the grey in this city

by bravelikealady

Summary

"Go home girl. You’ll be dead too if you don’t get out of here. [...] Look at me! You want to be like me?"

Arya Stark does not want to be like the Hound. She wants to be alive, she wants to be alive in Winterfell.

She thinks Sandor Clegane might like that too... and hasn't he, for once, earned that?

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title from Alpha Shallows by Laura Marling
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an addendum to Game of Thrones, season 8 episode 5.

And his heart was full of fire at the man he had become
And his soul was seldom higher with the falsities of fun
He could embrace sweet desire as in moments as they pass
But he feared it ever more, when he saw it didn't last.

“Sandor…”

Arya calls back to him, perhaps for the last time. This hound, this man, this vile protector, who had taught her so much, who had saved her over and over. He taught me forgiveness. He did not let the hole in my heart eat me alive.
She was realizing now, after he gave her her life, that she may have lost herself forever if they never crossed paths, if she had crossed his name from her list because she had taken his life truly.

“Come with me.”

“I cannot-”

“You have to. What about your revenge? Why do you get to waste your life? Look at all you have done without him, in spite of him.”

She could not be certain but his dark eyes seemed to glitter, like he might be crying.

“I am not scared of death. My life was meant to end long ago.”

“I do not accept that. If you were going to die bloody I would have done it.”

“What do you think is left for me, girl? Go home, go find your brother, go home to your sister. Keep her safe.”

“Winterfell is left for you. Come with me. Do not die here.”

As she crossed the distance between them, in the walls she had abandoned long ago, in the city where her father died, she felt fear again. Real fear, child-like, untainted by war or the cynicism of survival. There was no aftertaste of spite or vitriol, no mouth-watering tide for blood. Only fear. “Please.”

“Winterfell can be your home, too. Or Storm’s End if you like. Gendry will do as I ask.”

“That he will,” he gave her a smile. “Gregor... or whatever is left of him, he- He killed... he killed my father. And my sister. I know it... and I lived. I am the one who lived and I-”
“I lived too. How many Starks are gone? And what is Bran? You can be guilty somewhere else.”

He turned to leave, “fuck off, Arya.”

“You let them beat Sansa… and she’s now the lady of Winterfell. The smartest person I know. And she forgave you. I know she did, I know she spoke with you. We sat up together all night, talking about everything… she prays for you. You are the only one she bothers to pray for anymore.”

“Sansa…”

“Yes. Sansa. Let’s go home,” Arya reached her hand towards him.

For a moment he took it and they did not speak.

“How in the seven hells are we going to get out of here?”

“Would have helped if you’d shut up and agreed to leave a while ago.”

“Bugger you, come here.”

He threw Arya over his shoulder.

“Guard your head, girl. Sansa and Jon alike will see me headless if I bring you back dented.”

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