Stolen Glances

by KMBartleby

Summary

Podrick looks at Sansa a lot. He should probably stop doing that before people begin to notice. But has Sansa been watching him too?

Notes

See the end of the work for notes.

Podrick Payne was getting used to being in Winterfell. Sure, it was colder and very different from what he was used to, but the Starks had quickly made him feel welcomed into their home. Brienne and Arya trained with him regularly, helping him to prepare for the coming fight. Jaime Lannister had arrived in Winterfell and pledged his allegiance to House Stark (and seemed to be coming around to doing the same to Brienne, Pod thought. Though he kept those thoughts to himself.).

Podrick was enjoying getting to know the Stark siblings and all of their supporters who frequented or stayed at Winterfell. He was beginning to see their little mish mashed group of misfits as his adopted family of sorts. Well, except for Sansa. He hadn’t been able to become close with Sansa. Many of those in the North claimed that she was cold, aloof, and extremely serious. Podrick agreed that she could have that demeanor at times, particularly when handling important “Lady of Winterfell” business. However, outside of that role, he had seen her be charming, kind, and clearly full of love for her siblings. Podrick had heard stories of what had happened to Sansa on her long way back to Winterfell, and he thought that it was a miracle that anybody could go through those things and still be able to carry on and care for others.

He hadn’t talked to her much, unlike the other siblings. She was intimidating to him, but he couldn’t quite put his finger on why. After all, he’d heard rumors that Jon had come back from the dead, he knew Arya had murdered people, and Bran had visions. Surely Sansa shouldn’t be the one to intimidate him. He knew it was a little ridiculous, since he had accidentally let that slip to Sandor Clegane one night after some drinks and Clegane had laughed at him.
“Lady Sansa intimidates you? You’re Brienne of Tarth’s squire and friends with Arya Stark!” The Hound laughed, clearly enjoying this more that Pod thought he should. “Or perhaps it’s because you think she’s pretty and you wouldn’t mind taking her to your bed.” Podrick scowled at the older man. He wasn’t comfortable talking about women that way, especially not the one who was graciously hosting them at her home.

The Hound’s words had stuck with him after that conversation. Did he think Sansa was pretty? Well, yes, she was an attractive woman. He had thought so when he’d seen her in King’s Landing, though she had been different then. He still thought so now, though he knew it was not his place to have any sort of fascination with her. It wasn’t just physical appearance though, that he noticed about Lady Sansa. He admired how she had taken the time to get to know everyone at Winterfell, as well as try to know the names of her bannermen. She had stood firm even when Littlefinger had tried to step between the sisters and manipulate Sansa against Arya. He was thinking about this at breakfast one morning when suddenly Brienne nudged Pod with her elbow.

“…what?” Pod not so eloquently asked, being jolted from his thoughts. The blonde woman frowned at him.

“Is there a reason why you’ve been staring at Sansa for the past five minutes?” she asked, concerned. Podrick flushed red, and scrambled to collect himself.

“Umm no sir. I mean my lady. I mean Brienne. I… was just thinking and didn’t realize where my gaze was.” He hated that he was so nervous. It probably made Brienne question him even more than she already was.

“You do that a lot, you know,” Brienne told him with a slight smile.

“Do what?” he asked.

“Get lost in your head and just happen to stare at Lady Sansa.” Pod’s face went even darker red.

“Do I? I never noticed. I suppose I should work on not doing that. I wouldn’t want anyone to get the wrong idea.” Pod stood up from the table.

“Of course you wouldn’t. Aren’t you going to finish your breakfast?” Brienne asked him.

“I’m not really all that hungry anymore.” Podrick bid goodbye to Brienne and walked out of the great hall. Now that he’d been told he looked at Sansa far more than he’d thought, he was overly aware of making sure he didn’t look at her more than absolutely necessary. Several days passed, and he kept minimal eye contact with Sansa during conversations, and tried not to look her way at meal times. Sometimes he couldn’t help it though. It seemed like his eyes were often drawn to her, even subconsciously.

One afternoon, he was wandering through the castle, trying to find something to do. Brienne had given him the afternoon off from his squire duties, and he had finished training with Arya. He was wandering the halls aimlessly when Sansa appeared at his side.

“Hello my Lady,” Podrick greeted her.

“Good afternoon Podrick. How are you?” Sansa asked pleasantly with a smile.

“I’m alright, Lady Sansa. How about yourself?” Podrick asked, with a small glance towards the redhead.

“I’m fine. I have been wondering about you, though. Have you been feeling alright the last few
Sansa’s voice carried concern.

“Umm… yes my Lady. Why do you ask?” He was extremely nervous now.

“Well, it seems like you’ve been avoiding me. And when you have to be around me, you avoid looking at me as much as possible. Did I do something to offend you?” Podrick raised his head to look at her.

“No, Lady Sansa. Of course not. I don’t think you could do anything to offend me.”

“You know, before you started avoiding me, I would see the way you would look at me when you thought I wasn’t looking.” Was Podrick imagining it, or was Sansa smirking a little when she said that?

“I’m not sure what you mean, Lady Sansa.” Pod glanced around, hoping that nobody was hearing this conversation, while also hoping for a diversion so he could get out of the situation quickly. Sansa was above his station, and if she figured out that he was attracted to her… that he may have a crush on her… that would not end well for him. Sansa looked like she was fighting the urge to roll her eyes at his attempt to feign ignorance.

“No? Well, sometimes you get this look on your face. I’m not sure how to describe it…” she struggled to find the right words. “Like you’re happy. I’ve seen that look before from Ser Jaime or Gendry when they’re looking at Brienne or Arya.” Sana’s cheeks tinged pink as she finished speaking, but Podrick was too panicked to notice. She knew that Jaime liked Brienne and that Gendry adored Arya. And if that was the case, then she knew… shit, she had to know about him too.

“I-I-I’m sorry, Lady Sansa,” he hated that his small stutter had chosen to make an appearance for this. “I know you’re a highborn lady. I… I didn’t know until recently that I looked at you that much, and I never meant for it to be obvious or make you feel uncomfortable.” He was rambling now. Great, he thought to himself. This is sure going to help things.

“Podrick,” Sansa said, placing a hand on his arm and cutting off both his rambling speech and internal thoughts. Podrick looked at Sana. “Did you stop to think that if I can see how you look at me, that maybe I’m looking at you when you’re not looking?” Podrick’s head jerked up and his dark eyes met her light ones. Sansa’s cheeks were just about as red as his was.

“My Lady?” Podrick asked, feeling slightly lost and confused. He had to have misunderstood what she was saying.

“Although you have gone on oblivious to my admiration, Jon has brought it to my attention that I look at you the way Arya looks at Gendry. Or the way Brienne thinks she sneakily glances at Jaime. Or as Arya suggested, the way that Tormund looks at a leg of meat.” Pod chuckled at that statement.

“I’ve never noticed that, Lady Sansa,” wait. Did she say admiration? “Admiration?” Sansa giggled at Pod’s reaction.

“Well, yes. You are quite brave and heroic. You helped Brienne protect me, and I know you saved Tyrion’s life as well. Those aren’t feats that go unnoticed. You seem as though you could be one of those knights in the stories Old Nan used to tell my sister and I.”

“Well, I don’t know anything about that,” Podrick replied, shaking his head. “I just do what I feel needs to be done, or what Tyrion or Brienne tell me. It’s you who deserves admiration, in my opinion.” Pod’s mind was racing; she thought he was brave and heroic? Never had he thought
someone would say those words about him. Especially not Sansa Stark. “You survived so many terrible things. Most people would have let themselves be destroyed, but you came back even stronger each time. You’re incredibly caring about Winterfell and everyone here, and that’s what makes a person admirable. Plus, you’re very beautiful.” Pod winced as the last sentence slipped out of his mouth before he could stop it. Thankfully though, Sansa didn’t seem to be put off by the comment. Rather the opposite, actually, as she let out a giggle.

“I think you’re very handsome as well, Podrick.” Sansa smiled at the squire and took him by the arm. “What do you say we continue this walk together? We can look at each other without needing it to be a secret.”

“I’d love that, Sansa,” Podrick returned the smile and the two continued to walk arm in arm throughout the castle.

End Notes

My second GoT fic based on a prompt from a list I found on Tumblr. Reviews, comments, and constructive criticism are always welcome. I only started writing again recently.

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