’ll watch over Johnna and Willa for me? Make sure they’re okay.”

Sansa smirked seeing her baby brother’s cheeks go red, nodding. “I will.”

“Good,” Jon said looking to Ghost beside Rickon. “And you’ll take care of Ghost for me, right?”

“I will, I promise.”

He glanced at Sansa before conspiratorially telling Rickon, “Make sure he doesn’t have bows in his fur if she brushes him.”

“He’s going to be covered in them now,” Sansa told him. “You as well.”

Jon shot her a knowing smirk which she returned, feeling the blue ribbon beneath his glove as he moved to Bran, who looked up from the chair Wolkan built for him. “I’ll keep an eye on you.”

“I’m sure you will,” Jon laughed. “Don’t get lost. You’re needed more here than you are there.”

Bran tilted his head before nodding. “I’ll try.”

Stepping to Sansa, he took her hands and kissed her fingers. “I’ll do all I can to return to you.”

Sansa smiled sadly. “I know you will. I’ll miss you every day.”

“And I you.”

Sansa made her way to the walls to watch Jon ride off with Davos, Melisandre, his squire Willam Snow and a dozen others. Behind them was a cart holding one of the crates brought back from the Wall.

Rickon looked at her and seeing the tears glistening in her eyes clutched her hand with a supportive smile.

Coming back to the courtyard Bran sat waiting for her. “He’ll be back.”

A smirk flickered across her lips. “You see that in your visions?”

Shaking his head, Bran said simply, “I know Jon.”

XOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXO

The sky had been clear all day sailing south until night came and with it the storm. Dark clouds blocked the moon and left the sky without stars. Lesser men might have been lost, but they were ironborn and Yara’s ships continued their course to Dorne.

She found herself below deck enjoying Ellaria’s dornish invasion when the ship rocked. Yara leapt to her feet, pulling up and tying her breeches as she made her way to the stairs. “Stay here,” she told Ellaria, pulling her sword from it’s sheath on the barrel of ale.

Coming to deck she found her men rushing to put out fires and made her way toward the thunder she heard. Back by crackling lightning she saw the outline of the ship and knew. “Euron.”

Silence rammed into their ship and the spiked corvus sank onto the deck with Euron roaring, riding it down. The moment it was embedded her uncle charged forward and cut through one of her men. Taking them all in he laughed in anticipation of the slaughter to come.
Yara cut through man after man and told Tyene to keep her mother safe below deck. She saw her fleet aflame as catapulted firebombs streaked through the sky. She saw the mast of her ship snap and burn as it fell to deck. She saw Euron run Obara’s spear through her and choke the life from Nymeria with her whip. She saw his men carrying a struggling Tyene and Ellaria toward his ship. She saw him below and jumped.

Euron got back to his feet after she rolled away. “Give your uncle a kiss,” he said and she smacked him.

He busted her lip with the side of his axe, snapped her sword on the deck, and then punched her again and again and again until he charged forward, forcing her against the stairs.

Yanked to her feet as Euron held her throat while pressing his axe against it, Yara thought of Theon. She wished she could have saved him. No doubt he was dead. If not from Ramsay then surely he’d been killed by the Starks and their King Aegon. He’d betrayed them, so they’d take his head.

For a moment she wondered if she’d get to feast in the Drowned God’s watery halls with Theon, but then Euron threw her to one of his men. He wouldn’t kill her, and she knew that she was worse for it.

She saw his crewmen cutting the tongues from hers, heard the rumors of the things he’d done to his own brothers. Euron had no qualms about kinslaying, but he knew there were worse things to do to someone, other taboos to break. Being dragged onto the Silence all she could do was hope to drown in the blood from her nose and mouth, let her choke and die and stay dead if only to rob Euron of whatever he intended.

But she didn’t. Yara lived, and knew that had damned her worse than death.

Chapter End Notes

I actually don’t have too much of a problem with Jon going to Dragonstone in the show, but his situation here means he can’t go even if he wants to, so he’s offered to meet her halfway.

I thought it interesting to have her be the one who suggest the political marriage and the polygamy. This isn’t the vindictive, jealous Sansa from the show, she’s more mellow and thoughtful. She doesn’t want to lose Jon and she’s sure of her feelings for him and his for her, so I think she feels pretty secure at this point.

Originally I didn’t have the Euron and Yara scene, but this is about where episode two ended so I decided to add it. There’s not a ton of changes, but I wanted to introduce Euron early cause hey, guess who’s getting some reworking to make him more interesting and have a bigger role? You guessed right: Hot Pie. Hopefully this doesn’t ruin it for everyone but it turns out Hot Pie is actually the Great Other in a human vessel and now he’s coming for Jon!

Seriously though, I feel like Euron was wasted in the show, so I hope to do more with him here and have some interesting things planned, assuming it all works out.
Jon stood on one of Widow’s Watch’s towers overlooking the white waves of the Bite and Shivering Sea crashing against the rocky cliffs below. Though further south than Winterfell, the sea air made it seem just as cold. Hearing Davos come up behind him, Jon glanced back and gave the older man a nod.

“Is it like this on Dragonstone?”

“Warmer,” the man said with a laugh, bundling himself in his cloak to stand beside Jon.

With a glance toward Davos, Jon asked, “How many of the kingdoms have you been to, Ser Davos?”

“What do you mean, your grace?”

“You have a land in the Stormlands, spent time on Dragonstone, in Winterfell and even at the Wall. Anywhere else? You were born in Flea Bottom, right?”

“A few shore towns in the Vale and Dorne. Mostly kept to the eastern side of Westeros. Why do you ask?”

“I’m curious if you’ll be happy retiring to the Stormlands or if you’d prefer someplace else. There’s plenty of ruined keeps that will be empty once things have settled, and I’d prefer one in your hands than left to neighboring lords.”

Davos stared at Jon for a moment. “I don’t know what to say, your grace.”

Jon seemed pleased with that, turning to him. “I’d prefer you say you’d like to return to King’s Landing, but I wouldn’t ask you to give up the chance for peace just to burden you with being my hand, no matter how much I may wish it. I doubt you’d abandon me with so much at stake, but once the Night King is gone and we’ve dealt with Cersei I’ll likely be forced to spend my days at King’s Landing.

“You’ve already given me so much of your council. I don’t want to presume that you’d stay on, but I’ll do what I can to make sure not only do you know how much I appreciate it, but to make sure you gain the recognition you deserve for it. I’d offer to name you Warden or Lord Paramount of a realm, but I’m afraid that would upset too many others, so I’d ask you accept instead an empty keep or a new one wherever you think you’d like to spend your time.”

Davos looked down, taking a breath to steady himself and fight the knot in his throat. Looking to Jon he smiled. “I’ll have to think on it, your grace.”
“Something to keep in mind,” Jon nodded. With a glance toward the sea he asked, “How long should we wait before leaving?”

“A week,” Davos answered. “Even a poor captain should be able to get them here by then.”

It seemed their captain wasn’t poor as they were told Targaryen sails had been spotted the next day. Jon had wanted to ride to the shore and greet them, but Davos and Melisandre convinced him not to.

“She’ll seek to challenge your place as king,” said Melisandre. “I know you think it petty, but it should help remind her you’re not beneath her.”

Davos groused. “She has the right of it. I’ll take some men to escort her. I’d suggest you take the lord’s seat in the great hall and wait for our return. You’ve been king barely months now while she’s been a queen of some sort since she was sold to the Dothraki. There’s a chance she’ll try to dismiss you even with the copies the maester made us.”

With a sigh, Jon nodded, patting Davos’ shoulder. “I’ll await your return.”

**XOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXO**

Davos stood beside Willam and the others watching the boat carrying the landing party from the Stormborn ship. They hadn’t made it to shore when Davos furrowed his brow.

“She’s not there,” he said quietly. “Did she not even come?”

His annoyance faded when a screeching roar came from the horizon and they turned to see three dragons cut through gray clouds, speeding toward the peninsula. He watched them pass overhead, circling while the boat landed and men hurried off. It was only then the largest of the dragons landed, most of the men backing away as it eyed them in silent warning while letting the silver haired woman atop it dismount.

Davos’ gaze shifted from her to those making their way from the boat. A quartet of sour faced men wrapped in hides with arakhs on their waist hurried to the woman’s side. A round faced bald man and bronze skinned women with large black hair made their way toward Davos along with a short man he knew to be Tyrion Lannister.

They came to a stop, waiting for their queen, who walked toward them while her dragon leapt into the air, joining the others in circling them. “Davos Seaworth,” Davos said reaching over to shake Tyrion’s hand.

“Tyrion Lannister,” he said with a nod.

Davos turned to Daenerys as she reached them. “If you’d all follow me into Widow’s Watch, our king awaits.”

Tyrion glanced to Daenerys, shrugging in surprise at their not being asked to give up their weapons. Could mean they were dumb or they didn’t care, which might have been intimidating if not for the dragons overhead.

Following close to Davos, Tyrion looked up asking, “Is it truly Jon Snow?”


“No bastard after all,” Tyrion said with a laugh.
“And yet still raised one because of the lies of men and choices he never had,” Davos said grimly.

More often than not he found himself being jovial to counter his sullen king, but he hoped that comment would endear him to the woman who would surely be prepared to diminish everything he’d been through in hopes of securing her own claim. He wasn’t sure if it had worked, Daenerys keeping behind him, but the frown Tyrion wore after glancing at her made Davos hopeful.

Entering the castle they were given guest rights before being brought to the great hall. They found the tables moved, leaving only the large lord’s chair opposite the doors.

Daenerys entered to find a woman with vividly red hair wearing a crimson dress stood beside the man she presumed to be Aegon Targaryen, or Jon Snow. He sat with his elbow on the arm of the chair, his hand sinking from holding his cheek to clutch it’s arm as he sat up.

His face framed by pulled back dark curls with dark eyes lacking any sign of violet or purple, she wondered if he could possibly be Targaryen. Then she remembered all those who hadn’t gained the traditional looks, from Duncan the Small to Aegor Bittersteel. Still, she found he looked kingly, holding himself well and handsome enough to be worthy of a portrait. Yet the only hint of his house colors were a black jerkin, gloves and boots with the rest more dark gray.

When they entered his eyes tracked them, taking in each with only a small nod to Tyrion. Settling upon Daenerys he found Sansa was right again, she was beautiful. Her black attire and red cape draped from her right shoulder added to her regal appearance as much as how she held herself. It was her silvery hair that drew his eye, curling strands of wavy hair framing her face while the rest was intricately braided. Sansa usually wore her hair in northern plaits or straight and down with smalls braids at the back which he preferred to the rare southron style he’d seen, but Daenerys’ braids fit her well.

The others took to guard positions while Davos moved to his place on Jon’s right, opposite Melisandre. Daenerys stood directly ahead of Jon with Tyrion on her right and Missandei on her left with Varys and the quartet of Dothraki behind her.

Seconds passed as the Targaryens stared at one another. For a moment Davos felt tense thinking they were challenging the other to speak, but then realized they likely expected to be introduced before speaking.

“Your grace, Daenerys Targaryen.”

Missendei furrowed her brow, standing tall. “Before you is Daenerys Stormborn of House Targaryen, Rightful Heir to the Iron Throne, Rightful Queen of the Andals and the First Men, Protector of the Seven Kingdoms, the Mother of Dragons, the Khalessi of the Great Grass Sea, the Unburnt, the Breaker of Chains.”

Jon sat back with a nod, his eyes shifting toward Davos.

“Oh. This is Aegon Targaryen,” he said simply. “Raised Jon Snow. He’s King of Westeros.”

Melisandre rolled her eyes, stepping forward. “Before you sits King Aegon Snowshroud of House Targaryen and Stark, the Sixth of his Name, King of the Andals, the Rhoynar and the First Men, Lord of the Seven Kingdoms and Protector of the Realm, the White Wolf, the Hidden Dragon, Friend of the Free Folk, the Resurrected, the Slayer of White Walkers and Wights, the Sword in the Darkness, the Prince That Was Promised.”

Jon glanced at her, surprised by the abundance of titles she gave him. Had he been signing his
letters incorrectly?

Daenerys seemed amused by his surprised glance. “A pleasure to meet you, my lord.”

“The pleasure is mine, your grace.”

“Forgive me, your grace,” Davos interrupted, “but Aegon is king, not a lord.”

Daenerys’ jaw shifted. “Pardon my slight. It was unintentional.”

“It’s fine,” Jon assured, waving his hand toward Davos. “Thank you for agreeing to this meeting and coming. I hope the winds were kind. I’m relieved you came as quickly as you did.”

“Seems you’re a busy man,” Tyrion said arching his brow. “Rising from bastard to king.”

“I am what’s needed of me,” said Jon. “I needed to be a bastard so I wouldn’t be murdered and I was. I needed to hide at the Wall, so I became Lord Commander. I’m needed to help prepare us for the Long Night so I’ve become king, as I should have been the moment I was born.”

Melisandre gave him the slightest of smiles hearing him take her suggestion to stress his the fact his crown was stolen from him at birth.

“Can a Lord Commander be king?” Tyrion asked, tilting his head. “I thought brothers of the Night’s Watch swore an oath to hold no crowns and the like.”

Jon answered simply, “My watch is ended.”

“He speaks the truth,” Davos added. “Ask the new Lord Commander or any at Castle Black, they’ll say the same.”

“I thought their oaths were for life,” noted Varys.

“A king’s will surpasses the oaths of men,” Melisandre said carefully. “A mask forced upon a child can swear no oaths. A man robbed of the truth cannot cast aside what he does not know he has. His oaths were a lie as much as his name, his place on the wall forced upon him the same, and yet even here as Aegon Targaryen he still acts as the shield that guard the realms of men.”

When Melisandre noticed Jon look at her she found he gave her an appreciative smile before looking back to their guests.

“I find it hard to believe such a secret could be kept for so long,” said Daenerys. “If the last few years are any sign of things then it would be easier to claim a bastard a king.”

Jon smiled at the insult. “I’ve had many people think me a fool, but I would truly have to be one to want to rule kingdoms struggling from years of war. A kingdom torn apart as winter begins and the Long Night nears.”

Davos looked at him, surprised he answered her insult with one of his own.

“If that’s what you believe,” Daenerys began, “why not abdicate?”

Jon looked at her almost pitying. “Because you need my help as much as I need yours.”

Daenerys exchanged a look with Tyrion, smiling as she looked to Jon. “Did you not see three dragons flying overhead? I have armies of unstoppable Unsullied and thousands of Dothraki sworn to kill for me… and I need your help?”
“Not to defeat Cersei and take the Iron Throne,” said Davos. “You could storm King’s Landing and the city would fall. Hell, we almost took it and we didn’t even have dragons.”

“Almost,” repeated Tyrion.

“But you haven’t stormed King’s Landing. Why not?” Jon asked, rising to his feet and looking them over. “The only reason I can see is you don’t want to kill thousands of innocent people. It’s the fastest way to win the take the throne but you won’t do it. Which means, at the very least, you’re better than Cersei.

“You could have come here and scorched the entire castle and ignored the claim of some man who didn’t even know he was a king most of his life. You could have assumed I was lying and killed me without concern about kinslaying, but you’re here. Same as I’m here because it’s needed.”

Daenerys shook her head. “You say you only rose from need, so step down and go live in peace.”

“There is no peace,” Jon snapped, meeting her dismissive gaze before he sighed. “There never will be, so long as Cersei lives and the Night King marches south.”


“And women, children, horses, bears, giants,” Jon said with a nod. “Everything they’ve come across, everything they kill rises again as part of their army. An army that doesn’t hesitate, doesn’t doubt orders or need to eat or drink or sleep. We can’t waste our time here squabbling about who sits on some useless throne that will be worthless if they make it past the Wall.”

Daenerys met his gaze and found herself doubting it less than she had on her journey, but stepped forward, entwining her hands over her stomach. “I’ve spent my life in foreign lands. So many men have tried to kill me,” she gave a small dismissive shake of her head, “I don’t remember all their names. I have been sold like a broodmare. I’ve been chained and betrayed. Raped and defiled. Do you know what kept me standing through all those years in exile?

“Faith. Not in any gods. Not in myths and legends. In myself,” she declared. “In Daenerys Targaryen. The world hadn’t seen a dragon in centuries until my children were born. The Dothraki hadn’t crossed the sea, any sea. They did for me.

“I was born to rule the Seven Kingdoms,” Daenerys said as she came to a stop before Jon, shorter than him yet standing just as tall, “and I will.”

“You’ll be ruling over a graveyard,” Jon declared somberly, “if we don’t defeat the Night King.”

Daenerys’ lips tightened before Tyrion moved to stand beside her. “You may have the right of birth, but we both know how you were raised. Daenerys was raised knowing what she was, what she could become, and has been queen for years. Abdicate, let us unite our efforts and once Cersei is dead we can focus on… whatever you saw beyond the wall.”

Jon met Daenerys’ gaze as Davos stepped beside him, looking from Tyrion to Daenerys. “You don’t believe him. I understand that. It sounds like nonsense. But if destiny has brought Daenerys Targaryen back to our shores, it has also raised Aegon Targaryen as the bastard Jon Snow.

“You were the first to bring Dothraki to Westeros? Jon Snow is the first to make allies of wildlings and northmen. He was named Lord Commander of the Night’s Watch. The North marched to Winterfell ready to make him King in the North, not because of his birthright, they all thought him a damn bastard. They support him as King of Westeros not because it’s owed to him, but because
he earned it. All those hard sons of bitches chose him as their leader… because they believe in him.

“All those things you don’t believe in, he faced those things,” Davos said glancing at his king. “He fought those things for the good of his people. He risked his life for his people. He took a knife in the heart for his people. He gave his own li-”

Davos quieted when Jon turned to look at him while Daenerys and Tyrion shared a glance. Jon turned to them with a sigh, having hoped this wouldn’t be necessary. “We have proof. If you see my proof and still think the throne matters then you can go take it from Cersei and try to keep it once the Long Night is through.”

Daenerys arched her brow, both in interest of his supposed proof as well as the clear challenge. Tyrion wore a solemn expression as Jon turned to his men and ordered, “Go get it.”

Davos glanced at the men rushing off and looked to Daenerys. “I suggest you stand with your men, your grace.”

She remained silent as she and Tyrion made their way back to her guards, leaving plenty of space between them again. Seconds later Willam returned, rushing to Jon’s side and handing him a torch moments before the doors burst open and they saw the undead man run into the room before the rope tied around his chest pulled him back.

Missandei screamed, stepping back as the Dothraki stepped forward, their hands on their hilts as they stared wide eyed at the creature clawing at them while two men pulled on the rope, keeping it from their guests. Varys’ arms fell to his side, gaping at the wight as Tyrion stood frozen in confusion at how this could exist. Daenerys stared at it, shock and fear barely noticeable in her widened eyes.

Willam rushed around the undead man, taking a breath as he waved at him, drawing his attention. When the wight turned on Willam and thrust his arms out, one of the guards unsheathed his sword and swung it down, cutting it at the elbow.

They watched as not only did the wight not stop reaching for Willam, barely noticing the cut, but his dismembered hand writhed on the floor.

The men pulled him away, letting Willam pick up the hand, holding it out to Jon who held out the torch for Davos to light by scraping flint across his dagger. “The only ways to destroy them is stabbing them with dragonglass,” he said before holding the flame to the hand, “or with fire.”

They watched the hand go still as the flames spread, Jon dropping it before it engulfed the hand. He handed off the torch, motioning for the men to take the wight away. “Valyrian steel works as well, but unlike the others it’s rare.”

“Dragonglass isn’t rare?” asked Tyrion.

“Not on Dragonstone.” Jon looked to them. “There is a mountain of dragonglass buried beneath the island. We intend to mine it and craft weapons we’ll ship to White Harbor and distribute as much as we can.”

“Dragonstone is mine,” Daenerys said possessively, pulling her gaze from the wight to look at Jon.

“Your claim, my claim, they don’t matter. Lannister, Stark, Targaryen, none of them matter. There is only one side that matters.” She met Jon’s cool gaze as he said firmly, “The living.”

Seeing Daenerys exchange unsettled looks with her party, Jon rubbed his hands together. “I’m sure
you’d prefer to relax in rooms that aren’t rocking with the ocean. Lady Lyessa will show you to your quarters. I’d ask you think on what you’ve seen.”

XOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXO

The people of King’s Landing filled the streets with cheers and jeers as Euron lead his prisoners toward the Red Keep. Euron kissed at women beneath him and gave a content sigh.

“This is the life,” he said from atop his horse as the crowd threw dirt and rotted food at his prisoners. “Look at them. Cheering for a Greyjoy.” He reveled in their applause before yanking on the leather leash wrapped around Yara’s throat.

When she stumbled forward he glanced down at her. “I have to be honest. This is making me hard.” With a laugh he looked ahead. “If only Theon were here instead of Winterfell. I bet that twat spends his nights on his knees before his bastard king.”

Yara glanced at him in confusion, which Euron noticed with a smirk. “Oh, you didn’t know? The cockless disgrace is little more than a servant for the Starks.” Euron looked ahead with a laugh. “Won’t be long before he’s here with us. At least I know he can handle some rough play… but what about you, niece?”

Her disgust and anger only made Euron laugh as he lead them to Cersei and gave her Ellaria before taking Yara for himself. Cersei was sure to torture Ellaria and Tyene in her own way while Euron would find others. Yara wasn’t sure which would be worse.

Chapter End Notes

I thought adding Melisandre to their group proved interesting as she would surely be more at ease with pomp and circumstance than Davos, whose intro for Jon in the show I loved, but I loved having Melisandre there to make Jon seem even grander and coming up with all her titles for him.

Also may as well throw this in here since I haven’t already. When I was first brought in Willam he was going to be a show version of Satin, but Jon wouldn’t take a new or potential recruit for the Night’s Watch and it wouldn’t make much sense for him to be with one of the northern houses, so I made my own character to fill the small role of squire.

Again Euron’s scene wasn’t there originally, but I slipped in a small slip on his part.
Discussions

Chapter Summary

Discussions continue at Widow’s Watch.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

“Have you fought Grumpkins and Snarks as well?” Tyrion asked when he found Jon stood on the walls of Widow’s Watch.

“No. I dread the day they come,” Jon said turning to Tyrion.

Smirking, he gave Jon a once over. “Who’d have thought? The Bastard of Winterfell a hidden prince.”

“And the dwarf of Casterly Rock now hand to Daenerys Targaryen.” They smirked at each other before Jon nodded toward him. “Picked up some scars along the way.”

“It’s been a long road,” Tyrion nodded. “But we’re both still here.”

“Better than we were, hopefully.”

Tyrion nodded. “And Sansa? I hear she’s alive and well. Does she miss me terribly?” Jon maintained a slate expression, only just tilting his head. “A sham marriage. And unconsummated.”

“I didn’t ask,” said Jon.

“Well it was. Wasn’t. Anyway,” Tyrion said shifting focus, “she’s much smarter than she lets on.”

“She’s started to let on,” Jon said with a fond smile.

“Good,” Tyrion nodded. “I’ll gladly step aside and annul it. Let her have happiness with a good man.”

Jon gave a thankful nod for the offer. “I hope to be worthy of her.”

“If Good King Jon isn’t worthy of her than I don’t know who would be,” Tyrion said with a laugh.

“Gods,” he grimaced, “you’ve heard that too.”

“Only twice. Chorus was much better than Long King Jon.”

Jon sighed, shaking his head before glancing toward the tower housing their chambers. “I hate this,” he said to Tyrion’s surprise. “It all feels like such a waste of time when I know he’s coming. While we stand around trying to figure out who should lead they get closer to the Wall, and we’re finished unless every kingdom comes together.”

“You can’t expect her to just give up the moment she finally makes it back,” Tyrion said solemnly. “Her entire life she was told she’d return, and ever since her brother’s death she knew it would be
as queen. Now she finds out not only is there another Targaryen but her claim is surpassed. That she lived every hardship because her brother ran off to marry, and now his son she never knew existed holds claim to the thing that kept her going through most of it.’’

Tyrion sighed. “Give her time. She’s a good woman, a good queen, caring, just and fair. She’s not some foreign invader. She could have sailed for Westeros long ago, but she didn’t. Instead she stayed and saved many people from horribly fates. Some of whom came with us… She protects people from monsters, just as you do. It’s why she came here.

“But she can’t just give up everything she’s wanted for years, what drove her through every challenge. She wouldn’t be a worthy queen if she did.”

Jon glanced at him, thinking back on Melisandre’s words weeks earlier. “I understand that,” Jon nodded. “I do, but I can’t stand aside either. Even if I wanted to, the North wouldn’t accept her easily. They only accepted me because I fought alongside them and still have Stark blood. I would have spent the rest of my life on the Wall, but I couldn’t, just as I can’t give up now. I’d rather us all focus North, but I have to worry about Cersei to the south and now my own kin and her dragons.”

“You needn’t worry,” Tyrion offered. “Daenerys doesn’t want to take this from you any more than she wants to kill you. It’s one thing to have you step aside, but she’s no kinslayer, not when you’re all she has. Together you two will be unstoppable, you could retake the throne and unite every kingdom under a Targaryen banner once again. We’re on the same side.”

“The living,” Jon said firmly. “That’s my side. But if I have to I’ll conquer every kingdom myself to make sure we survive.”

“‘He thinks himself a conqueror?’ Daenerys asked with a smirk, impressed and amused.

“I think it more he’s willing to become one,” Tyrion clarified. “I suppose he conquered the North. The Vale seems to be on his side if reports are to believed. He could very well make his way through each kingdom if his attention weren’t being pulled toward the Wall. If we hadn’t showed up the only ones that would stand in his way would be the Westerlands and Crownlands. I doubt even the most duty bound Stormlanders would stay loyal to Cersei.”

Daenerys sighed, crossing her arms as she turned from the window to Tyrion at the hearth. “And we’ve ruined that.”

“Not quite,” said Tyrion. “I believe we’ve presented him with more options. He had potentially thousands more men, many of whom would be killed in wars with Cersei before they ever reached him. Now we stand here with nearly all the armies that might have joined him, the Dothraki, the Unsullied and three dragons.”

Daenerys arched her brow, looking insulted. “You make it sound as if we should usurp him. I will not.”

“I know,” Tyrion said with a smile. “Do that and we lose the North forever. Not just the Starks, but every house. They like to say the North Remembers… meaning they’re patient in their spite.”


“He isn’t asking you to leave,” said Tyrion. “You’re his kin. He’s a good man, he won’t ask you to
become some obedient princess for him to sell of as he pleases. He knows you’ve worked to get here, he won’t turn you away.”

“So I need to accept it? Go from queen to princess?”

“There are worse falls,” he said with a smirk. Seeing her stare at him, Tyrion sighed. “I suppose you could always offer to marry him. You’d both remain king and queen, unite our forces.”

Daenerys’ brow sank. “He’s already betrothed, isn’t he? To his cousin.”

“Who he thought a half-sister most his life,” reminded Tyrion. “It could very well be one of convenience. The poor girl suffered at King’s Landing.”

Tyrion frowned at the fire. “My bastard nephew had his kingsguard strip her in front of the court and beat her with their swords when her brother won a victory, made her stare at her father’s severed head on a spike. Every day he found a new way to torment the girl. Perhaps Jon’s doing it to keep her from being forced into another betrothal she doesn’t want.”

A flicker of doubt came through Daenerys’ nod. “You think he’d do that? Marry her just to keep her from harm? Not to try and secure his claim in the North.”

Tyrion chuckled, turning to her. “If Sansa asked him to wed her and never bed her he would, same as I did. However unlike me, he’d spend the rest of his life as celibate as he intended when he went to the Wall. He wouldn’t force something on someone else, especially not someone he cares for.

“You saw as well as I did he wasn’t lying when he said he rose only because he was needed. He’d resigned himself to a life at the Wall because he thought it the best he could do. He isn’t bearing the burden of a crown for his sake, but for his family and the realm. He’d bear a marriage or just about anything else they asked of him. That’s the kind of king I imagine Aegon Targaryen is. The kind of man Jon Snow was and no doubt still is.”

XOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXO

Chakko stood off to the side atop one of the Widow’s Watch towers looking over the sea while Daenerys watched her dragons. The three were circling each other, playfully swerving around one another over the ocean.

She glanced back hearing her dothraki guard shift, his hand on the hilt of his arakh when the door opened and Jon walked through it. Though surprised to find them there, he didn’t turn away, opting instead to walk toward Daenerys near the railing.

“Amazing thing to see,” he said looking from the dragons to her back.

“I named them for my first husband and my brothers,” she said looking to him with a solemn smile. “They’re all gone now.”

“Which one’s named for my father?” He asked as he came to her side.

“Rhaegal’s the green and bronze one,” she said pointing him out. “He’s not as docile as Viserion, but not as stubborn as Drogon. They’re the only family I have…” She turned to him, keeping a hand on the rail, “Or so I thought.”

Jon glanced at her before turning to watch Viserion dive into the ocean and come up a moment later. “I’m sorry it had to be like this.”
Daenerys glanced down with a smile, surprised to hear his sincerity. “I suppose I shouldn’t have expected a conqueror to step down so easily.”

Jon held back a sigh, walking to the rail. “You’ve been talking to Tyrion.”

Daenerys rolled her eyes, turning her back to the ocean. “He is my hand.”

“He enjoys talking.”

“We all enjoy what we’re good at.”

After a moment, Jon declared grimly, “I don’t.”

Daenerys looked to Jon, taking him in for a moment. He was stoic, maybe sullen, but came off as regal in a way. It reminded her of the stories Barristan Selmy told her of his father, a somber man who enjoyed the harp more than he did the sword, yet had caused a war which nearly destroyed the Targaryen lineage.

Had he ever heard stories of his father? Supposedly the seven kingdoms believed Rhaegar had kidnapped his mother and raped her before she died, but even now that he knew better, did he have anyone to tell him stories of the man Rhaegar was. That his father wasn’t a rapist or a mad man like her own, just a fool who believed in songs enough to think love would make everything okay.

Was he like Rhaegar? How much was he like Lyanna, who captured her brother’s heart so much he left one wife to be with her? How much was he like the man who raised him, whom she’d believed no better than the usurper Viserys told her of, yet kept this man alive with a lie rather than obey his newly crowned king and best friend?

“You know I can’t just return to Mereen,” she said finally.

“I’d never ask you to,” he said turning to her.

“My men won’t obey anyone but me.”

“Nor will mine.”

They paused, looking away from each other before she silently took a breath and turned to him. “Tyrion suggested we marry.”

To her surprise Jon looked to her, a smile flickering across his lips as he snickered. “Sansa suggested the same.”

Daenerys smirked. “Your betrothed suggested you cast her aside and marry me?”

Jon turned to the water. “Not cast her aside.”

Daenerys’ brow arched, barely keeping herself from laughing in surprise. “She suggested you live up to your namesake.”

“I won’t leave her, but she knew it would be offered and didn’t want me to turn it down immediately for her sake.”

Daenerys nodded, turning to him with her hands clasped together in front of her. “She sounds very understanding.”

“She’s strong. Stronger than most think. She’s been through a lot and I’ve done all I can to make
up for not being there for her when she needed someone.” He took a breath, his hands clutching the stone rail. “I wouldn’t force anyone into marriage, but if it came to it I’d try to make sure it wasn’t loveless or cold, and I’d never stray from those I’m sworn to. I’d do what I could to make sure they were as happy as I could and make sure they don’t feel abandoned or left out as much as I’d make sure they never feel pressured to do something they don’t want.”

Daenerys smiled, watching him stare off at the ocean to avoid looking at her.

Then, as if she’d missed what he was saying, he added, “I’d never make a decision without all us agreeing.”

Lowering her head to hold back a laugh, she turned to stand beside him looking toward the sea. “That’s fair. I’d prefer to—”

The door to the tower burst open and they turned to see Varys pause in surprise at the pair of them stood side by side, but then quickly rushed to her. “I have grave news,” he whispered.

Daenerys quickly stood straight and looked to Jon. “If you’d excuse me.”

Jon nodded, watching her leave, Varys waiting until they were in the stairwell to inform her, “Our Ironborn and Dornish allies were attacked on route to Dorne…”

XOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXO

“Do you think he’ll come for you?” Euron asked as he came to Yara in her cell. She was bruised and stripped to little more than a sack they threw over her, cuffed to the wall with just enough slack to reach the pot in the corner.

Yara remained silent, glaring at her uncle.

The man smirked as he moved closer. She dashed forward, trying to claw at him but her chains kept her inches away. “I heard you went to save him from the Boltons but he turned you away. You could have saved him from the man who tore off his cock, but he stayed there.”

She spat at him and he grinned, wiping it with his hand and looking over the bloodied saliva before slapping her with the back of his hand.

“Do you think he didn’t miss it?” She winced and turned back to him while he clarified, “His cock. Was it not very big?” Euron grabbed her cheeks, holding her face in place. “I heard you were chummy with him when he first came back. Does he still taste of salt, or was he just a wet dog?”

He shoved her face away and turned, pacing. “To turn away your own sister to serve the man who took you cock. People surely think him stupid, but do you know what I call that?” Euron came to a stop and turned to her with a smile. “Loyalty.

“The question is, how did he get it, huh? Give a man enough gold and he’ll join you, cut out his tongue for you, but what makes him stay even after you’ve made him no longer a man?” Euron arched his brow. “Maybe he didn’t care anymore. Maybe he was happy not being a man. Maybe Bolton filled little Theon so full until that was all he knew anymore and even his sister couldn’t make him leave.

“Maybe that’s how I should gain your loyalty,” Euron said meeting Yara’s gaze. Her saw a flicker of fear in her anger, making him grin. “They say there’s power in kings blood. I’m a king, ready to be one twice over once we win the war. Your father was a king. Our bastards might be worth draining.”
When Euron stepped toward her Yara took one back and Euron threw his head back in laughter, holding his stomach. She was confused until she saw him stumble forward and break into a run, grabbing her by the neck and lifting her as he threw her against the wall.

“I have something better in mind,” he whispered to her. Yara stared at him wide eyed, noticing his tongue brush against his pale lips as he opened his mouth and shifted his jaw. His fingers dug into her throat, sucking in a breath before he reached into his jerkin. “Something to fill you up.”

She watched him pull out a bottle of a blue viscous liquid, yanking the cap off with his lips and spitting it at her face. When she gasped for breath, he pushed the neck of the bottle into her mouth and moved his hand to her jaw, letting her suck in a breath and keeping her mouth closed as the awful tasting liquid poured down her throat.

When she started to hit him, he grabbed her right hand and snapped her index finger back. She choked on her scream as the liquid flooded her, feeling like she was drowning in it before he yanked the empty bottle out and tossed it behind him. When the glass shattered Euron stepped back, watching her closely.

Yara gasped for air, looking at his grinning face. Her stomach twisted as she tasted a million things in the wake of that liquid. With a sneer she ran forward and suddenly the chains snapped so she grasped his throat with both hands. Her fingers pushed into his neck, feeling it pulse against her as he opened his mouth to laugh, staring into her eyes as she choked him. The hint of blue in his lips grew, stretching to his face as his eyes went black.

When she finally threw his corpse to the ground Yara dashed to the door, throwing it open and rushing out before confusion took her and she stumbled to a stop staring at the beach before her. She watched as figures rose from the depths, deep ones from the stories of old. Half men born of man and sea creature. Each held gilded swords, though half were rotted while others had glittering scales.

A chirp made her turn and look to a skeletal bird swimming through the air above a small white dragon cloaked in wolf’s fur and chained at the neck. They were in the hall of a keep and beside the dragon stood a woman cloaked in shimmering shadows, white flames flowing beneath her skirts, searing the ground around her.

Beside them, sat atop a throne of skulls black and gold and ice was her uncle Euron. He smiled down on her, his eyes black and shining like the woman beside him. When he rose from from the throne the cloak that trailed him split. The inky tendrils writhed, grasping at everything around them until they wrapped around her throat and he leaned in to whisper in her ear.

“What do you see?” Euron asked, watching Yara sink against the wall, her hands held up by the cuffs on her wrist. When she stared at him in shock Euron barked with laughter and departed, his laughs echoing through the dim halls beyond her cell.

Chapter End Notes

So the end of this chapter is basically why I wanted to include the Euron scenes in the last few. I couldn’t just make him the book version, but I definitely want to integrate some of those elements into his character to make him stand out more.

Also to the people talking about the faith not liking a polygamous marriage, the Faith
of the Seven is basically dead in the water. They have a queen who killed their last High Septon and a king who follows the Old Gods and has a Red Priestess as one of his closest advisers. Even Sansa as queen won’t be a proponent of them because she has no faith in them. The Faith and their followers are clinging to a dying religion at this point. The traditions might survive so there'll still be knights and people will use their ceremony for weddings, but it won't have anywhere near the influence is had, especially at the end of the story.

Plus, as GRRM said, "If you have a dragon you can have as many wives as you want, and people are less likely to complain."
Old Faces

Chapter Summary

Sansa welcomes family to Winterfell.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

“I knew it was you,” Sansa said coming to a stop at the sight of the short dark haired girl staring up at their father’s statue in the crypt.

Keeping her gaze on the statue Arya asked, “Do I have to call you queen now?”

Sansa fought back a gasp, partly from her knowing of Sansa’s betrothal but also from hearing her voice after years of fearing she never would. “Not yet,” she said with a small, teasing smile, “Lady Stark is fine.”

Arya turned her head, meeting her sister’s gaze. When Sansa smiled and approached, she turned to meet her, letting Sansa hug her.

“You shouldn’t have run from the guards.”

“I didn’t run,” Arya said shaking her head. “You need better guards.” Sansa laughed lightly. “It suits you. Lady Stark. Queen Sansa… Jon left you in charge?”

“He did,” she answered. Arya stared at her, so Sansa smiled to hopefully ease the moment. “I hope he comes back soon. I remember how happy he was to see me. When he sees you his heart will probably stop!”

Arya made herself laugh. Sansa turned her head and Arya followed her to their father’s statue. “It doesn’t look like him. It should have been carved by someone who knew his face.”

“Everyone who knew his face is dead.”

“We’re not,” she said looking to Sansa. “They say you killed Joffey. Did you?”

“I wish I had,” she sighed.

“Me too. I was angry when I heard someone else had done it. However long my list got he was always first.”

“Your list?”

“Of people I’m going to kill.”

Sansa looked at her and chuckled, so Arya returned one of her own.

“How did you get back to Winterfell?”

“It’s a long story. I imagine yours is too.”
“Yes. Not one with a pleasant start.”

“Mine either,” Arya said with a nod. “But our stories aren’t over yet.”

“No,” Sansa said raising her chin. “They’re not.”

After a moment, Arya stepped forward and wrapped her arms around her sister. Sansa took a breath, glad for the embrace she returned. “Arya. Rickon and Bran are home too… but Bran’s different.”

Arya followed Sansa out of the crypts and through the courtyard, garnering a few stares and whispers as they made their way to the Godswood, before anyone could stop them. They made their way toward a weirwood and found Bran sat in a wheelchair with Rickon sat facing him, his back against the trunk.

Spotting the two approaching, Rickon leapt to his feet and ran to Arya. Her eyes widened, opening her arms to catch him as he practically tumbled into her, wrapping her in a hug and lifting her up slightly as he swung back and forth. Arya chuckled, waiting for her feet to touch snow again.

Looking at her baby brother, now a bit taller than her, she didn’t know whether to smile in joy or frown for all the time she’d missed. He led them to the weirwood where Bran waited, eyes shifting to Arya as if not surprised by her appearance.

“You came home.”

Arya rushed over to hug Bran, Sansa looking down with a proud smile as Rickon stepped beside her, letting her wrap an arm across his shoulders.

“I saw you at the crossroads.”

Arya’s brow knit. “You saw me?”

“I see quite a lot not.”

“Bran… has visions,” Sansa tried to explain.

“He’s the three-eyed raven,” Rickon said proudly.

“I thought you might go to King’s Landing.”

“So did I,” Arya said warily.

“Why would you go back there?” Sansa asked, rubbing Rickon’s shoulder.

“Cersei’s on her list of names,” Bran said keeping his eyes on Arya.

Rickon’s brow sank in confusion while Arya stared at him and Sansa realized Arya hadn’t been joking. Arya seemed to feel Sansa’s eyes shift to her, turning to face her. “Who else is on your list?”

“Most of them are dead already.”

Sansa’s lips curved into a smirk as she glanced down, more proud of how strong her sister had apparently become than afraid for what she must have gone through. She was here now, whatever they’d gone through all of them were there, alive, stronger.
Making their way back to the courtyard of Winterfell, they found more people filling it, waiting to watch the last four Starks enter reunited, a pack once again.

“Is it true?” Arya asked when they arrived at her room. “What they say about Jon?”

Sansa frowned, wishing yet again Jon was here. “Father lied so Robert wouldn’t kill him.”

Arya turned to them, frowning as she sat on her mattress. “His name isn’t even Jon?”

“Most people still call him Jon,” Rickon said shaking his head. “We all call him Jon.”

“Where is he?”

“He went to meet with Daenerys Targaryen,” said Sansa. “He should be back in a fortnight.”

Arya nodded, her eyes drifting to Sansa, lingering for a long moment that left Sansa wanting to shift, but she stayed still. “You’re really marrying him?”

Rickon chuckled. “It’s weird, right?”

“Rickon,” Sansa chastised before turning to Arya. “I am. You know I was never… I was never close to him like the rest of you. And then I spent months trying to get to him at the Wall, running from the Boltons and their hunting parties. I never felt as happy as I did getting to the Wall, not until he finally came back a few days later.”

Arya frowned at the thought of her sister, perfect little Sansa, trekking through the wild from Bolton hunting parties. She’d heard a few stories about them on her way here. “He wasn’t there?”

“He’d gone beyond the Wall to help the free folk,” Sansa started, frowning as she thought of how somber he’d been when telling her of Hardhome. “He tried to get them all past the wall, but the Night King arrived with an army of wights and slaughtered thousands of them. Jon only made it out because Longclaw stopped a White Walker’s sword and he could kill it.”

Arya’s eyes widened. “Jon killed a White Walker? They’re real?”

“Jon’s friend, Sam, he killed one too with a dragonglass dagger. And Tormund, one of the free folk, he killed one with a Valyrian steel dagger when they went to go capture wights for us.”

“Why would you capture wights?” asked Arya.

“For proof that they exist. We sent out letters to every house we could think of and some are sending people to see for themselves the proof of Jon’s identity and what’s beyond the wall.” Sansa’s eyes fell, clutching her hands together. “When Jon came back from Hardhome we barely had time together before they murdered him.”

Arya’s face darkened. “What?”

“Some of the Night Watch who thought he was a traitor because he saw the Free Folk were people, same as us. They didn’t deserve to die just because they lived beyond the wall. Some of the brothers killed him and we ended up guarding his body all day before the Free Folk and some of the brothers loyal to him retook Castle Black. The Red Woman did something and Jon came back.”

“The Red Woman? Stannis’ witch?”

“Melisandre’s been with us since then. She thinks Jon some savior reborn to end the Long Night.” Sansa shrugged before continuing. “After Jon hanged the men he declared his watch ended with his
death and we left. We went south gathering allies from most of the houses not with the Boltons and rode to retake Winterfell.

“We’ve been together for months now, almost every day until he had to leave. When I thought I couldn’t trust anyone, even doubted the knight and squire vowed to protect me, I always knew I could trust him. When I was afraid I’d end up raped and flayed like the women the Boltons hunted I kept going because I knew I had to get to him. When I thought they’d murdered him I was ready to die beside him.

“When we rode through the north gathering forces and I feared it wouldn’t be enough, Jon made me believe we would win. When he found out about fathers lie and might have broke I was there to remind him it didn’t change who he was. When he rode against the Boltons alone to save Rickon, I stood with the others, praying for their safety even though I know the gods don’t care about us.”

Sansa let out a sigh, fighting back the tears that stung her eyes after working herself up. With a small sniff she looked to Arya. “I know people say he might be doing it to keep the North loyal, but he wouldn’t have to worry about that, not after uniting them all. He was their king before they ever knew his true name. Before we decided to marry I nearly ruined it all because I pointed out how we could assure allegiances from Dorne and the Reach with out marriages, but he still chose me and I chose him.

“I love Jon,” she declared firmly. “Different from how you or Bran or Rickon love Jon. And he loves me. Different from how he loves you.”

Rickon smiled at his sister, having never heard her speak of Jon that way but having clearly seen it. Bran maintained his usual knowing expression.

Arya’s surprise at her speech faded, narrowing her eyes. “If you hurt him,” she said with a slight smirk, “you’re on the list.”

Sansa chuckled. “I’ll keep that in mind.”

Falcon banners flew as a group of Vale knights approached Winterfell. Sansa stood at the head of the greeting party with Brynden Tully to one side and the Starks on the other. The older man cast glances down at the Starks, smiling solemnly before turning his gaze to the wheelhouse’s opening door as Lysa Arryn got out and helped her son down.

Sansa’s stomach twisted before she even saw Petyr step out of the wheelhouse, his eyes scanning the crowd before settling on her with a slick smile.

“Aunt Lysa, Cousin Robin, Lord Baelish. Welcome to Winterfell.” Noticing Robin clutch his mother’s arm, staring at Ghost behind her and Arya, Sansa reached back to pet Ghost. “Don’t worry, he’s gentle as a pup when we’re not on a battlefield.”

Ghost let out a low whine, having submitted to her grooming that morning, though she’d spared him the bows. This time.

“Uncle,” Lysa said shocked by Brynden’s presence. “I’d heard you died in Riverrun.”

“I’m sure plenty of people believe it too,” he said with a nod, meeting her in a hug. Once he stepped back he looked to Robin, offering him a gruff smile and gently squeezing the boy’s shoulder.
“Can I pet him?” Robin asked looking to Ghost.

Sansa lowered her hand and stepped aside, rubbing her fingers so Ghost put his snout into her palm. When he did, Robin hesitantly reached up and rubbed between the direwolve’s ears. Lysa was staring at him, clutching her skirts in fear until Robin backed away with a laugh.

“He looks so weird.”

“He’s an albino,” Sansa explained. Turning to Lysa she smiled. “I’ve had chambers prepared for you.”

“Where’s the king?” Robin asked looking around.

Sansa’s smile faltered briefly before she looked to him as they started inside. “He’s away at the moment,” she took a second to think on how to explain it, deciding to go closer to the truth in case Petyr somehow knew, “meeting with the princess.”

“Princess?” Petyr asked, Lysa clutching the crook of his arm.

“Daenerys Targaryen,” she explained. “The princess returned from across the Narrow Sea. The King’s gone to meet with her.”

“I thought she was a queen,” Petyr said smirking. “That is what she claimed in her letter. What she was in Essos.”

“But not what she is here,” Sansa retorted. “For now she’s aunt to the king.”

“For now?” Petyr asked with a grin. “Could that change? Has the king truly taken after his mother, betraying one betrothal to marry another?” He must have felt it was worth Lysa’s nails digging into his arm to see Sansa’s jaw shift uncomfortably, though she remained quiet until she left them to their rooms.

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“Her mother would be disappointed,” Lysa said standing beside Brynden among the crowd gathering to watch Sansa train again.

“Her mother would be glad she’s alive,” said Brynden.

Sansa was laughing with most of her fireguard as Brienne went over things with Theon and Podrick helped Rickon. Lysa’s gaze shifted from the wildlings and miscreants around her niece and nephew to Petyr stood beside Robin, who sat on the wooden fence surrounding the yard.

Rickon’s eyes flickered and widened as he turned from Podrick and raised his hand. “Arya! Come fight us!”

The crowd separated, making room for Arya. The young woman’s smirk fell when she saw Sansa stood in the field with a blunted dagger. She nearly threw herself over the fence, her hands shifting behind her back as she tilted her head.

“You know how to use that?” she asked Sansa.

“I’m learning,” Sansa said with a shrug.

“Lady Sansa’s more than capable,” Brienne said with a proud smile.
Sansa gave her a thankful nod. “I stole a sword and dagger off a Bolton soldier Brienne killed while making my way to the Wall. Before that I only had a dagger she gave me.”

Brienne frowned. “Sadly we had need for her to defend herself even with Podrick and I at her side.”

Arya’s brow arched. “You’ve killed someone?”

“Only dogs.” Sansa shook her head before chuckling. “I threw my dagger at a Bolton soldier once, but the handle hit the back of his helmet. Thankfully it was enough to distract him so Podrick could kill him.”

“Thank you again, my lady,” Podrick called out, making Sansa roll her eyes.

Arya looked from Brienne to Sansa. “How about a match?”

Sansa tilted her head. “What?”

“Just a quick one. First to land a strike.”

Sansa lifted her skirt and smiled. “I’m not really ready for a proper spar.”

“Then go put breeches on.” Arya saw her sister purse her lips and sighed. “Fine. I won’t move my feet. Okay? You can move, and I defend or dodge.”

Sansa’s eyes narrowed, stepping closer and speaking low enough few could hear. “Are you angry with me?”

Arya met her eyes and seemed to be deciding whether she was. After a moment her face softened. “If you’re going to learn I’m going to make sure you can survive a real fight.”

Examining Arya’s face, Sansa stepped back with a nod. “Okay. One strike, and if I win you have to wear a dress for a week and let me put bows in your hair.”

Arya shook her head. “No.”

“Fine. Three days in a dress and only four bows.” Sansa grinned as Arya glared at her. “Okay, okay. Three suppers in a dress, one of them when Jon is here, and two bows in your hair, once the first time and again when Jon is here.”

Arya stared at her for a moment. “And if I win, I spar with Brienne.” Arya turned to Brienne. “I’d like to try fighting the person who beat the Hound.”

That drew a few murmurs from the crowd while Sansa looked to Brienne. “That’s her decision.”

Looking between the sisters, Brienne nodded. “I’ll accept.”

“Then so do I,” Sansa nodded. “Remember, no moving your feet.”

Arya nodded while Sansa took the training dagger Laul offered her, handing it to Arya before taking a quick step back. The sisters smiled at each other, both having thought Arya could slash at Sansa and technically win.

Rickon, Podrick and all the rest turned and stood back, watching Sansa walk around Arya, assessing her.
“I’m taller than you.”

“And in a skirt.”

“You’re better than me. Faster too.”

“You’re not stupid.”

Sansa paused, remembering all the times Arya had called her that. Then she winced and realized Arya had turned and thrown her dagger at Sansa’s shoulder.

“I win,” Arya said with a grin.

The crowd laughed as Sansa glared at her sister. “Cheat.”

Arya smiled. “Next time wear breeches.”

Chapter End Notes

No way Arya doesn’t win, but I thought it was at least a fun bit at the end. Sansa being in a skirt with a dagger is supposed to imply she’s learning how to fight in a skirt in a more practical self defense sense. After all she’s been through, from the near rape in King’s Landing to her trek to the Wall, I think that would be of more interest to her than fighting in a battlefield, though she’s trying a bit of both for now.

Tempted to have Arya make a stupid idiot list to go with her murder list. Dunno how she’d look in trunks and a scarf though.

Would it be too on the nose to have a Vale knight named Griffith?
Truce and Teasing

Chapter Summary

Dany receives more bad news and asks Jon’s advice. Littlefinger tries to play his game, and Winterfell welcomes another guest.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“Do you think he’ll be able to handle it?” Davos asked Jon as they stood on one of Widow’s Watch’s walls where Daenerys told them of the loss of her fleet heading to Dorne.

“He’ll never be what he was,” Jon said solemnly, “but Theon deserves to know what happened to his sister.”

“He might leave to save her,” said Davos.

Jon shook his head. “I don’t think he’s ready to do that yet. There’s still too much Reek in him.”

“We also don’t know where she is,” Daenerys said regretfully. “I don’t understand how, but Euron made it through our blockade without us noticing. He could be at King’s Landing, the Iron Islands, anywhere.”

“Even if we did, we don’t know that she’s alive,” Jon said with a sigh, his brow furrowed in a moment of thought before shaking his head with a crestfallen expression. “We can’t risk the men. Maybe when we focus south again. Assuming we could even salvage any of them, the Iron Islands’ fleet won’t matter against the Night King and we’ll need the men we’d lose trying to get her back.”

Daenerys saw he hated leaving Yara to her fate, but it was what he needed to do. Hearing footsteps she turned and saw Tyrion and Varys approaching with grim expressions. “What is it?”

“We took Casterly Rock,” Tyrion answered.

“That’s very good to hear,” she said, surprised it left them dour. The hesitant look they exchanged made her grimace. “Isn’t it?”

Tyrion took a moment before answering. “Casterly Rock was a feint. They left only a reserve to defend it.”

“A reserve?” Daenerys asked, turning to them with Missandei at her side.

“Once they took the castle, Greyjoy’s ships destroyed ours.”

Missandei put a hand to her chest thinking of Gray Worm trapped at Castlerly Rock. “Euron Greyjoy,” said Daenerys, her jaw shifting. “And where were the Lannister forces?”

Tyrion took a breath as if preparing himself for her anger. “They’d left, heading south to sack Highgarden. They destroyed the Tyrell garrison, likely captured Olenna and her grandsons if they
weren’t killed.”

“You’ll want to discuss this amongst yourselves,” Davos began.

“You will stay,” Daenerys said firmly, shaking her head as her blood boiled and she looked around them. “All my allies are gone. They’ve been taken from me while I’ve been sitting here in this castle.”

“We still have the largest armies,” Tyrion offered, watching her look to the water.

“Who won’t be able to eat because Cersei has taken all the food from the Reach.”

“Call Gray Worm and the Unsullied back,” suggested Tyrion. “We still have enough ships to carry the Dothraki to the mainland. Commit to the blockade of King’s Landing. We have a plan. It’s still the right plan.”

“The right plan?” Daenerys exclaimed, turning on Tyrion. “Your strategy has lost us Dorne, the Iron Islands and the Reach.”

He tilted his head, backing down slightly. “If I have underestimated our enemies-”

“Our enemy?” Daenerys asked incredulously. “Your family you mean. Perhaps you don’t want to hurt them after all.”

Tyrion’s lips thinned. “How can you question my loathing of Lannisters?”

“You are one,” she said turning to look at the sea.

“It’s called self-loathing,” said Tyrion, earning him a sharp glare from Daenerys while Jon and Davos shared a silent smirk.

Hearing Viserion screech she took a breath. “Enough with the clever plans. I have three large dragons. I’m going to fly them to the Red Keep.”

“We’ve discussed this-”

“My enemies are in the Red Keep,” she practically sneered. “What kind of queen am I if I’m not willing to risk my life to fight them?”

Missandei shot a glance to Jon, who seemed to be watching Daenerys, his face unreadable.

“A smart one,” answered Tyrion.

She shook her head, turning to look at her dragons. Seeing Rhaegal, her gaze turned to Jon. “What do you think I should do?”

He looked up, not having expected to be brought in. “I would never presume to-”

“I’m at war,” she said, walking toward him. “I’m losing. Now I ask the man who would be my king… what do you think I should do?”

Her council seemed surprised as Jon held her violet gaze. “I never thought dragons would exist again,” he said with a glance at them. “You’ve made the impossible happen. It helps people believe you can make other impossible things happen. Build a world that’s different from the shit one they’ve always known…” He glanced at the dragons. “But if you use them to melt castles and burn cities… you’re not different. You’re just more of the same.”
Daenerys frowned. “I can’t just let them walk over me.” Her eyes furrowed slightly as she added, “Over us.”

“I didn’t say don’t retaliate. Just don’t go melting castles and killing people who don’t particularly care who rules them. We need to be better then the Cerseis of the world. Not just so we can feel better about ourselves, or even for the people we serve. We need to make a future that’s better than the present, otherwise what’s the point?”

Daenerys looked to Tyrion, Varys and Missandei who seemed surprised and touched by Jon’s words. “Could we cut them off? Catch them before they make it to King’s Landing?”

“I’m not sure,” Tyrion frowned.

“You could make it in time if the winds are kind,” said Davos. “It’ll be close, but they’ll be slow after sacking a city like High Garden.”

Daenerys looked from Davos to Jon. “Aegon—”

“Leave,” he cut her off. “We’re united against Cersei. Let the rest be decided once you’ve come to Winterfell and we can all discuss it.” He added with a smile. “And please, Jon.”

Daenerys nodded before turning to her council. “Get the others. We’re leaving immediately. And send word to Dragonstone, have the Dothraki sail to the mainland.”

“At once, your grace,” Varys said with a bow while Tyrion rushed off to get the Dothraki guards.

Daenerys turned back to him. “We’ll maintain a blockade at Dragonstone, but once I’ve settled this I’ll head to Winterfell so we can all meet.”

“I look forward to it.”

“I bet you do,” Daenerys said with a laugh that softened to a smile. “Thank you, Jon.”

“I’m sorry I can’t be more help,” Jon frowned.

“When I first heard of your existence I was happy to not be alone, but then I feared the worst,” she admitted. “You could have been so different. You could have been like Viserys… instead you’re like everything I ever heard of Rhaegar.”

That seemed to surprise Davos and Jon. “I… I wouldn’t know.”

“One of the kingsguard who served my father told me stories about him,” she said with a somber smile. “When we meet again, I’d like to tell you some.”

Jon nodded. “I’d appreciate that. I’ve heard a few stories of my mother… but never him. Seems Targaryens with friends in the north are rare.”

Daenerys looked him over and smiled. “And now they have a Targaryen of their own.”

Sansa had finished seeing off her Granduncle Brynden and a battalion of Manderly men when she took to standing on the walls of Winterfell, watching the eastern horizon.

“Look at you.”
The moment Sansa heard his voice it felt like a bird shit down her spine.

“I had no doubt you would persevere,” Petyr said walking to her side. “Now a queen in all but name, set to rule the seven kingdoms alongside a man the people seem to revere.”

She offered a thankful smile, adjusting her cloak as he stood beside her, looking to the east.

“I hope he returns soon.” He didn’t fail to notice her surprise at that. “I trust you never would stand beside a man that inherited his grandfather’s madness, but can we say the same is true for the queen across the sea? She has three dragons at her command. What’s to stop her from turning them on our king?

“I remember hearing she and her brother despised the Starks nearly as much as she hated the Baratheons. Robert was a usurper and the Starks their dogs. They vowed to slay them all upon their return. His Stark blood may be an asset here, but I fear it may be a hindrance with her.”

“Jon’s strong,” she said as much to herself as him, “he’ll return.”

Petyr nodded. “I imagine you’re right… but I admit I hold concern that your betrothed may stray if Daenerys is as beautiful as they say. For even with a beauty awaiting his return, he is still a man with a man’s desire. She’s been wedded and bedded, no need to save herself any longer.”

She wanted to tell him Jon wouldn’t do that. That she’d suggested he marry her and he wouldn’t lead her on while he had Sansa. He wouldn’t risk one of them being hurt.

But she didn’t want him to know that. She didn’t want anyone to know yet that there was a chance she’d be one of Jon’s brides. Especially not someone who valued little secrets as much as Littlefinger.

“I will stand by my king’s decision,” she said carefully. Let him think her the dutiful lady.

Petyr looked to her with a smirk as he turned to leave. “I suppose even kings can be blind to their blessings.”

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After a morning in the yard which ended with Arya and Brienne sparring yet again, Sansa changed to prepare for her day. With a look over a few letters that had arrived she made her way down to meet with the lords who remained in Winterfell or had even returned after visiting their houses briefly.

It was past midday when she had a chance to walk the grounds. She waved to Rickon who sat with Joohna and the few younger free folk who remained at Winterfell while the rest had settled in The Gift. Though they’d teased Rickon about how much time he spent with Joohna, she knew Jon had talked to him about befriending the free folk, who would be citizens of the North once things had settled. He wanted them to respect Rickon as they did Jon when he took his place as Lord of Winterfell.

Not far from them she found Arya taking a walk, observing everything and everyone she passed. Spotting her sister, Arya made her way toward Sansa. “Don’t look so down. I’m sure you’ll land a hit eventually.”

Sansa rolled her eyes. “I’m not down. Definitely not about that.”

“What then?” Arya asked, stepping in line to walk with Sansa.
“I want to try getting glass gardens in some of the other keeps, but we barely have the supplies to repair our own.” She let out a soft sigh. “I thought… I thought this could be my project. The one thing I set in motion before Jon gets back. Show him I can get things done even if he’s gone, so he can rely on me for more than keeping things going.”

“I’m sure he relies on you for more than that,” said Arya. “He left you in charge. It’s up to you to start convincing whoever shows up to join our side.”

“I wanted to do more. If…” She came to a stop, looking around to see they were far from anyone overhearing when Arya turned to her. “I told Jon to at least consider marrying her as well.”

Arya’s eyes widened. “As in as well as marrying you?”

Sansa nodded. “But if he does… what am I? I know he cares for me, but she’ll be the one who brings armies and dragons to help us. I don’t want to end up the poor girl he kept because he loved. I don’t want to be forgotten when this is all settled. Not by him, but by everyone else. I’m not… I’m not special like you or Bran.”

The fear of inadequacy surprised Arya. She’d always felt Sansa would become this unshakably confident woman bordering on arrogant. It was part of why she’d been quick to remind her of her faults.

“You don’t have to be special to be important, Sansa.” Arya sighed. “I didn’t set out intending to end up how I did. I just wanted to be able to do what I want. I wanted to learn how to fight, and then I just wanted to survive. Then I just wanted to make sure I could get revenge, but… once I heard about you and Jon I knew I had to come back. Being able to wield a sword or a dagger will never matter as much as being here.” Arya took her sister’s hands and met her eyes. “Be here for him. Be here when no one else is. He’ll remember and they’ll see.”

The tender tone left Sansa smiling. She’d never expected Arya to say something so kind to her, especially not the Arya she saw so often slip behind a vacant mask. Still, she couldn’t help but smirk after a moment and tease, “Of course you’d tell me to be nice to Jon.”

Years ago Arya might have been fed up and stormed off, but she smiled. “Don’t think you can stop being nice once you land a hit on me either. I’ll still put you on the list.”

Sansa snickered, Arya following her as she began to walk. “I’ll try not to get too big a head.”

They were walking toward the crypt when they heard a guard’s voice in the distance. “Why do you need to see her?” A moment later he asked, “And she knows you? No? Then piss off.”

Sansa looked over her shoulder toward the gate to see who was there. Arya stopped beside her, arching her brow and turning to look at the gate with her. The moment she did Arya gasped. “Gendry?”

“You know him?” Sansa asked looking from her sister to the man speaking to the guards.

“Please, just-” He was saying when Arya called out, “Gendry!”

The guards turned to see the Stark women making their way toward them, Arya wearing a smirk as she came to a stop before the muscular man carrying a bundle of cloth over his shoulder. Sansa watched his face light up the moment he saw Arya, making an exaggerated bow.

“M’lady,” he said looking at her with a grin.
Arya scoffed. “Idiot. What are you doing here?”

Standing again, Gendry smiled. “I heard your sister was at Winterfell again and started north. I thought the least I could do is help her and the king as much as I can. Is… is it really your half-brother?”

Arya frowned. “Yeah. It’s Jon.” She motioned to her sister. “This is Sansa. Sansa, this is Gendry. We traveled together after I left King’s Landing.”

“It’s a pleasure to meet you, Gendry,” Sansa said with a curtsy. “As Lady of Winterfell, welcome.”

Gendry went wide eyed. “Thank you, m’lady.”

“Come,” she said waving him forward. “I’ll find you a room.” She shot Arya a quick look as if to say, unless he’ll stay in yours, and Arya’s eyes narrowed.

“I thank you, m’lady, but no need to trouble yourself for me,” he said following behind her.

“It’s no trouble. You’re a friend of Arya’s. You were there when no one else was. It’s the least I could do.”

Arya shot her another glare at her using Arya’s own words against her like this. It might have been cruel since she knew Arya wouldn’t make a fuss in front of him, but Sansa couldn’t help it.

“If you insist, m’lady,” said Gendry, “then I’d gladly offer my services as a smith. I had my own shop in Flea Bottom and apprenticed under Tobho Mott, from Qohor.”

“Gendry’s the best,” Arya assured, grinning. “We can trust him, Sansa. Plus I think we can use him to gain more allies. You’re Robert’s Bastard aren’t you?”

Gendry smirked, surprised she’d figured it out, while Sansa stopped mid stride, turning on them. “What?”

Both seemed confused by her concerned tone. Gendry looked to Arya before nodding. “It’s true, m’lady.”

Sansa shook her head. “You can’t let anyone know.”

Arya knit her brow. “Sansa, what—”

“Jon’s meeting with Daenerys Targaryen,” she explained. “If he brings her back she might try to harm you. Pe-People say she hates Baratheons. Wanted to kill them. If she comes with Jon he’ll have convinced her the Starks aren’t like she thought, but we may need to be careful.”

Gendry stood wide eyes while Arya’s narrowed, noting Sansa’s stutter.

“I promise, we’ll do what we can to make sure you’re safe,” Sansa assured him. “But please, keep this quiet until we know she’s fine. Don’t tell anyone, not even Jon.”

“Sansa,” Arya said with a frown.

“You know he won’t be able to lie about it, not like us. He’ll tell her and put Gendry at risk.” Arya gave a relenting sigh as Sansa looked to Gendry with a smile. “We’ve started to prepare arms for as many men as we can when the time comes. Most of the free folk were left in leather and hide when we fought the Boltons. We’d like to make sure they’re as armored as any other soldier when the time comes and their weapons are better than what they could manage beyond the wall or steal.”
Gendry gave her a firm nod. “I’ll do all I can, m’lady.”

Chapter End Notes

The ‘self-loathing’ bit is stolen from the tldw posts from reddit. I thought it was such a good line that was pure Tyrion it could’ve been in the show.

Sorry to anyone hoping Brynden would play a major role or screw with Petyr, but he’s got to go retake his home. He also has to avoid incoming guests.

Petyr missing his target is a key factor in my portrayal and interpretation of him and his whole “Chaos is a Ladder” bit, which I find more interesting than the typical puppet master view of it. Here he tries to make Sansa worry about Jon’s safety, instead his comment makes her worry that Gendry’s appearance might upset Dany. There’s a certain joy in having this character think he’s sniping when at best he’s hitting grazing shots that have chain reactions, at least with some characters.

I’ve changed the bit with Arya pointing out Gendry is Robert’s bastard three times because I can’t remember if she ever found that out, but I figure she would have thought back on that time a lot and figured it out on her own. If she knew, let me know where it’s shown so I can look up the scene and change it.
Reunion and Redemption

Chapter Summary

Jon returns to Winterfell and finds a lost wolf waiting, as well as a prideless lion.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Winterfell took up arms as riders under a Lannister banner approached. It might have been eight men but the guards all stood ready to react the moment anything happened.

The gate opened and the Starks gathered to welcome Jaime Lannister back to Winterfell.

He dismounted and handed his reins off to one of his men while Ser Bronn of the Blackwater moved to Jaime’s side. He scanned both Stark girls somberly before a smile flickered across his lips at the sight of Brienne. That smile died when he looked at Bran, who stared at him.

“I never imagined she’d send you,” said Sansa. “Though I suppose Cersei has few she can trust these days.”

Jaime maintained his frown as he looked to her. “How much of your letter is true?”

“All of it,” said Sansa. “The Night King marches on the Wall and Jon Snow is a lie my father told us all.”

“And there’s proof of this?” he asked resting his false hand on the pommel of Widow’s Wail.

Sansa nodded. “Unless you’re in a rush I’d prefer to wait for Jon’s return to settle that. He should be back in a sennight or so, but as for the wights we can show you them now if you’d like.”

Bronn and Jaime shared a look. “You have one?”

“Three,” Sansa corrected. “Jon took our other one.”

“You keep ‘em in the pantry?” Bronn asked with a laugh.

“Something like that,” Sansa nodded. “Theon, could you bring one to the great hall?”

“Of course, Sansa,” Theon bowed his head and hurried off with a few others.

“Where is the king?” Jaime asked as he followed Sansa and Brienne toward the great hall while Arya, Rickon and a pack of guards followed.

“Meeting with lords,” she lied easily. “The Manderlys think they’ve found a dragonglass cave, so Jon went to check on it.”

“Dragonglass?” asked Jaime.

“White Walkers can only be killed by valyrian steel and dragonglass, and wights can only be destroyed by those or fire. Wights keep fighting even when run through with swords and
everything shatters the moment it touches a White Walker or his weapons.”

Jaime and Bronn looked to each other and the men he brought. “And you know this how?”

“Jon’s killed wights and White Walkers,” she answered simply. “So has the free folk’s leader, Tormund. Most of the free folk were there to see the wights slaughter thousands when Jon went to bring them through the Wall. They saw Jon shatter a White Walker. There are still some here, feel free to ask them if they don’t sing about it tonight.”

The hall tables were cleared out, leaving plenty of space for Theon and two others to bring out a rotting corpse struggling against the chains and ropes binding it. The Lannister men stared at the corpse as it screeched at them, struggling to break away from the guards to attack them.

“Theon,” Sansa said, and with that Theon drew his sword and stabbed the wight through the chest.

“Mother’s tits,” Bronn said watching the creature swipe at Theon, who took his hand from the hilt, leaving the blade sticking through its torso.

Jaime stared at it. “And the only things that can hurt it are fire, dragonglass and valyrian steel?”

“I think Wun Wun might have crushed some, but he’s special.”

“Wun Wun?” asked Bronn.

“The giant,” said Brienne. “He big enough he can step on them and crush their bones, but that’s not an option for us, so it’s fire, dragonglass and valyrian steel.”

Bonn looked between the others as Theon pulled his sword from the wight, letting the guards take it away. “You northerners are fuckin’ weird.”

XOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXO

Once Daenerys’ party prepared to leave Jon’s did as well, and while Daenerys’ ship neared the horizon Jon’s group thanked the Flints and departed for Winterfell. As much as he wanted to push late into the nights to get there sooner, they kept a reasonable pace. It was still six days before Winterfell came into view.

The courtyard had filled with people come to greet him, but his eyes instantly locked on the short dark-haired girl stood beside Sansa. Jon practically leapt off the horse, taking a few steps before coming to a stop and let out a laugh.

“Arya.”

Tears prickled her eyes before she ran at him, leaping into his open arms just as she did years ago when she named Needle.

“I missed you, big brother,” she whispered.

Jon glanced at her, squeezing her tighter. “Whoever I am, you’re my sister. Always.”

Arya nodded into him. “Always.”

He ignored the onlookers as he set her down and smirked. “You’ve barely grown.”

Arya punched his arm. “Shut up.”
“I could have your hand for that,” he warned with a laugh. Looking her over his smile fell to a frown. “I’m sorry I wasn’t there when you needed me.”

“You were,” she assured, tapping Needle’s hilt.

With a kiss to Arya’s forehead he pet Ghost and walked to Sansa. She greeted him with a warm smile. “Winterfell is yours, my king.”

The crowd thinned and Sansa led Jon, Davos, Melisandre, Arya, Rickon, Bran and Brienne toward his solar where Maester Wolkan had prepared all the letters from the days he’d been gone. Once Wolkan left Jon walked toward his desk looking through the letters, giving each a quick read before setting it on the desk and moving to the next.

“We have guests,” Sansa told him once she pushed Bran into place near the hearth.

“Who came?” Jon asked, glancing at her briefly as he set down a letter and moved to the next.

“Our aunt Lysa came with her son and her husband.”

Jon looked up, frowning as he remembered what Sansa had told her of all three. “Are they causing trouble?”

“Not yet,” said Sansa.

“Robin’s…” Rickon couldn’t think of what to say without being mean. He’d wait until Sansa wasn’t around this time. That would be lordly enough, surely.

“Lysa’s always glaring at Sansa,” Arya said crossing her arms.

Shaking his head, Jon looked back to the letters. “Anyone else?”

“Jaime Lannister came with a small escort. He seemed interested in meeting you.”

Jon chuckled. “He met me years ago. Thanked me for my service at the Wall before I left. As if it’s much different from the Kingsguard.”

“After that we received a Daemon Sand from Dorne on behalf of Princess Arianne Martell and Garlan Tyrell from the Reach.” She watched Jon’s head snap up to look at Davos, whose brow rose. “What?”

Davos seemed to have a silent exchange with Jon before looking to Sansa. “Daenerys’ war effort has had some trouble. They took Casterly Rock but lost the ships that took them there and found it mostly empty. The Lannisters had left to sack Highgarden.”

“And they lost most of their Ironborn and the Dornish they were carrying,” Jon said setting the letters down and turning to them, crossing his arms as he leaned against the desk. “She thought she’d lost Dorne and the Reach. We might be able to salvage that.”

“We have the Lannister as well,” Davos suggested, sounding unenthused. “We could hold him. Use him.”

“No.” Jon shook his head. “He came here in good faith based on our letter. We can at least guarantee his safety here.” With a sigh he asked, “How much have they seen?”

“They’ve all seen the wight, but I’ve held off on your parentage until your return.”
“Give me time to read through the rest of these and I’ll meet them all.” After a moment he clarified. “One at a time. Best to keep Tyrell from Lannister for now. Let them leave separately as well.”

“That’s probably for the best,” Sansa nodded. “They had some words when Ser Garlan arrived, but nothing after that.”

“We’ll tell him about Highgarden, but make sure Lannister’s safe.” With a look to Davos he told him, “Send Theon first. I’ll tell him about Yara.” Once the others started to leave Sansa lingered, walking to the desk. “You read these all, right?”

“They were marked for you,” she said innocently. He glanced at her and she smiled. “I have.”

“Then they can wait,” he said tossing them down before turning to pull her into a kiss.

Relief flooded her as she sank into his kiss, clutching his jerkin. When the kiss ended she rested her head against his. “I missed you.”

“I left the moment I could.”

After a moment to catch their breaths she backed away. “How did it go?”

Jon looked apologetic as he told her, “It ended up as you said it would.”

She nodded. “I knew she’d want you the moment she saw you.”

Jon laughed while she smirked. “I don’t think it was that. And nothing’s decided. I told her I wouldn’t without all of us talking.”

Her hands rested on her stomach as she exhaled. “Thank you.”

“Did you think I’d just marry her there?” He shook his head. “You forget it was a Stark he married in secret.”

“And second,” she noted with a teasing pout. “Still, thank you.” Her hand found his, interlacing their fingers. “How was she? What’s she like?”

“She seems like a good person. She had moments where she seems all fire and blood but then we’d talk and she just seemed… alone.”

Sansa frowned. “She must have spent years thinking she was the last of her family.”

Jon knew that had been important to Sansa, the idea of getting to him keeping her going during her trek north. “She reminded me of you in a way,” Jon said brushing a hand through her hair.

“What do you mean?”

“I’m sure everyone thinks her some hardened dragon queen but I kept seeing this woman who wanted a place in the world, a soft heart hardened by her life.” He met her eyes with a smile. “Everyone looks at you and sees a lady, even in armor on a battlefield you remained a lady, yet all I see is a survivor. A brave woman with a kind heart… a wolf’s heart that’s endured more pain than it ever deserved.”

Stepping forward Sansa pressed her lips to his cheek. After gazing into his eyes and stroking his beard she smiled. “Come. Let’s go make allies.”
Garlan held his head in his hands, taking a breath before looking to Jon. “They’ll be dead the moment they reach King’s Landing.”

“I cannot give you back your home or restore your dead to life,” Jon began somberly, “but I can give you justice once I take the throne, and Cersei’s head with it. I’d ask Highgarden’s last rose to return and gather those you can, bring them north and when we march let us end the Night King and reclaim Westeros together.”

Garlan met Jon’s gaze and nodded, standing tall, looking a true knight and lord. “The Last Rose of Highgarden,” he nodded mournfully. “I’ll gather who I can to support the one true king of Westeros.”

Once Garlan and his men left the hall Daemon Sand followed, his brow rising when he was told of Ellaria and Tyene’s capture along with Nymeria and Obara’s deaths. Where Garlan mourned his loses Daemon smirked.

“My princess will be disappointed she could not find her own vengeance,” Daemon said with a shrug. “I’ll speak to her on your behalf. Arianne will prefer to forge her own rather than keep to alliances made by murderers. Those who remain will surely support the princess, and her you.”

Jaime stood in silence as he looked over the documents they presented, occasionally looking at Jon for a few seconds before looking back to them. Handing them to Davos, he turned his attention to Jon. “I’ll ride back at once and tell Cersei you’re as honest as your uncle.”

Jon answered his smirk with a nod. “Thank you.” He bit back a desire to make a snarky comment, knowing he had plenty from others while he was away.

Turning to Bronn and the men behind him, Jaime ordered, “Ready the horses. Best we leave before Tyrell so we don’t run into him on the road.”

“I could send someone with you to Moat Cailin,” Jon offered.

Jaime shook his head while his men hurried off. “We’ll be fine so long as we don’t give him the chance to have us come across him and his men laying in wait.”

With a glance to the others Jaime considered asking to have a moment alone with Jon, but knew they wouldn’t trust him. He’d have to do this with them around. Oh well.

Jaime’s eyes met Jon’s once his men left the room, all humor having left his face. “I regret it every day.”

Brienne went wide eyed at Jaime’s admission while Sansa, Davos, Arya, Rickon, Theon, and Melisandre shared curious looks and Bran tilted his head. Jon held Jaime’s mournful gaze, keeping his face even. “Regret what?”

“Not killing Aerys sooner,” said Jaime. “I watched him burn people alive, and then that night he would go to his wife and take her. She would scream, but they told me it was our job to guard the king and his family from others, not each other. I hated every night I had to stand outside the door with them listening to her screams and sobs.

“I liked your father, thought him blessed compared to the monster I guarded. People always call me Kingslayer, as if I care about betraying a madman who wanted to burn King’s Landing to the ground… I care that I betrayed Rhaegar by not putting my sword through Aerys while he held Elia
and her children prisoner. Even if they hadn’t died during the raid, I know Aerys would have killed them. He was certain Rhaegar was preparing to betray him and take his crown.

“For the rest of my days I’ll regret not being there for Rhaegar’s children when they needed me,” Jaime said staring into Jon’s eyes, “but I would be there for his last son if he asked.”

The room fell silent, the pledge leaving them shocked. Even Brienne, who always hoped for the best in Jaime, gaped at him.

Looking into the man’s eyes Jon saw nothing to doubt.

Whatever his relationship with Cersei, Jaime had been a knight once. He had cared for his duty, and though he’d disliked Aerys he’d grown fond of Rhaella, Rhaegar and his family if not Viserys. Their deaths weighed on him but were cast aside and hidden in some pit at the core of his soul until he stood here before Rhaegar’s son.

“If you’ll have me, I’ll go to Cersei and do my best to make her believe this all. Whether she does or not I’ll return with as many as I can without losing my head.”

“You’d turn against your sister?” asked Jon.

Jaime frowned thinking of his return to King’s Landing to find a pillar of smoke where the sept had stood, and while he mourned the death of his son Cersei celebrated her ascent to the throne. “I’d rather keep another last son alive where I failed my own.”

Seeing the sincerity in his eyes, Jon nodded. “If it would help, I’ll give you one of the wights.”

That earned him a few looks from the others who matched Jaime’s surprise. After a moment the former kingsguard seemed to realize it was a show of trust as much as an attempt to aide his convincing Cersei.

Watching the Lannister party leave with one of their crated wights, Sansa looked to Jon. “You believe him?”

“Enough to give him a chance,” said Jon. “They all deserve a chance.”

Chapter End Notes

Jaime’s scene at the end is influenced by a book scene where he sleeps against a pale root that’s likely from a weirwood and dreams about Rhaegar before he decides to head back and save Brienne. It’s this character altering moment that shows his regrets about Rhaegar and his family along with some other stuff.
In the depths of the Red Keep’s dungeons Cersei walked with Qyburn at her side. Behind them Gregor Clegane loomed silently, swiftly opening the door Cersei pointed to once they came to a stop.

Before stepping through the threshold Cersei sighed in disappointment. “Could no one stop her?”

“It’s doubtful, your grace,” Qyburn said apologetically.

Stepping inside Cersei looked to the corpse of Olenna Tyrell, the bottom half of her face soaked in blood that poured from her mouth, her face blue and bloated from choking on the chunk of her tongue she bit through. Across from her was the puffed and purple Willas Tyrell with blood, bile and tears streaking his face.

Looking back to Olenna, Cersei sneered. “Spiteful old cunt. Did she at least see it?”

Qyburn stepped past Cersei to examine Olenna’s corpse briefly, checking her eyes and the rigidity of her skin. He then did the same to Willas. “Difficult to say, your grace. If we assume the poison worked for him as expected, then I’d say she expired shortly after him, or at least near the same moment.”

“Good,” Cersei nodded. Turning to Gregor she wore a smile. “You did well making her confirm her part in Joffrey’s death, Ser Gregor.”

The knight remained silent, backing away as they departed the room. Moments later he opened another door where they stepped inside and found Ellaria Sand staring vacantly at the floor, gaunt and sallow. Across from her was the pale corpse of her daughter. Blood soaked her face, having poured from every orifice, her body twisted slightly as she’d surely writhed in pain and fear before finally succumbing to the poison.

Cersei ignored Ellaria, who stayed still as they entered, making her way to the corpse hanging from the chains. “You think she’d be of use?”

Qyburn nodded. “It will be a challenge, but I believe it’s possible, your grace. Given the support you’ve shown, I believe I can.”

Stepping back, Cersei motioned to Gregor. “Take her down.”

Ellaria finally shifted, looking up to watch them remove the cuffs from her daughter’s corpse, her body falling limply into Gregor’s arms. A whimper left her, making Cersei turn to her with a delighted smile.
“Where are my manners?” Cersei’s eyes bore into Ellaria with glee as she said, “Ser Gregor, let Ellaria kiss her daughter farewell.”

Ellaria shot Cersei a glare as Gregor’s hand grabbed Tyene’s hair, lifting her face and putting it in front of Ellaria.

When Ellaria only glared at Cersei, the queen’s smile shifted to a sneer, her eyes darkening. “Kiss her farewell, or watch Ser Gregor rip her apart from the inside out. After he takes her as he pleases.”

Ellaria’s anger turned to disgust and horror as she looked from Cersei to the helmeted face of Gregor Clegane. Holding her breath he pressed her gagged mouth against her daughter’s cheek, feeling the streak of dried blood against her chapped lips. Part of her wished it held the poison, that it would claim her as well.

Cersei waved a hand to Gregor and made her way to the threshold before stopping to look back at Ellaria. “I considered giving you to Qyburn, but I thought better of it. Instead, you’ll find the next time I step through this door I do so with a gift.”

Ellaria stared in confusion at Cersei’s sly grin before the queen left the cell, leaving Ellaria to sob into her gag.

XOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXO

“Gendry?” Davos asked as he made his way through the courtyard and found the smith working over breastplates. When the young man looked up from his work and smiled, Davos laughed. “I thought you might still be rowing. How’d you end up at Winterfell?”

“I heard what was happening and felt I had to come,” he explained, stepping away from the other smiths. “I couldn’t stay there arming Lannisters. I never knew what I was preparing for but I knew I wasn’t meant to make weapons for the family that killed my father. The family that tried to kill me. I didn’t know what it would be, but I knew I had another purpose and I’d know it when it came, so I left the moment I could.”

“Well I’m glad you’re here,” Davos began, “but don’t let anyone know, aye? Best to keep your father to yourself.”

“So I’ve been told,” Gendry said with a nod. Seeing Davos arch his brow, he smirked. “Lady Sansa told me as much when she and Arya welcomed me.”

Davos’ brow sank. “They know?”

“Arya was with me before the Brotherhood sold me to you and the witch,” he nodded. “She figured it out, and when I got here they saw me and Lady Sansa told me it best I keep it quiet. Seems Daenerys hates stags.”

“That so?” Davos nodded. “Understandable, I suppose. Best keep it quiet, at least until things have settled.”

“I’ll keep that in mind, Ser Davos.” Gendry smiled. “Thank you.”

XOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXO

Davos was walking with Jon when he saw Arya stood with Gendry, who was looking over a dagger she handed him. Spotting them, Arya waved, making Jon turn off course toward them.
“Your grace,” Davos said, “this is-”

“Name’s Gendry, your grace,” he said handing the dagger back to Arya. “I’m Robert Baratheon’s son. Bastard son.”

Arya and Davos stared at him as Jon quickly looked to each of them.

“Gendry,” Arya hissed.

“He was meant to keep that to himself,” Davos revealed.

“Our father’s trusted each other,” he said with a shrug, “why shouldn’t we?”

“Your father killed my father,” said Jon and Gendry winced, having forgotten since Arya always called Jon brother. He might have been worried if Jon wasn’t smirking as he said it. “I saw your father once, when he came here to Winterfell.”

“I met your uncle. In my shop.”

Jon nodded toward Gendry before glancing to Arya. “You’re a lot leaner.”

“You’re a lot shorter.”

They all froze as Jon turned his gaze back to Gendry. For a moment they seemed to fear he would be angry, but he smiled, relieved to meet someone who at least seemed honest. “I grew up on stories about them.”

“All I ever knew is that they fought together,” said Gendry, “and won.”

Jon nodded, his eyes shifting back to Arya where he saw the sleek dagger on her waist. “Where’d you get that?”

“Bran gave it to me,” she said handing it to Jon.

“Valyrian steel.”

“It’s the dagger meant to kill Bran after we left for King’s Landing.”

Jon looked over the dark rippled blade before handing it back. “How did he get it?”

“Littlefinger,” she said quietly. “He gave it to him. Thought it fitting he have it, but Bran said it’d be better with someone who could use it.”

XOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXO

“Thank you for your support, Lord Arryn,” Jon said with a nod to the boy stood beside his mother.

Robin nodded absentmindedly while looking back and forth from Jon to Ghost laying beside the high table. At his side, Lysa Arryn wore a plastered on smile, her eyes darkening whenever they drifted toward Sansa.

Jon knew it was inevitable, but when the hall emptied and he left intending to meet with Bran in the Godswood a voice called out to him, “Your grace.”

He turned to the man approaching with a nod. “Lord Baelish.” Deciding to get it over with, he faced him and put on a brief smile. “I must thank you, Lord Baelish.”
That seemed to catch him by surprise. “Pardon, your grace, but for what?”

“For your part in secreting my betrothed away from the lion’s den.”

His eyes glittered as he found the path from Jon’s comment to his goal. “I only did what I could to save an innocent from harm, your grace. She is the blood of the woman I love, I could not leave her to suffer the torment of a mad woman.”

“Still, I thank you.”

“I must admit I was wroth when I heard Lysa’s plan to send her to you at the Wall,” Petyr said with a dramatic frown. “I feared she wouldn’t survive the trip, but I’m glad I was proven wrong. Not only has she survived, but she’s persevered. Sansa’s managed to get what she always wanted.”

Jon waited a moment before asking, “What she wanted?”

Petyr smirked. “Her prince, of course. You’ve known her far longer than I, you know how badly she’d wanted to wed a prince and become queen. How she dreamed of a love worthy of songs. I’ve little doubt they’ll write songs of the secret prince who went to war for the woman who always dreamed of being queen.”

His words tapped at something buried in the back of Jon’s mind. “Maybe before, but she’s different now.”

“And yet here she is,” Petyr said proudly, “set to become queen of the seven kingdoms beside a man she thought her bastard half-brother for most of her life. Let no one question your betrothed’s ability to get what she wants in the end… no matter what she must endure, it seems there’s no doubt she gets what she wants.”

Petyr bowed and departed while Jon kept himself from glaring at him, ignoring the thoughts seeping through the cracks in the back of his mind.

XOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXO

After he’d had his fill at supper Jon excused himself to his solar. Removing his cloak he tossed it over one of his chests and rubbed Ghost’s head on his way to his desk. After going through the letters he’d missed, he moved on to reports on the people that were coming and going from Winterfell. The merchants setting up shop in the winter town, the ones traveling to other northern houses and towns on their behalf.

It was times like this a part of him wished he could gather all their men and ride south just so he didn’t have look at another document about how much grain they have stored or the maintenance of their glass garden.

He felt so sure whenever he had a sword in hand but doubted himself the moment a quill took it’s place. He wished he had Sam’s mind at moments like these, then perhaps he’d find something interesting about the cost of repairs compared to their income and taxes. Maybe he’d even find some way to make it feel like they weren’t barely getting by or pinching pennies hoping they’d split and quadruple.

It wasn’t just Winterfell, but every northern house that looked to him now. And if they won this it would be every house in every kingdom. He would be left to guide them back from ruin. Even if the Night King didn’t make it past the Wall and Cersei suddenly decided she regretted everything she’d ever done and begged Jon’s forgiveness, Westeros was still broken.
They’d been through years of shifting wars where kings rose and fell with every new moon. People had their homes burned, saw their husbands murdered, their wives raped, their children taken captive. Their lives has been ruined by people who didn’t care for them, and if he succeeded they would all ask him to carry them to a better life. And he could barely figure out how to make sure they repaired Winterfell and didn’t go hungry.

When Sansa entered the room she found him slumped back in his chair rubbing his brow while Ghost sat in the corner staring at him. She’d hope he would have a few days back before finding him like this again, but she wasn’t surprised.

She moved to his side as she always did, kissing the crown of his head. Letting his hand sink to the arm of his chair he turned to look up at her.

“Already?” She asked brushing a hand through his hair. He answered with a regretful smile, so she leaned down and kissed him. “Do you want help?”

“You can look it over but it’s barely any of this.”

“What is it then?” She asked, watching him get to his feet as she backed away.

“I feel so…” He sighed, walking over to the window, struggling to find the word.

“So what? Overwhelmed?”

“No.” He turned to her shaking his head. “I mean yes, but not just that. I just…” He looked at her for a moment before frowning. “Do they even care, or is it just because I’m the best they have?”

Sansa’s brow furrowed. “No, they would have chosen you anyway, Jon. They wanted you as their king, even before they knew of your claim.”

“It’s easy to say that when all they’ve done is suffer for years now, but what if they decide I’m not good enough.”

Sansa laughed, shaking her head. “That won’t happen. All the lords trust you, even the free folk adore you. Even if the southron lords think different you’ll always have the North’s support. Though I doubt they’ll do anything but cheer once you take the Iron Throne from Cersei.”

She was disappointed to see Jon’s frown didn’t disappear but sink slightly before he took a breath and turned to sit in his usual chair by the hearth. “How did your match with Arya go?”

“Same as always,” she said sitting beside him. “It lasted longer though.”

“You’ll get her eventually,” he said with a smile. The evenness from his voice a moment ago gone, easing her concern. “Would you like me to give you some lessons? I could have Gendry make you your own sword.”

“Let me think on it,” she said before smirking. “You know I’ve noticed things.”

“Things?” His hand slid to hers, brushing her palm before entwining their fingers.

“He’s always around to watch us spar.”

“Who?” He asked quietly, looking at their hands.

“Gendry,” she said with a laugh. “I swear he and Arya are always glancing at each other. She’s almost always with him if she’s not with Rickon or Brienne and Podrick.”
“You think she loves him?”

“Maybe. She’s at least interested in him, right?”

Jon nodded. “He seems good.”

“He does.” Sansa turned to him with a teasing smirk. “You don’t intend to play the protective older brother? Go tell him to keep his hands to himself?”

“And lose my hand when Arya finds out?”

“You know she won’t-”

Without warning he pulled her into a kiss. He’d been trying to hold off, she’d noticed that much. He wanted to let her finish talking, but it seemed he couldn’t wait any longer. It seemed almost as desperate as it was passionate, Jon nearly pulling her out of the chair to bring her to him. Once they broke he stood, keeping her hand in his to pull her up into another kiss.

She moaned into his lips when she felt his hand slip to her rear, knowing a moment later he’d lift her and bring her to his bed. Sansa barely sank into the mattress before Jon was gathering her skirt around her thigh and sinking to his knees.

“Jon,” she said watching him. “What are you-” She gasped as he moved under her skirt, making her press her hands into the mattress behind her and lean her head back, her eyes soon rolling as she moaned.

XOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXO

Long after she’d caught her breath and the flush faded from her body, Sansa stood at the door to Jon’s room, her hand stroking his jaw as she kissed him. She looked content as Jon brushed his fingers through her hair.

“You sure you don’t want me to do anything?” She asked glancing down.

“No, I wanted to do that,” he said smiling. “I’ve been thinking about it since I left.”

“Tomorrow,” she assured. “I don’t care if it’s a command, I’ll disobey.”

“How am I supposed to punish you though? Take your hands or your lips?”

“Only one?” she asked with a laugh, kissing his cheek. “Sleep well, Jon.”

“You too,” he said holding the door she opened, watching her go to her room. She cast a small wave his way before closing her door and he stepped back to close his.

He’d enjoyed their time together. Enjoyed making her peak again and again until she couldn’t stand it anymore. He enjoyed her exhaustion, the way she smiled and clung to him.

He knew she would have done as much for him, but he’d wanted this time to be about her. He enjoyed her pleasure as much as his own at times so he didn’t mind it. He liked how her voice got lower, deeper the quieter she got, every time he saw her tongue brush her lips as she spoke making him want to devour them. He enjoyed every moment he spent with her.

Then why did he feel so bitter?
Sucks Olenna couldn’t go out a boss like in the show, but there was no Jaime there to talk Cersei out of torturing her. Also how did Cersei know to make Gregor get the truth from Olenna? Hm.

I remember Qyburn saying the poison with Tyene could last days depending on the person’s constitution, so I’m going to say Tyene had a slow painful death that lasted days and days, so her corpse isn’t too old.
Brewing Doubts

Chapter Summary

Jon pushes himself in the training yard and meets with his advisers.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Sansa heard the crowd first, the grunts coming when she made her way toward the yard and found a large crowd had gathered. Making her way through them to stand with Melisandre and Rickon she found the crowd had formed to watch their king spar. Only unlike most others, he was fending off three men with his sword and shield.

Laul and Rila moved to stand beside Sansa, who gave each a small nod. “How long has this been going on?”

“Only a minute or two,” answered Rila.

Sansa looked back to the yard where Jon’s face was caked in dirt and sweat as he parried a strike and threw aside another with his shield before catching the third in the cross guard of his sword. He seemed to almost throw it aside just to move forward and bring his training sword across the attacker’s chest, continuing his swing into the arm of the man on Jon’s right and turning to catch another strike on his shield as he turned and thrust his sword into the chest of the one on his left.

All three backed away, their chests heaving as they struggled to catch their breath while Jon stalked around the yard, his head down in thought.

“They look exhausted for only a minute of fighting,” Sansa noted.

“No, that match was a minute,” said Laul. “They’ve been fighting for about an hour.”

Sansa’s brow rose. “All of them? Against Jon?”

“He fought them off for almost ten minutes before anyone hit him,” Rickon said grinning with pride at his brother’s skill.

“Our king is an excellent fighter,” said Melisandre. “Though it seems this is more an exercise to exhaust himself.”

Jon looked to the men and walked over, patting one of their shoulders. “Thank you for the match,” he said to each, the men bowing their heads and thanking him. Once they left Jon looked through the crowd before pointing to a spot left of Sansa’s group. “Arya, Brienne. I’m intruding on your match.”

Sansa looked to the women, both of whom seemed surprised as the crowd broke into murmurs. After a quick glance between them, Brienne shook her head. “Your grace, I-”

“That’s an order,” he said firmly. His lips shifted to a smirk when he added, “Arya.”
Sansa groaned as Arya threw herself over the fence. “Don’t think just because you’re king you can order me around.”

“But I can order Brienne to stop training with you,” he said with a grin. “How can I risk her harming a princess?”

Arya’s hand clenched. “Point or yield?”

Jon walked over to grab a sword for Arya while Brienne had already gotten one herself. “Yield.”

He tossed it across to Arya, who caught it by the hilt and spun it while moving to Brienne’s side. “Are you certain, your grace?” The knight asked. “You’ve surely exhausted yourself.”

“This is my cool down,” he assured. “Now come.”

“It seems he wants a beating,” Laul said with a laugh.

Sansa frowned, clutching her skirt as she watched Arya dash forward, eyes narrowed as she took a curving path toward Jon’s left side. At the same time Brienne rushed forward, positioned for a strike at his right. He could have backed away but instead he let them box him in, letting his sword catch Brienne’s, sliding toward Arya and raising his shield to catch her strike at his side.

His shield rose, letting Arya’s sword push off it, passing his head while his sword scraped Brienne’s and his body turned. Brienne went for another swing at his shoulder, but he managed to spin to Arya’s right, his own sword swinging toward the back of her legs. For a moment it seemed like Arya would be caught between both strikes until she flipped, Jon’s sword passing under her while Brienne’s passed above.

The crowd gasped as Arya landed, leaving Jon between them again, swinging up toward Brienne’s abdomen. She deflected the strike to the ground at the last moment before taking a step back and raising her sword overhead.

Arya had slid to the side, thrusting at him again, but he bashed the strike away. His sword cut through dirt as it rose toward her chest, hitting her just as Brienne’s sword passed by his shoulder a moment too late to land a strike.

Being the first hit seemed to make Arya stop holding back. While Jon turned to swing at Brienne’s arm, Arya threw her sword to her left hand. A quick thrust made Jon raise his shield, but then she grabbed it, pulling his shield arm back while she thrust her sword at his chest. That just so happened to be when Brienne brought her own strike down a split second later.

The crowd gasped as he winced and brought his sword up, knocking theirs away and pulling Arya. He had enough strength to take her off her feet, seeming to throw her as she released his shield and she slid away to his right.

Sansa wanted to stop it, to leap over the fence and beg them to stop as they continued to land two strikes each for every one he seemed to. Yet none of them yielded. Minutes passed and Jon kept fighting, pushing aside their strikes, closing in on them, taking hits to try and land his own. It was hard to gauge their thinking, looking more like some wild dance. Arya and Brienne’s matches seemed to help them fight in unison, weaving around each other to strike at Jon.

They could all see he was forcing himself to keep going, pushing through exhaustion, but no one knew why. It was hard to know if even Jon knew why, but he finally backed away waving his sword. “I’m done. I yield.”
The crowd seemed to give a sigh of relief while Arya and Brienne backed away, each taking heavy breaths as they watched Jon toss his sword into the bucket with the others and hand his shield to Willam before leaving the field.

Sansa broke away from the group, holding her skirt as she hurried to Jon’s side.

“Jon,” she called out, making him glance back. His grim expression broke with a smile as he came to a stop. “Are you okay?”

With a shrug he started walking again. “I’m a bit tired and sweaty. I’d call for a bath now but it’ll have to wait. I need to meet with Davos and go over plans for the Ironborn.”

They were in the corridor heading toward his room when she grabbed his arm, making him stop. “Jon. What was that about?”

Jon looked at her before exhaling and shaking his head. “I wanted to do something I know I’m good at. I’m fine.”

She had a feeling there was more to it than that, but she didn’t want to push it and risk him doubling down. Instead she nodded and kissed his cheek. “If you need anything I’m here for you, okay?”

A sad smile took his lips as he nodded. “I know.”

XOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXO

It was no surprise that shortly after their return news had spread that Jon had left to meet Daenerys. The men he brought were going to talk, they’d accepted that. What surprised her was when Lysa approached her with Petyr while Robin and Rickon played with Ghost.

“Is he going to leave you for the dragon queen?” Lysa asked without warning.

“Pardon?” asked Sansa.

“The king,” she said pointedly. “Is that the reason for that display this morning?”

“You mean his sparring?” Sansa shook his head.

“Hm. I assumed it was because you’ve held to your maidenhood.” Lysa’s eyes narrowed. “You have, haven’t you?”

“I have,” Sansa nodded. “Why would that make him fight?”

Petyr chuckled. “Men who are bred for war often deal with frustration in particular ways. If they can’t quell it in a woman’s arms they take to the yard until their own are too heavy to swing a sword. It’s often at it’s worst when they’re forced away from the former.” He tilted his head innocently. “Of course, he’s returned to you. I can’t imagine he’s missing a woman’s embrace when his betrothed is with him.”

Sansa shifted slightly, thinking on the implications. Was he frustrated because she hadn’t laid with him? He’d taken care of her the night before but he’d been the one to turn her away, saying he wanted to focus on her. They hadn’t laid together but they’d found ways around it.

Her brow knit as she realized Petyr was implying Jon had slept with Daenerys. She knew he hadn’t, trusted him enough to know he would have told her… but he was behaving oddly. He’d
always been giving, putting her before himself, but seemed so intent on it the night before. Almost as if he was making up for something.

He was fighting like he was angry, taking on multiple people knowing they would land hits. Jon wanted to lose. He wanted to be beaten and bruised. He was angry at himself, pushing himself until he was exhausted and couldn’t take it anymore.

Jon would never do that. But why was he acting so odd? Something was wrong. She just didn’t know what.

We have Riverrun,” Davos told them as Jon’s council convened after he’d received a letter from her uncle. “Which means we have the Riverlands.”

“They’re useless until the Lannisters are gone,” said Jon. “Tell the Manderlys to stay and help drive them out. Make sure the Riverlands can defend themselves before departing.”

“And if we get the Tyrell and Martell men?” asked Davos. “Is it worth it to try and take Cersei before the Wall?”

“Can we trust the Kingslayer to convince his sister?” asked Arya.

“No,” Sansa answered. “Even if she sees it, she’ll never help us. She’ll say to let us all die and then she’ll claim the remains. She’ll think the Night King will stop once he has the North. She vindictive and cruel, not smart.”

“How long could the Wall hold him off?” asked Arya. “Maybe we just let him sit there and wait until we’re ready to ride north.”

“The Wall will not stand in his way,” Melisandre said knowingly. “He will find a way around it or through it.”

“Your flames tell you that?” Arya asked with a glare.

“Stories tell of ways to bring the wall down,” Melisandre said simply. “The free folk talk of the Horn of Winter which can bring it down with a blow. It’s also possible the Night King is unique or even linked to the Wall in some way. For all we know he had a part in making the Wall and may very well be capable of bringing it down with a touch.”

“I hate magic,” Jon sighed.

Sansa turned to him with a frown. “I don’t. It brought you back.”

“Some magic,” he corrected, earning a smile from her. “I just wish I could even begin to understand it.” Jon chuckled. “I hope Sam comes back a wizard.”

“A wizard?” Sansa laughed.

“He said once he always wanted to be a wizard,” Jon said fondly. “I hope he comes back as one.”

“I hope not,” Melisandre said shaking her head, “warlocks are awful.”

“His father brought one to Horn Hill once,” Jon said thinking back. “Sam said the warlock slaughtered an auroch and had Sam bathe in the blood to try and make him brave. When it didn’t work his father had the warlock scourged.”
Sansa frowned as the others looked shocked. “Poor Sam.”

After nodding, Jon tilted his head. “Daenerys said she met warlocks too. They stole her dragons and tried to kill her with a manticore.”

“Greyjoy supposedly keeps them as well,” said Davos. When they all looked confused, Davos chuckled. “Pardon, I meant Euron. Varys told me there were tales around Essos that Euron took the tongues of his crew and kept warlocks to teach him magic.”

“We’ll have to handle him after Daenerys gets here,” Jon said leaning into his hand, his elbow digging into the arm of his chair. “Maybe her dragons can help thin the fleet and we can try to get Yara back, if she’s even alive.”

Once the others departed, Sansa lingered as she often did.

“Did warlocks really try to kill Daenerys with a manticore?”

Jon turned to her and chuckled. “Apparently. I thought it weird but then there were three dragons flying off shore when she told me, so I couldn’t really doubt her.”

Sansa snickered. “Did you two talk a lot? You were only there a few days.”

“Not much the first day,” he said putting his papers in order on his desk. “But once we started it got easier. Why?”

“Do you miss her?”

Jon turned to her, trying to gauge why she asked. “I don’t think so. I’d like to talk to her more.” Jon’s confusion gave way to a solemn smile. “She said she’d tell me about Rhaegar.”

Sansa smiled, knowing he had heard a few tales of Lyanna in her youth but no northern lords had much to say of Rhaegar beyond tales of his victory at Harrenhal.

Watching her nod, Jon moved toward her arching his brow. “Why?”

“I was just wondering how close you two got.”

“Are you jealous?” he asked with a teasing smirk.

“No,” she said incredulously, crossing her arms.

His hands found her shoulders as he gave an assuring smile. “If you’re jealous already I fear for my life the day you both get jealous of each other.”

“I’m not jealous,” she said smacking his chest lightly.

“Good,” he nodded, “because you have no reason to be, my love.”

Sansa smiled, pressing her lips to his, her body flush as she felt his tongue brush hers. She considered backing him to bed and taking him in hand then, but had enough sense to remember their duties.

When they separated she let out a sigh, kissing his jaw before backing to the door. “I’ll see you tonight,” she promised, not seeing his smile crumble as she left.
If Lysa’s question seems sudden, I hoped to imply by having Petyr explain it that he’d basically talked Lysa into her thinking. While he’s been pretty much off the mark every time with Jon and Sansa it’s easier for him to get what he wants from Lysa most of the time and lead her where he wants her to go.
Chapter Summary

Sansa finds out what’s been bothering Jon.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Sansa had been miserable after she had rejected Jon. Seeing him had hurt, but having the seat beside her empty through supper made it hard to endure. Yet she felt a similar twist filling her chest as they supped in the Great Hall.

He spoke with any who came to him, but never engaged anyone. He seemed content to get lost in his cups, downing two mugs of ale before finishing his meal, likely only eating it so it wouldn’t go to waste.

It was clear that something was bothering him. Not just kingly matters like most would assume, but something personal. Something was eating at his heart, leaving him to sink away, his eyes distant and lost.

She tried to reach for his hand beneath the table but he pulled his away, reaching for his mug and gulping down the remaining half. He set the mug down and rose, departing with nods to those who spoke to him as he passed. He didn’t head for his room but out toward the courtyard.

Her stomach was in knots as she tried to give it time so it wasn’t so obvious that when she finally excused herself she did so to chase after him. She had endured a lot, but not this. Something was wrong and she wouldn’t let it take him from her.

Sansa scoured the courtyard but found no sign of him. The glass garden was empty, the broken tower showing no sign of entry, no fresh tracks going toward the Godswood. She was starting to wonder if he’d ridden off, but then her eyes drifted toward Winterfell’s crypt.

Giving her eyes a moment to adjust to the dim candle light, Sansa made her way inside. It didn’t take her long to find Jon. He was sat on the floor with his back against a wall, looking at the statue of his mother. The only woman she knew of among the crypt meant for kings and lords.

She’d only seen him down here once before, when they first claimed Winterfell from the Boltons. Jon had led a party into the crypts to make sure no Boltons were hiding within it, and when the others came out he didn’t. She and Rickon descended to find Jon stood before the statue of his mother, staring at it until he noticed and left with them, giving her a smile that told her all was okay.

This time he looked to her and turned away, his head hanging as if ashamed. Her heart twisted, but she remained quiet as she moved to the wall and sat beside him. If he wanted to talk he would, but it would be enough to be there for him.

Looking at him, she saw him return to staring at the statue and carefully slid her fingers through his. She felt so relieved when they wrapped around her hand. He took a breath, his throat bobbing
before he shook his head at some ridiculous thought.

Finally, his eyes on the floor, he said quietly, “I feel so pathetic.”

Sansa remained silent, wanting him to get out whatever was on his mind.

After a moment he continued. “I know it’s… It’s stupid. I think about it and I tell myself I’m being an idiot, but I can’t stop thinking it. Even though I know the rest outweighs it I still see all these little things that feel like daggers in my side, telling me it’s true. That no matter how much I want it, I’m still who I always was.

“I know you told me about him.” Sansa knew who he meant almost instantly. “How he’d try to get under our skin. I don’t think he even realized he did, not in the way he intended, but it was enough to glance against something that had been eating at me. Something that such a dumb, petty thing could make seem so much worse. Even when I know, I don’t.

“I know it’s not true and I feel awful for even thinking it, but it’s still there. It makes me wonder if I’ve been fooling myself because I’m so desperate for things I never thought I could have. Things I don’t think I deserve. It makes things I know don’t matter seem worse, and it makes me afraid to ask because I know you’ll answer, and as much as I want to hear one answer, the other seems worse than taking another knife.”

“What did he say?” she asked quietly.

“He implied that you were with me to be queen,” Jon said shaking his head. “That you got what you wanted in the end. That even if it had to be with someone you knew as your half-brother you’d endure it to be queen.”

Sansa turned to him, clutching his hand with both of hers. “You know that’s not true.”

“I know,” he nodded with a broken smile.

“Then what is it.” She reached up to stroke his jaw. “You can tell me.”

“Kiss me.”

Sansa did without hesitation, pressing her lips to his, desperate to take away whatever was upsetting him.

When she pulled away he asked, “What do you feel?”

Sansa blinked. “What?”

“I know you wouldn’t be me for a crown or whatever he was trying to make me think,” Jon said dismissively before meeting her eyes. “But I know I was never what you wanted.”

Sansa wanted to say that wasn’t true, but it was. She’d always talked of blonde princes, not dark haired ones. She talked of men serenading their loves with harps, but the only singing Jon did was with his sword.

“It’s the same for you,” she offered.

Jon frowned, shaking his head to her surprise. “Once I understood what it meant, whenever I imagined a wife, you were what I measured her against as much as anyone else. When I didn’t tell myself it would be easier if she just do what I want to do and end up like Arya, when I really
thought about the things I want, she had to stand against you. When I tried to be nice to a girl I thought of how I would be nice to you.

“It felt so easy to love you that it worried me. It made me think I might have been the only one. Then when you turned me away it was like I’d been a fool to think I’d ever be more than a bastard, and a lady would never love a bastard.

“Then you came back and said you wanted me. You asked me what I felt. I told you I loved you different then anyone else. I barely even noticed then that you never told me the same and never have.”

Sansa’s brow knit. “What?” She shook her head. “No, I told you…” Her voice drifted as she thought back and realized he was right. She’d told him she wanted to be with him and marry him, but never said plainly that she loved him. The first time she’d said it had been to Brynden, then she told Arya, Bran and Rickon she loved Jon, but never him.

Suddenly it all made sense. His questions in the solar were about her. He wasn’t trying to apologize for some affair when he spent the evening pleasing her, he was desperate to make her love him. His frustration wasn’t carnal but emotional, punishing himself. Gods, he’d even called her his love and she just kissed him and left with only a promise for the night to come.

Sansa looked to him and sighed. “Jon,” she whispered, sliding her hand against his beard. “It felt like I said it every day when I woke and every night before I slept. It felt like I said it every time I look at you, and every time you look at me. If I spoke it every time I felt it I’d never speak any other words, but if that’s what it takes for you to believe then I promise, I love you.”

Jon’s lips twitched slightly. “And make it meaningless?”

“Never,” she whispered, pulling him to her so she could kiss him.

It seemed odd yet she couldn’t help but feel like the kiss was deeper, more meaningful than they had before. He’d been holding that for a long time it seemed, but she would make sure to chip away until nothing was left of that doubt.

When they finally broke away he frowned. “I’m sorry I let him get to me.”

“It was dumb luck,” she said shaking her head. “I didn’t exactly come out unscathed.”

Jon’s eyes narrowed. “What do you mean?”

“It was little ways. Remember what when you thought me jealous?”

His protective anger gave way to a grin. “You were.”

“Not really. It’s like you said, I knew it wasn’t true but I couldn’t help think it. I knew something was wrong, I knew you were acting different and then he suggested you were frustrated because you’d slept with Daenerys and returned to me, the maiden.”

Jon shook his head, brushing his hand through her hair. “I want to wait for you, Sansa. Don’t ever think I mind. Especially not when we’ve found other ways.”

Sansa smiled. “I know, but I can’t help worrying that I’ll be your worst. You said Ygritte was no maid. Daenerys is younger than you but still older than me and married once before. I’ll be the novice.”
“We’ll have time to practice,” Jon assured. “It’s not that hard to do, not when you both enjoy it. Something Daenerys didn’t find much in her first marriage.”

Sansa frowned. “No?”

Jon shook his head. “She mentioned a lover she’d left in Mereen, but seemed to say her first marriage was… rough. She was sold to a Dothraki Khal who took her like a broodmare. I doubt she found what I did in Ygritte’s furs, and what I promise you will in our bed, and should we marry her then… what she’ll surely feel if she desires it.”

“And how do you imagine that happening?” She asked, noting he’d avoided saying he or they would make her feel it.

“I have no fucking idea,” he admitted with a laugh. “But I’ll make sure you never feel unloved.”

Sansa nodded, brushing her fingers across his neck. “And I’ll do the same for you. Now let’s go back. I can’t do what I want with the dead watching.”

XOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXO

Things seemed easier now things were clear between them. Sansa had spent the first day speaking whispers of her love whenever she could, exaggerating them so even songs of old seemed to pale in comparison, but soon her teasing eased and it became more natural. He didn’t want it spoken every moment of every day, he certainly didn’t say it that much, but it seemed to help her goal of chipping away at whatever doubt she’d created when she turned him away.

Petyr kept giving small comments whenever he could, but he was a mockingbird pecking at the Wall, for that was how large Jon’s place in her heart was, how secure she felt in their love.

“The dragon queen rides North,” Jon told the lords gathered in the great hall. Whispers of the Second Field of Fire had reached them, so it was no surprise when the letter arrived saying she was moving.

“Is she with or against us?” asked Robett Glover.

“She isn’t against us,” Jon said carefully, placing the letter on the table as he stood looking toward the lords. “Whatever comes, she’ll stand with us against Cersei and I’ve little doubt she’ll support us during the Long Night. When she arrives we’ll begin discussing where we stand, but I doubt there will be any bloodshed. Neither of us wants that. She’s even bringing a shipment of dragonglass mined from beneath Dragonstone.”

“And what of her dragons?” asked Eddara Tallhart.

“They’ll come with her, but they won’t harm anyone. They obey her commands.”

“Do they obey yours?” asked Barbrey Dustin.

They all looked to Jon with renewed interest until he shook his head. “I was never near enough to command them. Davos got closer than I did.”

“And I about pissed myself,” Davos said with a laugh, “so I doubt they’d obey me.”

Once the chuckles quieted, Jon tapped the table. “The Night King’s army is heading toward Eastwatch. We’ll need to send men there to support the wildlings when they arrive, but once we’ve gathered all our armies we can all march north and finish this. If Cersei won’t step aside we’ll need
to rely on the southron houses and men at Moat Cailin to keep her busy, otherwise I’ll call on them to send as many as they can. North, south, none of that will matter when they reach the Wall. Only living and dead.”

While the hall emptied Jon noticed the lords move aside, letting Bran enter. He made his way to the dais. “I found it.”

Those at the high table tensed. “What do we need?”

Bran frowned. “Dragons and dragonglass. Fire and blood.”

Chapter End Notes

So how many figured out the real reason? Of course he didn’t believe Littlefinger, but as I said his grazing shot had a chain reaction.

I figure Jon’s insecurities paired with her earlier rejection, which narratively we never really experienced from his side, would have left him with some doubts that he hid away when Sansa came back to him. Then Littlefinger’s words made him think on it and he realized little things like her saying she cares for him and the like, but never saying she loved him in return, which he worried could be a sign that she was settling for him, and that grew into this little arc.

And I’m bringing in valyrian steel specifically as a way to support a theme of new legacys, so there will be no Blackfyre or Dark Sister sadly, sorry to anyone wanting those. I am considering using them in the next story I plan to write though, but for this one I feel the new legacy theme fits more without relying on ancient swords.
Dagger and Sword

Chapter Summary

Cersei makes decisions, Jon helps others prepare, and Daenerys arrives at Winterfell.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Jaime watched Cersei stare at the undead soldier hanging from Gregor Clegane’s sword, clawing at her. Qyburn’s eyes were wide as he watched Bronn put a torch to it, igniting the wight. It seemed to collapse off the sword, the exposed bones not held by rotted skin falling away from it.

Euron walked over, picking up the wight’s skull. “What is dead may never die,” he whispered before laughing. “Maybe the North is more interesting than I thought.”

“And they say there’s an army of these things moving south?” asked Cersei.

“At least a hundred thousand men, not counting the giants or animals among them.”

Euron let the skull drop from his hand as he stood. “What else is there?”

“They’re all lead by White Walkers and their Night King,” Jaime told them. “Everything but dragonglass and valyrian steel shatters against them. Nothing else stops them.”

“Dragons might help that,” Euron said with a nod.

Cersei gripped the arm of her chair. “And that whore’s surely sided with the bastard king.”

“It’s his son, Cersei,” said Jaime. “I know it.”

“So you say,” she sneered. “And what are we supposed to do? Stand aside? Let them take the throne along with our heads?”

“He’s asked us to help, but understands our reluctance. He’s offered an armistice.”

“So we just sit and wait?”

A hint of fondness colored Jaime’s smirk. “He said we can decide who sits on the throne once we’re sure it will still exist. If we agree to stand down then he’s agreed to do the same.”

“And what of the dragon whore?”

He seemed to contemplate his answer, but knew this might be a test if Qyburn’s little birds already knew. “He didn’t say as much, but I believe he had gone to meet her when I arrived.”

“Do you think he’s stepped down for her?” she asked, as if that would decide her thoughts.

Though uncertain, Jaime shook his head. “I doubt it. He seems intent on leading them through the Long Night.”
Cersei thought for a moment. “Could we trust his word for an armistice?”

“He’s still Ned Stark’s son,” Jaime offered with a shrug.

Cersei nodded, turning her gaze to Euron. “Do as I said. Send word once it’s done.”

Euron’s pale lips curved into a grin as he gave an exaggerated bow. “As you wish, my queen.”

“Write to the bastard king,” Cersei told Qyburn. “Tell him he’ll have his armistice. We’ll even offer his armies passage through our lands so he can let them defend the North. Say we’ll prepare a small company of men to join them once we can, as a sign of good faith.”

“At once, your grace.” Qyburn bowed his head, turning to flee the secluded courtyard.

Jaime eyed her as she moved to pour herself a glass of wine, leaving Bronn to take the wight away. “Should I prepare the men?”

Taking up her glass, Cersei turned to him with a smirk. “I always knew you were the stupidest Lannister.” She took a sip as his brow sank. “The Targaryens and Starks have united against us and you want to fight along side them. Are you a traitor or an idiot?”

“You saw it with your own eyes,” he said walking toward her. “You saw a dead man try to kill us.”

“And I saw it burn,” said Cersei. “If dragons can’t stop them, if Dothraki and Unsullied and every Northern house can’t stop them, how would our armies make a difference?”

“This isn’t about noble houses,” she said shaking his head in disbelief. “This is about the living and the dead.”

“And I intend to stay amongst the living,” said Cersei. “Let the bastard king and his queens defend the North. We stay here where we’ve always been, and while they battle the monsters we take back the lands that belong to us.”

“And then what?”

“And then we rule.”

“When the fighting in the North is over someone wins, you understand that don’t you?” He said as though speaking to a child. “If the dead win, they march south and kill us all. If the living win, and we’ve betrayed them, they march south and kill us all!”

“The Targaryens and Starks already want to kill us all. Most of them will die in the-”

“They’ve already killed thousands of our men. Their dragons turned our men to ash. We barely have a hold on the two kingdoms loyal to us. We can’t beat them and her dragons.”

“They’re not invincible,” Cersei shrugged, taking a drink. “One of our men used Qyburn’s scorpion to injure one. Once we have more of them they’ll fall from the sky before they ever near our men.”

“What men? Our armies are broken. We don’t have the support of the other houses.”

“No, we have something better,” she set her glass down with a grin, “we have the Iron Bank.”

Jaime stared at her, confused and pained. He knew he would have to do it. He’d said as much, but he wanted to believe, to give her a chance to be better. She wasn’t.
“You should have listened more when father talked about the importance of gold,” she told him as patronizing as their father ever was. “I know it’s boring for you. You just wanted to hunt and ride and fight, but I listened, I learned. Highgarden bought us the most powerful army in Essos.” Sinking into her chair she looked to him as though victorious. “The Golden Company. Twenty thousand men, horses… elephants, I believe.”

“The Golden Company is not here, they’re in Essos. How is…” He voice trailed into a sigh. “Greyjoy.”

Cersei grinned. “He’ll ferry the Golden Company back here to help us win the war for Westeros.”

“You plotted with Euron Greyjoy without telling me, the commander of your armies.”

“And you failed to do as I told you and kill the bastard king.”

“You sent me to meet with him.” Had she truly gone insane? “To see the proof he offered for myself.”

“I sent you there as the only man I thought I could trust to do what was needed. I sent you to meet with him so you could take his head.”

“You’d have me die there in the North?”

Cersei shook her head as if he truly were the idiot she seemed to think. “You could have had one of your men hide away and do it. You could have found a way if you wanted.”

Jaime walked to her, his jaw set. “I pledged to bring men North to aide the living. I plan to honor that pledge.”

“Then that would be treason,” she said coolly.

“Treason?”

“Disobeying your queens command, fighting with her enemies, what would you call it?”

Jaime shook his head, standing straight. “It doesn’t matter what I’d call it.”

When he turned to leave, Gregor stood in his way. When he glanced back to Cersei she said, “No one walks away from me.”

“Are you going to order him to kill me?” He asked as he turned to her. “I’m the only one you have left. Our children are gone. Our father is gone. It’s just me and you now!”

“Whether from you or another,” she said calmly, “there will be more to come.”

Whatever part of him still cared for her made his stomach twist at the thought of her with another man, much as it had when he heard she’d promised to marry Euron once the war was over. With a nod he told her, “Give the order then.”

Jaime met her gaze, almost daring her. Though not surprised to see her gaze shift toward Gregor with a nod, it still broke his heart.

For a moment he was shaken, his gaze shifting, going through all they’ve been together, all they’d loved each other before she became the monster before him. “I don’t believe you,” he said turning to Gregor and walking past him, waiting for a sword across his back that never came.
He wished he’d pulled for a more public reveal. He might have had more men join him as he made for the stables.

Though she’d freed him from his vows to make him commander of their armies, a kingsguard’s vows were for life. The men with him might not make a difference in the wars to come, but a kingsguard would give his life to guard his king and defend him from any who seek to harm his king, even from his own sister.

Looking over the scroll Bran drawn out, Gendry shook his head. “This is very specific.”

Jon crossed his arms. “I know. Arya says you’re good. I trust her judgment on this, and I trust you to be the only one who sees this before you throw it in the forge.”

Gendry looked to Jon wide eyed. “Only me?”

“You see how difficult it is to make,” Jon said with a nod toward the large parchment filled with small writing and diagrams. “We can’t waste the dragonglass on failed attempts. I’d rather them go to daggers, spears and arrows. But I’d set aside an amount for you to use to get a handle on it, and once you have we’ll forge as many as we can before we ride north.”

Gendry looked at the page again, frowning. “I guess I’ll stay south forging more for any reinforcements.”

“You can’t,” Jon said with a smirk, “we’ll need the dragons.”

Gendry laughed. “Right.” Though lacking certain specifics, Bran gave enough detail to give Gendry an idea of the temperatures needed, the timing, how to temper the steel. It wasn’t something he could rush, definitely not at first. It would need to be slow and precise at first until he had a handle on it. Each one would take time. “I can do it.”

Jon had been more than pleased when Sansa accepted his offer to help train her, but somehow that had turned into him spending every other morning with half the women in Winterfell. Thankfully Arya, Brienne, Podrick and Theon had taken to helping him. He could instruct them all but if he tried to help refine them all by himself it would take hours.

Of course, Arya relished the opportunity to guide Sansa. “Straighten your back,” she tutted. “Tighten your grip. Or should I crack your knuckles.”

Sansa knew the best way to annoy her. She tightened her grip and straightened her back and gave her a sweet smile. “That better?”

Arya huffed. “Yeah, yeah,” she said waving her hand and moving to help Lyanna Mormont.

“She’s right, you know,” Jon said walking to Sansa, placing a hand over hers, “but the hilt’s apologized. No need to choke it to death.”

Sansa laughed, fixing her grip. “I know she’s right.” Looking at the sword she took a swing and sighed. “Is this okay?”

“It’s a simple strike but yeah.”
“I meant the sword.” She held it in one hand, frowning. “Shouldn’t they be heavier?”

“Heavier than what?”

“Normal swords,” she shrugged. “It feels about the same as any normal sword. Wouldn’t it be better if it was heavier?”

Jon noticed her raise her voice for the final question, her attempt to draw attention from the others. He shook his head as she flashed a smile at him, having forced him into another teaching moment. They all seemed to turn to him, so he shook his head.

“No, it doesn’t really make a difference. Most of the time if the sword’s lighter it’s smaller or shaped differently, meaning you couldn’t wield it like you do these.”

“It won’t make us swing normal swords faster?” asked Johnna, though Jon noticed Lyanna look from the girl to him, as if she’d been wary of asking that and risk embarrassing herself.

“No. It’ll feel like it does, but it doesn’t.”

“And how would you know that?” asked Lyanna.

To their surprise Theon chuckled and answered while Jon sighed. “He’s tried.”

They looked from Theon to Jon, who nodded, glancing at Sansa. “The Starks were hosting some guests so I came out to the yard every night and gathered up as many sticks as I could. I tied them to a sword and counted every swing, forcing myself to do more and more every night until my arms hurt.”

Sansa frowned at the thought of Jon sat out here alone at night wrapping sticks around his sword and swinging away while she laughed at jokes in the warm hall and had her fill of lemoncakes.

“I got to a little over six hundred before I had to accept it wasn’t working,” Jon admitted with a small laugh.

Once their lesson was over Sansa joined Jon on his way to his solar.

“How’d I do?” He asked once he sat at his desk.

“Wonderfully,” she assured, sitting on his lap before he could reach the letters Wolkan had left for him.

His arm wrapped around her waist. “Sword or dagger?”

“Neither,” she admitted. “But if I had to choose? Sword, I guess.”

“Really?” That surprised him.

Sansa took a breath. “I had to wait until one of Ramsay’s dogs had knocked me to the ground to stab it in the eye. Maybe I could have hit him before he ever touched me if I could have just picked up one of their swords and known how to use it.”

After nodding, Jon patted her rear and sat up. “Let’s finish with these so we can see off your aunt and cousin.”

XOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXO
Sansa felt a wave of relief once Lysa and Baelish left for the Vale with Robin, leaving a few others lords and their men behind, vowing to send all they could once they returned to the Eyrie.

No one was surprised when a letter came from Jaime telling them Cersei planned to betray them a day after hers arrived saying she agreed to the armistice. Davos and a few lords had wanted to convene and discuss whether to focus on the Wall or south, but Jon said they would wait for Daenerys. Whatever happened, he had little doubt she would help with both wars whether she was his wife or not.

Thankfully it wasn’t long before they got word from White Harbor and saw dragons on the horizon. Knowing Daenerys wouldn’t be among those on horse, Jon rode through the gates with a small group while Sansa and most of Winterfell stood on the walls.

Tyrion led the group from Daenerys’ armies including a lone Westerosi man among the Dothraki and Unsullied. The bear on his chest plate drew Jon’s eye. “King Jon,” Tyrion said introducing the knight and Unsullied captain, “Ser Jorah Mormont and Grey Worm.”

The knight gave him a nod which Jon returned while shaking the man’s hand once they all dismounted. “I served with your father at Castle Black. He was a good man.”

Davos looked around the group before glancing at Drogon. “She on one of them again?”

“That she is,” Tyrion said with a laugh. “Our queen enjoys making an entrance.”

Jon looked to Winterfell and saw Sansa stood beside Ghost, watching him. Spotting Drogon begin his descent, Jon stood firm while others back away. Once his claws dug into earth Drogon crawled forward, toward Jon.

Sansa and many others fought back gasps as the dragon came to a stop in front of Jon, Ghost letting out a slight growl along with Drogon’s. From the dragon’s back Daenerys watched Jon remove his glove and reach out to rub the scales of Drogon’s snout. He stared into the dragon’s eye as it’s growl quieted, lowering his wing to let Daenerys climb off. Once she’d touched earth Jon pulled his hand back and Drogon backed away, carefully turning and flapping his wings to launch himself into the air again.

Making her way to Jon, Daenerys smiled. “I suppose there’s no doubting your dragon blood now.” She glanced toward Winterfell as he put on his glove and saw a woman in a gray grown stood beside a large white wolf. Auburn hair framed her face, hanging past her shoulders while azure eyes shifted from Jon to Daenerys. “Is that her?”

Following her gaze, he found Sansa shot him a quick look that told him he would be in trouble. “Yeah,” he smiled.

Daenerys laughed. “She’s beautiful. I can see why you’re willing to overlook having been her half-brother.”

Jon glanced at her. “Same as you’re willing to overlook being my aunt?”

Daenerys arched her brow and smirked. “It is in our blood.”

With a sigh Jon motioned for her to follow.

By the time they made it through the gates, everyone had moved to the courtyard with Sansa at the front. “Your grace,” Sansa said with a curtsy, “welcome to Winterfell.”
“Thank you, Lady Stark.” Daenerys wore a smile as she nodded to Sansa.

“You look well, Sansa,” Tyrion said with a smirk.

“You as well, Lord Tyrion.”

“My lords and ladies,” Tyrion said before introducing the others.

Having met them all already, Jon kept his attention on Daenerys and Sansa, noticing that between introductions they seemed to glance at one another. He hoped it was simply them gauging each other and not some unspoken challenge.

When Tyrion came to Jorah, Lyanna gave a huff, glaring at him, but kept quiet beyond that.

Davos handled the Stark introductions, Tyrion wearing a fond smile as he, like most others, thought House Stark all but gone barely a year earlier. Rickon seemed nervous to meet the new people, but his eyes kept drifting toward the dragons flying in the distance. Bran seemed impassive, while Arya seemed wary.

“And of course, the Lady of Winterfell, Sansa Stark.”

After they’d exchanged nods, Daenerys turned to look at the direwolf beside Sansa with a smile. “And I assume this is Ghost?” His ears perked up hearing his name, and she chuckled. “Yes, Jon told me about you.”

He took a step forward, eyeing her as she reached up to rub his head.

“He’s beautiful,” she said with a smile.

“I’m sure you’re all tired from your journey,” Sansa said once Daenerys took her hand from Ghost. “We’ve prepared rooms. Supper will be in the great hall. If you somehow get lost, I’m sure Lord Tyrion will show you.”

“I may still remember,” Tyrion said with a smirk. “I believe I was mostly sober during my second visit.”

Daenerys looked to Sansa and Jon as she followed them inside. “I’d like to speak soon.”

With a quick look to him, Sansa nodded. “Once you’re settled seek out Jon’s solar.”

Chapter End Notes

Where in the show Sansa spent the last few seasons growing more like Cersei, as if it were a positive, that’s not the case in this story. Cersei is vindictive, cruel, jealous and dumb, so Sansa is none of those things here. I think a good example is Jaime’s reasoning for telling her about Jon possibly meeting Dany. He assumes it’s a test, yet every time Jon’s wondered the same with Sansa it never is.

Sansa is everything Cersei could never be, and Dany is all Cersei wishes she could be, while Jon is basically what she might have wanted from Robert and all Joffrey could never be.
The idea with valyrian steel here is it’s such a pain to make it can’t be mass produced, so they’re looking for usability. That means melee weapons, no arrowheads, those will be dragonglass if anything, and even that will be used more for melee weapons.

I’m sure people are disappointed Petyr’s leaving, but he took a big enough risk keeping himself scarce while Jaime was around, no way he stays while Tyrion and Varys are there. His game with Jon and Sansa only made them get closer so he’d rather stay out of view and out of mind for now while he adjust and focuses on his other plans.
Planning

Chapter Summary

Daenerys, Jon and Sansa meet to discuss the war effort and their marriage.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“I should be there.” Tyrion said watching Missandei adjust Daenerys’ hair while she looked over her attire.

“This is a private matter,” said Daenerys.

“It’s a matter of state when it concerns your possible marriage,” said Tyrion. “You’re not some thatcher’s daughter that can run off to wed whoever she pleases.”

“I doubt Lady Sansa will feel comfortable discussing her new marriage with her previous husband there.”

Tyrion snorted.

Once Missandei finished, Daenerys turned to him. “Do you think I’ll be tricked?”

“No, they’re not the sort.” Tyrion paused. “Well, Jon isn’t.”

Daenerys nodded. “I need to speak with them alone to know how we work. Should we decide to wed I doubt you’ll be there every time we’re together.”

“If not for Jon I wouldn’t mind if I was,” Tyrion said with a laugh. He quickly looked away when both women shot him a glare. “I mean to say you’ll surely make a lovely match.”

“Of course,” she said drolly. Daenerys exited the room and made her way through the halls, finding the door to Jon’s solar open.

He was stood beside his desk looking over letters while Sansa looked out the window. “Are you nervous?”

“No,” he answered quickly. “If this doesn’t work she’s not going to hate us or slaughter us. We’ll find a way to work it out.”

“That’s optimistic.” They turned to find Daenerys standing in the doorway with a smirk. “And I feared I imagined you less dour than I first thought.”

“I have my moments,” Jon offered, setting the letters down.

“Would you like something to drink? Wine?” Sansa asked moving to a table with two pitchers and three glasses.

“Wine,” she said with a nod, hoping it would ease things.
Jon closed the door while she walked inside. “I suppose congratulations are due for your victory against the Lannisters.”

“Yes, we won, but…” She hesitated before saying, “They had a weapon that hurt Drogon.”

“Is he okay?” asked Sansa, handing her a glass before going back to pour one for herself.

“It reminded me of those stories about Rhaenys in Dorne.” She sighed. “I thought I’d die there and never be seen again.”

“You think she died?” Jon asked walking over to a small table set up beside the hearth with three chairs. “I always thought the letter Aegon got was telling him they had her and did something to her. That he ended the war with Dorne to make them stop.”

“I remember hearing Aegon took his son with him to Sunspear and hoping it was to meet her,” Sansa said with a somber smile as she sat at the table.

“That does sound like you,” Jon smiled, turning to Daenerys. “Either way, it seems you did well in your first battle in Westeros.”

“Thank you, but… I don’t know that it went well in the end. Tyrion is upset because I had to kill men who wouldn’t bend the knee.” She sighed. “I can’t imagine how anyone could think to be loyal to that mad woman.”

“I’m sure they were made promises and told whatever it was they always wanted to hear about themselves and everyone they hate.” Sansa shook her head in disgust. “Assuming she wasn’t just sleeping with them.”

“I thought she loved her brother?”

“She once told me tears aren’t a woman’s only weapon, their best lay between her legs,” said Sansa. “It’s not as if she hadn’t used it on others.”

Daenerys nodded. “She sounds like a true lady.”

“Mm.” Sansa looked to their right and saw Jon sat with a smirk, watching them speak.

Daenerys noticed and chuckled. “And how have things gone here?”

“Well.” Jon nodded. “Riverrun seems ready to defend itself so the men we had there have left. Arianne Martell has rallied the Dornish for us and Garlan Tyrell has those remaining loyal to him gathering.”

Daenerys sat up. “You’ve retaken Dorne and the Reach?”

“As much as is left of them,” said Sansa. “Dorne lost men in a brief civil war after the Sand Snakes took power. Most of the Reach was picked away with every war over the last few years. Every kingdom’s barely what they were only years ago.”

“And the North?”

“Bracing itself,” said Jon. “The Night King is nearing Eastwatch on the Wall.”

“How long until he reaches it?”

“Weeks?” Sansa shrugged. “They move slowly, but they never seem to stop.”
Daenerys nodded, putting down her glass and looking to them after crossing her legs. “Do you plan to focus there?”

“We haven’t decided,” Jon said sitting back.

“Cersei sent us a lie, but she knows we know that because Jaime Lannister left after he told her he was coming North.” Sansa shook her head at the confusing situation. “She’ll know he told us. I doubt she’ll even pretend to honor the armistice we suggested.”

“I think our best option would be trying to maintain your blockade on King’s Landing with Manderly ships added to your fleet. Man Moat Cailin as much as we can, and then pull everyone north except for small groups in key locations so that when we start to move south we’ll have inroads.”

Daenerys arched her brow and Sansa wore a smile.

“As much as I want her dealt with, we can’t leave our backs open to the Night King. I don’t trust the Wall to keep him out. I don’t know how, but I know that if we leave him there the Wall will fall.”

Daenerys looked from Jon to Sansa before nodding. “I’d agree to that. I can send some men to support those in the south and Moat Cailin. Let them send whoever they can North.”

“Thank you,” Jon said with a nod.

There was a moment of silence as they looked to one another. It was Sansa who broke it with a smile. “It seems that leaves us.”

“That it does,” Daenerys nodded, turning to Sansa. “Is it true you suggested he take us both?”

Sansa nodded. “I did. I know it’s been done before, Targaryens with multiple wives. I know it’s not exactly ideal but neither of us wants to give up what we have, but we’re willing to compromise.”

“Compromise,” Daenerys repeated.

“We’d be equal,” said Jon. “Supporting one another.”

Daenerys looked between the two before nodding. “And the wedding? Would it be together or one after the other?” Seeing their glance, she remembered their histories and smirked. “I forgot, you’re both virgins, aren’t you?”

“I am,” Sansa nodded.

After a moment, Daenerys turned to Jon, her brow raising. “You’re not? I thought you were a man of the Night’s Watch?”

“I pretended to betray them and traveled with wildlings for a time,” he explained. “I grew to care for a spear wive and she took me to bed.”

Daenerys snickered. “I suppose it would be easiest for Sansa with just you.”

“So one at a time?” asked Jon.

Sansa shook her head. “I don’t want to have us hold two feast. Not with Winter here.”

“You need not bed me our first night,” Daenerys said with solemn smile. “You know I’m no
maid.”

Jon sighed. “I never thought a war would be easier to plan than my wedding.”

They chuckled, Sansa taking a swig of wine before looking to Jon. “We don’t have to wait.”

Jon turned to her. “Sansa, I-”

“I don’t want to,” she said firmly.

“I’d rather not have it be planned just to avoid that night.”

“Then we won’t. It’s not as though we’re to wed tomorrow.” She looked to Daenerys. “If you do agree to this, I’d suggest we come to know one another before making a final decision. We can wed before we ride to war, or even as we march if need be.”

Daenerys nodded. “That’s fair. Let things happen as they will, so there’s no pressure come the bedding.”

“I don’t want a bedding,” Jon said firmly.

They looked to him, surprised. “I doubt you need to be shy,” teased Daenerys.

“It’s not-” Jon sighed.

“If it’s because of me,” Sansa said leaning forward to look at him, “you don’t need to worry. It’s different. It’s not like that time in King’s Landing or with Joffrey. I’ll be fine.”

Daenerys stared at Sansa, frowning as she thought of all Tyrion had told her. How she’d been stripped by Joffrey’s Kingsguard, how she’d nearly been raped during a riot.

“It’s not that,” Jon assured. “I just don’t want…” He sighed, crossing his arms. “I thought as a way to mix traditions we’d have whatever wedding we decide on, but then I’d steal you. Both of you.”

Daenerys blinked. “Steal us?”

Sansa rolled her eyes. “It’s a free folk thing. Their marriages happen when a man steals a woman.”

“That sounds awful.”

“It’s not,” said Jon. “They fight back if they don’t want it.”

“That doesn’t sound much better.”

Sansa smiled. “I know why you want to steal us.” Both looked to her as she turned to Jon. “You don’t want people touching us.”

“No, I don’t,” he admitted. “But I also think it’ll show the free folk we’re open to accepting their traditions instead of just asking them to conform to ours.”

Sansa grinned. “You really don’t want them touching us.”

Daenerys snickered. “It doesn’t seem very kingly.”

“To not want anyone but me touching my wives?” Jon asked with a snort. “I’d want the same from anyone. I…” The heat in him faded as he shook his head. “I’m not being fair am I?”
Daenerys glanced at Sansa, who seemed as confused as she did. “What do you mean?”

“I’ll have both of you and you’ll only have me.”

It took a moment for them to realize what he meant. Sansa frowned, reaching for his hand while Daenerys shook her head. “That’s not necessarily true.” When they looked to her she smirked to Sansa, whose brow rose as her cheeks grew rosy.

“Oh.”

Daenerys’s smirk faded as she looked to Jon. “I have yet to stray from a lover,” she said carefully, “if that’s what worries you.”

“And I would never,” said Sansa, with a quick glance to Daenerys.

With a somber smile, Daenerys took a breath. “If we’re going to go through with this, you both need to understand… You two would be the ones to continue the Targaryen name.”

Sansa quickly realized what she meant and frowned. “I’m so sorry.”

“My dragons are my children,” said Daenerys. “They’re the only ones I’ll ever have.”

“And who told you that?” asked Jon.

“The witch who murdered my husband.”

Jon glanced to Sansa. “Has it occurred to you she might not be a reliable source of information?”

Daenerys smiled with a small laugh.

Sansa offered a smile her own. “I’d say there’s no harm in trying.”

The sun died and sky bled crimson flakes that drowned men in shadows, golden cities and chained towers.

The Children of the Forest found him laying in the crimson snow, looking to the hole in his stomach that had let him leak. Reaching into her skirts, she removed a shard of shimmering obsidian which she drove into his chest.

The dead Stark's eyes opened and he sat up, his skin pale and hands black with pooled blood while not taking a breath, he never would again. The dead didn’t need to breath.

“What is dead my never die,” Euron whispered as he sat in his chambers, letting his tongue brush against his pale blue lips as he carved into a large, scaled horn resting in his lap.

Chapter End Notes

I know in the show Dany’s vision are more interpretive but I’m going with the book version where the shade of evening can also give visions of past events.

Also, for anyone interested I've posted the first chapter of a Jon/Myrcella fic called
Wyrm and Cub.
Time Together

Chapter Summary

Jon collects the last ingredient of valyrian steel, Cersei gives Ellaria a gift, and Sansa has time alone with Daenerys.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“This is Gendry Baratheon,” Jon said standing beside the smith.

Daenerys’ eyes widened, as did those of everyone around them. Even Gendry, who turned to Jon. “What? I’m a Waters.”

“I’m legitimizing you,” Jon said patting his shoulder. “House Baratheon now rest with you.”

“I thought you said to keep it quiet,” Gendry said with a glance toward Daenerys.

“I think it best we’re honest on all fronts,” Jon said looking to his would be wives.

Daenerys let out a breath. “You’re not your father. You clearly have no trouble working with Targaryens, and apparently love a Stark.”

Gendry’s cheeks flushed as Arya glared at Sansa, who bit back a smile, split between wishing she hadn’t mentioned that to Daenerys and thankful for her saying it out loud.

“He’s also the one who’s going to begin crafting valyrian steel with your dragons.”

Their shock somehow grew as they looked at the smith. “What?” Tyrion gawked. “That’s… how did you-”

“Other than Bran, Arya and myself he’s the only one who knows how to make it, and he’s the only one understands it.”

“If you know how then why not show every smith we can?” asked Tyrion. “Let them craft as many weapons as they can.”

“Because it’s a long, difficult process that requires specific timing and control,” said Gendry. “Not many would even be capable of it, but Jon’s agreed to let me have a small amount of dragonglass to forge a test batch. If I can’t make it then we’ll look for others.”

“And it requires my dragons?”

“Their fire… and their blood,” said Jon.

Daenerys eyes narrowed. “Their blood?”

“It’d be a small amount, a drop per weapon,” Gendry explained. “With how big they are a small cut should give us enough for a dozen swords.”
“We could use human blood,” Jon explained grimly, “but it would require a person be drained entirely. And multiple people seems to make even more necessary. The one that requires the least blood is dragon’s blood.”

Daenerys’ jaw shifted, all eyes on her. “How would you get it?”

When Viserion landed, people gathered along the walls of Winterfell to watch as he lowered his head to Daenerys’ hand. She whispered to him, consoling him as he kept glancing at Jon nearing his wing with an odd cylindrical object.

“Shh, shh, it’s okay,” Daenerys told him shakily. “It will only last a second, I promise.”

She watched Jon take a breath, pressing the thick needle between scales before driving it in. Viserion screeched, but Daenerys’ patting his snout kept him from taking off while Jon quickly pulled the plunger and heard the container fill. After a moment, Jon pulled the large syringe out and let it sink to the ground while taking the wet rag he’d brought and pressing it to the wound. It soaked red, but when he pulled it away the hole had closed. What would have been a drop to them was a pint from a dragon. Enough to keep Gendry busy for weeks and still have plenty left over.

“You’re so brave,” she told Viserion as he looked from Jon to her. Once they’d stepped back the dragon took off. Daenerys watched him before turning to shoot Jon a glare. “This had better work.”

Jon followed her toward Winterfell, looking from the sloshing container to the trio of dragons flying overhead. “It will.”

XOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXO

Ellaria Sand wished that she could die, but they made sure she didn’t. The new gag in her mouth kept her from biting her tongue, they shoved food and drink down her when she wouldn’t eat. She even tried to hold off on using the chamber pot, hoping that might make her sick, but they came in and beat her until she could hold no longer.

They wanted her to live alone in that cell where she’d watched her daughter die. Where she spent days watching Tyene retch and cry as the poison ate away at her life. The life she and Oberyn had made together. The life she helped create.

She thought she would be in that room forever, but then one day the door opened and Cersei entered. Ellaria raised her head, watching the woman come to a stop before her with a smile that didn’t seem to hold the joy it might have before, but made up for it in malice.

“I said last time I would return with a gift.” With that she stepped back and looked to the door.

Ellaria weakly turned her head, but soon her eyes widened and she gasped watching as her daughter walked into the cell. She wore all black, not unlike Cersei herself, only with a belt around her waist. Her once copper skin now pale and grayed, the whites of her eyes black with dark red with blood. Ellaria gasped as her daughter came to a stop before her, staring vacantly at her own mother.

“She’s not your gift,” Cersei said smiling over the girl’s shoulder. Looking from Ellaria to the risen Sand Snake she said, “Dear?”

Tyene reached back, removing a dagger from the back of her belt. She flipped it in her hand and thrust it into her mother’s stomach.

“Your death is your gift,” Cersei said watching tears leak from Ellaria’s eyes. “Don’t worry though. You’ll have time with her. She’ll make it slow.”
Cersei stood back, crossing her arms and watching as Tyene twisted the dagger in her mother’s stomach before ripping it out and stabbing her side. Slowly, the malice in Cersei’s smile gained some of it’s joy, each gagged grunt making it grow.

XOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXO

After supper Jon cited a need to speak about their plans for the south with Davos as an excuse to give Daenerys and Sansa time alone. They opted for a walk across the grounds.

“We usually meet in his solar to go over the day,” Sansa told Daenerys once they were alone. “You’re more than welcome, if you’d like.”

“I don’t want to intrude,” Daenerys said with a grin.

Sansa flushed, shaking her head. “It’s not… it’s not always like that.”

Daenerys laughed. “I knew you two wouldn’t be so chaste.”

“I wasn’t lying before,” Sansa assured. “We’ve been careful.”

Daenerys nodded, impressed and amused. “I’d ask if he’s good, but you have no real reference do you?”

“No, but he’s good,” Sansa said quickly, looking down. “I’m sure.”

“Good to hear.”

Sansa shook her head, looking to Daenerys. “You said Jorah Mormont is your Queensguard.”

Daenerys nodded solemnly. “Though I guess I’m a princess again so he wouldn’t be.”

“I have Brienne and my Fireguard. No reason you can’t have your own guards.”

“Fireguard?” asked Daenerys.

“When we rode to face the Boltons I told Jon I wanted to be on the field and he gave me a personal guard so it wasn’t just Brienne and Podrick. It’s mostly free folk, and they say people with red hair are kissed by fire, so the others called them the fireguard.” Sansa shrugged. “It’s stuck, and though it’s largely disbanded, I imagine I’ll reform it once we set off.”

“You were on the battlefield with him?” Daenerys asked, coming to a stop and turning to face Sansa. She’d assumed Sansa some meek maid, yet continued to be surprised.

“I wasn’t fighting. I sat at the rear with a few other lords. I am learning, though. Jon and the others have been giving me lessons. Sadly I fear I’m the opposite of Arya.” Seeing Daenerys’ confusion she explained, “She calls her sword Needle. I doubt I’ll ever wield a sword half a well as her, though my threaded needle is steadier than hers.”

“You’re surely better than me,” Daenerys assured. “I let others wield my swords while I stay atop Drogon’s back.”

“Would you like to join us for our next session?” Sansa offered, a conspiratorial smirk following as she explained, “I convinced Jon to let some of the other ladies join our training. He’d gladly do the same for you.”

“I had noticed women training beside men,” Daenerys said thinking back to when she looked
through the windows after her arrival, “girls alongside boys in the yard.”

“Better to know they can defend themselves if they want,” said Sansa. “This isn’t a fight any can ignore.”

When Daenerys had first spoken to Jon about the prospect of being his second wife she found it oddly serendipitous. After becoming Khaleesi most saw her braided hair as honoring Dothraki tradition, or even Drogo. While that may have played a part, so did her Targaryen heritage and the stories of Visenya. Though her bloodline had died with her only son’s death, Daenerys had looked up to her, ruling alongside Aegon the Conqueror, forming the kingsguard. She wasn’t to be trifled with. Visenya had been everything Daenerys wished she was while Viserys had lived. And Visenya had wielded Dark Sister.

With a nod Daenerys said, “I think I’d like that.”

Eventually they made their way to Jon’s solar and found the table had been moved, leaving three chairs before the hearth. Sansa entered with a sigh. “Maybe we should start meeting in my room.” Seeing Daenerys’ arched brow she quickly explained, “I have the lord’s room.”

With a nod, Daenerys chuckled. “I shouldn’t be surprised he wouldn’t take it for himself.”

“I had to force this on him,” she admitted. “He was ready to take his old room outside the family quarter.”

Moving to the hearth Daenerys nodded. “Back from when he was a bastard.”

“My mother didn’t like having my father’s bastard around so kept him at a distance.” She wore an odd smile, tinted with shame and solemn memories. “I was the only one who followed her example. The rest loved him like a brother, as they still do.”

“At least it seems to have worked out in the end,” Daenerys said looking to Sansa. “Now no thoughts of taboo sins should keep you from taking him into your arms.”

Sansa sat in one of the chairs, smiling. “In truth, it was easy to transition him from half-brother to cousin since I’d started to lose those sisterly feelings by the time we left Castle Black.”

Danerys smirked, sinking into the chair beside her. “Really? What changed it?”

Sansa took a moment to think back. “After everything at Castle Black I asked him where he’d go and he corrected me to say where would we go, and told me we’d come home, retake Winterfell. If another brother of the Night’s Watch wasn’t in the room I might have grabbed him and kissed him then and there.” Sansa laughed. “I always assumed it was just my emotions being in chaos after his resurrection.”

Daenerys’ smile fell as she furrowed her brow. “What do you mean resurrection? The Red Woman, Melisandre, used it in her introduction of him and Davos mentioned him taking a knife to the heart.”

Sansa let out a laugh. “I don’t know why I assumed he would have told you. Others talk but I don’t think I’ve ever heard him tell someone what happened.” Sansa sat back with a sigh. “When he brought the free folk through Castle Black some of the Night’s Watch thought him traitor, lured him into the yard and stabbed him to death.”

Daenerys’ head shifted. “What? How is he-”
“It was Melisandre,” she said somberly. “After the free folk helped those loyal to Jon retake Castle Black she did some sort of ritual that brought him back.”

Daenerys laughed grimly. “I’d assumed it was just a red priestess being grandiose as ever. And Tyrion assured me it an exaggeration of the north.”

“It is hard to believe,” Sansa admitted, “but I saw it. I held his body as his blood soaked the snow, before they carried him away and we holed up in the room to protect him. I don’t even know why we did it. Even before we decided to ask her, we knew we had to protect him.”

“I’m glad,” said Daenerys.

Sansa snickered. “Truly? You wouldn’t rather be rid of the King of the North?”

A rueful smile took Daenerys’ lips. “I’ve grown used to him.”

When he arrived sometime later, Jon blinked in surprise at the sight of them awaiting him. For some reason he’d assumed he’d spend the night alone. “Forgive me, ladies,” he said closing the door and removing his cloak. “Tyrion asked me to join him for a drink.”

“Which was surely followed by a second,” Daenerys nodded.

Jon warily took the only remaining seat, beside Daenerys. With a look to her he informed them, “Gendry should be able to start forging tomorrow.”

Daenerys’s eyes shifted to the fire to avoid him, still a bit angry at his hurting Viserion, even if she knew it was necessary. Sansa put on a smile and looked to Jon. “Danerys has agreed to join me and the other ladies for your lessons.”

Jon glanced at Daenerys, an odd smile taking his lips holding a hint of relief, as if something had clicked into place. “Good. I’ll make sure you don’t fall behind.”

When morning came Sansa walked with Daenerys to the training yard with Jorah trailing behind them. Jon was stood speaking with Brienne, Podrick, Theon, Gray Worm and Missandei who was politely shaking her head. Some of the Dothraki looked on from the sidelines amused by the women gathered with weapons in hand.

While going through the drills Jon had given them, Sansa found herself looking over to him and Daenerys off to the side. He was hoping to catch her up to them while Brienne led the others in helping her and the rest of the women. His hand brushed Daenerys’ when he went to fix her grip, but he pulled it back.

It was odd, she felt a flicker of jealousy, but it was also amusing to see him so hesitant with her. Even she seemed to avoid looking at him for a bit after she’d realized she had been staring at him while he spoke.

She knew early on she’d never truly have Jon to herself, and had feared this would mean she’s have even less of him, yet when he glanced at her with a warm smile she doubted that. Maybe she wasn’t losing a piece of Jon, but gaining one from Daenerys. Maybe they’d be stronger together, a pack, dragon and wolves united.
Here’s another reason why they can’t mass produce Valyrian Steel, they’re not going to exsanguinate a dragon for them when they can use dragonglass.

I doubt they’ll even bother reanimating Tyene in show, but I figured what the hell? Why not have an undead assassin with poisoned daggers?
Day With Dragons

Chapter Summary

As others prepare for the battles ahead, Jon finds himself with a free afternoon he spends with Daenerys.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

After meeting with the lords Daenerys sent groups of her men south to meet with men from the northern houses near Moat Cailin, ordered to leave as soon as the ravens reached their lands. Only a small amount of northerners would travel south with the Dothraki and Unsullied as guides in act of unity and to help converse with the southron lords they were set to meet.

Ravens traveled across Westeros ordering every house loyal to them north for the march on the Wall. Few would stay behind to prepare for the eventual march south. When Cersei came to claim what she thought was hers they could either accept it and play her loyal servant or hide themselves, send their families north to safety beyond the manned Moat Cailin.

The lords seemed to take news of his second betrothal well enough. They’d noticed some seemed relieved he wasn’t abandoning Sansa. Though they’d all seen him take the dragon’s blood, when asked what it was for they were told it was for the war effort.

At first Jon had intended to spend the day helping Gendry at the forge but Arya had been with him since that morning so he let them have their time alone. He was only forging daggers for now to use as little material as possible, but apparently even that would take most of the day.

With the lords busy preparing their houses, Jon assumed Sansa would want to spend time with him but found her heading toward the library with Tyrion.

“I asked Lord Tyrion to help me figure out how to improve our glass garden and hopefully make future ones easier to build.”

Jon smiled, remembering her efforts to start construction on others while he’d been away. “I’m sure if there’s a way you’ll find it.”

“Your grace,” Tyrion said with a nod before following Sansa down the corridor.

Though he didn’t want to presume she would answer his call and didn’t want to interrupt whatever she might be doing, Jon found Willam in the yard and waved him over. “I need a favor.”

“Anything, your grace,” the bastard squire nodded.

“Go find Missandei. Ask her if Daenerys would be available for a ride or whatever she might enjoy. It seems I have a rare afternoon free.” Seeing the boy’s grin, Jon shot him a playfully warning glare. “A word and I’ll have you shining armor for all the north.”

Willam mimed locking his lips before taking off to achieve his task.
Jon took the chance to watch a few of the children training, holding back a laugh when he noticed them trying harder since his arrival.

When Willam returned he did so alone, but with a slight grin. Jon gave the boy he was helping a pat on the back and made his way to his squire. “She said yes, she’ll go for a ride, but she has to change. Said she’ll meet you at the stables.”

“Good.” Jon nodded. “Come help me prepare our horses.”

Willam followed Jon to the stables, helping him saddle the horses and even brushing them quickly before they heard Daenerys approaching with Jorah at her side. Jon winced internally, having forgotten she had her own personal guard who would want to join them. A quick look to Willam was enough for the squire to hurriedly prepare a third horse.

He was just securing the saddle when they arrived. “Daenerys,” Jon said with a nod to them, “Ser Jorah.”

“Your grace,” Jorah said with a quick bow of his head.

“I hope you don’t mind,” Daenerys said with an apologetic smile. “Though I suppose I am technically no longer a queen, he is still my guard.”

“Of course not,” Jon assured. “Sansa has her sworn sword and fireguard, I understand.”

“And you?” asked Daenerys, with a glance to Willam.

“No,” Jon said shaking his head as Willam brought the horses out for them. “Willam here is more a squire.” He returned his gaze to his companions and smirked. “I know I’ll surely end up forming a kingsguard in time, but I feel I should hold off as long as I can, if only to keep the few solitary moments I have.”

Daenerys snickered. “I can understand that.”

Taking the reins from Willam, who bowed and hurried of, Jon looked to Daenerys. Before he could even offer to help her up she’d mounted the gray mare with ease. Jon gave an impressed nod before turning to mount his own while Jorah did the same with his.

Jon doubted he would ever feel quite right with how people stopped to look at him, but being propped up on a horse just made him feel easier to gawk upon. Thankfully it wasn’t long before they made it through the gates and took a path Jon remembered enjoying when he was younger.

“I suppose being Khalessi means it’s only natural you seem so at ease on a horse,” Jon said trotting beside her.

Daenerys chuckled. “I’ve ridden for months on end, from day to night, even while pregnant. If I didn’t know how to ride by now I’d be a poor khalessi.”

Jon nodded. “I can’t imagine you knew their language as a child. How long did it take you to learn?”

Daenerys turned to him. “I had skilled instructors. I could say a few key words once they told me, but it took months to not second guess everything I said.”

Jon looked back to Jorah. “What about yourself, Ser Jorah? Did you learn the language?”
Jorah seemed shocked at his inclusion. “I did, your grace. As you know... I spent a long time in Essos. I couldn’t keep to our tongue without worry I was being robbed in every exchange, so I learned what I could.”

Daenerys looked from Jorah to Jon. “Would you like to learn?”

A wary smile flashed across his lips. “I doubt I have the mind for it, but I’d be willing to try. Better to be able to speak with the men I’ll be fighting alongside at the very least.”

“I could give you a few lessons,” said Daenerys, “though I imagine Missandei might be a better teacher.”

“Whichever you think best,” he said, placing the final decision on her.

They soon arrived at a large clearing with a stream Jon remembered only filled after snow fell. Even summer snows would leave it dry, but they were firmly in winter so they heard the trickle of chilled water as they dismounted. The woods around them were white with snow that crunched and shifted with ease underfoot.

“It’s beautiful,” Daenerys said turning to take it all in.

“Few things compare,” he said with a smile, watching her smile as she walked to the stream.

Daenerys looked to him with a smirk before turning to them. “Jorah, could you take the horses back to Winterfell for us?”

Both men glanced at each other. “You grace? You can’t expect to walk back, not in this cold.”

“We won’t walk,” Daenerys said looking up, “we’ll fly and meet you there.”

Jon raised his chin slightly while Jorah started to gather their horses before mounting his own. With a glance to them he sighed, giving Jon a firm nod as if to say, “She’s in your care now.”

Returning the nod, Jon watched Jorah leave before turning to Daenerys, who raised her hand and seemed to whisper. Somehow that was enough for the three dragons to descend, landing in the clearing and blowing away all the loose snow around them.

All three watched them warily while Viserion was the first to approach Daenerys, keeping his eyes on Jon. Daenerys chuckled seeing Jon frown at the dragon’s apparent dislike of him, so once she had her hand to the dragon’s snout she waved Jon over.

Making his way to the creature’s head, Jon removed his glove and carefully placed his hand on it’s snout while meeting it’s eye. “I’m sorry about before,” he told the dragon, “but it’s going to help us. I promise.”

Viserion’s eyes had narrowed slightly, shifting toward Daenerys briefly before turning back to Jon and letting out a warm breath through it’s nostrils, pressing it’s snout into his hand slightly.

Once Viserion backed away, Jon looked to Drogon, who had raised his head to observe them. He sniffed slightly, his eyes focused on Jon before making his way toward them and looking him over. His eyes turned to Daenerys then, who smiled as Jon again rubbed the scales of Drogon’s snout.

The shift of snow behind them made them turn to find Rhaegal approaching, his eyes shifting between the two before looking at Drogon and Viserion. They seemed to watch Rhaegal as he approached the Targaryens.
Daenerys easily reached out to rub his snout as he sniffed. “Don’t feel left out,” she told him, “we haven’t forgotten you.”

Though she spoke, Rhaegal’s eyes had drifted to Jon, watching his palm rub the scales above his mouth. Jon met the creature’s eyes and in the distance heard a wolf howl as Rhaegal shifted, forcing Jon’s hand away while turning from Daenerys.

Her confusion lasted until the green and bronze dragon forcefully pressed his right wing down in front of Jon and lowered itself much as Drogon had for her. She let out a gasp while Jon looked confused. Her hand rose to her mouth while she stepped back.

Jon looked to her questioningly and Daenerys lowered her hand, revealing a solemn smile as she nodded.

His eyes lingered on hers before turning and stepping onto Rhaegal’s wing, holding his scales and making his way up the beast’s back until he was firmly between his spines. Jon felt his stomach knot around itself as Rhaegal pushed off the ground, his exhaled breath melting the snow on the ground before him. Daenerys had rushed off to mount Drogon while Rhaegal turned, letting out an air shaking roar before launching himself into the air.

If not for his scales, Jon might have feared he would hurt Rhaegal with how tight he was clutching to the creature’s spines. He could hear the other dragons roaring and screeching around him, a quick glance revealing they were flying around them, weaving through the air with Daenerys atop Drogon’s back, beaming as she watched Jon and Rhaegal.

He could see Winterfell coming up rapidly before growing smaller as Rhaegal turned from it, eventually landing in a clearing surrounded by trees. The others landed a moment later, Daenerys already off Drogon by the time Jon made his way back to earth. The dragon turned to look at him, giving him a sniff before pressing his snout to Jon’s forehead, as if kissing it.

A moment later he turned and took off with his brothers, leaving them in the clearing.

“I can’t believe he did that,” Daenerys said shaking her head. “I never thought…”

Jon turned to her and saw her eyes wide with emotion, drifting from the dragons to his face. For a moment there was only their soft breaths before a feint crunch with her step heralding her reaching up, her fingers slipping through his windswept curls as he leaned down to press his lips against hers while she pulled him into a kiss.

He felt sure the snow around them would melt from the heat he felt in that moment, but once they separated he felt the cold drift in again. For a moment he felt shame at kissing someone other than Sansa, but it faded as he looked to Daenerys, who stared into his eyes with shock. Shock at what she saw and what she felt.

Jon brushed a loose curl behind her ear before leaning in to kiss her again, leaving no doubt he wanted that as much as she had. Feeling him tug at her jerkin, pushing herself closer to him to deepen the kiss, he found it hard to think.

When she sank to the earth again, Daenerys let out a breath. They gazed at one another until they heard hooves and separated, turning to watch Jorah and their horses approach.

Once they were through the gates of Winterfell Daenerys was thankful it had been so cold, giving her an excuse for her rosy cheeks as she dismounted and looked to Jon.

“Thank you for the ride, your grace,” she said with a smile. “We should go again soon.”
Jon nodded. “I’ll look forward to it.” Watching her leave, he hoped it wouldn’t be too long, both for the implied kiss and another chance to ride Rhaegal.

Chapter End Notes

As tempted as I was to have Jon and Dany start singing A Whole New World, Rhaegal wasn’t going to have any of that. He wants his own rider to prove he’s as big and strong as his brother.

Also hey, look, Jon and Dany’s first kiss, something the show doesn’t show us because… why? It’s not like the season was building to them getting together and that might’ve been a good moment that’s in just about everything with romance. Oh, wait.
Tested Steel

Chapter Summary

The first batch of Valyrian Steel is tested, Arya has a talk with Sansa, and a familiar face returns to Winterfell.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Arya pushed Jon and groaned while he laughed. “You’d better take me next time,” she demanded.

Sansa frowned, looking like she wanted to worry but it was pointless since he was clearly unharmed. “Were you afraid?”

Jon flashed her a smile. “A little. I’ll have to look into a saddle.”

“It would help,” Daenerys admitted, thinking back to when Drogon was shot by the scorpion bolt. “If they didn’t have to worry about turning too fast and dislodging us they could move more naturally.”

“I can figure something out,” Tyrion assured.

“I’m not very good with leather, but I’ll go what I can,” Gendry offered.

“Worry about these first,” Jon said motioning to the daggers laid across the table before them all.

Screeching drew their eyes to the wight brought to the center of the room where Theon, Gray Worm and a Dothraki named Dirgo pushed it to the ground. Dirgo swiftly cut off the wight’s hand with his arakh, leaving it animated on the ground.

Jon picked up as many of the daggers as he could and walked toward Theon, who pressed his boot on the wrist of the wight’s severed hand, holding it in place. Taking the darkest dagger with unsteady, large ripples, he knelt and stabbed it into the palm, which remained twitching.

Gendry gave a firm nod, checking it off in his mind as Jon set the dagger aside and picked up another. The second dug into the hand, which flinched and scraped at the floor when it was removed. Jon placed the dagger with the first and took another pale gray one and jabbed it into the hand, watching as it went still.

The others all gasped as he withdrew the dagger and the hand remained unmoving. With a glance to Theon, Jon grabbed the hand and picked it up, daring it to move and attack him.

When it didn’t, Tyrion laughed and smacked Gendry on the back of his leg. “Good work!”

Gendry was beaming, Arya clutching his hand and giving him a proud smile.

Jon set the dagger aside, separate from the others while Dirgo severed and held down the other hand. They did this again and again, picking off body parts and testing daggers on them until they’d gone through each one and stilled the wight with a stab to the head.
“You know which ones to start with,” Jon said as he set the daggers on the table.

The others blinked in confusion while Gendry nodded. “They’ll take more time, but I’ll start as soon as I can.”

“What do we do with these?” Arya asked looking at the daggers, separated into one that had worked and the failures.

“You can reforge them, right?” asked Jon.

Gendry looked them over. “There’s enough for a longsword.”

“We’ll make a sword for the Lord Commander. Edd needs to be able to defend them. We’ll send it along with some dragonglass weapons.”

XOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXO

Sansa bit back a laugh at how Arya huffed when she tried to follow Jon and Gendry to the forge only to come back minutes later and throw herself into the chair across from her. “They threw me out. I was the one who as with him when he made all those daggers. Why am I the one getting thrown out just so Jon can help him?”

“Maybe they don’t want Gendry wasting valuable time kissing you between hammer strikes.”

Arya scoffed, looking away. “He doesn’t do that.”

“What does he do?” Sansa asked with a teasing smile.

“Not that,” Arya said with a sigh.

Sansa blinked in surprise, humor fading from her face. “Are you disappointed he hasn’t tried?”

Arya looked at Sansa, seeming to think it over before shaking her head. “He’s tried. We’ve… he’s kissed me. I just feel… it feels like it’s not me. Like when he looks at me and smiles and says I’m pretty, I feel like I’m wearing a different face. It feels like he’s seeing someone else.”

Sansa frowned at her sister’s sorrow. “I’ve felt the same.”

Arya scoffed. “Sure.”

Sansa set down her quill, no longer looking at the parchment before her.

“I’ve had welts across my back from the flat of a sword, thought my teeth loose as I tasted my own blood from where a kingsguard punched me. I’ve trekked through swamps three times in four days and then went weeks without bathing, and when I did it was with a rag and cold water from a stream. I’ve had sores and blisters and bruises and scratches from running day after day, let my hands go numb in freezing water just to try and get a dog’s blood off them. I went months without a proper meal or bath or brush or anything to make me feel clean or pretty or neat.” Sansa exhaled, meeting Arya’s shocked gaze.

“And do you know what Jon told me his first thought was when he saw me? How beautiful I was. Not pretty, but beautiful. As if pretty was a girlish thing and I was beyond that. When he told me I thought him an absolute fool because even though I’d had my first warm bath in months, I still felt gaunt and rancid and ugly, but he told me it was like warmth had returned to the world when he saw me. But I understand because even when we were back in Winterfell and he was caked in mud
and blood I thought him the most handsome, beautiful man I’d ever seen.”

Sansa took a breath, sniffing lightly as she looked down as Sansa concluded, “I’ve felt the same, and I’d bet Gendry does as well. Just let yourself enjoy it and you will. Soon you won’t think of how unworthy you are, just how lucky you are.”

The room was quiet for a moment, broken when Arya said, “You’re not unworthy.”

Sansa glanced up, her teasing smile returning. “Even of your favorite brother?”

“Jon’s not-” Arya stopped herself, rolling her eyes with a relenting nod. “Yes, even him.”


Arya thought. “I don’t know. We haven’t talked much, but she seems okay. She definitely likes him, and he seems to like her.” Looking to her sister, she asked, “You’re not jealous or angry?”

Sansa sat up, shaking her head. “I thought I would be, but… I’m not. Maybe because we talked about it before hand and were open about it? It’s not like he’s going around with her behind my back, lying to me. He hasn’t stopped caring for me.”

“It doesn’t bug you thinking that they might be… doing stuff?”

Sansa snickered. “No. And even if they were… I made it to the great hall before you and Gendry, so you didn’t see how guilty he looked when he saw me. He pulled me aside right away and told me he kissed Daenerys.”


“It’s fine,” Sansa assured.

Narrowing her eyes, Arya asked, “What did you say?”

“I kissed his cheek and told him good then went back to wait for you. They had a moment but it’s not as if I don’t have my own. It doesn’t mean he’s not the same man who told me I was beautiful when I felt hideous. He’s still the man who looks at me at times as if I’m some grand thing I know I’m not, but I could never convince him I wasn’t. Just because he has time with Daenerys doesn’t make him not Jon. Jon is Jon, and always will be. And I know Jon loves me the way I love him, just as much as you know Jon loves you as his sister the way you love him as a brother.

“Death couldn’t take him from me,” Sansa said with a smirk that sank with regret. “The only thing that got even close was me pushing him away, and I’ll never do that again.”

XOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXO

When the horn blew and people gathered in the yard, Sansa had never expected to hear a gruff voice call out, “You look well, Little Bird.”

Arya and Brienne shared her shock at seeing the burned face of Sandor Clegane as he was led through the gates of Winterfell by Tormund and a group of wildlings. When Arya noticed the other prisoners with him her eyes narrowed.

“You’re with the Brotherhood now?” She asked with a sneer.

“Looks like you made it back too. Plan to finish the job this time?” Sandor’s gaze rose to Brienne,
“Or you looking for a rematch.”

“You won’t fight anyone,” Sansa said firmly, stopping both women from speaking, drawing their eyes to her. Looking to Tormund she asked, “Why are they prisoners?”

“Tried to force their way through the Wall. Guess they were in a rush to die, so we locked ‘em up to save ‘em. But it’s getting cold, we couldn’t spare the food, so I figured bring ‘em back here and let Jon lop of their heads or do whatever he wants with ‘em.”

“It would be a waste,” said Beric Dondarrrian. “We seek only to fight the true enemy. Killing us would only aid them.”

“You were going north to fight the Night King yourselves?” Sansa asked looking between the four raggedly dressed and poorly armored prisoners.

Thoros shrugged. “Clegane saw the Wall in the flames, so we went.”

“You’re a red priest now?” Brienne asked with a laugh.

“No,” Sandor snorted, “but that don’t change what I saw. I saw the Wall, I saw the Bay of Seals by Eastwatch. I saw a ram too but who the fuck knows why.”

Sansa looked them over before turning to Tormund. “Take them to the cells for now. I’ll find someplace for them and meet with the king.”

Everyone seemed confused as she walked away, leaving Thoros to ask, “Are we guests or prisoners?”

“Both, it seems,” Beric said with a shrug.

Sandor watched the Stark girls walking with Brienne and her squire at their backs, barely noticing the fond, proud smile that took his lips as he followed the others to their cells.

Chapter End Notes

I always thought it odd that there wasn’t some kind of inherited sword or something for the Night’s Watch, so I thought Jon might correct that. Also Edd’s awesome and deserves a decent sword if only as a symbol.

Also figured Sandor has pretty much the same path, but since Jon didn’t take a trip to Eastwatch for the wight hunt Tormund brings the Brotherhood to Winterfell.
Night With Wolves

Chapter Summary

After a day in the forge, Jon meets Sansa in her solar.

“Sorry I’m late,” Jon said as he took his seat at the center of the high table with Sansa, the Starks and Davos to his right and Daenerys and her advisers on his left.

Sansa smiled as she brushed her thumb against a spot at the base of his neck to remove a black smudge. For a moment she’d regretted it, feeling like her mother doting on Bran and Rickon, but Jon’s thankful smile reminded her he hadn’t dealt with that. If anything he might have felt a bit envious when he saw it when they were younger. She let her thumb brush his jaw affectionately. Thinking back she would realize that was when she’d decided.

Even as he spoke with Daenerys, Sansa found herself smiling when she glanced his way. When one of the maids came around to refill their glasses, she pulled the girl aside and whispered in her ear. When the girl shook her head, Sansa gave her an order and the girl nodded before rushing off.

She noticed early on that Melisandre had finished her meal and went to sit with the Brotherhood, freed from their cells and sat at one of the lower tables on her suggestion. Jon had been amused to find the Hound sat in their cells, but deferred to Sansa’s trust of him and released the men once they vowed to aid them in the war against the Night King.

Sansa noticed Thoros kept looking to Jon as if he expected him to burst into flame and reveal he was the Lord of Light himself. Instead Jon smiled and nodded at one of Tyrion’s comments and Thoros returned to his conversation with Melisandre.

After the maid returned and gave her a nod Sansa noticed Jon’s plate was empty and his mug was nearly drained. Placing a hand on his forearm to draw his attention, she leaned closer to ask quietly, “Do you have plans with Daenerys tonight?”

He looked surprised and wary of how he should answer. “Not yet,” he decided was safest.

“Come to my solar,” she said rising from her seat.

Jon watched her move to Daenerys’ side, leaning close to whisper to her. Daenerys seemed surprised until she heard Sansa say, “Forgive me, Daenerys, but Jon and I won’t be meeting in his solar tonight.”

Daenerys turned to meet Sansa’s azure eyes and her confusion shifted to amusement. A knowing, teasing smile played on her lips as she nodded and whispered in return, “Good luck.”

Sansa’s cheeked reddened as she nodded and departed the hall for her room.

It wasn’t very long before the door opened and Jon found Sansa stood beside a large bronze tub full of steaming water. She’d tied her hair back, biting her bottom lip as she looked to Jon in the doorway.

“I thought you could use a bath after a day in the forge.”
Jon looked from her to the bath about a dozen times in a few seconds before closing the door. Still wary, he put on a smile. “Hopefully this isn’t some kind of way to tell me I should have had one before supper. I washed what I could.”

Sansa quickly shook her head. “No! You—It’s fine. It was fine.”

Jon nodded, walking over and looking from the water to her. “Are you…”

Sansa took a breath and nodded. “I’ll help you.”

His eyes met hers and seeing she was sure he gave a nod while removing his cloak. He turned away, setting his cloak on a chair near her hearth, smiling when he noticed a small pile of his folded clothes laying on the table, stolen from one of his chests so he wouldn’t need to change into the same dirty clothes.

At first she’d averted her eyes, as if she hadn’t seen him nude multiple times. With a shake of her head she turned and watched him unlace his breeches, flashing her a sheepish smile as he kicked them off slightly before putting them on the chair. When he turned to her she offered a small smile, glancing at the large scar at the center of his chest while he stepped into the tub.

At first she was surprised the water didn’t turn black from all the soot, but then remembered the black rag in his room. He’d clearly stopped there to wipe himself clean as best he could before missing supper entirely.

“Did you rush for me?” Sansa asked watching him sink into the water.

“Rush?”

“To supper,” she said.

His answer came when he silently turned to look at the fireplace. Sansa smiled, taking a stool and placing it next to the bath to sit beside him. “I would have understood. It’s not like last time. I know you’re not avoiding me.”

“I know,” he sighed, sinking into the water. “Thank you. I needed this.”

“I could imagine,” she said reaching for the cloth she’d set aside, dipping it into the water.

“It’s one thing to wield a sword but forging them is a different beast. I feared I was going to push even Gendry’s kindness to it’s edge.”

“I doubt that,” Sansa said rubbing the wet cloth along Jon’s shoulder. He looked to her hand before arching his brow. She ignored him, asking, “Why don’t you let anyone else help?”

“Because I need to do this,” he said looking away from her.

Sansa glanced at him, surprised. They stayed quiet as she picked up the stool and moved behind him. She could reach more of his torso this way, and it meant he could avoid looking at her as they spoke. Hopefully that would loosen his lips.

She was rubbing the cloth along his right arm when she asked, “Is it because you want to be the one to make it?”

Jon laughed softly. “Even if I wanted to I’m not really. I’m barely helping.”

Sansa nodded, bringing her hand back up his arm to his shoulder. “Is it going to replace
Longclaw?"

Jon tensed slightly. “No, nothing could.”

“I know you said you’d offer it back to Jorah, but—”

“He turned it down,” Jon cut her off. Sansa looked at the back of his head, using one hand to lift his hair and clean behind his neck. “I offered it to him but he gave it back.”

Sansa smiled. “Are you making a new one for him?”

Jon was quiet for a moment before sighing. “I can’t leave House Mormont without a sword. Jeor never needed to trust me like he did, but he gave me his sword, made me his steward. The least I could do is make sure his house has a sword to defend them.”

She wanted to press on, to talk about who he was planning on giving swords. He hadn’t told anyone his plans and had been quick to change the subject whenever it was mentioned. However, she wanted to enjoy her time with him more.

“Close your eyes,” she told him before taking a cup and soaking his hair. The water darkened as it passed through his curls, clearly having skipped his hair when he was cleaning earlier.

Even once she’d finished, Jon kept his eyes closed, leaning his head back against her, looking perfectly content to stay like that. They did, for a time, but Sansa had other things in mind. Things that became clear to Jon when she’d moved from gently rubbing his chest to his stomach.

She’d intended to sneak her hand down and take hold as she had many times before, but found herself hesitating. Instead she looked to him as he opened his eyes and met hers. The crackle of the fire and their breathing the only noise in the room before the slosh of water as he turned to meet her leaning in to kiss him.

Water made it past the rim, soaking the front of her as she nearly let him drag her into the tub, but that would make it even harder to get out of her gown. Instead she pressed her hands against the side and pulled herself away, reaching back to undo the last of the laces holding it in place. She’d had a maid help her with the harder to reach ones earlier.

Even after all they’d done Sansa still bit the inside of her lip as she let the dress fall and stripped away her clothes until she was as bare as him. He seemed to sit up, as if making room for her to join him, but arched his brow when she turned and walked to the bed, taking a breath as she sat and looked at him.

They held each other’s gaze for a moment, Sansa watching his face shift from confusion to surprise, amusement and then darkened as he took a breath. He gripped the side of the tub as if he would break it while standing, carefully stepping out and quickly drying what he could.

Her stomach knotted watching the shadows cast by the hearth dance across his body, sitting up with her hands digging into the mattress as he stepped between her legs. Jon’s damp hand sent a chill down her spine when it brushed her cheek while he leaned down to kiss her. She’d sat up to meet him, though quickly sank back as the short kiss was followed by one to her neck, with each one after moving lower.

“Jon,” she said clutching his shoulder, making him look up as he started to kneel before her.

“I know,” he told her with a smile, reaching up to brush his fingers through her hair. “I want to make sure you’re ready.” A small laugh escaped him as he looked almost sympathetic. “I know
it’s supposed to hurt a bit, but I want to make it as little as possible. This should help, and I’ll be as gentle as you need.”

He pulled her head down to meet his for a quick kiss before he released her and placed a kiss on her stomach. Sansa sighed, knowing he would be. Knowing he’d take care of her as he had ever since they first saw each other and he ran off to get her something warm to eat. He’d do all he could to make her enjoy this, as if she needed anything but him.
Chapter Summary

After a night with Jon Sansa breaks fast with Dany before Jaime returns to Winterfell.

Even when they rode to war she couldn’t truly say Jon had over prepared, yet Sansa was sure that was the explanation. That or the fact it was so little that she barely noticed the pain while focused on everything else. The way Jon looked at her, the way her felt inside her, the noises he made when she moved in certain ways. If there was pain she hadn’t noticed and didn’t remember, but she would never forget to feeling of them coming together as shadows danced across the wall or how content she felt laying beside him, hearing his heart beat, drawing as much warm from him as she did the furs around them.

She woke to find him sat on a chair, pulling on his boots and wearing the clothes she’d brought for him. A glance to the window told her the sun had only just started to rise.

Once he finished lacing his boots Jon walked back to the bed, pressing a hand into the mattress as he leaned forward to kiss her forehead. “Sleep, love.”

Grabbing his hand, she tugged his arm. “Not yet.”

“I need to meet Gendry,” he said regretfully, brushing a hand through her hair. When she pouted he gave her a kiss and smiled. “Sleep. Your king commands it.”

“Mm… I’ll try,” she said laying her head back on her pillow.

“You want me to relight the fire?” He asked motioning to the heart as he slid his old jerkin over the newer clothes.

Shaking her head, she pulled the blankets around her, watching him adjust the jerkin and put on his cloak, the same one she’d made him in Castle Black. Once he was done he adjusted it all and rolled his shoulders quickly before turning to Sansa. She answered his questioning gaze with a smile. “Very handsome.”

Jon rolled his eyes, accepting the answer and flashing her a smile before he left the room.

Even with the faded ache between her legs she felt content, curling into her furs, beaming at the lingering warmth and scent of him. She would have been happy laying there for the day, but soon the maids came and where at first they tried to be quiet, she sat up and went about her morning routine.

Sansa bit her lip, fighting off a swirl of embarrassment and humor when one of the maids gasped while going to make the bed. Without a word, the woman went about replacing the sheet, but Sansa doubted it would stay a secret through the day.

Of course she should have expected Daenerys to sit beside her as they broke fast. “So,” the violet eyed woman said with a grin. “How was it?” Either to make sure her meaning was clear, or to torment the clearly embarrassed Sansa, Daenerys asked, “How was he?”
Thankfully the only other person at the high table was Missandei, who was sat with Gray Worm. Taking a breath she looked to Daenerys and decided to be honest. Their openness about her had kept her from feeling jealous knowing Jon had kissed Daenerys, maybe Daenerys would need the same from them.

“It was…” She tried to think of the right word. She didn’t want to oversell it or sound childish, but she didn’t want to downplay it either.

“That bad?” Daenerys teased.

“No,” Sansa scoffed. “Far from it.”

Daenerys’ brow rose. “Really? It was your first time, wasn’t it?”

Sansa nodded. “I always heard it hurt and expected it to be awful, but it was amazing. It was fun.”

Daenerys wore an odd, solemn smile. “I’m glad. My first time was… not enjoyable in the least. I thought it would be like that every time, but then one of my handmaidens, a slave from Lys, helped me learn how I could… take control.”

Sansa wondered what became of the handmaiden as it was clear from Daenerys tone when mentioning her that she disliked the woman. Instead she decided to try teasing her in return by asking, “Is that what you plan to do when he finds his way to your bed?”

Daenerys, surprised by her forward question, snickered. “Maybe. Would you have a problem with that?”

Sansa thought about it, imagining them together as she had been hours earlier. It stung for a moment, but as she thought on it that faded. Even after he’d kissed Daenerys, Jon came to Sansa and they had their night together. Whatever they did together wouldn’t take Jon from her.

“No,” Sansa said with a sure smile.

That seemed to intrigue Daenerys, who tilted her head. “Did he tell you we kissed?”

Sansa nodded. “He did.”

Daenerys looked relieved before smirking, quietly asking, “One night when he’s too busy for either of us, would you like me to show you what my handmaiden taught me?” Sansa’s cheeks went pink as she looked away. Daenerys chuckled, but noted she hadn’t said no. “Thank you.”

Sansa blinked, looking confused as her sudden tender tone. “For?”

“Not using it against me,” Daenerys said with a somber smile. “I feared that this might end up a competition, or that you might flaunt how he cares for you more.”

“He cares for you,” Sansa said turning to Daenerys. “He wouldn’t have kissed you if he didn’t.”

“Maybe,” Daenerys sighed, “but not as much as he does you.”

“Not yet,” Sansa offered.

Daenerys gave a relenting smile. “Not yet.”

XOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXO
“This feels wrong,” Jon said looking at the crimson ruby he’d taken chips from.

Gendry chuckled. “I know, but it’s what you wanted, right?”

Jon looked over the chipped off piece of gemstone. “Is this enough?”

Gendry looked up from the anvil, wiping his brow with his forearm as he squinted. “Looks it from here. We can grind it to the right shape after. Just need it to be small enough we don’t leave too much as dust.”

Looking it over again, Jon gave a relenting nod. “I think it came out better than the topaz.”

“They’ll be fine once the rest is finished,” Gendry assured with another swing of the hammer, forcing a section of the glowing chunk of metal down.

“King Jon!” A voice called from outside the tent that was erected around the forge to keep out prying eyes.

Jon set his tools down and gave Gendry an apologetic smile while the smith nodded, telling him his departure was fine. Exiting the tent he found Willam waiting for him. “Lady Sansa called for you at the gate. They’ve spotted riders approaching from the south.”

Sansa greeted him with a smile alongside Arya, Brienne, Daenerys, Rickon and Tyrion. The dwarf’s presence was explained when Sansa told Jon, “A dozen riders with Lannister colors.”

Jaime Lannister rode through the open gate with Bronn and a dozen other men in red and gold armor. Jaime was lacking his, wearing leathers beneath his cloak. Scanning the group his eyes stopped when they landed on Tyrion.

The others looked between them, Jaime’s jaw set as Tyrion offered a wary smile. “Hello, brother.” When Jaime remained silent he gave a weak laugh. “You missed me looking like a complete fool. I thought I’d surprise you by hitting Casterly Rock, but Cersei was three steps ahead of me. Abandoned the family home, completely unsentimental. Father would have been proud.”

“Don’t talk about father,” Jaime warned.

“Jaime…”

“I once told Bronn,” Jaime interrupted, “that if I ever saw you again I’d cut you in half.”

Tyrion looked from Jaime’s face to the sword on his waist before offering a sad smile. “I doubt you’re so cruel you’d leave me a quarter man.”

Jaime’s hand clenched before turning his attention to Jon. “I assume you received my letter, your grace?”

“We did,” Jon nodded, glancing at Tyrion before offering Jaime a fond smile. “I’m glad you’ve returned, Ser Jaime.”

The anger faded from Jaime’s face. Brienne glanced from Jaime to Jon with a smile, proud of both as Jaime took a breath and gave him a thankful nod. “I am at your command, you grace.”

“We’ll find a place for you and your men,” Jon said with a glance to Sansa, who nodded in confirmation. Returning his attention to Jaime, he nodded toward his gilded prosthetic. “Obviously you’ve lost your sword hand, but I assume you can still fight?”
“I’m not where I was,” Jaime said with a smirk, “but few are.”

Jon nodded, not noticing a few eyes shift toward him. “Either way, I’ve no doubt you still remember how to fight as well as you did. I’d ask you help with training.”

“Are you sure that’s wise, your grace?” Jaime asked cautiously. No doubt worried some drunken northerner would try to seek vengeance for Bran.

“The women and children,” Jon clarified. “Help train them with the others. That includes my wives to be.” The men smirked when Jon placed a hand on the shoulders of Daenerys and Sansa. “Your cloak and armor may not be white any longer but I trust you to care for them as if they were.”

Daenerys looked like she wanted to make a comment, likely about his killing her father, but she’d learned enough about the mad king to know it was for the best.

Jaime nodded. “I will.”

“Good, then rest while you can and prepare to leave within the next few weeks.” Seeing the men exchange confused looks, Jon told them, “The dead march toward Eastwatch. We’ll send a small force there to asses it and try to hold them off if they near before we’ve gathered all our banners. Either way I’d have you and your men join me when I depart.”

Jon turned to Sansa, looking for her help. She put on a smile and stepped forward with Brienne. “I’ll show you to your room, Ser Jaime and find quarters for your men.”

Jon watched them leave and turned to find Tyrion walking away with a frown. He looked from the departing dwarf to Daenerys and offered an apologetic smile. “I’m sorry I haven’t had much time lately.”

“I was starting to worry you were avoiding me,” she said playfully. “Should I be concerned that you kissed me then took Sansa to bed?”

Jon’s eyes widened slightly while behind her Missandei bit back a smile and turned her head. “It wasn’t-”

“Oh, I heard it was very,” Daenerys cut him off with a teasingly assuring nod.

Tilting his head he asked, “Heard from where?”

Daenerys scoffed. “Surely the whole of the North knows by now. Though Sansa told me herself when we broke fast.”

She watched his brow knit together, unsure how to feel about this all. Finally he shook his head, looking to her. “I’m sorry if you thought it an insult. I never meant it to be one. It was separate from you.”

Daenerys snickered. “I know. I just wanted to make sure you haven’t forgotten me already.”

Jon reached for her hand and gave her a sincere smile. “You’re hard to forget, Dany.”

“Dany?” Daenerys laughed in surprise, looking up and away in thought. “Who was the last person to call me that? I’m not sure, was it my brother? Mm, not the company you want to keep.”

“Alright,” Jon said with a nod, squeezing her hand, “not Dany. How about My Queen? Shall I bend the knee as well as I speak it?”
Daenerys smiled at the implication, shaking her head. “Dany’s fine… when we’re alone.”

Jon nodded, raising her hand to kiss the back of it as he promised, “When we’re alone.”
Nine Pieces

Chapter Summary

Jon and Gendry reveal the results of their work.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

King Jon was a rare sight for nearly a week. It seemed the only time Daenerys, Sansa or anyone else could meet him without feeling rushed was in the early morning. After he woke he would leave Winterfell to have Rhaegal light a torch he carried back to the forge he and Gendry worked at all day, adding it to the embers.

Daenerys had taken to using that time, speaking with Jon as they walked to meet with the dragons. Though Jon had yet to take Daenerys to bed, they’d shared many a kiss when they had moments alone, often under the eyes of their dragons. She’d invited Sansa a few times, even managed to get her to pet Viserion, the most docile of the dragons.

After that he would spend his mornings in the forge, even when Gendry broke fast with Arya in the great hall. Daenerys and Sansa had taken to breaking fast together. Since their first time together when Sansa told him she wouldn’t be hurt by his missing supper he often skipped meals or arrived late. He’d apologized to Daenerys, but by then Sansa had explained her understanding of the situation. Most nights would end with the three of them speaking one of their solars. Again Sansa had taken to excusing herself or finding ways to politely usher them off whenever she saw Jon struggling to stay awake.

It might have been frustrating if they didn’t trust Jon had a reason to push himself as hard as he was. Sansa hoped to find him walking into the great hall one evening to present a sword so splendid it put every other to shame. Instead it was just past mid day when Sansa saw one of the maids returning from Jon’s room with a bucket. Seeing her questioning look the maid informed her, “King Jon asked for a bath prepared in his room.”

Instantly she knew whatever he’d been working on was done, otherwise he wouldn’t have stopped. Sansa felt anxious as she made her way to his door and knocked. “Jon?”

“Don’t enter!” That surprised her as she’d already been reaching for the handle. “If you can, give me about fifteen minutes and then call Davos, Gendry, Melisandre, Arya, Bran, Rickon, Lyanna Mormont, Brienne, Jaime Lannister, Daenerys and her advisers to the great hall. And have Tormund and Theon bring one of the wights.”

Though a bit confused by the guests he asked for, Sansa nodded. “I will.”

Leaving him to bathe and change into clean clothes she made her way through the castle informing all Jon had asked for. She found Arya stood against the wall outside Gendry’s room with her arms crossed.

“Jon’s called you and Gendry to the great hall in ten minutes.”
“He’s run in to go wash up,” Arya said nodding toward Gendry’s door. “This means they’re done, right? Do you know what it is? I tried to peak after they left but Jon must have taken it with him.”

“I think it’s a new sword for Jon,” Sansa said quietly. “He tried to give Longclaw back to Jorah, and now he’s asked me to call on Lyanna. I think he means to give House Mormont back their family sword.”

“You think he’d give up Longclaw?” Arya asked surprised.

“I think he’d feel he has to,” Sansa said sadly, knowing how much Jon cared for the blade. It was gifted to him by a man he looked up to and had saved him time and time again against not only men that wanted to kill him but wights and White Walkers.

Arya frowned. “He is stupid enough to think that.”

“Be there, okay?” Sansa asked, hurrying off as Arya nodded.

They all gathered in the great hall except for Jon and Gendry while Theon, Tormund and the dothraki Dirgo helped bringing in the wight. When Jon and Gendry arrived they brought a large bundle of cloth they set on the high table.

“We’ll need nine pieces,” Jon told the men near the wight.

Dirgo drew his arakh while Theon and Tormund held the wight by his chains, letting one of his hands loose. Once it was severed and on the ground, Jon reached into the bundle before making his way to the center. The others had backed away to give him room, but their eyes were quickly drawn to the dark, smokey blade he carried, the hilt wrapped in a cloth.

Pressing his boot to the wrist, he stabbed the back of the hand and it stilled, Jon letting out a relieved sigh, looking as if a weight had fallen from his shoulders. Off to the side, Gendry let out his own relieved breath. Their work wasn’t for naught.

Jon looked to the others. “This is of the first batch of new valyrian steel weapons, the first since the Doom of Valyria. More will come in time, but for now there are nine.”

While they all looked impressed, the revelation was news to Jaime, Lyanna and Tormund. The rest had known what they were working on. Jon made his way to where they all stood off to the side, coming to a stop in front of Rickon.

“You’ll be the head of House Stark soon,” Jon said placing a hand on the boy’s shoulder. Rickon stared up at him as he stood straight and nodded. “Ice was stolen from our father and reforged, but now it defends Sansa and will help us during the Long Night.”

Jaime and Brienne shared a look, the male knight looking solemn as his false hand rested on the pommel of Widow’s Wail. He’d offered it to the Starks, but Jon had suggested he kept it at least until the end of the war.

“For now, let this be the sword of House Stark,” he said removing the cloth around the hilt and presenting the sword to Rickon.

They all gawked at the blade as the boy stared at it, carefully taking it from Jon. His eyes trailed down the blade before examining the hilt. It had a simple, slightly curved hilt not unlike Robb’s back when he was king but with a white hilt and a black stone direwolf head pommel with chips of emeralds for eyes.
“Shaggy,” Rickon said with a somber smile.

“I hope that’s not it’s name,” Jon teased.

Rickon laughed, looking up to him with a sniff as he took the hilt in hand and gave a longsword a quick slash. Looking it over, he smiled. “Wolf Fang.”

With a squeeze of Rickon’s shoulder Jon nodded, backing away as Arya and Sansa crowded around him. Even Bran smiled from his chair when Rickon turned to show him the blade, though he blinked in confusion when he felt something small hit him. Looking to the object that landed in his lap, Bran saw a small silver direwolf head with topaz eyes.

“If you ever want one made for you, just ask and that will be it’s pommel.”

Bran looked it over, brushing his thumb across it as if petting Summer’s head before smiling at Jon. “Thank you.”

Jon looked to the men holding the wight, and then gave Gendry a nod as they cut off the rest of the wight’s left arm. “As of yesterday, I’ve legitimized Gendry of House Baratheon and named him head of his house.”

Gendry smiled at Jon before pulling a war hammer from the bundled cloth. The shaft was about as long as his arm and barely half as thick, with hoofed pommel. Atop it all was a dark valyrian steel head with a slight point at the front and a spike on the back where the horns from the stag head engraved on either side met.

They watched Gendry turn the hammer in his hand, wielding it one handed with ease and bringing the flat side down on the wight, letting the back spike pierce the hand, making it still. Holding it up he looked to Arya who was grinning at him and said sheepishly, “Hartstine.”

“Certainly a name worthy of a Baratheon weapon,” Davos said with an approving nod.

“Dirgo,” Jon called out as Gendry approached the high table and set his hammer down. The Dothraki arched his brow at Jon. “You’re one of the Khalessi’s ko, is that correct? One of her most trusted ko, as well?”

After glancing at Daenerys, Dirgo nodded. “I am,” he said with a heavy accent.

Jon waved his right hand and motioned to the wight. When Dirgo brought his arakh through the wight’s forearm, Jon approached and held out an arakh with lighter steel than the others so far, but holding the distinct ripples of valyrian steel. The pommel was a bronze horse head with hoofed legs as the cross guard.

All looked surprised, but none more so than Dirgo himself. “This mine?” he asked warily.

“You’re one of the men most trusted by my queen to be,” Jon said with a smile, presenting the sword. “I can’t ask you to protect her without being able to do so properly.”

Dirgo took the sword, his chest puffing slightly as he gave Jon a firm nod while Jon motioned for him to test it on the hand. With a swift slash, the blade cut through the hand which stilled. Looking over the blade he bowed his head, “Thank you, Khal Jon.”

Daenerys smiled as she met Jon’s eyes when he turned, calling back to Dirgo, “Be careful not to use that one when you sever both knees next.”
Dirgo laughed, carefully sliding the valyrian steel blade into his belt and using his normal arakh to slash through the wight’s legs. Theon and Tormund held the wight up by his chains before setting him down on the stumps of his knees.

“Gray Worm,” Jon called out.

Missandei gasped while Gray Worm went wide eyed, looking to Daenerys, who nodded and waved him off.

The Unsullied moved forward to present himself. Jon tucked his left arm under the cloak, flipping the sword in his right to present the hilt to the soldier. It was a short sword like most of the Unsullied used as side arms with a light gray rippled blade, but with dragon wings on the cross guard and a single broken chain link for a pommel.

Gray Worm stared at the weapon for a moment before looking to Jon, who nodded toward the wight’s severed legs. Taking the short sword, Gray Worm moved to the left shin, stilling the foot.

When he turned he found Jon raising his left hand which held a short shaft with a long triangular spearhead not unlike the Unsullied used, though broken chains were engraved along the base.

“You can change the shaft,” Jon said as Gray Worm looked it over. “This just made it easier to carry with the others.”

Gray Worm took the short spear, running a hand across it before he turned and threw it at the right shin, which stilled instantly. Retrieving the spear he bowed to Jon. “Thank you, King Jon.”

“If you two decide on names,” Jon said looking from Dirgo to Gray Worm as he returned to Missandei’s side, “let me know.”

When Dirgo answered almost instantly, Jon blinked, looking to Daenerys, who chuckled and translated, “Grasscutter.”

Showing his weapons to Missandei, Gray Worm answered in Valyrian which Missandei translated as, “Unbinder and Lock Piercer.”

Jon motioned toward the wight’s legs again, and they lifted him, letting Dirgo sever both legs above the thigh. They watched as Jon removed a bastard sword and spin it in his hand while walking over to stab and still one of the legs. Pressing his boot into the rotted flesh to pull it off the tip, he pat the pommel of Longclaw at his side as he looked to Lyanna Mormont.

“When I was at the Wall, Jeor trusted me with the sword of House Mormont. It’s stayed with me as I traveled beyond the wall, as I went from crow to wildling and back again, it cut through wights and White Walkers and men to keep me alive. I can never thank Jeor for what he gave me even beyond Longclaw… but I can make sure House Mormont isn’t without valyrian steel.”

Arya, Daenerys and Sansa looked surprised as Jon removed the cloth from the hilt and held the sword out for Lyanna Mormont. Her eyes widened as she looked over the sword with a blade similar to Longclaw but with a dark gray cross guard, green hilt and black bear head pommel with garnet chips for eyes.

Lyanna glanced over to Jorah who looked at the girl with a solemnly proud smile. Looking back to Jon she asked. “Are you certain?”

“You’re the head of House Mormont,” Jon said with a nod. “It’s yours to do with as you wish, but it is yours, and I’ve no doubt should you come to wield it they’ll run if fear of the she-bear of the
A smile flickered across Lyanna’s lips as she carefully took the sword. “Few things are as fierce as a mother bear protecting her children. Let Mother’s Might protect the north,” Lyanna said turning to Jorah, “in the hands of a northern knight.”

Jorah’s brow knit as he shook his head. “Are you certain, my lady?”

“I can’t wield it yet,” she said firmly, “so use it to guard the King and his betrothed in my place. You can return it to Bear Island when you return from the war.”

Daenerys beamed with pride as Jorah knelt and took the blade from Lyanna with a nod. “I thank you, Lady Mormont, and vow to do all I can to bring honor to the house I shamed.”

Lyanna gave him a nod, stepping back with a glance to Jon while Jorah got to his feet and gave him a small thankful nod.

Sansa was left wondering why Jon had been so evasive if he was just making another sword for House Mormont and not one for himself. She thought she found her answer when Jon opened the bundle for Gendry to remove a sword with a dark, narrow blade. At her side Arya let out a small gasp, her eyes wide Jon motioned for her. “Hopefully this can help where Needle can’t.”

She looked to Jon as she took the blade from Gendry. It was narrow for a longsword, not much bigger than the estoc Jon gave her years earlier. The blade was wider to have a cutting edge yet it didn’t weigh much more than Needle since it was valyrian steel. The hilt had a simple cross guard but the pommel was a small gray wolf head with gold eyes.

Arya looked it over and Sansa grinned seeing her sister swiftly swipe at her eyes before the tears made it to her cheeks. Flipping the blade so the blade pointed behind her, Arya grabbed Gendry’s neck and pulled him into a kiss. Sansa put a hand to her chest, proud of and happy for her sister while Jon looked away.

When Arya released the crimson faced Gendry, who turned his head away from Jon and everyone else in a mix of embarrassment and fear, she made her way toward Jon, setting the sword on the table. Sansa quickly called out, “You better not thank him like that too.”

“Shut up,” Arya called back, leaping up to wrap her arms around Jon’s neck, the same way she had when he gave her needle. “You’re the best brother ever.”

“And you’re the best sister ever,” Jon said squeezing her tight before letting her down. “Now go test it.”

Arya nodded, wiping her eye with a sniff before she spun around, snatching the sword from the table as she made her way to the last leg. She twirled the blade as nimbly as she had the catspaw Bran gave her, finally throwing it to her left hand and thrusting the moment she caught it, piercing the leg which went still.

Beaming, Arya made her way back to the others. “Now I have a Thread to go with my Needle.”

Jon pulled another sword from the bundled cloth, the blade a light enough gray that it seemed almost silver in places as the light shifted against the ripples. It was slender but not as narrow as Arya’s thread, more like a longsword forged for a woman. The room watched as he carried the sword straight to Daenerys, who stared at him.

“At Widow’s Watch you told me of your admiration for Visenya,” Jon said reaching for the cloth
around the hilt of the sword. “It’s no Dark Sister, but let this be there for you when I can’t.”

She was wide eyed as he removed the cloth and handed her the sword. She looked it over as the others gawked at her and the weapon. The cross guard was made from a bronze dragon to one side and a gold one on the other, meeting at the black and red hilt. The pommel was a black stone carved into a dragon head with small ruby chips for eyes.

Staring at the blade, Daenerys looked to Jon with tears in her eyes, shaking her head. “I…” She took a breath, smiling to him. “Thank you.” He hadn’t just given her a sword, but the first new valyrian steel sword belonging to House Targaryen since before Aegon’s Conquest. It was the start of a new legacy for her house. Their house.

Jon motioned to where Dirgo had cut off the rest of the wight’s right arm, stepping back to let her walk over and stab it. The dothraki stepped on the shoulder, letting her pull the blade free and look it over with a shaky breath before returning to the others. Tyrion was beaming before he arched his brow questioningly.

“I may not be able to make it sing as well as others,” Daenerys said smiling from Tyrion to Jon, “but let them speak of my Dragon’s Song.”

Sansa was so busy smiling at Daenerys she didn’t notice Jon take the final sword from the bundle until he was standing in front of her. Her eyes widened as she looked at the blade with light gray ripples. The silver cross guard looked to be undefined paws that curved upward slightly, but could be mistaken for feathers or wings. This one also had a white hilt, but the pommel was a gray wolf head with chips of topaz for eyes.

“Lady,” she gasped. Daenerys’ pleasant surprise softened as she remembered what they’d told her of the first Direwolf their family lost.

“I trust Brienne and your fireguard with your life, but I trust you above them all. I know you feel more secure wielding an actual needle and thread, but if we’re to see this through I’d ask you keep this at your side when I can’t be.”

Sansa smiled, failing to hide her tears as she carefully took the sword from him. “Jon,” she whispered, unsure what to say.

He motioned toward the wight, not little more than a torso. She looked from him to the wight and then the sword. Taking a breath she made her way over to the growling undead soldier and fixed her grip on the sword before thrusting it through the wight’s chest. It stilled and crumbled when she yanked the blade free.

Sansa looked it over and turned to Jon wiping her cheek with a broad smile. “I’ve had so many ignore my tears, now let them fear Lady’s Tear.”

**Chapter End Notes**

I had a lot of fun thinking up names for the swords. Wolf Fang is one hundred percent named for Wolf Fang Fist and Dirgo’s is named for Susanoo’s sword. The reason Gray Worm gets two is because his short sword used less steel so they wanted to try and keep it equal in that sense. I also assume Jon would’ve offered Lyanna Longclaw if he offered it to Jorah and she turned it down as well.
Daenerys was disappointed she couldn’t sit through supper with Dragon’s Song on the table, but thought it too improper even for her. Now that Jon had given them their gifts Gendry had started on the next batch with help from Arya and a few others they trusted. They would also make scabbards for each of the new swords.

Throughout their dinner, she found herself smiling at Jon as she watched him speak with others. She felt half child and half fool, her heart aflutter from a present, and a sword at that. She worried it painted her as caring only for gilded gifts, but it wasn’t that simple.

He’d remembered their discussion of Visenya, knew she was disappointed that House Targaryen had lost their ancestral swords, knew how important it had become for her to have a role in the lineage of their family. Even if she never could bear him a child, she could pass her sword to his and Sansa’s, let them carry her will with them to carve a new future for their family.

Once she’d had her fill Daenerys turned to Missandei, giving her a look that asked if she would be spending the night with Grey Worm. When she shook her head, Daenerys rose and excused herself, making her way to her room with her handmaiden.

“King Jon is very kind,” Missandei said as she poured herself and Daenerys wine.

“He is,” Daenerys nodded, looking at the sword resting on the table against the wall of her room.

Jon had taken them to the yard to get a feel for the swords and told them while he’d helped with all the weapons and hilts of the others, the pommels for Dragon’s Song and Lady’s Tear were done by him alone. “Though there are a few mangled dragon and wolf heads in the forge now,” he admitted with a laugh.

“I had assumed he would make arms for his own lords first,” Missandei said bringing Daenerys’ glass to her. “Maybe you, as a gift, but not Grey Worm or Dirgo.”

“Perhaps he feared I wouldn’t appreciate a sword as a gift and thought the favor of my captains would earn my affection,” Daenerys said with a smirk as she took the wine.

She clearly didn’t believe that, which was obvious to Missandei. “You speak as if he did not have it the moment you spoke to him, your grace.”

“When he called me a fool for wanting to be queen?” Daenerys reminded her.

“I meant when you first spoke to him as yourself,” Missandei clarified, “Daenerys Stormborn, not Queen Daenerys.”
Taking a drink, Daenerys looked to the hearth and thought back on their conversation at Widow’s Watch where he’d reminded her of Rhaegar. It had been brief, but she’d found it easier to speak with him after that, even bringing him in to help her when they lost Highgarden. Since then that spark of affection had continued to grow, she’d even found herself enjoying the company of her soon to be sister-wife while he had been busy on their gifts.

She spent most of the evening speaking with Missandei of what they’d learned of the lords in their time there. So many Targaryens seemed to ignore the North and though she knew Jon never would she wanted to make sure she didn’t either.

Once Missandei left, Daenerys finished off her glass of wine and sat on her bed with a sigh. Just as she’d started to reach for the laces of her dress, she heard a knock at her door and got to her feet.

Opening it she found looked up and met Jon’s eyes, staring at one another until she took her hand from the door and he entered, turning to close the door and meet her gaze again. She held it until she saw his hand rise to latch the door, a hesitant smile taking her lips.

She felt different kissing him, peeling off their clothes while making their way to her bed. It wasn’t like Daario or Drogo, she’d wanted things from them. Pleasure, safety, a place, affirmation. With Jon she just wanted him, all of him.

Her hand brushed against the scars of his chest when he tossed aside his tunic, kicking away her fallen dress. Looking at him she saw a shy frown on his face, watching her examine the scars across his torso. Finally she placed a kiss to the one over his heart, sliding her hand to his back before raising her head, letting him meet her lips with his.

While she hadn’t found much pleasure with Drogo she had with Daario, but again Jon was different. Where Daario was flashy, finding his joy in proving he could please her, Jon simply found his joy in pleasing her. She quickly found her joy in conquering the northern conqueror, making him moan and groan, riding him and taking all of him until he spilled inside her, wishing it would quicken within her.

Laying beside him to catch her breath she felt overcome by it all. Part of her was ashamed of what she’d become, feeling like a child pretending at a better life in the arms of a king she loved. Another part feared this was a dream, that she would wake and find her cruel brother alive again. He would take this from her, this content feeling of a heart beating in her ear as arms wrapped around her lovingly. She wasn’t a prize to be sold or claimed but a woman who found joy with a man who found the same in her.

“Jon,” she said quietly, a small piece of her hoping he was asleep.

“Mm?”

Daenerys looked up at him before pressing her hand into the mattress to raise herself, sitting up to face him. She stared at him for a moment, taking a breath to steel herself before taking another just in case.

“I want to marry you,” she declared.

Jon smiled with sweetened confusion. “Didn’t we already agree to do that?”

Daenerys sighed, sliding closer to him, pressing a hand to his chest. “No, I mean I want to marry you. Not Aegon… Jon.”

He blinked at first then slid back to sit up and look at her. “Really?” When she nodded he reached
up to brush his fingers along her cheek. “I want the same with you.”

Daenerys smiled briefly before deciding to put on a pout. “You sure you wouldn’t rather just the one wife?”

“I’m no fool,” Jon said with a grin. “I won’t turn away either of the most beautiful women in Westeros.”

“I thought I was only the most beautiful woman in Essos,” she said arching her brow.

Jon’s brow furrowed before he slid his hand from her to cross his arms. “She told you that?”

“You’ve been so busy we had to keep each other busy,” she said with a suggestive smile that softened as she ran her fingers along one of his scars. “Why did you come here tonight? You could have gone to her.”

“I could have,” he nodded, “but I wanted to be with you so she made herself busy. I think she’s working with Tyrion on our saddles.”

“I’m sure she’ll still miss waking with you,” she said teasingly. “She spoke of how she enjoyed it near as much as sleeping beside you.”

“Well I don’t know how good he’ll be once she wakes, but she has Ghost tonight to keep her warm.”

Daenerys nodded, looking to him with a frown. “It would be easier if we weren’t separate.”

“You mean if you were one person?” asked Jon with a smirk.

“No,” she said exasperatedly, “I meant if we didn’t have separate rooms and could all be together.”

“I don’t think the rooms are big enough for all three of us,” said Jon, “but I’m sure she’d move you to the family quarters if you asked.”

Daenerys shook her head. “I was thinking of the Red Keep.”

“You want us to share chambers?”

“It’s a thought,” she offered with a shrug. “Even if we don’t all share a bed at once I’d like us to be able to. As much as I’m sure she enjoys her time with Ghost I doubt he’s sufficient company. I know he wouldn’t be if you left me with him after tonight.”

Jon seemed confused, almost wary. “Should I go bring her here so we could sleep?”

Daenerys snickered. “No, but I would think it would be easier to go to hers.”

Jon reached up to brush a loose strand of silvery hair behind her ear. “Sansa will be fine, Dany. If she’s not I swear I’ll do all I can to make it up to her, but I know she will be. For tonight at least, let it be just us as it is when it’s me and her.”

She saw that he had similar trouble ignoring the thought of Sansa alone, and found herself torn between frowning and smiling as she imagined him feeling the same for her on nights she spent with Sansa.

“I’m glad you’re concerned though,” he said sliding into the bed, holding his arm open for her to lay into it again. “I was worried you two might not get along or would see everything as some
challenge.”

“Only some things,” she said with a smile.

His eyes opened as he hands drifted beneath the furs.

“Thrice, right?” She asked knowingly, a confident smirk taking her lips. “I can beat that.”

XOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXO

Jon had departed early to go train with Willam and some of the others, leaving Daenerys in bed until she forced herself up and prepared to break fast. When Missandei came to her room she furrowed her brow and looked Daenerys over suspiciously.

“What happened?” She asked quietly.

Daenerys wanted to tell her, but told herself she would let Sansa know first. She’d done the same for Daenerys in a way. She wasn’t just the first one Sansa had told, but she’d even known it was going to happen before Jon did, remembering him looking confused as he excused himself after Sansa told him to go to her solar.

“I’ll tell you later,” Daenerys promised, making her way to the Great Hall where she sat beside Sansa.

“You seem to be glowing, Princess,” Sansa said with a teasing smile, “has something happened?”

Daenerys clicked her tongue. “I forgot he said you made yourself busy last night. Of course you knew.”

“I’m surprised you didn’t seek out his room,” Sansa said with a shrug. “I’d been so sure you would after seeing your face when he gifted you Dragon’s Song.”

“And I was certain he’d seek out your room,” said Daenerys.

“I’ll find him tonight,” Sansa said carefully, looking at her plate.

Daenerys snickered. Even when teasing Sansa found a way to be sheepish. “Sansa,” she said taking the woman’s hand with a sigh. “I hated thinking of you alone last night.”

“I had Ghost to keep me company,” Sansa said shaking her head.

“I wouldn’t want it to be all the time,” Daenerys clarified before going further, “I know we’d each like time to ourselves, but I just want it to be clear I’d be open to the three of us sharing a bed, spending the night and waking together.”

Sansa turned to her, staring for a moment. “As in just sleeping?”

“Mostly,” Daenerys shrugged. “As much as I enjoyed it, afterwards part of me kept thinking that I’m just going to miss him the next night when he’s with you, and that made me think of how you must be feeling. I want us to be together. As much as I admire what she did and who she was…” Sansa was shocked to see Daenerys’ violet eyes glistening as she said quietly, “I don’t want to be Visenya.”

Right away she understood that it had changed for Daenerys, that she’d come to feel more for Jon than she had previously and couldn’t bear the thought of being the wife he visited once for every ten times he visited the other.
“You don’t have to be,” Sansa said squeezing Daenerys’ hand. “I know he cares for you, and we can try. We’ll just have to convince him.”

“He may be the only man who would make this a problem,” Daenerys laughed.

Sansa nodded. “But that’s why we love him.”

Daenerys seemed hesitant to nod in agreement. “Thank you,” Daenerys said before shaking her head to force away the tears burning her eyes. “I’m sorry.”

“Don’t be,” Sansa said with a kind smile. “I want to this to work, Dany, for all of us.”

Daenerys smiled at Sansa’s use of Dany and at her sincerity. “So do I.”

Chapter End Notes

While not on a boat, I went with something like the sex scene from season seven, having it cement her feelings for him in away to where she decides she actually cares for him. I thought that would also be interesting to play with as she previous sees Visenya as this role model and suddenly has that admiration thrown for a loop to where she fears becoming her.
Returns

Chapter Summary

As the armies of Westeros gather Jon, Dany and Sansa decide to prepare a wedding before they march.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The courtyard filled as two thousand men joined their army, their banners a mix of fish, suns and flowers. When the lords made their way through the gates, they found Jon stood at the front of the welcoming party with Sansa and Daenerys at his sides.

Jon was glad to see new faces among those familiar to him.

“Uncle, Granduncle,” Sansa said with a smile to Edmure and Brynden Tully.

Edmure stared at her for a long moment, sorrow painting his face before he stepped forward to hug her. Sansa seemed surprised while Brynden rolled his eyes and shook his head as though annoyed at the display. Once Edmure stepped back he flashed an apologetic smile at Sansa, but she shook her head.

Turning to Jon, Edmure gave him a look and snorted, a smile tugging at his lips. “Your grace.”

“I’m glad to see you safe, Lord Edmure.”

“Thank you,” Edmure nodded. “I’ve been a prisoner so long it feels a relief even to ride for war, especially one this important.”

Once they moved aside, Jon turned to greet a short, buxom dornish woman who wore a coy smile as she looked him over. Beside him Sansa and Daenerys shared a look as the lady curtsied.

“It is an honor your grace,” she said in a silky voice.

“It’s mine, Princess Arianne,” Jon assured with a welcoming smile. “I’m glad to see you make the trek safely.”

“I may not be able to fight on the front lines but if we’re to fight back death then I would stand with the others come to face it.”

“It seems you’re as brave as you are beautiful, my lady.”

Arianne smirked, clicking her tongue. “Don’t tease, your grace. I know you have two wives to be.” She added with a laugh, “Unless you’re looking to take a third?”

“Two’s more than enough,” Jon assured. “I know it’s different in Dorne, more open for women, but should you like we’ve been training women as well. You’re free to join them.”

Arianne nodded. “I’ll think on it.”
Daemon at her side gave them a nod as he followed Arianne away, letting Garlan exchange a handshake with Jon.

“I’m glad to see the Reach still has men ready to fight.”

“I only wish we were even half of what we had been,” Garlan sighed.

“The Reach may be trampled, but when spring comes Highgarden will bloom,” Jon assured.

Their guests seemed shocked to find a new batch of valyrian steel weapons had been made. They were also shocked to find that Jon planned to not only given northern lords the weapons but the southron lords as well.

The great hall was packed as they took supper using some of the supplies the southron houses had brought to bolster Winterfell’s stock. Jon even made a round of the hall after he’d eaten, speaking with some of the lords gathered, sharing japes with them. By the time he returned to his chair Daenerys had left with Missandei.

Sansa squeezed his hand and got to her feet, leaning to his ear. “Come to my chamber.”

Jon glanced up at her with a smile, turning to watch her leave before finishing off his mug of ale. If the days training and preparing for war hadn’t exhausted him his nights did. It seemed like he’d gone back and forth each night between them. Some nights they took to bed, others they sat and talked. He hadn’t woken in his own room in a week.

He felt a fool at times for feeling cursed to be so blessed.

Excusing himself, he departed and made his way to Sansa’s chambers where he found Sansa sat at a small table by her hearth. Sat beside her Daenerys saw his surprise and asked, “Were you expecting something?”

“Ha,” he said dryly, closing the door and making his way to take the vacant seat to Daenerys’ left, opposite Sansa.

“Almost every important lord and lady in the seven kingdoms is here,” Sansa said sitting back in her chair. “I think it’s time we marry.”

Looking between the two Jon nodded. “It won’t be very grand. No fire jugglers or thirty course meals.”

“I’m sure we’ll survive,” Sansa snickered.

“We have half of Westeros here,” said Daenerys, “surely someone will be willing to juggle torches.”

Sansa saw Jon nodded, his smile put on. Sitting forward she asked, “Would you rather something small?”

Jon blinked and shook his head. “No, it’s fine. I’ll need to deal with this stuff if we make it through this, might as well get used to it. Besides, we could use it to help boost morale.”

Seeing Jon wasn’t willing to say more than that, Sansa nodded. “I’ve started rearranging the rooms slightly. Once we choose a date I’m going to give Rickon the Lord’s room and move us all to neighboring rooms.”
“Are you sure?” asked Jon.

“Once we marry, once we leave, Rickon will become Lord of Winterfell.”

Sitting back Jon laughed. “I keep forgetting we’ll be in King’s Landing one day. Are you okay with that?”

“It will be different,” Daenerys assured, taking Sansa’s hand and offering a smile. “You’ll be in charge.”

Sansa nodded. “It’ll be different.”

“So when will it be?” asked Jon.

“I can have everything ready in a few days,” said Sansa. “A fortnight at the latest.”

XOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXO

Once she’d worked out all they could spare for a small feast Sansa found out when Gendry would be done with the next batch of valyrian steel weapons and set it the day after.

She found herself noticing Jon looking more solemn than usual whenever people spoke of the wedding. She might have been worried if she wasn’t so sure they all cared for one another, so found herself wondering what was tainting it for him.

Her answer came in a horse drawn cart two days before they walked to the heart tree.

She was walking with Arya when she spotted Jon speaking with Davos on a walkway overlooking the yard when the cart pulled up. He looked up, briefly smiling at Sansa before his eyes found the cart and widened, moving away from Davos.

“Sam?” He called out, making Sansa go wide eyed, turning to look at the cart where Samwell Tarly was helping Gilly and Little Sam down.

With a grin Sam watched Jon hurry down the stairs, the yard turning to watch, curious who could get such a reaction from their seemingly sullen king. He made his way across the yard and without hesitation wrapped his arms around the fat man in a warm embrace.

“You look well,” Jon said looking from him to Gilly, reaching over to ruffle Little Sam’s hair.

Gilly looked nervous as she did a half curtsy. “Your grace.”

“None of that, Gilly,” Jon laughed. “Not for friends.”

She smiled, looking a bit relieved as Sam grinned. “You look like you’re doing alright. Heard lots about you.”

“Mostly wrong, I’m sure,” Jon laughed. “Come on, get warm and tell me about Oldtown.”

Seeing the relief painting Jon’s smile as he spoke with Sam for most of the afternoon she realized he’d wanted Sam there for their wedding but thought it impossible. After that he only seemed to brighten at mentions of their wedding.

They were gathered for supper when Jon rose and the room quieted. “With all that is happening I find myself willing to overlook certain lesser evils for greater goods, and with that in mind, I, King Aegon Targaryen, release Samwell Tarly from his maester and Night’s Watch oaths to serve the
realm as regent of the North for Rickon Stark once Sansa and Arya Stark march to meet the Night
King and regent of the seven kingdoms should Rickon Stark be left as sole heir.”

The declaration, something Jon had never really done, shocked everyone, including Samwell. None
questioned it as Jon sat down except for Sam who leaned over to look at Jon, “Are you sure that’s
wise?”

“Every king has some acts of nepotism,” Jon said with a smirk, “let this be mine.”

Daenerys kept her distance from Sam, feeling a flicker of guilt whenever she looked at him and
thought of the men she’d burned in the scorched fields outside King’s Landing. She wasn’t even
sure if he knew, but then as they were in the training yard Samwell approached her.

“Your grace?” She looked at him and steeled herself, but cracked when he said, “Jon told me about
my father and brother.”

For a split second she wanted to ring Jon’s head, but frowned to Samwell. “I’m sorry, Lord Tarly. I
didn’t know at the time.”

Samwell shook his head somberly. “I understand. My father…” Samwell sighed. “I don’t know
why he would ever side with that woman. If he truly wanted to follow her then so be it. I just… I
wish my brother hadn’t been fool enough to follow him. Is it cruel to wish he was as craven as I?”

Daenerys shook her head. “I don’t think it’s cruel to wish he would live.”

“Either way,” Sam said looking to her, “they made their choices and I understand your reasons. In
truth I find myself feeling worse for my mother and sister than I do them.”

Seeing them speaking to one another, Jon flashed her a quick smile before returning to the others.
She couldn’t make it up to Sam, but she would do what she could. She wouldn’t let it affect Jon
and Sam’s time together, not when it was so clear Jon cared for the man who may as well be
another of Jon’s brothers.

Chapter End Notes

Originally this was the end of Part Two but I’ve cut the back half of this chapter to
make it the start of the next which is the last of Part Two. This chapter suffers a bit but
it’s worth it for the next chapter I feel.

With Sam’s arrival at Winterfell we’re near the end of season seven. Since there’s no
season eight to go off Part Three is going to be fucking nuts. Also like season eight it
will likely be the shortest compared to the others.
“Who’d have thought the next time we were in front of one it’d be to break your vows twice over?” Sam asked with a laugh as he and Jon stood before the heart tree in Winterfell’s godswood.

Jon nodded, adjusting the clothing Sansa had prepared for him. He felt ridiculous wearing a black doublet with slashes of red satin under a dark gray jerkin with white embroidery along the edges. He’d been dreading the idea of wearing two cloaks, but they’d opted to skip a cloak ceremony, leaving him in a black one with a crimson inlet. Though no longer a bastard, it felt fitting his wedding would be a bastard born of the Seven and the Old Gods.

“I feel like a jester,” he sighed.

“You need to look the part,” Sam told him, brushing snow from Jon’s shoulder. “This will be something people speak of for generations.”

With a relenting nod, Jon looked to Sam with a grin. “How angry would they be if they saw me in my training gear?”

Sam chuckled. “If you get us through this you could spend the rest of your reign as the nude king and I doubt anyone would say a word.”

In the lord’s room Sansa turned to the others after looking over her white gown with gray embroidery. She’d come to know Jon preferred her hair down, so brushed it as straight as she could before braiding the sides back to keep it from her face.

“You look pretty,” Rickon said with an assuring nod.

“You sure about this?” Arya asked, her arms crossed as she looked her sister over.

Sansa nodded. “Even if Father or Robb were alive I’d have considered asking you. Who would know better if I’m worthy of him than his sister?”

In the great hall Daenerys adjusted her own gown. She’d thought to wear an Essosi dress but they’d known it would be too cold, and now that it was snowing again she was thankful. She’d relented on having a mostly white dress, though it still had black and red across the chest and folds of her skirt.

“You don’t need to do this,” she said with a sympathetic smile. “I don’t want to be cruel.”

“No man could be more worthy of you, your grace,” Jorah said solemnly. “I give you gladly.”

Daenerys took his hands. “Thank you, Ser Jorah.”
Lanterns carved a path toward the heart tree after the sun set, guiding the quartet to where the lords and ladies gathered in Winterfell stood watching them, yet both brides barely cast them a glance as their eyes found Jon. He greeted them with a smile, warming them even as flecks of snow gently swirled and fell around them.

While Sam stood off to Jon’s side on the other, before the heart tree, stood a septon and Bran in his chair. “Who comes before the Old Gods?” asked Bran, looking to Daenerys and Sansa.

The four exchanged a brief look before Jorah spoke. “Daenerys of House Targaryen comes here to be wed. A woman grown, trueborn and noble. She comes to beg the blessing of the gods.”

Arya then spoke. “Sansa of House Stark comes here to be wed. A woman grown, trueborn and noble. She comes to beg the blessing of the gods.”

Bran glanced at Jon. “Who comes to claim them?”

“Aegon of House Targaryen and Stark, King of Westeros.” Jon looked to them both before asking, “Who gives them?”

“Jorah of House Mormont,” he said proudly, “sworn sword to Daenerys Targaryen.”

“Arya of House Stark,” she said with a nod, “sister to Sansa Stark.”

At that the septon stepped forward, ushering the women to approach. They moved to either side of Jon, who turned to face the septon with them. Jon’s left hand held Daenerys’ while his right took Sansa’s left, the women then entwined their open hands together as the septon began binding each pair in a strip of silken cloth while speaking.

“In the sight of the seven, I hereby seal these three souls, binding them as one for eternity.” Stepping back he motioned for them to turn. “Look upon one another and say the words.”

The three moved so they could face one another, looking into the eyes of the others as they spoke. “Father, smith, warrior, mother, maiden, crone, stranger. I am theirs and they are mine. From this day until the end of my days.”

They smiled to one another, having planned ahead so that each kissed the corner of Jon’s mouth.

The feast was far from the extravagant affairs Jon imagined a King’s wedding would be but much more than he ever thought his could have been. While they’d had a minstrel some nights in the form of Tom of Sevenstreams, who came in with the men of the Brotherhood Without Banners, Sansa had rounded up enough men to have a band playing songs all night. Jon hadn’t put up a fight about dancing, knowing it would mean a lot to Sansa, but found a certain joy in teaching Daenerys a northern dance.

When he wasn’t dancing with one of the many ladies gathered, Jon found time to swiftly take swigs of whatever he could. Normally he did his best to keep from falling too deep in his cups, but if he was going to make a fool of himself he’d drink until he didn’t care.

It took a while, but eventually he found himself sat at the high table with his left hand on his chin while his right tapped the arm of his chair. His eyes took in the sight of Daenerys as she spoke with Davos and Wyman Manderly, slinking across to where Sansa laughed at one of Tormund’s jokes alongside Gendry, Edmure Tully, and a snickering Jaime Lannister.

Jon rose to his feet and walked with enough purpose that people parted, clearing a path for him. Those around Daenerys glanced at him, her only warning being their backing away before Jon’s
arms wrapped around her and pulled her over his left shoulder.

“Jon!” She exclaimed, smacking his shoulder.

The room burst into laughter as Jon made his way toward Sansa, who turned and shook her head. “Jon, we said we-” She cut herself off with a yelp as he slipped an arm around her and pulled her over his right shoulder. Patting his back she declared, “You’re not stealing us!”

“Looks like he is, lass,” Tormund said with a laugh as they spun around and Jon carried them out of the room full of laughing and cheering lords and ladies.

Daenerys sighed, looking to Sansa. “This is ridiculous.”

“You’re ridiculous,” Jon snapped back, slurring slightly.

Sansa shook her head, holding back a laugh as she gently tapped his shoulder. “Okay we’re out of the hall, you can let us down.”

“I’ll put you down on the bed,” Jon said turning a corner, “before I strip you and have you soaking so I can have my fill.”

Sansa shared a wide eyed glance with Daenerys, who smirked as she asked, “Who are you talking to? I’ll be disappointed if it’s not me.”

“Both of you,” he said shoving his foot into the door of his new room, throwing open the door. The maids had already light the hearth and a few candles, meaning Jon could walk straight in and kick the door closed before heading straight to the bed and dumping both women on the large mattress.

Sansa snickered seeing him look at them both hungrily. “You must have gone deep into your cups.”

“Near the bottom,” he assured with a laugh. “Now…” He groaned, removing his cloak and tossing it on a chair. “Those are too pretty for me to tear away, but I can’t wait long.”

Daenerys laughed, delighted by the chance to see Jon sloshed but coherent. Looking to Sansa she arched her brow as if to ask if she was sure about this, and Sansa took a breath, nodding. “Could you help me?” She asked, standing and presenting her back to Daenerys.

“Only if you do the same,” Daenerys said getting to her feet.

Jon watched Daenerys undoing the laces of Sansa dress and sighed. “Gods I hope I remember this.”

XOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXO

The sun had risen well before Jon awoke, a first in months. For a moment he’d thought that not only had Sansa given them bigger beds but more comfortable ones, but then he realized the mattress had little to do with it. Daenerys was laying on her side with her arm across Jon’s torso while Sansa was on her back in his arm resting her head on his shoulder.

He couldn’t tell if he sat there for hours or minutes, watching each breath and thanking the gods for each one they took. Daenerys groaned, shifting against him before turning away from him. Her hand reached for his right under her, turning to face him with a grin while pulling his arm around her.

Daenerys wore a wry smile as she pressed her lips to his chest. He looked from Sansa to Daenerys, who shrugged in response as she slid up and kissed his collar. As if to warn her he reached his hand
around her and clasped her breast, making her laugh.

Sansa groaned, turning to her left before going right and turning onto her side, sliding further up until her hair was in Jon’s face. Daenerys snickered as he winced and pulled his face away from the hairs tickling his nose. Sansa’s eyes blinked up, looking confused by Daenerys’ quiet laughter until she told Sansa, “You’re torturing him.”

Sliding back she looked to Jon and saw him wiggle his nose, wanting desperately to scratch it but unwilling to take his arms from them. Sansa dozily chuckled, reaching up to rub the tip of his nose. He let out a sigh of relief, squeezing his arm around her. “Thank you.” He looked to Daenerys. “I blame you.”

“For wanting to kiss my husband?” She asked innocently while kissing his collar again.

“For starting without me, I’d bet,” Sansa said with a laugh, kissing his jaw.

Jon sucked in a breath as Daenerys grinned up at him, having taken him in hand beneath the furs. Sansa glanced down before pressing her hand over his heart scar to lift herself and take his lips in hers.

All three were startled by pounding on their door, which Jon answered by yelling, “Go away!”

“Your grace!” Davos’ voice came through the door, “They’re near the Wall.”

Jon sat up as Sansa and Daenerys gasped. Cursing, Jon leapt over Sansa to escape the bed, rushing over to pull on his small clothes and glancing back to make sure they were covered before he unlatched the door and stepped out into the hall.

Davos frowned, holding out a letter Jon took and quickly scanned. “We’ll need time to get everyone ready to march.”

“Ready a company,” Jon told him. “I’ll ride ahead with them and we can help secure Eastwatch.”

“I’ll find the best I can,” Davos nodded. He flashed Jon an apologetic smile. “I wouldn’t have interrupted if it weren’t grave.”

Jon nodded. “I know. Go. Try to have them ready to leave by midday.”

He turned back, entering once Davos departed. Daenerys and Sansa were getting dressed, a small part of Jon disappointed but knowing they would have busy mornings.

“How far?” Sansa asked, glancing at the letter in his hands.

“About a month out.”

“We can’t move everyone by then,” said Daenerys. “It took long enough to move just the Dothraki and Unsullied.”

“I’m leaving you two in charge while I take a company ahead,” Jon said tossing the letter on a table and going to his chest to pick out riding clothes.

“You can’t just leave,” Sansa said turning to him.

“I need to be there,” he said pulling on a pair of breeches. “If something happens I need to be there.”
“And die?” Daenerys asked with a scoff.

“This isn’t up for debate,” he said firmly, looking to them both. “They’re my brothers and even if we rush we won’t be there in time. If they manage to hold out then I need to help them. And I need you two here making sure Gendry finishes more valyrian steel weapons, at least enough for everyone we’ve talked about so far. Everyone else needs to have dragonglass.”

Daenerys crossed her arms. “You’ll take Rhaegal with you.”

Jon sighed. “Are you sure?” She stared at him silently and he nodded. “I won’t ride him there though. I won’t be any help alone.”

“Take the Brotherhood,” Sansa told him. “They wanted to be there originally. I’ll ask Sandor to guard you.”

“Sansa-”

“Don’t,” she warned. “I can accept you leaving, but not without someone I trust guarding you. Not this time.”

Jon’s jaw shifted. “He’s not a kingsguard.”

Sansa rolled her eyes. “He is if I say so.”

“Jorah as well,” Daenerys said with a nod. “At least for this.”

Jon frowned to both women. “I’m sorry.”

They shared a glance before shaking their heads. “It’s not your fault,” said Daenerys.

“Just come back,” demanded Sansa.

They dressed as best they could before moving to their rooms on either side of Jon’s and dressing for the day, storing their wedding gowns away before going ahead to help gather men to ride with Jon. He took some time to pack his old armor and spare clothes before making his way to the yard.

When he arrived he found Ser Davos, Daenerys and Sansa stood beside a motley crew, most of whom wielded valyrian steel. The thin, fox faced Tom of Sevenstreams sat atop a horse fiddling with a harp while Beric Dondarrian and Thoros of Myr examined the valyrian steel greatsword Sandor secured to his horse. Jorah Mormont was stood with Theon Greyjoy, who wore a northern style valyrian steel sword on his hip.

Rodrik Ryswell was giving the sword they gave him to his eldest son, Roger, who stood beside a red stallion. Bronn of Blackwater was looking over the dragonglass daggers he tucked into his belt while Jaime spoke with Brienne, the two sharing a smile and nod before Brienne went to Sansa’s side.

Jon watched Tormund walk up to Brienne, grinning wildly as he carefully swung the bearded valyrian steel axe off his shoulder, letting the head sit on the ground as he told Brienne. “If I return, I intend to fight you.”


“I know you southron don’t have the same custom, but I doubt you’d be with a man who couldn’t beat you. So I’ll fight you however you want until you see that our children would surely be
beautiful giants that could conqueror the world.”

Sansa wasn’t the only one to grin as she glanced at Brienne. Off by his horse Jaime arched his brow while Brienne crossed her arms. “And you think beating me will make me want to bear your children.”

“I think beating you will make you stop ignoring me,” Tormund said with a gruff laugh, “and then you’ll want to bear them as much as I want you to.”

Brienne’s cheeks flushed with embarrassment, the tall woman wanting to shrink away. “Fine. Come back and I’ll fight you.”

Tormund grinned, picking up his axe and walking toward his horse feeling like he could take on the entire wight army himself.

Jon started to laugh until he saw Willam Snow bringing their houses from the stables alongside Arya. He stormed over shaking his head. “No.”

Arya swiftly crossed her arms and glared at him. “You think you can stop me?”

“Arya, no. This isn’t going around slitting Frey throats. They don’t care whose face you wear as they kill you.”

“I can still fight,” she scoffed. “I could beat you.”

“No.”

Arya stepped to him. “Fight me now, and if I beat you I go.”

Jon looked down to her eyes as the others looked on them. “You could poke me full of holes. I won’t fight you.”

“I’m your kingsguard.”

“I already have two,” Jon said glancing over to Jorah and Sandor.

“I’m the Lord Commander then,” she said firmly.

He saw in her eyes she would go no matter what he said. He could lock her in a cell and she’d find a way out. “If you go, you’re not my kingsguard. You take orders from me. If I say go you go. If I say stop you stop.”

“Should I find a collar?” Arya scoffed.

“If it makes it easier for you to listen,” shrugged Jon. “We need to work together on this Arya. I can’t have you doing whatever you want.”

Her face softened and she nodded. “Alright.”

Jon squeeze her shoulder, leaning down until their foreheads were touching as he stared into her eyes. “You’re not alone anymore. We’re stronger a pack, but only if we work together.”

Arya smirked, awkwardly nodding against his head. “Okay.”

Standing straight he found Sansa smiling as they approached, her gaze shifting to Arya. “Don’t just protect him, protect yourself, okay?”
“Make sure Gendry eats?” Arya asked sheepishly.

“I’ll make sure,” Sansa nodded, stepping forward to hug her sister.

Arya gave a thankful smile as she returned the hug. “I’ll make sure Jon isn’t too stupid.”

Daenerys caught her eye as they separated. “Please take care of yourself, Arya.” Arya blinked in shock. “I’d rather not lose my sister.”

With a smirk Arya nodded toward Sansa. “If I’m your good sister then isn’t she?”

“She’s my wife,” Daenerys said with a haughty smirk while Sansa shook her head, amused. “I suppose sister-wife works, but you would still be my only sister.”

Arya gave a relenting nod. “Okay. If I must have another sister, at least it’s one with dragons.”

Daenerys snickered while Sansa clicked her tongue. Her playful glare at Arya ended when she saw Daenerys turned to Jon and grabbed his right hand, removing his glove. He blinked in surprised, watching her pull a violet ribbon from her dress and tie it beside the blue one he’d tied there.

Jon watched her with a smile, watching her try to put his glove back on before helping her, pulling it tight and flexing his fingers. That same hand then caught her chin, holding it as he leaned in and kissed her cheek. He turned to Sansa and kissed her cheek as well.

“I’ll send word if I can once we arrive.” Jon mounted his horse causing the men gathered to do the same, ready to meet the rest gathered outside Winterfell.

Standing on the walls of Winterfell and watching Jon’s party speed north, Sansa found her hand in Daenerys’. While others surely worried for their king, Sansa felt better knowing there was another concerned for the man he was. Though she may not spend the next weeks holding her hand, it was nice to know she could rely on Daenerys’ support as much as she could rely on Sansa’s. She might have been a dragon, but she was one of their pack now, same as Jon.

Chapter End Notes

I’m not exactly intimating that every night is a threesome, but it’s their wedding night so fuck it, but of course Jon doesn’t get time to enjoy it.

Thus ends Part Two. There won’t be an interlude like last time because I want to get straight into things. Part Two was light on fighting but Part Three will be full of action as things close out and will start pretty strong I feel.
Eastwatch

Chapter Summary

Jon leads a company to Eastwatch as the Night King marches on the Wall.

“What do you call it again?” Tom asked sat across the fire from Theon.

“What’s that mean?” asked Tormund.

“Squall? It’s a sudden gust of wind. Usually during a storm,” said Theon.

Tormund nodded. “I thought it was what women do when you get ‘em going.”

Some of the others chuckled. “And what about you?” Jaime asked with a nod toward Tormund.

“What do you call your valyrian steel?”

Tormund grinned, tapping the top of his axe. “When I was a runt my father told me the best axes were made from clips of a giant’s nail, so that’s what I’ve called this.”

“Giant’s Nail?” Thoros asked skeptically. “Not particularly fearsome.”

“Better than his Prick,” Bronn said with a laugh.

“How would you know?” Arya asked arching her brow, earning a few laughs.

Tormund nearly rolled off the log he sat on. “It’s what I called this one,” he said tapping the short cleaver-like sword in the scabbard hanging from his belt. He turned to Roger Ryswell, the long faced heir sitting up as Tormund asked, “And you? What’s on your waist?”

“Redmane,” Roger said tapping the black horse head pommel with garnet eyes.

“What about you?” Arya called out to Sandor, sat against a tree behind Beric and Jon.

Glancing at her he sighed and called back, “Gravedigger.” It felt appropriate since his was the largest one Gendry had made with a wide blade and tip not unlike a spade. Sansa had requested it as a kind of payment for his care for her and Arya.

“King Jon,” Willam said looking up from the fire, “do you think we’ll make it in time?”

“I don’t know,” he admitted grimly. “If they keep pace then no, we won’t, but they move slow and might want to wait until they’re all there before they move in.”

“Even if we do get there in time,” Jaime said with a sigh, “it’s not as if we can hold off the entire wight army ourselves. Not while I’m missing my good hand.”

A few of the men chuckled while Jon shook his head. “The Wall should be able to hold them off. We just need to be there in case they find some way through it.”
That final night before they reached the Wall they barely slept, though felt relief to see it still standing. Jon had Rhaegal go hunt and the dragon hadn’t returned when they rose with the sun and made their last approach for Eastwatch. Arriving with the sun at it’s peak they felt a deep chill stretching from beyond the wall.

Free folk and men of the watch hurried out to greet them. “They arrived three days ago but haven’t moved,” one of the men told them as they made their way the to the top of the Wall.

Below they saw the snowy earth blocked out by dark figures packed together facing the wall while the rest were hidden by the trees behind them. There must have been thousands lined up, standing still and waiting until suddenly they began to shift.

It started in the trees, the bodies moving, parting as mounted men rode to the front of the line atop rotting horses. A line of four White Walkers came to a stop at the front of the line, just far enough that nothing short of an arrow launched by a giant could hit them, and Wun Wun was still in the Gift. At the center was the Night King who not only had a curved version of the White Walker’s long hilted ice blades on his back but a long ice spear holstered in his saddle.

His icy gaze turned upward, easily finding Jon atop the wall, Jon recognizing the icy crown spikes atop his head. Keeping his gaze on Jon, the Night King dismounted, finally breaking it to glance toward the Bay of Seals.

Jon glanced to the water when he saw the Night King and walk straight toward the shore. Reaching the edge, the Night King stared out at the water as Jon’s widened. “Go now,” he told the others, stepping back as they watched the Night King take a knee. “Go now!”

The moment his hand touched the water it solidified, the sheet of ice stretching across the bay.

By the time Jon and the others had reached the docks of Eastwatch the ice had frozen the water around them, leaving a clear path that continued to grow. Those gathered watched as the Night King pulled his hand from the water and waited for a wight to begin walking toward him, taking their first step on the ice. After it’s third step another wight stepped onto the ice, and then five more.

As wights made their way onto the ice it wasn’t long before a pair of White Walkers joined them, and eventually the Night King stepped onto the ice, turning to meet Jon’s gaze.

Once the Night King took his first step toward the docks, Jon leapt off the edge to the ice below, catching himself and taking a breath as he got to his feet. The others followed or went around to the shore.

Wights charged across the ice, as Bronn looked to the others. “Are we actually fuckin’doing this?”

His answer was the Night King reaching back to draw his sword as the wights charged them.

“Kill him and we could end this now,” Jon called out. He unsheathed Longclaw and began an anthem of drawn steel as he roared and charged across the frozen bay.

Longclaw slashed through a wight that leapt at Jon, keeping his pace running toward the White Walkers. The others followed close behind, valyrian steel and dragonglass causing the reanimated corpses to crumple and fall away.

They followed their unwavering king as he cut through undead soldiers, parrying blows and slicing through torsos to leave broken corpses in his wake. Arya was the closest to him, weaving between undead men, her Thread slipping through them with ease, stopping any who dared try to attack
Jon’s back.

Sandor’s greatsword sent sets of wights clattering to the ground, cutting through three at a time before swinging down to crush the skull and chest of another. Beric and Thoros’ flaming blades ignited those they cut while Jorah deftly kept on Jon’s left guarding his king and found Jaime there to pierce the skull of one he’d missed with Widow’s Wail. Theon grit his teeth as he parried a strike from a wight and drove Winter Squall into the wight’s collar, it’s body crumbling around the blade.

Tormund let out a yell as his axe slammed into the chest of a wight, throwing its body back while it fell apart, scattering bones across the ice. His eyes met the icy blue death of a White Walker and he laughed. “Come on, fucker!”

Arya saw Jon cut through a wight to find the Night King before him. Dashing forward he met the curved blade with a rising slash. The Night King was unmoving as Jon glared into his eyes, pressing against the blade not to try and push through it but to keep him from moving his own. Arya spotted one of the walkers moving toward Jon, but before she could reach him Tormund let out a roar and swung his axe at the white bearded walker, who caught it against his own blade. Sandor let out a yell as he swung Gravedigger through a wight in a rising slash that the other White Walker deflected.

The wights around them seemed to double, coming in faster as the rest of the men joined them. She saw one of the Lannister men be run through with a sword only for Jaime to swiftly stab the wight that killed him and slash Widow’s Wail through the killed man’s chest in hopes of keeping him from rising again. He didn’t, but Arya suspected it was only because the White Walkers were busy.

Tormund was pushed back by the White Walker he clashed with, but Jorah appeared behind him, pressing his shoulder into Tormund’s back to keep him steady while thrusting Mother’s Might through a wight’s chest. He’d given his sword, Prick, to one of the other free folk who was using it with a hammer in his off hand to smash through skulls.

He managed to swing his axe again, forcing the White Walker to lock blades with Tormund, leaving him clear for Jorah to move around and swing Mother’s Mother straight into the White Walker’s side as hard as he could. The creature’s eyes widened before it shattered, spraying across the frozen lake.

Sandor let out a roar as Theon and Roger Ryswell dashed forward to stab at the White Walker he faced, forcing the scraggly haired walker to swiftly deflect their blows. That left him open for Sandor to raise his greatsword overhead and bring it down on the walker, shattering his body when the blade cracked his skull.

Jon was stood alone with the Night King, who broke their bind by taking a pair of steps back. The moment he could he slashed at Jon’s left arm, but the strike was parried, so he went for his right leg and found Longclaw there as well.

While others fought off waves of wights, Jon met the Night King blow for blow, Longclaw catching his curved blade every time. However every time Jon thrust or slashed at him, the Night King deflected or dodges his strikes, forcing Jon back on the defense.

Arya kept her eyes on him, trying to find an opening to run in and stick Thread through the Night King’s chest, but the wights kept coming, forcing them away from him and Jon. It was like he was separating them from the others, blocking their path with wights.

Jon had just managed to parry one of the Night King’s strikes when he grunted and thrust Longclaw straight toward his heart. He wasn’t surprised to see the Night King step back, turning
slightly to let the blade pass in front of his chest. He’d already prepared to turn, swinging the blade into him and hopefully cutting through his armor, but then the Night King grabbed Longclaw.

The air seemed to still as Jon met the Night King’s gaze, his icy lips twitching into a slight smile. He turned his gaze from Jon to his hand on Longclaw and Jon followed, his eyes widening as he watched ice stretch across the blade.

Jon sucked in a breath as he heard Arya yell his name and saw the Night King raise his sword. He’d been ready to leap back when he saw the curved blade coming down, but it wasn’t aimed at him.

In a single slash the Night King cleaved through Longclaw, leaving Jon with barely half the blade. That moment of shock was short lived as the Night King turned his hand and spun toward Jon, driving Longclaw’s top half into his right shoulder.

Stumbling back with a pained yell, Jon raised his broken bastard sword and managed to block the Night King’s sword, but it only made his shoulder hurt more. He stumbled back again as the Night King raised his sword, but when he brought it down it wasn’t Jon’s blood that soaked the blade but that of Thoros of Myr.

The Red Priest winced as he met the Night King’s eyes, letting out a bitter snort before he muttered a prayer and drove his flaming sword into his own chest. His yell seemed to grow as his body burst into flames. The Night King narrowed his eyes and stepped back as the flames stretched out from the red priest’s body.

With a grunt Jon grabbed the broken blade in his shoulder and tore it free, holding it in his gloved hand like a dagger, driving it into the eye of a wight that attacked him. However he didn’t notice the White Walker that rushed around the fire to attack him until it was too late.

The frozen man thrust his sword toward Jon’s chest only to find it pushed aside by a rippled steel dagger, passing far from the king. His unearthly blue eyes met Arya’s as she told him, “Not today.” With that she thrust Thread forward, straight into the White Walker’s throat, making him choke for a split second before shattering.

Looking at them all the Night King turned and began walking back to the shore, holding out his hand as some of the wights seemed to part, letting a large undead Ram make its way toward them.

“We drove him back,” Theon said slashing through a wight.

Watching the Night King tear the horn from the ram’s head, Tormund shook his head, “I don’t think it’s that easy.”

Without stopping his return to shore, the Night King held the horn up and pressed his nail into the surface, swiftly carving runes across it. The moment he set foot on shore, the Night King mounted his undead steed before turning back to where he saw Jon and the others battling wights and put the horn to his lips.

What started as a normal blow of a horn fell deeper and deeper, becoming a warbling unearthly screech. Blue drained from the sky as the air seemed to chill and though the sun remained it seemed no brighter than the moon, leaving only the cosmic void to replace the azure sky. When the horn fell silent in the still of the new night they heard the cracks.

Jon looked to the Night King, who slumped slightly as two other White Walkers approached him on horseback, placing a hand on his shoulders and guiding his horse back to the trees. His gaze
then turned to the Wall as the cracks grew louder and became visible across the thick ice. The first part fell off the very tip of the wall, falling hundreds of feet before crashing through the ice.

“Run!” Jon ordered, slashing his broken sword through a wight. “Off the ice!”

While they all ran for the shore the wights continued to fight. The remaining White Walker went after Jon, but was stopped by Jaime and Theon, both of them dashing past Jon to thrust their swords into frozen man’s abdomen, shattering him.

Jon paused to thrust the broken tip of Longclaw into a wight who grabbed Jaime, wincing as he brought the broken bottom half into another’s side as it clawed at Jon. Another chunk of the Wall fell, breaking another piece of the bay as cracks began to stretch through the ice below them.

Arya had taken point, weaving through wights as fast as she could to clear a path for Jon, but glancing back she saw even with Beric, Toram, Jaime, Theon, Tormund and Sandor around him they pushed past and had started to swarm Jon. He tried to fight them off with his broken half weapons, but for each he destroyed two more took their place, clinging to him until three charged between the others and brought axes down on the ice.

Arya screamed as she watched the mass of wights covering Jon drop into the bay. The others seemed frozen in place before another chunk of the Wall fell, splashing them all with water. Tormund took a breath and roared, charging straight into a wight running toward Arya, slashing through it hard enough the wight’s bones flew meters away.

“Ay!” Tormund yelled.

Arya shook her head and turned, yelling with every thrust or slash of Thread that left a wight lifeless. They managed to return to the shore with three quarters of those who had gone on the ice. While most continued to run away from the wall, Arya turned to look back at the hole in the ice where her brother had been. She tried to be no one, but her eyes were flooded with tears, her heart beating so erratically she was trembling.

She felt lost until she heard Rhaegal’s roar.

They all looked up to see the green and bronze dragon speeding overhead and dive toward the bay, blowing a stream of fire to melt the ice before water exploded around his body and he was diving.

Jaime grabbed Arya’s shoulder, pulling her until she followed the others in running from the crumbling Wall, avoiding the horses fleeing the massive misty cloud of dust, ice and snow as chunks fell to earth and shattered. After they’d run for a moment Arya glanced back when she heard another explosion of water and watched Rhaegal pierce the cloud, roaring while she spotted a small dark body hanging on his back.

Watching Rhaegal speed toward the southern horizon Arya looked to the others. “Let’s gather the horses we can and make for the roads,” she ordered, pushing aside her relief. “We’re falling back to Winterfell.”

With a final glance from the massive cloud stretched across the wake of the Wall to the dimmed sun beginning his descent through an obsidian sky she could only think there was no denying it.

The Long Night had arrived.
The Long Night has come as Rhaegal carries Jon back to Winterfell.

After Jon’s company left, Daenerys and Sansa went about preparing the rest for war. Even with their final count of dragonglass being a bit shorter than they’d thought there was still enough for everyone, even those wielding valyrian steel. Gendry managed to finish another batch of weapons for the lords. Some got two, but they were always smaller weapons, leaving most with the same amount of steel bar the rare greatsword or Gendry’s valyrian steel shield he made himself as a test.

Both women did their best to keep themselves occupied, working on projects or training, waiting for a raven that would never come. They knew he wouldn’t be reach the Wall for a while, yet Daenerys found herself wanting to take Drogon and fly out to help or at least check on them. Sansa helped quell her some, but she was starting to feel anxious herself.

Sansa was making rounds with Sam and Rickon, preparing him for the day they left him in charge when everything went dark. At once the world looked up to watch night bleed from the sun, coating the planet darkness.

Worried murmurs gave way to panicked talking and frightened screams. Sansa stared at the dimmed sun and felt her stomach twist until she was nauseous.

The Long Night had come.

With that she knew the Wall had fallen. She thought of everyone she’d met at Castle Black, all the free folk they’d sent to Eastwatch, all trapped beneath the ice. As she started to picture Jon among them she took a breath and shook her head. She’d doubt him this time, think he hadn’t made it. He would’ve had to run the horses ragged to get there by now, barely slept most nights and took only quick stops.

Drogon and Viserion letting screeching roars which seemed to make Ghost howl from wherever he was hunting.

Daenerys rushed out of Winterfell and stared up at the blackened sky, her regal mask breaking as fear overcame her. She was shaken from it when she heard footsteps and turned to see Sansa leading a small group toward the Godswood, so she moved to join them.

“Sansa,” she called out, making the woman glance at her.

“We’re going to find Bran,” she told Daenerys.

Relief flooded Daenerys as she ran to Rickon’s side, walking beside the boy and following Sansa to the weirwood Bran spent most of his days beneath.

That relief vanished when they saw the boy sat in his chair, his eyes clouded white with tears down his cheeks. Any emotion from the withdrawn boy was surprising, but to see him crying made them think the worst.
“Bran,” Sansa called out, placing a hand on his shoulder.

“He never wakes when I call him,” Rickon said frowning at his brother.

Thankfully they didn’t have to wait long for Bran to take a breath and blink, his pupils returning as he sat up and looked to the group gathered around him.

“It… The Wall fell,” he said somberly. “Jon he’s… I don’t know.”

“Oh gods,” Sansa gasped with a hand to her mouth as Daenerys clutched her chest.

“He fought the Night King. He broke Longclaw and stabbed Jon with it. Thoros, he sacrificed himself to stop the Night King from killing Jon, but he left and… he made a Horn of Winter and brought down the Wall. That was when the sky went dark.”

“What happened to Jon?” Daenerys asked clutching Sansa’s hand.

“When the Wall started breaking up he told everyone to get off the ice but there were all these wights on him, holding him when they broke the cracked ice and he sank with them. I couldn’t see him after that, only that Arya and the others got off before it all broke and managed to get away from the Wall. But Rhaegal dived in and Jon was on his back when he came out, but I couldn’t see if he… I couldn’t see if he was okay.”

“He’ll bring him back here,” Daenerys said looking to Sansa. “He’ll bring him to us.”

Sansa squeezed Daenerys’ hand, hoping she was right.

The sun had set, leaving them in total darkness if not for the fires being lit throughout Winterfell and the camp around it.

When the moon had risen over the horizon was when they heard the roars and howl telling them Rhaegal was close. Sansa and Daenerys rode out at the head of a group surrounding a cart filled with blankets and whatever they might need to treat everything Bran described.

Ghost met them in the clearing where Drogon and Viserion sat, waiting for their brother along with the rest of them. A roar drew their eyes north, Drogon and Viserion answering it with their own roars.

Rhaegal came into view and sank to the trees, landing as gently as a large dragon could. He looked to Daenerys, Sansa and the others gathered as Drogon and Viserion let out an odd whine watching their brother sink flat against the ground, presenting his back for them to see the small black cloaked figure laying between his spines.

“Jon!” Sansa called out, rushing to Rhaegal’s side with Daenerys.

In all their visits with the dragons she’d only touched Viserion, but Rhaegal made no motions to pull away as she and Daenerys climbed onto his back. Even against the warmth of the dragon a chill lingered around Jon, his back still damp as they pulled him from the dragon’s back and carefully made their way back down with him.

They set him on the ground on his back, both women on their knees as Rhaegal raised his head and look at Jon with an odd trilling noise. Ghost hurried to his side, laying beside Jon and licking his hand. Sansa looked at the small hole in his spaulder and frowned, reaching for his neck. It felt like she’d held her fingers there minutes, but after a few seconds she felt his pulse and looked to the others. “He’s alive!”
Davos steeled himself along with Gendry and Rickon, rushing toward the dragon to help the women lift Jon and carry him toward the cart. With some distance from the dragons the others helped lift him onto the blanket laid across hay. Daenerys joined her in the cart as it was pulled back to Winterfell, helping Sansa remove his cloak and armor, putting another blanket over him. The dragons took to the air where they circled over Winterfell while Ghost followed them.

The courtyard parted as the cart came through the gate, taking them to the steps of Winterfell where the riders dismounted and carried Jon to his room. Sansa and Daenerys stripped his damp cold clothes while Wolkan treated the wound on his shoulder.

Once he was stitched they piled furs onto him and stoked the hearth to make the room as warm as possible. Daenerys and Sansa sat on either side of him, their hands holding his under the furs. Rickon stared at Jon’s pale face before looking to the sword belt Sansa had removed.

He walked over and grabbed the scabbard, holding it as he pulled Longclaw’s hilt but found barely half the blade when he removed it. That garnered gasps from the others in the room, including Gendry, who walked over and examined the blade when Rickon handed it to him.

“It would take hundreds of years to make it this brittle,” Gendry said flicking his finger against the uneven tip.

“You can make him a new one, right?” Rickon asked Gendry.

The smith frowned, handing Rickon the broken sword. “I could use dragonglass from one of the daggers.”

Sam looked between them and shook his head. “He wouldn’t want to take a weapon someone else could use for his sake… Use Heartsbane.”

“Your family sword?” Sansa asked.

Sam nodded, looking to Brienne. “Your sword was one of two made from Ice, correct?” When she nodded, he turned to Gendry. “Heartsbane is a greatsword as well. Melt it down and make him another.”

“Sam,” Sansa whispered.

“It’s of no use to me,” he assured. “I’d say let him have it whole, but I’m sure he’d prefer something like what he had, so remake it as you see fit.”

Gendry stared at him for a moment before nodding. “I could have it done by sunrise.”

“Don’t rush,” Sansa said quickly, making them pause and look back to her. “Bran said the Night King retreated and we should have some time before we need to march. We’ll let Jon recover. And if you can, use the rest of Heartsbane to make a second sword so Samwell isn’t defenseless.”

“I doubt I’ll-”

“You were the first to slay a White Walker, likely in centuries if not thousands of years,” she cut him off firmly. “You’ll be regent to Rickon. Let the second sword be a reminder to any who question your place or worth until we return and I’ll commission another sword for House Tarly.”

Sam wasn’t the only one who seemed shocked by her declaration, spoken in a purely queenly voice. Daenerys looked upon her with pride.
Gendry gave her a nod. “I’ll make him what I can from the remaining steel, your grace.”

When Gendry and Sam left the room, Rickon turned to the bed. “What will we do with Longclaw?”

“I think it’s best we let Jon decide when he wakes,” Daenerys suggested.

Sansa nodded. “She’s right. We’ll wait until he wakes.”

Eventually the room emptied, leaving Daenerys and Sansa thankful they’d chosen larger mattresses, making it easier for them to sleep beside Jon. Even through the furs he’d been so cold laying next to him, but by morning it had lessened and color had begun to return to his flesh.

The sun had risen and the night remained when they woke. They broke fast in his room alongside Rickon while Bran went to check up on Arya and the others making their way back to Winterfell.

The sun was beginning it’s descent when Jon’s eyes blinked open and he found his wives sat on the edge of his bed beside one another. A weak smile tugged at his lips, but it quickly sank as he looked from them to the window where no light came through despite hearing the sounds of people moving about.

“Arya and the others?” Jon asked looking to them.

“They made it,” said Sansa. “We only lost a few of our men.”

“And Thoros,” Jon added mournfully, looking back to the window.

“That wasn’t your fault,” Sansa said holding his wrist, hoping to regain his attention.

“I failed,” he said quietly. “I failed everyone.”

Daenerys shook her head. “You haven’t. You’re still alive.”

“Even if you weren’t I doubt that’d stop you,” Sansa said with a somber smile.

“He brought down the Wall. He took away daylight. He broke Longclaw.” Jon sighed, looking to them. “How am I supposed to beat him?”

“With us,” Daenerys said grasping his hand. “You don’t have to do this alone.”

“Whatever Melisandre says this isn’t something you have to face alone,” said Sansa. “We’re a pack, all of us.”

Looking at them both he felt the shame shrinking. “Is Bran keeping an eye on them?”

“He looked in on them this morning,” Sansa said rubbing her hand up and down his arm soothingly. “They’re coming back here.”

Jon grunted as he sat up, ignoring their brief panicked attempts to stop him. “I need him to look for Edd and the others. The men from the Shadow Tower too.”

“I’ll ask him,” Sansa assured, “but you need to relax.”

“I can’t,” said Jon. “He won’t.”

“He is,” corrected Daenerys to Jon’s surprise. “Bran said that bringing the Wall down, taking the
daylight, it made him weak so he’s retreated to regain his strength. We have time for you to heal while the rest of us prepare.”

“I should be preparing too,” Jon argued.

“You’ve been preparing since I first saw you at Castle Black,” Sansa said brushing her hand through Jon’s curls. “Rest and heal for now. Westeros will need it’s king at full strength if he’s going to end the Long Night.”

“You have two queens,” Daenerys reminded with a smirk, “we can handle looking after you and preparing the realm. Trust in us.”

Jon looked to them, sitting forward and pulling them to him in a tight embrace they returned. “I love you both,” he whispered.

Sansa nodded against his shoulder. “So do I.”

“And I,” Daenerys agreed, her right arm beneath Sansa’s left.

Sansa saw them as a pack, but Daenerys saw them as the three heads of the dragon. They were stronger together, and together they would make it through the Long Night.
Pack of Dragons

Chapter Summary

Jon heals in Winterfell and receives a new sword.

Ever since that hug after he’d woken up they found Jon quick to hold them or grasp at them. He never said anything, but both suspected it was brought about by moments of need. A need to to feel warmth, to remind himself he was alive, that it wasn’t some dream he was having as he sank into the depths of the Bay of Seals.

When they laid together he found himself shifting between tender and aggressive, wanting to feel them cling to him and quiver as he found release, wanting them to feel as alive as he felt with them.

They never complained when he’d sit up in a panic in the middle of the night. Once he’d grabbed them as if protecting them from some phantom, startling them awake until they heard his harsh breaths and saw his eyes frantically searching the room. Both had held him until he calmed down and drifted to sleep clinging to them protectively until they woke.

Daenerys hadn’t left him much at all, though they all understood her fear. She’d lost her first husband to an infected cut so spent her days caring for his shoulder wound, obsessively making sure it was clean.

She’d left to meet with Tyrion and returned to find him sat near the edge of his bed when he looked up to see her enter. With a smile he pushed his furs aside, making space on his right for her to join him before holding out his arm.

He saw her hesitance as she sat beside him, making sure not to put any weight on his shoulder as she leaned her head against it. A smirk flickered across his lips before he pulled her into his shoulder as tight as he could. Daenerys gasped and turned, smacking his chest as she pushed off it to pull herself away. The moment she could she lifted his tunic and checked his stitches.

“Dany,” he sighed, grasping her cheek to make her look at him. “I’m fine, I swear. It’s not infected. It probably got washed right away in the bay. I feel stronger today than I did yesterday.”

Looking into his eyes she frowned. “I don’t need a hero, Jon. I don’t care if you’re brave or strong, it won’t impress me half as much as you being here and healthy. Do you understand?”

Jon nodded. “I do. If something is wrong I’ll tell you. I promise.”

“You’re our only chance,” she said grimly. “You need to be here to make sure our house doesn’t end with us. I don’t want to be the last Targaryen anymore.”

“You’re not,” Jon said brushing a hand through her hair. He gave her a sly smile as he told her, “You won’t be.”

Daenerys wore a somber smile, shaking her head. “It’s fine. I’m… I’ve been so lucky. I thought I was alone, that the Targaryens would die out with me. Even when I heard of you and we decided to wed, part of me feared I’d end up your Visenya, but you’ve never let me feel lesser.”
Seeing this was a fear she’d been holding from him, Jon frowned, guilt swelling within him. “I’m sorry if I ever made you think you would be.”

Dany sniffed, shaking her head. “You didn’t. But I know I can’t avoid it here. The future of our house will go to you, and the only part of me left will be whatever blood we share from my parents.” She added with a wet laugh, “That and whichever of your children inherits my sword.”

Jon hated this. He couldn’t convince her to believe like he did that they’d have children. He couldn’t do anything to really help her feel better. He felt as weak as he did watching the Night King snap Longclaw.

His arm slipped beneath hers, pulling her to him and holding her against him. He wanted to say something, but didn’t know what would help, if anything even could. So he just held her. After a moment her arms tightened around him, feeling almost as if she were trying to crush him in her small arms if not for her pressing her face into his neck.

Sansa entered the room later to find Jon sat with Daenerys’ head in his lap, stroking his fingers through her hair as she slept. Seeing the streaks across her cheeks, Sansa frowned and approached the bed.

“Did something happen?” She asked quietly.

Jon shook his head. “She’s not Visenya,” he said looking to Sansa. “Neither of you is.”

Sansa nodded with understanding, frowning at the sleeping Daenerys before offering an almost thankful smile to Jon. “You’re not Aegon either.” She carefully sat on the edge of the bed, placing a hand over his beside him. “When this is all finished we’ll leave a better world for them. There won’t be a Maegor the Cruel or a Dance of Dragons. Our children will love each other. No matter who their mother they’ll have wolf’s blood in them. They’ll be a pack of dragons.”

Jon smiled, glad to hear she believed as he did. He was also relieved to think she would care for his and Daenerys’ child better than her own mother did him, thinking him the child of her husband and another woman. She was a better person than her mother ever worse. Stronger than the woman who had been so terrified of a baby. So afraid of a boy giving up his family for her sake she still wished him to suffer. Sansa would never be as weak as her mother was the entire time Jon knew her.

For all people spoke of her Tully looks, Sansa was a Stark with a wolf’s heart. For all the whispers of her being a specter of Catelyn, she put the woman to shame in every aspect. He’d been so angry at Eddard Stark for not telling them the truth, but maybe he knew better. Maybe he saw that weakness in his wife. Maybe he knew the woman she was better than the one Jon wished she could have been, the one he found in her daughter.

With a glance to the sheath hanging from the chair near the foot of the bed, Sansa asked, “Have you decided what to do with Longclaw?”

“We’re about to march,” Jon sighed. “I can’t ask Gendry to stop making armor just to reforge it for me and it’s too damaged to use properly now, so I’ll leave it with Rickon.” After a moment he gave a weak laugh. “Maybe when we return I’ll have him reforge it into a dagger. Name it Shortclaw.”

Sansa smirked, reaching down to shake Daenerys. When the woman’s eyes opened she took a breath and sat up, looking to them both.

“It’s ready,” Sansa told her. The sleep left Daenerys’ face as she smiled. Sansa looked to Jon as she
slid off the bed and Daenerys got to her feet. “Come,” Sansa beckoned, waving for him to follow.

They moved to Sansa’s solar where Sam and Gendry stood at a table with two swords in front of them. Jon looked confused as Sam smiled. “I know we can’t really replace Longclaw, but you can’t go without, and Heartsbane does no good sitting on a mantle…”

“Sam,” Jon started, shaking his head.

“It’s already done,” said Sam. He turned and picked up the sword with red and gray ripples through the blade. The cross guard was a bow curved toward the blade while the pommel was a black stone arrowhead that might have looked like dragonglass if it was a bit glossier. “I’ve called it Bravemind, since it’s what I hope to pass on to Little Sam.”

Jon smiled. “He’d be lucky to have half as much of either from you.”

“No need to lie,” Sam said with a sheepish laugh, sheathing the sword and stepping aside. “I’ve been calling this one Nightbane.”

Jon stepped past him to look on the blade on the table. It was darker with red and black ripples through it. The silver cross guard had a curved wolf head opposite a similarly arched dragon head with small rubies at the center on either side. The grip was black, leading to the pommel where wolf and dragon claws grasped an azure stone as blue as the sky they hadn’t seen in days.

“This is…”

“The least I could do,” said Sam. “I’d give you Bravemind as well if you asked, but your wives have made it clear I’m to keep it.”

Jon looked from Sam to his wives, smiling at his side. Turning to the table he picked up the sword, smiling at the hand and a half hilt. Another bastard sword.

“The balance alright?” Gendry asked, watching Jon turn and shift his hand, turning the blade.

“I thought the hilt might be a bit off with all the gems, but it’s perfect.”

XOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXO

“We’ll send out groups ahead of us to meet with those coming from the Wall,” Jon said looking out at the lords filling the great hall, “and the rest will march in two days.”

Sansa thought he looked a lot better now that he was back on his feet, dressed with Nightbane on his waist. Word spread quickly of it’s origin and Sam garnered more respect from the lords, few willing to sacrifice their own valyrian steel even for their king, even when new valyrian steel had been given to lords only days earlier.

As the lords murmured and moved to leave she noticed Jon glance to Sam, who nodded quickly. Jon turned to the room and called out, “My lords!” That made them all stop and turn back to him, watching Jon walk around the high table. “There is one more matter I wish to take care of, and I ask you all bear witness.” The curiosity grew as Jon turned and called out, “Brienne of House Tarth!”

Brienne blinked, looking to Sansa who seemed as confused as she did. When she approached Jon she felt some of her concern melt when she found he greeted her with a smile before he took a breath and drew Nightbane. Her eyes shifted slightly before she started smothering the hope in her heart. The hope of a dream made reality as Jon told her, “Kneel.”
A few gasps filled the room, Brienne staring at him in shock, tears pricking her eyes until Jon gave her a small smile and a slight nod, asking her to move. She quickly fell to one knee and sucked in a breath as he pressed the flat of Nightbane against her right shoulder.

“Brienne. Do you swear before the eyes of gods and men to defend those who cannot defend themselves, to protect all men, women and children, to obey your captains, your liege lord and your king, to fight bravely when needed and do such other tasks as are laid upon you, however hard or humble or dangerous they may be?”

She was sure her throat was too tight to speak and yet she did. “I swear, your grace.”

Jon moved the flat of the blade to her left shoulder. “Rise, Ser Brienne.”
The Last River

Chapter Summary

Armies march north and find battle.

They camped as best they could with barely enough tents for half their men, but Arya was used to sleeping under the stars. It just felt odd to know she wouldn’t wake with the sun as there would be no dawn to break the horizon and bathe the world in light. Instead it would go even darker as the moon fell, leaving only the stars to break the black void above until the dim sun rose like a candle left to replace a hearth.

She was settling into her spot near a tree noting that Jaime, Sandor and Jorah had taken up spots near her again, as they had every night since they started south. Even on their walk they kept around her, acting as her lieutenants as well as clearly intending to be her guards. Were she younger she might have felt insulted, but she understood now.

The men had started a fire and begun to cook the game they’d caught through the trek when one of the men patrolling the perimeter called out, “Who goes there?”

At once the men reached for their weapons and prepared to launch into a battle as Arya got to her feet along with her trio of guardians.

Suddenly one of the men from the Night’s Watch with the patrol called out, “Edd!?”

“The Lord Commander,” one of the men near the fire said rising to his feet, easing the tension of the others.

Arya saw a group of men in black enter the camp with one of their patrolmen, leading them to her. “Your grace,” the man called, Arya biting back her annoyance.

As much as she’d loved having Jon back, she hated that she’d somehow become a princess because of it. It was the only thing that made her wish they recognized her as his cousin and not his sister. Maybe that would’ve been enough to stop it.

“Lady Arya Stark,” the patrolman said presenting Arya to the man at the front of the group, “Eddison Tollett, Lord Commander of the Night’s Watch.”

They shook hands as Edd smirked. “Your brother talked about you. Makes sense you’d be out here with ‘em.”

Arya frowned. “He’s not with us.”

Edd blinked. “He’s not?”

“He was, but…” Arya sighed, and went about telling him and the others what happened, watching their shock as they listened to what had caused their need to escape.

Their uncertainty of Jon’s survival ended when they reached the kingsroad and riders from the south arrived saying they’d been sent by King Jon along with another group sent to the survivors
from the Shadow Tower that joined them the next day. With more horses, tents, bedrolls and other
supplies they rode south to meet Jon and his army.

The moment they saw Jon riding between Daenerys and Sansa at the head of the mass of soldiers
Arya galloped toward them and guided her horse beside his. She nearly pulled them both from their
horses leaning over to hug him.

By the time they reached The Last River on their way back north they stopped and set up camp
while the moon rose. With scouts and patrols out Arya helped Gendry prepare his makeshift forge
to repair armor and arms for those that had been at the Wall. Once he was prepared he ushered her
away with a laugh.

“This will be boring,” he assured, “go speak with your brother.” She’d been ready to tell him off
until he added, “Ask him about his new sword.”

Arya slid into the space between him and Sansa a moment later, Daenerys tittering as Arya asked,
“You have a new sword?”

Jon laughed, setting his bowl down between his feet as he drew Nightbane and handed it to her.
“Sam gave up Heartsbane, the Tarly sword, and had Gendry reforge it into this one and another he
called Bravemind.”

Arya seemed doubtful of the name, tapping the black and red rippled blade. “And this?”

“Nightbane.”

That she gave an approving nod, judging it better than the last. “New hilt,” she noted.

“It’s not Longclaw,” Jon said somberly. “No point pretending it is. Besides, that was a hilt made
for Jon Snow. This is one made for King Jon.”

They’d started to turn in when riders came rushing into camp and found Jon on his way back to his
tent. “King Jon,” they called out, “Wights on the Kingsroad!”

“How many?” He asked as those who heard began spreading word and readying themselves.

“Not the full force,” the scout said shaking his head, “but a battalion at least hundreds strong.”

“He knows we’re prepared. They could be scouts.” Jon sighed, turning to Davos and Tyrion stood
nearby, ready to act as his hands. “Prepare a thousand man battalion. We don’t know if he’ll know
what they do the moment they see us. We’ll ride out and destroy them before they reach the
camp.”

“Jon, you don’t-” Daenerys began.

“Willam!” Jon called out, turning to his tent, “We ride!” The bastard squire dashed past Jon to find
his armor in his tent.

“You need not join them,” Tyrion offered while Davos sighed and turned to do as ordered.

“Better to test out Nightbane before I use it on the Night King,” Jon said tapping the azure stone
pommel before entering his tent.

Tyrion shot Daenerys and Sansa a pleading look they met with knowing nods before following him
inside.
“Do you truly need to do this?” Daenerys asked as Jon removed his cloak, tossing it on the mattress.

Jon held up a hand to stop Willam and waved him outside. “Go get ready and prepare our horses. I’ll handle myself.”

Willam glance at the queens and realized he was being saved from witnessing a possible argument, so gave Jon a thankful nod as he rushed out of the tent to do as he was told.

Sansa sighed turning back to Jon once his squire left. “You can let them handle this.”

“I need to do this,” he said firmly.

“They can handle themselves,” Daenerys said stepping toward him. “Trust in your men to handle themselves.”

“I need to do this,” Jon repeated, jaw set and eyes downcast. His harsh tone surprised them as much as the concern in his eyes when they rose to find theirs. “I need to make sure I can face him when the time comes.”

The women exchange a glance before Sansa stepped forward. “Take Rhaegal at least.”

Daenerys stepped forward shaking her head. “I’ll ride Drogon and we’ll all help.”

Sansa turned to her. “You too?”

Daenerys gave her an apologetic smile with a light laugh. “I won’t leave his back, I promise.”

Jon’s jaw shifted, clearly wanting to argue against it but knowing he shouldn’t and couldn’t. “If anything happens, leave.”

“Only if you’re on Rhaegal’s back,” Daenerys told him.

Jon turned to Sansa. “I’ll leave Sandor here.”

“I have my fireguard,” she reminded. With a sigh she walked over to pick up one of Jon’s gambesons and turned to him. “Come. I’ll help with this at least.”

Between forging the valyrian steel weapons for the lords they decided worthy, Gendry had also forged Jon new armor.

Over his black gambeson was a full sleeved gray mail haubrek beneath a black steel brigandine with near silver rivets. While most of the layered steel plates of the brigandine were left bare black a Stark direwolf and Targaryen dragon had been engraved on each of the larger plates covering his chest while his arms were protected by dark steel pauldrons and vambraces, leaving his hands gloved.

Over the plated jacket was a bevor which rose past his collar to cover his neck and chin. While the section on his collar was arched like dragon wings, the upper part over his jaw was angular and evoked a dragon’s jaw. To counter that the sallet he pulled over his head had slight triangular protrusions and a visor meant to evoke a wolf’s snout which just overlapped the dragon’s jaw, leaving a slit for his eyes.

Jon secured his sword belt on his waist while the others finished their own preparations with Missandei’s help. He exited the tent securing his cloak while making his way to his horse.
Behind him was Sansa in armor not unlike what she wore to the Battle of the Bastards, only her white jack of plate now had gray direwolves on it. Beside her Daenerys wore a similar set of armor with a decoratively scaled black steel gorget over a black jack of plates with red stitching and the Targaryen dragon, all atop a shirt of dark steel mail. Each woman wore belts with their valyrian steel swords on their waist.

When Daenerys moved to split away Jon grabbed her hand, finding his eyes through the slit of his sallet as he squeezed her fingers. Her gaze shifted when Sansa took her other hand. With a smile she gave each a nod and backed away, turning as Drogon roared, sensing her approach.

Turning to Sansa, Jon brushed a gloved finger across her cheek. “Stay safe,” he told her, giving a nod to Ser Brienne and the fireguard that gathered behind her.

“Come back to me,” Sansa told him as he backed away and turned, hurrying to mount his horse.

He wasn’t surprised to find his makeshift kingsguard among those Davos gathered. Riding at to his right was Arya dressed with a dark jack of plates atop her usual outfit, sure she would be too quick to need much more armor. Opposite her in plated armor and mail with an antlered helmet and yellow tabard rode Gendry Baratheon with Hartstine in his right hand.

Around them rode Sander Clegane, Jorah Mormont, Jaime Lannister, Theon Greyjoy, Tormund Giantsbane, Eddison Tollett and Beric Dondarrian. Alongside them were Gray Worm and his Unsullied company, Dirgo and his khas of Dothraki, and Tom of Sevenstreams and Bronn of the Blackwater with the Lannister men.

Brynden and Edmure rode with a Tully company, Edmure wearing his valyrian steel sword Autumn Stream. Garlan Tyrell wore his Last Thorn while riding with forces from the Reach. Daemon Sand seemed to lead those from Dorne, having been given use of Desert Wind and Viper’s Strike, the dornish saber and spear gifted to Arianne Martell.

It felt odd to have so many important figures riding to put down what was likely a scouting group, but he understood they all needed to see it. They needed to see the wights in force and know they could face it, much like Jon needed to know he could face the Night King when the time came.

As they rode they heard the roars and saw all three dragons overhead. Daenerys was keeping them with the group below rather than ride ahead, though from her perspective it wasn’t long before she could see the shambling corpses on the horizon.

Once she felt they were close enough she pushed Drogon to go further and commanded, “Dracarys!”

All three dragons swept across the battalion of wights, unleashing a wall of flames that pushed through them, scorching the kingsroad. It wasn’t until they were doing that first pass that she saw the battalion coming from the east, toward Last Hearth.

It was then she noticed a White Walker among the group dismount and pull a long ice spear from his saddle. Her eyes widened as she gripped the saddle Tyrion and Sansa designed and had strapped to each of the dragons, telling them all, “Simonagon!”

At once all three dragons rose as sharply as they could, their flames fading and turning away from the ice spear. It managed to graze Rhaegal’s wing, making the dragon shift course as it let out a pained screech.

Spotting the streak of ice which injured Rhaegal, Jon pointed to the east. “Gray Worm! Dirgo!
Tully! Tyrell!

Jon drew Nightbane, which signaled the others to draw their own weapons before the Unsullied, Dothraki, Reach and Riverland companies broke off toward the east, leaving the others to head into the remaining forces along the kingsroad.

Above, Daenerys focused on having the dragons dodge spears from White Walkers until they seemed to notice the incoming riders and their attention shifted. She watched the living clash with the dead and commanded the dragons to make for the rear of the battalions, focusing their fire on the back of the undead while Jon and the others attacked from the front.

Jon felt an odd relief when he cut through a pair of wights he rode past before clashing with a mounted White Walker. The reverberation nearly numbed his hand, his left tugging the reins to turn his horse, mirroring the walker. Digging his heels, the horse broke into another charge, Jon lowering his arm for a rising slash. However once the walker moved his own arm down, intending to deflect it, Jon’s hand turned and rose just enough to thrust Nightbane through the White Walker’s chest, shattering him and causing his horse and a dozen other wights to crumble to the ground.

Daenerys watched from Drogon’s back as Jon and the others tore through the wights and White Walkers. She saw Dirgo and Gray Worm cut through the ones that threw spears, clearly intending to free her movement again. Whichever wights were left standing after the White Walkers fell could be handled by her dragon’s flames.

She was leading Drogon on another pass of on the wight battalion’s rear when she noticed Viserion’s head turn. Her confusion only grew when he roared and sped away from them. Even below Jon noticed his departure and was confused, looking from Daenerys to Viserion as his eyes widened, realizing the dragon was heading back toward the camp.

Through the clatter of steel, thump of hooves and screech of wights he heard distant yells and saw the distant flicker of flames through the trees. Jon cut through a wight and rode to Arya’s horse, where she was deftly finding openings on the wights beneath her to end them with swift stabs while Gendry smashed through them with his war hammer.

Hearing Jon’s approach she turned, surprised when he grabbed her shoulder and yelled, “Go back to camp!” Seeing her confusion he added, “Sansa’s in trouble!”

Sucking in a breath, Arya tugged the reins of her horse to turn it. “Gendry, stay with Jon!”

Behind her Jon called out, “Sandor! Jaime! Go with Arya!”

Both men looked confused before they spotted her riding back to camp and seemed to put together something must have been wrong.

He wanted to return, but couldn’t leave Daenerys out here, not with the White Walkers throwing spears at her whenever they could. Sansa had the bulk of their army with her as well as her fireguard. With Viserion apparently heading back toward her, he trusted she would endure whatever had caught the dragon’s attention.
The Dragon Has Three Heads

Chapter Summary

The camp at The Last River is attacked.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Watching Jon and Daenerys leave, Sansa couldn’t help but feel a bit indignant, wanting to mount a horse and go riding with them despite knowing she would only be a hindrance. She might have been a bit better than Daenerys in the training yard, but she couldn’t mount Balerion the Dread reborn. All she had was Ghost, her fireguard, and Lady’s Tear on her waist.

While most of her fireguard retained their positions, the only new addition was Meera Reed, who got on well with the spearwives, even wearing similar armor. Sansa also relished the chance to get closer to someone who clearly cared for her brother.

It was Meera who told her, “They should be fine, especially with dragons.”

Making her way back toward the center of camp they found their remaining advisers gathered around a fire with a few of the lords, including Arianne Martell.

“I’m surprised you didn’t at least stay in Winterfell, Princess,” Tyrion said looking to the dornish woman wrapped in furs. An odd sight, odder even than Tyrion in his armor with a dragonglass battle axe on his lap.

“I thought it best for morale,” she said with a smirk. “Besides, if our king leads from the front what would it say if his wardens couldn’t even march with him?”

“That’s assuming we keep the old wardens,” Sansa said teasingly.

Arianne smiled at her. “I’m certain I could convince his grace and his queens of my usefulness.”

Sansa shook her head as the others were a mix of chuckles and curious interest. She noticed Melisandre staring into the flames and leaned forward slightly. “Lady Melisandre. Does the Lord of Light speak to you even now?”

Melisandre looked to her and smiled at the genuine interest in her queen’s voice. “He always speaks to those willing to hear.”

“What do you see in the flames?” asked Tyrion, arching his brow skeptically.

Melisandre turned to the fire and took a breath. “Skulls. Ice and dark water. Ice and fire. A sword of flame taking the night to quench itself and bring the dawn.”

She blinked and went quiet for a moment, sitting up to show that was all.

“Let us hope your interpretation true,” Davos said grimly.
Melisandre looked to him with a frown, nodding.

A distant screech made Sansa stand up and look to the north, followed by the others who saw a hint of light peeking over the trees from the torrent of flames that scorched the kingsroad.

It was only moments later they heard the first yells coming from the northeastern side of camp, near The Last River. Sansa gripped the hilt of Lady’s Tear as Ghost began to growl and she moved toward the yells to find their source.

She’d barely made it past the fire when she heard men calling out, “Wights in the river!”

Through the rushing waters which tore at their rotted flesh, hundreds of skeletal figures rose and made their way toward the camp. Their number continued to grow as more came from the river, pulling themselves ashore and moving to circle around the camp before making their way in, tearing at tents and clashing with soldiers wielding dragonglass.

Sansa looked back to where Tyrion put on his helmet and picked up his axe while Davos drew his dragonglass short sword, causing the others to take up arms. “Princess Arianne, Lady Missandei, Lady Melisandre, stay with me and my fireguard.”

“Thank you, your grace,” Missandei said with a nod as Sansa walked to her side near the fire.

With a breath Sansa drew Lady’s Tear and reached over to place a hand on Ghost’s head while the others spread out. The yells, grunts and clang of dragonglass and steel grew louder every moment until they saw the first wights running toward them.

Ser Brienne stood at the front, sliding into a ready stance before dashing forward and swiftly bringing her sword down hard enough to cleave the wight’s collar before it collapsed to the floor. As she backed toward Sansa Podrick dashed to the side, blocking a slash from a wight to thrust his dragonglass shortsword into it’s stomach.

A moment later three more wights rushed forward and Laul, Rila and Meera rushed to meet them with dragonglass spears. By the time they crumbled six more rushed them, forcing the entire fireguard to engage. Davos and Tyrion joined in the next wave. Ghost leapt past a wight’s slash to rip it’s head off, and while it’s body stumbled forward Sansa slashed at it, feeling a jolt of relief when it crumbled at her feet.

A chill ran through the air as they heard a scream and turned to see a man with iced skin and snowy hair lifting a Tully soldier off the ground with an icy sword driven through his chest. He swung his arm aside, throwing the man into a tent as he made his way toward the group gathered around the fire fending off another wave of wights.

Sansa gripped Lady’s Tear tightly as Ghost came to her side, ready to attack until Brienne dashed forward, slashing at the White Walker. While he caught her strike he forced her sword down and slashed across her left forearm while stepping back, away from her rising slash. When he went to swing overhead she raised her sword, blocking his strike high and angling it to drive Oathkeeper down into his chest, shattering him.

Six of the wights around them dropped, adding to the growing piles of bones before they saw another White Walker approaching. Flipping her spear, Rila dashed forward and thrust it at the walker, who dodged, grabbed the spear and pulled her forward to drive his sword through her jaw. The moment he ripped it out however he touched her and Rila’s eyes snapped open, shining blue as she raised her spear and turned to run at Laul.
Without hesitation the spearwife dodged and thrust her spear through the fallen fireguard, though there were tears in her eyes as she watched her friend collapse to the ground.

As the White Walker approached Meera and Laul raised their spears ready to drive him off when they noticed his gaze shift past them. A look over their shoulder revealed the sudden influx of warmth behind them came from where Melisandre stood beside the fire, chanting quietly and causing it to triple in size. Her right hand thrust to the side and a stream of flames arced from the fire, slamming into the White Walker, who glanced at the flames on his armor which swiftly died.

Melisandre’s brow knit as she realized she couldn’t stop him, so instead threw her arms up, causing the fire to split into a dozen streams that stretched out between the fireguard to slam into the oncoming waves of wights, igniting them. She couldn’t stop the White Walker, but she could burn wights.

As Melisandre began waving her hands, conducting flames around them, they heard Viserion roar. The White Walker paused to look up as the pale dragon flew overhead, diving toward the edge of the camp where wights were rushing from the stream to encircle it and unleashing a torrent of flames. Their men rushed back, away from the wights and flames, letting Viserion leave a trail of flames that surrounded most of the camp, cutting off the wights. Now the army only had to deal with those within the camp.

The White Walker turned his gaze on them as the fireguard rushed forward, ripping the spear from one’s hand to thrust his sword into their chest, raising them as he slashed through the throat of another. Those two then killed another while he killed a forth. The four all turned to rush the others until only Laul and Meera were left, saved at the last moment by Melisandre’s flames engulfing the undead fireguard.

Podrick dashed forward, slashing at the White Walker with a yell and found his dragonglass sword bouncing off the walker’s ice blade. His sword was forced back, and he managed to block the walker’s riposte, much to his own shock, only to have the tip of the icy blade slash across his shoulder.

While Podrick stumbled back with a hiss Brienne called out, “Podrick!”

The newly knighted woman moved to run toward him when something flew through the air as the White Walker stepped forward and shattered. As a dozen wights crumbled they looked to the shattered remnants of the walker and Podrick raised the dagger Bran had given Arya.

Sansa turned to watch three horses rush toward them with Arya, Jaime and Sandor cutting through wights. Even with them there there were still so many wights rushing them, enough to where Sansa had to step in front of Missandei to slash through one before it could hit her. Ghost brought one swinging at Arianne to the ground, backing away when Sansa approached to stab at it.

That was when they heard the roar again and suddenly Viserion slammed into the ground, knocking aside tents as he walked toward the group, crushing wights underfoot. His eyes found Sansa’s briefly before turning, pressing the tip of his wing to her feet.

The others looked on in shock as Sansa glanced at Viserion, the only of the three dragons she’d dared touch, and knew what he was doing. “Arya,” she called out, sheathing Lady’s Tear, “Protect Missandei and Arianne!”

“Arya!” Arya called out, but gave a nod when Sansa stepped onto Viserion and shot Arya a commanding look.
It was easy enough to climb onto his back with the saddle she and Tyrion designed, leaving her small grips as she secured herself in a set of straps and went through the little Valyrian she knew. “Sōvegon!”

On command Viserion flapped his wings and flew, roaring as he rose with Sansa on his back.

Sansa kept her gaze low as they circled the camp, seeing thousands of men fighting of a shifting number of wights. Thankfully the number was shrinking with only brief rises before sudden drops with each White Walker that shattered.

They were coming to the north when she saw him hidden among the trees, crowned in ice atop a wight horse. A spear in hand.

“VISERION!” She screamed, squeezing the grips of the saddle while the dragon suddenly turned as the spear flew toward him, screeching in pain when it tore through the membrane of his wing.

Along the kingsroad Jon’s head snapped around as he watched Viserion drop a few meters suddenly, blood pouring from a hole in his wing. He heard Daenerys scream above them and saw a flicker of red hair near the saddle, making Jon’s heart stop for a moment.

They watched as Viserion glided toward the trees beyond the river, away from camp, diving away from a second spear.

“JON!” Daenerys called as she flew overhead and pointed toward camp.

Looking to her he understood her pleading command and nodded, tugging on the reins as he called out to Gendry and the rest of his makeshift guard. “WITH ME!” He raised Nightbane and rode for the woods, leaving Daenerys and the others to handle the rest of the wights on the kingsroad.

Behind him followed Gendry, Theon, Tormund, Edd, Beric and Tom of Sevenstreams while Jorah stayed to guard Daenerys from the ground, helping focus on stopping White Walkers from downing her, Drogon and Rhaegal.

Somehow, Jon knew what he would find in the woods. He knew he would find Sansa, and he knew he would find him there with her. Jon just needed to get to her first.

Chapter End Notes

Generally I prefer dragonriders to have some Valyrian blood, but Viserion’s the most docile, kind of like Lady, so I figured fuck it, let the dragon have three heads. Also like screwing with the perspective on who is like Visenya or Rhaenys with Sansa and Dany, as both have certain aspects of both women. Here Sansa is the one fighting with her sword like Visenya but then who is shot down like Rhaenys.
Nightbane

Chapter Summary

Sansa faces the Night King until help arrives, Jon puts Nightbane to the test.

Never in her life would Sansa have imagined she would be in the middle of the woods at night during a battle trying to figure out how she could tend to an injured dragon. Viserion licked at the small hole in his wing. Though it had let out a lot of blood it wasn’t a lot for the dragon and was already slowing to a trickle. Relative to his size it was small enough that it shouldn’t have hindered his ability to fly, but the pain was surely too much so he’d landed to make sure Sansa was safe.

She was gently stroking the scaled edge of his wing when Viserion stiffed a moment before his head wiped around and he suddenly unleashed a torrent of flames. His body rose slightly, carefully turning, making sure he didn’t hurt Sansa as he moved in a circle, igniting the trees and land around them until they were entirely enclosed within a ring of flame.

Sansa’s confusion faded as she felt a chill pass through her even with flames burning around them. Lady’s Tear rang as she drew it, watching the flames before her part moments before watching the Night King step into view. The gap grew as seven more White Walkers joined him.

Watching them all draw iced blades from their backs and waist, all of them ignoring her, she turned to Viserion, ready to mount him until the Night King took a spear from one of the other walkers. Seeing that Viserion leapt into the air, speeding away as the spear flew past his tail.

He started to turn back and blew flames on them, making sure they wouldn’t touch Sansa in the small clearing he’d created. Yet Sansa watched the White Walkers stand in place, brushing off the stray flame that clung to their armor and clothes but didn’t even burn those. Instead they all seemed to turn their attention to her.

The White Walkers seemed to examine her, their eyes settling on the rippled steel sword she held. It was the Night King who stepped forward, passing into the ring of flame which instantly died.

Though she took a step back, Sansa raised the sword toward the crowned White Walker and met his eyes. “Jon will kill you,” she told him with a glare. “Whatever you do you’ll never stop him. He’ll kill you and every other White Walker, destroy your entire army. Your life, them making you into this, it will all be for nothing. You are nothing. You always have been and when you’re dead that’s all you’ll be. A part of the song of our victory!”

The Night King came to a stop, his lips quirking into a slight, amused smile. That didn’t stop the other White Walkers from walking toward her.

It was the flaming thurible flail that made them come to a halt. Slipping off his horse, a man cloaked in black walked between the White Walkers and Sansa. They seemed to recognize him, a few of them glaring while the Night King tilted his head curiously.

“You father was right about you,” said the man spinning the flail by the chain in his right hand.

“My father?” Sansa blinked at the man. “You knew him?”
His left hand raised as he stepped back beside her, pulling his hood and scarf to reveal her uncle Benjen. “You’re a beauty, but there’s no doubt you’ve a wolf’s heart.”

“Benjen!” She gasped.

“Never thought I’d see you wielding a sword,” he chuckled, “but these are strange times.”

“How are you here-”

“The Wall’s down,” he answered as one of the walkers charged toward them.

Benjen pulled a small dragonglass dagger from his belt, throwing the flail at the walker and hitting him in the face to little effect. Pulling the chain back, Benjen moved forward, dodging one of the walker’s strikes to stick the dagger in his throat. It gasped and screeched as it’s body broke down and crumbled.

Just as two more started to move forward they heard the hooves. They all turned to watch Jon riding in with Nightbane drawn and riders behind him. The White Walkers turned to meet them, Benjen throwing his flail at one of the pair that stepped forward in hopes of distracting them.

Gendry was the only one thrown from his horse as a walker dodged his hammer and cut it’s legs, knowing he couldn’t meet the hammer strike like the others had. They all clashed briefly before riding past and swiftly dismounting, turning and dashing back to face the walkers.

Jon ran up behind the one that had turned toward Benjen, driving Nightbane through it’s back with a yell. His eyes widened as the walker shattered and he saw Benjen standing before Sansa.

“Benjen?”

“JON!” He yelled, rushing forward.

Jon turned, swiftly raising his sword to deflect the incoming swing of the Night King’s curved blade. When he went for a riposte by shifting his momentum and swinging at his throat, the Night King deftly ducked beneath the blade, stepping away before turning back, knocking Benjen’s flail from the air with ease.

Gendry was on his feet, his valyrian steel shield scraped by the edge of a walker’s blade before bringing Hartstine down, snapping the blade in half. When he went for a follow up attack the walker dodged back, bringing his hand to the broken edge of the sword which stretched to a new point as if it had never been broken.

Theon slashed and dodged one of the bald walkers, ducking under a slash and going for his own when the walker turned and met his blade. The impact was enough to make him stumble back toward Edd, his Ranger’s Wrath deflecting the ice blade.

Tormund brought his axe down toward another walker, shattering his ice blade, but when he went for a rising follow up the walker slashed at his arm, catching his shoulder. Both backed away, Tormund smacking the bleeding slash while the walker regrew his sword.

Behind them Beric and Tom tried to hold the walkers off with their flaming sword and dragonglass daggers, but were struggling. At least until the one Tom fought suddenly shattered and he found Sansa staring in shock at the falling ice.

A roar shook the air and all glanced up to find Drogon as he flew overhead, crushing a few trees when he landed just beyond the clearing Viserion made. From his back Daenerys extended her
hand. “SANSA!” She called out, beckoning her forward.

Sansa glanced to the others, watching them fighting off the White Walkers with the Night King fending off attacks from both Jon and Benjen. She considered going to help him but knew she couldn’t. She could barely make sense of what they were doing, but she could head back to camp and help them.

Climbing onto Drogon’s saddle and wrapping her arms around Daenerys she said, “Thank you.”

Daenerys glanced at Jon who had only cast a single glance their way before returning to exchanging parries and riposte with the Night King and Benjen. She seemed to consider the same as Sansa before turning and gripping the saddle handles as Drogon took off, carrying them back to camp with Rhaegal and Viserion following behind them.

With numbers on their side Jon and his band felt bolstered, even with the dragons gone. Jon felt relieved that at least he wouldn’t have to protect them, and he trusted the others enough that he felt little need to hold back.

Gendry managed to deflect the strike from a walker and throw his arm back for one of his own. His eyes widening, the White Walker swung his sword forward only to have it shatter a second before Hartstine slammed into the center of his chest, shattering him as well. Gendry turned his attention then to the one Beric and Tom had taken to fending off, though he seemed to easily dodge all their blows, even when Gendry joined in.

Tormund missed his swing at the one who injured him, but found himself aimed at the one fighting Edd, so charged forward. His yell made the walker turn, leaving Edd free to dash forward and jam Ranger’s Wrath into the walker’s throat. He swiftly backed away to avoid a reactionary slash as the walker screamed and crumbled before Edd targeted the one who injured Tormund.

Theon was able to hold his own with the bald walker, though he couldn’t manage to get the upper hand. Every blow was deflected, but he’d also dodged each strike the walker took.

Benjen’s flail wrapped around the Night King’s arm, but a swift slash of his sword shattered the chain, letting the weighted end fall as the chains around his arm froze and shattered. He managed to quickly turn and block Jon’s strike, noticing the man’s eyes seemed darker, more focused as his blood boiled. His strikes held more power as he put everything he had into them.

He wasn’t slowed either, his next strike coming almost instantly once he retracted his sword, forcing the Night King to step back and deflect the rippled blade downward. When he went for his own upward slash he watched his sword slash through Jon’s bevor and sallet, turning each to ice which shattered around his head.

Jon barely seemed to notice, stepping forward and slashing up at the Night King, forcing him to turn for a horizontal block. That was when he noticed Benjen rushing toward him and his left hand opened, a small shard of ice forming before it closed and swung up, throwing the shard straight into Benjen’s chest. However the undead man didn’t stop, his dragonglass dagger pulled back, having tossed it to his right hand.

That forced the Night King to step back and turn into Benjen, his left hand grabbing the man’s blackened hand and drove his curved sword through Benjen’s chest. As the undead ranger gasped, the Night King turned toward Jon, using Benjen as a shield to stop Jon’s sword. Then the Night King pushed his sword down until it came through Ben’s thigh along with his blackened intestines.

“Benjen!” Jon roared as the Night King threw his uncle’s body aside, swiftly slashing through his
Jon unleashed a furious flurry of blows which the Night King carefully dodged and deflected before sidestepping one and smirking as his hand wrapped around the base of Nightbane. When Jon’s eyes widened and he tugged, rather than slice through the Night King’s hand he found the blade snapped, leaving him with barely any of blade beyond the hilt.

It was that same broken blade, reforged from Heartsbane which the Night King turned and drove into Jon’s heart, making him suck in a breath as the Night King stared into his eyes with a grin.

“JON!” They screamed and yelled as the Night King backed away, ripping the rippled blade from his chest, letting Jon stumble back as it turned to ice in his hand and shattered when his fist tightened.

Nightbane’s hilt fell from his fingers, but Jon reached for the dragonglass dagger in his belt, waving it at the Night King who seemed to smirk dismissively as Jon fell back. Staring into the night sky he watched the darkness envelop him. He’s started to raise his hand, intending to drive the dragonglass dagger into himself to keep him from being raised, but his arm fell, the dagger falling from his fingers.

The Night King seemed to take a breath, his chest puffing slightly as a victorious grin took his lips, his hand flexing as he strode toward Jon. He was moments away from making his greatest foe one of his thralls when Beric Dondarrian came between them and drove his burning sword through the Night King’s stomach.

The blade didn’t snap or shatter, the flames of R’hllor keeping it firm as it pushed through him. It didn’t shatter him or make him crumble like valyrian steel or dragonglass, only pierced him.

But it was something the Night King hadn’t experienced. Enough to make his face twist in anger, driving his hand to Beric’s throat, but Beric drove a dragonglass dagger into his own heart, which somehow caused his body to burst into flames.

The Night King stumbled back, and the moment Beric turned to ash the sword in his torso turned to ice and shattered. Sapphire blood poured from the wound which began to slowly close. He seemed to breathe heavily, turning and raising his hand, calling to the wight horse that galloped toward him.

Clutching his stomach, the Night King pulled himself onto the horse which sped away, leaving the others behind.

In their fury it was only moments before Gendry smashed through the walker Tom distracted, Theon drove Winter Squall through the bald walker’s chest and Tormund drove his axe into the shoulder of the last.

In the stilled quiet of the night, they all turned to look upon their king, laying lifeless with Nightbane’s hilt and a dragonglass dagger inches from his hands. The king was dead.
Standing Vigil

Chapter Summary

Jon is brought back to camp as they prepare for his return.

Those gathered to clear the bodies swiftly backed away when they saw Drogon land in the middle of the camp, lowering his wing to let their queens off his back while Viserion and Rhaegal circled overhead.

“Sansa!” Arya called, rushing to her sister’s side and wrapping her arms around her.

Sansa quickly returned the hug. “Arya, Jon’s fighting him.”

Arya backed away as the others gathered, including Jorah and those returned from the kingsroad, “What?”

“Jon’s fighting the Night King. He came for me in the woods when Viserion landed, but Benjen, he was alive like Bran told us. He came to a help but there were seven on them and then Jon came with Gendry and the others. He was fighting him with Benjen.”

Arya glanced to Jaime, who nodded as she turned to Sansa. “Where?”

Sansa turned, ready to point when suddenly Ghost let out a howl a split second before Drogon stood up and let out a screeching cry with his brothers. Rhaegal soared to the woods while Ghost ran, leaving camp.

As Drogon took flight, Sansa felt tears flood her eyes. She knew. She knew as she shook her head and begged, “No. Not again. Please not again.”

“Sansa?” Daenerys asked, reaching to hold her hand. Seeing the devastation on her sister-wife’s face made her think of all that had happened and suddenly her eyes widened, turning to the woods with a gasp. “Jon.”

It wasn’t long before they heard the calls.

“Riders!”

“The King!” They cried mournfully.

“King Jon!” They wept.

“King Jon!”

They spotted ghost first, striding beside Gendry’s horse, his helmet and weapons hanging from his saddle as he held the lifeless body of Jon in front of him. It almost looked like Gendry was riding with a sleeping Jon, but the limp body and Gendry’s tears made it clear what happened.

“Jon.” Arya whimpered, tears steaming down her cheeks as she saw her brother.

Sansa turned to Daenerys, wrapping her arms around the shorter woman as both lost the struggle to
keep from crying. After a moment they heard Rhaegals cry and people moved away, letting him land where his brothers had, watching Gendry arrive before the queens.

Dismounting, he let Jon slide into his arms, hanging lifeless from them as he turned, holding him out toward them as they separated. “I’m so sorry.”

“How?” asked Melisandre, looking from the hole in his armor to the hilt of the broken Nightbane and dragonglass dagger tucked into his belt.

“The Night King,” said Gendry. “He killed your uncle, broke Nightbane and stabbed him in the heart. Jon, he tried to fight, but he fell back and…”

“Beric stopped him from turning Jon,” said Theon. “He injured the Night King. He didn’t shatter like the others, but Beric’s flaming sword ran him through, and then he burst into flames and made the Night King flee, leaving Jon’s body untouched.”

Sansa looked from Theon to Melisandre. “Is it possible?”

The Red Woman nodded. “If the Lord wills it, it will be.”

Daenerys’ brow furrowed before remembering what they’d told her of Castle Black and turning to Melisandre. She’d tried something like this before and it had cost her fertility, but then that was a Maegi, one who wanted to harm Drogo for what his men did.

Melisandre truly believed Jon her savior and seemed to help him, always being a member of his council but keeping herself from becoming too zealous. She knew Jon wouldn’t be influenced like Stannis, not only for Davos at his side but he wasn’t a man who needed or wanted to be what he was destined to be. He didn’t covet it like others, merely accepted it when forced upon him and rose to meet it.

“How do we bring him back again?” asked Daenerys. “If Beric gave his life for Jon is that enough?”

Those around them gasped, breaking into whispers. Jon had never spoken of his death publicly, but there had been a few rumors that blossomed when the Night’s Watch joined their army.

Rhaegal leaned forward, making a few people back away. Ghost, stood beside Gendry and Jon with his snout to Jon’s hand, barely glanced at the dragon as it pressed it’s snout to Jon’s head. After a moment he turned and flew up to join his brothers.

“I’ll try what I did before,” Melisandre offered, “and if that doesn’t work I’ll ask the Lord for guidance. I’ve no doubt King Jon will return to us once he is needed.”

“Thoros always said his words,” Tom offered, “said he gave Beric his Lord’s kiss of life and then he was up. Is it different for you?”

“I only did it the once, but it wasn’t until I’d left the room.” Melisandre turned to Gendry. “Take the King to the council tent and lay him on the table. He’ll need his chest bare and we’ll need to wash his wounds.”

“I’ll get water,” Theon said running off.

The crowd parted, clearing a path for Gendry to carry Jon to the largest war tent in the camp. Melisandre clearly chose it knowing they would need the space as Sansa and Daenerys weren’t the only ones to join them. Arya, Brienne, Podrick, Laul, Meera, Tyrion, Missandei, Gray Worm,
Dirgo, Jorah, Edd, Davos, Tormund, Sandor and even Jaime Lannister joined them in the tent.

Gendry set him on the table and he, Daenerys and Sansa went about removing his armor and clothes, leaving his breeches. Daenerys frowned seeing the hole clear through the Targaryen sigil of his brigandine. Pulling off his mail shirt and gambeson they saw the wound over his heart was not only torn open but stretched. The larger blade and harsher movements likely leaving a larger hole. They stepped aside as Theon returned with water and a rag for Melisandre to go about cleaning the wounds.

Arya’s hands were balled into fist as she stared at Jon’s body, the tension barely easing from her body as Gendry put an arm around her. He watched Melisandre clean the king’s wounds before his eyes shifted to the things they’d taken from him laying in a chair beside the table. She blinked in surprise when he stepped away from her and started gathering Jon’s things.

“What are you doing?” Arya asked as others glanced at Gendry.

“He’ll need these repaired,” Gendry said setting his gamebeson and haubrek into the brigandine, along with his dagger and the remnants of Nightbane. “And he’ll need a new sword.”

“What?” Arya asked as the others looked on in confusion.

“I have everything I need except…” Gendry looked to Daenerys. “I’ll need your dragons.”

Daenerys’ jaw shifted, glancing from him to Jon until Sansa gripped her hand. “I’ll stay with him. Be quick.”

Arya stared at Gendry for a moment before looking to Sansa. “Could your guard go with him? Keep people away.”

Sansa nodded, looking to Brienne, Podrick, Laul and Meera, the last of her fireguard. “I ask you all guard Gendry and keep others away while he works.”

The guard exchanged a look before nodding. “We will, your grace.”

“I’m no good here,” Tormund said mournfully. “I’ll help as well.”

For a moment Brienne felt annoyed that he’d try to bug her even now, but saw the pain in the man’s eyes as he stared at Jon and knew he just wanted to be away and do something useful. So she nodded. “Thank you, Tormund.”

Daenerys glanced at Melisandre before turning to hug Sansa and whisper, “Don’t let her bring him back wrong.”

“She won’t,” Sansa assured.

Daenerys left with Gendry, those outside seeming surprised as they went to his tent and put Jon’s things into his cart to rode out of camp. They needed privacy they wouldn’t find there.

Sansa and the others watched Melisandre press her hands to Jon’s chest and say the words she had last time, again and again for minutes and minutes. Unlike the last time however she wasn’t disheartened when he didn’t awaken, instead she looked to Sansa.

“We should wait,” she said to the queen. “I’ll seek guidance on what to do if he doesn’t awaken by sunrise.”
Outside of camp, Rhaegal landed to meet Daenerys’ party at a small cave outside of camp. As if knowing what would come, he put his head into the cave and filled it with flames, scorching the walls and leaving a trail of fire along the floor which lingered. Daenerys took a cup that they’d taken and held it under the cut on the edge of Rhaegal’s wing.

“I’m sorry,” she said looking to him, but he simply stared, letting out only a quiet groan when she pressed on it, forcing blood from the healing wound. Just a few drops, but enough for what they needed.

The fireguard found themselves joined by Rhaegal, who laid on the ground nearby, watching Gendry as he and Tormund unloaded his supplies and the smith went to work while Daenerys made her way back to camp with Jorah at her side.

She felt awful that there was a part of her glad Jon hadn’t returned yet so she could be there when he did, but it wasn’t as if he woke up the moment Daenerys entered the tent. While others went about repairing their camp, gathering lost horses and any supplies before burning corpses, Arya, Daenerys and Sansa stayed at Jon’s side while the others guarded the tent and Missandei got them drinks and food to help keep them awake.

The sun rose and night remained, as did Jon’s death. Melisandre returned and looked upon him, brushing her fingers over his wound. “The Lord showed me Lightbringer, only it didn’t bring light. It stole the night, ripped it from the sky and in it’s wake left the dawn. He showed me a flaming heart.”

“Stannis?” Davos asked sat near Arya.

“No,” Melisandre shook her head. “Not his sigil, a true, beating heart of fire, spewing fire and blood, cooled by ice and snow. He showed me a gilded keep, the walls cracked and leaking, all of it burned away by a raging fire dark as the empty night sky.”

Daenerys tilted her head. “Does that mean…”

When she stopped herself the others looked to her, Melisandre arching her brow with interest at another interpretation of her visions. Sansa reached over to squeeze Daenerys’ hand. “What?”

Daenerys looked from Sansa to Jon to Melisandre. “You saw the heart after the sword?”

“I did. Then the keep.”

Daenerys got to her feet, stepping to the table and looking at Jon. “That sounds like he comes back after he gets the sword.” She turned to Sansa and smiled, “The sword Gendry is making right now.”

Arya was on her feet. “I’ll go help him!”

Before they could say anything she’d ran off, leaving Sansa to stand and walk to the table. Looking to Melisandre she asked, “Do you think the same?”

The Red Woman nodded. “I do. I fear he must wield Lightbringer before he will return.”

Davos got to his feet, shaking his head. “No, he can’t-you can’t!” When they looked to him, surprised by his sudden anger, he exhaled and looked to the women. “You two surely know the story? Azor Ahai made a sword that broke twice before the third time he stuck it in his wife’s heart to fuse her soul to the blade.” He turned on Melisandre as Daenerys and Sansa shared a concerned look. “I won’t let them be Nissa Nissa!”
Melisandre chuckled and shook her head as the women turned to her. “I doubt that will be needed.”

Davos looked shocked. “What?”

Melisandre looked to Jon with a somber smile. “I’ve no doubt he is Azor Ahai reborn, but he is also Jon Snow and Aegon Targaryen. He is King Jon, the Sword in the Darkness. His first sword forged centuries ago, stabbing his shoulder. His second reforged from another belonging to his closest friend, broken and stabbing his heart. His third will be one forged by an ally, new and for him, forged in the flames of his own dragon. That blade will never break. It will take the night and return the dawn.”

After a moment of silence, Sansa reached over to place a hand on Jon’s chest. “Jon is his own man. It isn’t a prophecy that makes him do this, but his own choices. He won’t be bound by the legend of another, he’ll create his own song.”
Kissed By Fire

Chapter Summary

Gendry finishes Jon’s sword and the army gathers to the flame.

Gendry was covered in soot when he finally threw down his hammer. It had been a day since he returned with Jon, and though he’d barely slept an hour, he turned to Arya with a content smile. “It’s the fastest I’ve worked, but it should hold up.”

“I can’t believe you had a new plate ready,” she said looking at the brigandine she’d washed, now with a new Targayen chest plate replacing the pierced one. The rings of the haubrek were simple enough to replace, and the gambeson easily switched with one of the others Jon brought.

“I have loose plates for any spot that got damaged,” he said gathering his things and loading them into crates.

“And this?” Tormund asked looking at the gorget not unlike the one Jon wore as they gathered the north, only with a direwolf and dragon head facing each other on the front.

“I thought he could wear it when he didn’t want to wear the helmet,” Gendry explained. “Now he’ll just have to grab one of the spares.”

With Jon’s new sword secure in his sheath, Gendry set the last box on the cart and Rhaegal stirred as the fireguard gathered to make their return to camp. Rhaegal flew overhead, drawing eyes before people heard the cart and made way.

Once they arrived at the tent, Gendry having used a rag to wipe away most of the soot from his face, he took Jon’s things and carried them inside. Daenerys and Sansa got to their feet as he set the armor on a chair. Holding the scabbard he drew the new sword, leaving the sheath and belt with the armor as he carried it over to the table and showed it to the queens joined by Davos and Melisandre.

“I don’t know if it came out right,” he said with a frown toward the sword with Nightbane’s hilt.

“Last one that color was mostly dragonglass,” Arya explained, “but we only used a chunk of Jon’s dagger. Not much more than usual and it still came out like this.”

Sansa held out her hands to take it from Gendry. Her eyes traced the blade’s smoky black ripples, it’s faint shine making it look like a true fusion of dragonglass and steel. Dark like the night sky.

“This is it,” Sansa said more than asked, looking to Melisandre, who wore shock. “The night taker your saw.”

“It is,” Melisandre nodded.

“You saw?” Gendry asked with a wary glance to the Red Woman.

“In the flames,” Daenerys said looking at the sword. “She saw this sword, and then a beating heart pumping fire and blood cooled by ice and snow.”
Sansa turned, setting the sword on the table, placing the hilt in Jon’s open hand.

For a moment they all expected his fingers to close around it and sit up ready to fight, but instead he laid unmoving as before.

“I’ll speak the words again,” Melisandre said walking around the table. “Let the Lord know he’s ready.”

As Melisandre put her hands on Jon’s chest and began chanting quietly, Daenerys walked around to the armor Arya and Gendry returned. Running a hand over the replaced Targaryen plate she checked inside. “You washed it?”

“Don’t want him wearing it with his own blood in it,” Arya said with a nod.

A moment later she grunted as Sansa wrapped her arms around Arya. Arya who barely washed her own hair when they were kids had scrubbed away as much blood as she could from his armor.

Once she released Arya, who flashed Sansa a look that told her she’d let that go for now, Sansa moved to stand beside Daenerys. “He’ll need fresh clothes,” Daenerys said looking to Sansa, who nodded before Daenerys looked to the entrance of the tent and called out, “Willam.”

The bastard squire stepped into the tent carefully, frowning toward Jon’s body before turning to the queens. “Yes, your grace?”

“Bring the King’s armor to his tent and return with new clothes for him. Comfortable and warm ones, let him relax once he’s awake.”

Willam nodded, rushing forward to gather the armor and sword belt, piling them together and exiting the tent.

They all watched as Melisandre pulled her hands from Jon’s chest solemnly. After a moment she stepped aside, moving to sit in a corner, clearly unwilling to miss his revival a second time.

When Willam returned with Jon’s clothes he had to make his way through people that seemed to be gathering around the tent. Entering, he found Daenerys and Sansa stood to either side of the table and quietly placed Jon’s clothes on the small table near the entrance before returning to his place outside with the other guards.

“How long was it last time?” Daenerys asked.

“Not very,” said Sansa. “Not this long.”

Daenerys frowned, looking from Sansa to Jon’s still face. “He’ll come back.” Her hand reached over to stroke his cheek, his beard trimmed in Melisandre’s ritual.

Sansa watched Daenerys lean forward and press her lips to Jon’s, her brow knit, silently begging him to kiss her back before she sighed and stood, somberly letting her hand slide from his jaw to his chest before slipping off his shoulder.

Daenerys watched Sansa brush her fingers through Jon’s hair which Melisandre had also trimmed during her ritual. She followed Daenerys’ example and leaned forward to press her lips to Jon’s, placing a second on his cheek before she stood, brushing her fingers through his damp hair a final time before placing them back on the edge of the table.

The queens met each other’s gaze with a solemn smile, but those broke when the rest of the room
leapt to their feet gasping as Arya screamed, “Jon!”

When they looked down they found him not awake, but the wound on his chest open and blood poured from it, leaking across his chest before igniting. Both women backed away as the blood pumped from the wound, somehow stretching across Jon’s body, letting the flames stretch and cover all of him until there was no part of him left uncovered.

Daenerys stood frozen until Jorah grabbed her, his arms wrapped around her and pulling her off her feet as she struggled to go back to Jon’s side while Jorah carried her out of the tent. Gendry and Arya had taken to doing the same with Sansa as the table beneath Jon ignited, the flames stretching out and filling the tent.

Everyone backed away from the burning tent. The flames impossibly seeming to cover every inch of the standing tent even as it was surely burned to ash. The massive fire lit the camp as everyone gathered to see what was happening, what had become of their king.

With a pulse the flames shrunk, followed by a second that left them no more than a normal funeral pyre before dying out over time, leaving only a mound of ash in their wake.

“JON!” Sansa screamed as Daenerys sobbed, Missandei wrapping her arms around the Targaryen queen while Arya held her sister.

The entire world seemed to fall quiet with the camp as snow began to fall anew, mixing with the ash. It was only because the world had stilled they heard the shift in the ashes before they saw a hand rise, using a black valyrian steel sword pressed into the dirt to help Jon raise himself from the ashes. The army watched in awe as Jon shook his head, ash and dust falling away from him before he exhaled and released a stream of smoke and ash he’d inhaled before coughing and sucking in a breath when he stood straight and looked around to the people staring at their naked, resurrected king.

When he turned to see Sansa and Daenerys staring at him he saw the armies fall to their knees around him, few remaining standing as Sansa and Daenerys rushed to his side, wrapping him in their arms.

He put his arms behind them, squeezing both. “I’m sorry.”

Daenerys laughed, “Don’t apologize.”

“You came back,” Sansa said shaking her head.

When they stepped back Davos was there to offer Jon his cloak to cover himself, earning a thankful nod. Jon pulled it over himself and looked at the sword in his hand. “What is this?”

“Your new sword,” said Daenerys. “Gendry forged it while you were gone with Rhaegal’s fire and blood.”

“Melisandre said it’s the sword you’ll use to take away the night and return the dawn.”

Jon looked at the blade with a nod. Looking at the people kneeling around him, staring at him with reverence and awe, he frowned. “I’ll need cloths before I take anything.”

Daenerys chuckled. “Let’s go to your tent.”

“Rise!” Jon called out as he started a slow walk to his tent, trying to keep his balance. “Prepare to move north! We’re going to end the Long Night!”
The camp rose to their feet and cheered King Jon, Azor Ahai, Risen King, Dragon King, Fire and Blood, Winter Dragon, White Wolf, King of the North and a dozen other things.

In his tent Jon looked himself over, frowning at the altered scar over his heart. Covering it beneath his tunic once he was dressed, Jon sank onto the bed and sighed.

Arya had waited for him to get dressed, waiting outside until Sansa told her Jon was decent so she could rush in and wrap his arms around him. Jon laughed as he hugged her back. “I just got back, don’t go killing me already,” he said playfully.

She swiftly slapped his shoulder as she stepped back to wipe her eyes, “Don’t joke.”

Jon nodded, looking down in thought before taking in those in his tent. Arya, Brienne, Daenerys, Davos, Gendry, Melisandre, Sansa, Tormund and Tyrion.

“I don’t know how to beat him,” he admitted.

When no one spoke, Tyrion offered, “I’d imagine you’ll do it with that sword.”

Though no one laughed, it earned a few smiles and smirks, including one from Jon before he shook his head. “He’s better than me. Faster, stronger. Even with Benjen’s help I couldn’t hit him. Maybe it’s not supposed to be me,” he said looking to Arya.

“Me?” Arya scoffed. “I watched you fight him the first time and I couldn’t see any openings you missed.”

“But I could distract him. Leave him open for you.”

“He was injured last time,” Gendry told Jon. “After you died, Beric ran him through with his flaming sword. The sword only shattered after Beric was ashes. It left a hole in the Night King’s stomach when he rode off. I don’t think he’s going to go anywhere alone and risk that again.”

“Let him bring his swords,” Jon said looking to Arya, the self appointed captain of his makeshift guard, “I’ll bring mine.”
Gilded Suitors

Chapter Summary

The Golden Company arrives in King’s Landing, and Littlefinger puts a plan into motion.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“This should be enough, yeah?” Euron asked sat in his quarters as three men inspected the scaled horn on the table between them.

A bald man missing his earlobes ran his remaining fingers across the horn. “It radiates. Warm to the touch as if it were a dragon itself.”

“And these?” Euron asked looking at the set of dragonglass shards laid across the table. “This was all they could get us. They didn’t look any different,” Euron noted, glancing to the men with a hole in his chest hanging from the corner of the room, “so what’s missing?”

“The Children of the Forest were supposedly ancient even before the First Men arrived,” said a curly haired man with no nose. “Their magic very well could be innate to them. Pushing those into a man’s heart may kill him because we lack whatever link they possess.”

“Dragons could help,” said the ashen haired man, the only of the three gaunt blue lipped men lacking any visible mutilation. “Think on it. Before that girl birthed her dragons half our work was tricks and charades. Once the world heard her dragon’s song our work bore fruit. I’d imagine that would only be stronger near them. Use the dragonbinder and you may find yourself capable of what would otherwise be impossible.”

There was a knock on the door and when the crewman opened it he found Euron sat with his three bastard boys who turned to look at the door. The mute man gave a quick signal, warning they were coming to shore.

“Make sure the golden twats are ready,” Euron said waving him off. Once the door was closed he got to his feet. “Drain the body and dump it while I’m gone. Next’ll have to wait.”

King’s Landing for all it’s opulence seemed dim before a host of twenty thousand men of the Golden Company. Their splendor edged to decadence with golden rings across their arms for every year served, glittering jeweled swords and fine silks beneath gilded armor.

The earth seemed to shiver as not only did they ride atop fine stallions but a dozen giant elephants with canopies and golden silk banners across their sides. The bulk of the force moved to the fields around King’s Landing while a smaller group made its way to the Red Keep with Euron Greyjoy and the city watch, their gold cloaks seeming pale and matte in comparison to those of the men they led.

Within the Great Hall of the Red Keep Cersei Lannister sat atop the Iron Throne. Qyburn stood to her right beside a woman in black cloth and armor with a hood over her masked face leaving only
her black eyes visible. To her left was Ser Gregor Clegane and her Queensguard all in their black plate armor. For a gilded lioness the only gold in the room was her hair and that on the men following Euron to the dais.

“My queen,” Euron began, motioning to the men behind him, “the Golden Company and their captain-general, Daario Naharis.”

Standing beside Euron was the Tyroshi sellsword, his hair slicked back with leather and gilded mail over silks while his hand rested on the golden head of his arakh hilt shaped like a naked woman.

Qyburn’s brow knit in confusion. “I thought your captain-general was Harry Strickland?”

Daario arched his brow and smirked. “Harry stepped aside to let me take his place.”

Qyburn noticed the man had no golden rings on his arm, marking him as not having spent even a year among the company. “Why exactly?”

Daario looked from him to Cersei with an enticing smile. “Because I told him I’d conquer the dragon queen as I have before in Mereen.”

Cersei’s brow rose. “Is that so?”

“I made her beg and plead many a night,” he assured.

“And that matters because…” Qyburn began.

“Her heart is mine as sure as she is,” he tapped the gilded lady on his hilt. “She left me behind to make political marriages, and now I hear she’s wed to some boorish northman?”

“And why should I trust you won’t simply join her side?” asked Cersei.

Daario glanced back at the golden company, then smiled to her. “I don’t think you have much of a choice.” When Cersei simply glared at him, he chuckled. “Daenerys has spent her entire life being told she was supposed to be here, but her heart lies across the sea as it always has. Until I stepped to shore of course,” he pressed a hand to his chest. “I don’t care who sits where, so long as I get what is mine.”

Cersei arched her brow. “And that is?”

“My dragon queen,” answered Daario.

After a moment of silence Cersei rose from the throne and smiled. “Perfect. You’ll sail with Euron north to the Bay of Seals. You can take the dragon queen back to Essos.”

“And her dragons?” Daario asked tilting his head.

“I’ll take them,” said Euron. When they all gave him curious looks he shrugged. “I’ve tamed storms. I can tame dragons.”

Daario shook his head but looked to Cersei. “And the northman king? His other wife?”

“Slit his throat,” Cersei shrugged, “but bring Sansa alive. Another will take her.”

Daario’s brow sank. “There’s another party involved? I’d prefer to know who before I make an agreement.”
Cersei smiled. “Lord Petry Baelish. He’s been supplying us with information from his men in the North and gave us valuable information of past betrayals. All he asked for was the bastard king’s red haired wife. You can have the silver haired one. So long as both are kept away then you may do with them as you please so long as Jon Snow is dead.”

XOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXO

Sat in his solar Petyr read the letter three times over, his grin stretching each time before he tossed it into the fire and called for a servant. “Ready a rider for Ironoaks.”

It was barely days later when Petyr decided they would have small feast in the Eyrie’s High Hall with a few lords. Among them was a young sandy haired knight who Petyr greeted with a smile. Once they started Petyr raised his glass with a look to the knight. “To family.”

That garnered a few cheers, but as the others drank Robin looked to Petyr. “He’s your family?”

Petyr chuckled. “No, my lord, he is your kin.”

Lysa’s brow knit. “What?”

Petyr blinked in confusion, flashing an apologetic smile to the knight. “Forgive me, beloved, but I thought you knew. Young Harrold is your former husband’s grandnephew and Sweetrobin’s cousin.”

“He is?” Robin asked skeptically.

“I am,” Harrold nodded. “My grandmother was your father’s sister. My father was only a landed knight of House Hardyng, but Lady Waynwood took me as her ward. I only just became knighted.”

“I saw much potential in the lad,” Petyr said with a smile. “A bit of myself perhaps. The son of a hedge knight, raised by another family and given a chance to rise to-”

Robin coughing interrupted Petyr, making the man turn in apparent concern while Lysa gasped and spun to her son. Once he stopped and sat up, Lysa brushed back his hair and helped him drink.

“Are you okay, my lord?” Harrold asked.

“It seems the winter has welcomed Lord Arryn with a chill,” Petyr said with a polite smile. “Surely it will pass soon.”

Supper ended when Robin started coughing again, lasting nearly a minute before he stopped. The boy groaned in annoyance as Lysa called for two guards to carry him to his room and ordered maids to bring more furs. She spent most of her evening there until Petyr came to get her for bed.

She tossed and turned through the night, and as morning neared she was already awake when the guard knocked on their door. “Lord and Lady Baelish,” he called through the door.

Lysa was on her feet throwing open the door while Petyr rose. “Yes?”

“It’s Lord Arryn,” the man mourned.

Lysa gasped, clutching her heart as she ran to Robin’s room. She barely noticed the guard and Petyr rushing behind her.

Opening the door to her son’s room, Lysa found a maid stood over the body in tears. “My lady, he’s…”
Lysa wailed, rushing to the side of her pale son laying lifeless in his bed. “NO! Robin! No, my sweet Robin, please gods!”

The door closed and Petyr gasped, “Lysa what are you doing?”

She turned and tearful eyes widened as the guard’s hand covered her mouth, keeping it closed.

“No, Lysa,” Petyr exclaimed while standing still, his hands over one another in front of him, “don’t-”

The guard took her hand and wrapped it around the hilt of the dagger on his belt, yanked it from the scabbard and sheathed it in her own chest.

“Lysa!” Petyr yelled with a vacant expression as she was put over Robin’s body, held there until her writhing stopped. His wife now still and dead as her son, Petyr took a breath and moments later had tears in his eyes as he rushed to her side. The guard and maid backed away as he exclaimed, “Find the maester!”

The guard was rushing to the door in a panic as the maid wailed, but the door opened and another guard rushed in to find them all in tears over the mournful scene. “Lord Arryn,” the man gasped.

“Please,” Petyr said turning to the man in tears, “she’s…”

The Eyrie woke to find their lord had been taken by sickness in the night and when his lady mother learned of his fate drove a dagger through her own heart. Some might have suspected foul play, but any who might have claimed it had ridden off to war, leaving Petyr to mourn his wife. Even Harrold was truly somber upon seeing his cousin’s corpse. The young knight seemed mournful when it was quickly declared he was now Lord of the Vale.

And yet it was barely a week later the Lord of the Vale and Lord Protector of the Vale gathered the lords and declared they would travel to King’s Landing to meet with queen Cersei to try and broker an armistice in the war to come to keep them neutral after such a tragedy. The meeting was mostly for show as most of the remaining lords readily agreed.

Petyr cared not for the war in the north or to come, only that once the dust had settled he would be on a higher rung with his prize. Whoever sat on the Iron Throne wouldn’t change that image of him sat atop it with an auburn haired beauty at his side.

Chapter End Notes

It sucks the last few chapters haven’t had as many comments, but I can’t imagine anything here might garner a bit more.
Chapter Summary

The final battle against the Night King.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

It felt odd to chase the dead, but that is what the armies of Westeros did. While they might have been able to catch the backs of another army the dead never needed to stop and rest. Thankfully their scouts weren’t just men, but an unkindness of ravens that seemed to follow them, waking them every mourning and guiding them north east.

When they came to the hill of ice that was the remnants of the Wall they found a clear path had been opened through it. The dead weren’t waiting for them on the other side, which told Jon that come morning they would pass through the Haunted Forest. Either they would be lead north west and deeper into the forest, or the wight army had moved east intending to freeze the bay again and cross over to Skagos in hopes of coming around and hitting their back. The Night King could hole up on the island and let them try to siege it, but Jon doubted it.

The sun was still in the sky when the army made camp and had their fill for the night. After meeting with his generals Jon retired to his tent with his wives to get what rest they could before what could be their final march.

“Shouldn’t I be with Brienne and my guard?” Sansa asked as Jon removed his cloak.

It was Daenerys who flashed an apologetic smile at her. “You did incredible during the attack, but they’d still be focused on protecting you instead of fighting.”

Sansa crossed her arms with a hint of indignation. “We can’t guarantee our safety on the dragons either, not with them throwing spears around.”

“That’s why I want you to wait until we’ve met them before coming,” said Jon. “Let us take their attention, give you less to dodge.”

Seeing Sansa’s frustration, Daenerys walked to her with a teasing smile. “Don’t tell me you’ve gotten a bloodlust from killing things without blood.”

“It’s not-” Sansa sighed, shaking her head.

With a solemn smile Jon pulled her head forward to kiss her forehead. “You’re fine.”

Daenerys nodded. “Viserion chose you. You’re meant to do this.”

“You’ll be able to help us more guiding him than you could from the field,” Jon said meeting Sansa’s eyes, who seemed shocked he knew what had been bothering her. “Let me worry about the men on the ground, I’ll need you and Dany helping us from the skies and watching our back.”

“You really think he’ll go through Skagos?” Sansa asked once Jon released her and stepped back.
“Hopefully we’ll catch him before that happens.”

They were woken by the unkindness of raven overhead. The moon was in the sky, but that had stopped mattering these past few days as they rode until they couldn’t anymore and woke when the were rested enough.

Jon had considered using Rhaegal to drop him and a group off in the middle of their army as a kind of distraction, but was talked out of it quick enough. Not wanting to wait with Daenerys and Sansa he opted to ride with the ground forces so he would be among the first to engage the wights. With his helmet and bever gone, Jon wore the gorget Gendry made him to top off the rest of his armor and strapped Nighttaker on his waist.

Mounted on his horse before his gathered army Jon took a breath and looked upon them. “I see before me a dream many have had but few have every seen! People of Westeros truly united, bound together and unwavering in our resolve! Let our march end today! Let it end when the living face death itself and prove that we fear no darkness! Let the earth quake in fear of our might as we march to death and find ourselves alive! Let us rise a new, united people born beneath the dawn of a new era of life”

“The Dawn!” The cheered, following Jon and his guards as the ravens guided them.

Winds howled as the Night King marched with a group of White Walkers at his side. The wights stepped aside, making room for them as their horses took longer strides than the human corpses.

They were passing through ironwoods and sentinel trees with the shore in sight when they heard the rising roar of yells and thump of hooves. The Night King turned and his army turned with him, putting the shore facing Skane and Skagos to their backs as they saw the united armies of Westeros charging them.

Immediately White Walkers looked to the sky for dragons, but found none as horses barreled into wights, knocking them aside while their riders cut through others with valyrian steel and dragonglass. Some of the men had even abandoned shields for torches in their off hands, waving them like clubs and igniting any they passed.

They had backed the Night King and his army into a corner and expected to fight to the last man. Once this battle had finished one or both of the armies would be completely wiped out.

Wun Wun lead the infantry trailing behind the mounted men, roaring as he threw a large spear over the mounted men. It managed to pierced a wight giant, crush a wight against the ground and destroy three others the dragonglass spearhead cut through.

The Night King reached for the spear in his saddle and rose from it as he pulled his arm back and launched the spear over his army, straight through Wun Wun’s heart. The giant stumbled, but dashed forward, using the last of his strength to make his way toward a group of wights trying to get behind the mounted men and sweeping them aside with his cudgel before collapsing to his knees. As he fell to the ground a trios flaming arrows hit his back, igniting his body before it could be raised again.

“Loose!” Davos ordered from horseback, aiming his sword toward the wight army. Rows of men fired dragonglass arrows into the undead host, two of them hitting White Walkers and downing a dozen wights beyond the dozens hit by the rain of arrows.
Once the walkers started throwing spears at them, a horn signaled and the air shook as the dragons roared and dived through the thick clouds overhead. They moved to the shore, scorching the earth and turning dozens of wights to ash. With both riders secured in their saddles and watching the walkers it was easy enough for them to warn the dragons, letting them dodge as swiftly as they could, diverting their paths.

It didn’t take long for most of the men to be unhorsed or dismount, the number of wights too great and the horses too easy a target. With the queens they swore their service to soaring overhead, Brienne and Jorah stuck with Jon and those around him cutting a swath through the center of the army.

Bronn was backing away from a pair of wights slashing at him when one collapsed seconds from driving an axe into the sellsword’s skull, revealing Podrick who turned and cut through the second. The sellsword laughed, “I’d offer to buy you a whore but it ain’t like they’d charge ya!”

Garlan Tyrell parried the blow of a White Walker with Last Thorn and gave a slashing riposte through his side, but as the walker shattered another charged him until the snake headed spear Viper’s Strike flew past him and into the walker’s chest. Rushing to retrieve his spear, Daemon Sand gave the man a wink before the saber Desert Wind cut through a wight and he kicked the short spear back into his left hand.

Brynden Tully grunted as he stuck behind his shield, knocking aside strikes and thrusting his short sword into wight chests. A dozen lay around him when three more charged him, but before they could flank him Edmure dashed past him, ignoring the scraping blow of a sword across his cheek to swing Autumn Stream through two at once. The third turned to strike him but Brynden cut it down with ease, giving his nephew a firm nod before they continued forward together.

With the bulk of the wight army pushing forward to flee dragonfire Davos dismounted and drew his sword. The men around him set aside their bows and emptying quivers to draw their own blades and enter the fray now they were too mixed to risk friendly fire.

Men and women of Westeros fought beside Dothraki, Unsullied and Free Folk, backing each other without hesitation or doubt. Faced with death they were driven beyond themselves, beyond their old lives. The world as it had been didn’t matter anymore and, though it might again once things had settled, in that moment all that mattered was that they kept each other alive and breathing, because that meant they were on the same side.

The Night King dismounted with his guardians and waved his hand, causing their horses to charge forward as Jon’s group approached. Jon felt an odd familiarity staring down a stampede of horses charging him, only this time he wasn’t alone as he dodged them and cut through the wight steeds. Sandor’s slash threw one to it’s side while others reared back before crumbling to the ground.

Jon came to a stop momentarily as he faced the Night King and his guardians. He glanced to his sides and found he was far from alone. Arya and Gendry stood to either side of him with Sandor, Jorah, Jaime, Theon, Edd, Tormund, Gray Worm, Brienne, Dirgo, Daemon Sand, Garlan Tyrell and Edmure Tully. As Rhaegal roared overhead Ghost stepped silently beside Jon, his crimson eyes locked on the blue of the Night King.

“And now it ends,” Arya said with a smirk, spinning Thread in her hand.

“No,” Jon said meeting the Night King’s eyes, “now it begins.”

With that they all charged, roaring at valyrian steel met ice.
The Night King slashed at Jon, who dodged and sped past him turning to strike at the walker on the Night King’s right. The walker had been distracted by Arya’s thrust, too slow to Jon yelling as Nighttaker cleaved his head and shattered his body. Gendry brought Hartstine down toward the Night King, who dodged and slashed at him only to scrape across his valyrian steel shield. Ghost yelped as the Night King swung and slammed hit fist into the wolf’s leaping body, throwing him aside with inhuman strength.

Brienne dodged the strike of a White Walker to slash through his torso, but when another went to stab her Tormund slammed his axe through the icy blade and thrust Prick through the walker’s neck. When Brienne turned she saw a bald walker about to stab Tormund through the back and leapt in front of him to take the strike, only for Sandor’s Gravedigger to smash through his head, shattering the walker.

Gray Worm and Dirgo were fighting off a pair of walkers when Edmure Tully charged into the back of the one Gray Worm faced, running Autumn Stream through his abdomen. The moment the walker shattered Gray Worm threw Lock Piercer into the back of the one Dirgo fought. The dothraki swiftly kicked the spear back toward Gray Worm, who caught it and ducked while Dirgo charged forward and slashed through the walker about to stick ice through Gray Worm’s spine.

Jon turned to block the strike of a walker while Arya tried to stab the Night King, who dodged her strike and Gendry’s swing. After parrying a strike into the ground Jon raised Nighttaker, letting it cut through the jaw of the walker who shattered. However another had moved to run him through with a spear until Garlan Tyrell slammed Last Thorn into it, forcing the ice spear up while Daemon Sand slashed Desert Wind beneath the walker’s raised arm.

Ghost charged the Night King, slamming into the frozen man and knocking them to the ground. While Ghost rolled away and sped off, circling the group, the Night King threew his legs around and slammed them into the ground to stand and walk from the fray.

When Jon dashed at the Night King, he found four walkers in his way and a pair of giants walking toward him. Theon thrust at one with Winter Squall only to have the walker dodge, but before it could bring it’s sword down on the Greyjoy, Mother’s Might tore through it’s arm and back in a pair of cuts so quick they both seemed to hit before it even shattered.

Theon stumbled forward and pushed himself low, beneath the slash a walker aimed at Jorah to bring Winter Squall up in a rising slash that tore through the walker’s chest. Ice clattered to the ground as he found Jaime Lannister rushing to meet another walker in a series of riposte.

Jon tossed Nighttaker into his left hand and pulled the dragonglass dagger from his belt, stopping briefly to throw it at one of the giants. He felt a jolt of joy as the dagger pierced the giant’s forehead and he stumbled to the ground. Tossing Nighttaker back into his right hand he continued his charge.

Jaime glanced from the giant falling to his knees to his king, smirking as he pushed the walker he fought to face him. A moment later as Jaime pulled his arm back the walker shattered, Jon slashing Nighttaker through his back. The walker shattered and Jaime thrust Widow’s Wail forward, through the eye of the walker about to strike Jon.

With only the giant left the others turned to prepare themselves but watched Jon continue running, pulling his sword back. The giant reached for him but they watched as Jon flung his sword up while it bent down to grab him, piercing the giant’s chest. The moment its rotted body stilled, Jon leapt up, yanked the blade free and ran to his left, slipping under the giant’s extended arm before it crashed to the ground.
Eddison Tollett brought Ranger’s Wrath down toward the Night King, but he caught the blade and pushed it away while dodging a strike from Arya. When another walker thrust his spear toward Arya, Gendry rushed forward to put his shield in front of it, letting the spear shatter like glass while Edd turned and swung through the walker’s neck.

The Night King backed away and looked at the group surrounding him, each easily knocking away the wights he sent toward them until suddenly streams of flames backed them. He was cut off from his army by a wall of flames and men, fire and blood.

“Kneel,” Jon told the Night King, his eyes ice and fire as they met his inhuman gaze. “Kneel and let this end quickly.”

The Night King kept Jon’s gaze as he took a breath and raised his chin before his lips quirked into a smile and he raised his left hand. His sword in his right, his left clutched at the air which suddenly froze into a sharp spear. His head lowered, he gave Jon a slight nod.

Jon took a step forward and shook his head. “Together,” he said before charging. Arya yelled first before they all joined the charge.

The Night King met Jon’s slash while thrusting his spear at Arya, then swinging around, pushing Jon’s sword aside and slamming the spear into Gendry’s shield. He thrust it past Gendry toward Jorah, who pulled his shoulder away at the last moment, while bringing his sword down on Theon, who had help blocking from Edd’s sword.

Garlan and Daemon rushed forward, but the Night King parried their strikes and dodged Daemon’s thrown spear before slashing his own up, slicing through the front of his armor. The dornish man yelled and backed away while Garlan thrust Last Thorn at the Night King, who dodged and slammed the side of his spear into the knight’s face. When he stumbled back the Night King slashed at him while turning to thrust his spear back at Sandor who came from his rear, turning to parry the greatsword as if it were a rapier.

Dirgo rushed past Sandor slashing at the Night King who pulled his sword hand to the side, slamming the pommel into the dothraki’s head as he dodged. While the man stumbled, the Night King thrust his spear past Sandor to Brienne, who deflected it straight into Jaime’s Widow’s Wail, holding it in place as Giant’s Nail slammed into it, shattering the spear.

The Night King dropped the remnants of the spear and backed away, turning to parry a strike from Jon. A split second later he began backing away, moving his head and shoulders slightly to avoid Arya’s thrust until he suddenly dashed forward, sliding under one of her thrust and avoiding Gendry’s hammer strike at his back to slam his left palm into Arya’s chest. She was thrown off the ground, flying back until she hit Theon, who leapt up to take the impact of her before she hit the wall of flames behind them. Both rolled across the ground as Gendy fought the urge to rush to her side and Ghost appeared beside her protectively.

Edd dashed forward to slash at the Night King, who dodged the strike and slashed across Edd’s shoulder before turning and cutting across Jorah’s stomach. He went to thrust at Jon, but Jaime dashed forward, letting Widow’s Wail push the icy sword off target while Jon thrust at the Night King’s face.

Iced blue eyes watched the dark valyrian steel blade pass centimeters from his cheek before the Night King tilted his head, avoiding Jon’s sudden swing. The moment the blade was past him the Night Kin spun, knocking aside Tormund’s axe and slashing to the side, cutting into Brienne’s leg.

Tormund and Jaime dashed to the Night King, who dodged their flurry of strikes before grabbing
Tormund and throwing him into Jaime a moment before he slashed at both men, cutting their sides. The moment he stepped back he dashed forward, avoiding the greatsword strike that landed where he’d been and parrying the spear and shortsword of Gray Worm before grabbing the Unsullied by the face and held his sword out, letting it slice through across the torso of the Unsullied as he was thrown into the Dothraki.

Edmure and Gendry let out a yell as they charged with Arya and Theon to join Jon in facing off against the Night King. The frozen sovereign dashed forward to meet them, shifting to the left at the last moment.

Gendry moved to block a strike aimed at Edmure, who stepped past him with a slash the Night King avoided before slamming his fist into the Tully’s chest. While he sucked in a breath the Night King turned, his sword rising, slashing across Edmure’s bicep and collar.

The Night King went back and forth blocking strikes from Arya, Jon and Theon before finally taking a step forward and slamming his foot into Arya’s chest. That knocked her back into Gendry, and he swiftly thrust his sword and turned, slashing through Gendry’s right pauldron and blocking Jon and Theon’s incoming strikes.

He then turned and turned back toward Arya and Gendry, thrusting his sword toward Arya’s heart. At the last moment Gendry moved his shield against the blade, knocking the sword aside so it pierced Arya’s right shoulder and Gendry’s side. When the Night King turned again, Jon had turned his blade to block while Theon gasped, leaving himself open for the Night King’s sword to slash across his stomach.

The Night King backed away, looking from Jon to his injured guards before arching his brow. From above Daenerys and Sansa saw Jon standing across from the Night King while all the rest lay bleeding.

His eyes were locked on Jon’s when the Night King swung his sword to the left, knocking aside Arya’s thrown catspaw dagger.

Jon took a breath before he dashed forward, slashing at the Night King. He dodged, but found Jon turning, swinging Nighttaker around for a backhanded stab at him. When he stepped back to avoid it he felt his shin slam into Jon’s heel, making the Night King stumble back while Jon switched his grip and swung forward, forcing the Night King to block the strike which made him take a few shaky steps back before falling to the ground.

“Fuck me,” Sandor marveled as he watched Jon stab at the Night King, who rolled aside and thrust his hand into the ground to throw himself back to his feet, barely avoiding a rising slash from Jon.

The moment he backed away a giant white wolf flew into his side, grabbing his left arm in his jaw and yanking the Night King aside hard enough as it turned while landing, throwing the inhuman aside. Before the Night King could retaliate he saw the wolf run off a split second before he heard the flap of wings and looked up to find all three dragons overhead.

He exchanged looks with Daenerys, Sansa and finally Jon as all three said, “Dracarys!”

The air filled with flame as all three dragons scorched the earth. While even that didn’t seem to harm the Night King, it was enough to make him show a moment of concern as he was blinded by flames. When they finally began to fade he looked to where Jon had been and found only a white wolf glaring at him silently as the injured guard had risen to their feet, holding their arms as best they could.
It was the crunch of ashen earth that made the Night King turn and thrust his sword forward, but Jon deftly avoided it. When he tried his own thrust which the Night King dodged, Jon shifted Nighttaker and slammed the pommel into the Night King’s jaw before turning and swinging at him. Though the Night King ducked his head to avoid the edge of the sword, Jon turned it down to block the Night King’s sword as he tried to slash at him, forcing the icy blade into the earth as Jon turned with a yell and cut through the Night King’s torso.

The world seemed to still as Jon took a breath and watched the Night King’s face twist in pain before his body exploded into chunks of ice, unleashing a rush of wind that swept out from him, blowing out the fires around them.

At once every wight fell to the ground and the few remaining White Walkers screeched in agony as their bodies froze solid and shattered. Soldiers looked around in shock before their eyes traveled toward the shore where the saw Jon standing with his sword raised, his chest heaving as he caught his breath.

Turning to them, he raised his right hand with Nighttaker and the let out a cheer a moment before light broke the horizon. At last the Long Night was over and dawn had come for the living.

Chapter End Notes

I settled on Nighttaker because it’s the same but opposite of Lightbringer. Jon isn’t fulfilling prophecies, but making his own, creating his own legacy and dynasty rather than remaking old ones. It’s a thing I tend to prefer over standard prophecy stories where it’s all pretty much to the letter.

I’m sure I forgot someone here but there’s a lot going on. I tried to use little moments to settle relationships in the first half and then make the key people have their moments with some fun groupings. Also I imagine some will be disappointed Ghost wasn’t involved more, but I don’t think it’s even slightly realistic to have a giant direwolf in the chaotic fray at the end and survive, so he mostly took care of wights around them while the others fought.

So the big end Jon squad vs NK fight was written to Shredder’s Suite from the original TMNT movie, particularly the bit from about 2:33 on repeat, and an MV using footage from the last Rurouni Kenshin movie’s Kenshin squad vs Shishio fight. Doesn’t matter, but I thought it funny and could give a sense of the kind of vibe I went for with all of them attacking NK but getting bodied.

I’m sure someone’s going to be pissed Night King didn’t kill more people, but I don’t think you need character deaths to have drama. If you care about the characters them being at risk should be enough and if you don’t care about them then why would their death’s matter? So it’s low deaths for named characters but hopefully still suspenseful.

I was originally toying with a more brutal, blood fight, but decided that it fit more to have their unity be so strong that they only get relatively small wounds. Because they all work together they all make it through with only one or two scars. Plus, they won’t have months off to heal from a brutal fight. There’s still another war to fight.
The Coming Storm

Chapter Summary

The Storm comes North

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Though many died from wounds in the battle those among Jon’s guard all found their wounds easily treated and wrapped. The pain was a reminder they were alive as much as the sun rising through the sky.

After returning to camp and spending a day mending themselves, the army began it’s march south. It would be slower than it had going north, but they moved as fast as they could while the king and his queens flew overhead on the back of their dragons. Despite wanting to ride with the men, Jon rode Rhaegal so another could take the horse he would surely be given.

It felt like they woke to another world when they found azure skies that morning, but flying toward the mound of ice that was the Wall they found weeping clouds darkening the skies. Thankfully the lightning seemed to be far from them and the dragons could sense any strays that came near them, dodging the bolts before they started.

Even through the heavy rain he could see the mound of ice on the horizon, the gap the Night King’s army had made to pass through it still in tact. With a glance back and below he could see the army heading toward it slowly. With a glance to the bay he saw the boats as the horn blasted.

Jon’s eyes widened, his hands tightening around the grip of the saddle when all three dragons roared and started flying erratically, threatening to throw each rider off if not for the straps holding them in place. Rhaegal dived almost straight down before twisting and shooting up, spewing flames that they passed through for a moment, which might have burned Jon if they weren’t moving so fast they barely touched him.

Below Arya and the others gripped the reins of their horses and gasped as they watched Rhaegal and Viserion screech in pain before they’d even slammed into each other. Both fell for a moment before Drogon shot past them and all three sped toward the ground south of the wall. Hearing the horn, Arya looked to the bay and saw a bolt of lightning back light a ship.

She and the rest of the army picked up their pace, speeding toward the gap in the broken Wall.

Drogon hit the ground first, throwing his head back and screeching as another horn blast sounded while Rhaegal landed and Viserion stumbled, cracking a tree that fell against another. The dragons cried in pain as Jon removed the straps and called to the others, “Get off!”

Daenerys and Sansa dismounted their dragons and they all backed away, coming together to watch the dragons writhe and cry in pained frustration as the horn blew again and again, louder and louder. It was almost enough to block out the sound of the horses approaching from the east.

Having forgone his armor in exchange for thicker clothing to keep warm during the flight, Jon had
only Nighttaker and a dagger to defend them, though each woman quickly drew their own valyrian steel sword as the riders neared.

The first to come into view was a man with pale lips wearing a cuirass with a sigil not unlike the Greyjoy’s kraken only with a large eye over the head and another larger eye across the abdomen. He quickly dismounted, staring at the dragons as he put the horn to his lips and blew with a grin.

Daenerys glared at him until she saw the man leading the gilded riders behind him, her eyes widening as she gasped. “Daario?”

The commander looked them over as he and his men dismounted, giving Jon a once over before snorting dismissively. “I’ve come for you, my queen.”

“For me?” Daenerys shook her head. Seeing Euron walk toward Drogon she stepped forward, aiming her sword at him. “Touch him and I’ll slit your throat!”

Euron turned to her and grinned. “Kill the king, take the queens. I’ll claim my own prize.”

At that Euron blew his horn again, only this time the sound seemed harsher, more directed as Drogon threw his head down, but then the glyphs across horn glowed crimson and Drogon stepped back, growling as he turned to his brothers.

Rhaegal and Viserion dug into the ground a moment before Drogon charged them, roaring as the three dragons tumbled, snapping trees before he slashed at Rhaegal and pushed off the ground, taking flight. Rhaegal roared with Viserion, taking flight and chasing their brother.

The gilded soldiers charged Jon, who dashed forward to meet them. He parried the first strike, slashing through the neck of the man on his right before turning the sword in his hand and stabbing back into the side of the one on his left. He then pulled the blade free and switched his grip, slashing through the gilded chain across another’s chest.

Seeing the king so deftly kill three trained mercenaries, Euron arched his brow and pulled his axe from his belt, waiting for an opening.

Four men charged Jon and he killed one before deflecting strikes from the rest, but that allowed three more to head for each woman. Sansa swung Lady’s Tear at one, but the man easily deflected the strike. He hadn’t been expecting her to use the new angle to slash down through his leg, making him cry in pain while another man rushed forward to grab her hands and force the sword from her grip. Daenerys took two strikes at one soldier before he knocked the sword from her grip and another rushed forward to grab her hands and pull them behind her back, tying them with a rope.

“Don’t fight this, my queen,” Daario called out from near the horses.

Jon slashed through the arm of a soldier and turned as Sansa screamed. He rushed the man holding her over his shoulder with Lady’s Tear in his left hand. Seeing the king charging, he tried to defend with the valyrian steel sword in his off hand, but Jon’s slipped past it and into his neck.

Daario clicked his tongue, taking his myrish stiletto and flinging it at Jon, hitting him in the back when he reached for Sansa.

“How!” Daenerys screamed while her captor reached for her sword.

Turning to her he ignored the knife sticking into his back and charged the man, cutting through his hand and turning to slash through his neck.
“Dany-” Jon started, turning at the last second to block an overhead strike from Euron’s axe.

The gilded soldiers grabbed the women and fled to their horses. They’d do their jobs, but even valyrian steel wasn’t worth risking their lives as their comrades had.

Euron laughed as Jon deflected his strike, dodging his valyrian steel sword, sliding back and slashing at the king. Euron turned and went for an overhead slash Jon dodged, avoiding Jon’s back swing. When Jon went for his own overhead strike Euron brought his axe back up, knocking the sword aside and shifting it to bring it down toward Jon’s collar, but Nighttaker slid up to block it.

Wincing at the dagger in his side, Jon’s strength faltered and Euron pressed the axe through Jon’s jerkin, cutting into him as Jon fell to a knee. That shifted the axe enough Jon to let it slide past his shoulder, using Euron’s brief unbalance as an opening to slash clear through the eye on the abdomen of his armor, opening his stomach.

The Greyjoy grunted, backing away as he saw blood pouring through his armor. Seeing the Golden Company mounting their horses with the bound women, Euron hurried back to his own. Grabbing his reins he blew his horn and lead the riders away from the clearing.

Jon hissed as he tore the dagger from his back and started to run, wincing in pain before throwing it at the riders. The stiletto spun before burying itself in the back of a rider who fell forward, his horse keeping to the charge with the others.

Though he tried to chase them, Jon knew before he reached the first tree he would catch them. That didn’t stop him trying, following them to the shore where he saw them being lifted onto the ship already drifting out of the bay. He watched as Drogon landed on the deck of the massive ship while Rhaegal and Viserion flew to either side of Jon, each covered in relatively small scratches.

Both dragons cried out as Drogon glared at them from the departing ship before looking to Jon. His eyes stung as much as his wounds as he took a breath and turned. “Come, we’ll get them back.”

He mounted Rhaegal and the dragons flew back to the clearing they’d created, allowing Jon to land again. Arya and the others arrived to find Jon wincing as he gathered Lady’s Tear and Dragon’s Song.

“Arya called, leaping from her horse as the others looked around in confusion.

“He took them,” Jon said with a shaky breath as they rushed to his side to check his wounds. “Greyjoy took them both.”

“Euron?” Theon gasped.

“He took Drogon. Used some horn to make him obey,” Jon winced when Arya touched the wound on his back. “Dany even knew the leader of the Golden Company men he brought. I think it was her old lover.”

“Daario?” Jorah asked with a sneer.

Jon nodded, his jaw shifting as he struggled to keep a level head. He turned from those who came for him, letting out a shaky breath and closing his eyes, gnashing his teeth and choking down the knot in his throat.

“We’ll get them back,” Arya told him quietly, shaken at the sight of her brother so unwrought.

With a breath he nodded, looking to them. “We’ll continue to Winterfell and send ravens to every
house.” His emotions gave way to fury and ice, fire and blood. “Then we march on King’s Landing and any house that ignores the call will regret it when I rip that cunt off the throne and hang that prick by his entrails.”

The others exchanged shocked looks, having never heard Jon speak in such a way nor show such anger. If he’d slain the Night King with a cold calm heart, what could stand in the way of his fury?

XOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXO

While the queens were taken to cabins guarded by Golden Company men, Euron hurried to his own quarters, his skin paled. “Fuck off! I’ll rape the corpse of whichever fuck bothers me!”

Three young boys followed behind him, closing the door to his cabin where their glamour fell away, leaving three warlocks. They helped him out of his armor, dumping the pooled blood as they saw entrails coming through the wound.

“Fuck,” Euron laughed. “Bastard killed me.”

“You’re not dead,” said the noseless warlock.

“I’ve seen men die from lesser wounds. I left a trail of blood for the cunt to follow. Fucker killed me.”

The warlocks exchanged looks before the ashen haired one said simply, “What is dead may never die.”

Euron’s gaze narrowed before shifting toward the dragonglass shards wrapped on his desk. Looking back to the warlocks he licked his lips and nodded. “Give me a drink and let me die, then do it.”

They looked hesitant, as if wanting to ask if he was sure they should let him die, but knew better than to question his orders. He watched them pour shade of the evening into a glass, but when they stopped he called out, “More!” When they glanced back he laughed. “Fill it to the rim. If I’m going to die, let me die knowing.”

They exchanged looks before relenting, filling as much as they could from the cask before bringing it to him. Euron quickly downed the entire glass, holding it vertical to take every drop he could before throwing it aside and laying back on his bed.

He took a breath and looked to the warlocks, who watched his eyes suddenly widen as his head rolled back and he stared at the ceiling, gaping slightly. His breath quickened before it slowed, his hand resting just above the wound in his stomach flooding the mattress with his blood.

What blood remained in him seemed to stretch toward his eyes or sink to his extremities, leaving his face and body pale as his breathing stopped and the light left his eyes. The mutilated men looked to one another before the earless one handed the ashen haired man a shard of dragonglass. All three took hold of it as they closed their eyes and took a breath, focusing on it before pressing it into Euron’s chest.

There was no screaming, not even more than a tiny trickle of blood from the center of his chest. His eyes didn’t go blue, they stayed black, flooded with blood like his hands as his pupils shifted without a breath and Euron sat up.

His pale blue lips curved into a grin. “What is dead may never die.”
Originally I had it as Dany is the one who gets taken to play on her ending up like Rhaenys while previously thinking she’d be Visenya, but decided to go with both for a few little moments going forward.

I went with Euron’s show sigil since it’s show verse, and decided screw it go nuts and what’s dead may never die.
What Is Dead May Never Die

Chapter Summary

Euron returns to King’s Landing to claim his prize, and Jon marches south.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Sat atop the Iron Throne Cersei wore a victorious grin watching Daenerys Targaryen and Sansa Stark being brought before her bound and gagged. At her side Petyr Baelish stared at Sansa hungrily while Harrold Hardyng stood off to the side looking disturbed at the sight of their queen’s haughty grin. If Jaime hadn’t betrayed her she would have found him that night and taken him until she couldn’t walk.

Her eyes drifted from their captives to her would be king, her brow sinking as she saw his pale skin and darkened eyes. “What happened to you?”

Euron held up his arms with a grin, the others coming to a stop while he continued toward the throne. “I’m a new man.”

“What does that mean exactly?” She asked, shifting in the throne as he came up the steps.

Coming to a stop in front of her he smirked. “It means I look forward to bending you over that throne and putting undying krakens up your cunt to replace the worthless lion cubs your brother put there.”

Cersei felt tears sting her eyes as she gasped at the audacity of this man. “Gregor,” she spat.

The queensguard unsheathed his sword and stepped forward, sticking the blade through Euron’s stomach.

She smiled watching Euron stumble back with the sword in his torso, groaning and moaning until her face fell watching him start to laugh. His eyes met hers as he pushed the sword to it’s hilt in his abdomen, leaving it there as he held up his hands. “As I said, I’m a new man.”

“How?” Qyburn asked, stepping forward in awe.

“I have my ways,” Euron said, grinning as he started toward Cersei again.

“Gregor!” Cersei demanded in a panic.

When Gregor started to move toward Euron, Qyburn held out a hand to stop Tyene from leaving his side as he called out, “Wait.”

Cersei gaped at her Hand as Euron’s men rushed forward and slaughtered the rest of her queensguard, leaving only Gregor Clegane at her side. “Qyburn, you-”

She turned when Euron’s hands wrapped around her throat, grinning as her eyes met his. “I don’t really need you to make heirs when I can’t die, but I’ll make sure your corpse won’t be of use.
before I throw you in the bay.”

Cersei was sure someone would stop this, yet everyone in the hall simply stood and watched in shock and fear as she tasted her own tears. This couldn’t be how she died. Maggy the frog had been right about everything else. It should have been Tyrion that tried to killed her, and yet looking into Euron’s eyes she remembered he was the younger brother to Balon Greyjoy. Could she have been wrong the entire time?

Once her body fell still and lifeless, Euron threw her body from the throne and looked to Qyburn. “You can bring her back like this one?” He nodded toward Gregor.

The Hand stared at Cersei’s corpse before nodding to Euron. “It should be possible.”

“Good,” Euron smirked. “Let’s see if we can make some true undying krakens worthy of the new king, otherwise I’ll find another to try.”

Euron turned and sank into the Iron Throne with a content sigh. Three children stepped toward him and their bodies shimmered before they were replaced by three gaunt, blue lipped men who took positions around the throne.

“Take the queens and throw them in one of the rooms,” Euron said looking at his hostages.

Petyr dared to take a hesitant step forward. “Excuse me, your grace.” Seeing the man’s black eyes turn on him Petyr fought a chill. “If possible I thought we’d take Sansa Stark and return to the Vale to wed her to it’s heir.”

Euron smirked. “Not yet. Her husband yet lives.”

Petyr put his disappointment and anger aside, not wanting to risk his own neck. “The bastard king still lives?”

“He does,” Euron nodded, looking to the queens glaring at him, “and his queens will be our guests until he comes to collect them and I open his gut and hang him over the gates.”

XOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXO

Coming through the gates of Winterfell there was no sense of victory despite the sun being at it’s peak in an azure sky. Rickon stood with his jaw set, Johnna wearing a small frown at his side as she held his hand for support. Even the stoic Bran looked distraught as he met Jon’s eyes.

“Jon,” Bran said, waving him over once he dismounted. After a moment of confusion Jon walked to his brother, who pulled him closer and whispered into his ear.

Jon’s eyes briefly widened before settling into a cool mask as he nodded. Standing, he squeezed Bran’s shoulder. “Thank you.” Turning to the others Jon ordered, “Lords Corbray, Belmore, Grafton, Lynderly, Waxley, and Waynwood will be brought to meet the king’s justice.”

As the courtyard gasped, Jon told them, “Any loyal to them or who put up a fight should be gathered. If they question it let them ask the lords of their debts to Littlefinger and their part in Robin Arryn’s death.”

Those who rode in with Jon left to gather the lords, Jon standing with Rickon and Bran as the lords were brought in yelling, writhing, crying.

“Throw them all in a cell. I don’t care if they kill each other,” Jon said staring at the lineup of
betrayers, “it just saves me swings of the sword.”

“I am so sorry, your grace,” Yohn Royce said mournfully as he watched them be taken away. “If I’d only known…”

“It’s not your fault, Lord Royce,” Jon assured, clasping a hand on the man’s shoulder. “I don’t doubt your loyalty, or that of any other lord who fought alongside us. But they cannot avoid justice for their part in the kidnapping of our queens.”

(Of course,” Yohn nodded.

While the lords were brought to the cells, Jon followed Rickon and Bran to the Great Hall where they high table was encircled by loyal lords and allies. Arya seemed to head Gendry, Davos, Tormund, Melisandre, Brienne, Theon, Sandor and Jaime while Tyrion stood at the front of Varys, Missandei, Torah, Grey Worm and Dirgo. Edmure Tully, Brynden Tully and Hoster Blackwood stood beside Arianne Martell, Daemon Sand, Tremond Gargalen, Garlen Tyrell, Alester Oakheart, Horas and Hobber Redwyne, Leyton Hightower, and Yohn Royce.

“Cersei is dead,” Bran said, quieting the room. “Euron killed her on the throne when he brought Sansa and Daenerys to her and Petyr Baelish.”

“Are they safe?” Arianne asked with a frown.

“He’s keeping them in a room in the Maidenvault. It’s guarded by Ironborn and Golden Company men. He’s using them to keep them and the Vale men Littlefinger brought in line.”

“So he has the rest of our men,” Yohn Royce sighed, “the Golden Company, the Ironborn and the largest of the dragons.”

“And he’s undead,” added Bran, to their shock. “The stories of him keeping warlocks were true. He figured out how to become as Uncle Benjen was. He’s still himself but he’s not alive, not really.”

Seeing Bran glance at him, Rickon stepped forward. “We’ve called for horses from every house and town in the North and sent letters to southron allies to prepare them as well, so as you move south it will hopefully be easier to move quickly.”

Jon wore a proud smile as he gave his youngest brother a nod. “Thank you, Lord Stark.”

Rickon perked up a bit. “Of course, Jon-uh, your grace.”

“I’ll need ravens too,” Jon declared. “Any who can but don’t support us will find themselves wishing the Night King had come.”

Jon spent his night writing and signing letters to every southron house not already with them. They also sent letters to their reserves letting them know to rejoin them as the army marched south.

The next morning Jon stood in the courtyard as lords and ladies of the Vale were brought out to say their final words. Some begged for mercy but found it only with how quickly their heads rolled through bloodied dirt.

Once their bodies were set ablaze Jon and the others left Winterfell, and though others seemed wary of the men of the Vale, Jon kept Yohn Royce close to show they weren’t all traitors. By the time they reached Moat Cailin that seemed to work and those that remained were welcomed as they had been on their way from the Wall.
The further south they traveled the quicker they could move as more horses were brought to them. They also started rearming their men with steel now that dragonglass wasn’t necessary. Their numbers grew as they traveled, those who remained south joining them and bringing what aid they could. Though some ignored their calls, they would regret it in the years to come while those who rode to join the army were welcomed.

Jon did his best to not push them all too hard, but he didn’t care for himself the same way. Arya noticed he didn’t sleep much at night, candles burning in his tents at all hours or walking the camp for hours. His anger has chilled the warmer they got, growing quieter, clearly lost in thought whenever he could push aside concern for what might be happening in the Red Keep.

One night after the camp has settled Jon returned to his tent to find Arya sat waiting for him with two cups of ale. Though surprised and a bit hesitant to take the offered cup, Jon took it and sat in the chair next to her.

After a few moments Arya looked to Jon. “They’re strong. They’ll make it through this.”

Jon stared ahead, taking another drink before responding. “I know that. I don’t know about me though.”

“You?” Arya asked, turning to him.

“If we don’t get them back I…” He frowned. “I don’t want to become like Robert. I don’t want to end up bitter because the women I loved died.”

“They won’t die,” assured Arya.

“And if something else happens,” he said sitting forward, taking a breath, closing his eyes and shaking his head, pushing that away. He couldn’t think on that, not without getting too angry.

“It will work, Jon,” Arya said reaching over to hold his hand and meet his gaze when he looked to her. “You’ll sit with wives who garner more jealousy that either your crown or throne.” She was relieved to hear him chuckle at that. “Our plan will work. I know it will.”

Chapter End Notes

I’m sure people will be disappointed it wasn’t Tyrion or Jaime who killed Cersei, but I like showing Cersei as a dumbshit whose assumptions and prejudice ruined things. I mean half the male characters are younger brothers so there’s lot of potential to crap on her thinking and still technically fit her prophecy. Plus I like crapping on prophecy in general.

Jon is being super harsh here, but I think having just been resurrected, having his sense of victory stolen as well as both his wives has pissed him off and ‘woken the dragon’. Also even though they know the Night King is dead they still burn the bodies almost as a reaction with slight concern that they could somehow rise anyway, but really it’s an extra fuck you to not send their bones back home.
Sansa felt much as she had years earlier as a prisoner within the Red Keep despite being treated as a guest, only this time she shared her room with Daenerys Targaryen.

The first few days they were left to themselves, given their meals and largely ignored which they preferred to their occasional guests.

Daario was the first to seek them out, finding the women sat at a table speaking quietly when he entered. They clutched each other’s hands and glared at the sellsword, who smirked dismissively at their anger while he approached.

“I hope you find the room suitable, my queen,” Daario said to Daenerys.

“Why have you done this?” she asked, disappointment on her face.

“Isn’t it obvious?” he asked arching his brow. “For you.”

“So you’ve kidnapped me and helped another man take my throne to help me?” She asked with a scoff.

“I did as you asked, let Meereen settle themselves,” he said defensively. “I couldn’t leave you here to suffer beneath some bastard king when you deserve to be a queen with a throne of your own.”

“Did you plan to betray Cersei and now Euron?” Daenerys asked, keeping her voice even despite the coldness of her gaze.

Daario shrugged. “You don’t have to be queen here.”

Daenerys shook her head. “Did you ever care about me or was I just another achievement?”

Seeing her disappointment Daario scoffed at what he felt was ingratitude. “What’s the difference?”

He tried to win her over with flowers after that, but she took each and threw them into the hearth without a moment of consideration. In time his visits became less frequent, only stopping in to check on them but finding no warmth when he did. There was even less when Petyr Baelish visited with one of his guards.

“Once things have settled I’ll get us from here, I promise,” he told Sansa.

“Your promises are worth less than the contents of a chamber pot.”

“You’d prefer I leave you here?” He asked stepping toward the table where she sat. “Let the
ironborn and their monstrous king have you? Maybe you’d like to end up like Yara Greyjoy. Locked in the dungeon, drugged senseless and little more than a jester to amuse her uncle.”

“How would that be any different from going with you?”

“Because once you come with me we can began making you a true queen,” he answered. “You’ll marry Harrold and gain the Vale. Then we can reclaim the North and Riverrun and begin taking each kingdom until they are all ours. We will be true conquerors of Westeros, freeing it from monsters and undead kings. Songs will be written of our journey to the throne.”

“Our journey?” Sansa scoffed. “I’d kill myself before I ever marry one of your pathetic puppets or even looked at a worthless worm like you.” Rising to her feet she met his eyes with a glare as cold as the winds beyond the Wall. “When Jon comes I’m going to look down on you with a smile as you beg for mercy.” Daenerys wore a pride smile as she looked up at Sansa from her seat beside her.

A knock on the door drew the guard’s attention, though Petyr maintained Sansa’s glare until the door opened and another guard stepped inside. “My lord, King Euron called you to the Great Hall.”

“Did he say why?” Petyr asked glancing over his shoulder.

“Targaryen banners were spotted south, approaching the King’s Gate,” the guard answered.

When Petyr turned to look at the kidnapped queens he found them both wearing victorious grin. With a sneer he turned to leave the room. “Double the guard here.”

Once the door was closed Sansa sank to her seat with a sigh. “I knew he’d come.”

Daenerys nodded, reaching over to squeeze her hand. “Now we just need to figure out how to get to him.”

XOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXO

The sky was overcast as it seemed to be since the day Euron took the throne for himself, but no rain fell as Aegon Targaryen stood at the front of his army come to reclaim his wives and his throne. From the walls enclosing King’s Landing Euron stood with his reanimated kingsguard alongside Daario Naharis and his golden mercenaries. Both men stared down at Jon, who kept his gaze on Euron, which seemed to make Daario’s sneer deepen.

“Send a rider to parley,” Euron told Qyburn. “Let’s hear what they have to say.”

“At once, your grace,” Qyburn

Jon’s gaze finally broke with a glance to the opening King’s Gate as a group of riders rode to meet them. A smile took his face as he looked to Gendry, Davos, Jaime and Sandor. Each gave him a firm nod, assuring him this would work as they rode out to meet the men.

In a dark corridor Arya stood across from Tyrion Lannister and Varys. Glancing to her side she saw the rest of their company including Theon, Tormund, Brienne, Podrick, Laul, Meera, Jorah, Grey Worm, Daemon Sand, Brynden Tully and Bronn along with dozens of other men.

In a small cage barely illuminated by the torch Varys held was a maester’s raven taken from Winterfell. After what felt like hours it’s eyes shifted white and he pecked at the cage before cawing three times in a quick pattern.
Arya smirked. “Let’s go.”

The raven’s eyes returned to normal as Arya lead the group up through the depths the Red Keep’s dungeons. The few they met along the way were easily dealt with and silenced, but most they found in the dungeons wouldn’t be of much help, leaving them there until things were settled so they didn’t risk being found by their fleeing.

However when they looked into the cell and saw Yara sat against the Wall, Grey Worm pointed her out and Theon gasped, rushing to the door to peer through the gap. Seeing his torn expression before backing away, ready to leave her for their sake, Arya reached for her lock pick and stepped to the door. Theon gaped at her back as she swiftly unlocked it.

Yara turned her gaze up to watch Arya step into the room, her distant expression turning to confusion at the torch lit group in the doorway. Her eyes widened when she saw Theon step into the room, his lip quivering.

“Theron?” Yara asked with a laugh, shaking her head and licking her dry, pale lips. “This is bad. They haven’t given me any yet and I’m already having visions.”

Theon glanced at Arya before stepping forward. “This is no vision, sister.”

Arya walked with him, her lock picks in hand. “You think you can fight?”

“You’re freeing me?” Yara asked, blinking at the girl.

“We’re here with King Jon come to free his wives and kill Euron,” Theon explained with a smirk. “Thought you might want to help.”

Yara held out her cuffed hands for the girl to unlock. “Just give me a sword.”

**XOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXO**

Euron watched Jon and his men retreat to their army while his riders returned, the Targaryen king turning to look up at him again. When the men made their way to him, Euron demanded, “What did he say?”

They exchanged a glance before looking to Euron. “He said he’d be willing to end this all without a battle. Send a champion to face him and if he wins you exit the city and face justice.”

“And if we win?”

“He said he wouldn’t lose even if you came yourself, he-“ The man stopped, wincing at his stupidity.

“He what?” Euron asked, turning to him.

The man gulped, sighing. “He said he proved as much before.”

Euron turned to Jon and glared down at the man who looked up with cold patience.

“I’ll go.” They all turned to Daario, who smirked. “Daenerys’ men or Jorah likely put him up to it.”

“Why?” asked Euron.

“When I marched on Meereen the Great Masters sent a champion to challenge her best fighter in single combat. I killed him and the next day the city was ours. Perhaps Daenerys’ men told him of
my deed and he wishes to mimic it.”

Euron looked from the sellsword to Jon below, having turned his attention to the King’s Gate with his head tilted slightly as if waiting for it to open.

“Fine,” Euron said waving Daario away. “Go kill him and be done with it.”

Daario glanced down at the northern king with a laugh before turning and leading his men down toward the gate.

XOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXO

“I think I know a path to the Tower of the Hand,” Sansa said as she and Daenerys ripped the legs off a chair. “From there we can figure out how to get to Flea Bottom.”

“Maybe I can try to call for Drogon,” Daenerys said looking at the nail sticking through the end of the chair leg. “There has to be some way to break through whatever spell he used.”

“Don’t ride him,” Sansa said looking to Daenerys. “If you try and he has that horn…”

“Sansa…” Daenerys frowned, looking to her sister-wife. “If something happens, let him know I loved him. And know I loved you as well.”

Sansa shook her her head, stepping to Daenerys. “We’ll both get to him.”

Daenerys smiled before stepping forward and sliding a hand to Sansa’s cheek, pulling her into a kiss. Sansa closed her burning eyes, returning the kiss before Daenerys sank back to the floor with sigh.

“I’m glad I met you,” she said meeting Sansa’s gaze. “Both of you.”

“And I you,” Sansa nodded.

Hearing the door start to open the women turned, moving so they had a clear path to attack whoever entered. The door opened and a Golden Company soldier fell to the ground, blood pouring from his throat before his body was pulled back into the hall. After sharing a confused glance the queens watched Arya, Jorah and Brienne enter the room with their swords drawn.


“Jorah,” Daenerys said with relief.

Seeing the queens armed with chair legs Arya grinned, sheathing Needle as she moved to bring them into a brief hug. Once she stepped back she took the chair legs and tossed them aside.

“You won’t need those,” she said waving over Brienne, who set the satchel hanging from her back on the table and opened it to reveal two sword belts with simple sheaths holding Dragon’s Song and Lady’s Tear.

The queens took their swords and strapped them to their waist while Daenerys looked to Arya. “How’d you get in here?”

“I know my way through the keep, your grace,” Varys said from beneath his hood in the door frame.

“What’s going on out there? Where’s Jon?”
“Distracting Euron and his men,” said Arya.

“Likely fighting Daario by now,” added Jorah.

“What?” Daenerys asked looking to him as she finished with her belt.

“King Jon has our army at the King’s Gate and has offered to face their champion,” Tyrion explained. “They’ve pulled their forces there to prepare for a siege, leaving us able to slip past them.”

“Now while you two follow Varys back, I’m going to head south and open the gate for him so we can take the city.”

Sansa looked to Daenerys, who gave a slight nod before both turned to Arya. “We’re going,” Sansa said firmly.

“Don’t be idiots,” Arya scoffed. “You two can barely fight, you’re unarmored… just go to safety so we can fight without worrying about you.”

“This is our fight as much as it is yours,” Daenerys said firmly. “More so, even.”

“We have to settle this,” said Sansa. “We can’t stand aside.”

Arya’s brow knit as she shot both a glare. “You two… Jon’s already a wreck because you were taken!” She winced, not wanting to say as much, though it wasn’t much of a secret. With a sigh she continued, “If anything happens he’ll be ruined.”

Both queens wore frowns at the thought of Jon being a wreck because of them, but with a share glance shook their heads. “We’re going to see this through,” Sansa said as Lady’s Tear shed it’s sheath.

“We’re going to take our home,” Daenerys said as Dragon’s Song rang.

Arya looked between the two before looking to Brienne and Jorah, who gave her a nod so she lead them out of the room and the queens followed, ready to take their kingdom.

Chapter End Notes

Bit of compressed time here but it would be mostly filler of them being locked away in a room if I tried to stretch it. I thought it fitting Jon approach from the King’s Gate, but his approaching from the south is meant to imply he went to every kingdom and gathered all he could before riding to King’s Landing.

The raven in the cage is basically Bran signaling the team in the secret tunnels. I thought that would be a nice little way to keep him involved despite being back in Winterfell. Arya’s party is basically meant to be people tied to Sansa and Dany or who know King’s Landing, even Daemon was with Oberyn so I threw him in as well for the heck of it.

Finally got around to a bit of Sanerys for those who care for it, but I didn’t think it enough to add to the tags since it’s such a brief moment.
Chapter Summary

The Taking of King’s Landing.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Stood in the Great Hall, Harrold Hardyng looked over the few Vale knights before making his way toward Petyr who stared at the Iron Throne.

“My lord,” he said firmly. “You truly believe it best we wait?”

“You saw the man,” Petyr said nodding toward the throne. “We’d do little against the Golden Company, his Ironborn and his undead guard. It’s better for us wait, gather our strength and take the throne when his gilded knights flee back to Essos and the Ironborn return to their reaping and raping.” Turning to Harrold he wore a slick smile. “And when we do who better to sit atop it then a true knight of the Vale sat beside a girl destined to be queen.”

Harrold’s gaze shifted toward the throne and the reluctance left his face, replaced by an arched brow and slight smile. “Better than dead man for sure.”

“Better than most men,” Petyr corrected. “But smart men wait for their chance to strike.”

The door at the side of the hall opened and a maid came to a stop seeing the knights turn to her, their hands moving to their swords. She nearly dropped the tray of glasses she held as she yelped and froze on the spot.

“Fear not men,” Harrold called out with a laugh, his eyes flickering at the sight of the slender maid. “Come, dear lady.”

“P-Pardon, my lords,” she said bowing to each man she passed on her way to Harrold. “I was told to bring your water while you guarded the throne.”

“Come, dear lady.”

“P-Pardon, my lords,” she said bowing to each man she passed on her way to Harrold. “I was told to bring your water while you guarded the throne.”

Harrold flashed her a smile as she came to a stop. “Thank you, sweet girl.”

The maid offered a sheepish smile, diverting her eyes as he took a cup and she quickly poured him water from the pitcher. When the other knights took their own drinks to help combat the heat of their armor, she poured the last of the water into the glass and offered it to Littlefinger.

“Thank you,” he said with a nod.

The maid looked to him with a smile, tilting her head. “This is where your ladder breaks.”

Littlefinger’s eyes widened. “What-”

He choked on the catspaw dagger thrust into the right side of his neck before the tray even hit the ground. The moment it did, the pitcher clattering was followed by the door bursting open and the yell of a dozen men rushing into the room along with the freed queens.
Harrold drew his sword, gasping as he watched the maid pull her face off to reveal another as Arya Stark smirked at Littlefinger. “Winter comes with fire and blood,” she said before ripping the dagger from his neck, letting it spray across Harrold.

Wincing and reaching up to wipe the blood from his face, Harrold turned just as a sword cut through his neck, leaving him gasping while another cut through his jerkin. Falling to his knees, clutching his gaping neck, Littlefinger looked up as Sansa Stark and Daenerys Targaryen came to stand on either side of Arya.

“No one would ever want or love a pathetic nobody like you,” Sansa said meeting his tearful gaze. “No one will remember you, no one will know you ever existed.”

“P-Please,” he begged until Sansa slashed upward, cutting across his chest and knocking him back, leaving him laying in the spot where he’d held a dagger to their father’s throat while they rushed off to help break the impending siege.

XOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXO

The King’s Gate opened and gilded riders passed through, coming to a stop as Jon dismounted. Entering the range of archers on the wall, Jon unsheathed Nighttaker and started his approach while the others kept in line.

Daario chuckled, hopping off his horse, sprinting ahead slightly before he came to a stop and reached for his stiletto. Watching Jon walk toward him he held the blade, letting the gilded woman hilt rest on his shoulder. Once Jon was close enough Daario sprinted forward and threw the dagger, letting it spiral through the air before Jon shifted his shoulders and slashed up, knocking the stiletto off course.

In a moment of frustration Daario looked to Jon’s face and saw his eyes weren’t even on him, but still with Euron on the wall of behind him. When Jon continued to walk forward Daario tore the arakh from his belt and flipped it, letting Jon approach him before dashing forward to close the gap.

Jon’s gaze finally left Euron, shifting to Daario for the moment he brought Nighttaker up to catch Daario’s slash and force the sword up, giving him an angle to thrust the valyrian steel blade into the sellsword’s neck. Daario’s eyes widened as he looked to Jon and saw him already staring at the Wall again while slashing forward, ripping through Daario’s neck and walking past him while Daario clutched his neck and fell to his knees before toppling over.

Euron’s black eyes widened as he called out, “ARCHERS!”

Seeing the men atop the wall draw their bows, Jon came to a stop and pointed Nighttaker straight at Euron. “DRACARYS!”

The air shook as Rhaegal and Viserion roared, diving through the dark clouds covering the Crownlands. Euron turned, fleeing toward a corridor with his kingsguard as the archers fired up. Their arrows were burned away as the dragons unleashed torrents of flame across the wall of King’s Landing

A horn blast sounded and Drogon’s roar heralded his taking off from the Dragonpit and speeding toward his brothers. Rhaegal and Viserion took curving paths toward their brother, sweeping past him and forcing Drogon to flip back and chase after them before they flew up, back into the clouds.

While the Golden Company soldiers retreated toward the King’s Gate Jon turned to his men and
called to them, “FORWARD!”

Making their retreat the Golden Company men felt a wave of relief when they saw the gates open, but that died when they saw the men that came through waving Targaryen and Stark banners. Before they could do more than tug on the reins of the horses arrows pierced the chest and neck of the riders.

While his army marched toward the open gate, Jon rushed ahead to where he saw his wives stood with their sworn swords at the front of the group. He sheathed his sword and they followed suit, rushing to meet him as he held his arms open and caught both women. Holding them as tight as he could he reached up, letting his fingers through their hair and presses a kiss to each of their heads.

He’d started to speak when Daenerys grabbed his head and pulled him into a kiss. The moment she freed him he felt his head pulled to his right to meet Sansa’s lips.

“We’re fine,” Daenerys assured as Jon stepped back, releasing them. “They never touched us. Daario thought himself my savior and Littlefinger had plans to wed Sansa to some knight before taking her for himself.”

“Seems you won your gambit,” Jorah said with a nod to Daario’s corpse on the field.

Daenerys frowned, shaking her head while Sansa looked to Jon. “Littlefinger’s dead as well. Him and his men.”

“I took the heads of his spies,” Jon said with a nod. “Now all that’s left is taking what’s ours.”

A roar drew their eyes up where Viserion fell through the clouds before he spun and flapped his wings to catch himself. Drogon flew down to try and ram him, but Rhaegal slammed into Drogon’s side, the dragons spiraling before breaking apart and flapping their wings to fly toward the city, chasing each other.

Daenerys seethed as they made for the Red Keep, “We need to destroy that horn.”

While Daemon Sand left to join the Dornish forces in taking King’s Landing and Brynden joined Edmure’s Tully forces, the rest stayed with the king and queens as they made their way into the city. They were soon joined by Davos, Melisandre, Dirgo, Eddison Tollett, Gendry, Sandor, Jaime and Theon. With Jon at the head they carved through the Golden Company and Goldcloaks making their way to the Red Keep.

XOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXO

With his kingsguard behind him Euron looked over the corpses of the Vale men in the Great Hall and growled. The door was thrown open and a pale, gray skinned Cersei Lannister stumbled through it, pushed by two of his men who followed her.

“Come my queen,” he said grabbing her arm, “we’re leaving.”

She stared at his hand vacantly, following him as he pulled her through the halls of the Red Keep. Coming to the streets of King’s Landing they heard the clatter of swords, the yells of men fighting, civilians screaming in fear as they watched men from around the realm killing foreign sellswords and ironborn raiders. They heard the roar of dragons as streaks of flame stretched across the sky before Viserion landed on four buildings whose roofs collapsed when he pushed off them to launch himself into the sky.

They made their way toward the Dragonpit as Euron clasped the horn on his waist. It came into
sight when an arrow pierced Qyburn’s back between his shoulders and stuck through his chest. Watching him fall to the ground they turned to see Jon cut through the shoulder of a sellsword while Daenerys slashed through his neck and Sansa cut across his chest as Theon readied another arrow.

“Go,” the ashen haired warlock said as he and the other two turned to block the path.

Euron said nothing, grabbing Cersei’s arm tighter and rushing toward the Dragonpit. Another arrow flew, but was blown off course when the warlocks raised their hands.

Theon was readying another arrow, following the others in their charge toward the warlocks. They began chanting a spell and waved their arms, but suddenly Melisandre began one of her own, the ruby on her throat glowing as she pulled three pins from her hair and threw them at the ground before the warlocks. The pins seemed to stretch as they dug into the ground, and suddenly the warlocks froze, grunting as they tried to move. Their eyes widened as they looked to the pins stuck through their shadows which now seemed to have chains wrapped around them, locking them in place.

Melisandre wore a victorious grin as Daenerys charged forward and slash through the ashen haired man’s stomach, the noseless man’s neck and stabbed Dragon’s Song through the earless man’s chest. Their corpses stayed frozen in place as Jon led the others past. When Melisandre waved her hand the pins hit the ground along with their bodies.

Euron practically threw Cersei aside as he came to a stop at the heart of the Dragonpit and pulled the dragonbinder from his belt and pressed it to his lips. He blew until his lungs emptied.

Jon came to a stop as he looked up, watching Drogon dive down with a roar. He was just above the Dragonpit when Rhaegal and Viserion slammed into him and the three dragons crashed through the side of the coliseum, destroying a wall that had held their ancestors prisoner centuries ago.

Fire filled the sky as all three breathed at one another, their streams crashing and twisting together into a rising stream of mixed flames that seemed to explode as all three flapped their wings and took off flying.

Drawing his sword, Gregor Clegane stomped forward, bringing it down toward Jon only to find his sword bouncing off the valyrian steel of Gravedigger. Jon thrust Nighttaker into the gap of his armor and turned as he slashed up, cleaving the shoulder so the reanimated man’s right arm fell away. Raising Gravedigger to his shoulder, Sandor turned and swung as hard as he could, cutting clear through his brother’s neck so his head rolled beside his arm as his massive body fell limp to the ground.

Turning back to Euron Jon charged forward with the others who rushed to stop the kingsguard from interfering. Before he could bring the dragonbinder to his lips again Jon slashed through it, shattering the horn as Euron swiftly backed away and draw the sword from his scabbard to deflect a followup slash.

Drogon cried as he landed, shaking his head as his brothers warily landed beside him and stared him down before all three roared and took off to circle the Dragonpit.

Sansa deflected a blow from Arys Oakheart, who suddenly found Needle through his eye while Dragon’s Song and Yara’s pilfered guards sword cut across his back and arm. When Sansa stuck Lady’s Tear through his chest, Jaime came and slashed Widow’s Wail through his neck.

Boros Blount found Meera and Laul’s spears buried in his sides, stopping him as Podrick deflected
his sword and Brienne took Oathkeeper through his neck. Preston Greenfield had his arms cut off by slashes from Edd and Dirgo while Gendry’s Hartstine crushed his helmet, pulverizing his skull.

Osmund Kettleback had his sword knocked aside, letting Tyrion rush forward to cleave through Osmund’s knee with his axe. When the kingsguard stumbled forward, Theon swung up, taking his head in a single motion. At the same moment Balon Swann found Gray Worm’s spear and Davos’s sword in his chest while Tormund’s Giant’s Nail ripped through his jaw.

Euron grunted as he deflected another blow from Jon and tossed his sword into his left hand, pulling the axe from his belt and swinging it at Jon, using the sword for defense.

Tyene pulled two daggers from her waist as Sansa and Daenerys charged toward Jon and Euron. She slashed at both women, who dodged and deflected the daggers, Daenerys managing to knock one from her left hand. Turning, she swung toward Sansa with her poisoned dagger only to have Gravedigger cut her arm at the elbow a moment before Widow’s Wail pierced the back of her head. Once she stopped, choking on the blade, Jaime pulled it free and twisted his arm to cut through the neck of Ellaria’s daughter, giving her a mercy she didn’t deserve.

With a silent scream Cersei pulled a dagger from her dress and charged toward Sansa when she saw Jaime put a hand on her shoulder, asking if she was okay. Tyrion rushed forward with his axe drawn back, but it was Jaime who turned and deflected her dagger before cutting through her neck, letting her head roll back slightly before she fell to the ground.

Jon swung Nighttaker up while Euron swung down, the sword slipping under the bearded axe and yanking it from Euron’s grasp. His eyes wide, Euron glanced to the poisoned dagger on the ground and dashed for it. Throwing the sword back to his right hand, he ducked down to grab the dagger and grinned as he saw the queens before him.

With a single thrust the poisoned dagger dug into Daenerys’ side, making her arch her back. Euron stood behind her, holding his sword to her neck as he ripped the dagger out and laughed watching her blood drip from it. Then he threw her straight at Jon, who put a hand over the wound.

“Dany,” he gasped.

“Daenerys,” Sansa said rushing to her side.

Jaime looked from the injured queen to the girl he’d beheaded before picking up her knife and noting it was coated in more than her blood. “It’s poisoned.”

“You can try killing me,” Euron said with a grin, “but she’s already dead, and it’ll be a slow, agonizing death too.”

Jon glared at Euron, but then he noticed Melisandre walking toward them with a somber expression. Daenerys and Sansa looked to the Red Woman as she pressed her hand over the wound and met Daenerys’ gaze with a serene smile. “Only death can pay for life.”

Their eyes widened as the blood pouring from the wound darkened, mixed with the poison that had been flowing through her before Melisandre’s hand burst into flame. It seemed to close the wound, leaving no visible mark as the flames trailed up Melisandre’s arm to engulf her body.

Jon quickly pulled Daenerys and Sansa away as Melisandre leaned her head back and stretched out her arms as the dragons roared and the flames engulfing her seemed to swirl within each other and die, leaving only ashes across the ground.

After staring at where she’d stood for a moment, Jon turned to Euron and laughed. Euron’s brow
knit until he felt Yara’s pilfered sword stick through his collar while Theon’s Winter Squall pierced his torso. His eyes widened as Euron watched Jon charge forward, Nighttaker arcing directly through his skull, cleaving his head to the collar and shattering the dragonglass in his chest before all three ripped their blades free.

The self proclaimed Undying King died, and with his death the warring years of Westeros came to an end.

Chapter End Notes

Figured it fitting Littlefinger die near the spot where he betrayed Ned. Also I thought it amusing to have Daario who thinks himself so grand be killed while basically being ignored by Jon, showing how insignificant he is. For the show kingsguard there’s not much about them so I went with what the wiki had for them.

I thought it fun to have Melisandre do some literal shadow binding, and then give her life cause I’ve no doubt she immolates at some point so let it be to give a spark back to Dany. I’m sure some will be disappointed Cleganebowl wasn’t some long drawn out fight but I think Gregor is way overrated by most people, put him against two of the better in the realm and he’s done in seconds. Ghost is with a group ready to take people retreating, mostly because I didn’t need him much for an infiltration and the last battle.

Next chapter is the last, a long epilogue stretching from right after the battle to well after.
Throne Of Ice And Fire

Chapter Summary

Westeros is united under a new dynasty.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

With the Golden Company and Euron’s Ironborn wiped out, Jon and the armies of Westeros took King’s Landing and united the realm for the first time since Robert died.

Their first days were spent clearing out anything belonging to the Baratheons, Lannisters or Greyjoy as well as any loyal to them. By the time things settled the populace were relieved to hear not only was their new king to not be a pale, dead eyed mad man, but near a god if half the soldiers were to believed. Even the other half considered him a true, brave, good man beyond what they’d seen since well before Aerys II.

They found their queens equally a relief. Most has heard of Sansa, and her being Eddard Stark’s trueborn daughter gave them hope their king might be as fair and considerate of them as the Hand had been during his brief time upon the throne. While Daenerys hadn’t been raised in Westeros, she had managed to quell the Dothraki they heard so many tales of into a peaceful army who obeyed both their Khalessi and Khal. It also didn’t hurt that she had three dragons which saw her as their mother and obeyed their new king and queens.

Drogon had lost some of his stubbornness after being freed from the dragonbinder, though Daenerys felt it more an effort on his part to make up for his behavior than any lingering effects of the spell. It didn’t take long for Rhaegal and Viserion to warm to him again, and she felt the three had grown closer than they had been, losing some of their wariness of their larger brother now they had faced him in battle and lived.

The most shocking thing was when the crowd gathered to watch men haul the Iron Throne out of the Red Keep, bringing it an open courtyard. The soldiers all backed the crowd away as their king stood beside the throne and all three dragons descended.

“For centuries this throne has been the want of men good and cruel,” Jon said looking through the crowd. “This was the throne of the King of the Seven Kingdoms, but as the King of Westeros, stretching from Dorne to the Deep North, I take a new throne.” He turned and pointed to the Iron Throne. “Dracarys!”

At that all three dragons blew fire on the throne. The crowd watched in awe as Gendry came and picked away at the throne whenever they stopped their flames, sending barrels of the iron away until it was all gone. They used this distraction as a chance to sneak out and dilute any stores of wildfire left behind by Cersei or Aerys.

The remnants of the Iron Throne were forged into a new steel one set in the Great Hall. Rather than cover the walls in dragon skulls the only hints of them were on the throne itself. While the arms had wolf heads, the high back had two dragons sat on either side with a third at the middle stretching it’s wings out toward it’s brothers. The legs of the chair were a mix of wolf paws and
His first days spent upon his new throne passed taking oaths of fealty from the lords that helped him forge his new kingdom, united under his banner.

With no Wall to send criminals to, he decided to free any brothers of the Night’s Watch who proved themselves loyal and reformed. In it’s place he formed the Ranger’s Watch which held many of the same oaths, only found their place leading the expedition into the Deep North and policing the Kingsroad. It became a place where men could claim honor and prove themselves reformed by giving their lives to helping the realm. No longer needing to worry about wildlings or wights, their prey became bands of brigands and bandits.

Generations later the Rangers Watch would become corrupted briefly when too many criminals took advantage of it without a desire to reform. Those betraying the crown would be wiped out and Ranger’s Wrath given to help remake the order as King Jon intended.

Though Edd remained as Lord Commander of the Ranger’s Watch, he also helped Jon and Yohn Royce reform the Vale. After removing those few left loyal to Littlefinger, they found some resistance to naming any but Arryn as Lord of the Eyrie and High Lord of the Vale. Instead they found a work around by legitimizing Harrold Hardyng’s bastard as Alys Arryn and having her warded to a loyal family who would raise her well.

When years passed she would be wed to the son of Andar Royce, grandson of Yohn Royce, and their children would take the Arryn name to settle those unwilling to see any but a falcon as their lord.

With Euron having claimed nearly every man from the Iron Islands they found themselves on the brink of disaster until Yara returned to act as High Lady of the Iron Islands. She gave up her role as Queen and their independence for support from the mainland. They would keep to their promise to stop reaping and raiding, so they were given a more active role within the realm’s navy.

To the North the Starks reigned once again. Bran gave up his place as Lord of Winterfell and High Lord of the North to Rickon. The youngest Stark was guided into lordship and united the North and Free Folk when he married Johnna. It wasn’t long before she gave birth to Jon Stark, heir of Winterfell, followed shortly after by his brother Benjen and their baby sister Karsi Stark.

With support from the king and their leader Tormund, the free folk settled in the Gift and helped expeditions into the Deep North while those willing to travel south were integrated and welcomed. It was during one of Tormund’s trips south he found Sansa’s sworn sword having given up her armor for loose dresses to hide her stomach and settled in the south to help raise his own children. Just as he predicted they were giants, their youngest serving as kingsguard to Jon’s successor, proclaimed by many as Duncan the Tall reborn.

Lyanna Mormont helped grow her house, accepting some of the Free Folk and unifying them to help expeditions to the Deep North. It wasn’t long before she married a free folk hunter with dark curls. Their eldest son, Jeorn Mormont inherited his mother’s eyes and a broader build than either parent, finding a friendship with the royal family and the Starks.

Bran stayed in Winterfell for a few years to help Rickon and even Jon when their king called upon him. It was only fifteen years into Jon’s reign that Bran disappeared in the Deep North, leaving Meera with their children Oleif Reed and Jojen Stark.

Edmure took his place as Lord of Riverrun and High Lord of the Riverlands when he returned to be with his wife and son. It was only a few years before Brynden Tully passed in his sleep, still
unwed, but by then the Tully family had begun to grow again, leaving the future with Edmure’s eldest son Hoster.

People blamed the Westerlands for the king’s lack of a proper kingsguard during his first few years. While Tyrion took his role as Lord of the Casterly Rock and High Lord of the Westerlands, he was reluctant to have children of his own. Instead, with cajoling from the king, Jaime Lannister was wed to a Westerlands woman and gave them heirs.

Jeyne Westerling gave birth to twin girls Joanna and Tyelle before giving birth to Damon Lannister followed shortly after by their second son Jason Lannister. It was shortly after his birth that Jon allowed Jaime Lannister to once again don his white cloak, becoming Lord Commander to Jorah Mormont, Theon Greyjoy and Sandor Clegane before choosing others. Even with his oath retaken Jaime helped raise his children with his new wife at King’s Landing before fostering their sons to Tyrion at Casterly Rock.

It was the Westerlands and Reach that took the bulk of the Dothraki and others Daenerys brought with her. Though some traveled to the other kingdoms, even taking homes far south or north, most of the horse lords preferred the warmer fields of the western kingdoms.

After years of living in fear and barely avoiding death, Garlan Tyrell’s wife Leonette returned to Highgarden to be with her husband and new High Lord of the Reach. They struggled as much as any realm those first few years, but in time Jon’s words proved true and Highgarden bloomed anew, and with it the Reach. Years later Brienne of Tarth would knight their eldest son Macen Tyrell while Ser Podrick Payne knighted their second son Leonas Tyrell.

Legitimized, proven in war and with support from the crown Gendry reclaimed the Stormlands and House Baratheon. Beyond being the Lord of Storm’s End and High Lord of the Stormlands, he also became one of the most famous smiths in history. Men from across the world traveled to offer him countless riches for valyrian steel, but often found themselves disappointed when he explained they needed to ask the king’s permission.

Requiring not only dragon fire but dragon blood meant he couldn’t forge without help from the royal family. Though some found themselves gifted or rewarded with valyrian steel, he would accept some commissions. Gendry took only a percentage he thought fair while the rest went to the crown who funded his forge and supplies, using the profits to pay off most of the kingdom’s debts to the Iron Bank while still leaving both parties richer than either bastard had ever hoped to be.

Arya spent most of her time traveling between the North, the Crownlands and the Stormlands. She remained unwed until the day they told Jon she was pregnant.

“Please,” he said grasping her hands to her shock, drawing raised eyebrows from Daenerys and Sansa, who was nursing their own child.

“Why do you care if I’m married?” Arya asked with a scoff.

“Arya, you don’t-” He sighed, glancing at Gendry, who wore a solemn frown as they shared an understanding look. Returning his gaze to Arya, Jon wore a somber smile. “I know how you two feel about each other. I swear I will legitimize any child you have without question, but don’t let others doubt them for a moment. Please.”

Arya frowned at the desperation in Jon’s eyes, realizing he feared for her own potential child as if it were one of own. Glancing back at Gendry she saw that though he never wanted to pressure her, he clearly wanted to avoid their child having to face what they did as bastards.
“Fine,” she said with a huff, pulling her hand from Jon to cross her arms. “I’ll marry the idiot.”

To the south Arianne Martell ruled as Lady of Sunspear and High Lady of Dorne, abandoning the position of Princess to help unify the realm under one royal family. Jon made an effort to keep Dorne involved rather than risk the strife that plagued them after Elia’s death and even as far back as Aegon’s Conquest.

In time Arianne gave birth to children born Sand, but swiftly legitimized by Jon to become heirs of House Nymeros Martell. Though done largely to avoid conflict and lingering doubts about Ellaria Sand and her Sand Snakes, her lack of husband left room for rumors about who fathered her children. Some even thought they belonged to King Jon himself, explaining his haste to legitimize them as Martells, though it was never confirmed. Whenever anyone dared to hint at it, Jon only seemed frustrated while the queens brushed it off as rumors and Arianne laughed but denied it, claiming their fathers all wild men she could lay no claim to.

It wasn’t long after the war’s end that the realm learned their queen was pregnant with the heir to the new Throne of Ice and Fire. While the kingdom celebrated the parents to be, the king found himself concerned as it brewed new arguments.

“He’s resting,” Sansa said holding a hand to her extended stomach when Daenerys asked how the baby was.

Walking over to the bath tub, Daenerys beamed, sitting on the stool beside it and pressing her hand against Sansa’s stomach. “I can’t wait to meet you, little Rhaegar.”

“No,” Jon said turning his chair from his desk to find Daenerys already looking at him with a challenging smirk while Sansa rolled her eyes.

“He was your father, Jon,” Daenerys argued as she sat up, taking her hand from Sansa to turn toward him. “I know he didn’t raise you but he was your father and my brother.”

“Who you knew just as little as I did,” Jon said, groaning when he felt himself slipping into an old argument. He decided to switch topics. “What is it’s a girl? We could name her Visenya.”

“I wish,” Daenerys said with a sigh. “There’s a lot of her I respect, but… even ignoring what she was, there’s a part of me that worries the name cursed. Her bloodline died out with her only son and I fear damning a child to a name anything like Viserys and risking them being half as cruel as him.”

“They won’t be,” Sansa assured. “Not with us raising them.”

“It doesn’t matter,” Daenerys said shaking her head. “It’s a boy and his name is Rhaegar.”

“I’d rather name him Aenys.”

“Don’t tempt me,” warned Daenerys.

“I suppose there’s always Aegon,” Sansa said unenthused.

“Gods no,” Jon said shaking his head. “there’s already half a dozen.”

“Aemon?” Daenerys offered, remembering Jon speaking fondly of their great uncle at the Wall.

Jon sat back in thought. He knew Sam had considered it once but dropped it. “Maybe.”
“You were always Aemon the Dragonknight,” Sansa said with a smile.

“He was Aemon?” Daenerys asked with a smirk.

“Always,” Sansa said enthusiastically before correcting herself. “Well, usually.”

“The one that secretly loved the sister he could never have?” Daenerys said as a teasing grin took her lips.

“Shut it or we’re naming him Tormund.”

Daenerys glared at him. “Never.”

“What about Duncan?” Sansa suggested. “It’s the name of a Targaryen, one of the most famous Kingsguard but not very Valyrian.”

Daenerys nodded. “I suppose that could work.” After looking from Sansa to Jon she suggested, “What about Eddard?”

Sansa glanced at Jon, sharing a frown before she looked down, ashamed. “I thought about it but… I know the North still love him and most still respect him, but I hear that and I just think of Father. I think of the man who I watched be beheaded, who lied to Jon his entire life. I don’t think of a child in my arms.”

Jon rose to his feet, brushing his hand across Daenerys’ cheek as he came to the tub and leaned down to kiss Sansa’s brow. He pulled another stool beside it, sitting next to Daenerys and Sansa. “I don’t want our child to have someone else’s name,” Jon said looking between the two solemnly. “I don’t want them to be burdened by history. They’re already going to be burdened by so much just for being our children, let their names not be another.”

Both women exchanged a look before nodding. “So an original name,” Daenerys said tilting her head in thought. “It’ll be harder to think on.”

“I actually have something in mind,” Jon said guiltily. “I just… I didn’t want to completely dismiss whatever you two wanted, but I think it works. I thought of it originally from a northern tale, but it has ties to the Targaryens in a way.”

Sansa sat up with an interested smirk. “A northern tale?”

“Bael the Bard,” Jon said with a smirk. “Not unlike Baelor or Baelon, but we’d change the end, make it something like Baelard or Baelric.”

“I like Baelric,” said Sansa.

Daenerys nodded. “Prince Baelric Targaryen.”

When crown prince Baelric Targaryen was being born Daenerys smacked Jon for frightening a poor maid who suggested he leave by yelling, “Never!” She quickly forgave him though, as it was clear Jon was distraught with worry.

“My mother died birthing me,” Jon said as he watched Sam and Gilly helping Sansa with the birth when Daenerys pulled him off to the side. “Your mother died birthing you. What if something goes wrong?”

Daenerys found herself smiling for their shared concern, but shook her head looking to Sansa.
“She’s not like our mothers,” Danerys said turning to Jon with a frown. “Our mothers were weak and distraught. Yours lost the love of her life and mine a prisoner fearing for the lives of her children and herself. I doubt they could fight half as hard as Sansa will, I doubt they had even a third her strength.”

Jon glanced at Sansa before nodding and smiling to Daenerys, “She has us.”

Daenerys smiled, taking Jon’s hand and pressing it to her stomach. “We have each other.”

Jon’s eyes widened as Sansa groaned and looked over to find him kissing Daenerys. “Enough of that,” she groaned, “we’ll talk about hers after I have mine!”

Baelric was joined not only by Daenerys and Jon’s first son, Aemor Targaryen, but Sam’s second son and his first trueborn with Gilly, poor Dickon Tarly. While being friends with the crown prince saved him from too much teasing, it didn’t help the japes when Baelric became king and named him his hand, opening a flood of jokes about Dickon the Hand of the King. Though little found it surprising that Baelric, who looked much like his father only with blue eyes a shade near purple, would take a Tarly for his hand after being raised with Samwell as his father’s Hand most of his life.

Shortly after Baelric was born Ghost had disappeared, and months later they got a raven from Rickon telling them Ghost had showed up with pups following him, leaving two with them and arriving in King’s Landing with two more which found themselves sleeping with the king to be and the silver prince. He would do that every so often, disappearing and returning with pups that took to Jon’s children while the rest likely stayed with their mother, wherever she was, or were left in the North with Rickon and his growing pack. It was only when they were a few years old they found an egg in the open dragon pit, now little more than a space for the dragons to rest and be fed or cared for. Baelric would be given the crimson egg while Aemor received the silver one.

The golden egg would go to Jon’s first daughter, which started another debate on names. They tried newer ones and even combining others like they had to name the silver haired and gray eyed Aemor, but found little they agreed on. It wasn’t until Sansa held the dark haired girl and stared into her sapphire eyes that she named her, “Daena.”

Daenerys went wide eyed, unable to hold back tears as she wrapped Sansa and her newest child in a hug. It was little surprised that when Daenerys next found out she was pregnant she decided it would be a girl named Sanya. She stuck to that even when she held the dark haired princess in her arms, her eyes such pale violet they looked like gems.

Though it was Daenerys who was pregnant next she would lose it before they could announce it to the realm, but together they rebounded and welcomed Sansa’s second daughter into the world. She was the only child Sansa birthed with Targaryen silver hair. It was then Sansa found her path for the children to follow, naming the girl, “Lyella.”

“Lyella?” Jon asked looking up from his daughter’s azure eyes.

“For your mothers,” she said looking from Jon to Daenerys.

Soon after her came Robbard, with wild black curls and azure eyes. He came weeks before the Jaegon, who many said was Rhaegar reborn. Though Robb was adventurous and Jae quieter, the two were close as twins even with their opposing hair colors.

When Jon and Sansa’s third daughter came Sansa had been reluctant to suggest her name until Jon forced it out of her. “Arelyn?” Jon asked, giving a nod as he pieced it together. “For Arya and
Catelyn.”

“I know she was never kind to you,” Sansa said with a frown, “and I know Edmure has a daughter named for her, but I want to have some memory of her.”

“I count the days until I can hold little Lynny in my arms,” Jon said with an assuring smile. In time he found it humorous as he took to calling his third daughter Arel or Lynny, yet she looked much like he remembered Sansa as a child.

His silver haired and gray eyed daughter with Daenerys would garner the most questions about her name. “Melys?” Tyrion asked when he looked the girl over, bouncing her on his knee.

“For Meleys, the Red Queen dragon ridden by Rhaenys, the Queen Who Never Was,” Daenerys explained, before her smile grew somber. “And for Melisandre, whose death let me give life.”

Their final child was Sansa’s third son, Brakon, named for her brothers shortly before Bran’s disappearance. The dark auburn haired boy had a chance to meet his uncle, seeming to share a bit of his quiet thoughtfulness as he grew.

By the time he was twelve Baelric was madly in love with Margana Tyrell, and would go on to wed her. While Daenerys was pleased that her own bloodline would continue, further separating herself from the legacy of Visenya, they knew she still found it somewhat disappointing her bloodline wouldn’t continue through the Tagraryens on the throne. At least until Little Jon Tarly began courting Sanya Targaryen.

Though kindhearted, Little Jon used his father’s inherited intelligence to work with his wildling instincts, becoming the Tarly menace as a child. He was ever rushing off to adventures with the princes, but it was Sanya who reined him in, calming him and making him rise to become a knight. And it was their daughter Myrabel Tarly that wed Soran Targaryen, who would sit on the throne after Baelric, their children uniting Daenerys and Sansa’s bloodlines.

The kingdom was rebuilt and while Baelric inherited the throne and Nighttaker, the Silver Prince Aemor would take Dragonstone and Dragon’s Song while Daena would take Lady’s Tear and the Dreadfort, renamed the Snowfort. They also had other keeps rebuilt for the royal family, including Queenscrown, Summerhall, Moat Cailin and even a rebuilt Tower of Joy.

Jon had conquered the Long Night and united Westeros as even Aegon the Conqueror could not. He did so not for himself, but for his family, crafting a dynasty that would reign for ages to come, stretching out across the world. Yet no matter how far they traveled or how vast their kingdom grew, they remained a pack of dragons and wolves born of a northern conqueror.

Chapter End Notes

And there it ends. I considered having a longer post battle period but decided against it. The timeline is a little wonky with references to stuff before they happen but should make sense. I imagine Arya is pregnant around when Sansa is nursing Daena. It was a lot of fun thinking up the next generation as much as what happened to everyone, and I tried to give a little bit for everyone I could.

I gave ‘em a new throne to go with the whole new dynasty theme, plus screw the Iron Throne. It’s also why I gave them new titles like High Lord of X instead of Wardens
or Lord Paramount, basically they’re changing things so they have something new to build on.

Jaime and Jeyne Westerling is just kind of a weird thing I tossed in cause why not? It’s not like she was used in the show. I think I actually kind of like it in a weird way. You can decide whether any of Arianne’s children are Jon’s or not, I just liked the idea of her having bastards he legitimized for her since she wouldn’t want any link to her cousins.

Thank you all for reading and commenting. It was definitely fun writing this. If anyone is interested, I have another story still in progress called Wyrm and Cub which has Jon going to King’s Landing 3 years before A Game of Thrones. It’s a Jon and Myrcella story based on the book universe that is currently coming to the Hand’s tourney which should be a lot of fun.

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!