Summary

The Lady of Winterfell and the Lion of Lannister have a surprising amount of things in common.

Their love of the songs of old is merely one.

Notes

This is quite different to my usual style; it's a lot more experimental, - I attempted to write it in a style approximating the epic/high medieval, so I'd love to hear what you all think.

trigger warnings: major angst, violence & death.
The Lady of Winterfell and the Lion of Lannister have a surprising amount in common.

*I wanted to be ser arthur dayne*

*(like the songs of bravery)*

*I wanted to be a lady*

*(like the songs of hope)*

At the end of all things, after the War for the Dawn, after the Fall of the Dead and the End of Winter, they are, somehow. She with her tender, generous heart, her stark white skin and eyes like the sunset sea and hair of weirwood red; the lady of the North, beloved of her people. He with his golden hair and emerald, flashing cat-eyes and a golden hand, his horizon redemption, his only thought to keep his promise, by any means necessary.

*their end is tragic*
(like the songs of love)

but there is also a beginning

(like the songs of old)

She fights to keep her people alive; she gives them hope and warmth and food. He fights to keep her alive; he gives her a shield and his strength and his devotion. But the Dragon Queen is discontent; and begins to see shades and suspicions and stealth, even where there is none.

Though the Lady does not bear the title of Queen, she is more a Queen than any other, and the Dragon in her jealous greed and fear crafts an ultimatum.

bend the knee or die

join me, and you shall be granted mercy

But the Lady has not endured so much to bow to one who would offer her the same choice Cersei in the South once gave.

I cannot bow to you

I will not

never again

not to targaryen tyranny

So the Lady is taken to Winterfell’s great courtyard in front of lords and bannermen and farmers
alike, and asked once more, to recant, and bend the knee.

She would not.

“My Lords and Ladies of the North! My people!” says she. “I must do as my own conscience dictates. I was not tortured by Joffrey and Cersei and Ramsey and Baelish to bow again in front of yet another tyrant, a tyrant who demands respect and fealty instead of earning it, a tyrant with neither interest or knowledge in this land, and for that I am sentenced to die. Then let me die; but I am a Stark of Winterfell in the North and you have partaken of my bread and salt.”

There are angry stirrings at this; though they do not believe the Dragon Queen will do this; the Lady knows she will. She can see the bloodlust in those alien violet eyes.

“You have broken faith!”

“No,” the Lady rejoins, an unsettling smile upon her lips. “House Targaryen broke faith when Rhaegar took Lyanna; House Targaryen broke faith when instead of listening to Lord Stark’s requests the Mad King burnt him alive and strangled Brandon Stark. House Stark owes House Targaryen nothing. But you may choose to believe as you like.”

“If you burn the Lady of Winterfell you shall have to burn me too!” a voice calls from behind, and the Lion of Lannister strides out to stand beside her, their fingers tangling. “I am her sworn shield; I should be shamed to live in a world in which she does not,” he declares fiercely.

“So be it,” the Dragon sighs, a superior expression twisting her countenance in a superficial demonstration of melancholy. The Dragon’s Consort protests, the Lady’s brother and sister protests, the Lion’s brother protests, the Lords and the bannermen protest, but the decision has been made.

And the Lion swiftly draws the Lady into an embrace so she does not have to look death in the face; his golden hand tangling in her russet hair. They are anchored in each others’ eyes and something passes between them, private and fragile (in another life - I would have - I know). He covers her mouth with his; desperately, tenderly, and she feels his shudder as her own, and they cling to one
another -

and then they are gone

like the snow melting in spring

like the memory of an echo

like the songs

But the North Remembers. But the West Remembers.

and uneasy lies the head that wears the crown
Chapter Summary

she thought she would see Visenya reborn / like the songs

Chapter Notes

Hi everyone! By popular demand, here is part II.

Enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

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LIKE THE SONGS II

she thought she would see Visenya reborn

like Nymeria, like the warrior queens,

like the songs of bravery

There is nothing songlike about watching her elder sister go up in flames.

There is only horror, only pain, only wishes made in vain (be a coward, don’t burn, don’t die, don’t be by the dragon devoured). Though the doomed romance between the Lady and the Lion takes
them all aback; and Arya knows, one hundred years from now, two hundred, three hundred, a thousand years from now, children will clamour to hear the tale of Arya’s sister and the man she loved. Arya knows this, because she intends to make it happen. To die in love, entwined so closely gold and white and crimson blur - a grim beauty, and macabre, with more terror than hope, more agony than joy.

*like the songs of love*

She watches as the Dragon Queen stands, unmoved, staring at a pile of ashes; a dark, jagged cut against the pristine snow (*the wound, this wound, this gaping void, this will never heal*), and Arya howls like the Direwolf she is, and she dashes, fast as a shadow, needle-thin knives in her palms, towards the white-haired woman in the clearing, but Ghost knocks her to the ground.

*traitor traitor traitor*

*like the songs of old*

She screams, the Lords scream, the Imp screams, but the Dragon and her Consort are silent.

*I am the fury and the fear*

*I am the avenger near*

*I your last words will hear*

*I the Shadow*

*I the Wolf*

*I the Knife*

*I the Dark*
I the very last of all the Starks

so conquer, rule and burn -

I shall wait my turn

for you dragons never seem to learn

madness your death does earn

The Consort attempts to reason with the Dragon, speaking intimately in her ear, face drawn in melancholy and shock, and after a time they depart the courtyard (they will get no welcome here).

even the traitor regrets

but the laments come too late

he will return and repent

and lay his sword at the lady’s feet -

perhaps -

traitor, they call

(like the songs of war)

And the Direwolf cannot take her eyes from the ashes. A Lady defended by a Lion. A Lion loved by a Lady. Beloved of her people. Beloved of his. Sansa and Jaime. Lannister and Stark.

they should have been enemies

(they were, in the beginning)

they were prisoners

(like the songs of chivalry)
the princess in the tower
the lion in the cage
their trials overcome
(like the songs)
like the songs of love
like the songs of old

Arya will see to it.

(later she dreams of a lion frolicking in the snow young and powerful and glorious with a grey-white wolf dainty and pretty and happy / she dreams of them at the sunset howling and roaring / she dreams of them basking in the sun furry tails entwined)

(she dreams of her sister’s voice but she wakes and it isn’t even a memory but a trick / she dreams of his sword flashing in the sun but the courtyard is moonless and empty / she dreams of ghosts but there is only ash upon the cold dark stone)

She hopes the Dragon dreams. She hopes the Dragon sees Sansa feeding the smallfolk and Jaime teaching the boys to fight. She hopes the Dragon sees them laughing and happy and smiling in her dreams (she hopes the Dragon sees them in love when her own bed is cold).

Direwolves don’t smile.

Arya does.

The Shadow in the Dark (black on white). The Cloak and the Dagger. The Stealer of Faces. I the wrath. I the chain. I the plighted troth - I the agony and the pain. I the vow, I not thou, I the sword, I the hope, I the hearth, I the bleeding dying heart, I the shadow, running, running, howling in the
dark.

I the wrath, I the ruin, I the strangler’s bane. I the snow, I the storm, I the death beneath the ice.

Valar morghulis - I have many smiles still to gain.

and the queen of the ashes sits upon her iron throne

a barren crown for a barren queen

hollow indeed is greed

and in the far distance

dark.

the clarion call

the echo of the lion’s roar

the memory of the lady’s song -

see, there, the greyhound in the snow

good as a shadow!
like those songs of prophecy foretold

- and in Winterfell there grows a tree
bark of white and leaves of red and gold

they say it howls at night, a lion in winter
for from the dragon they are free

and in the West there is a rock
ancient and old
where sits a lady and
a lion resting his head in her lap
you see

no, that is merely fantasy

a troubadour’s embellishment -

sung to comfort children
Chapter End Notes

thoughts?
III

Chapter Summary

(this is his penance)

Chapter Notes

Hi everyone, Jon POV for you all. it's quite angsty, but I hope you all enjoy it. I plan to do a Daenerys POV next, as the final part of this series of drabbles.

Thanks to everyone who has commented, and please do give me your thoughts on this instalment!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

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III.

His sister or his lover. His sister or his lover. The words beat a frantic tattoo in his mind, and he cannot choose. He pleads with his lover not to do this, but he cannot choose between them.

And then it is too late.

He cannot believe it; cannot understand what his eyes are telling him because it is too horrible to be true. His sister is dead at the hands of his lover.

if if if

The Lady is dead. The Lion is dead. The Dragon has won, and the Shadow rages.

Ghost wrestles the Shadow back; but it isn’t what everyone thinks; he simply doesn’t want to lose another member of his family, though he knows Arya will not thank him for it.
In all his nightmares he could never have anticipated this. He looks at his lover and his stomach twists with lust and hatred, and bile rises in his throat. What happened to him when the Red Witch raised him? Is some obscure, ancient magic the reason why he fell in love with a She-Dragon?

His sister or his lover. Direwolf or Dragon. Stark or Targaryen. The Hero’s Choice.

Except he isn’t a hero and this isn’t a song.

He pulls his lover away, and when they are alone, he stares sadly at her face (pretty and terrible) and he does not know what to feel.

she was my sister, my sister -

she was a threat to my rule

and his decision is made -

I love you, but she was my sister. And you forced me to choose between you - how could you?

I can’t tell you

then whatever madness brought us together -

it is done

I will have no part in it

not anymore

(is this what happens when a dragon and a direwolf mate? perhaps he is as selfish as Rhaegar was, as selfish as Lyanna was, to pursue his lust and leave destruction in his wake)

you have nowhere else to go
I know that
it does not change my decision

go then! go! leave!
go and die in what way seems best to you

He has loved her fierceness; he loves it less when she turns it against him.

a dragon is all fire
a dragon cannot be controlled
a dragon cannot be tamed
(he knows that now)

I have loved you - and you would let me go
just like that

what do you want me to say?

that you regret it
that you should not have done it
she was my sister
and he loved her
and she loved him

and she made her choice
they both did

this is not an impasse
this is a chasm
one day, you will come to regret it

is that a threat?

no

it is simple fact

the north remembers

and a lannister always pays his debts

(this wolf still has fangs enough)

thus he leaves; leaves Winterfell, and turns north

do not wait for me

(this is not a song)

and I am not a hero

he walks and walks and walks until he can walk no more, and sleeps in the shade of a weirwood tree

(he dreams) -

his sister dancing - his sister laughing - his sister happy - his sister ashes

(his sister dead)

and his own heart torn apart

the dragon holds him down

the lion claws it from his chest

and the lady eats it
he wakes screaming

*this is his penance*

he lives out his days in the wild

in the wind

in the snow and the ice

and there from memory he fades

*no other could possibly hate him as much as he does himself*

(his sister died for his lust / his mother’s brother died for hers)

he regrets

but still he falls with thoughts

of silver hair and violet eyes

and the Dragon’s name upon his lips

*like the songs of woe*

*but this is not a song*

*and here there is nothing*
no redemption to be found

Chapter End Notes

thoughts?
Chapter Summary

The Dragon crossed the River long ago.

Chapter Notes

Hi everyone! Welcome to the final part of this little experimental series - Daenerys POV for you all. I have to say that I am so bowled over and humbled by the reception this has got; so thank you, and I hope you enjoy this last segment.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

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IV.

if I look back I am lost

When did she cross the river? When she moved not a muscle as Khal Drogo poured burning gold over her brother’s head? When she suffocated her own husband? When her children hatched, and she decided that if the world would not come to her, she would simply have to take it?

the last Targaryen, the last of her line

the Conqueror

(it has such a ring to it, does it not?)
when did she begin to believe her own propaganda?

When did she begin to believe, as her brother Viserys did, that Westeros was hers - never mind Aerys the Mad, never mind Rhaegar the Rapist, never mind the Lords Paramount clamouring for reparations (reparations denied) - simply because she was a Targaryen?

she the spare (never the heir)

she born of incest and rape

what right, has she, truly?

(but that doesn’t matter, it never has)

She is a Dragon

and with fire and blood

they take

She is a Dragon

and her destiny is nothing less

than the remaking of the world

in her own image

or so she believes

so she must believe

(if I look back I am lost)

But Sansa Stark… Sansa Stark unsettles her. Oh, she might scorn the Lady for thinking of - logistics is such an ugly word, is it not, so cold, so reductive - and hasn’t she heard that bread doesn’t win you a throne; soldiers do?
soldiers might win you the throne

but bread helps you keep it

(so she will discover)

to her own peril

(the north remembers / the west never forgets / to pay their debts / the reach grows strong / and dorne always rights a wrong)

sansa . lyanna . brandon . rickard . jaime . joanna . olenna . randyll . dickon . elia . rhaenys . aegon . ellaria .

burned / taken / strangled / burned / burned / assaulted / abandoned / burned / burned / betrayed / abandoned / denied / left for dead

and this all at targaryen claws

a crown of fire & a throne of blood

A Lady should be incapable of rattling a Dragon! there is no song of the sort - but this is not a song; and the Dragon is greedy and threatened and envious.

kneel or die

(says the Dragon)

I will make them love me

(says the Lady)

The Dragon is vain; all men have fallen at her feet, either in lust or submission, but all have fallen in
the face of her magnificence and that is the most important thing.

The Great Khal. Her brother. Her old companion, the Bear. The Sellsword, the Imp, the slave-masters of Meereen, the slaves themselves. The Iron Born and even the famed King in the North.

Jaime Lannister does not.

and it infuriates her

The Lion of Lannister has no fear of dragons. He killed her father; he attempted the same with her. The Lion of Lannister has no fear of dragons. The Lion of Lannister for dragons only has contempt and disdain and disgust. The Lion of Lannister slays dragons.

Even as he dies the Lion ignores the Dragon.

The Lion is busy passionately declaring himself to the Lady.

like the songs of love and woe of old

The Lion is the Lady’s Protector; the Lion is the Lady’s Knight. But the Lion and Lady are equal

and it confounds her

how can they be? even a Khalessi was only a Khal’s Wife. Men warm her bed; her days of warming the beds of men are over. Even with the White Wolf; her superiority is understood - he bent the knee to her; he came to her bed

The Lion and the Lady have a friendship, an intimacy, a reciprocal devotion to one another that she does not understand.

she fears she never will
and that -

unnerves the Dragon

though she will not admit it

She does not understand the White Wolf either; how can he choose the Lady over passion and pleasure and life?

(she would never have chosen Viserys)

I can’t tell you

if I look back I am lost

what need has a Dragon of a Wolf when she has her Throne?

if she wants lovers she has them -

But the Red Keep is full of ghosts - here there everywhere

she hears the Lady’s song in the dark of night

she sees the Lion’s sword flashing in the sun

two lords lean against the columns of the hall, dark haired and grey eyed

blue winter roses grow in the gardens

she turns a corner and sees a lioness upon the prowl

when it rains her skin is pricked by thorns

two lords overlook the bay, side by side, arms clasped
the sun weeps - how can it weep?

two children laugh and play

‘Father! Father! Father!’

(they never find him / he isn’t there)

and in the castle bowels a viper creeps

(sometimes she thinks the walls are licked by fire)

she hears the Shadow is delivered of children - a girl first, with hair, weirwood red; eyes stark grey -
and then four sons, northern black of hair, and eyes of sunset-blue - named in memoriam

And the Dragon rages.

Her vision is so full of ghosts she does not see the greyhound in the shadows.

on and on the wheel turns
unbroken
Do tell me what you thought!
is this how it ends?

Chapter Notes
See the end of the chapter for notes

V.

is this how it ends?

thinks the Imp

with ash upon the cold snow ground

with the breaking of the realms

with the Lion’s death?

the Lion his brother

his protector his friend his champion is this how it ends?
all the years of his life the Imp has wished his brother might find love true and happiness, and for it to be taken thus?

he doesn’t think the Dragon will say it

(until she does)

somehow he has clung to the belief -
the Lion cannot be slain

somehow

it chokes him that night he dreams

the Lady yet a girl

innocent

and broken

beautiful

unhappy

(locked in her tower)

too young

far too young yet in his veins lust burns and roils

sickening

her face sharpens
the Lady is grown
and still she smiles not

only the Lion makes her laugh

how

he doesn’t understand for

Power, power they do not desire

and

he does not understand
he cannot
it is beyond him

for they love

somehow

and it is beyond him

to forge from hate
love
to build from rubble
a realm
and in the ash
to plant trees
the Lady and the Lion forge and build and plant

*though they are gone*

their love endures their realm yet stands their trees yet grow

*though they are gone*

*how*

he cannot understand

for why have love when one is handed the reins of Power

(that fickle mount)

for why build when beckons seductive destruction and the urge to wipe everything away?

why plant when it is so much easier to take?

(the Imp has spent too long courting Dragons)

*is this how it ends*

upon the cliffs the Lion loved

staring into the sunset

his shadow is stunted

and another behind

*you could have prevented it*
(that chokes him too)

my sister is gone
and you could have prevented it
and if that is not good enough
your brother is gone
and you could have prevented it

The Dragon is a Dragon

then why bring her here
why sail with her
if you knew what she was

(ambition . casterly rock . desire . power)

you have your fortress now, Imp
but there is no one left to hear
and the stones themselves they weep
now there is no one left to hear

Silent stones or the Lion’s Life?

was it worth the fight?
was it worth the blood?
was it worth the screams?

The Imp will end
The Dwarf will die

and fade back into the dust from whence you came

you will be nothing

then, Shadow, end it now

let it end

it will end, have no fear of that

for you it will end

the Dragon is dead already

and at my hand

you are the last

(look upon your castle

proud and silent

at the going down of the sun

look upon your castle

and despair)

is this how it ends?

for you, Imp -

yes .

For my sister and the man she loved

For your brother and the woman he loved

For the Lion and the Lady
for them

no

it does not end here

for from life they pass to death
and from death into song
from song into myth
into another life everlasting

and thence

and thence into legend
thoughts? comments?

End Notes

thoughts? *winces and hides behind the sofa, waiting for the rotten tomatoes to start flying*

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!