Summary

Dany can't shake this attraction to the icy Northern king, and gives in to her feelings more than she should...

Notes

Essentially canon, adding in extra scenes to season 7 to flesh out Dany and Jon getting together. Continues post-canon.....
Chapter 1

Daenarys stormed from the sparse Dragonstone throne room.

“You didn’t tell me how stubborn this Jon Snow would be.”

“Your Grace, he is a Northerner who has been recently granted kinghood. Did you expect a pushover?” Tyrion struggled a little to keep up with the seething queen.

She sighed. “No, of course not. Still, what nerve…”

Tyrion chuckled. “He always did have that.”

Dany slowed her steps. “What else do you know about him?” She could still feel his eyes on her, calm and only a little wary until she challenged him. Then they lighted with a flash of anger like lightening. She recalled her shock when he first entered the throne room. Tyrion had never mentioned that the northern king was comely. So many things about him were unexpectedly soft; eyes, lips, his restrained curls. She had expected someone harder, older, and it surprised her that a man with such boyishness could have been made a king. His men must respect him.

Tyrion rubbed his scar. “Most of what his man Ser Davos claimed. I met him at Winterfell, when he was but a boy. I could see his resentment of his position, his bastardry, but he made something good of it. He went to the Wall and became Lord Commander. How many can say the same?”

Dany knew many men who felt they were owed more and let it poison their lives; her brother was one of them. Royal blood in his veins but nothing to show for it, he was reduced to begging for scraps and screaming at her to bolster his pride. This Jon Snow was different indeed; not content as a bastard outcast with not quite enough Stark blood in him, he neither remained in his place and festered away nor did he fight to the top through sly means. He left and earned better things elsewhere. A decision that showed prudence and strength, without cruelty.

“I see,” she remarked coolly. “You sound almost as if you respect him.”

“It’s hard not to respect Ned Stark’s son,” Tyrion said quietly. As he followed Dany through the doors held open for them, he hid a smile. The queen was not generally so interested by visiting lords and monarchs.

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Jon watched the dragon queen ascend the cliff face back to her castle, breathing a sigh of relief that she had granted his request to mine dragonglass. He turned into the sea breeze again, grateful for its bracing chill. The queen was acerbic and stubborn, but he had not been expecting concessions so soon. Truth be told, he was still surprised he had been allowed to keep his head.

Of course he had heard that the young Targaryen was beautiful, but she was the loveliest creature he had ever seen. He had loved Ygritte’s raw, honest wildness, but she and Daenerys were like sun and moon. Instead of coarse, freckled face, he saw delicate, luminous perfection. He still missed Ygritte’s hair, kissed by fire, but it was worlds away from the silver silk that was clearly brushed daily by the queen’s handmaids. She seemed utterly surreal to Jon, as if she were birthed from fire and blood like her dragons, not quite of this world.

He leaned into the breeze, trying to cool his suddenly feverish pulse.
Daenerys had picked at her dinner, barely listening to the conversations swirling around her. After
supper, she retired and changed out of her thick, leather pants and dress.

“Bed, your Grace?” Missandei inquired, carefully putting aside her clothes and picking up the
nightgown.

Dany hesitated a beat. “No, I’m not quite tired yet. Tell me, are the men staying up?”

Missandei cocked her head. “Yes, I believe so. At least, I overheard talk of games in the library.”

“I see.” She paused a long moment, then with a rush in her gut, she pressed onwards. “And…Jon
Snow?”

Missandei kept her face carefully blank. “I believe he suggested it, your Grace.”

Dany nodded infinitesimally. “First, could we get my hair out of these damn braids?”

As Missandei’s fingers worked, Dany was lost in thought. What would her men think? It was highly
irregular for their queen to join them in their after-supper recreation. But then, Jon Snow wouldn’t
know that.

She carefully picked out a loose, thick woollen Westerosi dress, far more casual than her usual attire,
and a long necklace with one of Drogo’s leather pendants hanging from it. It would feel good to
remember him tonight, even amidst whatever strange fascination she had for Jon Snow.

Dany bade Missandei good night, and silently traversed the stone corridors towards the library. In
any other castle, the moon shadows and night’s chill would have made the journey deeply
uncomfortable. But this was Dragonstone, her birthplace, and every few feet there was a dragon
carved into the old stone, keeping watch over her.

As she neared the library, she could pick out the murmur of voices, and then a warm laugh broke out
as she approached the door. It creaked at her touch, and there was a deep lull in conversation as she
entered the room.

“Please, I don’t mean to interrupt,” she smiled bashfully. Spotting Tyrion by the fire, she picked her
way across the room, and gradually the games resumed. There were clumps of Westerosi, Dothraki,
and Unsullied, all playing games from their own corners of the world. Some of the game pieces in
front of the Dothraki looked suspiciously like toes. But on one table, Dany could see one of Jon’s
northerns explaining the rules of a card game to some attentive Unsullied men, and she smiled to
herself. This was why she was here, to see different people come together.

She nodded to Tyrion as she found a seat by the fire, anxious not to interrupt his story about some
Lyseni maid he met in Meereen. Chuckling along, she surreptitiously searched for…

With a start, she met Jon Snow’s eyes from across the room, where he was embroiled in some kind
of betting game with his men. She glanced quickly down into her hands, chastising herself for acting
like a giddy maid. She was the rightful queen to the Seven Kingdoms, her men needed to see her as
strong.

Making an effort to focus on the stories flowing along with the red wine, she found herself drawn
into the cheerful atmosphere of soldiers allowed rest.

Hours passed, and gradually the library thinned out. Soon only half a dozen people remained, Dany
and Tyrion lingering by the fire. Dany was uncomfortably aware that Jon Snow had not yet retired for bed, and was chatting quietly with an Unsullied man as he packed up their game. As Tyrion took a deep pull from his perpetual wine cup, she gazed into the coals as she heard Jon Snow move across the room to join them.

“M’lady,” he said, in his gruff voice.

“Your Grace,” she corrected gently, but nodded at a soft chair next to hers. He gave a small, slightly sarcastic nod as he settled in it.

“I was tired of losing every bit of gold I’ve managed to find since my fifteenth name day,” he sighed. Dany hid a smile, then tried to sound regal. “As a matter of fact, I was hoping to speak to you both,” she said. “Jon Snow, you told me a little of the children of the forest and the First Men this afternoon. It was…illuminating.” As she spoke, she watched the way the shifting flames fell onto his face, giving it a deep warmth that reminded her of the cave earlier today. Once again, his eyes were black and unfathomable.

“It was a pleasure to recount the stories, Daenerys. My old Maester Luwin told us the histories of those times, while Old Nan at Winterfell gave a…more colourful retelling. Grumpkins and snarks and the like.” He and Tyrion exchanged a secret, fleeting smile.

Dany did not see the brooding king smile often, and it sent a flash of warmth through her to see it. She also noticed how he had switched to calling her Daenerys, and did not recall allowing him to do so. Somehow, she couldn’t bring herself to point it out. She made an effort to follow the conversation.

“Yes indeed, and I have read many a maester’s scroll detailing the history. Would you like to hear more, Your Grace?” Tyrion asked. Then he burped, and looked into his wine cup as if he were seeing it for the first time. “On second thoughts…perhaps I should go sleep this off. Big…big day tomorrow…” He lurched from his seat and made his unsteady way to the library door. Dany watched him go with a torn smile.

“What’s on tomorrow, my lady?” Jon prompted softly.

“I have no idea,” she chuckled. Again, that smile, as if she had dragged it out of him. “Now, just one story before bed? About grumpkins and snarks, if you could.”

“Aye, Daenerys,” he said.

He talked about…something to do with wolves and ravens. She didn’t listen to much of it. She mostly watched him, watched how his mouth shaped the words of his story. How he ran a hand over his beard every so often, the fingers thin but scarred and calloused from swordplay. She let her eyes wander just a little, seeing how the light played over his bicep, concealed in stiff leather. Once again, she was surprised to find such softness in a man of such reputation.

She could sense from the timbre of his voice that the story was winding up, so she shook herself from her wandering thoughts.

“…and at this point Nan would always tell us to put some mistletoe under our pillows, to keep the children of the forest from spying on us as we slept,” he said with a chuckle to himself, at the memory of his childish fear.

“Did you ever?” Dany teased lightly.
“Put mistletoe under my pillow?” he smiled. “I did, once. I woke up with an awful rash on my face.”

She laughed, a light tinkling sound that she hadn’t heard in a long time. He looked at her, and Dany couldn’t read his black eyes.

“But I was taught a long time ago not to judge the old stories too harshly. The world is far bigger than we can ever know, and we are very tiny. There is always more to know.”

His humour had evaporated, and one hand teased at his hair as he gazed into the fire.

Dany was moved by the sentiment. “Who taught you such a thing?”

Jon sighed, sitting back in his chair. “A woman,” was all he would say.

Dany felt a heady rush of curiosity, wondering who could have attracted the attention of a king. “But…was this after the Night’s Watch? You took a vow of chastity, did you not?”

Jon finally broke his gaze with the fire and looked at her deeply. “My lady, this is not a pleasant story.”

Dany smiled dryly. “I have travelled to Westeros a widow, without husband, lover or admirer. Do you imagine my story is? She chuckled at herself, shocked that she had revealed so much. “So self-pitying. What I mean to say, Jon Snow, is I know a thing or two about lost love. Story for story?”

His gaze was unreadable, but he nodded assent. Rubbing a hand over his face, he looked into the dying coals.

“Her name was Ygritte.”

“Ee-grit?” Dany repeated uncertainly. “Is that a common Westerosi name?”

Jon smiled. “No. It’s a wildling name. She was a wildling girl, kissed by fire.”

Dany started. “How so?”

Jon looked over. “Not in the way you think, my lady. Not like you are.”

Dany simply couldn’t read his eyes.

“No, she had this…mane of red hair. As fiery and untamed as she.”

“Were you married?” Dany asked uncertainly.

“No. Wildlings don’t really have marriage. But we were together.”

He was silent for a long time, until Dany finally had to ask, “How did she die?”

His brown furrowed. “How do you know she died?”

Dany smiled sadly. “Because if she were alive, nothing would keep you apart.”

To her surprise, she thought she saw anger harden his mouth as he said: “I wish that were true.”

He was silent a time. “We were in battle. She were on the other side of it. One of my brothers…” He couldn’t finish the sentence.

Dany, too, gazed into the coals, her heart breaking for the boy beside her. A long silence stretched
between them. Finally, she felt she could speak.

“Well, if the wildlings are anything like the Dothraki, she died…honourably,” she said tentatively.

Jon blinked, stirring himself. “Yes, she did. It’s some comfort.” After a pause: “Your late husband was Dothraki?”

Dany smiled, allowing herself to feel the flash of grief and comfort that the thought of Drogo always brought. “Yes he was. A great warrior. He died with his hair uncut.” A tear dripped from her eye but Dany still smiled. “We found love, though we did not choose to be together.”

Jon leaned forwards, a hand touching hers. “My father married a woman for duty, to wed two great houses. They, too, managed to build a love together. I’ve seen that it can be as strong as any love wedding.”

Dany didn’t allow herself to meet his burning gaze, but she shifted her hand a fraction to allow his to cup her fingers. There was so much more to say, and yet she couldn’t make her throat work to say any of it.

But Jon seemed to understand, and they stayed like that as the coals died and the warmth bled from the room, tears falling onto their joined hands.
Jon sat beneath the heart tree’s wide, ghostly limbs, honing Longclaw as his father had done before him. But he barely saw the blade; the only thought in his head was of the dragon queen. So much pride as she challenged him and his Northern crown in the throne room, but there were cracks in her composure. Last night by the fire, he suddenly saw an ordinary women, a widow with a kingdom’s troubles on her back. The simple peasant’s dress and her long, unbound hair had made Daenerys of House Targaryen no less plain. On the contrary, a vitality and warmth had shone outwards, a strength she maintained even when tears coursed from her eyes. He had been held transfixed, amazed that he were hearing such things from the fearsome queen.

He saw Ygritte’s face, that twinkle in her eye as she mocked him, always challenging him. Daenerys was the same, neither of them cruel but neither complacent. The familiar tug at his heart at the thought of Ygritte made his hand pause, and he looked up into the blood-red canopy. He had not felt such attraction since grief took hold of him. And once again, he seemed doomed to end up on the opposite side of battle with this proud queen. He knew he should put these feelings aside; a king mustn’t let his heart get in the way of his decisions. He had the North to think of.

A crunch of leaves behind him caused him to start, and his heart lurched as he saw Daenerys picking her way through the godswood towards him. He almost stood, but something about the stillness of the mirrored lake and the peace that the heart tree always gave him made him remain.

“You’re lucky this is still here,” she said, gazing into the canopy as she perched on a rock beside him. “Tyrion tells me that Stannis burned idols of the Seven as a sacrifice to the Lord of Light, and he burned the godswood at Storm’s End.”

“I’m familiar with Stannis and his red woman,” he said, returning his attention to his sword so that he could avoid the queen’s alluring lilac eyes. “And their unfortunate practise of…burning things.” He paused. “Could I ask, Daenerys…which gods do you believe in?”

The queen sat back a little, smoothing her battle-ready leather pants, clearly in thought. “I have seen…a great many things that cannot be explained without gods. I have heard the Dothraki stories about a stallion that will mount the world.” Her hand drifted to her belly. “I have seen sorcery at the hands of maegi. I have birthed dragons, and seen visions in the House of the Undying.” She looked at the face carved into the weirwood. The face had a square, regal jaw, and its brow was furrowed in fury. “I feel a connection here, to this place, and I have seen the power of the Lord of Light. I…I believe in a greater force. I just don’t know what it looks like.”

Jon felt enveloped in a slow, peaceful wonderment at the woman before him.

“I admire that,” was all he could say.

Daenerys turned her attention from the heart tree and smiled at him slowly. “You do? I think it’s rather non-committed.”

“No,” he said hoarsely. “It shows humility.” He cleared his throat. “A valuable trait that is not often found in monarchs.”

He thought he saw a tint of blush on her cheeks, but she hid it well.

“I came to tell you I am leaving. I…I have chosen to follow your advice. I will rain fire on the Lannister army, without harming anyone who shouldn’t be harmed.” Her supple mouth tightened as
she said this, a flash of dragonly anger lighting her eyes.

He nodded slowly. “I’m grateful that you chose to listen.”

“I only listen to good advice,” she said haughtily, although he thought he caught a smile tugging at the corner of her mouth.

He smiled a little too. “I hope you are merciful,” he said softly.

She looked at him searchingly, then stood abruptly. “Merciful? Merciful queens will not last very long in this land.”

He stood as well, slowly, the sense of peace he always got in the godswood still infusing his limbs and guiding his tongue.

“Weak queens don’t last very long. But mercy has its own strength. I know the weight of passing justice, Daenerys.” Jon looked into her strange eyes, and saw the doubt that she had exposed to him on the beach. Doubt and vulnerability.

“My father always said that the man who passes the sentence should swing the sword.” He paused, gripping Longclaw tight as he remembered the men of the Night’s Watch that he had slain in the name of justice. The feel of the head rolling free. “Mercy is powerful. Even more powerful is deciding against it. You must never forget the price of a decision like that. In this case, the queen who passes the sentence must kill them herself. Smell their burning hair, hear their strangled screams. Know that you brought it on them. And feel the guilt that comes with it, so that you are wiser next time you make that choice.”

Daenerys was still as a tree, pain and sadness heavy on her face. Jon felt an instant bite of regret that he had spoken so brazenly to her. Her eyes met his for only a second.

“I will,” she said shakily.

She strode away. Jon watched her go, seeing her shoulders squared despite the weight of a kingdom on them. He murmured, softly, “Be safe.”

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As Dany left the godswood, her legs still weak at the king’s burning eyes, the wind blew through the trees, sounding almost like a whispered “be safe.”
Chapter 3

Dany walked along the cliff’s battalions, Tyrion beside her. The joy of victory burned inside her, and she had donned bright, loose Dothraki pants and a small leather vest, her favourite. The sea’s chill was fearsome on her bare arms but it never bothered her anyway.

They hashed out every detail of the battle together, remarking on what could have been done differently, more effectively. They approached the feast hall of Dragonstone, and Dany was laughing at one of Tyrion’s quips as the door was opened for her.

A gale of laughter poured out, and Dany saw Jon kneeling in the centre of the hall. He was talking with one of her Dothraki, a mother with several children. All the Dothraki had boarded her boats to Westeros, whole families, and there were many children running through Dragonstone’s halls. Jon and the mother clearly did not share a language, but they were making do with gestures. Beside him, a small girl of around five name days clad in Dothraki skins was pulling at a lock of his hair, fascinated that the curl maintained its shape. An even smaller boy half-covered in blue Dothraki clay was pounding furiously on his back, and with a sigh Jon allowed him to clamber on and then stood. The boy giggled uproariously, and Jon rocked him from side to side as he continued to attempt communicating with the mother.

Dany bade Tyrion farewell and approached with a grin. She had only ever seen the king clad in thick protective leathers, but today he had clearly embraced their victory as well. He wore only a thin linen shirt and loose britches, his hair unbound. It felt strange to see him so naked, and Dany couldn’t ignore the muscles of his forearm and the wildness of his hair. He looked so much more relaxed and invigorated than she had ever seen him.

The mother, upon seeing Dany, bowed deeply and murmured a Dothraki greeting to her khaleesi, to which Dany replied warmly that she should be at ease. Jon’s smile was small but intimate.

“Daenerys,” he greeted her, at which the Dothraki mother’s eyes widened to hear such familiarity to a queen.

But he was soon distracted by the boy on his back beating at his ear. The child pointed imperiously forward, and Jon complied with a laugh, running full steam ahead so that the child shrieked with laughter. The mother’s eyes followed them as they made a circuit around the hall, watchful but not concerned. Dany, too, watched the pair, and had to giggle when Jon spun the boy around in a wide arc. She chatted with the mother, asking about how she was finding Dragonstone, but her eyes never left Jon and the boy.

He trotted back up to them, a cocky grin on his face that she had never seen before, the boy pinned under one arm.

“My lady,” he said with a small bow. “The children have been telling me that they believe they are faster than the Mother of Dragons.”

“Faster? Is that so?” she said with an answering grin. “How odd that you so swiftly picked up the Dothraki tongue, Jon Snow.”

He put the boy down, causing four or five other children to pull at his legs, begging for a ride. His eyes twinkled at her, chest heaving a little as he seemed to size her up.

“Competition is universal,” he said. “Now, they were teaching me some Dothraki game earlier. I
wonder if you know it?’

He turned to one of the taller girls and attempted to say the Dothraki word for ‘hunt’.

Her eyes lit up in understanding, and she started issuing orders to the other children. They scrambled to sit in a circle, one place left ominously for the khaleesi. She sat slowly, giving Jon a wary look from across the circle. Her insides twisted as he winked back, a mixture of giddy fun and a swoop that Jon’s eyes always gave her.

The tall girl stood and began pacing around the circle, tapping each child’s head as she went. With each tap, she declared ‘lamb!’ in loud Dothraki. Then, ‘horse!’ she cried, and the child she tapped jumped up and chased her around the circle until she sat in his place. All the children looked at Dany and asked shyly if she understood the game. She smiled widely at their awe-filled eyes, nodding eagerly, finally meeting Jon’s eyes and giving him a private grin.

They played several more times, none of the children daring to tap Dany or Jon. More and more Dothraki children heard of the game and filtered in to play, until the circle spanned half the hall.

Finally, the small boy that Jon had picked up shouted ‘horse!’ as he tapped him. They sprinted around the circle, Jon running a careful distance behind the child so that he giggled wildly as he ran, but plopped down in Jon’s seat with a gasp. Jon threw up his hands in mock dismay, and all the children in the hall laughed helplessly. Dany wondered if the boy would one day tell tales that he outran the King of the North.

Jon, on the either side of the circle, began making his way around. He paused dramatically before tapping some heads, each child squirming under his touch. He drew closer and closer, and Dany’s whole body tightened in anticipation. He was going to choose, he was going to choose…

He was behind her, and before she knew it he cried ‘horse!’ . She was off, grinning wider than she had in years, sprinting after him with all she had. No careful running now, this was a proper race and they could both feel it. He ran faster, but she was determined, and just before he claimed her place she lunged for his shoulder blade. She made it, but lost her balance and tripped, and they careened to the floor together.

The hard stone knocked the breath from her, but she couldn’t stop laughing, her blood still coursing with the thrill of the chase. Jon lay near her, giving great belly laughs as he rolled over on the dusty floor. In a second they were swamped with kids, giggling and clambering over them to check if they were alright.

“Daenerys…are you hurt?” he asked breathlessly, as the young girl from before sat heavily in his lap. She couldn’t answer, and collapsed giggling next to him again. He grabbed her hand to pull her up to sitting. His hand stayed on her arm, molten eyes meeting hers. She couldn’t ever remember feeling so happy.

Suddenly, Tyrion was wading into the middle of it all, calling concernedly. Some of the children were taller than him. Dany clumsily got to her feet, offering Jon a hand. He took it, and smiled calmly at her advisor.

“We’re alright, Tyrion. Just a tumble.”

Dany fought to catch her breath. “This is just diplomacy,” she teased. “Proving to Jon Snow who the superior monarch is.”

Jon shook his head in amazement. “No, my lady, that fall was a cheat. You never would have got me
if you hadn’t tackled me to the floor.”

“Tackled!” she laughed. “Next time we’ll pit a dire wolf against a dragon and see who wins then?”

He ran a hand through his mussed hair in bashful defeat. “I’m sure that’s not quite necessary.”

“Regardless,” Tyrion’s voice cut between them like a knife. “Such foolery is not becoming of a queen.”

Dany felt the last of her childish joy fade. Brushing the dust from her clothes, she squared her shoulders. Jon’s eyes, resting on her as always, also lost some of their elation.

Tyrion marched off, and Dany followed. She glanced back at Jon, and felt warmth flash between them. When she and Tyrion were out of earshot of the occupants of the hall, she rounded on him.

“You are not to scold me like some child. I am no aloof Westerosi queen, never again- ”

“Daenerys, you must be careful falling in love with Jon Snow.”

She twitched as if he had scalded her. “I’m not- ”

“Oh? You’re not in love with him? Even worse, then. You cannot act that way around him. You may marry him eventually, but if you do not, do you think your future husband will appreciate stories of your frivolity with a rival?”

Dany felt anger churn within her, as well as the elated remnants of whatever had just happened. But also a sting of shame.

He reached out and touched her hand. “My queen, I know this is hard. You are not the first monarch by a long shot to love like this.”

She sighed. “I… I know you’re right. I’ve always known it was dangerous.”

She couldn’t stop herself. She glanced over at the centre of the hall. But Jon was gone.
Chapter 4

Chapter Notes

I just want to say how grateful and surprised I am at all the attention and feedback I'm getting! Please feel free to send in any criticisms xxxx thank you all so much for reading

Dany felt the sway of the ship beneath her as she watched Jon, too pale under the mountain of furs. But her eyes barely saw the small room around her; the sight of Viserion sliding limply under the ice kept replaying before her eyes. For the first time in Dany’s life, she felt cold. The only place on her body that felt warm was her hand, where Jon’s fingers had touched hers.

Their journey south through the treacherously icy seas would take most of a month, and Dany had nothing to do with her days except sit beside Jon. She couldn’t stand the thought of him being alone, and while she knew every person on the ship would stand vigil over him if she asked, she was perilously afraid that he would succumb to the cold that kept him shivering day and night. And so she watched, and she mourned, day after day.

Tyrion had tried to coax her out of the room, speaking of the strategies they needed to go over, preparation for her debut at King’s Landing. But Dany had brushed him off; she could deal with that later. Once Jon was better.

He shifted in his sleep, a sheen on sweat on his skin glistening in the candlelight. Dany withdrew from reverie to watch him closely. The maester had told her that Jon was still in danger, and he mustn’t be allowed to get cold.

Jon sighed, and then, finally, his shivering stopped. Dany moved from her chair to sit beside him on the bed, unsure of whether this was a good sign or not. She shifted a fur, and his eyes blinked open slowly.

“Daenerys,” he sighed, his expression sleepy and content.

She smiled, gripping his hand. It was icy cold beneath her touch, colder than before.

“I changed my mind,” she murmured. “You can call me Dany. I mustn’t forgot my brother, but he has no place in my life anymore.”

Jon frowned a little. “Your brother?”

“Yes,” she said uncertainly. “We spoke about it before?”

“Did we?” he said wearily. “I don’t-”

His eyes drifted away from her. Dany squeezed his hand, trying to get his attention, but it was rigid under her fingers. She shook his bare shoulder, but it too resisted her touch.

“No…” she gasped, feeling the skin of his chest. It was cold; too cold.

“Jon!” she shook him roughly, but there was no response. Dany stood abruptly. She should get the maester, he would know what to do, but he was a ship away and Jon seemed to have slipped into
unconsciousness. His face looked blue, even in the glow of the candles, and the knife wounds that had seemed so red and raw in the daylight were now bloodless. She had to act now, she had to warm him up.

Glancing helplessly around her, Dany ran to the fire and stoked the coals, but the room barely warmed. Her breath was coming in gasps, fear gripping her heart. She couldn’t lose Jon too.

With sudden clarity, she realised what the warmest thing in the room was. It was her.

Her shaking fingers fumbled with the leather ties of her jerkin, her eyes riveted to Jon’s slack face. Roughly, she pulled the half-undone jacket over her head and ripped off the thick shirt underneath. Then, her canvas pants, boots, stockings, until she was in only a thin cotton shift.

Tearing the wolf skins aside, she climbed onto the bed. Jon’s skin was so cold and the muscles beneath were wound tight as a drumskin. Dany lay on as much of his body as she could, chest to chest, praying to any gods that may listen, one hand resting on his cheek.

A moment passed, then two, with no change. Dany focused her every thought on Jon, as if willpower alone could bring him back from the brink of danger. She knew that her Targaryen blood kept her body warmer than other humans’. If a dragon couldn’t warm him, who could?

Suddenly, his comatose face began to twitch. His breath, which had been perilously shallow, came in gasps. The muscles underneath Dany all started spasming, and Jon cried out. Dany gripped him tight, almost wishing her warmth into his body.

His arms instinctively wrapped around Dany and he crushed her into him. They were wrapped in a desperate embrace, as Jon’s eyes popped open and his ragged breaths filled the room. Dany scrutinised his face, not daring to hope, watching the blue tint give way to a warm flush.

Eventually, his spasms subsided a little, although the violent shivering remained. The hands on her waist still clutched at her like a lifeline. Jon’s breath slowed a little, and his eyes found Dany’s face, suddenly alert. His face was gaunt with fear.

Dany, too, began breathing easier, and lowered her head to his chest as she felt a sudden rush of tears. His skin pressed against most of her body, and it gradually become more like a man than a block of ice. She silently thanked whichever gods had listened.

They stayed like that for a time, stock still. Dany was carefully attentive to the pace of his breaths and the beat of his heart, which grew stronger and stronger. She was becoming more aware that she was lying almost naked against the entirely naked king, conscious of the delicious weight of their bodies together.

After an age, Jon’s arms relaxed a little, and moved to encircle her waist, so they were resting peacefully together. She lifted her head, meeting his eyes. They were liquid and warm, although the muscles around it seemed tense. Not from fear; she thought she saw apprehension.

“How do you feel?” Her whisper was too loud after the silence.

She watched his throat bob as he swallowed. “Cold,” came a husky reply.

She smiled a little. “Surprising, that.”

His mouth twitched in response. “But your body is so warm,” he murmured, one fingertip drawing a circle on her waist through the flimsy cotton.
Her breath was coming a little ragged again, and not from fear. Their mouths were terrifyingly close.

“Dany…” he said as his eyes drifted to her lips. “I think…I think this is a bad idea.”

His words were undermined by one hand skimming slowly up her side, from hip past her waist. Dany could feel every inch of her body, and the rough layer of cotton between her skin and his hand was driving her slowly insane.

“Do you?” she said, shifting her weight very slightly so that they were suddenly aware of just how tightly their hips were pressed together. Jon’s breath caught.

“She…” His eyes were as soft as she’d ever seen them. “I don’t want it to be like this.”

Her fingertips moved to his cheek, feeling where the smooth skin met his beard. “Do you have another way in mind?” she whispered, drinking in the features of his face.

“Yes,” he said openly. “You just saved my life. I don’t want to…It feels like you’re only here, with me, with your body like this…” His hand drifted around to her back, sweeping from shoulder blade to the small of her back. Dany sighed as her skin tingled in the wake of his hand.

“…because you have to be. Because it was necessary.”

She saw the conflict deep in his eyes, between lust and trepidation.

“You must know that I want you,” he said softly, a thumb brushing her cheek. “But I want us both to choose for it to happen. Not out of some desperate rush for survival.”

She smiled sadly. Her body ached with need, but she recognised that she felt the same struggle in her heart. This wasn’t what she had pictured.

“Not tonight,” she agreed quietly.

They gazed at each other, their mouths so close that their breaths mingled. She almost breached the distance. Instead she stretched, and pressed her lips to his forehead. One hand cupped his cheek. The movement caused their bodies to slide past each other, and again she felt a tantalising awareness of where she fitted against him. Jon’s arms tightened a little, and he seemed to drink in the smell of her. A great sense of comfort swelled between them.

Dany shifted her weight so that she was no longer crushing him, laying beside Jon and drawing his head under her chin. One arm wrapped protectively around his head, smoothing over his curls. She noticed with satisfaction that his body felt almost warm now.

“Sleep,” she whispered. His sigh brushed against her chest, and he kissed her collarbone. With their bodies intertwined, they drifted off together.
Chapter 5

Jon lingered outside Dany’s door, his heart thumping so loud he was afraid she could hear it through the thick oak. He was sure that she had quietly turned down Ser Jorah’s suggestion to fly to Winterfell because it separated the two of them. He was sure that Daenerys was expecting a quiet nighttime visit such as this. It was the first night of their voyage; he had planned to wait a day or two, but he had only managed to stay in his cabin a few minutes after Tyrion had left before need had driven him straight to her door.

Drawing in a strangled breath, his fist hovered over the writhing sigil of House Targaryen. He knocked softly.

She opened the door, and stood without saying a word. Jon was certain that the nervousness eating a hole in his belly was clear on his face. He thought he saw fleeting surprise and warm relief on her face, but then it was calm as still water as she opened the door wider for him in invitation.

He closed it softly behind him, unable to look away from her. She strode across the room.

“Wine?” she inquired softly.

“No,” he said. Jon didn’t want it to cloud his mind. Not a single detail of the night ahead should be forgotten.

Dany didn’t pour herself anything, instead moving to sit in a chair by the fire. Jon hovered a little uncertainly.

“I wanted to thank you again for everything with Cersei,” she said stiffly.

Jon moved slowly to stand beside her chair. “Did you?” he asked softly.

Dany finally looked up at him. “No,” she said with a smile. “Sorry, I’m just…” She looked bashfully down into her hands and chuckled. “…just a little nervous.”

Jon felt a smile tug at his mouth, suddenly feeling much better. “I am too,” he confessed, and she looked up at him with a smile.

He hesitated a moment, then moved to stand behind her, one finger running through her braid.

“Could I take these out for you?”

Dany leaned back a little into his hands. “Yes,” she murmured.

Jon pulled on the ties holding the ends of the braids together, gently unwinding the intricate arrangement. As his fingered moved up to reach her scalp, he rested a moment and put his hands on her shoulders. They were still clad in the stiff leather jacket that she had worn that day, but through them he could feel that her muscles were stone-hard. His thumbs dug in a little, partly massaging, partly just feeling the delicate bones underneath.

Dany sighed, rolling her head backwards until it rested against his stomach. His thumbs moved so that they smoothed along her jawline, from ear to point. Dany’s incredible eyes were closed, and she hummed every so often as his fingers found a sensitive spot. One thumb brushed over her brow,
rubbing away the crease between her eyebrows. He leaned down and kissed the same spot, mirroring the way she had kissed his forehead on this very ship weeks ago, and her sigh brushed over his face.

Jon smiled and resumed undoing her braids, running his fingers through her silky hair until it was as smooth and free as water. His fingertips rubbed into her scalp, undoing the tension in the small muscles underneath. Dany breathed deeply, releasing herself more and more into his hands. Her eyes opened slowly, and met his with a smouldering fire within.

His hands moved, to the back of her neck where leather ties kept her jacket in place. With slow, unhurried tugs, he began undoing tie after tie. It took quite a time, as the queen’s most formal clothes were as stiff and intricate as her hair. Dany leaned forward when he reached her lower back, and when he had loosened the last tie, he slipped a hand underneath the jacket and let it rest on her waist.

She wore a loose shirt beneath it, but the warmth of her skin burned through it into his hand. She had been so deliciously warm the night she had saved him, but he had always thought that was just because he had been so cold. He could still recall the peaceful feeling of slipping away into dangerous sleep, then the burning spread of fire wrenching him back. And finally, the dawning realisation that Dany was in bed with him. Without almost nothing on. He had barely dared to breathe, thinking it must all be a dream. But she moved, and talked, and the next morning she was still asleep beside him in the weak dawn glow, her skin like pearl. As he touched her cheek, she had stirred, and slipped out of his cabin door before the captain’s bell, and cheeky smile lighting her eyes.

Now, one hand was on her waist and one rested on her cheek again, the skin like velvet in his rough hands. He stayed like that a beat too long, just drinking in the feeling of her beneath his hands, and Dany decided she couldn’t wait.

She stood slowly, the curve of her back just visible between the panels of the jacket. She turned, and looked calmly at Jon. Pulling on the front of the jacket, it came free, leaving her in a flimsy shirt that reminded him of the cotton shift she had worn last time. It was thin enough that the fire behind her revealed her silhouette, and he could see the shape of her quite clearly. Her breasts swelled through the fabric, the small points of her nipples betraying her arousal.

Dany didn’t break eye contact for a moment as she moved towards Jon, taking his hand and leading him to the bed. He sat, as Dany laid down. Without a word, she started working on the ties that ran the whole length of her pants. She began at the hip, while Jon worked her boots from her feet and then started on those at the ankle. The process was painstaking, not helped by the sneaking looks he was giving her torso. Finally, they met at the knee, the fabric falling away tantalisingly, but Dany just serenely rolled over and started on the ties on the other leg.

By this point, Jon was almost trembling with want. There was a hard lump in his pants that had been there since she had opened the door, and it hadn’t abated for a second. With each tie he discarded, he was rewarded with one more inch of smooth, alabaster flesh. Dany seemed far more ambivalent about the process than he, but every so often he brushed a finger down her leg, and she couldn’t stop her hips from arching upwards with a sigh.

Finally, torturously, the last ties came off. Dany lay back, her eyes devouring him and mouth falling open a little. Jon desperately wanted to rip the pants out of the way and crush her to him, but she had made him undo every tie with agonising slowness.

So, he let his hands rest on her feet, discarding her socks. Then, he let just his fingertips touch her skin, snaking their way slowly up the gap in the fabric. He reached her calf, then skimmed past her knee, slowing as he travelled up her outer thigh. Dany’s breath was coming louder and louder, and it stuttered as his thumbs smoothed over her hipbones. They were sharp beneath his hands, and he let his fingers trail over her stomach. She sighed, arching upwards, and he smiled down at her.
Jon gently tugged on the pants, sliding them out from under her and revealing the shapely, plump legs beneath. He ran the flat of his hand down her leg, feeling the smooth silky texture of it, his eyes drifting towards the mound beneath her underthings.

Dany sat up slowly, then drew her shirt over her head, tossing it blindly across the room. She was naked except for her underwear, and Jon drank in the sight of her small, delicate breasts. He looked deep into Dany’s eyes, and that tender sense of connection flowed between them. He ached to touch her, but just as he shifted his hand, Dany put hers over it.

She shifted on the bed so that she were kneeling behind him, and her whisper into his ear sent sparks of heat through him. “Not yet.”

Her light fingers found the buckle of his leathers at the shoulder, and she worked just as slowly as Jon had. Gradually it loosened, and she helped him lift it over his head, before undoing the ties of his shirt underneath. Piece by piece, his garments lifted away, until his torso was bare.

Dany smoothed a hand over his shoulder, and his breath trembled as it traced down his back. She placed a light kiss on his shoulder, then slid off the bed.

“Stand,” she said softly.

He did as commanded. The distance between their bare skin was almost too much to stand, and while her face was set in a calm mask, he could see the flicker in her eyes that told him she was dying to feel his skin on hers.

She let a hand drift over his chest, and he couldn’t stop his ragged breaths as her fingertips followed his scars down to his stomach. The muscles under her hands bunched and twitched, the tension in his pants winding tighter and tighter.

Finally, she reached his ties, and the tiny shifts in pressure against his cock as she undid them made him gasp. A satisfied smile flittered across her face as he leaned into her hand, silently desperate for her touch.

She tugged on the pants, and in one swift movement they fell to his knees. Dany’s eyes burned into his, her control slipping away from her face in an instant, naked want overwhelming it. She pushed on his chest so that he sat on the bed, and she teared off his boots and pants.

He sat on the bed in only his underpants, as Dany stood. They both caught their breath, on the brink, savouring the moment before everything would change.

In a rush, she moved forwards, straddling him. Jon wasted no time in crushing her into him, hot skin against his. He buried his face into her shoulder with a gasp. The long, long wait for this moment made it completely surreal; he was sure he was dreaming.

She was trembling against him, nails digging into his back as she held him as tight as she could. Jon could feel her opening against him through two layers of underwear, even hotter than her skin, damp already.

He let his hands trail down her sides as he kissed along her shoulder, following the collarbone. He leaned back a fraction so that he could see her eyes. Her lips trembled as she looked at him, betraying vulnerable need.

One thumb brushed over her bottom lip, and they once again paused on the brink. Then he kissed her, wholly and completely, a kiss that encompassed their whole bodies as they were pressed together. They both stilled, sinking into the feeling of connection after so much time yearning for it.
Then Dany started kissing him, faster and harder. His hands, which had been stroking her hair, moved to her waist and dug in. She moaned softly. That sound drove him higher, and he kissed his way roughly down her neck.

Dany leaned away. “I need you,” she said hoarsely, and pushed his chest again, harder than before. He collapsed backwards as she rolled away, and shifted so that his head rested on the pillows. Dany lay over him, just as she had so many weeks ago, and reached upwards to kiss him softly. One hand smoothed over her hair.

Then they kissed fiercely, desperately, trembling breaths washing over each other. Jon ran a hand down her waist and was stopped by her underwear. He pulled it away in frustration, as she did the same to his. They gasped in unison as she they came together again, and Jon stroked the perfect skin of her ass as his cock rested on her hip. The bare skin against it was heavenly after being confined so long.

Dany kissed him, hard, letting one leg slide between his so that he could feel her opening against his thigh. He let his hands roam over every inch of her, clutching tighter and tighter.

Dany pulled away a moment to catch her breath, and he could take it no longer. He flipped her over onto her back, and their desperate gasps mingled together. His hands clutched at her hair, as Dany’s legs opened beneath him.

His cock was at her entrance, and he paused a moment to take in Dany’s face, her wide, fiery eyes. But she wasn’t having that, and she shifted beneath him so that he pressed into her.

That was all the encouragement he needed. He slid inside. She was wet, so wet that he had no trouble pushing the whole way in with an incredulous gasp. Her eyes were glued to his, and she kissed him as if she were drowning.

A thrust, then two, but he paused again to look at her, drinking in her face and brushing a thumb against her hairline. He drew in deep, ragged breaths, barely daring to believe that he was inside her. Dany gazed back, lust and something deeper in her eyes, looking equally as amazed that this was real.

And then he could stand the stillness no longer, he kissed her, and she frantically returned it. He moved, thrusting, listening to her gasps rising in pitch. She opened more and more beneath him, her body growing damp with sweat. He was moving slowly and gently, trying to savour it.

But Dany’s hands reached down and squeezed his buttocks, driving him upwards, eyes wild.

“What more,” came her guttural whisper.

Jon sank into her as deeply as he could, driving a deep primal moan from her throat. The bed was starting to creak in time with their movements, as he drove harder and harder into her. Dany’s gasps were more like cries now, and he roughly clamped a hand on her mouth.

“Shh,” he cautioned with a grin.

She kissed his hand with a cheeky look in her eyes, and shifted her hips in some delicious way that made him gasp too loudly in the quiet chamber.

“Shh,” came her muffled reply.

Her body moved with his, letting him in even deeper. Jon was perilously close; the long, long weeks of buildup had his body all too ready for orgasm.
Dany’s stifled gasps were hot in his hand, their breaths in time. They couldn’t take their eyes off each other as Jon drove them higher and higher.

Finally, he could take no more. His hand slipped off her mouth as he began to moan helplessly.

“Come,” she breathed into his ear.

Jon exploded, deep groans driven out of him as he was lost in her. Her hot wetness enveloped him, welcoming his seed. Dany clung to him and started kissing every part of him she could find, his cheek, neck, ear, forehead. He moved slowly, every thought focused on the sensations along his cock. Finally, he sighed as if every bit of air in him was driven out of his body, and lay limply on top of her.

Dany’s kisses slowed but didn’t stop, and she scattered them along his neck and chest while he caught his breath. She gave him a deep, satisfied smile, kissing his lips lightly. Jon embraced her, deepening the kiss.

“Dany…” he breathed, as if it were a prayer.

Her fingers stroked his cheek as she gazed at him, her liquid eyes the only thing in the world.

Chapter End Notes

yay they finally did it! just a PS that yes I know Dany’s hair is still in braids in their sex scene in the TV show. I took creative license and did it anyway because I just couldn’t see this scene happening any other way :)

Chapter End Notes
Dany’s fingers roamed over Jon’s chest, trying to memorise the patterns in his skin of blades and scars. She knew that she should feel relaxed, fulfilled, with no thought in her head except for him. But her mind roiled and twisted, the future that she had so willingly ignored just hours ago now staring her bleakly in the face.

Jon dozed lightly beside her, his mouth soft and peaceful.

She was reminded suddenly of Daario Naharis, and the nights she spent sleeplessly beside him, a man not even fit to be her consort. Daario was as different from the king as a man could be, but still the feeling lingered.

Jon twitched as he stirred beneath her fingers. She plastered a smile on her face, as his sleepy eyes met hers. His smile was radiant, but it only made her heart twist.

“Dany,” he breathed, drawing her closer for a kiss. But as she returned it, he must have sensed her discomfit.

“What is it?” he asked. The vestiges of sleep lifted from his eyes, and Jon’s fingers traced over her cheek.

Dany turned her head away.

“Jon…” she sighed, but the rest of the words wouldn’t come to her mouth.

He gave a small smile. “I think I know.”

She looked at him tentatively.

“Marry me,” he said simply, his face open.

Dany was still, her breath caught in her throat.

“It makes sense, you know it does. We are two of the most powerful people in Westeros. We are already allied. This will forge our armies together so that a thousand thousand enemies cannot break it.” He shifted under her, eyes intense with joy.

“I…” her voice was a broken whisper. Her guts twisted like snakes, the beginnings of regret.

“Say yes,” he whispered, kissing her cheek. “Say yes, Dany.”

Finally, she collected herself enough to speak. “Jon, you are the King in the North,” she said. “If we emerge from this battle against the Others, you will rule half the kingdom with my blessing. You will need children to follow you…children that I can’t give.”

“And if it’s already too late for that?” he whispered, a hand brushing over her belly.
The thought was like an arrow through her. “Then everything will change,” she said.

He was silent for a long time, the deep joy draining slowly from his face. Desperation replaced it.

“I came here even though it was dishonourable. I broke my vows. Again! I risked having a bastard child, because I didn’t think—” His eyes grew wilder. “I didn’t think it would be a bastard! Wedding our houses makes sense, Dany—”

“I can’t do that to you,” she said firmly, trying to keep the tremble out of her voice. “If the maegi lied, we’ll find out, won’t we? The seed is planted already. But I cannot promise to marry you now, in case she were right, knowing that it will end your line.”

“I gave that up long ago,” he said. “I made vows.”

“You also made vows to take no crown,” she reminded him. “That’s behind you now. What’s in front is beautiful, healthy children, to rule after you.”

“If the north is so important to you, I’ll name Sansa its queen. I never wanted to rule anyway. Her sons can hold it.”

“But they chose you to lead them,” Dany whispered. She had to persuade him, had to find something to say that would keep him away. He didn’t belong with a barren woman. “Besides, you can forge an alliance out of this.”

“An alliance?” His eyes darkened. “Half the great houses of the Seven Kingdoms are smashed to pieces. Who will I marry? Cersei Lannister?”

Dany snorted. “Of course not. But there’s the Dornish, Arienne Martell still lives. There’s whoever takes hold of Highgarden; their crops and wealth remain, someone must step into the place of the Tyrells. And in the Vale, you already command their men, but you could gain their everlasting loyalty by—”

“Oh, so I am to marry Robert Arryn?” he mocked, his face hard.

Dany rested her head on his chest, guilt spasming through her. “No,” was all she could say.

Jon sighed, the air escaping him in a rush.

“I just don’t understand. You wed in Meereen, knowing you could give him no children. How is this different?”

A dry smile twisted her mouth. “Because I did not care for Hizdahr zo Loraq. I didn’t even tell him that I was barren.” The word was ugly in her mouth.

Jon surged from the bed, pacing restlessly next to her. “No, I…you need a strong marriage alliance too, to help the Westerosi people love you. This makes sense. If you marry the King in the North, you’re no longer the invading foreign force or the Mad King’s madder daughter. You’re the true queen, returned.” He ran a hand fretfully over his hair.

“I don’t need to wed the King in the North to anchor myself in Westeros,” Dany pointed out. “Any high lord will do.”

Jon snorted. “That makes me feel better. So you’ll be the one to wed Robert Arryn?”

Dany, too, slid from the bed. He stood before him, stopping his path, touching his hands lightly.
Jon’s face crumbled a little.

“I want you, Daenerys, I don’t want- ”

“I know,” she whispered, kissing his hands. “I know. And…we are bound, Jon Snow. Not just by… anything as superficial as love.” The word hung between them, and Jon’s eyes darkened to black. “We have the same vision, the same…future in mind. A better land, a kinder and more honourable place to live.” She gazed deeply into his eyes, desperate for him to understand. “Even if we don’t marry, we will always be on the same side. But I will not take children away from you. I saw you with those Dothraki- ” Her voice broke.

Jon’s hand smoothed over her hair. His face was still set in angry lines, but his eyes betrayed a tenderness.

“How can you do this to yourself?” he whispered, lifting her chin so he could search her eyes.

She couldn’t meet his gaze. “I have my dragons. I have children. But I won’t take them away from you.”

“You had already decided this. When you let me into your bed.”

Dany’s eyes closed to hold in her tears. “I wanted to believe,” she whispered. “That it was possible.”

Another sigh escaped him.

“Dany,” he said tentatively. “You know that if we cannot be man and wife…I will not live a lie. I cannot do this again.”

Finally, finally, her tears escaped, and Dany just nodded as guilt and grief gripped her heart. Jon held her, the muscles in his chest still tight and angry underneath her cheek, but his fingers were soft.

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Jon wandered through the slumbering camp, the dawn light was only just beginning to glow around them, making the sea of frost-covered tents glitter. One or two figures stirred, bent over cooking fires as they made a hot drink to stave off the night’s chill. But Jon was restless, excited. Today they would reach Winterfell.

He strode past the command tent that rose imperiously above the rest at the head of the camp, a large Targaryen banner and Stark standard flying side by side. The sight tempered his good mood somewhat; a reminder that the sigils could be joined into one. If only Dany would…

He understood why she had done it. She felt she was freeing him, not realising that the only future that even vaguely interested Jon had her in it. What wife would tolerate the deep respect and desire he held for the dragon queen? What children could they bear that he wouldn’t look at and wish that they had silver hair? It would be better to join Dany, heart and soul, and damn the consequences. But she was resolute.

He nodded at the sentries as he strode past them, stopping a moment to ask them how the night had been. Cold, was the general consensus. He moved on, breathing in the familiar smells of the wolfwood. Dawn was breaking through the trees in long shards, and he followed the sound of a babbling creek to its source.

A shining, pale-haired head was gradually revealed through the trees, and Jon was surprised to come across the queen perched beside the creek. She gazed pensively into the water, still as a bird, and
didn’t even seem to hear his approach. He sat on a rock beside her, sinking into the feeling of a forest at dawn. The birds in the trees were making quite a racket; a good sign. If the Others were near, no animals would dare make such a cacophony.

He waited for some time, seeing if Dany would acknowledge him, but her eyes never moved away from the flow of the water. Finally, he touched her knee.

“Dany,” he said softly.

The icy distance in her eyes melted a little, and she blinked slowly, looking up.

“Jon,” she said, barely audible, her eyes drifting away from him again. An unworldly sadness haunted her face.

He left his hand resting on her knee, conscious of the line between giving comfort and intimacy.

“Talk to me,” he murmured.

She was silent for a long time, her unnerving stillness dropping away more and more as she shifted on her rock. Her mouth eventually opened.

“I had my moon’s blood this morning.”

Jon felt as if he were collapsing. He had clung to that distant hope of a child, more desperately than he realised. It would have made everything so simple.

Dany finally seemed to see him in front of her. “I was five days late,” she murmured, ripping up a dead leaves with her fingertips. “I had really begun to believe that…everything could be-”

He squeezed her knee. “I know,” he said. Her fingers moved to cover his, and for once they were cold as ice.

Nothing else needed to be said, and they stayed like that until he heard the scouts calling through the trees that they were needed at camp.
Chapter 7

Chapter Notes

So I rewrote the chapter :) this is going to be a pretty editable fic with big changes like this so bear that in mind xx

Jon could barely breathe as the familiar drum towers rose before him. When he had last left Winterfell, it had still been largely in ruins. But strange new wooden structures peppered the skyline; many repairs had been completed. Sansa had been busy in his absence.

He glanced nervously to the queen riding beside him. They were at the head of the column that snaked behind them, and she was in full Westerosi finery. There was no sign of the haunting grief they had shared that morning; Dany’s face was a mask of regal disdain, although her eyes devouring the skyline just as his had. She turned to him, her tight smile betraying a flicker of warmth and curiosity. Jon wanted her to love Winterfell as he had, to share the sense of safety that endured even after the fires had gutted it.

Moreover, he wanted Sansa to like her. He felt a little like he was bringing a wife home to the family. He tried to shake the feeling at once, but something remained.

They rode closer, and he could see Sansa’s red hair waiting outside the gates. It was unusual that she hadn’t decided to wait inside the castle, but she had company; a drab girl stood beside her, and a boy seated in a…

Suddenly, Jon was surging ahead, urging his horse as fast as it could go. It couldn’t be. But the closer he soared, the more certain he was, the more he could see…

He leapt boldly from horseback, still running, and the girl was running towards him, and then they caught each other.

“Arya! Arya…” he sobbed, clutching as tight as he could.

She didn’t say a word, but wouldn’t let him go. Finally he drew away, eyes devouring her face. It seemed just the same.

“How are you still alive?” he asked incredulously.

She gave a wide smile. “This helped,” she said, patting the pommel of the skinny Braavosi sword at her side.

He laughed and pulled her in again. “Gods, you’ve grown!”

Over her head, he saw Bran, and shock flooded his system again.

“Bran,” he breathed, breaking away from Arya and moving to hug him too. “Bran, I heard that you were north of the Wall. Sam said- ”

“I know,” Bran said calmly. “We have a lot to talk about.”
Jon drew away, disconcerted at the distance in his eyes. But before he could ask more, the clomp of hooves behind him grew louder, and he turned to see Dany sliding from the back of her horse.

His siblings watched her approach. Sansa’s face was wary, watching every move. Arya looked intensely curious, but Bran seemed unsurprised by her presence, even familiar.

Jon was so distracted by Arya and Bran that he forgot to introduce her. Instead, Dany spoke.

“I am Daenerys Targaryen. You must be Jon’s family. I’m so grateful that you’ll allow me and my people into your home.”

“It is an honour to meet you, my lady” said Sansa with her customary manners, bowing her head.

“Your Grace,” corrected Jon softly, and two of his three siblings looked at him with surprise. Only Bran seemed unconcerned.

“We can discuss all that later,” said Dany diplomatically.

“Where are your dragons?” asked Arya, and Jon smiled down at her. He had desperately missed her bluntness.

Dany gave her a long look. “They are on their way. Dragons are wild beasts, they will join us when they are ready.”

“You can’t control your dragons?” Arya’s eyebrows raised.

“I choose not to, unless necessary,” came Dany’s icy reply, but she followed it with a smile. “You must be Arya.”

“Yes,” Arya said curtly.

“And, Sansa and Bran, is that right?” Dany pressed.

“I’m surprised Jon has told you about us,” Sansa observed. Her eyes flicked to Jon, heavy with suspicion.

“Well,” he said. “I’m surprised you didn’t send word that our brother and sister were alive.” His joyous smile took the bite out of his words.

“The ravens are getting less and less reliable as the cold wind rises,” Sansa said.

“Speaking of,” Dany broke in. “Could we get my people out of the cold? It has been a long march.”

“Yes, of course, my- ” Sansa’s voice stopped at the word ‘queen’.

“Call me Daenerys,” she said kindly. Jon looked at her with surprise; only a handful of people in the world were close enough to call her Daenerys, and they had won that right after years of loyalty. But she wouldn’t meet his eyes, instead turning to her captains and signalling them to advance.

Jon put his arm around Arya as they walked through Winterfell’s gates. “Remember the last time we welcomed a monarch to Winterfell? We all waited in a neat little row for Robert Baratheon, just like you were.”

“We were all so happy,” she said faintly. She leaned into him, but the boundless energy that he remembered was gone. She seemed calmer, more purposeful, and she almost glided across the ground. The fury in her was gone…or perhaps no. Something still shimmered under the surface, a
more tempered rage.

Sansa pushed Bran’s chair, and he turned to Jon and said: “We need to talk. All of us.”

“Surely we should let our guests rest after the journey?” Sansa said politely, only the smallest bite in her tone.

“No,” said Bran, resolute. “We’ll meet now, in the godswood.”

Jon met Sansa’s gaze, unnerved by how much their siblings had changed. But the calm purpose he saw in her eyes was the same as that in Arya and Bran. He realised he had it as well, and he could guess where it came from. They had all seen too much of the world; not much could surprise the four of them anymore.

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Dany strode through the godswood, the forest richer and wilder than the one at Dragonstone. She felt a heavy power in the tree limbs around her, and was reminded of her conversation with Jon Snow about religion. These old gods that he prayed to seemed more real than she’d thought.

“I’m surprised that I was invited to this little gathering,” Tyrion remarked, walking beside her.

“You are my Hand,” Dany pointed out.

“Yes. I am also a Lannister, who was long accused of having Bran killed and who was forcibly wed to Sansa. I see no reason for Arya to dislike me, but I’m sure she could find one.”

“You killed your father, the head of the Lannister lion. You have proved above and beyond that you are dedicated to the cause.”

“I have, your Grace, and I expected to win their trust. In time. We have been here for perhaps an hour, and I’m already invited to council meetings. Something smells off.”

“If the man with half a nose smells something bad, I should probably listen,” Dany smiled, and Tyrion gave a wry half-grin in return.

They approached the figures huddled under the weirwood, one of the biggest she’d ever seen. Bran alone watched her; Jon and Sansa were absorbed in conversation. Arya was nowhere to be seen.

Jon saw her, and broke away from his sister with a smile.

“Welcome, Daenerys.” He had returned to using her full name in others’ presence, for which she was glad. They had to walk a line between the casual intimacy of allies and something deeper, something that their advisors could correctly interpret as romantic.

“This is a magnificent godswood,” she said, laying on the charm. She was sure that winning over the favour of the trueborn Starks, as well as the one named Snow, would go a long way to securing the North. But there was something else. She desperately wanted Jon’s family to like her, to approve. But Sansa paid her no mind, her gaze fixed on her Hand.

“Hello, Tyrion,” she said quietly.

“Sansa,” he greeted her. Dany could feel wariness rolling off him. “I’m honoured that you have allowed me here.”

“It was not my decision,” she said coolly, looking over at Bran. Dany examined him too; the cripple
boy was far older than she thought, and there was a wisdom in his eyes that was centuries older than his young face.

“There is another coming,” Bran said.

A twig cracked behind them, and they turned to see Arya and the boy Gendry walking through the trees together, deep in conversation, clearly very familiar with one another. Dany looked at Jon in shock.

“Does your sister know the Baratheon boy?” She hadn’t been impressed when Jon had revealed who the smith’s apprentice truly was, and the wilder part of her had been very tempted to end the line of the Usurper kings then and there. But the kinder hearts of her councillors pulled her back. And, as Jon said, Ned Stark was just as responsible as Robert for her family’s demise. So if she took his head because of his father’s sins, she’d have to take Jon’s as well. That had been an effective end to the argument.

But Jon seemed as taken aback as she was to see his sister laughing with the Baratheon bastard. “I didn’t know-”

Bran smiled. “Yes, they know each other,” was all he said.

Gendry bowed his head slightly as he approached their group. “My lords, my ladies.”

“Oh, don’t do that,” said Arya with a chuckle. “You’re just as important as us now.”

“Still lowborn, Arry,” he said with a hint of resentment. “Still a bastard, even if I am a king’s bastard.”

“As am I,” said Jon softly. “It doesn’t matter here. Welcome.”

“Why am I here?” he asked bluntly.

Bran stirred in his chair. “I have some important things to tell you all. Please, sit.”

Dany paused, uncertain, finally following Jon’s lead as he sat cross-legged on the damp grass. They were arranged in a small circle, feeling oddly like a band of children eagerly awaiting a story from an elder. Bran now sat above them on his chair, and he gazed across the still lake.

“Bran, you’re so different,” Jon said softly, as the silence stretched out.

His eyes refocused. “Yes, Jon. I am the three-eyed raven now.”

“What does that mean?” Dany asked respectfully.

“I see the past,” he said, eyes now boring into hers. “I see your past, Daenerys Stormborn. And your future.”

Dany had seen too much in the House of the Undying to doubt the certainty in his face. “And?”

Bran did not answer, his gaze sweeping over the five of them.

“Winter is coming,” he said. “Words we’ve heard half a hundred times. Issues of the realm, issues of succession and thrones and power are meaningless in the face of the rising winds. Stark and Targaryen and Lannister and Baratheon are names that no longer hold meaning. The feuds and blood that lay between you are in the past. Daenerys and Gendry, your fathers are not here. Sansa and Tyrion, there are no Lannisters here. Do we all agree that we have one true goal ahead?”

“We are one council, our power shared equally between the seven of us. We fight for the good of the realm, the whole realm, and every life in it. Agreed?”

Again, they vowed.

“There are truths to reveal here that have been hidden for years, decades. Truths that call everything into question. Remember what you have sworn here today, before the old gods. Once the Night King is sleeping again, we can discuss politics. But not before.”

“What truths do you speak of, Brandon Stark?” Dany asked. A mix of curiosity and fear was curdling in her belly. She had no idea what he could know.

His old eyes pierced hers again. “You are not the last Targaryen, Daenerys, Mother of Dragons.”

The words hit her like an axe to the stomach.

“Wh- what…how…”

Bran’s eyes moved slowly to Jon. “And, Jon, I know who your mother is.”

Jon’s face became a mask.

“Who?” he said, a fearful flicker in his eyes.

“Lyanna. Our aunt.”

Jon’s breath left him in a strangled rattle. “But- ”

“And your father was Rhaegar Targaryen.”

The world turned black around the edges of her vision. Too much, the shock was too much, especially after her moon’s blood this morning. Dany felt hands on her shoulder, Tyrion’s hands, soothing her. The only sound in the world her gasping breaths.

“It can’t be,” she breathed, leaning over the grass.

She looked over. Jon was a statue, face white and every muscle tensed. Sansa was weeping, Arya giggling into her hands.

“The rape…he…” Jon’s hand’s were in tight fists, eyes unseeing. Anger hardened his face.

“No,” said Bran. “They were wed.”

“Wed?” came Jon’s strangled rattle.

“Your name is Aegon Targaryen.”

Jon shook his head, his breathing as uneven as Dany’s. Their eyes met, burning deep into one another. His were as scared as a deer’s in the wolfwood.

“I’m…I’m a Stark? A true Stark?”

“And a Targaryen,” breathed Sansa, wonder filling her eyes. “Welcome, cousin.”
Jon gave a twisted laugh. “I always wondered why my fath- oh gods, he wasn’t my father…” He looked lost now, unsure.

“He loved Lyanna, we all heard that a hundred times,” murmured Arya. “He would have done anything for her. Including ruining his honour, including driving a wedge between him and Mother. Including…looking after a Targaryen right under Robert’s nose.”

Jon shook his head, half amazement and half disbelief. He tried to speak, but no words came out, and eventually he lapsed into a brooding silence.

“But,” Bran said eventually, just as calm as before. “Three heads has the dragon.”

Dany’s hand covered her mouth.

“You can’t be serious,” said Arya. “Another Targaryen?”

Bran gave a long sigh. “Yes. The Mad King lusted after a woman, a highborn lady, with a great lord as her husband. The story of Rhaegar’s rape was a sick lie, but not Aerys’s. His desire was well-known. It is said that on her wedding night, he took great liberties in the bedding ceremony.”

Tyrion’s hand stilled.

“There was a tourney at King’s Landing, many years ago but many years after their wedding. Half the realm flocked to the capital, including her. Aerys was cruel to her, mocking her children and her husband, his jealousy obvious to everyone who saw it.”

Dany felt sick with shame as she listened to the actions of her father. She had believed for a long time that the title ‘Mad King’ was a grotesque lie, but Ser Barristan had gently revealed otherwise. This only proved that he was one of the famed Targaryens cursed with insanity.

“That night, anger consumed him. He sent his Kingsguard to steal her away, bringing her to his chamber.” Bran’s eyes flickered as they watched the events of long ago, misery creasing his brow.

“A year later, she gave birth to a son. His son. Her husband was so wroth that he plotted, for a long, long time, to serve justice to the Mad King.” Bran smiled bitterly.

“And he got it. He betrayed the king, and his son plunged a sword in Aerys’s back and ended his dynasty.”

Bran’s eyes returned to the gathering before him, and settled on Tyrion.

“No,” Dany heard his strangled whisper. She looked at him, amazement filling her like a bubble.

“Yes,” said Bran. “Tywin never treated you as his son, and you always thought it was because you were a dwarf. And, you killed Joanna on your way into this world. But it was even worse. You did all that, and weren’t even his. Did you never wonder at the depths of his hatred for you?

“I- ” Tyrion looked broken, remorse filling every line of his face. He couldn’t find the words.

“And did you never wonder why he ordered the Mountain to kill the Targaryen babes so savagely? You know Tywin, and you know it was not one of his prudent political moves. The Mountain was his man, everyone knew it, and the whole Seven Kingdoms judged him for the brutality. It was his revenge for the horror that Aerys visited on his great love.”

Dany was trembling uncontrollably, as Tyrion was wracked with sobs. She met Jon’s eyes again,
seeing in them the same upheaval that she felt. The rest of the group watched, sympathy in all of their faces.

“He never…” Tyrion gasped. Gradually he regained some control of his voice. “He told me once… that the greatest sacrifice he made for his house was allowing me to live…to preserve the family honour, he said. Because he knew…he knew that revealing my parentage would have destroyed the respect he had worked…his entire life to earn. Revealing that he couldn’t even protect his wife from the…” He lowered his head. “And then I killed her. No wonder he hated me so fiercely.”

It was Dany’s turn to comfort him, and she rested her hand on his. Gripping it tightly, he managed a twisted smile at her.

“All this time,” he wept. “All. This Time. And I killed him for it. Would any man have acted differently? Would any man have hated me less?”

Jon, sitting beside him, took his other hand. Tears had begun streaming from his eyes too, both their pasts a broken trail of lies.

But Dany felt inordinately happy. “Family,” Dany breathed, too quiet for anyone to hear. But Bran’s eyes flickered to hers, and he gave her a secret, joyous smile.

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“So, brother mine-”

“Do you really have to call me that? I don’t want to say ‘sweet sister’ because then you’ll just remind me of Cersei.” Tyrion drawled.

“And if you call me nephew, I’ll set Ghost on you,” Jon said with a straight face. Only the twinkle in his eye gave him away as he looked at her.

Dany had to chuckle. “And I suppose ‘fellow dragons’ is too grandiose?”

“Not for me,” said Tyrion with a grin. “It’s about time I replaced the nickname ‘Imp’ with something more befitting my new status as ‘blood of the dragon’.” His playful tone was undermined by the discomfit that flickered in his eyes, every time he said ‘dragon’. It had been weeks since Bran’s revelations, but none of them were yet comfortable with the changes between them. Dany had the easiest time of it; both Tyrion and Jon were grappling with a complete upheaval in their identities.

They were sequestered in a quiet corner of the Winterfell library, all of them slightly unnerved that they were clearly having a family meeting.

“I guess I wanted to…clear the air,” said Jon, a little tentative. “I don’t want us to continue as if we are only acquaintances.” His eyes met Dany’s then, lighting up with a flash of heat. She looked away to hide her smile, as they both remembered a night when they were more than acquaintances.

Tyrion cleared his throat. “Yes, well, the question of succession has certainly become more difficult.”

Dany met his gaze squarely, not shying from the truth. All the same, fear began to twist inside her. The Iron Throne was everything that she wanted. “You are my older brother, Tyrion. You would have a strong claim to the throne.”

He snorted. “I am your bastard older brother. And I have never been interested in sitting on the thing myself, I’d prefer to put your pretty head at risk. No, I have found being Hand of the Queen…suits me. Suits me better than anything I’ve tried my entire life.” He smiled at her. “Following a monarch
that I actually believe in is quite a rewarding experience.”

Dany had to blush.

“Then there’s only my claim,” said Jon quietly.

Dany’s fear returned, even stronger. She didn’t want to fight Jon, even more so now that she knew he was family.

His gaze met hers calmly, and there was kindness there instead of a challenge. “Daenerys, I already told you I bend the knee. You will make a far better queen of Westeros than I would make a king.”

“I don’t know if that’s true,” she said softly. She tried to keep affection out of her tone, but a glimmer in Tyrion’s eye told her she hadn’t succeeded.

“In any case,” she said with more composure. “When you were a bastard boy holding half my kingdom away from me, it was easy to see that you had to kneel before me. Now, you are my brother’s son, my equal.”

“Your better,” murmured Tyrion.

“What?” she said sharply.

He cleared his throat. “Well, Rhaegar was older than us both. Jon beats your claim because he’s not only the firstborn’s son but he is, well, a son. In the laws of Westeros, every possible male heir has to die before they consider crowning a queen.”

“Just one of the many changes I will make,” Dany sighed. She twisted her hands, thinking over the situation in her head. “Jon, if you want to claim the thr-”

“Stop,” he said. “I don’t.”

She scrutinised him. “You don’t?”

He shifted on his chair with a sigh. “Daenerys, I’ve been to the south once in my life. I spent most of my time on your island, and now I’m back in the North with no intentions of leaving any time soon. What do I know about ruling the southern kingdoms?”

“And, this is all fairly futile,” Tyrion broke in. “This is all based on the assumption that the three of us survive the war, and that we even have Seven Kingdoms to squabble over at the end of it all. The Others are still out there.”

Dany gave a long and considering sigh. “Jon, you bent the knee to me. But you are my blood, you should never have to kneel before me. I can’t accept it. The North is yours, and you will rule it as its King. If, of course, there’s anything left of it after this is all over.”

Jon gave a dry smile. “So it’s not much of a gift after all, Your Grace.”

She smiled too. “We can negotiate over the other kingdoms, if you wish. Dragon to dragon.”

He went to reply, but Tyrion cut him off.

“There is one other elephant in the room,” he said carefully. Dany felt a lurch in her stomach, sure that he was about to mention…

“Targaryens have wed brother to sister for centuries.” He gave her a lecherous wink, but his eyes
were serious.

She laughed, refusing to meet Jon’s gaze. “Your dastardly plan is revealed, Imp. You wanted to seduce me all along.”

He chuckled, leaning back in his chair, but his eyes piercing her.

“But would I be wrong to guess that you two are…very close? That you have…been very close?”

Jon’s face became guarded, and Dany’s stomach dropped as her fear was realised.

“Yes,” she whispered. Jon looked alarmed at her concession.

“I thought as much,” Tyrion said. “But you clearly decided not to wed?”

Jon was as still and silent as a statue. “No,” came his husky reply. His pain-filled eyes flickered to Dany’s and away again.

“Tyrion, I am barren,” she said, misery swelling inside her. “We know it, because he couldn’t…not even Targaryen seed could quicken me.” She looked down into her hands, emotion filling her voice. “And now that we know you’re a Targaryen, Jon, it’s even more important that you find a fertile wife. Your children could have the Iron Throne after me.”

Sadness twisted around her heart, and she desperately craved his touch and his warmth, but she had made a decision. She pictured little silver-haired children, running clumsily before their father. She couldn’t take it away from him.

“Dany,” he breathed, that yearning tone of his, and her heart twisted even tighter. “Dany, how can I marry anyone but you? Who would understand me like you do?”

She clutched her hands tightly together, not letting her tears spill. “It would be…” she started, but a sob interrupted her. “I wish I could be with you. Body and soul. I…feel like you…” Her tears began to stream. “Like you complete me. Like you understand what I am going through, in a way that no one else does.”

His eyes burned into hers with fierce longing. There was no sign of tears in his eyes, only wild determination.

“Dany…” Tyrion said softly. She jerked as he used her nickname, but in a way it felt right. It was her family’s name for her.

“Did you know that Visenya Targaryen was married to Aegon the Conqueror for ten years before they first had a child?” he said, looking at her kindly.

Dany couldn’t breathe. Her eyes were locked on Jon’s, crazed hope gleaming there.

“Everyone believed her barren as well, as Aegon had children with his younger sister, Rhaenys, his favourite. But after eleven years she gave birth to Maegor, who grew big and strong and became Maegor the Cruel.”

He smiled to himself. “Even if that proves unsuccessful, you could try polygamy, as Maegor did. He took three wives at once, the Black Brides, and each night visited their beds in turn in the hopes of a child.”

“P’rhaps not,” Jon whispered, and Tyrion chuckled.
“Alright, perhaps not. But, of course, there’s your bastard brother to think about. I’d be quite happy to apply myself to the task of producing an heir.” His concerned eyes defied his flippant tone. “I’m sure we could twist the laws around so it all works out somehow.”

Dany was shaking, her mind swirling, possibility glimmering in her mind. Jon’s heart was in his eyes.


She gave one heaving sob, then another. Would she? Could she? The image of Targaryen children was strong in her mind’s eye, but then it blew gently away, replaced with another image. Her and Jon, standing beneath the huge heart tree, snow swirling around them as they made vows to one another.

Then she was kneeling before him, her face pressed into his knees.

“Marry me,” she whispered, gazing up at him. He didn’t waste a second. He, too, slid to his knees. They knelt on the floor together, clutching each other as tight as they could.

“Yes, yes Dany, of course,” he whispered into her hair, over and over.
The hall erupted as Jon said the word ‘Targaryen’. Rows of lords, knights, and ladies lined its walls, arguing furiously with one another. Their slapdash war council were seated at the long table, the seven of them in a long row. Dany was in the centre, Jon to her right and Tyrion to her left. Sansa and Bran were beside Jon, and Arya and Gendry sat down the table next to Tyrion.

“I am,” he confirmed, but his voice was drowned out. He stood. “I am a Targaryen!” he finally shouted, and the din died away.

“There are three Targaryens left in the world, and all three sit before you today. I am the son of Lyanna Stark and Prince Rhaegar, who wed in secret. Tyrion is the product of rape between Aerys the Mad King, and Joanna Lannister. We…” He let the full weight of the statement flow through him, delighting in it, as he declared: “We are the blood of the dragon.”

The crowd began mumbling angrily again. Many cried ‘Imp!’, ‘Bastard!’, and ‘Monster!’. Tyrion’s face was twisted in humiliation.

Dany slowly got to her feet.

“There’s more,” she said loudly, and every voice in the hall stopped. Many had yet not met the Targaryen queen, although her dragons soaring over Winterfell were hard to miss. Curiosity had every eye fixed on her. Jon felt her worry, and almost wanted to intervene, to step up and speak for her. But he held his tongue. He was going to marry a queen; she didn’t need the protection of her husband. She was born for this.

“Jon and I are to be wed,” she said, taking his hand. He looked at her in surprise; they had intended to wait a few days before making that announcement. But when she met his eyes, calm purpose shone within them, and her mouth flickered with a joyful smile. “Trust me,” she whispered, just for him.

“Married?” Sansa’s voice broke through the hubbub in the hall. Her face was white with shock. “But, what about alliances, Jon? There is Arienne Martell in Dorne, we could add Dornish swords to our war against the Others if you only- ”

“We will win the Dornish swords regardless,” Dany cut across her. “Sansa Stark, your words are wise. We need political strategy if we are going to create a force strong enough to defeat winter itself.” She should have looked small, but her voice swelled from within, with a serenity that battled the doubt in every person who heard her.

“Or, should I say, we would have needed political strategy. In the old world. The world where old names were all you needed to have power. The only path upwards was to marry higher up the ladder, so that you could amass just a little more land, more food, a few more loyal swords.” Dany’s voice was hard, unforgiving. She did not plead with the northern lords, knowing they respected strength over soft words.

“Many of you in this hall have old names, powerful names, which earn you certain rights. I will not wrest these away from you, but nor will I demand that anyone fight for us because I will marry into northern blood.
“Your loyalty is not to the Starks. It is not to your king, or queen, or lord. Your loyalty is to the living. Your children and children’s children will not live unless you pledge yourself to fight. The Dornish will be told this, as will every corner of Westeros. We will not rally Targaryen banners, nor will we pick the families with the biggest armies and force ourselves to wed them. Not in our new world.”

At this, she smiled at Jon, and warmth lit up her violet eyes. “We will be wed because we cannot stand to be apart.”

His heart leapt, and he squeezed her hand. But when he looked at his sister, Sansa’s eyes bored into him. He saw the conflict within, between happiness for him, and concern that he was making a terrible mistake.

“The Targaryens wed brother to sister for centuries,” came Gendry’s voice, rough and deep. “And the gods punished them for it. The old ones and the new hate incest. And you want us to cheer you?”

An agreeing murmur spread through the hall. Jon nodded at him.

“A concern I felt myself, my lords. But, we are aunt and nephew.” He and Dany had to smile at each other, as they always did when he used the word ‘aunt’. She was actually younger than he, and several voices joined their laughter. “First cousins wed often; my own grandfather and his cousin, Tyrion’s father and mother. This is no different.”

Sansa sighed in frustration. “So, the only question that remains is prudence.”

Jon looked over at her. “Sister,” he said. “I can ask only for your blessing.”

“Well, you have mine,” Arya called out, a small smile on her face. Jon chuckled, unsurprised that Arya had little concern for the politics of marriage.

“And mine, Jon Snow,” said little Lyanna Mormont. She gave a long, considering look to Dany. “This new world you speak of, Daenerys Targaryen…I’ve been told for years that I would one day have to marry for the good of my house. I would like to see a world where that was not the case. Although I have no idea how you hope to accomplish it.”

Dany smiled at her. “One challenge at a time, I think.” She took a deep breath, and called calmly through the room. “In a fortnight, we will be wed. This way, anyone left in Westeros who would join our cause has time to make their way to Winterfell. Then we march north. Every one of us.”

The chatter rose again at that statement, and many of the lords were grumbling, arms folded, shooting daggers at Jon. Finally, one stepped forward.

“You are my King, Jon Snow, I chose you. You are Ned Stark’s true son — or his nephew, what does it matter. But I didn’t give you my loyalty to see you hand it over without a fight to this… foreigner, this daughter of a madman.”

Jon squared his shoulders. He had expected this. “My lord, I did not join with Daenerys out of cowardice, or because of threats, or fear. She inspired me. And she listened to me, she let me drag her up to the north, to protect us against what’s out there. We are lucky to have her.” He tried to remain impassive before the crowd; they needed to see a king, not a lovesick boy.

“Besides,” she called out. “Jon Snow bent the knee, and I told him to rise. If we survive what’s coming, he will be King of the North, not Warden. An independent kingdom.”

The northern lord snorted. “Good to see she handed your pride back to you on a silver platter,
Snow.”

Jon looked at Sansa, silently imploring her.

She sighed and stood, and the hall quietened.

“Perhaps the Seven Kingdoms will not listen to your pleas and threats about a new world, when they would have listened to a marriage alliance. Perhaps this love wedding will cost us men. And…I can’t help but think of Robb, who married for love and lost his head for it.” Murmurs of assent greeted her words, a heavy grief weighing down the room.

But…” She looked down the hall. “The Freys are gone, and you are not Robb. Nor is your intended a powerless girl.” She appraised Dany, a grudging acceptance in her face.

“Having more swords may not win this war. But the dragon queen will, as will the King in the North. Your love, and your strength and trust, will be the rock on which our victory is built.”

“Aye!” the room answered her. Only a handful of faces remaining wary and unconvinced; far less faces than they’d feared. Dany’s hand gripped his tightly.

“The King in the North!” cried one of the lords, and they took up the call, over and over. It was mingled with cheers of “Mother of Dragons!”, “Targaryen!” and “Daenerys!”.

Jon felt relief, and a heady rush at the power they had been given. As well as the responsibility. He saw Dany’s eyes shine with the same fear and exaltation that throbbed within him, and in a rush he kissed her.

The hall thundered with cheers, and they clutched each other. He felt the weight of duty shifting, and for the first time since he had begun to lead people, it became shared with someone else. She understood its weight, the first person who truly did. He felt her relief as she, too, let it sit between them, rather than bear it alone. They broke apart, eyes locked, their hearts and fates bound.

Chapter End Notes

i know i know, still no wedding, hold your horses :) xx
Chapter 9

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Tyrion pushed open the library door, certain that he would have the privacy to peruse some of Winterfell’s most ancient books. He and Samwell Tarly had had a splendid conversation last night over dinner about the accuracy of a text by Maegor’s High Septon, but for now he craved peace and quiet as he read.

With a start, he saw a figure by the fire, sewing in the wan winter sun rather than reading. Her red hair flickered in the light as she turned to look at him.

“Tyrion,” she greeted him softly.

“My apologies, my lady. I had thought the library empty,” he said politely. He’d managed to steer clear of Sansa for most of his time in Winterfell, not wanting to be too much of an intrusion. He knew the very sight of him surely filled her with dread, and remembered fear.

“Come in,” Sansa said, returning to her needlework.

He walked cautiously over to the hearth, sitting in the chair beside her, unsure of whether he should get a book to read. But she spoke before he could fetch one.

“Did you know of their plans to marry?” she asked abruptly. Her voice betrayed nothing.

He sighed. “Yes. And I thought your words today were very kind, very moving.”

“They were the right words,” Sansa said softly. “I still think- ” she broke off. “It doesn’t matter.”

Tyrion considered his next words carefully. “Does she intimidate you?” Tyrion asked.

She looked up sharply. “Of course she doesn’t,” said Sansa, then a smile came to her. “She has two dragons, Tyrion, how can I not be? How can Jon not be?”

“Well, I can tell you right now, it’s not a Targaryen trait. Those dragons are terrifying, especially from my height.” He gave a wry grin, although his stomach lurched as he said ‘Targaryen’. He generally tried not to think about his parents, about who he really was.

Sansa’s icy eyes, so much sharper than he’d seen them at the capital, pierced him. “How strange it must be,” she murmured. “Are you used to it yet?”

“Used to what?” Tyrion’s words came out in a rush. “Used to being the product of a vicious rape that tore my family apart? That caused so much hatred in my father? And can I even call his hatred unjust or unreasonable?” He pressed his lips tightly together, annoyed that he had let the turmoil within him escape. “My apologies, my lady.”

She smiled. “Come on. Call me Sansa.”

He looked up in surprise. “Truly? After our own happy marriage?”

She straightened. “You were kind to me, you stopped Joffrey. You never forced yourself on me. I couldn’t trust you then, you were a Lannister, I had learned the hard way not to trust Lannisters. But we’re both here, now. It’s behind us.” Pain grew in her eyes. “I…find it hard to trust men these days.
It...helps to remember that you defied your father’s orders to consummate the marriage.”

He nodded, asking no more questions, gazing into the coals. They sat in companionable silence for a time.

“I...” Sansa seemed on the brink of saying more, but courage left her.

“Yes?” Tyrion prompted quietly. Sansa’s hands twisted together.

“It’s so hard to be here,” she whispered. “To make sure I remember my childhood in Winterfell, and not...the Boltons. Jon’s wedding...they’re going to hold it in the godswood. Which is right, the old gods are Jon’s gods, only...it’s going to remind me of my last wedding.” Her voice shook, and her face was tight.

Tyrion’s heart ached for her, but he didn’t let pity show on his face. She needed someone to talk to, not to be treated like a little girl.

“You haven’t spoken to your family about it? To Jon? I’m sure he would hold it somewhere else if you asked.”

She shook her head vehemently. “He wants it there, and I won’t be the one to stop him. As for the others, they don’t know anything about what I’ve...about King’s Landing, what they...did to me there. What I had to survive. They would think me weak.”

Tyrion had to clench his hands to stop himself reaching for hers. “You are sitting here, as Lady Stark, with the respect of a hundred northern lords, because you were strong,” he said softly.

Sansa’s eyes met his, and he could see that she wanted desperately to believe him.

“Thank you,” she whispered.

He smiled, letting the silence stretch out as she sat with her thoughts.

“I remember when my mother and brother died,” she said finally. “You tried so hard to help. And you left me alone when I asked. Thank you for...still helping.”

Warmth swelled in him, and he could only murmur that: “I’m glad.”

Again, comfortable silence.

Until there was a knock at the library door.

“Tyrion?” Jon said, sticking his head around the door. “Oh, Sansa. I didn’t know you were here.”

Tyrion slid off the chair. “Jon, what can I do for you?”

There was a twinkle in his eye that worried Tyrion. “Come with me, little uncle. Sansa, you might want to come watch this.”

She smiled tremulously, and discarded her needlework, smoothing her skirts as she stood. “Watch what, exactly?”

“It’s a surprise,” he winked at them, and disappeared. Tyrion gave Sansa an exasperated look, and he felt something grow between them as she smiled conspiratorially.

They left the library, the three of them walking through the warm castle corridors. Winterfell’s hot
springs flowed through the walls, keeping away the chill.

As the approached the courtyard, they began to hear shouts and grunts. They emerged onto the balcony of the fighting yard, and they could see there was a duel in progress.

Tyrion watched with fascination as Arya danced around her opponent, who wielded a hammer that could probably squash her like a bug.

“You’re too bloody quick,” grunted Gendry, as a swing missed her by an inch.

“You can beat a hundred men with a hammer like that if you’re a slow, slumbering beast,” she snapped back, ducking another blow. “You can beat a thousand if you learn how to move quickly as well.”

“I bet you can’t even lift this hammer;” he said, managing to evade a whack to the head from her skinny sparring sword.

“Can too!” Arya said indignantly, reaching out to tap his exposed back. But he caught her with a huge backhand, and she went flying. Tyrion gasped, and Sansa ran to the railing, leaning over with concern. Jon seemed less worried, but his eyes never left his sister.

“Arya!” Gendry cried, dropping to the ground beside her still body. “Arya, I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to-”

She coughed, rubbing her chest. “It’s alright,” she said with a wheeze. She gave a weak laugh.

“Good move. I’ll have to watch out for that next time,” she said, getting unsteadily to her feet. Gendry still hovered, a hand on her back, and Tyrion watched the body contact with sharp eyes.

“Are you sure you’re ok?” he said, and she punched his chest lightly.

“Are you going to ask the wights if they’re alright?” she scolded. “That was a great move. Don’t be afraid to pull it again. I’m tougher than I look.”

Jon’s face had softened, and he took Sansa’s hand. “She’s fine,” he murmured to her.

She smiled at him. “We’re just like Mother and Father, watching her train.”

Jon chuckled. “Come on,” he said, but Sansa’s eyes strayed back to Arya.

“I might go down and check on her,” she said, and Jon nodded, smiling at Tyrion as she descended the wooden stairs.

“Come on, Halfman. Can’t keep Dany waiting.”

“Oh, this is her surprise,” Tyrion grumbled to himself. “That can’t be good.”

Jon took him to the castle gates, and as they left Winterfell’s walls, he heard the screeching cry of dragons. Just outside the gate, Dany was standing with her children, watching them tear at a freshly-caught meal. Wolf, Tyrion thought uneasily.

She turned at their approach. “Are you ready?” she said to Jon. He put his hand at the small of her back.

“As I’ll ever be,” he said with a smile.
“For what, exactly?” Tyrion asked impatiently, feeling the usual mix of awe and terror that being around the dragons gave him.

“You didn’t tell him?” Dany asked Jon. That damned twinkle was still in his eye.

“More fun this way,” he said, kissing her forehead.

“Very well,” she chuckled. “Tyrion, let me explain. There are three surviving Targaryens…and two surviving dragons. Drogon is mine, no one else can ride him, and I cannot ride Rhaegal. He needs a Targaryen on his back when we go north.”

Shock, terror, and desire flooded through Tyrion.

“Surely…” he choked out. “Surely Jon will ride him?”

Jon shrugged. “Dany thinks so. But he could bond with either of us, you have as much Targaryen blood than I do.”

He gulped. But I’m no true Targaryen, he thought sadly. Only a stunted ill-made fool, like my father always told me.

“Well, he’ll have to stop viciously attacking that carcass first,” he said shakily.

“Rhaegal!” Dany called sharply, and he slowly turned to look at their little band. Tyrion heard a cheer behind him, and looked over his shoulder to see a small gathering atop Winterfell’s walls. Spectators, he glowered, how wonderful.

The dragon paced over to them, his enormous head brushing the queen’s outstretched fingers. His gaze pierced Tyrion, and then Jon, the glowing bronze eye seemingly aloof. Dany moved away from them, leaving Jon standing before the dragon, and gestured Tyrion forward. With a bolt of courage, he took a few timid steps, so that he and Jon were level, Rhaegal’s head between them. The beast radiated heat, and snowflakes melted an inch before meeting his moss-green scales. Rhaegal smiled slowly, revealing big black teeth that were half as tall as Tyrion was. The dragon was far bigger than it had been below the pyramid of Meereen.

“Remember me?” he murmured. “We met before, when you were imprisoned. I came to help you.”

Rhaegal’s eye examined him closely, and Tyrion thought he recognised him. He was certainly calmer than he had been, when in chains.

Jon was on his other side, and his hand was outstretched, reaching to stroke the scales. Rhaegal’s head moved away from Tyrion, swaying into Jon’s hand. He gave a wide smile, stepping closer…

Then the dragon’s head swayed again, his snout knocking softly into Jon so that he fell into the snow. He gasped, and Dany giggled as she ran forward to help him up.

“Naughty boy,” she scolded the dragon.

Rhaegal payed her no mind, his attention now solely fixed on Tyrion. His hand reached out, trembling like a leaf, to stroke the scales. They gave off a deep, delicious warmth. The dragon leaned into his touch, and something passed between them as Tyrion looked deep into his eye.

Then the long neck slid forward, until Tyrion was staring at his shoulder.

All thoughts had flown from his head, and the only sound in the world was the thump of his blood in
his ears. Wild panic gripped him, but he moved shakily, finding gaps in the scales into which he could fit his hands. Taking a deep breath, he collected his courage, and stepped up. He climbed slowly, the dragon holding still beneath his slight weight. Finally, he was atop his neck.

Now he could see Jon and Dany, their eyes wide in awe. Behind them, the crowd on the battlements had swollen to a thousand. He began to hear again, and the crowd was roaring as if he were at a great tourney. He’d never heard a sound like it. With a shaky breath, he gripped tight to the dragon’s scales.

“Rhaegal,” he whispered, then cleared his throat. “Rhaegal!”

The dragon’s head turned so he could see the fiery eye.

“Fly,” he called in High Valyrian. He had a death grip on the dragon’s spines, every muscle clenched. For a moment, nothing happened.

Then, he left the ground.

Rhaegal leapt, great beats of his wings carrying him towards Winterfell. He swooped low over the battlements, so that Tyrion could see terror etched on every face. A huge gasp rose from the crowd as he missed them by a foot, everybody ducked. Then, in the blink of an eye, Rhaegal had flown past the castle and over the wolfswood.

They soared together, carving a leisurely path eastward, Rhaegal brushing to tops of the trees. Tyrion was gasping, breathless, still sure that he was in a dream. Then he gave a great whoop of joy.

“Higher!” he called in Valyrian. He tried to use his body to show the dragon what he wanted, and he complied, his massive wings beating at the air so that they left the trees behind. The ground grew farther and farther away, and Tyrion felt his tears drying in his eyes as the sky opened above him.

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Dany watched, as proud as she had ever felt, as Rhaegal’s speck appeared on the horizon, growing bigger and bigger until he landed with a thump outside Winterfell. Tyrion — white, shaken, but with a smile a mile wide — slid from his back.

Jon was beside her, smiling too, although Dany thought she could see disappointment in his deep eyes. Who wouldn’t want to ride a dragon? And with Viserion gone, he would never be able to ride one. Unless he outlived Dany, she mused, and rode Drogon. But she shook off that thought.

But he was a good man, that’s why she loved him, and he strode forward and knelt to hug Tyrion tightly.

He was incoherent, great gasping breaths interrupting his speech. Dany smiled kindly, and stroked Rhaegal’s nose as her brother collected himself.

“I’m…I’m a Targaryen,” he laughed, wild and joyous.

“Yes,” said Jon, laughing too.

“I’m a Targaryen!” he crowed, hands covering his face.

“Yes!” Dany giggled. The glee in his eyes was infectious.

He turned, amazed, to his dragon. “Farewell, friend,” he said, walking over to pat his scales.
“Farewell,” he repeated in Valyrian. Rhaegal nestled into his hand for a moment, then took flight again, and this time Drogon joined him as they circled lazily above the forest. The three of them turned to return to the castle.

“We are the only people living to have ridden a dragon,” Tyrion said to Dany slowly, wondrously, and her joyous smile lit up again.

“It’s unimaginable, isn’t it?” she said.

“It is. And I’ve been trying to imagine it my whole life,” he said, voice still cracking with emotion.

“Do you remember my first flight?” she asked.

“Like it was yesterday,” he breathed. “It was the first time I had ever seen a dragon. I remember my envy, as well.” He laughed, and looked at her. “I’m a true Targaryen,” he said, as if he were believing the words for the first time. “Not just the Mad King’s twisted bastard.”

“You are my brother, and the blood of the dragon,” she said quietly. “Never forget it.”

They entered Winterfell’s gates, and were immediately knocked backwards by thunderous cheers and applause. The castle was currently hosting thousands of free folk, Dothraki, sellswords, northerners, southerners, freedmen, Unsullied, and many stragglers who had rallied to their cause in the last few weeks. It seemed that every single one was packed into the courtyard, and every single one had seen Tyrion ride a dragon.

“Halfman!” came a wild cry, and waves of sound rolled over them. Hands reached for Tyrion, lifting him up, and he was carried over the ecstatic crowd. Jon came in behind her, and Dany leaned into his side. Pride swelled in them both, as they watched Tyrion, finally adored by the masses.

Chapter End Notes

i knowww still no wedding xx
Chapter 10

Chapter Summary

ENJOY

Chapter Notes

It's been aaages since the last update, and honestly it'll probably be aaaaaages till the next one!! hehe

Jon smoothed a hand over the fine leather jacket. The embroidery was smooth and thick under his palm, Sansa’s needlework as fine as ever. A pale white direwolf with red eyes gazed out at him, serene and regal. The likeness to Ghost was uncanny, and his heart warmed for Sansa’s gift.

He was about to pull it over his head when there was a knock at the door. “Yes?” he called, and Jorah Mormont stepped into the room.

“Lord Stark,” he said courteously. “Daenerys sent me over, to help you prepare. You should have a friend by your side on a day like today.”

Jon smiled at him, though it was a little stiff. “Of course, Mormont. I’m grateful. And please, I’m no Stark, I’m not even sure what last name I should be going by these days. Call me Jon.”

He bowed his head, and moved over to him to pick up the jacket. “May I?”

“Please,” said Jon, adjusting his blood-red undershirt so it fell straight. It was the best he owned, made of fine silk. The supple leather slipped over his head, and Mormont began fastening the ties at its back.

“The queen is happier than I have ever seen her,” he remarked, his voice guarded. “Even with Khal Drogo, her sun-and-stars, she was not this happy.”

Jon smiled to himself as he fiddled with the jacket sleeves. “As am I,” he said quietly.

“And of course, with Daario Naharis, he excited her but she was not truly-”

“Who?” Jon asked, nonchalant, although something began twisting in his belly.

“She did not tell you?” Mormont said, tugging hard on the ties. “A sellsword that she fell in love with in Meereen. A dangerous man, not fit for the khaleesi. But she loved him all the same.”

Jon smiled a grim smile to himself. “And where is this Daario now?” he asked nonchalantly.

Jorah grunted. “In Meereen, taking silver-haired lovers, no doubt.”

“She’s Grace left him behind?” Jon pressed. “I’m sure that was difficult for her, if she truly loved
him.”

Mormont’s fingers were almost vicious as they pulled the last ties tight.

“It was,” he conceded.

Jon turned to face him, and the grizzled warrior took his cuff and began lacing it. Jon saw the heavy jealousy in his creased brow.

“Then the queen is wise in her choices,” Jon said quietly, and saw rage surge in Mormont’s eyes. He tugged the sleeve straight, moving to the next one.

“I do not judge the queen’s choices,” he murmured diplomatically.

Jon felt an ache of compassion in his chest. He wasn’t sure he’d behave any differently if he were Mormont. In fact, he remembered the same surly envy from years ago. Here in Winterfell, a sweet serving girl had smiled at Robb instead of him. He’d nursed a grudge against his brother for weeks before Ned Stark finally sat him down and demanded to know what this brooding look was about. He’d given a big, full laugh when Jon told him. With a hand on his knee, his gruff smile had been warm and understanding.

“Lad, don’t waste your time on the pretty faces. Wait for the one who feels like your best friend before you even start thinking about what she looks like. Pretty girls are for fools, and I hope you’re not one of those.”

Jon had haughtily denied his foolishness, and he smiled to himself to recall the pride in his younger self. Something twisted in his heart as he thought of Ned Stark, who he couldn’t help but think of as his father. He wished he could tell him that he’d done just as he said, and found a friend as well as a wife.

Jorah noticed the smile. “Did I make a jape, my lord?”

“No,” Jon said softly. “And it’s Jon.”

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The ceremony itself was small, quiet, only their closest friends huddled in the godswood. Ser Jorah walked the queen up to the heart tree. Bran, as an impromptu head of the family, calmly lead them through the vows. His voice was muffled by the falling snow. It drifted lazily around them, giving the sacred trees an eerie stillness. On Jon’s side, the Stark family stood proud, beside Sam and Gilly and the babe, with Tormund at the head of a handful of wildlings. Dany stood tall in a thick, white, woollen dress, streaks of silver threaded through it. Her long pale curls cascaded unbound to the small of her back, and over her ribs, a large black sigil of House Targaryen was sewn. She and Jon mirrored one another, he clad in black with the white wolf, and her in all white, with black dragons on her chest. He, too, had his hair unbound, a mass of black curls salted with snow. They were picturesque, and their eyes never wavered from the other’s as they promised to love one another until the end of their days. The heat that flowed between them wasn’t the crackling, transient lightning spark of lust. It was a slow, deep, sustaining warmth, like a hearth that smoulders all winter, keeping the family home warm. They said their vows in low, purposeful murmurs, unhurried, unfettered by doubt or fear.

Brienne watched it all near the back of the small crowd, keeping her usual watchful eye on the woods around them. It never hurt to be careful.

Beside her, a tall, scarred man shifted and sighed in irritation.
“Didn’t I kill you?” she murmured to him softly, so as not to interrupt the vows.

“Apparently, the gods still need me,” the Hound grumbled.

Brienne watched Sansa and Arya, who stood nearest to Jon. Sansa was crying silently, but Arya just looked on, a calm joy in her face.

“You did it,” the Hound said to her. “You kept your bloody vow. Look, the two Stark girls, home and safe.”

“Yes,” she whispered. “We did it.”

She looked at him, and under his gruff, impatient glare, she was sure she could see pride shining in his eyes.

Northern weddings were a quick affair, and before long, Jon was unclasping his cloak. The heavy black fabric bore a great red dragon, its three heading rippling viciously as he swung it over Dany’s shoulders. His tenderness was clear to see as he clasped it, and they kissed softly, almost chastely. Brienne had to smile, and clapped furiously with the rest of the crowd.

Their kiss stretched on, until Tormund began muttered an off-colour jape about saving it for later. Jon broke away with an abashed grin, and they faced the group with joined hands.

“It’s time,” Dany called through the thickening snow. “Time for us to celebrate the happiness we share today-” He and Jon shared a smile as she said that. “-with every single one of you.”

A cheer went up, and gradually the party wended their way back through the godswood.

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The rest of the night passed in flashes for Dany. Deep, echoing belly laughs. Hearty Westerosi drinking songs. Wild Dothraki revelry, with only one death. Dany almost forbade the usual Dothraki wedding violence, but decided that they had a right to their disquieting tradition.

Tyrion was seated beside her, while Jon was talking intently with Arya.

“Daenerys, about that day with the children, on Dragonstone-“

She opened her mouth to cut him off, but he ploughed on.

“I should never have chastised you,” he said quietly. “You must understand-“

“I do,” she said firmly. “In the old way of things, weddings were…tools. Almost weapons. But not today.”

“No, not today,” he agreed. “I cannot remember a wedding with real, genuine joy. At my last one, I was accused of regicide.” He chuckled dryly. “And even before my nephew choked on pigeon pie, his cruelty soured the proceedings somewhat.”

Dany gazed over the crowd. “And what of the next one, do you think?” she asked lightly.

Tyrion sat back with a contemplative air. “I’ll wager a dragon on…Samwell and his little wildling family.”

“Oh Tyrion,” she teased. “Such a safe guess! Your dragon clearly means a lot to you.” Dany’s heart lifted, not just with the comfort of being with her brother, but with the game. Guess which of her
people would be the next to feel this rich, heady happiness. Guess who had joy and love in their future, rather than more blood and loss.

“I’m still not convinced that Rhaegal has picked the right Targaryen,” Tyrion drawled, but his words held no weight. He and Dany had taken a few flights together, and every time they touched back down, Tyrion walked with a little more pride and fearlessness. A greater sense of belonging. Dany had also noticed the Imp taking quiet midnight walks out beyond the castle wall, into the freezing night with a book and a jug of wine, to curl up and read beside his dragon. The huge wings shielded him from the chilling wind, and a light smouldering contained in the dragon’s mouth gave Tyrion both illumination and warmth.

He tapped his chin. “And what of…Jon’s littlest sister? And a certain Baratheon bastard?”

Dany’s eyes popped. “Surely not,” she breathed, as the implications whirled through her brain. “I don’t believe it.”

Tyrion shrugged. “I guess I’ll have two dragons then,” he said with a sly grin.

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A particularly rowdy rendition of ‘The Bear and the Maiden Fair’ came to a thundering close, and the musicians drank well-earned pints of ale. With conspiratorial glances, they came together for the next song; a slow, dignified waltz, the song to which — traditionally — the married couple had their first dance.

Jon touched Dany’s elbow softly, disrupting her conversation with Grey Worm, as heads all through the hall swivelled towards them.

“Shall we, my lady?” he murmured into her ear, letting his breath wash over her. He was sure that she shivered, and not from cold. Her eyes danced as she turned and nodded.

Leading her by the hand, they walked regally out onto a space in the middle of the room, which had rapidly cleared to make way for them. She turned to face him once they reached the precise centre of the hall, hundreds of eyes fixed upon them.

Jon had been given dance lessons once or twice as a boy in these very halls, but he had never taken them seriously, always making japes with Robb when the wizened dancing master’s back was turned. He found himself wishing he had paid a bit more attention.

“Have you done this before?” she whispered to him.

“No,” he admitted, a small blush creeping up his neck under his jacket.

“Me neither,” she smiled, and he saw his nervousness reflected back at him.

He drew her closer, hands light on her waist. He was vaguely aware that they should be dancing to this song with one hand outstretched, but all thoughts of formal etiquette were beginning to slip away. The music was slow, pulsing, delicately romantic, and he focussed only on the slight shape of her beneath his hands.

At first they watched one another as they danced, trapped in each other’s eyes as they had been in the godswood. Dany’s eyes had been startlingly clear, like thin glass, infused by the harsh white light of the snow. They were darker in the hall’s firelight, thick purple liquid with glimmering shards swirling within.
Then, she pulled him closer, and they simply swayed, cheek to cheek.

Minutes passed, possibly hours.

Finally, gradually, the music began to morph. A drum started to beat, guitars were strummed rather than plucked, and a lively flute picked up the pace. Jon opened his eyes to see Gendry chatting with the band of musicians, and then prancing out onto the dance floor with a grin on his face.

“Right, ladies and gentlemen, kings and queens. That was all very nice, very touching, but I think it’s time to enjoy ourselves!”

There were jeering cries of agreement, although Jon noticed that many of them had twinkles of moisture in their eyes. Their quiet happiness must have been touching after all.

Gendry began clapping along with the beat, dancing and moving, drawing others out onto the floor. Within seconds, Jon and Dany’s solitude was punctured. Couples, siblings, children and friends joined hands and began to dance to the song, a well-known jig. It had the whole hall shaking, a thousand feet stamping in time. Dany laughed, eyes glittering, trying in vain to follow the steps. Jon still held her by the waist, and he swept her along as the dance carried them across the hall and back again. He loved the vibrant warmth of her beneath his hands. He loved the way she sank into the joyous celebration. Her steps were unsure and clumsy, but graceful nonetheless. He realised something with a shock; she was his, in every way imaginable. Wife, and best friend, and family.

She caught the intense look on his face. “What?” she gasped, breathless with exertion and laughter.

He just smiled. “I love you,” he said.

Joy lit her face like a firework, and she caught his face between her hands and kissed him thoroughly. Raucous clapping and laughter erupted around them, but he didn't hear them. He could barely stop smiling long enough to kiss her back.

Then, a larger disturbance distracted them. The middle of the hall had opened into a small bubble, at the centre of which Gendry was dancing an elaborate jig. His feet flashed faster than a Dothraki blade, every step sure and agile. He finished with a flourish, to great applause. He bowed mockingly, in the direction of his challenger…

…Arya.

She stepped into the bubble with all the serenity of an assassin, or a wolf stalking its prey. When she began to dance, it was oddly graceful, too fluid and dignified for the wild music. Her movements were more suited to the slow waltz than the thumping beat of the jig. Gendry stepped forward again, and took her hands. His steps were small and simple, and Arya eventually began to copy them, watching with sharp eyes. Gendry kept his pace slow, giving her time to learn. The beat obligingly slowed as well, and small pockets formed all over the hall, as others took the opportunity to teach their neighbours the dance’s steps.

After a few rounds, Arya’s face spread into a confident grin. The beat began to drive her limbs faster and faster. Gendry’s smile widened in response, and he spun them in a circle as her movements grew looser. The careful, poised elegance fell away, and she seemed helpless to the music.

Finally in tandem, their eyes locked as they danced, faster and faster. The competitive glint in their eyes drew the rest of the crowd in like flies, and they formed a tight ring around them, clapping, egging them on.

Sweat flying, Arya matched him step for step, her grace meeting the music’s wild excitement.
Their feet moved faster than ever, and still neither slowed.

Finally, Gendry broke, stumbling sideways as sweat poured down his brow. Arya gave a last dainty hop along with the final chord. She was panting. Eyes bright. Cheeks flushed. She curtsied to the applause, then collapsed into laughter. Gendry just plain collapsed, and she swept up under his arms to hold him upright.

They gave a lopsided bow together.

Jon felt breathless just watching them, and he realised he hadn’t seen his sister so…animated since he had arrived at Winterfell. That unsettling sense of cold purpose had never seemed far from her eyes, even when she seemed happy. But now, all that he could see was the sister he had known as a boy, the assassin forgotten.

He drew Dany closer, and was just in time to intercept a significant look passing between her and Tyrion. He couldn’t quite figure out what about, only noticing that Tyrion seemed smug, and Dany somehow chagrined. She turned to him, and returned his curious look with a small kiss that said ‘tell you later’.

Tyrion got to his feet and slammed an empty wine jug onto the heavy table, having to repeat the action several times to cut through the hubbub.

“Right!” he called loudly. “I’m sure most of us will continue the drinking and the dancing, but I think our lovely hosts have some business to attend to.” He gave a slightly drunken gesture to Dany and Jon. “Onwards and upwards, eh? To the lord’s chamber?”

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A cheer rocked the hall, the loudest yet.

“Oh no,” Dany laughed. “Surely not.”

“No,” Jon said to her, a glimmer in his eye. “Indeed, Lord Tyrion. Sorry, Uncle Tyrion!” he called, and a shout of laughter met his words. “But I’m afraid I won’t need any help with the bedding ceremony.”

With that, he lifted her off her feet with a gasp.

“Put me down!” she said with a giggle.

“Aye, Your Grace,” he smiled. “Just a moment, and I’ll put you straight down.”

He strode across the hall, and the jubilant crowd parted, calling out lewd suggestions and jokes.

Faces flashed past Dany, and she realised she was looking at everyone in the world that mattered to her; Grey Worm and Missandei, Jorah, Tyrion, her Dothraki bloodriders, and hundreds of Westerosi and Unsullied and Dothraki that she had come to know over the past weeks. All were smiling, and she suddenly felt as though the whole hall was filled with the dancing golden light of joy. It was a light that hadn’t been felt by most people there for a very long time.

And then they were through the great wooden doors, with a dedicated entourage following them through the corridors of Winterfell.

Dany’s blood was still singing with excitement from the dancing, and she laughed at the more ridiculous and scandalous suggestions from their following. One or two — from Tyrion, of course —
even caused Jon’s breath to hitch, from shock or laughter, Dany couldn’t tell.

Up the stairs, along the passages, and finally they were at the lord’s chamber. Ned Stark’s old rooms had been offered to Dany upon arrival, but she’d refused and insisted Jon take them. Now, they were to be shared.

Jon turned to the gathering, swinging her around unceremoniously so she had to clutch at his neck.

“Thank you, friends, for the kind words of advice,” he smiled, and an answering jeer filled the passageway.

“Now go away!” she cried, and Jon strode into their bedroom and spilled her onto the bed. She gave a cheeky wave to the crowd, drawing out a final gale of laughter before he shut the door resolutely.

Dany didn’t waste a second, almost leaping across the room in a breathless rush. She pinned him to the door with a kiss, crushing their bodies haplessly together. Last time had been slow, delicate, wonder infusing them both as they uncovered the other’s bodies.

Not this time.

Hot, wet, gasping, clawing hands. Dany’s mouth was devouring his, and then his face was buried in her neck, and he bit her. A flood of heat passed over her skin as she gasped.

At this sound, they both heard muffled guffaws through the door. Dany pulled away from him covering her smile with her hand. Jon’s mouth flattened as he went to swing open the door, but she stopped him with a light hand on his chest.

He stepped aside, and she serenely opened the door. A dozen of the loudest, unruliest, and bawdiest soldiers stood crouched before them, clearly enjoying their eavesdropping.

Dany didn’t say a word. She simply mustered the steeliest dragon gaze she could find. She met their eyes one by one.

And one by one, they melted away, a shadow of genuine fear passing over their faces. The last was Gendry, who gave a wink before scampering down the corridor, safely out of harm’s way.

She shut the door slowly, and turned. Jon met her eyes with bemusement and a bit of awe.

“I can’t believe that worked,” he said.

She shrugged, playful. “Best weapon in any monarch’s arsenal. Forget about dragons, all you need is a bone-chilling stare.”

He nodded thoughtfully, already drawing towards her again. “You’ll have to teach me some more about the skills of monarchs.”

“I have plenty to teach you, Jon Snow,” she whispered, just before their lips touched.

They kissed, kissed again, finally obeying the burning energy that had flowed between them all night. Jon’s hands brushed from hips to neck to back, always pulling her closer. She walked forwards, walking him backwards, until he sat heavily on the bed.

No time for delicately removing each other’s clothes tonight. Their eyes never left each other as they tore at their things, a race to see who would undress first. Dany won, and she stood there breathless.
and shaking with desire as Jon tore off his stiff boots.

Finally, finally he was free. They gathered themselves. Jon sat at the edge of the bed, naked as a
babe, breath falling out of him in a tumbling rush. Dany stood before him, drinking in the play of
firelight across his warm skin. It reminded her of their conversation at the fireside at Dragonstone,
where she had first let down her guard around him. Now, she could scarcely remember what it felt
like to be guarded.

The warm air shivered past her skin, and then she was closing the distance, and they tumbled back
on the bed together. His hot skin felt like fire against her, and with a driving need, she pulled him
closer and closer. Not an inch separated their bodies. They kissed ferociously, hot gaping mouths
pressed together. There was no delicacy or tenderness here. Only hunger.

His hands weren’t delicate either, grabbing her, his fingers digging into the flesh of her ass in an
effort to pull them even closer together. Her nails scraped their way down his back, drawing out a
long moan from deep in his throat.

Her knee was resting on his hipbone, and she become startlingly aware he was butting against her
wetness. The tiny, slight pressure of it had her gasping, and her arching back made it clear that she
craved more. But Jon had other ideas.

With surprising strength, he flipped her onto her back. Pressing down on top of her, she let her legs
open wide in invitation, and she pulled him in close form his ass. He smiled, coy, and gave her a
deep kiss before his wet mouth travelled down to her breast. He was sloppy, devouring rather than
kissing. But when his teeth closed around the nipple, Daenerys cried out, hands burying themselves
in his curls in ecstasy. His fingers tugged at the other nipple, and she was lost in sensation.

Soon his hot mouth was moving again, slipping lower and lower. His hands smoothed over her
stomach, more delicate than before, and purposefully spread her legs. She complied, all too willing,
and felt an aching second of consternation as Jon hovered above her mound. Was he going to tease
her? Move away and begin somewhere else, when every inch of her skin was screaming for his
mouth to sit firmly on her?

But no. Jon’s fingers moved slowly over her opening, and she gave a keening cry. She had been
dying for this for hours, hungry for his fingers to do exactly this. She saw his fingertips come away
glistening, and Jon’s deep eyes met hers. Wonder stirred there, and she realised he wasn’t pausing so
as to deny her pleasure. He was transfixed, drinking in the sight of her most private self.

“Beautiful,” he breathed, and she didn’t hear the word; she felt it, brushing against her openness.

And then his mouth was on her.

Wet tongue stirred against her wetness. Dany cried out, hands smoothing raggedly over his hair in
soft, blissful encouragement. His tongue was slow, deliberate, and she gasped with its every sweep
over her clit. She felt as if she were melting, melting into the heat of him.

Just when she thought she was getting accustomed to the sensation, his teeth got involved in the most
marvellous of ways, and everything was suddenly heightened. She was somehow relaxing and
tightening at the same time, and it felt like every corner of her mind was concentrating on that one
square inch of skin, engrossed in every stroke of his tongue.

Jon’s hands smoothed upwards, twisting her nipples, and once again everything was intensified. Her
fingers spasmed in his hair, and with panting cries she begged him not to stop.
His tongue returned to its swirling. Dany’s body was so tense that she juddered with every
movement. Higher and higher, tighter and tighter. She felt like her entire being was concentrated in
that patch of skin, more and more of herself collecting there as Jon’s mouth moved relentlessly. It
seemed like the only thing in the world that existed was that one, tiny movement.

And then, when she thought she could be no tighter, Dany felt every muscle clench. Then the world
went blank.

Her cries filled the chamber as she shuddered, opened, loosened, desperate. Jon still didn’t stop, the
smooth strokes triggering spasms and sparks as she sank slowly into limp, languid release.

He slowed as her gasps began to die, fingers taking over to stroke slowly and gently down her
length. She gave a shuddering sigh. She felt wrung out, boneless, and loose with pleasure.

Jon pulled away a little, kissing gradually up her body until his head reached hers. She clung to him
like a baby animal, legs and arms both wrapping around him. She buried her face in his neck. In the
aftermath of that tsunami of sensation, she felt cold and hollow, needing to feel his warm body beside
hers.

Fingertips danced lightly over her back, and her sensitive skin fissured with pleasure. His saturated
mouth found hers, and she tasted her pleasure on his tongue.

Long, endless kisses, bodies melted together. Dany could have been a puddle with a mouth, for all
the movement she felt capable of.

A log cracked loudly. Gradually, they both became aware of the chill in the room. The fire was
dying.

“Wait right there,” Jon whispered into her mouth. She groaned in consternation as his warmth
slipped out of bed. She stretched, long as a cat, reveling in the liquid sensation that still suffused her
limbs. Jon’s face glowed orange as he poked the coals, dropped another log on the fire. A curl fell
over his brow to brush his lips. Dark eyes met hers across the room, and they shared a lazy smile.

She watched his taunt muscles as he stood slowly. The way his eyes traced over her sprawling figure
was like touch, and she returned his attentive gaze.

“Come here,” she called, a quiet command. He approached the bed like a wolf prowling, slow and
deliberate. Dany sat up and moved away, patting the pillows in a silent demand. He obliged,
compliant for the moment, lying where Dany had just been.

“Hmm,” he chuckled. She silently cocked her head, and he couldn’t hold back his grin.

“Wet patch,” he said, arching his hips to pat the bed beneath him. Dany laughed as she leaned down
to kiss him.

She’d thought her body spent, but within seconds his kiss was sending sparks of heat through her.
She knew exactly where she wanted him. From the way his hips shifted restlessly, he was quietly
dying for it as well.

In a swift, fluid movement, she was straddling him. Leaning down to reach his mouth, the tips of her
breasts brushed over his chest, and Jon reached for them instinctively. She shifted, and then her
opening was pressed against the shaft of him. Panting breaths mingled, and she was tempted for a
moment to prolong the agony.

But their need was too great. In one sure movement, she lifted her hips, positioned him, and sank
A slow, grateful sigh escaped both their lips. Eyes locked, the rightness of him swelled within her, the fullness that she’d been aching for. Jon’s mouth had fallen open helplessly, and his plump bottom lip was just too enticing. She leaned over and took it gently between her teeth, letting him slide out of her just a little as she did so.

He reacted to her every move, breath stopping and stuttering as she lifted off him by another fraction of an inch. Then, with a sigh, she sat back again, driving him into her as deep as she could.

A small moan escaped as his tip found the spot deep inside her. They were as joined as two people could possibly be.

His hands had come to rest on her hips, and with the lightest of touches he guided her upwards. She complied, watching how his face spasmed with desire. Down again, slowly, sinking, blissful. A small part of her loved the control of it, knowing he was helpless to his need. She began to move, and each thrust set off a chain reaction in the muscles of his face.

His hands were desperate now, driving, and Dany moved faster. Their gasps were in tandem, and each time he hit that spot deep inside, her mouth fell open with a moan.

She loved the suggestions offered by his hands; they didn’t clutch tight enough to absolutely control her thrusts. They simply guided her to certain angles, and speeds, and depths.

And right now, they were begging for more.

Gripping the headboard, she obliged. He was slipping completely out of her and back in again, dragging high keening groans from his throat. Dany was lost in her own momentum, and a hundred wights crashing into their chambers couldn’t have distracted her enough to stop moving.

More and more, harder and harder, and Dany was opening more with every thrust, as his shaft found even greater depths.

Jon’s deep pants were drowning out her own, and he gave a broken whisper, “I’m- I’m going t-”.

Dany was as unrelenting as his tongue had been earlier, not dropping her pace for a second as she rode him. His fingers clutched spasmodically at her hips, then his whole torso was twitching, and he cried out. Those full lips gaped open obscenely, and his eyes popped open in wonder.

She sank down, as deep as she could possibly go, and he curled upwards as his seed exploded into her. There was a tight, wonderful ecstasy on his face, which smoothed away into slack, blissful release. Dany slowly leaned over him, resting her chest against his, and after a moment his arms reached around her and crushed them together.

They had no reason to move, and for a time they stayed buried in one another. The husky, warm smell of Jon was strong in her nose. Dany had never felt such peacefulness in her life.

When, finally, the ache in her hips began to register, she shifted to lie beside him, not moving any farther away than she had to. His eyes drank her in.

They were heavy, almost drunken with love.

She echoed his words from earlier that evening, when they had danced in front of everyone they knew.
“I love you,” she breathed. He gave her a tiny kiss, first on her swollen lips, then reaching up to press his tenderly against her forehead.

She nestled closer, and they drifted off into sleep.

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