An Unexpected Journey

by Katlyn1948

Summary

Arya Stark has found west of Westeros, but being at sea for five years get a little daunting. So when she decides to venture on home, she doesn’t realize that Westeros would take her on an unexpected journey like no other.

Notes

So this is set five years after the end of season 8. Now don’t worry, I’ve decided to change some things for season 8 that will get a mention. For example, Bran is still King, but Sansa did not ask for the North’s freedom. Jon didn’t kill Dany, but was able to convince to abdicate the throne and live in peace with him. The have a boat baby, just FYI, and are happy!! I will be throwing in some curve balls, so watch out.

See the end of the work for more notes.
Returning Home

It had been nearly five years since she set foot on solid land. Her journey had taken longer than expected and when she truly believed that there was nothing left to discover west of Westeros, it was time to go home.

She had written four letters to be sent out. Four letters informing of her long awaited return. When the time came to send the letters, only three black ravens flew. The forth was swiftly put back into its cage. She was hesitant to send the last letter. What would she do if he wrote back or requested to see her? What if he was expecting something of her? Those questions ate at her inner thoughts for three nights and when the forth came around she decided to lock the letter in her parchment box, never to be seen by anyone.

When the morning came, she was up at dawn. Her anxiety was eating at her internal being and she could no longer wait to be on dry land.

“How much longer until we reach King’s Landing?” She asked her navigator, Ser Rednick.

“A few hours at most, Lady Arya.” He responded with certainty.

She gave Ser Rednick a sideways glance, “How many times must I tell you, Ser, to just call me Arya?”

The man chuckled, “More times than I can count within the last five years...Arya.”

She smiled. “That’s better.”

Arya has insisted that he crewman not call her lady. It was a moot point, she knew, for old habits die hard. Ser Rednick had reminded her of that the day they set sail.

Ser Rednick was an old friend of Ser Davos. His wife had passed and his children grown. When he heard the young lass was sailing west, he jumped at the opportunity to experience youth once more.

Arya was grateful for the old sea navigator. He was like a father to her, much like Sandor Clegane had been, except without all the swear words.

“What are you looking forward to once we dock, Ser Rednick?” Arya asked.

“My son has had another babe. Four moons, he is now and I would very much like to meet him.” The gleam in his eyes was apparent. She could tell he missed home, and if she was being honest with herself, she was too.


Ser Rednick shakes his head, “No, my lady. My daughter lives in The Neck, near Moat Cailin with her husband and my son lives in Storm’s End.”

Arya nearly choked on thin air, “Storm’s End?”

“Aye. He moved when the new Lord took his place, said he wanted to help the new lord in any way. But truth be told, I think he followed a girl.” Ser Rednick said with a smile.

A grin crept on Arya’s face. “His wife.”

Ser Rednick chuckled, “He is a wild one, my boy. You should come to Storm’s End to meet him,
once you’ve convened with your family.”

The invite startled Arya. She hadn’t planned on going to Storm’s End, in fact she was planning on avoiding the damn place altogether. All she wanted was to see her brother and sister in King’s Landing and the make her way to Dragonstone to visit her other brother. Was that truly too much to ask of the Gods? To see her family again? Or was this a way of the Gods telling her that there was family waiting for her in Storm’s End?

Arya’s mind flicked to the parchment locked away in her box, the seal still very much intact. Perhaps there was a reason why she hadn’t sent it after all.

“Okay, Ser Rednick, I go to Storm’s End with you.”
The Dirt Beneath Her Feet

Chapter Summary

Arya finally arrives in King's Landing and is greeted with more than just her siblings.

Chapter Notes

Here is the second part! I had a little difficulty writing this chapter and I think that I was just in my head and felt like it wasn't any good. BUT...I have received so many wonderful comments not only on AO3 but on Tumblr as well and that has pushed me to just try. I really do take criticism well. I enjoy hearing from people on what I can improve on. So keep it up! I want to know. Anyway, without further ado, part dos!

The feeling of solid ground was familiar, yet somehow new, for Arya. Being on a boat for five years, one tends to forget that the Earth is meant to stay still, not rock back and forth. It was a comfort for her to know that she finally had made it back home. At one point in her journey back to Westeros, she believed that she would never make it back. She remembered the long days at sea and seeing nothing but the horizon ahead of her. Now, all she sees is bustling harbor folk and the Red Keep in its new form.

Bran had done a magnificent job, she had to admit. For a time she believed that King's Landing would never be the same, especially after the destruction from the War of The Two Queens, but here it was, growing larger and better everyday. The people seemed happy and it didn't surprise Arya that the residents of King's Landing took a liking to the new king. Bran was a just and kind ruler and had the right people on his council to help him along the way. One of those people being Tyrion Lannister, the clever imp, who has been the hand of not one, but three rulers in the last decade. Of course he would be the one to greet her.

"Welcome home, Princess Arya." He bowed to her.

"Don't bow, you look stupid doing it and don't call me Princess." She said bluntly.

Tyrion rose and nodded his head. "It is nice to see that you haven't changed since the last I saw you. Expect for your hair, it is a little longer."

Arya scoffed, "Yeah, well you haven't changed either, except you've gotten shorter since the last time I saw you."

"Ah, the same quick wit humor that I so fondly remember." He quipped. He gave her a small smile and then looked at the brute looking man beside her.

"And who is this?" Arya glanced at Ser Rednick. He was standing just a few feet from her and Tyrion, obviously trying not to intervene in the conversation.
"This," she gestured to the man, "is Ser Rednick. He has been my navigator these past five years. Without him, I don't think I would have ever made it back home."

Tyrion smiled and held out a hand to the gentleman. "Pleasure to meet you, ser. I'm sure our King and his Lady Sister would be delighted to hear about your adventure with our princess. Please join us."

Ser Rednick took Lord Tyrion's hand. "Pleasure is all mine, Lord. But I must decline, I'm in no mood to see royals. In fact, I was headed on down to the inn for a nice cup of Ale and good night's rest on something that does not move. Want to take it all in before I get back on the bloody ship in two days time."

"Back on the ship in two days?" The question was directed to Ser Rednick, but was solely intended for Arya.

"Aye, headed to Dragonstone, then Storm's End, on the request of Lady Arya." Ser Rednick explained.

Tyrion smiled. "Ah, Storm's End? I see. Well either way, it was nice to meet you Ser Rednick and I do hope you enjoy your stay in King's Landing."

Ser Rednick bowed and walked off in the opposite direction. Arya was silently cursing the old man for opening his mouth. She hadn't planned on telling anyone of her venture to Storm's End. She didn't want questions thrown out at her like the ones that Tyrion Lannister was sure to ask. So before he could open his big mouth to pry into her private life Arya asked, "I wasn't expecting to see you, Lord Tyrion. I had expected Ser Podrick, per my sister's letter. Where is he?"

Tyrion's face went pale and Arya knew he was hiding something. It was her turn to pry for information. "What is going on?" She asked with concern. Tyrion sighed, "It is best that we wait until we get to the keep. Don't want the wrong ears listening."

Arya nodded and continued to follow the Lord Hand through the streets of King's Landing. It had definitely changed since she last been here. Granted, buildings weren't burning and people weren't dying, but it was still different. It seemed livelier and cleaner. The streets weren't filled with human waste and the smell was actually bearable. People were thriving; even the ones that were too poor to eat seemed to have a new spring in their step. It made Arya smile; a genuine grin that plastered her face. It had been so long since she's seen happiness, that she herself had lost a little of it. Being at sea was thrilling for her, and at a time, made her happy. But as the years went on and the sea, for that matter, she found herself slowly becoming miserable. It was the words that Sandon Clegane had told all those years ago that brought her back home. You want to be like me? He had asked her. She knew what he meant. He didn't want her to be miserable, to go and live her life like she was supposed to. And she did, or at least she thought she did. Perhaps sailing west wasn't a way to live, but rather a way to outrun the complications in her life. Five bloody years it took her to realize that and it may have been five bloody years too late. But that's why she was here, to right her wrongs and to be with her family, even if it was for only a few days.

The Red Keep was just a few feet away. The tower had been rebuilt and aside from a few boulders that were too heavy to move, it looked exactly like it had when Arya was just 10 years of age. The steps were just as grand and just as daunting to climb, and although she was swift and skillful, the tread up to the entrance drew deep breaths from her lips. She was relieved when she finally made it to the top, but annoyed that the imp was still a few paces behind her.

"Would you be so kind to hurry up?" She huffed at him.
"I do apologize Princess Arya, but my legs are not as long as yours, if you recall." He joked.

"I could have carried you." She tells him when he finally makes it to the top.

He chuckled, "That would be quite embarrassing, but I probably would've taken the offer. These damned steps are an absolute nightmare."

Tyrion began to pick up his pace and lead Arya through the Keep. She recognized where they were going as soon as they turned the hall. The council room was a few feet ahead and as she got closer her heart began to quicken. Her excitement was threatening to burst out of her chest. She knew that her sister and brother were just behind the door and the anticipation was absolutely killing her.

Tyrion placed his hand on the knob of the door and pushed it open. Arya ran past him without any formal introduction. Arya stopped dead in her tracks, her shock was read on her face because there at the head of the council table was her brother, the king and standing right beside him was her sister with a swollen stomach.

Chapter End Notes

Before ya'll have a cow...NO Bran is not the father of Sansa's baby. I will explain everything in the next chapter! Hoped you enjoyed and please tell me what you think, the more I know, the better!
Chapter Summary

Arya finally spends time with her family and has a heart to heart with her sister.

Chapter Notes

Here is chapter 3! So I am really trying to update at least once a day. I typically take a full day to write the chapter because I do work full time and have to write in between calls. But enough about how long it takes me to write a chapter, I know you want to read what happens. So without further ado, I present chapter 3!

My sister is with child. My sister is with child! That was all Arya could think. It shouldn’t have been as surprising, considering Sansa has always wanted children, but still Arya couldn’t quite grasp the situation. She had expected nothing to change in her five years away; how naive she was to actually think that. Of course things were bound to change. Her family had lives as well and it would be stupid of her to think that theirs would stop just because hers was moving forward. Still, she wished she had known that her sister was expecting. She didn’t even know she was married. Or was she? No, Sansa was not like that; she would’ve gotten married to some high lord to create her little lordlings.

“You’re pregnant!” Arya stared.

Sansa face scrunched, “You’ve not seen me in five years and that is all you can muster? How about asking how I’ve been?”

Arya ignored her last statement. Her thoughts were not concerned with how her sister has been, but rather what her sister had been up to.

“Why didn’t you tell me?” She asked as she moved across the council room to greet her siblings.

A scoff escapes Sansa’s lips, “And how do you suppose I tell you? We only ever got two letters a year from you! And I could not risk sending my ravens, for they would have no idea where you would be!”

Arya knew Sansa was right. Only her ravens knew the location of her ship. If any ravens were sent to her that were not hers they would have never made it. Arya wanted it that way, for she didn’t want to be bothered with unimportant politics. Sure, she ran the risk of not knowing what was happening in Westeros, but she didn’t mind. Westeros was going to be a distant memory that she did not want nor need to think about. Although, now she was cursing her decision because if she would’ve sent more ravens, she probably wouldn’t be as surprised as she was now.

“You’re right. I’m sorry! How have you been? Are you married? Who’s the father?” Everything came out in a rush as she embraced her sister.
Sansa chuckled and held her sister close. She was taking her all in; the sight of her, the smell, the feel. Sansa had wished for this moment as soon as she got the raven announcing Arya’s return and she didn’t want to let her go. Tears were threatening to spill from her eyes and before they could fall, she released her sister and gave a small smile. “One question at a time, sister.”

“Of course,” Arya glanced down beside Sansa and saw her brother the king. “And how have you been?”

Bran looked up at his sister a smiled, “Well. It is nice to have you home, Arya. We’ve been waiting for you.”

“Well sorry it took so long, but I’m finally here.” She said.

Everyone in the room had smiles on their faces. The joy was radiating through out and for a while no one said a single word, not even the imp and his big mouth. It wasn’t until Ser Podrick made his way into the room that Sansa finally broke the silence.

“I can answer your questions now, Arya.” She said as she grabbed a hold of Podrick’s hand.

“Podrick and I are married. We have been for a year and a few moons now.” She smiles as she looked up at her husband.

Arya was surprised, but happy for Sansa. Podrick was a good man and knew he would treat her right. And if he didn’t, she would make sure he’d regret it.

“I guess you couldn’t stay away from his ‘magic cock’ could you?” Arya said with a laugh.

Tyrion tried and failed to suppress his laughter and Bran just smiled. Sansa’s face turned into a scowl and Podrick just blushed.

“No, it’s okay. I get it, you just couldn’t stay away.” Arya jokes.

“Arya! Five years and you are still annoying as ever!” Sansa huffed.

“I’m only teasing you, sister.” She said dismissively.

Arya looked between Pod and Sansa. She could tell that they were both happy and she couldn’t be more excited for the both of them. But with that happiness came a moment of disappointment. Not at her sister, but at herself. She could’ve had that type of happiness if she wasn’t so stubborn. Her fear and reluctance had gotten in the way, making her run from her conflicting emotions. Arya was never good at confronting her feelings. She’d rather bury them deep within herself than to face them head on in any situation. Sansa had told her just as much right before she left on her journey.

"Why are you running?“ Sansa had asked her.

"I am not running. I am going on an adventure." She told her sister. But she was running. She was running away from responsibilities and relationships that she didn't want to face. At the time, she truly believed she was just sailing to go on an adventure, but after years of being in her own head, she realized that she did run and it was time for her to stop running.

"So, you must be exhausted. Let us have a recess and convene at supper." Her sister stated, bringing Arya from her thoughts.

Everyone nodded in agreement and lifted from their seats. Tyrion pulled Arya aside to escort her to her chambers.
"If you would please follow me Lady Arya." Tyrion motioned towards the door.

Arya followed and they began to make their way to the chambers side of the Red Keep. They walked in silence for a time, until Arya’s curiosity got the better of her.

"When did it happen? The two of them?" She asked the Lord Hand.

"You are going to have to be more specific than that, Lady Arya." Tyrion smiled.

"You know of whom I am referring to. My sister and the squire." Arya said.

"Ah yes, your sister and the squire. Well you'll just have to wait until supper, I suppose." He teased. He knew she wanted answers and giving her slight torture was amusing to him. It has been a good while since he has had some sort of fun in this boring keep, and if it meant that he would get ruse out of the young lass, he would continue to tease her.

Arya was becoming irritated with the Lord Hand and wanted nothing more than to slash the man. Even after all this time he knew what got under her skin the most. Her impatience was growing and the more they walked in silence the more she became fidgety. She couldn’t keep her curiosity at bay, even she knew that and the idea of waiting until supper to find out answers was maddening. She was about to ask again when they reached her chamber doors.

"Ah, here we are. Your chambers are already set up for you and your chest should be waiting. If you have any further needs, tell the ladies maid." He turned on his heel and headed into the opposite direction.

Arya sighed and entered her chambers. It had been the same one from years ago and although the times have gone by, the memories still remain. She didn't think of them often, but when she was in the place where so many bad things happened, it was hard to forget. She hadn't realized how tired she truly was. They had sailed for four moons straight just so she could get home sooner than she had originally planned for. It was nice to be in a bedroom that didn't rock and creak with every wave and the bed looked quite inviting. She really hadn't had a good sleep since she left King's Landing. Arya jumped into the feather down bed; her body sinking into the soft surface. It felt nice, compared to the lump in her private quarters on Nymeria. But as she lay there, her mind would not stop wondering. Her body was exhausted, sure, but her head was full of energy. She kept thinking about Sansa and her new found family or Bran and his upcoming nuptials. The people in her life were moving on and she was just...stuck. It was a feeling that she didn't like and it made her want to shake it even more so. She also kept thinking about him. His blue eyes would haunt her dreams nearly every night and she thought that once she got back to Westeros, they would stop, but it only got worse because instead of haunting her a night, they seemed to haunt her in the day time too.

With a frustrated grunt, she threw herself from the soft bed and decided to explore the keep like she used to do when she was a child. If she couldn't be trusted with her own thoughts in seclusion, then she would distract herself doing something she liked.

She creeped out of her chambers and headed towards the dungeons. The last time she was down there they had housed the massive dragon skulls from the Targaryen line, now it was nothing more than dust and rumble. It truly looked like a proper dungeon.

I wonder if there is anyone down here. She thought. It would be a nice surprise to see a prisoner in one of these cells, but she doubted there would be. Bran didn't seem like the type to hold people.

She made her way further into the dark tunnels and noticed that the former escape path to the sea was now closed off, probably from the destruction of the Keep. With no other path to take she turned to
head back to the surface, but when she whipped around she was greeted with an unfamiliar face.

"Hello." The woman said.

"Who are you?" She asked the woman with a rough tone.

"I'm Meera. You must Arya." Meera stretched out a hand to Arya.

Arya was hesitant, but took her hand to shake.

"Are you Bran's Meera?" She asked after releasing her hand.

Meera smiled, "I am. It is nice to finally meet you. I've heard quite the stories from your sister."

"I'm sure." Arya paused. "How did you find me?"

A small chuckle escaped Meera's lips. "I went to your chambers first, to fetch you for supper, but you weren't there. Your brother then told me to check the dungeons, and he was right because here you are."

Arya's face turned to confusion, "Supper? Is it that time already?"

Meera nodded.

She must've been in her thoughts longer than she realized.

"Right, well lead the way." Arya gestured towards the stairs leading to the surface of the Keep.

Meera and Arya walked through the corridors in the Keep, making their way back to the council room.

"I thought it was supper time." Arya mentioned. "Why are we going to the small council room?"

"It's more intimate. Your sister just wanted it to be family and close friends. No need for the whole keep to join us for supper." She said with a smile.

"I doubt my sister wants it to be intimate. I bet she did it so she could trap me in a corner and question me on everything I did while I was away." Arya said with a scoff.

"I believe you may be right about that. Your sister scares me sometimes." Meera admitted to her.

Arya smiled. Sansa scared her sometimes too; of course she would never tell her sister this for Sansa would hang it over her head for the rest of their lives.

"Oh, Meera?" Arya stopped the young girl before they reach the council door.

"Yes?"

"I wanted to say thank you, for keeping Bran safe beyond the wall. He told us what happened all those years ago. Without you, he wouldn't be here today." Arya squeezed Meera's arm in reassurance. She could tell that the young girl appreciated the thanks, for she tried to keep her tears from spilling. Meera nodded and lead Arya into the wolf's den.
Chapter End Notes

So this turned out longer than expected and there is still the whole dinner scene. I promise she will make her way to Storm's End. It won't be in chapter 4, I can tell you that. But it will most likely be either 5 or 6. I've also decided to stretch this story to 10 chapters, but if I need more to wrap it up, I will. I hope you enjoy and the next chapter will be up tomorrow.
The Wolf's Den

Chapter Summary

Arya has dinner with the family and Tryion spills a secret she was trying to hide.

Chapter Notes

Chapter 4 whoop whoop! I started writing it last night and a little this morning and some during my lunch break. I actually really like this chapter, I feel like it had a better flow than the previous chapter. This is it though. This is the last chapter that we get before she goes to Storm's End. Don't worry though, we will see these characters again before I finish this. I particularly like writing Tryrion. I am basing him off more of the show version than the book, actually most of the characters are the show versions, only because I am halfway through book one. But I hope you enjoy this chapter as much as I enjoyed writing it. Happy reading and here is Chapter 4!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

A wolf’s den it was because sitting around the table with Sansa and Bran was her older brother Jon. Her breath had caught and her eyes went wide. This was more of a surprise than finding out Sansa was pregnant.

She immediately ran to him and jumped into his arms like she had nearly six years prior. His chuckle tickled her ear and she relaxed instantly in his grasp. She scarcely believed that he was here holding her.

“What are you doing here?” She asked as he let her down to the floor.

“Well, you’re not the only one capable of surprises.” He ruffled her hair as he spoke.

She pushed his hand away and playfully shoved him. Her eyes flicked to Sansa and she instantly knew.

“You told him?”

Sansa smiled and gave a quick nod. “The moment we got your letters we decided to plan this whole surprise. We knew you’d try to make your way to Dragonstone after you came to King’s Landing, so we decided to bring Dragonstone here, or rather its very important people, here.”

Arya was in disbelief. Her family all in one place together again. It was nearly impossible to believe, yet here it was unfolding in front of her very eyes.

“And Daenerys?” Arya asked as they all started to take their seats around the table. Bran was at one side of the head while Sansa was at the other. Their significant others to the right of them while Tyrion, Jon, and herself took whatever seats remained.
“She putting the twins down to rest. They were quite rowdy on the boat ride here.” Jon has said.

Arya nearly choked on her wine. “Twins? But the last letter I received from you said it only to be one babe, not two.”

“Aye, and if you had sent more letters like you should’ve I would have been able to tell you that we had a twins.” Jon said matter of fact.

Arya waved her hand dismissively, “Yes, yes. Sansa already told me I should’ve written more often.”

Smiles and laughter filled the small council room as the family ate. They were sharing their stories and adventures to Arya and she couldn’t help but feel elated. She had truly missed this. For so long she had been alone and had been focused on her kill list that there was little room left for love and happiness. Now that it was all over and she could see the bright faces before her she started to believe that she could finally have all that she never thought she could.

“So Lord Tyrion, I’ve heard my siblings life stories and what I missed these past years, but I haven’t heard how your life is going. Please do enlighten me?” Arya asked.

Tyrion took a sip of his wine; he was on his fourth cup. He cleared his throat and spoke.

“Well, if you must know, I have married.”

Arya’s brows lifted in surprise. “Really? Hmm won’t this be your third?”

“And my last, I hope.” He lifted his goblet to the Gods.

“Well, who is she?” Curiosity taking over Arya.

“Well she ah-“ He was interrupted by a new voice that had joined the council room.

“She was one of my Dothraki hand maids.” It was Daenerys that spoke. Arya hadn’t noticed her enter the room.

Arya stood from her seat and greeted the former Dragon Queen with a small bow.

“Daenerys. It’s nice to see you...on good terms.”

Dany gave a small smile and quickly embraced the young assassin. Arya was surprised by the sudden gesture and wasn’t sure how to respond. She hadn’t been close to Dany, not even after Jon had talked her down from burning thousands of innocent people alive.

When Arya had left to travel, Dany’s mental state was not in the best condition. She was still recovering from her losses and was paranoid that people where still trying to poison her.

From one of the few letters she had gotten from Jon, it took her time to recover. It wasn’t until she found out that she a babe in her belly that she realized what was most important and ultimately giving up the throne to Bran.

Arya returned the embrace. She still wasn’t sure how she felt about Daenerys Targaryen, but she did believe that, with time, they could become friends.

“It is good to see you too, Arya.” Dany said as she let Arya go.

Arya returned to her seat and Dany sat beside Jon.
"I am sorry I was late. I had to put the twins down for a nap. They were a little agitated on the boat ride here." Dany said as she took a bite of her food.

"Oh nonsense! I'll be in your shoes come four moons time." Sansa assured her.

Arya looked between the two ladies and was surprised by their interaction. The last time there were in the same room they wanted to kill each other. Now, they looked liked the best of friends, smiling and laughing with one another. It was almost sickening to Arya, but she had to remember that she had been gone for five years and that was plenty of time for them to strike a friendship.

“So tell me Arya, how were your travels? Find anything interesting?” Dany asked her.

Arya washed her food down with the remainder of her wine before she spoke. “Nothing much, just a lot of sea and few small islands that had friendly natives. We did find a rather large mass of land that we mapped, but there weren’t any people that we saw. Then after that we just sailed around Essos and stopped when we needed supplies.”

“It sounds like you enjoyed yourself.” Dany quipped.

Arya nodded, “Oh yeah! It was liberating. I had command of the ship and the men listened to me. But eventually I did miss home. That’s why I’m here.”

“And how long do you plan on staying?” She asked her.

Arya was hoping no one would ask that damned question. She really didn’t want to explain why she wasn’t staying in King’s Landing. The only one who knew her plans was deep into his fifth cup of wine. She glanced at him and he gave a small hiccup. He wiped his mouth of whatever wine may have spilled out of it and looked up at Arya, a grin covering his face.

“Oh yes! Please do tell us how long you are staying, Lady Stark! Was it two days or three? I can’t quite remember what that navigator of yours said.” His words were slightly slurred.

Arya shot daggers at the imp and swore that one day she would slit his throat in his sleep.

She could feel the many pairs of eyes lingering on her body, each with their own impending question. This is exactly why she wanted to keep it hush. She hated answering questions that she really didn’t have an answer to and she had a feeling that she was about to receive plenty of them.

Sansa was the first, as always, to ask the question that undoubtedly on everyone's mind.

"You are not staying? Where are you going?" Her tone was harsh but the hurt in her voice was undeniably recognizable.

"I-" She was cut off by Jon before she could answer he sister's question.

"You're sailing again, aren't you? Haven't you had enough of the sea?"

Arya's eyes widened. "No! No! I am not sailing again. I've truly had enough of the high seas." She assured her family.

"Then where are you going?" Sansa asked once more.

Arya hesitated. She didn't want to tell them where she was going. She shouldn't have to, but if she didn't she knew her family would be hurt and didn't think that she could bear to see their weary faces.
With a sigh, Arya answered. "I am staying in Westeros and I'll be back to King's Landing, I promise. I just have one more place to go to before I even begin to think about settling down."

She saw the tension in her family ease a bit. They truly believed that she would up a leave again and that broke her heart. She didn't want them to expect for her to leave. They knew she was a wanderer, but she had hoped they would believe her to stay. But she had been gone from for five years and perhaps they only knew her as she had been and as what she was now.

"And where is this place that you have to visit? Hmm? You haven't been any where else but Winterfell and King's Landing, so where else would you have to go?" Her sister was becoming impatient due to the lack of answers that Arya was providing.

"Well, that's not necessarily true. I have been to the Riverlands and Harrenhal, but that's another story." She said matter of fact.

Sansa face was starting to beam red. Arya's blatant disregard for answering her questions was becoming irritating.

"Arya! You know what I mean. Now please tell me where you are going."

Now Arya was the one becoming annoyed. She didn't want to answer her sister's questions, nor did she have to. She was a woman grown of twenty and three and didn't need to explain her reasonings. If her sister wanted to know the truth, she could go to their brother Bran, who seemed to have all the answers.

Arya crossed her arms over her chest and remained silent. She wasn't going to give her sister the satisfaction. Although, she couldn't say as much for the imp sitting beside her.

"I think I can answer that as well." He hiccuped.

Arya turned to the imp, "If you say a single word, I will make sure that you never see tomorrow."

"You are not a sprightly young lass are you?" Tyrion inquired.

Arya instinctively reached for Cat's Paw, "I'll me more than happy to show you sprightly."

Tyrion looked down at Arya's hand resting on the hilt of her dagger. He decided that today was not the day to be clever. "I think I've had too much wine. I will be retiring to my chambers and fucking my wife. See most of you all on the morrow." He lifted from his seat and turned to Bran and bowed, "Your Grace."

Bran nodded and Tyrion waddled out of the council room with his goblet of wine in hand.

"Arya, you cannot threaten him like that. He is the Lord Hand of the seven kingdoms." Sansa chastised.

Arya grumbled, "I can threaten who I please."

"Why are you so stubborn? Why can't you just tell me where you are going?" Sansa tried again.

Arya's blood was boiling and she wasn't going to be able to keep her head any longer.

"I don't have to tell you where I am going! I am not telling you where I am going! It is my business! But," Arya calmed herself, "I can promise you that I will be back in time for the birth of your babe."

Sansa's face was stoic. She gave a curt nod and said, "That is it then." and raised from her seat.
"Come, Pod. I no longer wish to squabble with my sister. I will see her when she returns from wherever ever she is going."

Pod gave Arya an apologetic look and helped Sansa out of the council room.

The remainder of the guest stayed silent. Meera was still munching in a half eaten piece of bread and Dany was whispering to Jon. The awkward tension that filled the air was becoming unbearable.

Bran was the one to break the silence.

"Meera, why don't we retire for the night? I'm sure Arya will enjoy her travels. Please do keep an open mind when you go see him, he has been through quite a bit in these last years."

Meera lifted from her seat and rolled Bran to the door. "It was nice meeting you, Arya." She told her as they exited.

Arya's eyes quickly locked with Jon's. He was going to ask her question when Dany intervened. "Leave her be. She isn't answering any questions." Arya silently thanked her. She pushed her chair back and exited the council room, heading to her chambers.

She hated that, even now after all these years, Sansa was still in some small way trying to control her. But Arya wasn't that little girl that anymore, she hadn't been for a long time.

Arya was making her way to her chambers for the night to prepare for her journey to Storm's End when she heard giggling coming from a near by chamber room. She veered left instead of the right that she needed to take to head to her chambers.

The giggling sounded young and childish and there were distinctively two sets of giggles coming from the closed door that was facing her. Arya gently pushed the door open and saw two young girls no older than five namedays sitting in the middle of the room playing with their tiny wooden direwolves. One girl had dark black hair with dark eyes to match while the other had silver hair that shined like the moon; her eyes were a loveliest shade of violet that Arya had ever seen.

She knew right then and there those were her nieces that were born just a few moons after she had left on her journey. They were beautiful and no one could deny that they belonged to Dany and Jon.

"There are beautiful, are they not?" A voice came from behind Arya.

She jumped and spun to see Daenerys staring at her. It was not easy to sneak up on Arya Stark, but Dany had done so, probably due to the fact Arya was so enticed with the twins that were in front of her.

"They are. What are their names?" Asked Arya.

Dany smiled, "The one with hair like mine is named after my mother, Rhaella and the spitting image of Jon, Lyarya."

Arya chuckled at the name, "Why in seven hells would you name her Lyarya? I've never even heard of it."

"Well, we wanted to name both of them after our mothers, but Jon feared that people would think that we named her after Lyanna Mormont, not Lyanna Stark. He also wanted to name her after his favorite sister, so we combined the names."

Arya's eyes grew in realization. Their child was named after her. But why? What had she done to
have a child named after her? Why was she so special?

"We named her after you, not because you defeated the Night King or because you survived the Battle of King's Landing. We named her after you because you were unafraid to tell me that I was wrong. I remember that day like it happened a fortnight ago. It was several days after the Battle of King's Landing and I was still in a difficult place. Yes, your brother was able to convince me to not burn the city down, but it was you who came up to me and told me that if I ever had a moment in life where I willing chose to end thousands of innocent lives, that you would shut my eyes forever." Dany hesitated and Arya could see the emotion in her eyes.

"No one, not even my advisers had ever been so bold to say that to me. You, along with many other people, helped pull me out of my despair. So that is why we named her after you. Because you are beautiful and strong and never afraid to speak your mind."

Arya was truly touched by the words Dany had told her. She never thought that she was beautiful in any sort of way. But here this woman was, who was the definition of beauty, telling Arya Horseface that she was beautiful. It made her mind immediately jump to Gendry and the night after the Battle of Winterfell. He had told her she was beautiful and she didn't believe it. She didn't want to believe it. Now, she wishes that she had.

"Thank you." She told Dany.

Dany gave her a smile and squeezed her shoulder gently. "I know where you are going. Do not worry yourself, your secret is safe with me. But head Bran's warning; keep an open mind."

"What does that even mean? And how did you know?" She asked her.

"I may have not been myself five years ago, but I was still an observant woman. I know love when I see it. As for the warning, you'll come to find out Arya Stark of Winterfell." And with that Dany brushed passed her and entered the twins room, closing the door behind her.

Arya was more confused than ever and was wondering if going to Storm's End was such a good idea. You have nothing to worry about she assured herself. She was going to Storm's End on the morrow and no one was going to stop her.

Chapter End Notes

This chapter took forever! But I love it! It was one of my favorites, aside from the first chapter. Arya will be headed to Storm's End in the next chapter and that one may take a little longer to write. Only because we see Gendry again and I was to make it a slow burn. So fair warning, I doubt there will be an update tomorrow. I will however compensate and most likely give you two on Saturday. Anyway, I hoped you enjoyed it and tell me which was your favorite part!
The Little Lady of Storm's End

Chapter Summary

Arya arrives at Storm's End and meets an interesting little lady.

Chapter Notes

So, I went back and forth on how I wanted to write this chapter. I've received a lot of comments from people who are really excited to see what Bran meant by "Keep and open mind." Some have speculated and some have absolutely no idea. When I came up with this story, I had an idea of where I wanted it to go. Obviously it was a sort of extension to season 8, but also a fix it. I made Arya stay away for five years for reason. I wanted to emphasize that time has gone by in Westeros and her family and the people around didn't stop their lives because she wasn't there.

I had many interpretations of how I wanted this meeting with Gendry and Arya to go. In fact I have wrote several different versions, each outlining a different outcome of how I want this story to end. I was afraid of proceeding with one version of this story for fear of how people would receive it. As a writer, I have to go with what makes me feel okay at the end, while also appeasing the audience. I hope I was able to do both in this chapter. I also just want to stress the fact that these two characters, in my eyes, are Endgame. They will end up with each other in the end. Now, how they get there, in my version, some people may not like. I just ask that you give it a try and don't unsubscribe or stop reading the story because it is not going the way you want it to go. Just know that these two characters will end up together. Happy reading

Arya meet with Ser Rednick at dawn. Even with the dim twilight, the harbor of King's Landing was alive with working people. It took a good while for Arya to actually get to Nymeria because of the gathering crowds. She had wanted to get to the ship before the workers started their day, but she had an unfinished conversion with her sister that she needed to address before she left.

It was early, so Arya wasn't sure if Sansa would even be awake, but none the less, she knocked on her chamber doors. She heard a few shuffles and a grunt of what sound like someone hitting their foot on the bed post. After several minutes, Sansa opened the door. She was in her nightgown and a robe covering her round belly.

"Arya? What in seven hells? You are aware that the sun hasn't even broken the horizon. What are you doing up?" Her sister said with a sleepy voice.

"I wanted to bid you a farewell. I'm leaving in just few short hours and I wanted to apologize for my behavior as last night's supper." Arya said.

Sansa eased a bit and small smile grew on her face. "You do not have to apologize. I should not have pushed you. You are a woman grown and you do not have to explain yourself. Just promise you'll be
Arya quickly embraced her sister, "Of course I will be back. I cannot miss the birth of this babe."

Sansa gave her sister a tight squeeze. She normally didn't cry, but with the babe in her belly, it made every little thing emotional. "Be safe." She said to her sister before she shut the door behind her.

Arya made haste after her goodbye to her sister. She wanted to get on the sea and be at Storm's End before the morrow drew to a close. She was anxious and ready to take the voyage south.

Ser Rednick was waiting at the dock where Nymeria was stationed when Arya arrived. He had the sails hoisted and the crew ready for sailing. Arya was truly grateful for the old navigator. He took the reigns when she could not. He had taught her the proper way to sail and run a ship. Without him she would have been truly lost.

"Ser Rednick, how was your stay?" she asked as she boarded the ship.

"Quite well, Lady Stark. I was able to send a raven to my son and let him know of my journey to Storm's End."

"So he is aware of our impending arrival?" Her eyes were quizzical.

He nodded, "Aye, he'll be joinin' us as we dock. He said the weathers ought to be good for an easy sailing." Ser Rednick looked up to the skys. "And I will have to agree with him."

Arya's eyes followed. The skies were clear with not a cloud in sight. The winds were steady and sails were eager.

"Well then, Ser Rednick, let us not waste anymore time. Lift the anchor and set sail for Storm's End."

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It took two days for them to reach the port of Storm’s End. Two days on her ship did nothing to ease the nerves that she had been feeling ever since she docked at King’s Landing.

She hadn’t seen him in five years. Had not sent a raven to ask about his well-being nor even asked her siblings when she did write. She had absolutely no idea what he had been up to or if he was still the same man she left all those years ago.

Ser Rednick hardly talked about Storm’s End unless it was about his son and she had purposefully avoided talk about the damned place if it was ever brought in conversation.

But standing on the dock with the light drizzle that had ascended upon them she couldn’t be more ecstatic. Her nerves were high, but her excitement was higher and she could scarcely believe that she was finally here.

She has never been to Storm’s End, but she could remember her father’s stories of the seas side castle and how it over looked ocean. The impregnable keep and it’s ability to weather any storm. It truly was a glorious castle. She even dared to think that it was more beautiful than Winterfell.

Ser Rednick had mentioned of it’s magnificent beauty, but one could not truly understand until they looked upon it with their own eyes.
It was slightly shocking to Arya that she never took the time to visit this place. Perhaps if she did, she may have never left Westeros.

The harbor of Storm’s End was just as busy as the one in King’s Landing. The fisherman were reeling in their morning catch and vendors were out and about selling their oysters, clams, and cockles. It was like any other bustling town thriving with common folk and Arya couldn’t help but smile.

When she left Westeros, Storm’s End had been on the brink of mutiny. The locals and bannermen alike were starving and unorganized and she heard that if it wasn’t for the new Lord and his trusted advisor, there would be no more Storm’s End. Perhaps, she thought, he isn’t a stupid bull after all.

Arya’s thoughts were quickly disrupted by sounds of joyous laughter. To her left she could see Ser Rednick and young man that could pass as Ser Rednick’s former self, embrace in a bearly hug. No doubt it was his son that he could not stop talking about.

“Lady Arya,” Ser Rednick motioned her to come. “This is my son, Archibald Rednick III.”

Arya lifted her brow to the navigator. “The third? Your name is Archibald? I thought you said it was Roger.”

“Aye it is. My second name is Roger. I hate Archibald.”

Arya glanced at the young man the back at Ser Rednick. “Then why did you name him that?”

“I have asked him that same question everyday of my life since I could talk.” The young man spoke. He quickly bowed to Arya.

“It is a pleasure to meet you, Lady Arya. I’ve heard all I can about you from the few letters my father has sent.”

Arya retuned the bow, “Likewise, Lord Archibald. And please do just call me Arya.”

The young man smiled, “Of course, Arya. But I must also ask you to please call me Archie. I may be a Lord, but the title is new and I do hate all the formalities. However, I cannot say the same for my wife.”

“Ah yes! How is that daughter-in-law of mine doing?” Ser Rednick asked his son.

Archie grabbed a hold of his fathers shoulder and lead him towards the seaside town. Arya was in step with them both as they made their way through the people.

“She is always well, father. She taking quite nicely to being a Lady, although she does not wish to do typical lady things.”

This tickled Arya’s ear. “What do you mean, Archie?”

“Well...she cannot sew to save her life. She hates the way some of the other ladies speak about common folk and she’d much rather spend her times in the stables than to gossip around in a circle. Although, now a days, she is tending to our young children.” Archie spoke freely.

“The stables?” Asked Arya. She was becoming more curious about this Lady Rednick.

“Aye. Her father was the former stable master before he passed. Her brother took up the job, but she does most of the work. Teaches our daughter how to properly care for the horses. Our son is only 4
moons, so all he is interested in is his next meal.” Archie says with a chuckle.

“And you do not mind her working in the stables? With her being a Lady?”

Archie shook his head, “No, not at all. But I wouldn’t be able to stop her if I tried. She gut me like a fish, that one. Her uncle is the swords master and taught her how to properly defend herself if necessary.”

Arya shook her head. She would have to meet this Lady Rednick, for she believed they could be fast friends.

They talked more on their walk through the town. Archie has mentioned that the bannermen of Storm’s End had taken a liking to their new Lord and that he truly cared for his people. Ser Rednick would tell his son about the adventures of the sea and how they encountered more than just islands.

Arya enjoyed seeing the father and son talk. They were close, she could tell and she enjoyed seeing the familiarity between the two. They may been apart for five years, but they conversed as if they had seen each other the day before. It was a familiarity that Arya could not wait to experience. She can only hope that is how it would be once she sees Gendry again. Old friends, picking up where they left off.

They had finally reached the gates of Storm’s End after walking for what seemed like ages. It hadn’t been a difficult trek, but for someone who had been on a boat for the last five years, climbing the hills and rocky terrain had winded Arya. She as glad when they finally saw the guards because that meant they had reached the top.

“Halt! State your business.” One guard said.

“Aye! It is I, Lord Rednick, Of House Rednick. Newly appointed bannerman of House Baratheon.”
Archie spoke clearly. “I am here with guests of House Baratheon that have arrived from a long journey.”

The guard nodded to his fellow guardsman and they let the trio pass.

Inside the grounds of Storm’s End was just as busy as the harbor. People were running around doing their daily tasks. The kennel master was training new pups, the swords master was teaching new guards the art of sword play, and the ringing of metal against metal echoed from the forge. It was an all to familiar sound for Arya and she was anxious to see if he’d be in the smithy. Her feet seemed to have a mind of their own as they were guiding her into the direction of the smithy. But is he in there? Would the Lord of Storm’s End be along side his fellow smiths? She thought. But it would not matter, for a familiar voice broke her thoughts.

“Is that Arya Stark of Winterfell?”

Arya turned to the voice and immediately recognized the old smuggler.

“Aye it is, Ser Davos.” She smiled as she approached him.

She welcomed his embrace, taking in another memory of home.

Her and Ser Davos had not been close, but she would be eternally grateful for the old man, for without him she believed her brother would be dead.

Ser Davos released her from the embrace and she was able to truly see his aging face. Being an advisor to a lord had taken its toll on the smuggler, but he seemed to remain his eager old self.
“How have ye been, my dear?” He asked her.

“Well. I’ve just returned from my travels west and was hoping to see an old friend. Where is our Lord Gendry?” She asked with sudden realization that this was the first time she said his name aloud since she’s gotten back to Westeros.

“He’s out collecting monthly rents. He should be back before supper.” The old smuggler answered. “In the mean time, I’ll have rooms drawn for you lot.”

“No need for us, Ser Davos. My father will be staying with me. As you know, my keep is just a few minutes ride outside of Storm’s End. We will be leaving right after supper.” Archie said.

Ser Davos nodded. “Very well. Please Lady Arya, if you follow me, I can show you to your temporary chambers. Where are your belongings?”

“They are back on my ship at the harbor. I can send for them on the morrow.” Arya hesitated. “And Ser Davos, if it is alright with you, I’d like to explore the castle grounds. Make myself aquatinted.”

“I don’t see why not. I’ll have one of the maids fetch you once supper is ready.” With that Ser Davos turned and headed off to the armory.

Arya smiled and turned to the father/son duo.

“I had no idea you knew the Lord.” Ser Rednick said.

“Yes, he’s an old friend.” She let the old man know.

“Old friend, you say? Is that why you so eagerly agreed to come with me?” He questioned with knowing eyes.

“Mayhaps.” A small smile had crept onto Arya’s face.

Archie hadn’t acknowledged the interaction between his father and Arya, for he had an eagerness of his own.

“Come father, let us go meet your grandchildren.” And with that, Archie dragged his father in the opposite direction.

Arya was left standing there in the middle of the castle grounds. She didn’t know which direction to go in first. On one side there was the armory, along with the training grounds and stable. The other side looked like it had housed the smithy and the kennels, while straight ahead were the kitchens. Everything seemed surreal to Arya. She was actually here and couldn’t quite believe it.

When she was a little girl and her father told her the stories about Storm’s End she always thought that she would hate it but standing here in the middle of the grounds surrounded by hard working, dedicated people that were loyal to their Lord, she came to realize that maybe it wasn’t such a bad place after all, even if it was wet all the time.

Arya decided to take a left and head towards the training grounds. It had been a while since she has sparred with anyone of decent skills. Perhaps she could find someone in the stormlands that could take her on. As she made her way to the training grounds a young girl of maybe three namedays ran into her.

The little girl had landed on the ground with a thud and tears began to well in her eyes. Arya knelt beside her to make sure she was alright.
“I’m sorry little one, I’ve must have not seen you. Are you alright?” Arya asked. It felt strange to her, to be kind. She hasn’t had much interaction with children, so she wasn’t sure if she was being kind enough. Although this would be good practice she thought.

The little girl hesitated when she looked up at Arya, but nodded.

Arya smiled at her and helped the little girl on her feet. “Well that’s good. What’s your name? Maybe we can find your mother?”

The little girl sniffled and wiped her nose on her sleeve. “I no have a mother.”

Arya’s heart squeezed with sadness. She, of all people, knew what it felt like not to have a mother.

“Do you have a father?” Arya asked.

The little girl’s eyes lit up in excitement. Her mop brown curls bobbed up and down.

“Really? Where is he then?” She asked. Arya was trying to maintain her patience with the young lass, but trying to get answers out of a child her age was next to impossible.

The child looked around the courtyard frantically, but couldn’t quite place her stare. Perhaps she is too small to see, thought Arya. With one quick movement she lifted the girl into her arms. She had nestled perfectly onto Arya’s hip and held on to her for dear life. Arya began walking around the courtyard for the little girl to see. For several minutes the girl was silent, that is until they made their way to the castle entrance.

“There is papa.” The girl said as she pointed towards the castle gates.

Arya turned and her breath had caught in her throat. Coming into the castle on a brown horse was a man with the most beautiful ocean eyes that she had ever seen. Ocean eyes that she never thought she would see again.

But that is impossible. The little girl she had in her arms looked nothing like him. Her hair was a muddied brown and her eyes were an undeniable hazel.

“What is your name?” She asked the little girl in her arms.

She looked up at Arya and smiled, “I am Lyra Baratheon. My papa calls me the little Lady of Storm’s End.”

Arya’s mind begins to get fuzzy. She was trying to put pieces of an impossible puzzle together. Had she really expected him to wait all this time for her? And what about the child’s mother? Why did she not look like him? How could she have been so stupid? Of corse he would move on. She gave him reasons to. But that didn’t mean that it still didn’t hurt.

Arya looked up one more time, this time those ocean blue eyes were staring right at her.

Only one thing could come to his mind, “Arya?”

Chapter End Notes

I hope you all aren't too mad at me. I wanted Gendry to have a life after Arya left. Now,
I truly believe that he wouldn’t have married or gotten with any other person had he not be forced to do so. I wanted it to go this way since I decided on writing this story. I really want to emphasize, in case you didn't get that in the chapter, that Gendry did NOT love this lady. He had to marry her or he was essentially going to end up dead. I want to believe that his bannermen wouldn't care, but let's be real, they would want to ensure that Storm's End didn't go unmanned ever again. I also wanted to give him an heir since you know his bannerman would pretty much demand one, but I wanted to make his wife die in child birth. Call me cruel, but it is how I wanted my story to go. Now Arya is going to love this kid because she's not even sure if she can have kids herself. Sure, I think it is going to take some time for her to adjust to the fact that Gendry has a child, but she isn't going to hold it against him because she knows that he did what he had to do and that he had to move on with his life. He still loves her, he never stopped loving her, but at the same time, he didn't know if she was going to come back. I hope not all of you are mad at me and if you want, I can post the alternate version of this chapter so you can see how I incorporated Lyra a different way. I made several different versions of how Lyra fit into this story and ultimately I went with this current version. I promise you will find out what happened to Gentry in these past five years in the next chapter. I really hoped you enjoyed it and please feel free to tell me what you think. I won’t get mad I promise! PS sorry it so long to upload
Arya and Gendry have a heart to heart. Arya also tries to keep an open mind.

First off I would like to thank everyone for their support and words of kindness as I have been writing this story. I really do appreciate it and it gives me the motivation to continue to write. I also want to thank the people who are no longer reading, because at least you read this far and showed support. I was really excited to write this chapter because Arya and Gendry finally see each other again and talk about their lives and what happened to each of them respectfully. I am going to be completely honest in saying I’ve only thought up to this moment, so everything after this chapter will be a complete and utter surprise to myself. This also means that the uploads will probably be every other day or even maybe twice a week, Versus the once a day I have been doing. I promise I will try to roll them out as soon as possible. Anyway, as always, happy reading!

PS
This took way longer to write than I thought! Also I may or may not have had a few Coronas and a pint of Ben and Jerry's writing this. So fair warning, there may be some typos, but I hope you like anyway!!
She quickly buried her head into the crook of his neck. Gendry wasn't necessarily scolding the youngling, but he was stern when he spoke, despite the fact that there was a softness in his voice.

Arya couldn't help but smile at the encounter between father and daughter, for it reminded her so much of her relationship with her father. A relationship that she missed dearly. But she also couldn't help but feel a little betrayed. She had told him to move on; she said as much on their last night together. *Any lady would be lucky to have you.* She now cursed those damned words, because she realized that she could have been that lady. Not the kind that sewed, or gossiped, or bore children, but the kind that could love him just as fiercely as he had loved her.

Arya's heart was broken, that she could admit, but she will be damned if anyone would be able to tell on her face. "I do not want to go with Septa Joanna," Lyra whined. "I want to go with her." She pointed straight at Arya.

Gendry looked up from the young girl and stared at Arya. His eyes were filled all kinds of emotions that Arya couldn't decipher. There was a mixture of confusion, worry, happiness and for a moment, desire. His stare lingered and he could notice his keep workers looking with curios eyes.

"Well, how about we go inside, look for Septa Joanna and maybe my friend here can join us in the search?" His eyes were pleading with Arya.

Lyra then looked at Arya and everything within her melted. She did not want to disappoint the young child so she nodded, "Of course, I'd be more than happy to help."

Gendry walked up to Arya and gently set Lyra down. She looked in between the two adults and smiled quickly grabbing both of their hands. Arya was taken by surprise, but did not pull away. If anything her grip on the young girl's hand tightened feeling a sort of comfort in it.

They walked silently to the castle's great hall, only exchanging quick glances here and there. They were both afraid to break the silence, for they didn't know what the other would say. Arya had never truly been scared of much, but for the first time in her life she was completely terrified. They were old friends, so why was it so difficult to speak as such? It was taking everything in Arya to muster a word to him, but thank the Gods that the child's Septa had decided to enter the great hall.

"There you are, child! I have been searching high and low for you! Where did you run off to?" The Septa was young, could not have been more than a few namedays older than Arya. Her head covering was that of a Septa in training; not fully covering her hair.

"Joanna! How in the Gods did this child get away from you?" Gendry had asked the young Septa.

"Oh, my Lord! I had not realized you had returned. I do apologize, she is a quick thing. One moment she was right beside me in the gardens and the next she was gone." The young Septa was clearly out of breath, probably from searching for the lost child.

"You wanted to give me a bath! I hate baths!" Lyra accused the Septa.

Septa Joanna huffed and gave the child an annoyed look. "You have mud on your skirts and in your hair. I need to get you clean, young child."

Lyra stuck her tongue out at the Septa and ran to hide behind Arya.

"Will you come here? Come from behind the lady." The septa went to grab at the child, but Arya unconsciously got in the way.
The septa stopped in her tacks. She looked at Arya and was truly confused as to what was going on.

"Please accept my apologies, Lady..?"

"It's Arya. Arya Stark of Winterfell."

The septa's face grew pale. She knew exactly who Arya Stark of Winterfell was. Her story has traveled all across Westeros, there was hardly a person in this country that did not know who Arya Stark was. Even her, a small town folk girl from the Riverlands has heard of Arya Stark.

"Lady Arya! How rude of me! Please do forgive me, I hadn't realized who you were." The Septa gave her a small bow.

"There really is no need for that. Please do no bow." Arya said to her.

Septa Joanna rose from her bow and gave Arya a wide smile.

"I've heard so much about you. Well not of about you, but your accomplishments! There are songs written about you, you know! Wonderful songs on how you defeated the Night King and how you survived The Battle of King's Landing. It truly is a pleasu-" Her ongoing rant was quickly cut off by Gendry. He was becoming annoyed with the young septa and wanted nothing more than to talk to the brown haired lass that was standing beside him.

"Septa Joanna, I am sure Arya would love to here about the songs written about her someday, but that day is not today. Please if you could, take Lyra and do give her bath. We have special guests tonight and she has to look presentable." Septa Joanna nodded and reached for the child once more.

"No papa! I don't want to go!" Her eyes were pleading. With those eyes, Arya knew Gendry wouldn't last much longer on holding back his weakness for her. So she was going to save the stupid bull before he let a 3 year old boss him around.

"Lyra," Arya knelt down beside the girl, "If you go with your septa, I promise that when we meet again, we can play in the mud all you like."

Lyra's face lit up and she gave Arya the biggest hug a girl her size could give. She squealed with joy and quickly ran towards her septa. Arya looked back at Septa Joanna just in time for her to mouth a "thank you." Arya nodded and saw the two figures depart the great hall.

It was just the two of them now, standing in the middle of the great hall. There was still silence and it was becoming unbearable and uncomfortable for Arya. So with all the courage she could muster she spoke first.

"So...you have a child." It wasn't a question.

Gendry cleared his throat, "Uh, yes. I have a daughter, Lyra. Well you met her." He was nervous, she could tell. He wasn't meeting her eyes and his hand were fidgeting, no doubt wanting to hammer something into submission.

Arya swallowed, but there was nothing but ash in her mouth. She had to ask the next question, but she was afraid of the answer. She knew that if he had a daughter, then he had a wife and that would completely shatter her.

"You're married then?" She spit the question out.

Gendry's hands had stopped fidgeting and he looked directly at her. "No, I am not," He hesitated,
"Not anymore."

"So you were? Did you love her?" Arya's voice was small and she hated how he made her feel, how this situation made her feel.

Gendry was not longer nervous, in fact he was angry. She had been gone for five years and thinks that she can walk into Storm's End and pick up where they left off.

"Gods, Arya! I haven't heard from you or seen in five years and this is what you ask me when you see me? You told me to move on, so I did!" He yelled at her.

Arya flinched. He had never yelled at her, but she could understand his anger and frustration. It hurt her every being that they were having this dreaded conversation. All she wanted was his arms around her, holding onto her and never letting go.

"I never thought you would. At least I never believed you would." She told him truthfully.

Gendry let out a long sigh. He wanted to be mad at her. Wanted to yell and scream even more than what he was doing now, but he just couldn't. Because all he saw standing in front of him was the a ghost he's never thought he'd see again. He could see she was sad, for she could was now the one who could not meet his eyes. She looked so vulnerable in front of him. It was a side of Arya that he had hardly ever seen, not since they were in that cave with the brotherhood. Not since she asked him to be her family.

He took all of two steps to her and embraced her into a hug that he never wanted to let go. She was visibly shocked, but she received the embrace, returning it all too quickly. She took in his smell. It hadn't changed in all these years. The smell of the smithy still very much prominent. It was a smell that she recognized as home.

"Gods I've miss you." he whispered into her ear.

"I've miss you too." She let out; her voice quivering as if she was about to cry.

They were embraced for what seemed like a lifetime. Each not wanting to let the other go. But the preparations for supper were coming underway and the maids and cooks were beginning to come in and out of the great hall.

Gendry released Arya and grabbed her hand leading her from the great hall.

"Where are you taking me?" She asked him as they began to make their way up a column of stairs. She had realized they were climbing the tower that stood in the middle of the castle.

"We are going to my chambers, so we can talk more freely." He told her.

Her cheeks blushed at the thought of entering his chambers, but she quickly suppressed any thoughts that Sansa would deem improper. As the ascended the stairs, he never once let go of her hand. He feared that if he did, that she would just disappear like the first time.

They had finally reached his chamber doors. With one swift motion he entered his solar. It was magnificent, Arya had to admit. As you entered, there was a table that could seat four. The bed was near the wide open window that overlooked the seas. Sheer curtains were the only things covering the open archways that led to the balcony. The fireplace at the head of the room was large; a stag adorning the stone atop of it. This room was large; larger than her parents chambers had been back in Winterfell. Although large, the room still felt rather cozy and Arya did enjoy the sea breeze that was tickling the curtains of the balcony.
"Nice room, my Lord." Arya teased.

Gendry gave a small smile but still flinched at the title. Everyone had been calling him 'My Lord' for years now and he still couldn't get used to the name. Arya saw his discomfort at the name and continued to tease.

"Now you know how it feels, my Lord. To have people call you my lord. It gets annoying, doesn't it, my Lord?" She was practically laughing.

"Yeah, yeah. Just shut it, mi'lady." He teased back.

"It is 'My Lady,' you are a highborn now, remember?" Arya sipped on a goblet of wine that Gendry had poured her when they entered his chambers.

"Of course, how could I forget, My Lady?" He jabbed back at her.

Arya face turned to a scowl, "Don't call me that."

"Oh, so you can give it, but cannot receive it?" He asked her.

He could tell that she was no longer teasing. Her face had gone solemn and her wine goblet remained untouched in her hands. She still looked the same except for her hair; it was longer than before, almost reached her mid back and she had few more scars that seemed to adorn her face. He could tell that she was lost in deep thought, about what, he wasn't sure. He knew that she must have gone through things in their years apart, but he had gone through things as well. The reality of it was is that they were no longer the same people that they had been those years ago. It seemed easier to pick up where they left off when they were they were at Winterfell; nothing but younglings. Now there was five years of experience between them and they had to learn to know each other again.

Gendry walked over to his bed and sat at the edge, facing Arya who was seated at the table. He wanted to grab for her and put her hands in his, but he thought better of it and just watched her. He watched her mind race, he could see it in her eyes as they flicked back and forth. It was almost as if she was trying to fit things together without asking for the answers.

"Arya?" He called to her.

She heard him and immediately her trance was broken.

He took her hands this time; grabbed the goblet and set it in on the table beside her. Her brought her chair close and looked her in the eyes.

"Ask me your questions, you stubborn she wolf."

"Are...are you sure?" She wanted confirmation.

"As sure as I can be. Now ask." He assured her.

"Who was she? What was her name? What happened to her?" Every question Arya could think of was spilling out of her mouth. She was like a run away horse unable to stop.

"Slow down, love. I will answer them all, just give me a minute to hear them." He smiled to her.

She quickly shut her mouth and began to listen to Gendry Baratheon's story.

"Her name was Isabel Haywater. She was the daughter of one of my bannermen. I wasn't intending on marrying her, or any woman for that matter. I was going on year two of my lordship and my
bannermen were pressuring me to marry; to create heirs to Strom's End. Every woman they threw at me I dismissed. I did not want to marry, for there was no other woman that could make me happy but you." He paused and could see the tears welling in Arya's eyes. "I was going to wait, however long it took. Ser Davos had advised against it. He feared that my bannermen would stage a coup and put a Lord in charge that would produce heirs. But it did not matter, I would have gladly given up Storm's End if it meant that I could wait for you. But something happened. Lord Haywater had come to me and begged me to marry his daughter, for she was ruined. She had fallen in love with a local farmer and had ended up with a babe in her belly. When she told the farmer, he left her and the Stormlands altogether. She was devastated and Lord Haywater was worried about the wellbeing of his daughter and her unborn babe. He knew that the child would be a bastard and he didn't want his grandchild to go through what I went through. He didn't want his daughter to be deemed nothing more than a common whore. I took pity on the woman and her child, but more so for the child." Gendry swallowed. "I knew what it was like to grow up with no name and no family. I knew the hardships and I couldn't let that babe endure the same fate as I did, so I married her and claimed the babe as mine."

Gendry gave time for Arya to process the information he had given her. Slowly, everything started to fall into place.

"Did she love you?" She had asked him.

"No, but she loved her babe, as any mother would. She was grateful for what I did, but she told me herself that she couldn't find it in her heart to ever love another man again. She had her own chambers that she would reside in. When we were together in front of the people, we were man and wife, Lord and Lady, but behind closed doors we hardly interacted. We did become friends, though and she was funny. Had a good sense of humor." Gendry smiled at the memory of his late friend.

"What happened to her?"

Gendry hated the memory. Every time he had to think about it, he would close up and retreat. But he was here to give the woman he loved answers, so that was what he was going to do. He grabbed the pitcher of wine and pour himself a glass. If he was about to let in all the emotion he had suppressed for the last three years, he needed wine in his belly to do so. He chugged the goblet and resumed his story.

"She had gone into labor early, nearly two moons early. And Isabel was a tiny thing, smaller than you, if that was possible. The maesters had said it was going to be a difficult birth, even when she was only four moons along. We had prepared for what seemed to be the worst, but we did not account for the fact that the babe would come early. We also didn't account that the babe would be as large as she was. I remembered Lord Haywater saying that the farmer Isabel had been with was a rather large man so I knew that the babe would be difficult for her. Even the way she carried the babe. She had to stay bed ridden around moon five because she was so large. Lyra just did not fit, so the maesters had to cut her out of Isabel. There was little chance that Isabel would survive, that much I knew. On her dying birthing bed she made me promise to take care of her." Gendry's voice broke. "What she didn't know is that I already loved that babe as my own before she was even born. Isabel didn't last the night and when it came time to name the babe, I chose Lyra, for it had been Isabel's mother's name." Gendry hadn't noticed the tears that were running down his face. The memory truly did hurt him, for Isabel had been a dear friend.

He looked up at Arya and noticed that she had her own tears falling down her face. She hated seeing him hurt. She wanted to take all of his bad memories and lock them away forever.

"Why are you crying?" He had asked her as he wiped her tears away.
"I am so sorry! For everything! What you went through and what you did. Not a lot of men of your stature would have done that, but you did. I should've been here with you. You should not have gone through any of that and if I was here you wouldn't have." Arya was nearly sobbing.

Gendry grabbed her and held her close to him.

"Don't you dare apologize, for any of it. I know why you left. You had to live for yourself in your own way. Was I angry at you? Of course; I still am, but that doesn't mean that I don't love you. And if you were here, I would not have Lyra. I cannot imagine my life without that little girl and I hope you can understand that."

Arya pulled from him and grabbed his face into her hands. She looked him straight in the eyes. "I understand everything. But I do have to ask, have people wondered of her parentage? I could tell that child was not your true kin the moment I looked at her. What happens when others realize that?" She asked him honestly.

Gendry sighed and pulled Arya's hands into his. "There have already been questions of her linage. I have dismissed them all, but there are some who will not let it go. I am afraid for her sometimes, that is why I have her Septa constantly with her and Ser Davos not to far behind."

Arya's heart swelled and she fell in love with this man all over again.

"I will promise you, Lord Gendry Baratheon, that if anyone tries to harm her or question her parentage in anyway, they will have to deal with me."

"Arya, I cannot let you do that. You don't even know her, and I've changed. You don't even know me anymore." he protested.

"Will you stop being a stubborn bull and let me get to know her; get to know you again?" She pleaded.

Gendry's mouth turned wide. He hadn't meant to kiss her, but at that moment he couldn't help himself. Her lips tasted the same, sweet but with a little hint of Storm's End sea salt. Arya melted into him and gladly accepted his kiss. She had missed his lips on hers and she never wanted this moment to end. But the sound of dinner bells had pulled the couple apart.

"Does this mean you are staying?" He asked her as pulled from her lips.

"Aye, I'm staying."

Gendry smiled, 'Good, now let's go eat.'

Chapter End Notes

So there you have it! We found out how little Lyra came to be. And isn't Gendry so compassionate and honorable? He knew that his late wife was carrying another man’s child and he knew that she would be ruined if he didn’t take her as a wife. He did it mostly though for little Lyra. He didn’t want her to go through the same things that he
went through. Anyway, I told y’all it would be as bad as it seemed. I can’t wait to see what I do next! Thanks for reading!
The great hall of Storm's End was beginning to fill with bannermen, workers, and maids alike. Each seat of the hall began to fill with people that Arya had never seen before. It was like a never ending flood of bodies; as one made its way through the hall's doors, another would follow. The idea of having to face all those people was eating at Arya's nerves. She hated crowds. She never liked them, or to be more precise, she never liked being the center of attention of crowds. To have all eyes on her was an unnerving thought and she was ready to run back to her ship, never to be seen again.

She honestly didn't know why she agreed to eat with Gendry at the head table, where only the important people sat. It was invitation of questioning eyes waiting to happen. But she didn't want to reject him. He had been so happy to see her again, that she didn't want to disappoint him again. Although she was sure that Gendry wouldn't have minded if she sat in the great hall with all his other bannermen; she wanted to make him happy and if that meant sitting and the head table with all eyes on her, then she was going to do it.

She was an assassin! She shouldn't be afraid of anything, and in fact, she wasn't. She could count on one hand, with a few extra fingers leftover, all the things that made Arya Stark scared; being the
center of attention was one of them. It was becoming extremely tempting for her to go steal some poor maid's face and blend in with the crowd, but she was stronger than that and she would hold her head high and sit beside Gendry at the head table. And it's not like she would be the only one up there. Ser Davos and little Lyra, along with Septa Joanna would all be up there with her. They even made a space for Lord Rednick and his family, for he was a newly appointed bannerman.

Supper was nearly about to be served, the cooks and barmaids were just waiting for all of the Storm's End people to fill the hall. Arya knew she only had minutes of some sort of peace before the food would be handed out and the Lord of Storm's End would make his nightly speech. She was trying to find anything to distract herself from the impending doom she was about to face, even if it meant downing more wine than what she was used to.

She was in her second cup when a lady about her age with curly auburn hair came up to sit beside her. She had trousers on, but her jerkin had flared out, almost like a dress with no middle. Her waist was cinched with a large belt and at her hip was a small dagger, almost like the one Arya carried at her hip. It didn't take long for Arya to realize that this must be the famous Lady Rednick that she has heard about. Archie was right, she was definitely not the normal lady.

She turned to Arya and gave her a know smile, "You must be Arya Stark. I am Rena Rednick, Archie's wife."

Arya set her goblet down on the table in front her. She quickly wiped her mouth of any lingering wine and greeted the lady. "Nice to meet you Rena. I've heard a bit about you from your husband. I must admit, I was not expecting someone like you to sit down beside me."

Rena chuckled, "Ah, yes, well I am sorry to disappoint, but I have just come from the stables and did not have time to change into a proper dress for tonight's supper."

"Oh, no need to apologize to me. I would not be caught dead in a dress, unless my sister forces me into it." Arya smiled.

"Archie's father did mention that you were not a typical lady. I see what he means. It is somewhat a comfort to me, knowing that I won't be the only lady the wives gossip about." Rena says.

Arya shrugged, "Let them gossip, they are probably jealous that we don't care what people think."

"I'll drink to that!" Rena said as she lifted her goblet to meet Arya's. The two women continued to converse on small oddities as the remaining people entered the great hall.

Once the last of the remaining people had piled into the room, Gendry rose to his feet with a goblet in hand.

"Tonight, we celebrate not only Lord Rednick and his decision to become a loyal bannerman to House Baratheon, but we also celebrate the return of friends and family!" The great erupted with cheer.

"Please help me welcome back Lord Rednick's father, who has been traveling the high seas for the last five years under the command Arya Stark of Winterfell, the Savior of the Dawn and Slayer of the Nightking!" More cheers rang through the hall, but there were some lingering eyes and hushed whispers that didn't go unnoticed by the young assassin.

Gendry raised his goblet and the rest of the hall followed, officially igniting the celebrations. Gendry took his seat and the center of the table. Arya was sitting to the right of him while Lord Rednick to the left.
After downing another goblet of wine, Arya leaned to Gendry to whisper at his side, "You know, the Gendry I knew years ago would never have been able to stand in front of this many people and make a speech."

He gave a weary smile, "The Gendy you knew years ago has changed quite a bit." He paused and saw the discomfort on Arya's face as she scanned the crowd at the whispering lords. "Was the speech too much?"

Arya looked up at him. She could see worry in his ocean blue eyes. She knew he feared he had drawn too much attention to her. "Perhaps just a bit. I've changed too, but my dislike of attention and crowds has not."

Gendry nodded and gave her a reassuring smile. She smiled back and turned to see the crowd in front of her. Most were enjoying the food that was in front of them, not having a care in the world; while others dared to glance at the she wolf. Every now and then Arya could feel the eyes that landed on her, only making this supper all more difficult to ignore. But she has some curiosities too. If she was planning on staying in Storm's End, then she needed to know every little thing about the bannermen that followed the Baratheon name. And who better to ask than a Lady who's husband was a newly appointed Lord.

Arya turned to Rena who was trying to desperately control her young daughter from throwing whatever food that had lost her interest. She studied the young mother and noticed that she was getting highly frustrated.

"I do not mean to impose, Lady Rena, but perhaps she is bored? I see little Lyra giving her septa the same struggle. If I am not mistaken, I believe Septa Joanna will be taking Lyra to her chamber shortly, perhaps she can take your daughter as well? They seem close in age and it may do them some good to play with one another." Said Arya.

Lady Rena gave her a small smile, "No imposition at all and I think that is a splendid idea." Rena looked back at the septa and little Lyra, for Arya was right, Lyra was beginning to get cranky. Rena lifted from her seat and picked up the small child into her arms. She made her way over to the septa and began conversing.

Arya observed the interaction and gave a small laugh when she noticed the septa's face twist with horror.

"What's so funny?" Gendry asked her.

"Oh, just poor young Septa Joanna now has to deal with two little hellions rather than one." Arya pointed towards the woman and Gendry gave a roaring laugh.

"Even now you know how to make people miserable." He smiled to her.

"It was only a mere suggestion that Lady Rena ask Septa Joanna to take her daughter so her and Lyra can play." Arya said matter of fact.

"No, you're right. Lyra is getting irritable and since Lord Rednick's newly appointed status, her and Ginger have been the best of friends." Gendry said.

Arya smiled and watched as Septa Joanna took Ginger from her mother's arms. She grabbed a hold of Lyra's hand and made their way to were Gendry was sitting.

"Lord Baratheon, I will be taking the children to play in the little lady's room. However, she insisted to bid you a good night." Septa Joanna brought Lyra around to her father. He picked her up in a one
fail swoop and rested her onto his lap.

The little lady looked up at her father with pleading eyes.

"Papa, I do not want to go with Septa Joanna. I want to stay with you," she paused and looked at Arya, "And her!"

Gendry chuckled, “You want to stay with Arya? Why?”

Arya was curious as to what the youngling would say.

Lyra looked between her father and Arya, “cause she said, well she said we could play in the mud.” She looked Arya dead in the eyes. “You said we would play in the mud, Ar-Ar-Arry!”

Arya’s eyes went wide. She could tell the child had difficulty pronouncing her name, but she never thought the child would resort to her old nick name once upon a time ago. It clutched Arya’s heart, for she never thought she would hear that name again.

Arya scooched closer to the child. She leaned down so she was level with her. “Lyra, I did promise and I always keep my promises, but it is a little late to play in the mud. And Ginger is eager to play with you.” She paused listening to the brewing storm on the horizon. “But you her that? A storm is coming and with a storm comes rain. Tomorrow there will be fresh mud for us to play in.”

Lyra’s little eyes lit up and she gave Arya a toothy grin. She looked up at her father and gave him a wholesome hug, before jumping off his lap and trotting away with Septa Joanna and Ginger.

Gendry turned to Arya with hard eyes. He hadn’t meant what he was about to say, he just said it. It was if all the frustration he had built up inside of him, making him say stupid things.

“You keep promises? That’s funny.” He tone was harsh.

Arya looked at him with a scowl. “I promised to come back didn’t I?”

Gendry scoffed, “I don’t know, did you? Our conversation that day last maybe two, three minutes. Then you got onto a boat never to be seen again.”

Arya looked down into her wine goblet before taking another sip. “Well you remember what you remember and I’ll remember what I remember.”

“Maybe you’ve had too much wine and your memory is a little off.” He said to her.

Arya looked up at him with eyes that could kill. “Maybe you’ve had too much wine, because you’re saying stupid things. Oh no, I’m sorry I forgot, you say stupid things even without the wine.”

Gendry was about to say something to her when Lady Rednick made he way back to her seat.

He cleared his throat, “If you’ll excuse me, I have to stop a brawl from happening between my kennel master and the master of arms.” He rose from his seat at the table and headed towards the crowd.

Stupid bull! She thought. Sometimes he could be the same Gendry she left years ago and now she was beginning to see the new Gendry he had told her he’d become.

“I’m sorry, did I interrupt something?” Rena asked her as she took her seat again.

Arya shook her head, “No, just a stubborn bull being stupid.”
Rena nodded, a smile creeping onto her face. She knew the Lord Paramount and this Lady She-Wolf had past that was hard to ignore. She was an observant lady, some would say too observant.

“So how long have you loved him?” She asked Arya.

Arya looked up at her in surprise. Was it that obvious?

“I-I don’t love him.” Arya’s words faltered.

“Hmm, okay.” Rena was trying to suppress a grin that wanted to escape onto her face.

Arya cursed herself and finished her third goblet of wine. She was beginning to feel the effects, making her more loose than normal.

“So tell me Lady Rena, which bannermen should I put to the back of my mind and which should I keep my eye on?” Arya questioned.

“And what makes you think I know those answers?” Rena teased.

“You were a stable master’s daughter for most of your life. I have to believe that you were able to hear things that were meant for you to hear.” Arya told her simply.

Arya had been right, of course. Being a stable master’s daughter made Rena near invisible. She would hear things that were not meant for her ears. Some would say she’s a real master of whispers.

Rena sighed and finished her own goblet before she answered the she wolf.

“Most of the Lord Paramount’s bannermen are loyal. They love that there is another Baratheon in charge of Storm’s End, but there are some who would rather see another take his place.”

Arya nodded, her eyes darting around the great hall.

“Lord Swann is one of those men.” Rena pauses. “I’ve lived in Storm’s End my whole life. The stormlands are my home and I am loyal to the Baratheon’s, my family has always been. But Lord Swann’s family rejoiced when Renley and Stannis both perished. They thought it was their chance to take Storm’s End, but the other bannermen wouldn’t let them.”

“But hasn’t the Swann family been Baratheon bannermen for generations?” Asked Arya. She wasn’t as familiar with other houses history as she was with hers.

Rena nodded, “Aye, they have. But Lord Swann’s Lord Father has wanted Storm’s End since before Robert’s Rebellion, at least that is what my father had told me. I didn’t see it for myself until I got older.”

“Do you think he is capable of staging a coup?” Arya wanted all the information she could gather.

“He almost did, nearly four years ago. Threatened to take the castle if our Lord Paramount did not marry. The only problem, Lord Swann never did have enough men to follow him. I highly doubt he’ll try again.”

Arya gazes the great hall. She wanted to find this Lord Swann. She wanted his face engraved into her thoughts, for if he ever tried to usurp Gendry’s seat, she would know exactly who he was.

Her eyes stopped on a pudgy old man. His beard was white and curled in an exquisite way. He belly hanged over his belt and his jerkin seemed a little too tight. This was Lord Swann, Arya knew instantly.
Rena noticed that Arya’s eyes had locked on the old man. She had picked him out in a large crowd, for he truly was that noticeable.

“Aye, that’s him. He has a daughter as well. He believes that, with enough pressure, the Lord Paramount will marry his daughter. Too bad he’s too daft to know that that’ll never happen.”

“That,” Arya points to the man, “has a daughter?”

Rena nodded, “Her name is Jeyne. She a skinny little thing with pale blond hair. She is obsessed with our Lord Paramount, I’m surprised she hasn’t tried to speak with tonight.”

Arya racked the room once more and she spotted the girl. She was seated between two other women. She had a disgusted face as she stared at the three men sitting across from her. They were undoubtedly intoxicated and spewing ale every time the talked.

“She’ll probably try to sneak into his bed chambers again.” Rena pulled Arya from the crowd.

Arya’s eyebrows raised, “Again?”

“It was around Little Lyra’s first nameday. We were celebrating, just like we are now. Near everyone was high on wine or ale. The little lady had long gone to bed and her lord father was right behind. Archie and I weren’t yet made a Lord and Lady, but we were still in appearance at the party. My father had agreed to watch Ginger for us while we celebrated. I saw our Lord Paramount head to his chambers and Lady Swann was right behind him, following. He still grieved for his wife, who had died a year prior, he was not taking any women. Thank the Gods for him that he had enough sense to lock his bed chambers before she reached his door.” Rena was trying to suppress a laugh. "Her face when she descended those stair was of utter disappointment; it was hard not to laugh and her embarrassment."

Arya smiled at the thought, but was still uneasy at the news that Lady Rena was providing. There were things that were going to have to changed once Arya became established, and it seemed Lord Swann and his daughter were going to be the first things.

"It was quite a sight, I must admit. Both Archie and I did feel sorry for her bu-" Rena suddenly stood. Arya looked behind her to see Gendry had made his way back to the table. "Lord Baratheon." Rena stated with a curtsy.

Gendry lifted his hand, "Please Lady Rena, call me Gendry. I've told you and Archie that a million times."

"Of course, My Lord... I mean Gendry." Rena sat back down and began to munch on her uneaten plate of food.

Gendry took his seat once more. He cleared his throat and leaned close to Arya so his lips were at her ear. "I am sorry."

She turned to look at him; their lips mere inches apart. "I accept your apology, but do anything like that again, and I cannot promise that I won't be as tight lipped."

Gendry stared at Arya. Her grey eyes were beginning to bore into his soul. At that moment, he wanted nothing more than to grab her face and take her lips onto his. She was just as intoxicating as the wine he had been sipping. He wanted her, all of her and couldn't wait to take her to bed. They were inching closer, not caring if the whole keep saw them. It almost as if they were in a trance with one another. They other not moving. They were so close when a throat cleared in their direction, making them pull apart.
"I beg my pardon, My Lord. I just wanted to come over and say hello." Jeyne Swann had interrupted. Arya gave the girl a quizzical look. She studied the girl from head to toe. She was skinny thing, Rena was right about that and her hair was a pale blond, but she was also very pretty. Her face looked nothing of her pudgy father and her eyes were just as blue and the bull sitting beside her.

"Uh, hello, Lady Swann. I hope you are enjoying tonight's festivities." Gendry said.

He was being nice, Arya knew. But she could tell my his posture, that he was uncomfortable with the woman.

"I am, My Lord," She paused and looked around the head table, as if she was looking for someone. "Where is the little lady?"

"Her Septa took her and Lady Rena's daughter to play, away from the grown crowd." He answered her question.

"Well that is good, young children shouldn't be around the grown men and women at such functions. Don't want them to bother us." She stated. Arya could tell there was a hint of smugness in her voice.

"Then why are you still here, Lady Swann?" Arya cut in.

Jeyne gave Arya a questioning look. She was sizing her up, almost like a lion taunting it's prey. But Arya was a wolf, and she was not going to let this little weasel out of her grasp anytime soon.

“I do beg your pardon, Lady Arya. Why would I not be here?” Jeyne’s voice seeped with hatred.

“Well, you just said that children should not be around the grown men and women. You cannot be more that ten and seven, a child still.” Arya’s voice was cool, ice dripping with every word she said.

Jeyne have a fake smile, “Oh, I do get that quite a bit. But no, I am of age. In fact I just had my 21st nameday.”

“Oh heavens, I had no idea.” Arya’s voice was drenched in sarcasm.

The tension in the air seemed to grow thick. Arya was staring at Jeyne, praying to the Gods that she would just leave already. It seemed Jeyne had felt the she wolf’s grey eyes because she said, “Yes, well it was a pleasure to meet you Lady Arya. And good to see you again My Lord.” She placed her small hand on Gendry’s. He pulled away, but not before Arya raised a brow to the young girl. She quickly retreated, giving Rena a glare as she walked by.

“I truly do despise that woman.” Rena said as soon as Lady Jeyne was out of ear shot.

Arya concurred, “I’ve never liked girls with the name Jeyne.”

And with that she filled her wine goblet and chugged it till in went dry.

Chapter End Notes

So what did you think of the drama!!! So let us talk about Lord Swann and his daughter Jeyne Swann. They are going to be trying our lovelies in the coming chapters. Jeyne
wants to be lady of a powerful house and her father basically wants to control that powerful house with a marriage, but we know Gendry is not about that life. And Arya is not about to let a girl named Jeyne get in the way of her and her man. I can't wait to write a scene with Arya threatening Jeyne, because let's be real, she will. Also, mama bear Arya will be coming out in the next few chapters too. I don't want to give too much away, but I just wanted to give you all a glimpse of what is going to happen next. You guys thought I was going to make it easy for our OTP did you? Yeah, not going to happen. There needs to be a little conflict, and in the end it will make their relationship stronger. And what did you think about that Arya and Rena scene? I am so happy that she can find someone that she relates to and can speak to other than Gendry. Also isn't Lyra just like the cutest thing ever? Look, she may only be three, but she is smart and knows something is up, even if she doesn't know exactly what's up. Anyway, I obviously had too much fun writing this chapter. And I haven't even written it yet. I write my beginning AND end notes before I even write the chapter, but that is beside the point. I hope ya'll enjoyed it mucho! (look I am a hispanic girl who was born and raised in North Carolina, so I'm a little country too, get over it) Anyway keep on the lookout for chapter 8! Love you guys and keep commenting, me gusta those comments okay!
Rekindled Love

Chapter Summary

Arya and learns more about Rena. Gendry and Arya rekindle a spark.

Chapter Notes

So I know that it took forever for me to get this chapter up, but it finally is. I am really liking the relationship that Arya and Rena are developing and Rena is becoming one of my favorite characters to write. I also really like the moments between Gendry and Arya. There isn’t much dialogue between the two this chapter, but it still gets the point across. Anyways, as always, happy reading!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The vast amounts of wine that Arya had consumed was beginning to take effect. In all her years, she’s never had more than two goblets. She’s never really like the feeling that the wine would make one feel. She wanted to keep her wits about her; keep her mind focus for anything that may be thrown her way. Even on her travels west, she never drank more than what she felt comfortable with. She had a crew to keep and maintain. If she wasn’t at her top performance, she could have endangered everyone on her ship.

Tonight was a different story. Between the judging crowd and the looks from the high Lords and Ladies of the Stormlands, Arya threw caution right over her shoulder. She was four goblets in and pouring her fifth after that encounter with Lady Jeyne Swann. She hadn’t been this relaxed for a long time and it was an invigorating feeling. She was chatting and laughing and truly did not care what the people of the Stomrlands were saying about her.

Lady Rena was even enjoying herself. She did not have to worry about her children for a night and it was liberating. She loved her children, Gods knew that, but being a mother, wife, and a new lady was beginning to take a toll on the young woman. Having one night to enjoy the company around her was an escaping feeling. And making a new friend was a nice perk.

Arya was observing the young lady. She reminded her of her sister, Sansa. The auburn hair, the blue eyes, even the way she held herself as a woman. It was a comfort to Arya, for she never really had friends before; at least not friends that were women.

“So Lady Rena, when will you be leaving tonight? It is getting late and the roads are no safe place, even if your keep is a short rides away from here.” Arya asked her.

Rena’s gaze tore from that of her husbands and landed on Arya. Truth be told, she had not heard a single word Arya had said. She was preoccupied ogling her husband from the other side of the high table.

“I do apologize, but I seemed to not have heard you. What was it you wanted.” Rena asked her. Her eyes going back and forth between Arya and her husband.
Arya noticed Renæ’s averting gaze and smiled. “I have a feeling you and your husband will be staying here at Storm’s End tonight.”

Renæ waved her hand dismissively, “Nonsense. Beside Ser Davos did not tell the maids to set up rooms for us.”

“I’m sure Lord Baratheon can acquire some rooms for you and your family, Lady Renæ.” Arya reassured her.

Renæ nodded; a slight blush rising to her cheeks.

“There is no need to be embarrassed. He’s your husband. If you want to bed him, then bed him.” Arya told her as she took yet another sip from her goblet.

Renæ’s cheeks grew an even darker shade of crimson. “I cannot bed my husband here! Not with the Lord Paramount under the same roof.”

Arya shrugged, “I’m sure what Gendry doesn’t know won’t hurt him.”

Renæ looked passed Arya and noticed that Gendry’s seat was empty.

“Where is the Lord? I did not noticed he left.” She asked Arya.

“Aye, he went to check on Lyra and Ginger. It is late, so they are more than not, sleeping. I do have to ask, where is your son?” Arya asked.

“He’s back at home at our keep with my brother. They rode before supper. He was getting fussy and my brother offered to look after the babe.” She gave a small chuckle “Gods bless him. He had expected that we would not return home tonight.”

“And he is capable of caring for the babe?” Arya asked.

Renæ nodded, “Aye. Sometimes I think he can care for the babe better than I can. He has always loved the children. Preferred their company over gents and lasses here at the castle.”

Arya tore a piece of bread and stuffed in her mouth, “He works in the stables? The new stables master, am I right? After your father passed away?”

Renæ raised her eyebrows, surprise covered her face, “You know more than you let on.”

Arya smiled, “Gendry and I talked for a bit before supper. He may have said a few things.”

“Well yes, he is the new stables master, but he does not want to be. Our father taught us everything and after he passed, naturally it went to my brother.” Renæ’s face fell.

Arya could tell that Renæ was disappointed. “And you wanted to be the new stables master.”

Renæ nodded her head. She wanted to be stables master more than anything, even more than being a lady, but it was deemed not proper. Her father had taught her and her brother everything he knew, but it was Renæ who applied his teachings. She was the one that knew how to care for the animals while her brother just sat and watched.

“Every time we come to the castle, I make sure to check on the bloody beasts. I check their shoes and change their feed. I even brush them. My brother does none of that. If it weren’t for me, the Lord would not have any horses.”
“Well, just ask Gendry that you want to be the new stables master.” Arya said as if it was truly no problem.

Rena gave a curt laugh, “I cannot just ask the Lord Paramount of the Stormlands to make me his new stables master. Things may have changed since you’ve been gone, Lady Arya. But some things remain the same.”

Arya reaches for Rena. She placed a small hand onto of hers, “You leave Gendry to me. You’ll be the new stables master yet. Now, go and bed your husband.”

Rena lets out a laugh, “The last time I bedded my husband at a celebration like this, I ended up with his babe in my belly.” Rena looked over to her husband once more. She got up from her seat beside Arya and made her way to her husband.

Arya saw the couple depart the depleting crowd. Most everyone had left to sleep off the wine in their bellies or to fuck the seven hells out of their lovers. The only ones that remained were the few that were too drunk to move or too tired to care.

Arya herself was ready to leave the great hall and find a soft bed to lay her head, for the wine had truly taken its toll. She was lifting from her seat when she realized the great hall was swimming. Her balance was off and she gripped the table for support, but it wasn’t enough. Before she realized, she was toppling over her chair. But before she slammed back into her chair a pair of strong arms grabbed her from behind.

“How about we get you to bed? Come, the maids have set up a room for you.” He grasped her waist and lead her from the great hall.

“Where are you taking me?” She asks as the walk the corridors of the castle.

Gendry chuckles, “I am taking you to your room so you can sleep off the wine.”

Gendry's eyes widen. He begins to protest when Arya crashes her lips to his. This time it was her turn to steal a kiss and perhaps more. He tasted of ale and smokiness and she deepened the kiss. She wanted to taste more of him. To devour every inch of him. She broke away from him, just for a moment to say one word. “Please.”

It was the confirmation that Gendry needed. He lifted her up and began walking towards his solar. He slammed her against his chamber door, fiddling with the latch. He couldn’t see where the bloody handle was, for he was too busy kissing the love of his life.

“Oh let me!” Arya gasped as she escaped his mouth to open the door.
They tumbled inside chuckling as they began to rip at each other’s clothes. Arya pulled her small clothes off while Gendry helped. It had been so long since she had been intimate with anyone, especially him.

Their first time had been due to the fact there was impending death beating at their back door. It was clumsy and painful, but still enjoyable. Since then she had been with one other man and woman, but neither could satisfy her the way Gendry had that night in the forge.

Gendry had only been with one woman after Arya. On a stupid drunken night in King’s Landing. It had been a moon since she had left for her voyage and Gendry was in a bad place. He hadn’t been back to Storm’s End and he just wanted to forget about everything that had happened in his life. After the incident he swore he would never lay with another woman again, and he didn’t, not even with his wife.

They explored each other’s bodies, basking in each other’s scent. It was familiar but also foreign, for it had been years since they touched each other.

Arya didn’t know where she ended and he began. It was like they were two parts of a missing puzzle that needed to be put back together. This is home, she thought. This is where I want to be.

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Arya was spent. They had ravaged each other’s bodies for what seemed like hours. The smell of sex and wine filled the air of the high lord’s bedroom. Arya was sticky with sweat, but she couldn’t bring herself to untangle her limbs from Gendry’s.

“So How was it?” She asked him after sometime.

Gendry looked down at her. She was nuzzled perfectly into him. “It was amazing. Truly! I haven’t felt anything in a long time and then you came back and all of those thoughts and emotions hit me so hard.” Arya nuzzled closer to him. “I just hate that I took advantage of a drunk woman.”

Arya lightly punched his shoulder, “You did not take advantage of me! If anything, I took advantage of you. I was the one who kissed you, remember?”

“Hmm, maybe I need a reminder.” He said to her as he drew her closer. He pressed his lips to her, taking her all in. They were getting entangled with one another once more when the handle of his bed chambers began to shake.

Arya pulled away, bringing the furs close to her body. “Who could that be? Lyra, perhaps.” She asked.

Gendry shook his head, “No, Lyra only comes to my chambers when the sun rises. That’s Jeyne Swann.” His voice was cold when he said her name.

Arya looked at him with questioning eyes. “And how would you know?”

Gendry gets off the bed, pulling on his trousers, “Because this is not the first time she’s tried to come to my chambers in the dead of night. Every time we have some sort of celebration, she tries to make her way in here, hoping for something. It’s a blessing by the Gods that I remember to lock the door.”
He makes his way towards the door, getting ready to open it when Arya stops him.

“Wait!” She climbs off his feather bed and makes her way towards the door, she doesn’t attempt to cover up. She unlatches the lock and pulls it open.

There standing in the archway was Jeyne Swann. Her face was pale; the only color coming from the blush of her cheeks.

“Good evening, Lady Jeyne, May I help you with something?” Arya asks. The cool breeze that came from the corridor behind Lady Jeyne made her nipples harden.

“I-I was not aware the lord had company.” Her words faltered, but she remained her composure.

“I am not company, Lady Jeyne. I am Arya Stark and Gendry Baratheon is my betrothed. If you ever try to come into our chambers again, I can promise you that will never be able to set foot in Storm’s End again. Do I make myself understood?” Arya’s voice was dripping with venom. She wasn’t the jealous type, but Jeyne Swann had pushed Arya a little to far.

Jeyne’s face grew with terror. She quickly shook her head, gave a curtsy and turned from the chamber door. Arya slammed the door behind her, turning to look at Gendry.

“I hope that’s alright. Me being your betrothed?” She placed a hand onto his bare chest.

Gendry took Arya’s face into his hands. “I love you. You know that?”

“Good, because I love you too.” She told him as she grabbed one of his hands and made their way back to the bed.

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Arya was sound asleep when she felt a small body climb on top of her. She opened her eyes to see a pair of brown ones look down at her.

Lyra was staring at Arya, glancing between her and Gendry.

Arya couldn’t tell what the 3 year old was thinking. She had remember that Gendry said Lyra liked to come into his chambers once the sun broke the horizon, so she didn’t latch the door. They had been mindful and had clothed before falling asleep, afraid that Lyra might find them in a precarious situation.

“Lyra, good morrow.” Arya whispered. Gendry was softly snoring at her side, she didn’t want to wake him.

“Good morrow. There is mud outside. Can we play?” She asked Arya.

A smile grew on Arya’s face. “Of course, but shhh, let us not wake your father.”

Lyra climbed off of Arya and went to sit at the table across the room. Arya lifted from the bed and pulled her jerkin on over her small clothes fastening the laces. She pulled on her boots and walked towards Lyra, reaching her hand out for her to grasp.

Lyra instantly took Arya’s hand and they made their way to the courtyard below.
I am not very good at writing sex scenes, so I tried to keep it subtle. Also Arya’s claws are coming out. Also this will not be the last time we see Jeyne, unfortunately. She is going to make life for Arya difficult. Lyra is a smart girl and she knows something is up with her father and Arya. Obviously she’s a child, so she doesn’t know like details or anything, but she can see the change in her father that wasn’t there before Arya arrived. She also likes Arya, and it takes a lot for that little girl to lie someone, just look at the way she treats her septa. Next chapter we will see Arya and Lyra interact more and Rena may get what she wants. Word will get out that Arya and Gendry are betrothed and we will see Ser Davos’ opinion on that. Lord Swann will not be happy about it. Anyway, I hope you all liked it and comment! I want to know what you think! Thanks for reading!
A Muddy Day

Chapter Summary

Arya and Lyra play. Gendry and Arya talk.

Chapter Notes

Another chapter! Two days in a row! Fair warning, next chapter won’t be until next weekend. It’s the only time I have to write. Also I’m off for three days this weekend so I will try to put out three chapters. I hope you enjoy this chapter! A lot of people were waiting for it. I don’t want to give too much away so as always, happy reading.

PS I also write original stories and I post that on Wattpad if any of you are familiar. My tag is Katlyn1952. I haven’t posted anything on there in a while, but I am currently working on an original piece that I will be uploading shortly on there. I want to fair warn you though, a lot of my stuff on Wattpad is old and not very good, but if you want to check it out, go for it.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The mud was wet; not the kind of wet that melted snow leaves behind, but the kind that comes from a thunder storm. It was the perfect kind of wet mud for playing in. Arya had led little Lyra from her Lord Father’s chambers as quietly as she could, but once they got to the courtyard Lyra squealed with delight and jumped in a large puddle filled with muddied water. Arya couldn’t help but smile. The little lady had truly grabbed onto Arya’s heart and wasn’t letting go.

“Come! Come play with me, Arry!” Giggled Lyra as she jumped up and down; splashing mud everywhere as she landed on the ground.

“Watch out! Here I come!” Arya sprinted towards Lyra, picking her in her arms and swinging her around. She didn’t care if her clothes would become filthy, for they had seen worse than mud. All she cared for the moment was making this little lady the happiest little lady in all of Westeros.

Lyra giggled with pure glee. She was having the time of her life in something as simple as mud. What it is, to be a child again, thought Arya. It reminded her of her days in Winterfell. How she would outrun Bran and sneak to see her older brothers spar with wooden swords in the courtyard. Or how she would take whatever nasty thing she could find and stick it in Sansa’s bed. But perhaps her favorite memory were the ones when the snows had just melted and the grounds were all wet. She would purposefully drag her skirts behind her, getting them all covered in mud so she could see the look on her mother’s face when she went for her sewing lessons.
Those were the memories she missed, not the terrifying ones that branded her mind forever.

“Arry?” Lyra brought Arya from thoughts. She was still in Arya’s arms, her little hands grasping around her neck.

“Yes, Lyra?”

“Can you take me to see the horsies?” Her eyes were pleading. How could Arya say no to that.

“Well, I don’t think the stables master is up yet, but I don’t see why not.” She smiled to the young girl.

With Lyra still in her arms, she made her way to the stables. It was muddier by stables; the constant beating of the horses hooves tend to make the ground looser, allowing more water to seep when it rained. It made the trek to the stables a little more difficult, making Arya lifting her legs higher to trudged through it. She was glad that she had decided to hold Lyra, for the little lady would have difficulty making it two steps.

Arya set the child down so she could push the stable doors to the side. They were heavy and required two arms to push them. But once they were open, she took a hold of Lyra’s hand and led her inside.

“Which one is yours?” She asked Lyra.

Lyra pointed to a young horse, it looked no older than a few years. “It’s that one.”

They made their way to the mare. She was a golden horse, with a long mane to match. Arya reached her hand and stroked the mare’s face.

“She is very pretty. Do you have a name for her?” She asked as she looked down at Lyra. She was sitting on a near by hay bale, straws sticking all over her tiny body.
“I didn’t name her, but papa says that she is called Windbreaker.”

“That is a lovely name, isn’t sweet girl?” Arya asked the horse.

The mare was timid and shy, Arya could tell by the eyes. You could always tell by the eyes. She’d also been around enough horses to know how they could act.

The horse huffed and Arya saw a bin of apples by Lyra.

“Lyra, I think Windbreaker is hungry. Do you mind bringing an apple to me? And watch for her legs, don’t walk behind them. Go around.” Lyra nodded and grabbed an apple from the bin beside her. She followed Arya’s instructions and walked around the horse, rather than behind. She placed herself beside Arya, holding the apple for her to take.

“Why don’t you feed her.”

Lyra shook her head, hiding behind Arya. Much like she did when they first met. Arya kneeled down to meet Lyra at face level.

“Are you scared?” Arya asked her.

“She’s a big horse. What if she bites me?” Lyra gripped the apple close to her chest. She was looking between the horse and Arya.

Arya looked at Lyra with loving eyes. She swept a piece of hair from her tiny face, pushing it behind her ear.

“There is nothing to be afraid of, little one. She will not hurt you, in fact, she is probably more scared of you than you are of her.”

Lyra still wasn’t moving and the apple in her hand began to get fingernail marks in the skin.

“Here, give me the apple and I’ll show you.” Arya held her hand out for Lyra to place the apple in
the center of her palm. Lyra shakingly gave Arya the apple, still glancing at the horse to make sure it
didn’t bite her.

Arya nuded the apple close to the horses snout and it gently grabbed the fruit with its teeth, leaving
no bite marks on Arya’s hand. Lyra’s eyes were nearly bulging out her head. She couldn’t believe
that the horse didn’t try to take Arya’s hand with it.

“You see? Nothing to be afraid of.”

The little lady’s mouth grew into a wide grin. She had never seen the horses being feed, so she was
always so terrified that they might bite people. She had never once thought that they did not such
thing.

She was about to ask Arya if she could try to feed the horse another apple when the morning bells
began to ring.

“It seems as if we have run out of time, this morning, Lyra. The wake up bells have rung, and your
Septa will be looking everywhere for you. Let’s get you cleaned up and ready for the day.” Arya
said as she went to pick up the child.

Lyra whined, but nodded. She was satisfied, for now, and would listen to her Septa, because the last
time she listened to her Septa, Arya had played with her.

“Will we do it again, after my lessons with my Septa?” She asked her as they made their way out to
the courtyard.

“I don’t know how your Septa would feel if you played in the mud two times in one day, but I can
promise that we will do something fun. Perhaps even with your father?” Arya had suggested.

Lyra’s eyes glittered and she quickly nodded in agreement; a grin spreading across her face. She
hadn’t spent time with her father in quite a bit and she would be looking forward to the encounter.
Lyra liked Arya. She kind to her, much like Lady Rena had been. She had always wished that Lady
Rena be her mother, but she knew that was impossible because Lady Rena already had a friend-boy.
That’s what Septa Joanna had called Lord Archie; Lady Rena’s friend-boy. But Lady Arya didn’t
have a friend-boy, so perhaps she could be her mother. Lyra liked the idea of that and decided that
she would make her papa be Lady Arya’s friend-boy.
“Arry? Can my papa be your friend-boy?” She asked Arya.

Arya was confused, for she never heard the term ‘friend-boy’ before.

“Lyra, what is a friend-boy?” She genuinely asked the little girl.

Lyra didn’t have time to answer before she heard the huffs of her Septa.

“Lyra Cassandra Baratheon! Where have you been!? I’ve been looking everywhere for you! I thought you in your father’s chambers, but to my surprise you were not there! Only a snoring Lord!” Young Septa Joanna was fuming and Arya couldn’t help but chuckle at the outburst, for she had given her own Septa the same troubles.

“I apologize Septa Joanna. It is my fault. Little Lyra came looking for me, remembering the promise I made her to play in the mud.” She looked down at the child in her arms. “And I always keep my promises.”

“Well thanks the Gods that she decided to play in the mud before her morning bath.” Septa Joanna said as she took Lyra from Arya.

“By the looks of it, you’ll be needing a bath too, my Lady.” Septa looked Arya up and down; mud covering every inch of her, much like the little lady in her arms.

“I suppose you are right, Septa Joanna. If you could please tell on of the chambermaids to draw one, I’ll get cleaned up in time to break our fast.”

Septa Joanna curtsied, “Of course, I’ll have them draw it in your chambers.”

“Actually,” Arya stopped the Septa before she could leave, “If you could have them draw it in the lords chambers, that would be appreciated.”

The septa’s cheeks grew a bright crimson. She glanced at the little lady in her arms praying to the Gods that she did not ask her questions later. But Lyra was oblivious to the conversation unfolding before her, her mind preoccupied with the straws of hay in her hair.
“My lady, that would not be appropriate.” She tried to reason.

“And why not?” Arya questioned.

The Septa grew ever more uncomfortable. “You and the Lord are not married. It-it would be highly inappropriate of a woman of your stature to be in the presence of the lord in that nature.”

Arya gave a mischievous smile, “I can assure, Septa, that the lord has seen me as bare as I would have been on my nameday. Besides, he is my betrothed, it will not bother him in the slightest.”

Arya began to walk past the Septa and Lyra, her grin still planted on her face. The Septa was rendered speechless and just nodded her head as Arya passed by.

She shook her head, trying to erase the image that Lady Arya had engraved in her head. She turned on her heel and began to walk towards the castle, leaving the courtyard and mud behind.

“Septa?” Lyra asked her as they entered the castle.

“Yes sweetling?”

“What does ‘beholthered’ mean?”

Septa Joanna’s face paled, “Oh seven hells.”

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“Where were you?” Gendry asked her as she entered their chambers. “Oh, never mind.”

He took one glance at her and knew exactly where she had been.

“Is it that obvious?” she asked as she began to pull her muddied clothes off. They had began to stick
to her body, making her feel restricted.

“Well, the fact you are covered in mud and hay and probably horse shit,” Gendry gestured to the tub of steaming water, “And the chambermaids brought in that. Yeah it was pretty obvious.”

Arya chuckled as she entered the tub. The hot water felt nice on her aching body; her muscles sore from last nights activities.

“Are you going to be joining me? The tub is large enough for both of us.” She said, her tone seductive.

Gendry bent down beside the tub, pecking a quick kiss on her lips.

“I wish I could, but I have to deal with my liege lords before we break our fast. I have some tax numbers to go over with them from yesterday,” he gave her another peck, “and I have to let them know of my sudden betrothal to a certain she wolf.”

“About that,” Arya sunk deeper into the tub, avoiding Gendry’s eyes.

“Please tell me you are not regretting your decision?” Gendry grew worried.

Arya’s eyes grew wide. “No! Never! But,” a blush crept onto her face, “I may have inadvertently told young Septa Joanna of the things we did last night and that we are betrothed.”

“Seven hells, Arya! Septa Joanna is more loose lipped than the liege lord’s wives. The whole bloody castle might as well know!” Gendry huffed.

“And that’s a bad thing? I thought you were about to go and tell your liege lords right now!?” She reminded him.

Gendry rose from beside the tub and began to pace the floor. “At least I would have been able to ease the news to them. Especially that prick of man, Lord Swann.”

Arya grimaced at the name. She truly could not stand Lady Jeyne Swann, she could only wonder
what her father was like. If he was anything like his daughter, than she truly had a problem on her hands.

Arya finished washing and exited the tub; the water filthy from her early morning ventures. She grabbed a near by dry linen and wrapped it around her body. Gendry hadn’t taken the time to observe her new scars that adorned her body. Hells, he hadn’t even been told about the ones that covered her abdomen. It was if each new scar was a story waiting to be told; stories that he knew she would tell him with time.

Arya crosses the room to where Gendry was pacing. She stopped him and wrapped her arms around her waist.

“You have to tell me about Lord Swann. I know some, from Lady Rena, but I need to know the details. All of it.”

Gendry returned her embrace and rested his head on her wet scalp. He let out a long sigh he hadn’t realized he was holding.

“What did Lady Rena tell you?” He asked her.

She pulled from him and looked him in the eyes. “Just that he tried to stage a coup and basically forced his daughter on you to marry.”

“Aye, that is about it. Although I am having my suspicions that he may be trying to stage another coup. He suspects that Lyra isn’t truly mine. If he manages to convince the other liege lords that Lyra is not of my blood, I’m afraid that I may lose Storm’s End.” He says with a worried sigh.

“No one truly knows about Lyra. Only you and I, right?” Arya rings her hair of any remaining water as she speaks.

“Aye, and the Rednicks. I trust them, Arya. They were like me; came from nothing. They are loyal and good friends.”

“So Lady Rena knows? She didn’t tell me.” Arya observes.
“She wouldn’t have. I made them swear to take it to their grave.”

“No, that’s a good thing. It means she is truly loyal. I like that woman, Rena. Her and I get along great.” Arya says.

Gendry nodded, “I had hoped as much. She is so much like you, it scares me.”

Arya returns by Gendry’s side. She grabs his face into her hands.

“Listen to me, you stubborn bull. I will be by your side if anything, Gods forbid, like a coup were to happen. I will protect you and Lyra with my life. Gods help the men that try to hurt her.”

Arya was strangely protective of Lyra. She couldn’t imagining parting from that child, even if the Gods tried. If only her mother could see her now. Marrying a lord and becoming a mother; even if the child was not her blood, she already loved her as if she was. Lyra was her daughter and dared anyone to try to tell her otherwise.

Gendry leaned down to kiss Arya deeply. Gods I love this woman, he thought. He wasn’t sure if he even deserved her. She had changed, he will admit, but it was good change and he honestly couldn’t wait to see what journeys they would take in their future.

Arya pulled from the kiss. She adjusted her dry linen around her body and realized that she had nothing to wear. All of her belongings weren’t due to arrive until later in the day, and the only clothes she had were covered in mud.

“Uh, Gendry? I have nothing to wear.” She told him.

“Well all of my clothes will be huge on you. I mean I could-no it wouldn’t be proper, or right.” He said, thinking out loud.

Arya gave him a quizzical look, “What is it?”

“Well, I have something, but I’m not sure you’ll like it.” He told her truthfully.
“It cannot be that bad. Come on, show me.” She insisted.

He shrugs and gives her a look of warning, “As mi’lady commands.”

He walks over to his armoire and pulls out a garment. Arya can’t quite see what it is until he turns around to face.

Her eyes widen in terror, “No! I am not wearing that! There is no way that I will be ever getting in that.”

“Arya, it’s the only thing that I have that will fit you. And it’s only for a day.” He tells her honestly.

Arya grumbles and walks over to him. She stares at the garment and crinkles her nose in disgust. “This has to be bad luck.”

“I don’t know much of old superstitions, but at least it’s better than parading around the castle in your nameday suit.” He dangles the garment in front of her.

“Says you.” She grabs the garment from his hands and begins to put it on.

“Seven hells.” She huffed as she looked in the mirror.

Arya Stark was in a bloody dress. There was no way in all the hells there were that the liege lords of Storm’s End would take her seriously. She grabbed her belt that housed Cat’s Paw and Needle and secured it around her waist. The dress did fit Arya well, but it was it was still an uncomfortable feeling. She hadn’t been in a dress in who knows how long, it also didn’t help that it belonged to her betrothed’s dead wife.

Arya turned to face Gendry, a smile on his face that he was trying to conceal.

“If I so much as hear a laugh escape your lips, I promise the only thing you’ll be fucking is your self. Do you understand?”
Gendry composed his face and gave a bow, “As mi’lady commands.”

She frowned and turned on her heel, leaving the chambers and her laughing bull behind.

Chapter End Notes

Ahhh!!! So we got the Arya and Lyra scene. I love those two together, don’t you? And Gendry opening up to Arya. Also I like how Arya is more empathetic. She needs to be, after all she has gone through. Next chapter we will be dealing with the liege lords and the news of Arya and Gendry’s betrothal and I may add a forge scene in there too. Hope you enjoyed!!
The Liege Lords of The Stormlands

Chapter Summary

Arya meets the liege lords and Gendry blows off steam! Also, Arya asks Lyra an important question.

Chapter Notes

First off, this is my second time writing my notes because my dumb self closed the page without saving my stuff! Thank the Gods (old and new) that I write my shit in word before I post it here. Anyway, I now I said that I wasn’t going to post another chapter until this weekend, but I had dreamt this particular scene between Lyra and Arya and needed to get it out of my head. I also wanted to tell you that I’ve decided to end it at 13 chapters. Now going forward each chapter will be longer and there is also going to be a time jump. I don’t want to give too much away, so as always, happy reading!

Arya was the first to enter the Round Hall of Storm’s End. The liege lords were all neatly seated at a long table facing the dais that a throne was perched upon. Beside the throne was a smaller throne like chair that Arya gladly took her place on. The looks from several of the liege lords were a mixture of confusion or disbelief. How could anyone, even the Night King Slayer, be so bold to take their place beside the Lord Paramount of the Stormlands? Yet, not one of the liege lords questioned her. They were either too afraid for too unaware to speak up.

Gendry entered shortly after Arya. The once playful smile that was on his face was now one of concentration and dread. He truly hated these weekly meetings with the high lords. They were necessary, he will admit, but that did not mean that he truly despised hearing the complaints that each lord had from the week prior.

This week would be no different. In fact, it would probably be worse, considering they were talking about the rents and taxes that were due this quarter. Since the destruction of King’s Landing, taxes around the seven kingdoms had to be raised to help repair some of the damages. The people of the Stormlands were struggling to even pay half of what was due. Gendry had been a lenient these past months and a few of the high lords were beginning to take notice.

“Welcome Lords. We have some things to discuss about this month’s recent rents. As you all know, I took a week to travel around the Stormlands to see what is happening with our people. It is not looking good. There have been more rains than normal this year, rendering a lot of the crops overwatered and useless. The people are struggling while we sit here in our castles not caring. I can no longer do that.” Gendry was assertive and this took Arya by surprise. She had no doubt that Gendry would succeed as Lord Paramount, but she had never heard him take charge like the way he just did. It made her proud; to see him up on the dais showing his house words with pride: Ours is The Fury.
“And do you suppose we fix this situation?” A young man had spoken. He couldn’t have been more than 20 name days. He had pale blonde hair and dark blue eyes that could appear purple in the slightest change of lighting.

“Thank you for asking, Lord Dayne. Well, I supposed that we, as high lords, can make sure that we cut the cost of some of the rents to our people.” There were a few grumbles that came from some of the lords. Arya could see that Gendry was beginning to struggle, so she quickly took charge.

Rising from her seat, she made her way to stand in front of the high lords table.

“My Lords, perhaps we can see which parts of the Stormlands that need the most help. From what I’ve gathered from my time in King’s Landing, the Island of Tarth is still prospering.”

“Aye, it is. There is no shortage of food and the people are prospering.” Lord Tarth announced. There was no denying that he was Ser Brienne’s father. Although significantly shorter than his daughter, Lord Tarth and Ser Brienne looked much the same. Their hair was the same coloring and their features were strikingly similar.

“I purpose we have the prospering houses pay slightly higher taxes, giving the poorer people of the Stormlands the chance to recover as well as lowering the cost of some of the rents.” She suggested.

Gendry turned to Ser Davos, who was seated at the table with the other high lords.

“Will this work?”

Ser Davos shrugged, “I suppose it could. I would have to run some of the numbers. But it could work.”

A throat cleared and all heads turned to Lord Swann, “I do not mean to be brash, but Lady Arya, you have been here for no more than a day. How do you know what is good for the Stormlands? Aren’t you a northerner yourself? How could a northerner presume to know anything on how the south works?”

His words were like venom. He was trying to get a ruse out of Arya; to see how she would react to his harsh words.

Arya took a steady sigh, “Lord Swann, is it? I may be of the north, however, I was a Lord’s daughter. I remember my father facing a similar situation when I was younger and this was his solution. It had worked. As for knowing how the south works, well it really isn’t that different from anywhere else in the world. And believe me when I say, I would know.”

Her voice was calm. She did not raise her voice or even try to be curt with the man; she had simply stated facts and that seemed to irritate the man even more.

“Who do you think you are, parading around here giving orders like you are the Lady of Storm’s End? You are no more than a traveling wench who forgets her place!” His face turned red with anger.

Gendry stepped towards the old lord looked him square in the face.

“I suggest you apologize to your future lady! You do not wish to make an enemy of her, Lord Swann. For any enemies of hers are enemies of mine.” Gendry said in a low voice. Arya could see his fist clench and his jaw tighten. He was trying his hardest not to knock this ignorant lord on his arse.
“Future lady!? You expect her to help you rule the Stormlands!? We are truly doomed.” Lord Swann huffed. He rose from his chair and exited the Round Hall.

“I want every remaining lord to listen!” Gendry was now furious. “If any one of have a problem with Arya Stark becoming my wife, then I suggest you keep it to yourself. For any loose lipped lord will have his titles stripped and his lands dispersed.”

With that Gendry stormed out of the Round Hall. The remaining lords began to whisper before they realized that Arya was still in the room. The whispers hushed and the lords began to disperse, heading to do whatever lords did.

Arya walked up to Ser Davos, who was conversing with Edric Dayne. She had heard of Lord Dayne before he had been a lord. If she recalled correctly, he was the young Squire to Beric Dondarrion before he joined the Brotherhood Without Banners. It seems he had made a name for himself in the years since.

“Ser Davos, if I could interrupt.” She cautiously asked.

“Of course, my dear.” He turned to Lord Dayne, “Please excuse me, Ned.”

“It is no bother, Ser Davos. And it will be a pleasure for you to be our new Lady Paramount, Lady Arya.” Lord Dayne bowed and turned to talk to another nearby lord.

“How can I be of assist, Lady Arya?” Ser Davos asked.

“Are all liege lord meetings that eventful?”

“Unfortunately, yes. Sometimes, it can be worse. The boy has done good these last five years, but he still is learning.” He admitted.

“How so?” She asked.

“Well, he’s gotten better at reading, and that’s with me teachin’ him. He managed to somehow use a fork properly and the people love him.”

“But…?”

Ser Davos sighed, “But, there are some Lords who think someone can do better.”

“Lord Swann.” Arya stated.

“Aye, that fat pig and his son are trying to take it from him. I have managed to keep most of the lords at bay, but the Swanns are an old and powerful house with support. I’ll keep my eye on them, if I were you.”

Arya nodded, “Do not worry about that, Ser Davos. I always keep my enemies close.”

“Oh, I also suppose a congratulations are in order. Betrothed? Finally, I thought he would never marry again. And look at ya! You are already playing the part. Never thought I’d see Arya Stark in a dress.” He teased.

“Don’t get used to it. As soon as my things arrive, I will be in the same old trousers you’ve seen me in before. Dresses are torture devices made to hinder women’s abilities to move. I truly cannot wait to take it off.” She answered him truthfully.

Ser Davos let out a laugh, “Still the same, you are. And your things arrived early this morning. Sent
my men out to your boat as soon as the morning bells rang.”

Arya sighed in relief. She would finally be able to rid herself of this dress and be comfortable.

“Thank you, Ser Davos. I will change and look for Gendry.” She said as she turned on her heel to leave the Round Hall.

Ser Davos quickly said to the young lass, “He’ll be in the-“

“I know where he’ll be.” And with that she left the Round Hall and the remaining lords to their devices.

*****

Gendry had made his way to the forge. It was the only place he could truly think like his old self. The feel of metal beneath his hands was a warm familiar feeling that he could savor forever. The other smiths knew that when Lord Baratheon enters the forge, that they need to scurry like mice and avoid him at all cost.

He was hammering a piece of steel into a perfectly shaped sword. With every swing his anger would dwindle; calming the bull within. Nearly every week he would make some type of new weapon fashioned from his frustrations. Every time he would meet with the liege lords it would always end up with Gendry in forge until the wee hours of the night. He wouldn’t sleep, eat, or interact with anyone. Tonight would be no different; except it was. He now had a woman waiting for him in his chambers. His betrothed. The very same woman that Lord Swann had disrespected.

Gendry’s anger bubble all over again and he took another swing and the searing hot steel. The sound of metal against metal did little to quench his angry, but the small shadow that had appeared in the arch way of the forge had.

“How did you find me?” He asked her.

Arya arched her brow and walked to stand beside him.

“Because you’re still the same. I know you, Gendry. That means I know where you would go to blow off steam.”

He looked at her and gave her a small smile. He noticed that she was no longer in the dress from this morning, but rather her familiar tunic and breeches.

“I see your things have finally arrived. Couldn’t wait to get out of that dress, could you?”

Arya chuckled and gave him a small peck on the lips. “You know me, too.”

Gendry smiled and began hammering the anvil once more.

“Once you’re finished, come find me before supper. There are things we have to discuss.”

Gendry was now the one that lifted his brow. “Should I be worried?”

All Arya did was smile and she turned out of the forge, walking towards the courtyard.

Gendry shook his head and returned to his work. He didn’t know how she did it, but she could tame the wild bull within him with just one look.

It was strange that even after all this time apart, they still managed to find a way back to one another.
Sure, there were things that were different, but most everything that was there remained the same. His feeling sure didn’t falter, not even after five years and it seemed like Arya was becoming her old self once more.

It reminded him of their earlier days on the king’s road. He would tease her for being a girl and she would pout saying that she wasn’t a lady. It was nothing but light hearted fun back then and it was beginning to feel like that again.

Gendry clanged the steel for what was hours. He hadn’t realized the time until the bells rang and it was near supper time. He cleaned up his area and headed to his solar. He was covered in soot and needed to get cleaned before he took his evening meal. There was no celebration tonight and he didn’t feel up to dining with his liege lords. All he wanted was a simple family meal with the two women he loved most in this world.

He entered his solar and dumped his belongings onto the table by the fireplace. A tub of clean water had been drawn for him and he quickly soaked his aching bones. The water felt nice and he couldn’t wait to clean off the forge from his body.

When he was nothing more than a smiths apprentice in Flea Bottom, he was lucky if he got a bath once a week. Being the Lord of Storm’s End, he got a bath nearly everyday. It was a luxury he didn’t know he needed until it became common. Now, he wouldn’t know what to do if he didn’t have his daily bath.

He had finally finished bathing and dressing when a soft knock came from his chamber door.

“Enter.” He stated as he finished fastening his belt to his waist.

A mop of brown curls came running towards him and little Lyra nearly tackled him to the floor. Fits of giggles escaped the young girls mouth and Gendry couldn’t help but smile.

“What are you doing here?” He asked her as he picked her to place her on the bed.

“Arry saved me from Septa Joanna.”

“Did she now? I bet you were excited.”

The little lady nodded her head fiercely, sending her curls in all directions.

Gendry turned to look at Arya. She had a smile present on her face that he hadn’t seen before. It was different kind of smile from the ones she had given him. This smile showed something more than just happiness. It showed overwhelming love. Because that’s what it was, love. Arya was in love with this child and Gendry could tell.

“What’s going on?” He asked her.

Arya pulled her gaze from the child on the bed. “Well, she wanted to do something with the three of us, so I brought her here and informed the maids that we would be taking supper in your chambers tonight. I’ve had enough of Lords and Ladies for one day, and I had a feeling your would be too.”

He pulled her into his arms, “So this is what you wanted to discuss?”

“No, what I wanted to discuss can wait until after we dine with Lyra.” She said as she placed her arms around his neck. She reached up and gave him a long sweet kiss, completely unaware of the child staring at them from the bed.
“Does that mean my papa is your friend-boy?” Lyra suddenly asked.

Gendry and Arya pulled apart and gave her a questioning look.

“Lyra, what is a friend-boy? You had said it earlier today, but your Septa stole you before I could ask.” She asked the little lady.

“Septa Joanna said that Lady Rena couldn’t be my new mama because she already had a friend-boy, Lord Archie, and papa couldn’t be hers.” Lyra had said matter of factly.

Arya hadn’t meant to laugh, but the innocence the child was portraying was truly delightful. Lyra looked at Arya with confusion. What had she said that was so funny? Even her father was trying to hide a laugh.

“Why are you teasing me?” She asked the adults on the other side of the room. Her eyes began to fill with tears and her lips began to quiver.

“Oh, no we are not teasing you, Lyra.” Arya quickly rushed to the child and sat beside her on the bed.

“But you were laughing at me.” She accused.

“No, sweet girl. We were not laughing at you, just at the thing you said.” Gendry cut in.

Lyra looked even more confused.

“What your father is trying to say is that,” Arya paused, trying to find the right words to say. “Yes, your papa is my friend-boy.”

Lyra’s eyes lit up with excitement. She jumped onto Arya, tackling her into the bed, giving her a giant hug.

“Does this mean that you will be my mama?” Lyra asked as they sat up.

Arya was taken aback by the question. She never really thought of it, but she was going to be Lyra’s mother when she married Gendry. The thought scared her. She didn’t know what it meant to be a mother and wasn’t sure she would be any good at it. For so long she had to only think of herself and not have to worry about the well being of another human. Let alone a child. But the more she thought, the more she realized that parting from Lyra would be more painful than parting from Gendry. Perhaps she could be a mother after all.

“I suppose it does, if that’s okay with you?” She asked the little lady.

Lyra gave Arya a toothy smile and gave her another hug. “Don’t tell Lady Rena, but I think I want you to be my mama.”

Arya chuckled, “Your secret is safe with me.”

She gave a glance at Gendry and notice that his eyes were welling with tears. Great, I’ve made the stupid bull cry, she thought, not realizing that her own tears were streaming down her face.
I’m not crying, you’re crying! I loved that scene and writing it too. I pulled from my dream but also real life because my dad (who is technically my stepdad) asked me if it was okay to marry my mom when I was 9 (this man has raised me since then, he’s my dad). I felt it important to my story to add, so that’s why I did. Now here is a little teaser of some sort for next chapter. We are time jumping, baby! It won’t be a big time jump, maybe 3 or 4 months and there is going to be a surprise because let’s be real, I am here for drama and fluff. Also the next chapters will be longer and we will see Sansa and co. Again before I finish this out. I don’t want to give too much away so just enjoy what you have and get ready to endure the torture of not know what is going to happen for at least a week! As always, tell me what you think and what I can do better on! Thanks!
The Ravens

Chapter Summary

Three months have passed. Arya is thriving in Storm's End. She makes her way to King's Landing and a letter leaves her in pieces.

Chapter Notes

FINALLY! Chapter 11 is here! I have been writing this thing since Tuesday night and I am glad to say that I have finished it. I must say it is long, like longer than I expected it be. I almost split it in two chapters, but then it wouldn't have worked with what I wanted and what I had planned out. This chapter was like a run away train; as soon as I started writing, I just could not stop. Now, I have read it and I am fully aware that there may be some mistake grammatically and probably in terms of editing as well. I think I may have put to much and could have cropped some things out to make it flow better, but I really didn't want to. There is a lot that happens in this one and there is some foreshadowing in terms of what is going to happen in the last chapter. I am not going to lie, I had difficulty writing Meera because I just didn't know how to get her personality across. We hardly saw Meera in season seven and then she wasn't in season 8 so I had to base her off of what she was prior without know how she was now. I hope that makes sense. Anyway, I am going to stop babbling and as always, happy reading!!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Storm’s End was thriving since Lady Arya Stark had arrived; even more so than just with the lonely Lord. In the three moons that she has been there, soldiers were being trained properly; women and men alike. There was revenue coming in instead of going out. The town’s people were slowly coming out of debt and the changes around the castle were welcoming.

Lady Rena had been made the new stable’s master; her brother, Aster, relieved when he no longer had to deal with the bloody beasts. In fact, he took up a new job helping Septa Joanna with the children, although who could really tame Lyra and Ginger?

Some of the liege lords had been hesitant with Lady Arya, but after seeing that she indeed did know what she was doing, all of their concerns seemed to have vanished. Lord Swann, on the other hand, had remained distant. His presence at the castle had decreased; he could not stand to be talked down to by a woman; especially a woman the likes of a Stark. His dislike for the she wolf had only grown and his determination to take Storm’s End had begun to nag at his inner most thoughts. All of his plans had been squandered the moment Arya Stark had shown up. He was close to trapping the Stag with a marriage with his daughter; so close to being able to take what he believed he was owed.

Although Lord Swann’s absence was noticeable around the castle, not a single person seemed to mind that the overzealous man had kept himself away. It was a breath of fresh air for Gendry, for he didn’t have to deal with the squabbles and debacles that were led by Lord Swann. For once in his time of being Lord, he actually looked forward to the weekly meetings with the other liege lords.
There is not to say that there were not disagreements that pushed to the surface during these meetings, but at least there was no one trying to embarrass him in front of the other lords. It was a comfort to him that Arya was always by his side; keeping the lords in their place.

Arya was always by Gendry’s side; aside from when she trained the new recruits. Whenever Lady Rena or Ser Davos would see one, the other was right beside. They were learning each other again; learning the way the other moved, or talked, or smiled. And although there were in no rush to get married, they did act as if they already were.

Lyra was leaning Arya as well. She never had a mother in her life and the idea of having Arya as a mother swelled the little girl’s heart. She had learned that Arya loved to shoot arrows. She had always wanted to learn, but her father had been hesitant. Arya had somehow convinced Gendry that it was best for Lyra to start early; she was going to be 4 namedays in just a few short moons and wanted to be the best archer she could be. She wasn’t even three days into her lesson when her father nearly stopped the lessons; she had shot an arrow that narrowly missed Septa Joanna, giving her a near heart attack.

“Lyra Baratheon, you watch were you aim that thing!” She scolded the young girl.

“I think you scared Septa Joanna out of her shoes!” Arya laughed.

Lyra giggled at the sight of her Septa screaming in fear. She hadn’t meant for the arrow to go beyond the target; it was mere accident, but still laughable none the less.

Gendry happened to be across the courtyard at the time of the accident and couldn’t help but smile at the sight of his two girl laughing with amusement. Although he was absolutely terrified that Lyra would one day put an arrow in someone’s leg; he enjoyed the time that she was spending with Arya. Lyra had always been the type of little girl who was not afraid to let people know how she felt; her septa could attest to that, for she has received the blunt of Lyra’s quips.

It had always taken Lyra a time to warm up to anyone that she did not know, but with Arya it was different. The moment she saw Arya her lit up with admiration. It could be due to the fact that Arya wore breeches instead of dresses, or that she could shot and arrow with precision from hundreds of feet away. Whatever it was that drew Lyra to Arya, Gendry was grateful. He no longer had to worry about Lyra growing up without a mother, or even him growing old without someone to spend life with.

There was one night in particular that he was extremely grateful to have someone to talk to at night; to decompress the day prior. Lyra had just finished her first archery lesson with Arya and Gendry had been dealing with wining lords all day. It was the first weekly meeting that had gone a disarray since Lord Swann had not been attending.

The idea that Arya had purposed to the liege lords a moon prior had been flourishing and revenue was gaining, there was no need to worry about how town’s people would pay their taxes or rents. The crops had even managed to heal and sprout.

But what had the Lord Paramount so worried was a raven that he had received that morning before the weekly meeting. It was from Dorne; their neighboring kingdom. Gendry had decided not to tell his liege lords the contents of this letter leading to some squabble amongst several of the lords. He had promised them that once the situation was handled, he would inform them of what was going on.

The letter had been nagging him all day going into the evening. Arya had noticed that he was deep in thought and not fully there at dinner. Later, when they went to their chambers she had asked him what was on his mind.
“It’s nothing. Really.” He dismissed.

Arya gave him a look that he knew all too well.

“You’re lying. Tell me.”

He gave a long sigh and moved from the bed he was laying on. There was a pitcher of wine that the two had kept in their chambers; he grabbed a nearby goblet and took a long drink.

“I received a letter…from Dorne.”

Arya’s eyebrows rose in surprise.

“And what does our neighboring kingdom say in this letter.”

“Well, it was a letter from Edric Dayne to be completely honest.” Gendry took another sip.

Arya had joined her betrothed at the table and took a goblet herself.

“And how is Ned Dayne? Wasn’t he here nearly a moon ago?”

Gendry nodded, “Aye, he was visiting from Dorne as an emissary for the prince. He visits nearly every moon to see how our crops are doing. We do trade with Dorne and here recently they have been trading the usual amount we had agreed upon, while we’ve been…lacking.”

Arya came to a realization, “They are threatening to stop trade with the Stormlands, aren’t they?”

She didn’t need confirmation. She had already known the answer because it was something she had warned Gendry about.

“If we don’t come up with at least three moons worth of crops, they will cease all trade coming into the Stormlands.” Gendry looked up from his goblet. His eyes fixated on Arya’s and he could tell that she was worried for him.

“Arya, we cannot have that trade stop. That is how I was able to pull the Stormlands back when I first took over. Some of the liege lords were not happy with the trade, but I thought it necessary at the time. I still think it necessary.” He confessed.

Arya grasped his face, she leaned in and gave him a small kiss, “We will figure it out. We always figure it out. Besides the crop thrived this moon. I’m sure we could manage to get trade more.”

“The crop was good. But not enough to send three moons worth. Maybe one; two if we are lucky, but not three.”

Arya sighed and dropped her hands from his face. She rose from the table and began to pace the area in from of their bed.

“Is there anything else that we could trade? We have fish from the harbor or…or,” Arya hesitated. She exactly what they could trade, but Gendry wasn’t going to like it.

“Or what?”

“If I have learned anything from my travels, and that includes the ones from the King’s Road when we were children, then steel is as good as gold.”

Gendry’s expression was that of confusion, “What in seven hells will the Prince of Dorne do with
steel? It’s just scrap metal Arya.”

Arya groaned, “Oh you stupid bull! Not scrap metal, but forged steel.”

Realization dawned on Gendry’s face.

“Weapons!? You want me to make weapons for Dorne!? I can’t be in that forge all day, I have a holdfast to take care of. Besides, we don’t even know if they’ll agree to it.”

“Firstly, you can spend all day and every day in that damned forge. The Gods know you do when you are angry. Secondly, you are the best blacksmith I know and you trained nearly all the men in the forge. If anyone can do it, you can. And it will only be until we have enough crops to supplement what was lost.” She assured him.

Gendry took a beat to think about it. It was a good plan, he had to admit. They would be able to keep the trade between the Stormlands and Dorne, as well as have enough food to feed his people.

“Alright, I’ll send the raven in the morning. But you’ll have to take care of things for a while. Can you do that.” He asked her.

She smiled and made her way over to him. She straddled his hip and whispered, “Don’t worry about me. Worry about your liege lords who will have to deal with me.”

Gendry laughed and swept her to the bed.

That was nearly two moons ago and Prince of Dorne had agreed to this proposition. Gendry had been making weapons nonstop and couldn’t wait for the crops to be ready for harvest.

Arya had done a fine job of dealing with the lords. There were still a few that did not like the idea of a woman commanding them, but it did not faze Arya one bit. She was used to the incompetence of men; she had enough of them on her ship Nymeria when sailing west.

And even though both were busy with their respective duties, they knew when to make time for one another.

“You almost done?” A familiar voice had startled him as he was swinging his forge hammer against steel.

“With next moons shipment, Aye. When is Ned Dayne supposed to leave?” He asked her.

She walked over to him. “He already left. He said that he will be here in exactly one moon to pick up the last shipment and that the Prince of Dorne appreciates the weapons.”

He gave a crude laugh, “I bet he does.”

He continued to bang the searing hot steel into submission. He and his fellow smiths had been hard at work to complete the agreed weapons that they were nearly finished with the last shipment a whole moon early. As much as Gendry enjoyed the smithy, he could not wait to go back to his lordly duties and spend some time with his girls.

“Will you be at dinner, tonight? Or must Lyra and dine alone again?” She asked him.

He looked up from his work, “Well, I have few more to get finished and the boys and I will finally be done with the weapon making. As for supper tonight…I think I can make it.”

A smile spread onto Arya’s face. “Good. I’ll see you in the solar shortly.”
Arya turned out of the forge leaving Gendry to finish his work. She made her way to the stables to check on the newly birthed foal that had joined the ranks of Stormland Horses.

Since Rena had become the stables master the animals had been prospering. They were fed regularly, and their shoes were changed when they were supposed to be.

“How are mother and foul?” She asked Rena.

Rena jumped. She hadn’t heard a single soul come into the stables. This wasn’t the first time that Arya Stark had snuck up on Lady Rena. When she was first made stables master, Arya had nearly killed her with fright while she was brushing a mare.

“Gods! I didn’t hear you come in.” Rena was clutching her chest, trying to steady her beating heart.

“Sorry. It’s habit. But, how are they?” Arya shrugged.

Rena smiled, “The are doing well. Mother is exhausted, as expected, and the foul is taking its fill of milk.”

Arya nodded, “That is great to hear. You’ve been doing a wonderful job with the horses. Your father would be proud.”

Rena’s eyes began to fill with hot tears. She hadn’t meant to cry in front of Arya, but the kind words she spoke to her felt truer than any words she’s heard before.

“Thank you, for everything. If It were not for you, I would not be doing what I love to do. Archie and I owe you and Lord Baratheon so much, I do not know how to ever repay you.”

“You do not owe us anything, and Rena, how many times must I tell you to call him Gendry? If you can call me Arya, you can call him Gendry. He will not mind.” Arya said to Rena as she grabbed her hand. She gave it a tight squeeze of reassurance.

Rena gave a quick nod and wiped the tears from her face. “I truly do not know why I am crying. I’ve been so emotional lately its absurd.”

Arya laughed, “Have a cry! I heard it was good for the soul. Gods know I need a good cry.”

“Arya Stark, crying? That’ll be the day the seven hells freeze over.” Rena let out with a laugh.

The two women remained laughing in the stables. Over the last few moons the two have grown close and have truly become fast friends. It was nice for Arya to feel that type of relationship. Growing up, all she had were her siblings and the few friends she did have either ended up dead or being sold to a red witch.

It was comfort to truly feel what friendship is like. With Gendry it had been different. They were so different and had no choice to become friends; their lives depended on it. Then she began to fall in love with him before she even knew what falling in love meant. Of course, she did have Sansa, but their relationship had been strained since Arya departed west. Even as children they didn’t have the relationship she had wished they had.

With Rena it was truly a breath of fresh air. They could talk about similar interests and hobbies, and although they grew up quite differently, they seemed to share the same filler when it came to looking at the world. Rena was a true friend that Arya could rely on no matter the situation.

“I should be going.” Arya said to Rena as their fit of laughter had quieted.
“It is nearing supper and Lyra will be expecting me to save her from her Septa and your brother, Aster.”

“Ah!” Rena said in realization. “I call them the dynamic duo, those two.”

Arya crinkled her eyebrows, “Which ones? The children or the adults?”

Rena took a moment to think. “Both.” She concluded.

“I cannot argue with that one.” Arya stated.

Rena gave a smile chuckle before turning back to the mother and foul.

Arya turned from the stables and made her way to the library. Being housed right above the Round Hall, there were always so many damned steps to take, much like there were to get to her chambers that she shared with Gendry. She did appreciate the privacy, considering how long it could take someone to get to their chambers, but she cursed them every time she tried to hastily get to their chambers to devour each other’s bodies after a long day.

It was truly the only that that Arya hated about Strom’s End; well that and the heat. It was always so hot that by her third day in the Stormlands she had shed her long cloak, doublet, and jerkin. She had opted a life pair of breeches and tucked in white cotton shirt. Rena had suggested that she wear a leather vest over her shirt to appease the lords. As much as Arya hated the idea of appeasing lords and wearing leather in Storm’s End, it did help cover what needed to be cover; it also gave a good grip to her belt that housed Needle and Cat’s Paw.

On her travels west, she always had the sea breeze and winds to cool her heated body. In the Stormlands the only relief from the heat was the rain, but even after the storms, it left the air sticky and humid. The only true escape, however, came from her chambers. The large window allowed the sea breeze to enter and cool the hot stone that covered the entire castle. It was a welcoming comfort when her and Gendry slept, especially if they acted in certain proclivities that may be deemed improper.

Since her return, they hardly kept their hands off each other. Nearly every night their clothes from the work day would be thrown askew across the floor. There were even times when they could not wait until the night to be in each other’s arms. The spare room located in the forge or even the grain sacks that were housed behind the kitchens made perfect spots of fun for the two. Even a table in the back corner of the library was an invigorating spot for their vehement love making.

They had made sure that the table was securely out of view and well hidden from would be prying eyes, or by the off chance that it was needed to sit the children during their lessons.

“I don’t want to!” Arya heard a yell from the library. She was nearly to the door, and it seemed not a moment too late.

Lyra was beginning to get frustrated with her Septa and by the looks Ginger was giving her uncle, so was she.

“It is only a few more words, Lyra. Just read them and you will be done for the day.” Begged Septa Joanna.

Since the undertaking of two children rather than the one, Septa Joanna had begun to get increasingly agitated. Her perfectly kept veil was askew nearly ever time Arya saw her and her cheeks would flush with exhaustion. Septa Joanna loved Ginger and Lyra, but they were truly two beasts out to make her life miserable. She had been ten and seven when she decided to take the
vows, thinking it was her destiny. She had always cared for children in her village, but never the likes of these two girls. Now, nearly three years later, she was thinking if perhaps she had made a rash choice.

“I’ve come to save you!” Arya announced as she entered the library.

“Oh, thank the gods.” Septa Joanna had said a little too loudly.

“They giving you trouble, Septa?” Arya inquired.

Septa Joanna shook her head, “Not more than the usual. They are children and prefer to play than to study.”

“Don’t worry too much, they’ll grow out of it…eventually.” Arya gave the Septa a questioning smile.

“Did you give your septa trouble?” She asked.

“Loads. Probably would’ve annoyed her for the rest of her days, if she were still here.” Arya hadn’t thought about Septa Mordane in years. She had scolded Arya on her needle work; always comparing it to Sansa’s exquisite lines. Although she got on Arya’s everlasting nerve, she couldn’t help but love her and miss her all the same.

“Well then I have much to look forward to.” Septa Joanna spoke, bringing Arya from her thoughts.

“Aye, you do. But I can tell that you love her.” Arya inquired.

“Of course, I do! I’ve been with her since she was nothing but a babe. Lord Baratheon had hired me shortly after his wife’s death to help care for child and teach her proper. I probably would have said no if I knew how much of a handful she would be.” The Septa confessed.

“At least you have help, with Aster and all.” Arya motioned to the young man. He was playing some sort of game with the two hellions, making them giggle with all their might.

“Yes, he has been a tremendous help. He told me that he wants to be a maester.” Arya had noticed the slight blush that had crept to the septa’s face.

“Does he? I think he’ll make a fine maester someday. You know that maester’s can now have families thanks to my brother’s new ruling. I think Aster would also make a fine father someday, seeing as he loves the children so much.” A sneaky smile had tugged at Arya’s lips.

Septa Joanna was quick to notice the hint, “Are you implying something, Lady Stark?”

“I would never imply for you to break you vows, Septa Joanna. Of course, what you do on your own volition, it is another matter entirely.” Arya shrugged.

Septa Joanna looked down and this time she noticed the heat that rose to her cheeks. If she was being completely honest with herself, she had thought about vacating her vows for some time. She loved what she did; teaching the young girls was a delight, but she couldn’t help but feel unfulfilled. Maybe it was the way that she saw Lord Baratheon and Lady Stark stare and each other, or even Ginger’s parents. She hadn’t the opportunity to feel that. Most know what they want to do with their lives, but for Joanna she never really knew; at least not until this point.

“Aster?” She called out.
He looked up from the children, “Yes, Septa Joanna?”

“Would you like to take a walk with me later? After supper?” She asked, her blush ever more present.

“I-I…well, I-I suppose.” He stuttered.

Arya couldn’t help but smile at the encounter. She was watching young love blossom and it was an enjoyable sight.

“Come, Lyra. Let us set up dinner in your father’s solar. He said he will be joining us tonight.” Arya held out a hand for Lyra.

She skipped towards her and grasped the outstretched hand.

“Bye Ginger! See you tomorrow!” She waved to her friend.

“Bye!” The auburn-haired lass waved back.

They exited the library hand in hand and made their way up the steps to Arya’s shared solar and chambers.

“How were your lessons?” Arya asked Lyra as they entered the solar.

“Boring. I wanted to shoot more arrows with you.” She confessed.

Arya smiled at the girl, “You knew of our agreement. We would shoot in the morn and in the noon, you would do your lessons.”

“No. You and papa came up with that. I did not agree.” She said matter of fact.

Arya chuckled, “When did you get so smart?”

Lyra shrugged while twisting a booger in between her fingers. She wiped it on her dress and returned the finger to her nose.

“Yet, you are just a child.” Arya said more to herself, than to the lass sitting on the chair across from her.

Arya began to set up the table for the dinner that the chambermaids would be bringing up at any moment. She knew Gendry would be a tad late, for he liked to bathe the forge away before he ate his meal. With Arya and Lyra being in the solar, he would most likely bathe in the spare tub located in the forge.

With time needing to pass, Arya decided to tell Lyra more about her family. She wanted the girl to know as much as possible for when she met with them. She hadn’t told her family where she was going or that she was even in Storm’s End. In fact, she hadn’t even told her family that she was getting married. She had sent only one raven to them and it was to tell them she was safe and okay. Arya knew that eventually she would have to make her way back to King’s Landing. She had promised Sansa that she would be there in time for the birth of her babe.

She knew that Bran would remind her. It was just a matter of when she would receive that damned raven baring the Stark sigil.

“Lyra, do you like princesses?” Arya asked.
“Hmm, not really. The only princesses I like are Sansa Stark and Daenerys Targaryen. Papa told me what they did, and they are pretty. Oh, and you too! You are a princess, so I like you too.”

Arya chuckled, “Well, it is funny you say that. I happen to know them.”

Lyra’s eyes widened. Arya loved the innocence of the child and the fact that she did not put two and two together that all three women were related.

“You do!? Can I meet them?” She exclaimed.

“Of course! They will be here when I marry your father. And Daenerys has two daughters just a nameday older than you. You’ll be fast friends.” Arya explained to the child.

“How do you know them?” Lyra was all kinds of curious.

“Well, Sansa is my sister and Daenerys in my marriage-sister.”

Realization began to come to the little lady.

“So, when you and papa get married, then they will be my aunts?”

Arya nodded, “You are right. That will make Rhaella and Lyarya your new cousins. Sansa will also have a new babe soon, meaning a new cousin.”

“That is exciting!” Lyra squealed. She jumped into Arya’s arms and gave her a giant hug.

“I’m glad you approve.” Arya laughed.

Arya had told Lyra all about her sister and Daenerys; at least everything up until she left Westeros. She had detailed their bravery and willfulness, as well as their beauty and strength. Arya loved watching Lyra’s eyes light up with admiration. It was the same look that she had given Arya when she taught her how to shoot. Arya even told Lyra about her brothers; dead and alive. It didn’t surprise her that Lyra enjoyed the stories of the battles more than the stories of her pretty sister.

It truly amazed Arya that even though she was not Gendry’s by blood that Lyra was a fierce stag through and through, but Arya couldn’t help but think that she may have some wolf in her too.

A soft knock came from the door. Arya rose from her seat and opened it, revealing Isa, the chambermaid.

“Pardon me, milady. I ‘ave your supper.” Her heavy southern accent came through.

“Of course, please come in.” Arya pushed the door aside for Isa to enter.

“Just set it down there. I can serve it once Gendry comes from the forge.” Arya instructed.

“Milord instructed me to tell you to begin without him, milady. He’s still forgin’ and he told me to tell you to not expect him tonight.” Isa said.

Arya sighed with frustration. “Of course, he did. Thank you, Isa. You may go.”

Isa gave a small bow and left the solar.

Arya slammed the door shut. She knew better than to expect him tonight, but she was still hoping.

“Is my papa not coming tonight?” Lyra asked.
Arya sighed and took her seat beside the little lady. “No, sweetling. Not tonight. But you will see him tomorrow, when you sneak into our chambers.”

Arya tickled her stomach and the Lyra’s face twisted into a wide laugh.

“Come, now. Let me feed you.” Arya grabbed the sweet bread from the tray of food that Isa had brought in. She scooped up the warm stew into a bowl and placed it in front of the child.

“Stew, again?” Lyra wined.

“Yes, again. But you see this time, it is chicken, not boar.” Arya pointed to the floating chicken leg.

“We need better cooks.” Lyra said to Arya as she shoved a spoon full of stew into her mouth.

Arya nodded in agreement, “Yes, Lyra we do.”

Arya pushed her own bowl of stew away. She was suddenly feeling queasy and her appetite fled her stomach. She had been ravenous moments ago, but now that Lyra had pointed out that it was stew yet again, the thought of putting a spoon full of that in her mouth made her stomach churn.

She had been feeling sick these last couple of weeks and had made a mental note to see the maester, but with her new duties she had been so busy that it just slipped her mind. It was strange for Arya to be sick. The last time she felt ill was a couple of years ago on her ship. They had hit rough waters, causing the boat to sway back and forth violently, giving her the unruliest seasickness, she had ever experienced.

It had begun to interrupt her daily tasks. Just the day prior, she had been giving Lyra her shooting lesson when her stomach churned, and she emptied the contents of her morning meal. It was becoming a nuisance and she really did need to see the maester.

Arya brought her gaze from her discarded bowl to the child that was falling into the bowl. Little Lyra could hardly keep her eyes open; the day finally catching up to her. Arya lifted the child into her arms, Lyra’s head immediately resting on Arya’s shoulder. She could hear soft snores come from the child as she went towards her chambers. They were located just below the library; two floors from lord’s chambers.

Arya pushed the door open and gently placed the child in her bed. She brushed some hair out of her face and leaned to place a small kiss atop her head. At that moment Arya was grateful for her training at the house of black and white. It trained her to be quiet as a mouse and footsteps as soft as a cat. This came in handy for sneaking out of sleeping children’s chambers.

When she returned to her shared chambers Gendry had been seated at the table, eating not only his bowl of stew, but her untouched one as well.

She made her way to their bed and began discarding her outer clothing, leaving her in just her cotton shirt.

“It is nice of you to join us.” Arya stated as she climbed into bed.

“I’m sorry.” Gendry said was he took a swing of goblet.

“The men and I decided to make a few extra, just in case.”

“You could have told me, instead of sending Isa with a message.” Arya stated mater of fact.
Gendry sighed and turned in his chair, so he could face her.

“I did not have time, Arya. I am sorry, truly,” He paused, looking at her face. Her eyebrow was raised. He knew he wasn’t getting out of this one easily.

“How long did you wait?”

“We waited for at least three hours. Poor Lyra was falling asleep into her dinner bowl!” Arya exclaimed.

Gendry pushed from his chair and made his way to Arya’s bedside, taking her hand.

“I am sorry. Can you ever forgive me?” He pleaded, with a joking manner.

“Of course, I can,” Arya grabbed his face. “Just not tonight.” She gave a playful slap on the side of his face. She turned from him and got settled into bed.

Gendry sighed. He deserved that, he knew. He began to disrobe from his cloak and clothing. He pulled his night breeches on and climbed into bed next to Arya. He settled next to her and began studying her face. It has changes slightly in the last five years. It was longer and thinner; but here of late, it had become rounder and fuller. The scar on her forehead had faded a bit and there was new scar just above the right side of her lip. Her hair was longer, too. It was well past her shoulders and reached just above her hips.

“Don’t cut it.” He said to her.

Her eyes fluttered open to give him a quizzical look.

“Don’t cut what?” Her voice was laced with drowsiness.

Gendry pulled a loose strand of her hair into his hands and began twirling it at the ends. “Your hair. Don’t cut it.”

Arya fully opened her eyes. She lifted herself up, so she was staring at him completely. “You make it very difficult to be mad you. Besides,” she pulled the strand that was in his hands away. “I wasn’t planning onto; at least not yet.”

He grabbed the strand again and began twisting it once more. “No, don’t ever cut it. I’ve seen with short hair for nearly the whole time I’ve known you that the long hair is a welcoming sight.”

Arya yanked the strand from his hands once more, “Will you stop playing with my hair? And I will have to cut it eventually. It is becoming difficult to put it up in a tight bun, since there is so much of it.”

Gendry sighed, “Fine, just don’t cut it too short.”

“Good, now that we have that clear, can you please let me sleep.” She pushed herself deeper into their bed and began to drift. It wasn’t long though, before a knock came at their chamber door.

“Enter.” Gendry said.

Arya groaned and sat up.

Maester Cragen had entered their chambers. He too was in his sleep clothing and his face looked as if it was just coming from sleep.
“I do apologize, my lord, for waking you and Lady Stark. But the cook’s boy who sleeps in the raveneries came to me with an urgent letter that arrived not even an hour ago.”

“Very well, what is it?” Gendry asked.

“Well, my lord, the letter is not for you. It is for Lady Stark.” The maester held the scroll up and Arya could plainly see the Stark sigil on the wax seal.

Arya immediately jumped out of bed. The only two people who knew where she was were Bran and Daenerys. It wasn’t difficult to place who sent the letter, considering a direwolf had been imprinted onto the wax seal and not a dragon.

She swiftly walked over to the maester and took the scroll, breaking the wax seal.

Dearest Arya,

I do hope that you are enjoying yourself in the Stormlands. I see that you have kept an open mind and have taken the Little Lady of Storm’s End into your heart as if she was yours born of blood. I know you were planning on making the journey to King’s Landing soon, but I fear that Sansa’s babe has decided to come early, unbeknownst to me. Do not fear, the babe will come in four days’ time. Giving you plenty of time to make it to King’s Landing. Do not take the ship; it will be faster on horseback on the King’s road. Even with the extra person you’ll be brining, you should be here by the end of the morrow.

With deepest sincerities,

Your brother,

Bran.

Arya dropped the scroll on the table and began pacing the room. She thought that she at least another moon before she had to explain to Gendry why she was leaving to King’s Landing. She hadn’t said a word to him about her family since she’s been in Storm’s End and he’s been smart enough not to ask. Except for tonight.

“It is from Bran, isn’t it?” He asked her after he escorted the master out of their chambers.

“Yes.”

“What does it say?”

Arya picked up the scroll from the table and handed it to him. He took it from her hands and began to read it. It took him longer than usual, considering he had just learnt how to read only four years ago, but he was able to make out what was being said.

“Sansa’s pregnant? I didn’t know that.” He stated. “Pod must be excited.”

Arya looked at him with surprise.

“You knew she was married? To Pod? How?”

“I was at the wedding, Arya. Nearly every Lord Paramount was, expect Yara Greyjoy. Her and Sansa don’t get along; some squabble they had about a year after you left.” He stated.

“Now, I am the one who should be saying sorry.” She confessed.
Gendry shook his head. “No, I understand. It is your sister and I know you’ll not want to miss this. I’ll have Rena prepare a few horses for in the early morn.”

“No.”

“No? You don’t want me to go?” He was confused.

“You need to stay here. There are certain things that are fragile that could be taken advantage of if you leave.” She told him truthfully.

“Is it that or are you afraid of what your family will think? I am assuming you haven’t told them about us.”

Arya groaned. “You’re right, I haven’t told them about us, but I was planning on to when I got to King’s Landing. And I am not afraid. I just wanted it to be us for a while, without anyone outside of Storm’s End knowing.”

Gendry sighed and took a seat at the table in his chambers. He knew Arya was right and that he needed to stay in Storm’s End in case something or most likely someone decided to take advantage of the missing lord.

Alright. But what did he mean about an extra person? If it is not me, then who?”

“He means Lyra. I told her all about my family when we were waiting for you. She seemed really excited about them and this would be a perfect opportunity for me to take her to meet them.” Arya suggested.

Gendry was hesitant. He trusted Arya wholeheartedly with Lyra, but he couldn’t say for others. This was his child and if anything were to happen to her, he wouldn’t know what to do. He knew that she would be safe with Arya and it would be good for her to experience other places than Storm’s End, but traveling on the King’s Road was dangerous, even if was only a day’s ride.

“I don’t know, Arya. She’s never been outside of the castle walls. And what if she isn’t well received by your family? Because she is not of your blood?” His worries were getting the best of him.

Arya could tell he was nervous and worried. She made her way to him where he was seated at the table and grabbed the chair next to him. She pulled his hands from his lap and held them close to her.

“My family will love her, you know that. And I will protect her with my life. She is mine now, just as much as she is yours. Please let me take her to King’s Landing. They are going to be her new family, as well as yours. And she will not be alone. Jon and Dany have children her age; she’ll love it!”

With a defeated sigh he nodded his head. A bright smile pulled at Arya’s face and she quickly embraced her soon to be husband.

“You play dirty, you know that?” Gendry said into Arya’s neck as they embraced.

“I do know such thing. Besides, you had already agreed the moment the idea left my lips.” She chuckled.

Gendry returned the laugh and they stayed embraced for awhile longer.

“Come, let us go to bed. We have an early morn.” He said as he let go of her. Arya nodded, and they
walked to their bed together.

Lyra was excited when she heard the news the next morning. She was expecting her day to go as it always had the last three moons. Wake up, get bathed, practice her shooting, complete her lessons, then eat supper and head to bed. But this morning, instead of her Septa waking her, her papa had surprised her.

He had told her that she was to ride to King’s Landing with Arya, so she could meet the princesses. It had made Lyra jump with glee out of her bed. She was surprised to see that her things were already packed and the carriage ready for departure.

She was nervous, but excited, and ready to venture outside of the Storm’s End walls. Arya had been waiting for her by the castle’s entrance and the moment she saw her she jumped out of her father’s arms and straight to hers.

“Well, someone is excited.” Arya said to her as she picked her up.

“Very! I can’t wait to play with Rhaella and Lyar-Lyarr!” She struggled to pronounce the last name, being so like Arya’s she couldn’t say it.

Arya laughed, “I don’t know if Lyarya will like the playname you have for her, but I guess we will find out.”

Gendry walked over to his girls. He looked down at both Arya and Lyra placing a kiss atop both of their heads.

“Be safe. And write me as soon as you get there.”

“We will, and I promise.” Arya stood on her tiptoes and planted a soft kiss onto Gendry’s lips. Lyra couldn’t help but giggle at the exchange. She loved seeing her papa and Arya in that manner. It truly made her heart swell.

Lyra and Arya bid farewell to Gendry and the rest of Storm’s End. Lyra stuck her hand out of the carriage window and began to wave as the horses pranced, exiting the castle gates.

It wasn’t a long journey, Arya knew that. But she also knew that the small child seated beside her would most likely be asleep by the time they reached the Red Keep. It took a full day by carriage to reach King’s Landing. If Arya had ridden a single horse by herself, she would have reached King’s Landing in just a few short hours.

She was planning on taking only one horse and have Lyra ride with her, but Gendry had insisted for them to take the carriage. He had made a good argument that Arya had no choice but to accept. He was right in saying that they would be there for a few days and wouldn’t be able to take their belongings if it had been one horse. Arya had argued that she and Lyra didn’t need that many things to take, but Gendry had pointed out that Lyra was a busy child that never stayed clean for long.

With some resistance, Arya agreed, and the carriage was prepared. She was nervous at how her family would perceive Lyra. She had no doubt in her mind that Daenerys and Jon would love her. Bran was cryptic, and although he never showed emotions, Arya felt certain that he wouldn’t mind the child. Her nervousness came from how Sansa would take the news. She would certainly ask Arya all kinds of questions even if she was writhing in pain from her labor.
One thing Arya was certain of, was that Lyra would truly thrive. She was hoping that her and Dany’s children got along, for Lyra’s sake. She couldn’t stop talking about them the whole carriage ride to King’s Landing.

“Do you think they will like me?” Lyra asked Arya. They were nearly half way through their journey and still had a little way to go.

“Of course, they will! Who could they not like you?” Arya assured her.

Although, Arya believed she was trying to convince herself and not Lyra. She never had a chance to properly introduce herself to her nieces and had no idea if they were kind. She was hoping that they were, considering Jon was their father, but Arya still had reserves.

Lyra was very much like Arya when she was that age and if that gave any inclination of how things would go, then maybe it wasn’t looking to good. Arya never really had any friends that were girls when she was Lyra’s age. All the other liege lords daughters were too preoccupied with their sewing lessons, while Arya would play around in the mud with her younger brother.

She was hoping that Dany and Jon didn’t raise their children that way, but she had no way of knowing. All Arya could do was pray to the old gods and new that they would accept Lyra as a friend.

Night had finally fallen once the carriage had pulled up the gates of the Red Keep. Lyra had fallen asleep nearly an hour prior and Arya couldn’t help but smile at the sleeping child in her lap. She hated that she wouldn’t be able to see the grandness of the keep until the sun rose, but it kept the spectacle of the surprise fully intact.

Nothing had really changed in the three moons that Arya had been away; in fact, the only thing different about the keep was that it was no longer red, but rather the dull grey of the Stark house. That made Arya smile. She had always hated the color red and seeing still on the keep when she arrived from her travels gave her a sickening feeling. Now, she could truly call it a second home; the reminder of that had happened seemed to have washed away with new coloring.

The carriage drew to a stop. Arya slid from under Lyra’s sleeping form and exited the carriage. Much like her first arrival, Lord Tyrion was there to greet her.

“Welcome, Lady Stark. We have been expecting you.”

Arya gave a slight nod, “Thank you. I assume Bran notified you of my impending arrival?”

“King Brandon Stark does have a way of informing us small council folk of arriving members.” He noted.

Arya scoffed, “Such formalities, Lord Tyrion.”

“Yes, well, when you are in the presence of the King’s sister and soon-to-be Lady of Storm’s End, then such formalities must be used in the company of low borns.” He motioned to the guards surrounding them.

Arya looked around and did notice an increasing amount to soldiers; more so than when she last was here. She wondered why there were more, but she also noticed the small group of towns people gathering outside the castle gates, even in the dead of night.

“I suppose you and the young girl are tired from your journey, please follow me and I will escort you to your chambers for your duration. My squire will direct your carriage to the stables and he will
bring your things to your chambers once the sun has risen.” Tyrion waved a hand to a young boy that was standing behind him.

“How did you- never mind.” Arya turned from Tyrion and entered the carriage to get Lyra. She was still sound asleep and didn’t want to wake the child. She lifted her up into her arms and Lyra slightly stirred, but quickly returned her head to Arya’s shoulder.

She left the carriage and watched as it departed with the young squire Tyrion had mentioned earlier.

“So, I suppose Bran told you of my betrothal.” Arya stated.

Tyrion nodded, “Yes, he did. He also mentioned that you would no be alone. At first, I thought the Stag would be with you, but then King Bran had told me that it would be Lyra instead.”

Arya shifted Lyra in her arms and began to ascend the stairs that lead to the main entrance to the keep. Climbing the stairs were tedious enough but carrying a child along with walking upstairs proved to be difficult. Tyrion had noticed Arya’s struggles.

“Perhaps you would like to give her to one of the guards? They can carry her to your chambers.” Tyrion suggested.

Arya shook her head, “No, I can carry her. She is my responsibility.”

“I understand, but maybe you would like the hel-”

“No. I said I have her.” Arya hadn’t meant for her words to come out as harshly as they did. She was grateful that Tyrion wanted to help, she was just frustrated that he hadn’t taken no for an answer.

“Very well.”

They remained silent the rest of the way to her temporary chambers. It was the same one from when she was here earlier, only this time there was a slightly larger table and a secondary bed in the corner meant for Lyra. Arya shook her head, knowing full well that Lyra would never sleep in that bed as long as they stayed. She would beg Arya to let her sleep with her. Arya, unable to say no to the child, would reluctantly agree.

“I hope the chambers are to your liking.” Tyrion said.

“Of course, although you can have that small bed removed. Lyra will be sleeping with me.” Arya mentioned.

“Are you cert-” Tyrion took one look at the raised brow Arya had given.

“Yes, I will have it removed first thing in the morn.”

“Thank you. Good night, Lord Tyrion.” Arya said.

Tyrion gave a bow, “Good night, Lady Arya.”

He shut the door behind them and Arya moved to the bed to set Lyra down. She quickly curled under the furs Arya had placed atop her and continued her light snores.

Arya undressed and before she laid in bed next to Lyra, she took the scrolls and ink from the desk in her chamber and began writing Gendry, letting him know that they were safely inside the keep.

My dearest bullheaded man,
Lyra and I are safely inside the Red Keep, although I don’t think I can call it that anymore. Lyra was
talked the whole trip and didn’t quiet until she fell asleep on my lap an hour from getting to the keep.
She truly is your daughter! She can sleep through anything. I have yet to see Sansa, but I plan to in
the morn. I hope she is fearing well. Anyway, I just wanted to write you and let you know we are
safe. I know your weekly meeting is in a few days. Do not let those lords get to you. I will see you
when I return in four days’ time. With all my love,

Arya.

She rolled the scroll and sealed with the wax Stark sigil. She was planning on sneaking to the
ravener itself, but before she could even leave her chambers a small caw from a bird on her
window seal stole her attention. She gave a small smile, knowing Bran must have directed the raven
to her chambers. She secured the scroll to the feet of the raven and let it fly.

Arya watched as the bird flew and hoped that it was get to Storm’s End before the night was over.
She wanted to give Gendry some peace of mind, considering his worries over the whole trip.

Once the bird was out of view, Arya climbed into bed next to Lyra. She observed the young girl as
she slept. Her brown curls were askew on the pillow and there was a slight string of drool escaping
her mouth.

Arya chuckled and kissed Lyra’s head. She turned and blew out the candle sitting on the bed side
table, leaving the room in complete darkness. She turned in the bed and pulled the furs close to her
body. Her eyes began to get heavy and before Arya could realize what was happening, she was
thrust into deep slumber.

Send help! Hurry! They were captured! Hurry!

Arya tossed and turned. The words echoed in her head all night, leaving her feeling more tired than
before. She had remembered falling asleep and then hearing heart shattering words in her dreams. It
was almost as if it were a warning or premonition of sorts.

She bolted awake, not wanting to hear those awful words any longer. Lyra was still snoring beside
her and Arya noticed that the sun was just beginning to rise. She sighed and climbed out of bed,
minding that Lyra was still sleeping.

She quickly dressed and exited the room, leaving the little stag to her dreams.

Arya had hoped that her dreams were better than the one that she had. Ever since she woke, she had
this undeniable feeling of dread; almost as if something bad were going to happen. She had been fine
the whole carriage ride up to King’s Landing, but now being inside the castle, she just felt uneasy.

Arya was wondering the castle, stuck in her mind, when she noticed a chamber maid coming out of
her sister’s room with an empty tray.

“Excuse me,” She grabbed ahold of the chambermaid’s arm.

“Yes, my lady?”

“Is my sister- Lady Sansa awake?” Arya corrected herself.

“Yes, she is, my lady. She has been up all night. The poor babe is making her restless and her labor
pains have started. I was just dropping off some food for her and Ser Podrick.” The chambermaid’s
voice was kind and sweet.
Arya gave her a small nod, “Thank you. Oh, if can, please check on my child sleeping in my chambers? If she awakes, come and fetch me.”

The chambermaid curtsied, “Yes, my lady.” And kept walking to her intended destination.

Arya turned and knocked on her sister’s chamber door.

Arya entered the room that Sansa was staying in. She was laying on the bed with the furs pulled towards the floor. Podrick was seated on a chair in the corner hunched over, snoring.

Arya could see the pain on Sansa’s face and it panged her heart to see her in so much discomfort.

“You look miserable.” Arya stated.

Sansa’s eyes bolted open and she stared at her sister’s grey eyes.

“Arya! I thought you wouldn’t have made it! Bran must of-ow!” Sansa clutched her stomach, holding her breath until her labor pain passed.

Arya’s eyes softened, and she came to sit by her sister on the bed.

“How are you feeling?” Arya asked. She noticed the sweat pooling around her sister’s forehead. She grabbed the wet cloth in the wash basin beside Sansa’s bed and wiped her forehead clean.

“Well, I am fat and in labor. How do think I feel?” Sansa huffed.

Arya smiled. “It seems Pod is resting easily.”

“Poor thing was up with me all night. He was worried that the babe would come, but Bran assured him that it would not be for at least another day.”

Arya nodded. Bran had said as much in the letter he sent to her just a few days prior.

“I am glad you made it. I love Dany, and I am grateful for her helping me, but she is not you.” Sansa grabbed Arya’s hand.

“I would not have missed this.” Arya squeezed her hand in comfort.

They stayed silent for a few moments. Just savoring each other’s company. It has been years since was just the two of them, even if Podrick was in the corner.

Sansa was the one to break the silence. “Are you going to tell me where you have been? It must’ve not been far, considering you are here.”

Arya’s cheeks grew hot and she quickly averted her sister’s gaze.

“I’ve been meaning to tell you, or rather write you. But I’ve been hesitant.” Arya admitted.

“Well tell me, before I’m screaming in pain.” She urged.

Arya gave a nervous sigh, “I’ve been in Storm’s End. With Gendry…and Lyra.”

Sansa’s eyes widened in surprise. “He told you? I suppose that’s a good thing. Wait…why were you at Storm’s End? I knew you and Gendry were acquainted, but…”

“There is more to it than that. Gendry and I have known each other for years. He-he…I lost my
maidenhead to him. I have loved him since before I knew what love was. Sansa, we are to be married.” Arya had finally confessed.

“You are to be what!? So, you’ve been with him these last three moons. Doing what, exactly?” Sansa’s voice became questioning.

Arya groaned in frustration. “Do you really want to know? Because I can assure you that it isn’t deemed proper.”

“Arya! I am being serious. Please tell me.” Her sister pleaded.

“I’ve been helping him run Storm’s End. I have also become a mother to Lyra. Sansa, I love that little girl as if she is my blood and I can no longer imagine my life without both of them in it. Please be happy for me.” Arya’s eyes began to fill with tears.

Sansa looked at her sister. She really looked at her sister. She was no longer the little girl she had once known or even that lonely traveler that wanted to run away for her problems. The girl that was sitting in front of her was a woman grown of three and twenty, capable of knowing exactly what she wants.

She grabbed Arya’s hands and kissed them. “I am happy for you, sister. But I do have one question. Is this what you want? The life of wife? A mother? Are you going to be happy being…still?”

“Sansa, Gendry will never make me do things that I do not want to do. He knows me and if I tell him that I need to sail to where ever for a short time to escape, then he would stock my ship and bid me a good trip. But I have been traveling for five years and I am ready to stop running; have a family. For him and Lyra to be my family.”

Sansa sighed, a small smile coming to her face, “Okay. Then I am happy for you. And I think the twins would love to have a playmate their age.”

“Does that mean you’ll accept Lyra?” Arya’s voice was filling with happiness.

“Well, I really don’t have a say in that matter, but of course! She is a sweet little thing, at least she was the last time I saw her.”

Arya laughed, “She still is! And she is here, in King’s Landing. She came with me and she absolutely loves the twins even if she hasn’t met them yet. She can’t seem to stop talking about them. I hope they like her.”

“They will absolutely love her!” Sansa assured Arya.

She was truly happy for her and couldn’t wait to plan Arya’s upcoming nuptials.

Arya rose from the bed and planted a kiss to Sansa’s forehead. “I will let you rest.”

“Wait! Will you be here? In the room, when the babe is born? Please?” Sansa asked.

Arya smiled, “Of course I will. Now, rest.”

Sansa gave her a small nod and Arya left her sister to rest until the true labor came.

Arya closed the door behind her quietly. She couldn’t bare to wake Podrick and disturb her sister. They had been through so much, the two of them, that she just wanted them to rest easily for a short period of time.
She made her way to her chambers, hoping that Lyra was still asleep. She had asked that chambermaid to fetch her if she was awake, and considering she hasn’t seen her, perhaps Lyra was still curled up in a ball on their bed.

She pushed her chamber door open and noticed that the room was empty. Lyra was not in their bed. Arya’s heart began to race, and the sense of panic was being to take over her body. She frantically searched the room, thinking that Lyra could be hiding. When she finally came to the realization that Lyra was indeed missing, she quickly turned to exit the chambers when she slammed into the chambermaid from earlier.

“Oh, pardon me, my lady.” The chambermaid said as she began to pick up the items she had dropped when Arya ran into her.

“Where is she!?” Arya grabbed the chambermaid and pulled her to her feet.

The chambermaid’s eyes screamed fear and she had difficulty letting her words escape her mouth, “She-she is with Prince Jon and Princess Dany. They-they saw me come to your chambers and-and asked where you were. I let them know you were with your sister, Princess Sansa, and they told me not to disturb you. Your child is with them. I-I thought it would not be a problem.”

Arya sighed and released the chambermaid. “I apologize. I just panicked. You are certain she is with them?”

The chambermaid quickly nodded.

“Thank you. Do you know where they are?”

“Yes, Princess Arya. They are in the small council room. The king likes to break his fast in there when his family is here.”

Arya nodded, “Thank you. And again, I am sorry. Oh, and please just call my Arya. I am no princess.”

The chambermaid nodded. Arya brushed passed her and continued towards the small council room. She was relieved that Lyra was with Jon and Dany, but she couldn’t help but feel slightly panicked. That feeling of not know where Lyra was hadn’t been a good feeling for Arya. In fact, she hated it. It was mixture of fear, sadness, and dread. Arya had only ever experienced each emotion separately, but all at once? It truly terrified her.

She wasn’t sure where these emotions were coming from. Here of late, she has been feeling everything all at once and it was intensified. Perhaps it was due to her nerves of seeing her family and how they would perceive Lyra. What ever it was, it had to go away, because Arya hated the feeling of not having a control on her ever-spiraling emotions.

She finally reached the small council room and pushed the door open. The sight before her eyes made her heart swell.

Lyra was sitting next to the twins and they were giggling and playing with their toys. Jon and Dany were whispering with one another and Bran and Meera were seated at the head just looking on with admiration.

Dany looked up from Jon and noticed Arya standing at the entryway.

“Arya! Welcome back!”
Arya’s eyes darted to Dany, “Thank you. It is good to be back. How is everyone?”

Arya made her way to the table and sat directly across from Jon, Dany, and the children. Lyra hadn’t paid Arya any attention when she sat down. She was completely enthralled with the twins in front of her.

“We are good. I see you brought Lady Lyra Baratheon. She is quite the story teller, that one. She told us all about you and her father.” Dany subtly questioned.

Arya’s cheeks grew red, “Exactly how much has she told you?”

Jon cleared his throat and Arya glanced in his direction.

“Everything. She told us everything.”

Arya studied Jon’s face. He had always been the type of person to wear his emotion on his face, but now, Arya couldn’t tell what he was thinking.

“Everything?” Arya’s voice raised at least an octave.

“Aye. She told us about her shooting lessons, driving her septa mad, and her friend Ginger.” Jon confessed.

Arya’s breathes a sigh of relief, but it for naught, because Jon said, “And she told us how you are going to be her new mother. Care to explain?”

“Do I have to?”

Arya saw Jon’s face turn serious. She gulped and took a deep breath.

“Yes, I am getting married to Gendry. I have been at Storm’s End for the last three moons, if you must know. And before you ask me any other question I wish to not answer, I have known him for years. In due time, I may share more, but for now that is all I am willing to answer.”

It all came out at once. No breaths in between or pauses. She didn’t want her family asking anymore questions. All she wanted to enjoy her time here and see the birth of her niece for nephew.

She heard Jon grumble under his breath and Arya couldn’t help but smile. She could tell that the news of his little sister getting married was an uncomfortable topic for him that, for now, he seemed okay to avoid.

“That is wonderful news, sister. I also believe that Dany has news of her own.” Bran said.

Arya looked over to both Jon and Dany and she noticed Dany’s cheeks flush.

“We’ve already told Sansa last night, but now that the rest of our family is here we would like to share that we are expecting another child!”

“That is amazing! How far along are you?” Arya asked.

“No more than three or four moons. The maester confirmed it a few days ago, before we made our way from Dragonstone.” Dany was beaming, and Jon was looking at her with absolute love.

Arya was truly happy for her brother and marriage sister, but she couldn’t help but feel a slight pang of jealousy. She and Gendry hadn’t really talked about have children of their own, and if Arya was being honest, she wasn’t sure if she could. Now that she was settling down, the thought of having
children had begun to enter her mind.

It hadn’t been a priority or even a remote thought when she was younger or even when she sailing around the world. She always thought that she never wanted to have children, it was deep seeded feeling, but that all changed when she came back, and she decided to live. As much as she loved Lyra with all her being, she couldn’t help but imagine what her blood children would look like. No, doubt they would pull Gendry’s genes. *The seed is strong*, she remembered. But if it was strong, why had she not fallen pregnant?

She hadn’t taken any moon tea since she has been with Gendry and they had been particularly active in their proclivities. She hadn’t confirmed with the maester if she cannot bare children, but by the ways things were going, perhaps her womb was permanently damaged by what the Waif did.

Arya’s hand fell her stomach and her heart sank. The Arya five years ago would have laughed at the thought of having children, but the Arya now couldn’t help but fell sadness.

“Arry!” Lyra had pulled Arya from her thoughts. She was still seated across from Arya and her hands were on one of the twins direwolf toys.

“Yes, Lyra?”

“Ray and Ly were telling me about the dragon! Can I see it?” She asked. Her eyes were bright with wonder and Arya couldn’t help but smile.

“Well, that is something you will have to ask Dany about. It’s her dragon.” Arya motioned to Daenerys.

Lyra turned to Dany and asked the same question.

“I can show you, but you must keep your distance. Drogon is weary to strangers.” She told Lyra truthfully.

Lyra looked at Arya for approval. “If she said yes, then it is fine with me. But listen to everything Dany tells you, you understand?”

Lyra nodded and jumped from her seat across from Arya. She went over to her and gave her hug.

“Thank you!” She turned and Rhaella and Lyarya quickly grabbed each of Lyra’s hands and pulled out of the small council room.

“Let me go before they accidently feed Lyra to Drogon.” Dany joked. She rose from her chair and gave Jon a quick kiss before she chased after the children.

Jon remained along with Meera and Bran.

She noticed Jon’s twitching hands and how they crumbled up the piece of sweet bread on his plate.

“Jon? Are you alright?” She asked him.

Jon’s eyes bolted to hers.

“Yeah, I’m fine, why do you ask?”

She pointed to the mess he made in front of him. “I don’t know, you seem…nervous. Are you not happy about another babe?”
Jon’s eyes widened, “No, I am excited. I am just…” He sighed.

“Tell me. Please.” Arya encourage; her voice soft.

“If am being honest, I am trying everything in my power to not get on my horse and ride down to Storm’s End and knock some sense into that man.” He confessed.

Arya sighed. She knew better than to think that Jon would leave the situation alone.

“Jon. I already told you that I di-”

“I know that you said, Arya. But you cannot expect me to sit here and not wonder how this relationship started. I get it, you’ve known him for years. But how am I not supposed to stop my mind from going to all kinds of places. What did you do all those years ago? Exactly how long have you known him? Seven hells, Arya, how do I know that he did not take advantage of you?” Jon said honestly.

Arya scoffed, “Trust me when I say that if Gendry had ever taken advantage of me, he would not be alive.”

Jon shook his head in frustration. He hated that she never answered his questions. All he wanted to know was how it happened. He hated not knowing.

“I am being serious, Arya. Please just tell me something.” He begged.

Arya groaned, “Alright. But I tell you this one thing and you have to promise to not ask anymore questions. When the time is right, I will tell you all of it. Every last detail.”

With hesitation, Jon nodded, “I promise.”

“Well, I have known Gendry since before Winterfell. I had met him in King’s Landing, after father’s death. The gold cloaks were searching for him; trying to execute him for being Robert Baratheon’s bastard. He was the only one who knew I was girl. I had to disguise myself, so no one would know who I was. He protected me, and I protected him. Then he got sold and I thought I would never see him again. Then there he was, riding on horse back following you. Of course, he would follow you, who wouldn’t? I don’t know, after I saw him again, these feelings started bubbling inside me that I didn’t know I had. We spent the night together before the battle and then I left. That’s the short story anyway. Truth be told, I wasn’t ready to experience those emotions, so I left. Sailed away for five bloody years, hoping that those feelings would vanish. When they didn’t go away, and I accepted that they were never going away, I decided to come home and to see if I could start over. It turned out that I could. Now we are here.” Arya finished.

She looked over and could see tears welling in Meera’s eyes.

“I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to listen, but it was just heartwarming.” Meera said as she wiped her tears away.

Arya gave a small smile to Meera and turned to Jon. He too seemed to have tears in his eyes. Arya’s story had made him realize that she was growing up and there was nothing he or anyone else could do to stop it. He had to stop seeing her as a little girl and see her for the woman that she is becoming.

“Well, I am happy for you. And I promised you that I would not ask anymore questions. So please do excuse me while I keep myself preoccupied so I won’t ask you those questions.” Jon lifted from his chair and exited the small council room.
Arya nodded and saw him leave.

She wasn’t planning on having this conversation with either of her siblings, but she supposed it was for the best. She had a chance to explain herself, and for now that would have to do. She knew that eventually Sansa and Jon would want more answers and she give them. Just at this particular time in her life, she still wanted to keep somethings hidden. Gods, she hadn’t even told Gendry how she got her scars. There were things that she still had to keep hidden deep beneath her and she knew that when the right time comes, she will let it all out.

Arya was grateful for one thing; that she wouldn’t have to tell Bran. He seems to know everything, so she was certain that he knew what she was going through and what she went through.

“Don’t worry, Arya. They will stop questioning. Everything will come to light and they will accept it.” Bran said suddenly.

Arya was just as confused as the first time he said something cryptic to her. She knew better than to question him, so instead she turned to Meera.

“Meera, we haven’t had a chance to properly get to know one another. Please tell me, how is the wedding planning?” She asked.

Meera took a sip from her water before answering, “Well, Bran said that we should wait until the end of the year. He said that things have to ‘calm first’ whatever that means, so I haven’t really been planning anything. How about you? I hear that you are betrothed now. You must be planning something.” Meera inquired.

Arya shook her head, “No, not really. We aren’t in any rush to get married at the moment. We are just enjoying each other’s company.”

“That’s good! I’m sure his liege lords were surprised.”

Arya laughed, “You have no idea. They were too keen on a woman asserting dominance over them.”

“So, Gendry lets you have your input?” she said as she took a bite from her sweet bread.

“Yes, he does. He enjoys it, actually. It gives him a chance to take a break from those lords. In fact, I’ve been looking over the weekly meetings that we have for the last two or three moons.”

“That is truly amazing. I am glad to hear that you are thriving in Storm’s End.”

The two women conversed for several hours. Arya would glance over at Bran here and there to see if he was listening, and although his face was stoic, she could see the faint smiles that touched his face whenever Meera talked about their time together.

She had recounted their adventure beyond the wall and Bran’s journey in becoming the Three Eyed Raven. She even told Arya about the time Bran had contacted her nearly three years ago. It had been two years since they had seen or talked, and she receives a raven asking her to come to King’s Landing.

“I finally come, and he begins telling me everything that had happened since I last saw him. It was astonishing to hear the tales. I had been so enthralled with them that I didn’t even hear him apologize to me. It was surreal, all of it. The next thing I know, I had agreed to marry him!” Meera laughed.

Arya had laughed along. She did love hearing that her brother was happy and content and somewhat
his old self. If anyone deserved happiness, it was definitely Bran. After all that he went through, it was nice to see him have a woman to love him for just the way he was.

And Meera was a good fit for him. She was tough but loving at the same time. If anyone could handle Bran’s ways, then it was definitely Meera.

“Well, I am glad to hear-” Arya was about to say when Bran had cut her off.

“It is time.”

Arya’s eyes widened. She jumped to her feet and ran out of the small council room. She could hear the panged screams from down the hall and she quickly picked up her pace. She noticed that Jon and Podrick were both standing outside of Sansa’s chamber door. The children were seated on the floor next to them.

“What happened?” She asked the two men as she reached the door.

“Her waters broke. Sam, Gilly, and Dany are in there now.” Podrick answered.

She turned to Jon.

“Don’t worry, I have Lyra and the girls. Get in there.” He knew what she would ask him even before she had a chance to ask.

She smiled and turned to open the door, but before she went in she turned to Pod.

“What the bloody hells are you doing out here?”

“Well-I-it is not proper.” He managed to say.

Arya grabbed his arm and jerked him inside the room.

“Fuck being proper. You put that babe in her, so you are going to be there when it comes out.”

She shoved him inside and slammed the door behind her. Arya motioned for Podrick to go by Sansa’s side and he complied grabbing a hold of her hand.

Arya went to Sansa’s other side and quickly wiped her hair from her face. Sansa was in pain, Arya could tell, and it took everything in her not to cry. She couldn’t, because if she did then she wouldn’t be able to stop.

“You are doing great Sansa. Pretty soon you’ll have your babe in your arms.” Arya assured her.

“Oh, shut up! I know that you are trying to get my mind off the pain, but it won’t work!” Her sister yelled.

Sansa then turned to Podrick, she was already crushing his by squeezing to so tight, but she needed to make sure he knew how she really felt.

“And you! I will never ever let you put another babe in me, do you understand? I don’t care how magical your cock is!”

Podrick’s face turned white. Arya tried to subdue the laugh that was bubbling in her stomach.

“She doesn’t mean it.” Dany had said from across the room. “I said the same thing to Jon when I was birthing my twins but look at me now. Pregnant with his babe.”
Pod slowly nodded and looked back to Sansa, whispering words into her ear. He was trying to soothe her, but it wasn’t working.

“Oh, seven hells! Get the babe out of me already!” Sansa screamed in pain.

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Arya walked into the small council room with a bright smile on her face. Her sister had labored long, but the birth of Robb Stark came quick. The babe was healthy and strong, much like his mother who birthed him. He was the spitting image of his mother. The Tully auburn hair and the blue eyes were undeniable. If Arya didn’t know any better, she would have guessed that Sansa created this child all on her own.

Of course, Pod had been a blubbering mess, but Arya had remembered Sansa telling her that she liked when he got emotional. She was truly happy for the couple and secretly hoped that would be her someday.

Tyrion was in the small council room with a wine goblet in hand. By the looks of it, he must have been on at least his third goblet; his head bobbing almost as if he was falling asleep. When Arya had entered, it seemed as if he found a new-found energy to speak.

“Ah, Lady Arya! How is the new mother?” His words were slightly slurred.

“Well. Thank you for asking.” Arya took a seat across from Tyrion.

Arya looked at Tyrion and wondered why he was still awake. He had no reason to be. It was obvious that he was waiting for something.

“Lord Tyrion, why are you still awake? Shouldn’t you be in bed with your wife?” Arya asked as she took her own goblet of wine.

“I should. But I was worried for our dear Sansa. She is a friend after all. And my son happened to kick me out of my bed, so he could lay with his mother.” He took another sip.

Arya nearly choked on her wine. “You have a son!? When?”

“Hmm, not too long after Dany had the twins.” He recounted.

“He is um…like you?” Arya asked with a flush.

“You mean is he an imp?” He shook his head, “No, he isn’t. Takes after my wife. Even the coloring of his skin.”

Arya took another sip, “And his name?”

“I have no idea how to pronounce it. It is Dothraki, and I haven’t been able to say it. He has a name with the common tongue; Wiley.”

“Wiley…good name. Maybe Lyra can meet him before we leave to go back to Storm’s End.” Arya suggested.

Tyrion nodded in agreement.

“I must say, motherhood becomes you. She may not be your blood, but she is your daughter.” Tyrion admitted honestly.
“Thank you, Lord Tyrion. It’s strange. From the moment I met her, I felt this connection. I love her deeply. I will kill anyone who ever tried to hurt her.” Arya’s eyes turned dark. The thought of anyone getting near Lyra with mal intention nagged at the back of her mind. Ever since Lord Swann’s outburst, she has had this overwhelming feeling that something bad was going to happen. It was one of the major reasons she had suggested to bring Lyra here to King’s Landing.

She hadn’t shared this thought with Gendry because she felt like it wasn’t necessary. She was wishing she had told him because that feeling only seemed to get stronger as she stayed in King’s Landing.

“Oh!” Tyrion jabbed, breaking Arya from her thought. He was rummaging in his jerkin pocket when he pulled out a scroll with a stag wax seal. “Before I forget, a raven arrived for you this evening. It was a rather late delivery, if I must say so myself.”

Arya rose from her seat and went towards Tyrion.

“What time did it arrive?” She asked as she took the scroll from his hands. She hadn’t notice that her own hands were shaking with nerves. That feeling of something bad was overwhelming and it coated Arya like hot tar.

“Just shortly before you came in. I doubt it’s nothing. Probably Lord Gendry bidding you a goodnight. Guarantee he misses you warming his bed.” Tyrion joked.

Arya broke the wax seal and began reading the very words she had been dreading. Tyrion noticed the color run from Arya’s cheeks. Her joyous smile was washed from her face and she looked as if she was going to be sick.

“I need to go. I have to-” Her words were cut off when she ran to the nearest window and regurgitated the contents to her stomach.

The scroll she was holding was now on the floor next to Tyrion. He picked up the scroll and began to read its words. Every bone in his body began to ache. He felt like someone had punched him in the abdomen.

“Arya, I-” Tyrion began to say. Arya quickly wiped her mouth and began to make her way to the door.

“I need my brothers. Now!” Arya yelled as she slammed the door behind her.

Tyrion was completely numb. In the five year since the battle of King’s Landing there hasn’t been any sort of problem. No wars, battles, or fights. It had been peaceful. That all changed with what the letter contained. He glanced down at the scroll in his hands and read it again.

Arya, it is truly a blessing that I am able to write this letter. I’ve locked myself in the ravenery and quickly writing this letter to you. Lord Swann has staged a coup. Mutiny has arrived. I wish I could tell you more, but his men are coming. Gendry, Davos, and Archie have all be captured. I fear for their lives! Please send help.

Rena.

Chapter End Notes
So, I know that chapter left on an emotional cliff hanger. I'm sorry, but it was going to happen. Don't worry, Arya is coming to rescue and she is not going alone! I also really wanted to Sansa to be a little harsh and in a bit of a disarray. We always saw her as tightly wound that I needed to loosen a bit, even if she was giving birth. I had fun writing emotions for Arya, even for Bran as well. What those two have gone through, they totally deserve it. I also had to put some of Tyrion in there and how about that truth bomb of him having a kid. Let us be honest though, I feel like Tyrion would totally be with a Dothraki woman. They are wild and Tyrion would love that. Anyway, it probably won't be until at least another week until I post again, if not then a week and half, but that is why I made this chapter so long!! Anyway I hope you enjoyed it and until next time, Caio!
Arya’s rage hazed her mind. Everything she was feeling; the happiness and joy, quickly vanished from her being the moment she read that letter. She hadn’t felt this kind of rage since her father was beheaded and she began reciting her list of people she would kill. Everyone on that list was now dead and Arya had the sudden urge to create a new list of the people that had decided to hurt her new family. The first name she would add would be Lord Swann. She would gut the man as soon as she saw him. She would take her needle and slice his open from chin to naval.

Arya had aimlessly wondered the keep. Her intention was to find her brothers but even that task proved difficult. She couldn’t erase the words that she had read. Send help. She should have trusted her feeling; should have let him come with her, then both Lyra and Gendry would be safe. She felt so stupid to think that those lords wouldn’t stage a coup. She couldn’t understand how they could. Lord Swann did not seem to have the numbers for a large coup, so other lords must have turned against them.

She couldn’t help the tears that fell from her face. She hadn’t cried in so long, and the action felt foreign on her face.

“Arya? Arya? Arya, can you hear me?” Dany had suddenly appeared in front of her.
“Dany? Where did you come from?” Her voice was so small.

“Arya, I have been calling your name for quite some time.” Dany had worry written all on her face.

“I was coming to tell you that Lyra had fallen asleep with the girls and to not worry about her tonight. Gendry would have loved to see her make new friends. Should we send a raven to him to ask him to join us?”

Arya could no longer keep in her emotions. Just the sound of his name ripped her heart into pieces. She burst into a visceral sob, collapsing into Dany’s arms. She felt the warm embrace surround her and hold her close.

“Arya, what happened?” Dany whispered into her ear.

“I-I need Jon.” She managed to say in between sobs.

Dany nodded and tried to lead Arya back to the small council room. It took longer than expected, considering Dany had to drag Arya back to the room. To their surprise, Jon and Bran were already waiting, with Tyrion by their side.

The scroll that had been sent to Arya was now in the hands of Jon, already worn from the constant fiddling it had endured.

“What is going on?” Dany asked after she had placed Arya on a seat beside Bran.

Arya hiccupped and wiped the snot dripping down her face, “It’s Gendry. A coup was staged, and he is being held captive along with other members of our house.”

Dany’s eyes shinned with concern and she turned to Jon. He nodded to confirm the devastating news.

“How did it happen?” Dany asked as her eyes flicked between Jon’s and Arya’s.

Arya took a deep breath before answering, “It was Lord Swann. Rena said as much in her letter. He has been trying to take control of the Stormlands since Gendry became lord. He tried to stage a previous coup but was unsuccessful. Gendry believed that Lord Swann didn’t have the men supporting him that time around. But since my arrival, things have been…tense with a few of the other lords.”

Arya knew her relationship with some of the other liege lords had been strained, especially once she took up the job of holding the weekly meetings, and she had tried to mend those ties before she left for King’s Landing without much success. With the added stress of the struggling crop and lack of income that the Stormlands had been producing, trying to fix an already fractured relationship proved difficult, even for Arya.

With Gendry being in the forge nearly every day for the last three moons, some of the lords were beginning to wonder if their high lord even cared for the position. Arya had assured them that Gendry was doing everything in his power to make sure the Stormlands thrived, even if it did mean he was strapped making weapons from sunup to sundown.

She was able to keep most of the lords at ease, but she couldn’t ignore the looks on several of their faces. It was the look of doubt and distrust and it had shaken Arya to her core.

She cursed herself for being so naïve. She should have known that with her gone, a coup would be easier to stage. She couldn’t deny that most of the liege lords were frightened of her and would never
dare cross her. But with her out of Storm’s End, there would be nothing to stop a coup.

“I need to go back. I need to save them.” Arya said as she started to rise from her chair.

Jon was quick to rise after her. He met her at the small council door, pressing his hand against the large oak door, preventing Arya from exiting.

“I understand that you want to go and save them, but we have to think about this rationally.” He gently said.

Arya’s fuse was beginning to shorten. She loved her brother, but at that moment she wanted nothing more than to take her fist and slam it against his jaw.

“And how do you supposed we do that? I can’t sit here and wait, Jon. Gendry and everyone else that are being help captive at Storm’s End are in danger. My family is in danger.” She told him simply.

Jon looked into Arya’s eyes and saw the fire building. It was a fire that he hadn’t seen from her in a long time. He knew his sister and he knew that once she set her mind to something, she never would give it up.

“You are mad if you think I am going to let you go in there alone. We will save them, Arya. All of them.” He placed his other hand on her shoulder, squeezing it lightly.

Arya reached her hand to meet his and grasped it.

“Thank you.”

A throat cleared from Tyrion, “I hate to be the bearer of bad news, but how do you suppose you get into Storm’s End? The moment Swann’s men see you approach the gate they will kill you on the spot. The only reasonable way to get in without being seen in to take a ship directly to the shore of Storm’s End, but you run the risk of sinking that ship before ever reaching land.”

Arya hated that the imp was right. They would be too exposed with they went at Storm’s End directly and trying to dock a ship in Shipbreaker Bay was near impossible. They couldn’t be seen, that was the main objective, yet all of their options left them exposed.

“There is another plan.” Bran had spoken.

All eyes turned to him. His expression was stoic, but there was a slight smile pressed onto his lips.

“I sent Ser Brienne back to Tarth a little over a moon ago. The Tarth family is loyal to Lord Baratheon and will help. A raven has already been sent. While you attack from the front, Ser Brienne along with the Tarth men will be able to attack from behind. The waters around Griffin’s Roost are much calmer and can be navigated with ease. They will dock there and ride to Storm’s End along the shore.”

Tyrion took a sip of his wine from a goblet that seemed permanently attached to his hand, “And how will the Tarth men get into Storm’s End? It is impenetrable.”

Arya shook her head. She remembered a secret passage that Gendry had shown her the second night she was there. He had told her he found it on accident and he would use it to escape to the shores every once and a while. She had taken up to using more than him as of late; wanting to watch the waves crash against the shore.

“Not completely. There is a passage that leads to the inside of the castle, much like the old passage
here at the keep. It is hidden and obscured and can be used to smuggle them in. It’s smaller and the
Tarth men may have to crouch to get inside, but they can get inside.”

“Good, now that we have the clear, what about men? You have Tarth, but do you have anyone
else?” Tyrion questioned.

Dany cleared her throat, “Take some of the unsullied. Grey Worm will help.”

“Are you certain?” Arya asked Dany.

Dany nodded, “You are family, Arya and so are the people being held captive. I help my family.”

Arya’s lips curved into a smile. She was beyond grateful to the Dragon queen and didn’t know how
she would ever return the favor.

“I am sorry I did not see this earlier, Arya. If I had known, I would have been able to prevent it.”
Bran suddenly stated.

Arya moved to meet her brother at the head of table. She took the seat beside him and grasped his
hands firmly into hers.

“Don’t be sorry. It would have happened if you saw it or not. I’m just glad you thought two steps
ahead of me and asked Ser Brienne to join us. Thank you for that.”

Bran gave her a genuine smile break onto his face, “Anytime.”

“So, when do we leave?” Jon asked, breaking the moment between Arya and Bran.

Arya looked at her younger brother once more and he nodded, approving the words she was about to
say.

“We leave tonight.”

Jon nodded in agreement then turned to leave the council room but not before he placed a soft kiss
onto Dany’s lips.

Arya could see the fear in her eyes and wanted to assure her that everyone would come back in one
piece, but even Arya was too smart to know that. It was normal for Dany to be worried because
Arya would be too, if she was in Dany’s spot. But Arya was worried. More afraid than worried, if
she was being honest. She feared that the people she had grown to love and care for would be no
more. She feared that she would never see their faces again and she feared the words she would have
to tell little Lyra if anything were to happen to her father.

That was perhaps the most terrifying part for Arya. She didn’t want to have to think about Gendry
dying, but there was a high possibility that he could. If the unthinkable were to happen, Arya wasn’t
sure if she would be able to tell Lyra. She couldn’t stand the thought of her little girl’s heart breaking,
all while hers was breaking too. Then there was the possibility that Arya wouldn’t come out alive as
well. Little Lyra had already gone through so much in her short four years, that Arya couldn’t stand
for her to go through anymore tragedy. She had to think about her now and not just herself.

Arya lifted from her seat and stalked towards Dany’s direction. She needed to speak to her before
she left on what she thought to a sure suicide mission.

“Dany, I need to ask you a favor.”
Dany nodded, “Of course. Ask me anything.”

Arya tried to swallow the lump in her throat, but it was useless. She could feel the tears beginning to prick at her eyes and she blinked them away before Dany could notice.

“If anything were to happen with me and Gendry…I need you to take Lyra. She will have no one else and I know that if we were gone, she would be happy with you. Please promise me you’ll take her.”

Dany quickly embraced Arya into a hug, “Nothing will happen to you or Gendry. You will get him out alive and flay that Lord Swann into a million pieces. If I could burn him alive, I would. Then you will come back here to King’s Landing and embrace your daughter and husband into a bone crushing hug.”

Arya let out an exasperated laugh, “I think I would love to see him burn.”

They let go of one another and Dany looked Arya in the eyes, “I promise.”

Arya gave a weak smile, squeezing Dany’s hands in reassurance. She gave her one last hug before turning out of the small council room.

They left shortly after. Jon and Arya were accompanied by the unsullied that Dany had brought from Dragonstone and a few gold cloak soldiers that Bran was kind of enough to lend. It was nearly 200 men and with the Tarth company meeting them at Storm’s End, the roughly had a party of 500 willing soldiers. It was more than Arya could ever ask for and she hoped that it would be enough.

They rode through the night, not wanting to stop at any cost. The soldiers were quick and had little difficulty keeping up, but for Arya it still felt like they were going at a pace of a slug. She knew that eventually they would have to stop to rest and with each passing hour, Arya could feel her anxiety heightening at levels she didn’t think imaginable. She was making careless mistakes that a novice would make, not some trained assassin that traveled the high seas. She was stumbling over small rocks or nearly falling off her horse. The worst was her utter exhaustion during the journey.

There were times in her younger years as a child that she would be able to stay up for hours on end without so much as a wink of sleep and be capable of killing a full grown man. Now, she was lucky if the steady gallop of her horse didn’t rock her to sleep. She truly didn’t feel like herself and it was beginning to annoy her that even the slightest jab or joke coming from one of the gold cloaks could send her into a fury.

Jon nearly had to pull her off of a young solider for imply that the capture would be all dead when they arrived. She had her dagger pinned to his neck and his body trapped between the ground and her small frame.

“Say anything like that again and I promise that your neck will be sliced open so wide that your head will be hanging to your body by a string.” The words seeped with venom as she sheathed her dagger, climbing off of her young boy before Jon could drag her off.

She could see the worry on her brother’s face and chose to ignore is questioning eyes. She wasn’t in the mood for being reprimanded and could honestly care less of what her brother would say. Her main priority was getting to Storm’s End and killing that fat pig Swann before he could harm anyone she loved.

It had taken a full night and day to reach Storm’s End and Arya was slightly relieved to see the high drum tower peaking above the trees. They couldn’t get too close to the castle for the fear of
destroying their cover. It was best if they made camp just along the end of the woods. They would be able to see the castle and observe, all while keeping out of sight.

The sun was sinking below the horizon and Arya would have to go through another night not knowing if her family was still alive. They had to wait for the raven from Ser Brienne informing them of their landing on the beach. Arya was sure they would receive one when they reached the woods edge but there was no raven in the sky. They couldn’t march the gates, not with the backing of the Tarth men on the beach. They had to wait, or run the risk of being slaughtered.

That is what annoyed Arya the most. She hated waiting or sitting still. She wanted to get into Storm’s End and kill anyone that got in her way. She found it difficult to keep her mind off of the bad things that were running throughout her head. Every possible worst scenario would creep up in her in her deep inner thoughts, giving her more panic and anxiety than the last.

She was sitting by a dull fire they had made for the night. Most of the unsullied and gold cloaks were gathered by other fires or sleeping in their respective tents. Arya had made sure to pick a fire close to the woods edge, yet far away from the other traveling party. She wanted to be alone to pick her thoughts, which she couldn’t decide if that was such a good idea.

“I thought I would find you here.” Jon had snuck up on her, causing her to jump slightly.

“Must’ve been in deep thought if I could cause you to jump.” He questioned as she sat on the log adjacent to her.

“I-I don’t think that this plan…is going to work.” She told him honestly.

Jon pursed his lips, “Why, because Bran came up with it?”

Arya shook her head, “No, because Tyrion is right, we are too exposed. Even with the Tarth men, they will see us coming and that could give them the opportunity to execute the captors if they haven’t already.”

Jon stayed silent for a moment and began to take in his sisters words. He was stupid to not listen to Sansa during the battle with Ramsey; he wouldn’t make that mistake again.

With a deep sigh, he asked, “And you have an idea?”

Arya nodded. She knew what she had to do and it was something that she hadn’t done in a very long time. She may be out of practice, but she knew the skill would come back to her with ease. It was only a matter of if she was able to go through with the task.

She had vowed that she would never take another face for as long as she lived and for year on the seas, she didn’t have to. Taking faces had damaged a part of her that took years to heal and she wasn’t sure if she wanted to go down that path again. She remembered the person she was when she did it and she didn’t want to become that person again. She feared that if she took a face then she would remember the euphoria it made her feel, making her want to feel it even more. But now was not the time to think of her feelings, not when her family was in danger.

“Well, are you going to tell me or muster in your thoughts all night?” He jabbed.

Arya threw him a look that would kill and he quickly apologized.

“Remember when you asked me if I used Needle and I told you I had, once or twice?” She waited for his response. He quickly nodded and motioned for her to continue.
“Well, it was more than once or twice. I’ve killed a lot of people, Jon. Remember the Freys? That was me. I killed Walder Frey and stole his face in order to kill the rest of them. Poisoned their food and watched them drown in their own blood. I trained to be a faceless man; to steal faces.” She confessed. She had only told Sansa of her history and only a little to Gendry. This was the first time she was telling her older brother; a man she trusted with her life.

The shock on Jon’s face was evident but he didn’t muster a word. He simply nodded, taking in every word that Arya spoke.

“I plan on taking one more face and I have to do it tonight.”

That elicited a response from the brooding man.

“And whose face is that, exactly?”

Arya pulled out a map from her satchel that was placed beside her. She lifted from her perch and moved to sit beside Jon on the log he was seated on.

“You see this right here?” She asked as she pointed to a dot on the map. “This is Stonehelm and is occupied by the Swann family. Lord Swann and his sons won’t be there, but his daughter will be. There is no doubt that she would have stayed behind while the men in her family did all the brute work.”

“Arya, Stonehelm looks as if it nearly a half a day’s ride, you’ll never make it back before sunup.” Jon mentioned.

“Aye, it’s half a day’s ride if you gallop like a mule. If I ride full speed, I can be there and back before anyone notices I’ve been gone.” She tries to convince him.

“I don’t know, Arya. I don’t like the idea of you going out there alone…at night. And we are talking about killing an innocent girl! You can’t be serious.” Jon was trying everything to convince her stay put.

Arya scoffed, “Innocent? Jeyne Swann is far from innocent. My friend Rena had told me many things about Lady Swann that has made me coil in disgust. She even tried to strike young Lyra when she thought I wasn’t looking.” The memory nearly brought tears to her eyes.

Lyra had been training in the yard with Arya after a rather wet day. The muds of the castles were wet and sticky, causing anyone who walked within it dirty in an instant. They had just come into the hall from her archery lesson, tracking dirty and mud all along the floor. Lyra was excited about the mud and ran into the hall, tripping over her own feet as she did so. Lady Swann just so happened to be in her path and the little girl slammed right into her, ruining her pretty silk dress.

“Ugh, you little fool!” Lady Swann had yelled. Arya could see her hand raised, readying to come down on Lyra’s face.

Arya had made her way over to them in record speed, grabbing Lady Swann’s wrist, pushing it out of her grasp and stormed up to the visitor’s chambers.

“Augh, you little fool!” Lady Swann had yelled. Arya could see her hand raised, readying to come down on Lyra’s face.

Arya had never felt rage like she had that day. It was that moment that she knew she would protect Lyra with her body if need be.
Arya shook the memory from her head and turned to face Jon. She could tell he was thinking deeply and contemplating the plan.

With a deep sigh, Jon nodded his head, “Okay. But only if you’re sure.”

Arya grabbed his hands into hers and gave them a reassuring squeeze, “I am sure. Those people in there are my family too and I can’t lose them.”

“You have to promise to be safe. And if you are not back by sunup, we march the gate. Understand?” His voice was stern but loving and Arya couldn’t help but smile at the thought that he sounded so much like their father.

“I promise and I understand, Ned Stark.” She joked.

Jon let out a soft chuckle and embraced his sister, squeezing her a little too tight. Arya felt peaceful in his embrace and was hesitant to let him go. He reminded her so much of the great late Ned Stark and although not biologically his, looked exactly like him. The older he got the more his features favored their father’s and it panged her heart ever so slightly.

“I have to go if I wish to return by day break. I also want to warn you that I will not look like myself. Don’t be shocked and don’t ask questions you don’t want to know the answers to.” She chided.

Jon nodded and released his sister. She gave him a soft peck on the cheek before mounting her horse and riding off into the woods.

She felt the cool night air flash across her face as her horse galloped at full speed. She didn’t want any risks or take any chances so she rode hard and she rode fast. Her main priority was getting to Stonehelm and back before the sun had a chance to break the horizon. She knew it would be a risky kill. Swann may have been an idiot but he wasn’t stupid. He would have his castle guarded for any repercussions that may make their way to his home.

Arya had to be smart about her approach. First, she couldn’t be seen. She would have to tie her horse just on the outskirts of the land and walk the rest of the way. Second, she had to get passed the guards without making any sort of sound; which was easier said than done. And third, she had to kill Jeyne and steal her face and try to get into Storm’s End without any suspicion. Yes, much easier said than done.

She had been out of practice, she will admit. When one is on a ship for five years, there is only so many places to hind a creep without it becoming repetitive. There would be times when they docked that she could practice her sleight of hand or her whispered footsteps across cobbled stone. Her water dancing had stayed with her for there was no shortage of crewmen who wanted to battle the Night King slayer. It was the killing she was weary about. The last person to meet their demise by her hand had been a crewman who decided to force himself one of her handmaids. The poor thing was frightened to the core and couldn’t create a proper sentence after the whole ordeal. Arya had tended to her as much as she could in her cabin below. Once she was able to calm the girl, she went above deck and took her Cat’s Paw dagger and sliced it across the man’s neck. That had been nearly four years prior and Arya wasn’t sure if she could take a life so easily as before.

Jeyne Swann was nothing short of an evil wench, but did she deserve to die? She hadn’t killed or murdered anyone Arya had cared about and she hadn’t even tried to hurt anyone on purpose, so did she really have to die? Arya was conflicted and wasn’t sure if she could slice her neck as easily as she done with the crewman or even Littlefinger. But maybe she could still use Jeyne as a bargaining tool. Lord Swann loved his daughter, that much Arya knew, and she had a feeling that he would do anything to get her back safely.
Arya reached Stonehelm in a little over two hours. Her horse was exhausted and her thighs were sore from gripping the saddle. She secured her horse to a nearby tree just on the edge of the woods. She fed him an apple for his hard work and began her trek to the castle.

It was much smaller than Storm’s End, but still had its own sense of fierceness. Arya noticed the black and white watch towers and made sure to remain in the shadows of night. Although the sun had set and the sky was black, it would not be enough cover for the young wolf. She had to remain unseen and unheard. She came up to the gates and noticed a number of guards stationed just outside of the main gate. A few other guards were patrolling the parameter of the castle. Arya noticed a small guard, not much older than she, walking towards her. Now was not the time for a conscience, so with one swift move, Arya drove her dagger into his neck, silencing his gargled cries. The guard bleed out quickly, never seeing the face that slayed him. She swiftly carved his face and became the unnamed guard. This was a risk, she knew, but she had to get into that castle and this was the only way. She dressed in his armor and situated Needle and Cat’s Paw where she could reach them easily. She knew she couldn’t speak; she didn’t know his voice, but she was able to see how he walked, and she picked it up with ease. Arya continued the patrol the guard was walking and ran the parameter. When she reached the front gates, a guard halted her.

“Stewart! Your supposed to be inside the walls! Get in there before Harding feeds you to the birds.”

Arya turned slowly and nodded to the guard while making her way inside the castle. She was surprised how easy that was, although it could have just been luck.

Once inside she shed the armor and face and followed a handmaiden inside the castle hall. Most of the small castle was sleeping, making her venture through the building easier. She had to find Jeyne’s chambers and she had an inkling that the handmaiden knew exactly where they were. Without thinking, she shoved the handmaiden into a nearby utility room, pinning her against the wall.

“I really don’t want to kill you, but I will if I have to. All you need to do in order to live is tell me where Jeyne Swann’s chambers are. This is a rather urgent situation, so I suggest you tell me immediately.” Arya whispered into her ear.

The handmaiden’s face went pale; her whole body shaking.

“She is up the stairs, the last room on the right.”

Arya nodded and knocked the handmaiden unconscious.

She shuffled through the corridors without so much as a sound. Her feet were light as feathers and her breathing was steady. She followed the handmaiden’s instructions and soon she was standing right outside Jeyne’s chambers. She didn’t see a light emitting from the room and guessed that the lady was now sleeping. With a deep sigh she grabbed the door handle and gently pushed it open.

The room was dark; the only light was the from the small candle seated on the small table placed by the chamber window. It wasn’t a large room and Arya could make out where most of the objects were. She glanced over to the bed and noticed a sleeping figure with blonde hair curled under a mountain of furs.

Jeyne Swann looked oddly peaceful as she slept, not the wicked girl Arya had come to know. It was strange for Arya to see her as that; a girl. Whenever she mentioned Jeyne Swann or even picture the foul woman it was always the same image that popped into her head. A high-born lady pointing her nose down at you as if you were nothing more than scum at the bottom of her shoe.

Arya turned from where she stood at the entrance and slammed the door behind her, startling the
young woman awake. She saw her fumble for the candle before she came to realize that another person was in her room.

“Arya Stark?” Her voice was like a putrid smell seeping with poison.

“Good evening, Jeyne.” Arya said coolly as she made her way to sit at the small table.

“What are you doing here? You’re supposed to be in Storm’s End.” She confessed.

“Am I? Well I guess your father got it wrong. No, I wasn’t in Storm’s End when he attacked. I was safely put away in King’s Landing welcoming my new nephew into the world.” Arya’s voice remained calm and calculating. Her stoic behavior made Jeyne feel slightly uneasy about the situation at hand.

“That’s impossible, we intercepted the letter. You couldn’t have known.”

This response peaked Arya’s interest. They had been intercepting letters and it seemed they had been doing it for quite some time.

“Did you, now? Well I suppose there were multiple ones. The point is, I wasn’t there and now I’m here.” Arya pulled Cat’s Paw from its place on her belt and she began twisting it around in her hands. She could see the fear sweep across Jeyne’s eyes and this elicited a smug smile to form on her lips.

“Don’t worry, I won’t hurt you. At least not yet.”

Jeyne swallowed, but her voice remained unwavering, “What do you want?”

“I want the truth, Jeyne. You tell me the truth and I’ll let you live. If you lie, I will carve that pretty little face of yours off and add it to a collection of faces long forgotten.” Arya scared herself at how much the truth was behind those words.

“I am not going to play your stupid games! Now leave before I have my guards called.”

Arya pursed her lips. She didn’t want to harm the woman, but she was proving more difficult than even her own sister. She lifted from her seat and came face to face with Jeyne. She towered over Arya by nearly half a foot, yet she was cowering in fear at the she wolf. Arya placed her dagger on the side of Jeyne’s cheek and dragged down, leaving a cut across her porcelain skin. The red ooze spilled from her wound and Jeyne quickly reached to cover the cut.

“You evil little bitch! Why did you do that!?” Jeyne yelled.

“That was a warning, Jeyne. Now you can play my game or die. Remember to tell the truth.” Arya returned to the chair and propped her feet atop the table.

“First question. What is your father’s plan?” She hadn’t expected the girl to relinquish all of her father’s information and if she did Arya would trust her even less than what she did now.

“We want Storm’s End.” It was the truth, Arya knew that, but it wasn’t the whole truth.

“What does your father plan on doing with the captives?”

“Kill them, probably, unless they are useful.” The ease of those words slipping out of Jeyne’s mouth frightened Arya.

“You would want innocent people dead?”
Jeyne shrugged, “Why would I care, I don’t know them.”

Arya’s blood began to boil, “And what of Gendry and Lyra?”

“We all know that bastard child doesn’t belong to Gendry. She looks nothing like him! That little bitch is nothing more than a nuisance that deserves to be rid of. As for Gendry, father will most likely kill him, even with me begging not to. I like Gendry and I don’t want to see him die. But you…you would have to be dealt with.” Jeyne spat.

Arya was up from her seat within seconds. Her dagger was firmly on Jeyne’s throat just itching to slice through it.

“Why kill Lyra? She is nothing more than a child!”

Jeyne’s mouth twisted into a wicked grin, “Because she would be the heir to Storm’s End and we need to tie up loose ends. All loose ends.” Arya noticed Jeyne’s eyes flick downwards to her abdomen.

“What are you talking about?” Arya said through gritted teeth. She pressed the dagger a little harder to Jeyne’s throat causing her to squirm in discomfort.

Arya needed to be careful and not get too emotionally wrapped up in situation. One wrong move, one wrong slip up and she could be dead instead of the girl in front of her.

“For being the Night King slayer, you are rather oblivious! My good sister has had three children; I know a pregnant woman when I see one.” Jeyne said as she winced in pain.

Arya knew better than to fall for silly tricks, yet she still did and looked down at her own stomach, instinctively reaching her free hand to cradle it. And that was the opening Jeyne needed. She shoved Arya from her, knocking her back into the wall. Arya stumbled but caught herself before falling on her arse. Jeyne had turned to run but was too slow for Arya Stark. With one swift movement Arya grabbed Jeyne’s pale blonde hair and pulled her back, causing Jeyne to fumble into the bed post.

Jeyne was livid and saw red. She shuffled to her bed side table and pulled a small three-inch dagger from the draw. As Arya approached, she swung stabbing the assassin in the upper arm.

Arya cried out in pain and she clutched her arm. She found the hilt of the dagger and pulled it from her arm, leaving a deep wound oozing with blood. Arya threw the small dagger across the room and turned her attention to the cowering girl who was trying so desperately to open her chamber doors.

But Arya was too quick and before she had a chance to turn the lock her throat was sliced open. At first Jeyne hadn’t noticed the blood pooling around her night cloths. It took her a second to realize that she was choking on her own blood and that her body was getting cold. She looked up at Arya’s storm grey eyes.

“You stupid girl! Why didn’t you listen.” Was the last thing that Jeyne Swann heard before she took her last breath.

Chapter End Notes

Okay so a lot to decompress. SOOOOOO....yeah a lot to go over. First, I contemplated a lot about killing Jeyne off or not and in the end I was like "fuck it" let's kill her. The
only sucky part about that it is now I have to write about how Arya is going to deal with that as well as the prospect of bringing a life into the world. Basically a lot of mental shit will be going down in the last chapter (definitely not the next one because Storm's End happens). But be prepared for that. Also like, I really didn't feel that bad killing Jeyne off. I wonder if this is what it is like for GRRM when it comes to killing character's off. Anyway, I hoped you enjoyed the fluff, angst and somewhat mild violence?
Fury is Coming

Chapter Summary

Arya concocts her plan and things don't turn out the way she exactly planned them

Chapter Notes

So...I finally finished the chapter! There is a lot that goes on in this chapter and I apologize if it ends up a bit choppy towards the end. I really wanted to get this out before tomorrow and I had some downtime here at work, so I finished it during that. I did enjoy writing most of this chapter, but what I am really looking forward to is the next chapter. It is the last one and then after that is the epilogue. I do want to warn you that there is a mention of rape in this chapter, so trigger for anyone. I will also be editing the tags to reflect that. Don't worry, thought all will reveal it self in this chapter. I want to fully let all of you know that the last chapter may not be posted until the end of July or beginning of August. I work the next 17 days straight and will have little to no time to write. I will try to get drabbles up for my other collection of fics to pass the time, but as far as a long chapter, don't expect it anytime soon. I tried not to leave this on a cliff hanger...I may have subconsciously have done so idk. Anyway, I really hope you all enjoy and let me know what you think!! As always, happy reading...maybe?

Fury Is Coming

Arya slipped out of Stonehelm without being seen. She had her satchel filled with a dress, shoes, and a pretty little face. She hated that she had to kill Jeyne Swann, but her family came first and if it meant disposing of an evil wench, then she wouldn’t hesitate. But she still couldn’t shake the feelings that had returned when she slit her throat. It was almost as if she missed the feeling; like it was an extension of her being that had repaired itself. The worst part was that she liked it. She liked how it felt and how it made her feel. She liked that she had taken a life again and some part of her couldn’t wait to do it again.

This feeling reminded her of her list that she so many years ago. Although fulfilled, she could remember each and every name upon it. There were a few names that had been removed in light of certain circumstances, but it still remained as such: a list of people that she would kill. She had new list now, and Lord Swann was at the top. She couldn’t believe the audacity that the man had! To plan the heist and to willingly kill your high lord. He was a stupid man to think that Bran would let him live after such things. The worst of it was that he decided to bring his children into the scheme, endangering not only himself, but his entire family.

Arya would make the man pay even if it meant the death of her.

As promised, she reached the camp before sunup. Her horse was beyond exhausted and even her own body ached. She had bandaged her stab wound on her arm during the ride back, so the ties were
not as tight as she had wanted them. She was no stranger to stab wounds, but it didn’t mean that it
didn’t hurt like seven hells. She knew Jon would reprimand her, but they didn’t have time silly
squabbles. She had to get back to her tent and turn into Jeyne Swann.

Once she reached the edge of camp, Jon came bursting out of his own tent ready to greet her. He
gave one glance in her direction and immediately called for a maester to treat her arm and her
swollen eye that she hadn’t realized was injured.

“What happened?” He asked her as they were seated in his tent.

The maester was stitching her arm and she had a wet cloth pressed to her upper right eye.

“She fought back.”

Jon chuckled, “Yeah, I can see. Did you…get it?”

She knew what he was asking. She pulled her satchel from the chair beside her and threw it over to
her brother. Jon caught it with ease and carefully lifted the opening, revealing a freshly carved face
with light blonde hair. His face went pale and he tried to swallow the lump that had risen in his
throat. It was hard to hear Arya’s story when she told him, and he knew that she had to do those
things to survive. He just never believed that she could be capable of something like this. Jon still
believed Arya to be his sweet little sister that didn’t like to do lady things, not some killer assassin
capable of becoming someone else.

He placed the satchel down and returned his gaze to his sister. The maester was nearly complete and
the swelling around her eye had gone down to it normal size. He could see the tiredness across her
face and half a mind to tell her to rest when he remembered that, not even he could make Arya do
something she didn’t want to do.

“So, what’s the plan?” He asked her.

Arya removed the wet cloth from her face and pulled her shirt over her head once the maester had
finished with his handiwork. She knew what the plan had to be. She was a master at deception and
would use what the faceless men of Braavos had taught her.

“I’m using Jeyne’s face to get into Storm’s End. I need two of the gold cloaks to shed their armor
and wear the Swann’s armor to accompany me. I was able to grab a few before I left Stonehelm. I
must admit that their soldiers aren’t as well trained as ours and could be easily over taken…if I can
get in. The sun is coming up and I can make up some excuse that Stonehelm was taken by Gold
Cloaks. I’ll say that I only managed to get away. They have no choice to let me in, especially if I
look like Jeyne. Then night will come, and I will sneak past the guards and open the gates. The
Swann men and whoever else that conspired with them will have no choice but to lay down their
weapons. Jon, I want as little blood shed as possible. These men are only taking orders from a fat
pompous pig with no moral code and don’t deserve to die.” Arya laid out the plan before her brother
and she could see the wheels in his head turning.

He took in every word she said and couldn’t deny that it was a bloody good plan. Even better than
the one they originally planned. Her way would prevent unnecessary death and give the men
following Swann time to surrender. But Jon still felt cautious. He didn’t want to risk the life of his
little sister and this plan put her at the very center of the chaos.

With a reluctant sigh he nodded his head in total agreement.

“They will, Jon. I will let the men know while you…change.”
Jon left the tent and left Arya to her own devices. She began to pace the large tent studying the situation at hand. All she had to do was wear Jeyne’s face and pretend to be her for a short while. This would be easier that imitating the guard she had killed. Arya had known Jeyne. She knew how she walked and talked and could easily become her. But she wasn’t sure if wanted to become her. With Jeyne’s revelation that Arya may be pregnant, she didn’t want to run any risk of harming the babe. But there was a possibility that Jeyne could have been lying about Arya’s condition in order to distract her. She wanted to ask the maester then and there, but Jon had been present and if he knew that she may be carrying he would have put a stop to the plan altogether. Arya couldn’t have that. If she was indeed pregnant than her child would know who their father is. She had to save Gendry because the thought of raising another child without him was unbearable. 

Arya grabbed the satchel from where Jon had left it and reached into the bag, pulling out her new identity for the next full day.

Putting on Jeyne’s face had proven more difficult than what Arya had suspected. She never put on a face of someone who she personally had known. Sure, the other faces she stole, she had to observe the person and their mannerism. She had to see what they did and how they talked and how they walked. But she never knew them. Arya had known Jeyne. She had carried conversations with the woman and had threatened her from time to time. It was at that moment, when she put on Jeyne’s face, that she truly understood why the faceless men became No One. You weren’t supposed to have feelings about the one you kill. It is supposed to be emotionless and void of relation. Putting on the face of someone she knew had felt different than those she didn’t know. Walder Frey or even a lowly house maid was easy to pretend, but Jeyne Swann without a doubt in Arya’s mind was her most difficult face yet. It took her a few tries to get Jeyne’s mannerism exactly right and imitating her voice was a test in it of itself. With only a few more hours until the sun hit the horizon, Arya became Lady Jeyne Swann.

She was dressed in one of the dresses Arya had seen Jeyne wear numerous of times. It was a long silk dress with long sleeves that flared at the bottom. The neck line was shaped like an V and stop just above the breast bone. Her waist was cinched with a large leather belt and the floral design had given the dress a light-hearted feel. Arya felt too exposed in the dress but had to wipe the feeling away. She wasn’t Arya Stark anymore, she was Lady Jeyne Swann and Lady Swann never felt exposed.

Arya tussled her hair, letting the long blond curls cascade down her back. She gave herself a small cut above her lip to make it look like she was hit with a fist. She had to play the part of escaped hostage and couldn’t show up to the gate without a scratch on her. She gave the dress she was wearing a few tears and pulls to make it look like it was nearly pulled off of her. Once satisfied with her look, she exited the tent.

Jon was waiting right outside with the two guards she had requested.

His face when he saw her was nothing short of disbelief. He knew it was sister standing before him, but if he hadn’t known it was her he would never be able to guess that real Jeyne Swann was dead. “Arya? Is that you?” He asked her as he got closer to where she was standing.

“My name is Jeyne Swann and I am your captor. I escaped the raid at Stonehelm and made my way here with two of my guards to meet my father.” Arya said calmly.

Jon pursed his lips, “Right. Jeyne Swann.”

He pushed passed Arya and followed the path leading down to Storm’s End. Arya mounted her horse and followed the two guards, slowly trotting behind them. Before they reach the castle gates,
Jon stopped the party and moved his horse to ride next to Arya.

“I have to leave you here now. Be safe and give ‘em seven hells.”

Arya couldn’t help but smile. She gave him a small nod and watched as he galloped back towards the woods. She was surprised at how well Jon had taken her face stealing. She had expected a bigger blow up from him; instead she was greeted with the same old Jon concerned about her wellbeing.

She turned back to the guards and motioned them forward.

The trek up to the castle gates didn’t take long. As she got closer she began to observe the outside of the castle. There were three soldiers standing guard and four patrolling the wall above. All were dressed in the Swann armor that the two Gold Cloaks were dress in now.

“Halt! Who approaches Swann Manor?” One of the soldiers standing before the gates yell.

Arya mentally laughs at the deluded name Lord Swann had given Storm’s End. As if a castle as mighty as this one would even be named something so puny. It was no more than a mockery for the castle and Arya could feel her blood boil at the name.

“We’ve come from Stonehelm with Lord Swann’s daughter!” The gold cloak on the right responds.

“Please ser, I wish to see my father! Stonehelm was attacked! I hardly made it out alive!” Arya whined. She did her best to imitate Jeyne, thinking of the many times she had whined to her father.

There were small whispers being exchanged between the soldiers and for a moment Arya was beginning to get nervous. She was sure these men had no idea what Lady Jeyne Swann looked like, thus allowing them to enter. If they were smart, they would bring someone out to greet them; to make certain that it was indeed Lady Jeyne Swann.

“Stay there! We will bring someone out to you to confirm your identity.” The same soldier stated. They aren’t as stupid as they look. Arya mentally noted.

They waited for several minutes before the large iron gate opened. A small figure emerged from the entrance and Arya recognized the auburn hair immediately. Rena had looked beaten and broken. Her hands were bound with chains and her Arya could see the raw skin where the shackles chaffed against her wrists. Rena’s left eye was swollen and bruised, and her bottom lip was busted open. She was dressed in no more than a thin cotton sham; her nipples protruding through the thin fabric as the wind swept passed them.

Arya wanted to scream. She wanted to run to Rena and shield her from any more harm. It took every ounce of self-control in her body to not jump off her horse and slay every single soldier in that castle. She hated seeing her friend in such a manner and could only imagine what they did to her. But if it is one thing that Arya knew about Rena is that she was unbreakable. They could beat her and burse her, but she would not break.

“Is it her? Is that Lady Jeyne Swann?” The solider asked Rena as he pushed her forward.

Rena lift her head and looked Arya in the eyes. She studied her face for a moment and Arya was hoping she couldn’t see through the façade. After several minutes of observation, Rena said, “Aye, that’s her.”

The soldier grabbed Rena’s arm and threw her to another patrolling soldiers. “Take her back with the others.”
The soldier nodded and began escorting Rena back into the castle. Arya saw her figure retreat and wanted nothing more than to follow her to where she was going.

“Come on, your father is waiting for you inside.” The soldier motioned them to enter. Without a beat, Arya urged her horse forward through the castle gates. Aside from a few burnt canopies and an empty forge, the inside looked unscathed. Arya recognized several of the castle workers. The looks on their faces were that of fear and dread. It would be no surprise if they had complied to Lord Swann’s demands. They were just trying to survive.

They led Arya to the stables and docked her horse into an empty pin. It wasn’t until she stepped down from her horse that she noticed the dead one it the corner of the stables. It was Windbreaker, Lyra’s horse. No doubt the coup had scared the poor creature and instead of calming the beast, they shot her dead with arrows.

“What happened?” She asked one of the soldiers as she passed the dead horse to exit the stable.

“It tried to run over your father. We had to shoot her down. It’s a shame, really. I heard she was a fast one.”

The soldier led her to the grand hall situated in the middle of the castle. There were scarcely any workers; not like it had been one a week ago. It was a strange sensation to Arya; being in a familiar castle, yet having it feel so foreign. It was Storm’s End, there was no denying that, but it didn’t feel like Storm’s End. To Arya, it just felt like on big cage trapping her inside.

They entered the grand hall and the first thing Arya noticed was Lord Swann along with his two sons seated at the main long table in the front of the hall. It made Arya sick to even look at the pompous man sitting where Gendry sat. It took everything in her to keep down what little food she had eaten on the journey here.

At first, Lord Swann was oblivious to her presence. He was preoccupied with shoving his fat face with whatever meat pie the cooks had scrounged up for him to eat. He was talking with his sons, going over some battle plan, and Arya could see his half-chewed pie spew out of his wide mouth. This man was truly grotesque, and the more Arya stared at him the more she struggled to keep the bile in her mouth.

“My Lord, your daughter Lady Jeyne, has arrived.” The soldier swiftly interrupted.

Lord Swann suddenly stopped from his conversation and looked up at them both. His eyes went wide with shock and he was suddenly descending from the high table. Arya had no inclination that that man could walk as fast as he did. Every time she meet the man he would swaddle back and forth like a woman heavily pregnant with a babe. He couldn’t take two steps without huffing for air, yet the moment he saw his daughter he had gotten over to her position in record time.

“My sweet Jeyne, what happened.” His voice was soft as he spoke to her.

Arya had to swallow her illness and pretend to be a distraught lady.

“Oh father! It was horrible! They raided the castle, the kings men, and began killing everyone they saw! I tried to escape, but not without being caught. A man grabbed me and hit me across my face. I didn’t know what was happening! If it weren’t for the two guards I rode with here, I would surly be dead.” Arya sobbed. She ran to Lord Swann and buried her face into his chest. She had to restrain herself from gagging as she smelt the stench of sweat and stale ale on his clothes.

“My sweet girl! Why was no raven sent? How did they even know we had taken Storm’s End?” He
questioned as he rubbed her head.

“It seems as if a letter was sent from here before the raid had ceased. And the worst part is that they have that treacherous Arya Stark with them. Oh father, it happened so fast! They killed everyone!” Arya rolled her eyes as Lord Swann continued to soothe her.

“Hush now. Why don’t we get you cleaned up and get you some food to break your fast. Then you can rest.” He reassured her.

Arya shook her head in agreement.

Lord Swann beckoned for a chamber maid to be brought to the grand hall. After several minutes, a girl Arya knew had entered. She was one of the chambermaids for little Lyra and was a sweet girl. Now, she looked terrified and fragile.

“My name is Desa, my lady.” She said to Arya as she curtsied.

“I don’t care who you are, just take me to my rooms.” Arya spoke. She hated that she had to be so mean to the girl, but she had to be believable.

“Of course, my lady. Right this way.” She motioned for Arya to follow her.

Before exiting the grand hall, Arya turned to ask Lord Swann a question, “Father? Perhaps after some rest I can be taken to where the prisoners are. I would like to laugh upon them at their failure.”

Lord Swann’s mouth turned into a wide grin, “Yes, my sweet, I would love to give you that pleasure.”

Arya gave a small curtsy and followed the chamber maid to her rooms. She scoffed when she had been escorted to her old chambers from when she first arrived at Storm’s End. She had never slept in them, of course, but she did go in there a couple of times for new clothing when her and Gendry were sneaking about their relationship.

“Here you are, my lady. Is there anything else I can assist you with before I leave you?” Desa asked her in a small voice.

“You can tell me where the prisoners are.” She stated.

Desa’s face paled, “Your lord father stated that he will take you to the prisoners after you’ve gotten rest. Besides, you really should have the maester take a look at that lip of yours.”

“I know what my father said! But I am asking you a question that I expect you to answer.” Arya’s voice was stern and hard.

Desa swallowed, “They are being held in the Round Hall, below the Lord’s chambers.”

“Why there? Why not the cells below the castle?” She asked.

Desa shrugged, “From what I’ve heard, they want to be able to keep an eye on all of the prisoners at once. But that is all I know, my lady, I swear it to the old Gods and new.”

“Oh, stop rambling like an idiot. That will be all.” Arya shooed the chamber maid away.

Desa gave a quick curtsy and left her in her chambers.

Arya let out a sigh as soon as the door closed. She was relieved to finally be alone. Keep up this
charade was proving difficult and she wasn’t sure how much longer she could pretend to be Jeyne Swann. As every hour passed, the overwhelming feeling of wanting to pull off of her face was increasing. She had to last until night fall. Once the stars were above head she would be able to shed Jeyne’s face and slay the soldiers guarding the front gate, allowing her brother and the troops to take the castle back. Arya had reminded her bother to inform Brienne and the Tarth men to enter the castle through the secret entrance when they heard the fighting. All she could do was hope the message was relayed in time.

Arya couldn’t waste time. She had to set the plan in motion and that started with getting a message to the prisoners letting them know help was on the way. After she had gathered herself in her chambers, Arya exited the room and began ascending the stairs to the Round Hall. She couldn’t wait until supper time to see them and she had to warn them to the impending raid.

As she reached the Round Hall doors she spotted two soldiers guarding the entrance. She had no doubt that there were probably more inside.

“Good day, sers. I’ve come to see the prisoners.” She said calmly.

“And who are you?” One of the soldiers asked.

“How dare you?! I am Lady Jeyne Swann, Lord Swann’s daughter! My father said that I could come see the prisoners and that is what I am doing.”

“I’m sorry, my lady, but no one comes in or out without the permission of the lord.” He replied.

Arya pursed her lips. She remembered the scowl Jeyne used to give her and etched it across her face.

“You question me? Once my father hears about this, he will have your heads.” She said as she began to turn on her heel.

The soldier quickly raised his hands, “No! I apologize, my lady. Of course, you may go in.”

A sly smile formed on Arya’s face and she thanked the young soldiers as they opened the door to the Round Hall.

Her heart sank as she saw the people she loved huddled in a corner of the Round Hall looking defeated and beaten. Everyone she cared about was in that hall. Rena and Archie along with their children were shackled together. Arya saw the tear streaked face of little Ginger clutching onto her father’s arm. Their babe, no more than ten moons was cradled in his mother’s arms. Joanna and Aster were holding onto one another for dear life. Arya could tell that Joanna wasn’t the same Joanna she had left a week ago. She was bloodied and bruised and looked so frail. Arya noticed that she was in same thin sham as Rena had been in. It did little to cover their bodies, leaving the women vulnerable to prying eyes. Arya also noticed the blood stain situated between Joanna’s legs. That sight nearly made Arya faint with pure anger. She vowed that she would find the man that took her maidenhead and flay him for all to see. Arya racked the room and noticed that Ser Davos and the head cook were also shackled together. They didn’t have many cuts or wounds on their body, but they could have looked better. It wasn’t until her eyes landed on Gendry that Arya nearly reeled the contents of her empty stomach. He was beaten so badly that his left eye was swollen shut. His nose was bent in an odd direction and he was clutching his side from what was no doubt several broken ribs. His wrists were bound together, like everyone else in the room.

Arya made her way to the group of prisoners despite the warnings coming from the guards. She shouldn’t have been thinking like Arya Stark, but she couldn’t help it. Her instincts were telling her
to save the people she loved, but her mind was telling her to stay put. She had a job to do and if she blew it now, then they would all be dead before sun down.

“My lady, please do not get to close to the prisoners.” A guard warned.

“Shut your mouth! I will do as I please.” She scolded.

This elicited a reaction from Gendry. He had recognized that voice and it wasn’t Jeyne Swann’s. It sounded similar to the Swann girl, but there was no denying that there was a hint of a northern accent in there too.

“Lord Gendry. Look at the trouble you’ve gotten yourself into now.” Arya teased. She tried to make it sound as if it would be something Jeyne would say, but she was finding that it was something she would say.

“What do you want, Jeyne? Come to torment me? Do your worst.” He casually spoke.

“No, I came to see my father’s prizes. I told you we would get Storm’s End, one way or another.”

Gendry scoffed. He was becoming annoyed with the Jeyne look alike. He wasn’t positive if it was indeed Arya, or if his mind was playing a cruel game. Perhaps the blows to his head had finally caught up.

“What do you want, Jeyne? Why are you here? Aren’t you supposed to be back at Stonehelm?” He questioned her.

“Thanks to that whore Arya Stark and her bastard brother, Stonehelm is gone! They attacked us in the dead of night a swarmed the castle. They came from both ends, they did. I barely escaped with my life!”

“And you expect me to feel sorry for you?”

“You stupid bull! Of course, you should!”

Gendry’s eyes snapped to hers. She gave a small wink and a small smile made its way to Gendry’s lips. *He knows!* Arya thought. She was relieved that Gendry was able to pick up on the subtle clues. She just hoped that he understood the plan from the elaborate story.

“Well, I do apologize, Lady Swann, but I have no ounce of sympathy for you.” Gendry spat. He tried to make his voice sound harsh, but failed at doing so. Arya tried to suppress a chuckle, not wanting to blow her well-guarded cover.

“Guard, I think I am done with seeing the prisoners for today. Please escort me to my room.” Arya said to the nearby solider. She tried to sound as spoiled and whiny as Jeyne had been. It was difficult, but she believed she pulled it off.

The solider led her to her chambers where she stayed until the dinner bell rang, indicating supper was now being served.

She made her way to the great hall and took her seat next to one of Jeyne’s brothers. Arya noticed the Great Hall fill with guards and soldiers alike. Most donned the Swann banner, but there were a few with banners that Arya had yet to learn. For the last three moons, she had been trying to learn all of the House Banners of those under House Baratheon. She was able to remember all but three and the one banner that had just walked in was unfamiliar.
“Lord Storm! So good of you to join us! We do appreciate lending a few men to fight in the heist.” Lord Swann’s voice boomed as he entered the Great Hall, taking his seat at the head of the main table.

“You are welcome, my lord. House Caron will help in any way possible.” The man answered.

Arya finally realized that the man standing in front of them was Rolland Storm, Lord of House Caron. It was surprising to say the least, considering House Swann and House Caron despised each other just a few short moons ago. Each had laid claim to being the oldest of the marcher lords, causing some unresolved conflict over the last decade.

“As promised, Stonehelm will be yours once we rid of the world of the last Baratheons. Although, I must regret to inform you that Stonehelm was taken the night before by the King’s men. Among them, the bastard Jon Snow and his wench of a sister, Arya Stark. My poor daughter hardly escaped with her life.” Lord Swann announced.

There were hush whispers that sounded the Great Hall. Many were surprised by the false information given to them. They hadn’t heard of an incoming army and were no way prepared to fight a crowd that large.

“I do beg your pardon, my lord? Stonehelm was taken? Should we have concern that they will attack Storm’s End next?” Questioned Lord Storm.

The whispers now turned to frantic conversation and Arya began to see the gaps in the already crumbling armor of what was Swann’s men. They weren’t well trained and most seemed genuinely terrified to fight an army of that of the Gold Cloaks and Unsullied.

“Silence! There is no cause for panic! Even if they march here to Swann Manor, they have no way of taking the castle. We can last a siege for years. If Arya Stark wants her bastard boy, then she will have to come and get him directly.” Lord Swann’s voiced echoed across the hall.

The very sound of his voice made Arya’s skin tingle with disgust. She couldn’t wait to gut him like the pig he is.

The chatter began to quiet and Swann’s men along with those of House Caron continued eating their meals.

Arya turned to her own plate and suddenly felt sick to her stomach. It was filled with foods like grapes, sweet apples, and chicken. A piece of brown bread sat on the edge of her plate while a large chunk of what looked like boar sat in the center. It was fine food, but the very thought of consuming any of it made her insides churn. Not even the mild ale would tame her grumbling stomach.

“Are you going to eat that?” The man sitting beside her asked.

She turned and was greeted with the male resemblance of Lady Jeyne. One of her brothers, no doubt, and perhaps the younger of the two. Arya did not know much about the Swann family, but she knew that Lord Swann had three children. His oldest and heir, Donnel Swann was married to a fair lady from the Stormlands. They have three children and from what Arya can remember, a forth on the way. Manfred Swann was the younger son and the middle child. Just from observation, he seemed to be the dimwitted one with no couth.

“Uh…no, I’m not.” Arya stated.

Manfred reached over and plucked the plate from in front of Arya and settled it before him. She was surprised by his gesture, but grateful that the smells of the food were no longer wafting into her nose.
The dinner seemed to last for hours and waiting made Arya tick. She hated the waiting and the staying still. If her hands weren’t doing anything to occupy the time, she would become impatient and fidgety. She was lucky that no one seemed to care that Lady Jeyne Swann was in their company, leaving Arya to her own thoughts and devices. It wasn’t long before she grabbed a large piece of brown bread and began tearing off chunks to pass the time.

After several hours of men eating and drinking their bellies full, most began to retire for the night. Some would go back on patrol while a few others would roll into whatever cot was available and sleep on their wine.

Arya was hoping that most would sleep, giving her brother and his men the advantage. Of course, they wouldn’t even be able to get into the bloody castle if Arya didn’t escape from this dreaded dinner soon. She glanced over towards the end of the table and saw Lord Swann falling into his cup. She gave a sly smile and lifted from her chair, making her way towards the stout man.

“Father, perhaps it is time for you to rest?” She encouraged.

Lord Swann looked up at her and gave a short nod, “Of course, my dear.”

He lifted from his own chair and stumbled over his feet, causing a few of the maids to catch his falling body. Arya could hear a frustrated sigh come from behind her. She turned to see that Manfred had lifted from his seat to help his intoxicated father.

“I’ll get him to his chambers.” He stated. He began to guide his father out of the Great Hall and down a corridor that Arya knew led to the nearby chambers.

Arya turned on her own feet and began to walk out of the Great Hall herself when a voice stopped her in her tracks.

“Mother would be proud.” It was Donnel, there was no doubt.

She turn to face him; her body half outside of the Great Hall doors.

“I beg your pardon?” She asked in an innocent voice.

“Mother would be proud that you are taking care of him in her absence. You really have grown from your childish ways, Jeyne.”

Arya narrowed her eyes. She better than to press a conversation that had clearly ended, but her curiosity got the better of her.

“Would mother be proud of you? Chaining women and children together?” She pressed.

Donnel’s eyes widened.

“You saw them? When?”

“This morning, shortly after I arrived. I understand that they are the enemy, but was it necessary to do that of small children?” Arya’s voice cracked ever so slightly, but she quickly reeled in her emotions.

“It was father’s idea. All of it was. I never wanted any part of this, if I am being honest. And why do you care so suddenly? You loved the fact that father had arranged this heist! What changed?” He began questioning her.
Arya remained calm and answered him with ease. “I only wanted Storm’s End and Gendry, I never wanted children to be harmed, even if they are brats. And you really didn’t want to do this? Any of this?”

He grunted in frustration, “No Jeyne! I was content living with my wife and children. I didn’t want to be dragged into this mess. I only went along with it because it was father! I actually like our High Lord and think he’s done a splendid job.” He paused and took a deep sigh, “I left Stonehelm after I married for a reason, Jeyne. I didn’t want to be a part of politics. Yet, here I am caught up in a heist that will surly get me killed, all because I can’t seem to shake our father’s demands.”

Arya’s face went soft. She understood Donnel’s predicament. She knew what it felt like to be caught between family duty and doing the right thing. It was a hard thing to choose between.

“You’ll live. I know it.” She gave him a small smile before turning and making her way up to her chambers.

Once safely inside, she latches the door behind her. She quickly tears off Jeyne’s face and tosses it into her satchel. She shed her dress and quickly jumped into her breeches and jerkin, securing Needle and Cat’s Paw on her waist belt. She reached under the bed and pulled out a bow and arrows, fastening the bow across her chest, while hooking the arrows around her waist. She tied her hair into a bun atop her head. It had grown out considerable and was more practical up than the normal half up half down style she preferred to wear. She slipped on her leather gloves and gave herself a once over in the large mirror situated in the corner of the chamber she was in. It was her simple get up and reminded her of her garments she had worn during the Battle of Winterfell.

She studied her reflection longer than normal. She looked the same, but there were features that had noticeable changed. Her face was rounder and her hips seemed wider. Her normal cloth to lay down her breasts felt more unconfutable than usual and her breeches seemed tighter around her waist. She turned to her side and noticed, just barely peeking, was a small swell curving on her lower abdomen.

She had ignored all the signs and chalked it off as stress, but now, as she looked at herself she realized that she was in fact with a babe. The thought terrified her but she also couldn’t shake the slight excitement she felt as well. She thought it impossible for her to carry children, yet there she was cradling the small bump. This was all the more reason for her to save the people she loved. To save the man she loved. She couldn’t stand the thought of having her child grow up without their father. It was a horrible experience that she had the misfortune of going through.

Once satisfied with her look and final realization that she was pregnant, Arya slipped out of her chambers and scurried through the dark corridors of Storm’s End.

She was quiet as a mouse and swift as a cat. Not a single soul would know that Arya Stark was inside of Storm’s End, aside from Gendry.

Arya made her down to the holding cells below the castle. Surprisingly there was not a single soldier or guard watching over the place. She slipped past several cells and made her way to a small passage that led straight to the beach. The tunnel was small, but she knew that wouldn’t stop someone like Ser Brienne of Tarth or her men. Arya was out of tunnel in minutes and was greeted by the warm salty air of the Stormlands. She looked off into the distance and notice a band of men gathered around a small campfire. By the looks of it, there were at least 50 men ready to fight. It hadn’t been the number Arya had hoped for, but it was sure to be more than enough to help take back the castle.

“Ser Brienne.” Arya spoke, startling some of the Tarth men. She had come upon them in silence, no one noticing she had even arrived.
“Lady Stark, a pleasure to see you again.” Brienne greeted with a bow.

“Likewise. I see you revived my brother’s letter?” Arya inquired.

Ser Brienne nodded grabbing the scroll from her satchel. She handed it to Arya and Arya took it gladly, giving the contents a quick read.

“Perfect. If you and your men are ready, then I can lead you back to the castle. We must hurry. I still have to let my brother in.” Arya motioned for them to follow her.

Brienne gathered her men and marched forward to the tunnel entrance. Just before entering, Arya turned to Brienne.

“I will go forward. You’ll know when to join?”

Brienne gave a short nod and Arya turned, running through the tunnel. She smoothly glided over rock and stone, making sure to not catch her foot on one. Once back inside Storm’s End, Arya ascended the stairs and like before, moved through the castle without making any sound. She made her way to the empty forge and observed the soldiers guarding the main gate. The forge gave a good vantage point where she could see all without being seen herself.

There were two soldiers along the tower above the gate and two standing right outside. With a shaky breath she docked an arrow into her bow and pulled it tight. She exhaled slowly and let the arrow fly, striking one of the soldiers taking guard by the gates, right in the neck. He slumped down in his place and before the other soldier could react, Arya let another arrow fly, striking him square in the eye.

The guards above were oblivious to the dead ones below. There weren’t able to see them due to the angle of the tower. Arya discarded her bow and swiftly made her way up the tower stairs. She released Cat’s Paw from its hold and gripped the handle tight. Just like at Stonehelm, Arya sunk her dagger into the guards next, causing him to gurgle his own blood. The other guard saw the encounter and was about to ring the warning bell when Arya took the dagger and threw it, causing it to stab the guard in his hand. He yelled in pain and struggled to unsheathe his sword. Before the guard had time to realize what exactly was happening, Arya stabbed him in the heart with Needle. The guard stumbled to the floor clutching his chest.

Arya turned and made her way down the stair to open the gate for her brother and his men. It gave a loud groan as the hinges sung open. Arya looked off into the distance and could hardly see the figure approaching her. There, riding in on his horse, was Jon.

“What took you so long?” He questioned as he dismounted.

“I had to kill four guards. Thank the Gods they didn’t know how to fight.” She said with a soft chuckle.

Jon pulled Arya into a warm embrace and gave her a soft kiss atop her head.

“I’m glad you’re okay. Now, let’s go save a stag.”

Arya nodded and they made their way into the castle. Grey worm and the unsullied along with several Gold Cloaks were close behind. She led them to the Round Hall where her family was being held. There were several guards at the door, but the moment they saw Jon and Grey Worm, they laid down their weapons and let them pass with ease.

Arya burst into the room but immediately stopped in her tracks. Lord Swann was in the Round Hall
with a knife held to Gendry’s throat.

“You must think me stupid, girl! I received a letter from Stonehelm shortly after my son took me to bed. There never was a siege! And now they can’t seem to find my daughter! Have you turned her? Where is she?” He yelled. His spit spraying everywhere.

“Lord Swann, it is over. Lay your weapon down. You men will not survive what is to come.” Jon spoke.

Lord Swann’s face went red with anger. “Not until you tell me where my daughter is. Or by the Gods, I will slit his throat!”

Arya could feel the bile rise in her throat. She wanted nothing more than to run to Gendry and save him from the pigs clutches. She swallowed the lump in her throat and took a deep breath before answering.

“Your daughter is dead, Lord Swann. She has been for nearly a day.” Arya’s voice was shaky as she spoke. She was terrified of what Lord Swann would do at the news.

“Liar! I sat with just a few hours ago. Now tell me where she is!” He yelled. The knife in his hand began to dig into Gendry’s skin and Arya could see a tiny drop of blood appear.

“That was me, Lord Swann! I killed your daughter, I stole her face and I wore it to get inside the castle! She is dead and if you don’t release Gendry, you’ll be next.” Her voice was calm and icy, sending chills down Lord Swann’s spine.

Arya’s hand rested on her dagger. In one easy move she could throw it and have it pierce Lord Swann’s eye. Gendry noticed the gesture and gave a look to Arya that screamed no.

“I-I don’t believe you! It was my daughter, I know it.” Lord Swann’s voice began to quiver causing his grip to loosen on the knife. This gave Gendry the opportunity to break free from his grasp. In one swift motion, he brought up his chained hands and pushed the knife from his neck. The movement surprised Lord Swann, causing him to stumble back. Gendry was able to pry the knife from Lord Swann’s hand and plunged it into his fat belly. The lord grumble in pain, clutching the gaping wound left by the bloody knife still in Gendry’s hands.

Arya moved to where Gendry was standing and grabbed the knife out of his shaking hands. She passed it to Jon and returned her attention to Gendry.

“Arya, I-” She quickly cut him off by crashing her lips to his. She could taste the stale blood from his healing lip but at that moment she didn’t care. She was so close to losing him; so close to never seeing his face again that nothing, not even the uncomfortable stares from the surrounding people, could tear her apart from him.

They pulled apart after a few minutes in each other’s arms. Jon and Grey Worm had unchained the other prisoners and a maester had been summoned to assess their wounds. Arya knew the physical wounds that they endured would heal, but the mental wounds would forever stay imprinted.

Lord Swann had succumbed to his wound, passing nearly instantly.

When the rest of them exited the Round Hall and made their way to the courtyard they saw all of the Swann men with their weapons on the ground with the Tarth men with their weapons raised against them. Brienne had a man half her size in a head lock, trying to keep him from escaping. Arya recognized the man instantly. It was Lord Rolland Strom of House Caron and he was whimpering like a baby.
“Take him along with any other man not willing to surrender to the holding cells. We will deal with them accordingly come the morn.” Gendry instructed.

Ser Brienne nodded and instructed one of her men to escort Lord Storm into the holding cells beneath the castle.

There was much to do in the night. Most of Lord Swann’s men had surrendered and agreed to swear their allegiance to Storm’s End. The men with Lord Storm were stubborn and agreed to stand by their lord, earning them a stay in the holding cells. The few bodies that dropped were put in the stables until a proper pyre could be built.

The maester finally attended to Gendry after he insisted that everyone else that was in the Round Hall with him were treated first. It was late in the night, with the sun just a few hours from rising. The maester stitched his open lip and applied a salve to his swollen eye. He gave him milk of the poppy for his broken ribs and instructed him to sleep. Of course, being the stubborn bull he is, he insisted on not taking the dreaded concoction and promised he would rest once the usurpers were dealt with.

“I will make him rest, thank you, maester.” Arya smiled.

“Of course, my lady.” The maester turned to exit the chambers they were staying in, but Arya stopped him before he could leave.

“Tell me, how are the other? The children?” Her eyes were pleading.

“They had minor injuries. The children are doing just fine.” He said with a small smile.

Arya nodded, “And what of Joanna? When I saw her she-she…”

Arya’s voice trembled as she remembered the blood stain on her white sham.

“Her moon blood. They hadn’t given her the proper materials to clean herself. She has assured me that her maidenhead is intact. They did nothing to her but give her a broken nose.” He assured Arya.

Arya let out a sigh of relief and escorted the maester out. She latched the door and turned to climb into the bed beside her sleeping bull.

She studied his face for some time. She wanted to remember every inch of it, even if she had seen his face a thousand times over. She truly loved this man and couldn’t imagine another day without him in it.

*Tomorrow, tomorrow I’ll tell him.*

And she drifted off to sleep.
The Seed Is Strong

Chapter Summary

Arya and Gendry begin to pick up the pieces of their life and some news bring family together.

Chapter Notes

AHHHH! I am so sorry that this took so long to get up!! I want to fully warn you that this is UNEDITED and there are a lot of mistakes. I have been writing this chapter for the last month and I just really wanted to get it out. I have one more chapter after this then the epilogue. Next chapter will be the wedding and it won't be a long one. I wanted to add the wedding to this one, but like this chapter was just DRAGGING. I was getting frustrated with it and I knew that it was just time to get it out there. Because it is unedited, there are some choppy bits and doesn't flow as well as I would like it to. I do plan on editing the entire story after I get it done, but that may take some time. Anyway, thank you all for your patience and enjoy!!

PS
This counts as my AXG Week entry for "Don't Lie to Me," I will be grabbing the bit that I wrote in this story and post it as a stand alone because it can be, I just have to rewrite it a bit. Happy reading!!

The sun gleamed through the thin curtains, spraying light heat across Arya’s aching body. The events from the previous night had left her sore and tired; her muscles felt like loose mud and the very thought of rising from the soft featherbed annoyed her. She was content on where she lay, with her very stubborn, very alive bull beside her.

He was gripping her tightly, her back to his front. They had fallen asleep like this, drowning so deep into slumber that neither had moved an inch while sleeping. Arya sank deeper into his still sleeping form and embraced the warmth that his body emitted. Although they had been apart for only several days, it felt like years had passed since she had been this close to him.

It was familiar feeling to have him cradle her in such a way and Arya could not help but smile as his hand rested over her stomach. She had not told him yet of the babe, but she was sure he would take the news with joy.

As swiftly and as quiet as she could, she turned her small frame to face his large one. She wanted to see his face while he slept. His eye was swollen still and his breathing was coarse; no doubt from the few broken ribs he had received from his beating by Lord Swann’s men. His lip sported a large cut and his nose was a shade of purple. Gendry had gotten the most beatings during their time captured, and Arya could tell on every inch of his body.

It panged her heart that she could not get to them sooner. Mayhap if she did, she could have spared him a few cuts and burses.
Arya wiggled her arm free from under Gendry’s and began lightly tracing his jawbone. She brushed her fingertips over his face, making small circles around his cheek. The light touches has stirred the sleeping bull from slumber. He cracked his good eye open and saw the face of the woman he loved staring back at him.

There was a comfortable silence between the two as he marveled at her beauty. Her gray eyes bore into his blue ones and her brown hair was disheveled in all kinds of directions. She had a small cut above her lip that was now healing, leaving nothing more than a small scar. Gendry also noticed how her face became rounder and fuller in the nearly four moons that she was had been there. Gendry reached up to brush a fallen piece of hair out of her face and leaned to press a small kiss atop her forehead.

“Good morning.” He said in a weak and groggy tone.

Arya smiled, “Good morning.”

Gendry groaned as he stretched his aching muscles, “Oh, I thought surely this was a dream and I was still held captive by Lord Swann, but alas, here you are wrapped in my arms.”

“Mmm, well I hope I am better company than the arrogant Lord Swann.” She mused as she gave Gendry a long kiss.

Gendry happily returned the kiss and enveloped Arya into a tight hug. He breathed in her scent; the smell wafting his nose with familiarity.

“Thank you, for saving me. For saving all of us.” He whispered into her ear.

Arya pulled back from the embrace and looked into Gendry’s eyes. There were welling with tears as she grasped his face in her hands.

“You do not need to thank me. I would have done everything twice over if it meant that you were safe. I love you and I cannot imagine my life without you in it any longer.”

Gendry smiled, “Good, because I do not think I would be able to give you up as easily as before.”

They laid in bed for a better part of an hour before a small knock stirred them from their embrace. Gendry rolled over and hobbled out of the bed, grabbing onto his side and wincing in pain as he did. His ribs were sore and the maester had warned him that the pain would be debilitating. He groaned as he trudged across his chambers; his feet feeling a hundred pounds heavier.

It took him longer than normal to reach the door and with a quick jest he released the latch and sung open the oak barrier.

Jon was standing in the doorway. He had yet to get used to the idea of his little sister having a man in her bed, but that could be discussed at another time.

He was standing with a tray of sweet bread and honey along with a pitcher of water. Gendry pushed the door open even further so that Jon could enter with ease. He shuffled to the small table in front of the fireplace and set the tray down, grabbing a chair to sit as he did so.

Gendry’s cheeks were flushed red and Arya could not help but smile at his slight embarrassment. This man had survived Gold Cloaks and Wights only to be scared out of his breeches by her brother. It was an amusing exchange as Arya glanced between the two men she loved most in the world. She could see the uncomfortable stance that Gendry was holding as he hesitantly sat across from Jon.
With a groan, she shifted out of bed and grabbed her nearby breeches, pulling them over her hips with a slight jump. They had become tight here of late and she knew exactly why. She drifted towards the table and drooled over the smell of the sweet bread. She was ravenous and could devour a whole cow if they would let her. She took the seat beside Gendry and grabbed a piece of sweet bread from the tray, lathering it up with honey. The bread was warm and smelled as if it had just come out of the hot stone oven. Arya shoved the sweet bread into her mouth and moaned with delight. It had been nearly 24 hours since she last ate and her body was craving sustenance.

“Hungry are we?” Jon questioned as he raised a thick eyebrow in her direction.

Arya grumbled, “I’m ravenous.”

She took another bite of her sweet bread and grabbed her goblet to water to wash it down. Gendry grabbed his own piece and nibbled at the baked good.

“I have received a letter from Dany. Lyra is doing well and has yet to question where you are. I think the twins have been keeping her occupied.” Jon states as he hands Gendry and Arya the letter.

Arya smiles at the sweet words Dany wrote. She jabbed Gendry in the shoulder and said, “I told you she would get along just fine.”

“Yeah, yeah, you were right.” He said as he rubbed her shoulder from her jab.

“Bran also sends his regards. He trusts that you will punish those accordingly.” Jon states.

Gendry swallowed and nodded his head.

“Speaking of…who do we have imprisoned?” Arya questioned.

Jon sat up in his chair. He pulled a piece of parchment from his jerkin and handed it to Arya.

“We have Lord Storm along with several of his banner men. Lord Swann’s sons are being held prisoner. His oldest claims full responsibility on behalf of his dead father, but I doubt he is telling the truth. Most of Lord Swann’s soldiers have laid down their arms, and have sworn fealty to Gendry.”

“Donnel is lying. He never wanted any part in this coup. If anyone deserves to be set free, it is he. As for the other son, I do not really know what his role was. Give the lands to Donnel; he will make an excellent lord.” Arya stated through chews.

“And what about Lord Storm? Is there anyone else who can rule over House Carion?” Gendry asked.

Arya shook her head, “Not that I am aware. As much as I want the man to rot, I do not think we should kill him. According to Rena, he was not a part of the original coup against you. I believe he got a little over zealous and followed a stupid Lord thinking he would get more land.”

“That still does not excuse what he did.” Jon stated matter of fact.

“Of course not, but must the man die?” Arya countered.

“What? The all-powerful Arya Stark does not want a man dead. What is this strange miracle?” Her brother teased.

Arya threw her fork at his head, which he narrowly missed. “On the contrary, Jon. I do not want all men dead. I am just…tired of all the killing and death. I have had enough of it.”
She spoke the truth.

What she did the night before was necessary but the feeling of taking a face had not set well with Arya. She hated that she enjoyed so much; that taking a life was as simple as a snap of the fingers. If she was indeed with child, then she did not want them growing up around death. She did not want Lyra growing up around death. There were alternatives for men like Lord Storm and she would see to it that there was another option.

“We could send him to The Wall. If that is still a thing.” She suggested.

Jon scoffed, “Arya, the wildlings man The Wall. A man has not been sent north to take the black since it fell five years ago. Although….we could send him to live among the wildlings. Tormund can reform any man.”

Arya glanced at Gendry and he nodded in agreement.

“Good, that settles it then. We send Lord Storm to Tormund and Donnel can keep his family lands. If his brother was a part of this coup, then send him with Lord Storm. He’d never survive a day.” Arya said as she pushed from her chair. She circled around the table and headed towards the oak door, opening it for Jon to exit the chambers.

“We will be down in a few. Thank you for the food, now please leave.” She said to him as she waved her hand to gesture him out.

Jon chuckled and rose from his seat, giving Gendry a sturdy pat on the back, “We will talk later.”

Gendry gulped and gave a slight nod as Jon exited the room. Arya closed the door behind him, latching it for good measure. She did not want any more unwanted guests to interrupt their morning. She crossed the room and embraced Gendry into a tight hug.

“How long do you think we have until the maester comes to check on my wounds?” Gendry whispered against her lips.

She chuckled, “Not long. Besides, as much as I would love to take you to bed and rip your clothes off, we have to get ready to greet your castle. They have been through a horrific experience and they need their Lord Paramount to reassure them.”

“Don’t you mean ‘our’ castle? You will be their ‘lady’ soon enough, they should hear from you as well. After all, you did just save them.” He pulled back to look her in the eyes.

Arya groaned, “Gods, I hate talking to people.”

“You won’t have to do it much, just this once…and maybe after we marry.” He joked.

Arya scoffed, but could not help but have a smile on her face. The word ‘our’ felt nice against her lips and she truly could not wait to experience that life with the man that she loved.

They stayed embraced until another knock pulled them apart. Arya went to open the door, revealing the maester on his morning rounds.

She let the old man in and he immediately went to assessing Gendry’s fresh, but healing wounds. He applied another layer of salve over Gendry’s lip, protecting the gut from any dirt that may make its way inside the cut. He then began to bind Gendry’s abdomen to help relieve some of the pain from the broken ribs.
Arya watched the maester work on her injured lover and tried to suppress a laugh each time Gendry’s face twisted in pain. She did not take enjoyment at his pain, but rather the faces he made towards the maester every time he would jab something painful on Gendry’s body.

For nearly an hour, she watched the maester work. It was a remarkable sight; she had never actually seen a maester work and the intricacies and dedication that they put into their work was extraordinary.

“How long have you been a maester?” She asked as she pressed a cold rag to Gendry’s eye.

“Nearly thirty years. I decided to join just shortly after my 21st nameday.” He responded.

Arya nodded, “So, you have seen quite a bit of things?”

“Aye, I have.”

“How many babes have you delivered?” She questioned.

She knew she was walking on hot coals. She did not want to shout she was pregnant, but more so imply just enough for the maester to understand her and for Gendry to be completely oblivious.

“Thirteen babes. All survived, as well as the mother. Why do you ask?”

Arya sighed. She wanted so badly to tell them that she thought she was pregnant. But, what if it turned out that she was not? She could not help but feel a slight panic rise in her chest. For years, she believed to be barren, but now there was a possibility that perhaps she was not. It was not the fear of not being with child that scared her; it was the disappointment that she would feel if she was not. With as much courage as she could muster she said, “Because, I think that I may be with child.”

Both men has swiftly lifted their gaze to her.

Gendry’s expression was that of shock, excitement, and confusion while the maester showed nothing but concern. He quickly finished up with Gendry and shuffled over to Arya’s side, instructing her to lift up her blouse. With some hesitation, she did as he commanded and the maester immediately went to pressing on her soft, yet firm abdomen. He did not seem to notice the scars that racked her abdomen. If he did, he did not mention it.

“Hmmm, you may very well be. Your belly is firm and there is a slight roundness to it, but it is still too soon to tell. If you are, I can wager that you are maybe three or four moons along. Have you bleed recently?” The maester asked as he finished examining her belly.

Arya’s cheeks turned a bight shade of crimson. She had not talked to anyone; expect Sansa, about her moon bloods. It was an embarrassing topic for her, considering her last bleed was at the age of thirteen.

“I-I do not bleed, maester. I have not bleed since my thirteenth year.” She confessed.

The maester pursed his lips, “No doubt from your physical activities that you’ve endured in your younger years. I have seen it before, especially with young women who do more dutiful tasks than their men do. Not to worry dear, that does not mean that you are not with child. I have encountered at least three other women who did not bleed that had children of their own. Come to me later and I will conduct a few tests to see if you truly carry a babe.”

Arya nodded and escorted the maester out of their chambers. She clicked the door behind him and returned to her dumfounded bull still sitting on the bed with his mouth hung open.
“Why the look of surprise?” She asked him with a smirk and she returned to her chair at the table.

“You are with child? But I thought...you told me...how did this happen?” He stuttered.

Arya chuckled at his utter confusion, “Well, when a man and woman love each very much—”

“Do not patronize me. You know what I mean, Arya.” Gendry interrupted, with slight irritation in his voice. The excitement had worn off, leaving only the confusion and fear.

“I thought you said that you could not bear children. You said that The Waif...what she did to you, damaged your insides.” He looked at her with questioning eyes.

Arya sighed, “I truly thought that I could not. Between missing my moon bloods and the attack from The Waif, I was highly certain that I could not carry a child. I guess I was mistaken.”

She looked over towards Gendry. His face was still mixed with confusion, but the surprise had now turned to fear. She could tell he was afraid. She was not sure of what, exactly, but it was evident that he was afraid.

“Talk to me. Do you not want this child?” She said in a small voice.

Gendry snapped his gaze to hers. He immediately stood from their bed and made his way to where Arya was sitting. He gently lowered onto one knee and grasped her hands into his.

“Of course I want the child! What would have you think otherwise?”

“You look terrified, Gendry! I thought...well I do not really know what you thought.” She confessed.

Gendry chuckled, “Seven hells, I am terrified! A new born babe is always scary, but we will face it together.”

Arya smiled and pulled Gendry to meet her lips. She kissed him longingly and fiercely and never wanted to let go, but he pulled from her and she suddenly missed his presence.

“Come, the people want to see us and I think we have hidden for far too long.” He said as he lifted her from her chair.

Arya groaned and reluctantly followed behind him.

The descended down the stairs and made their way to the Great Hall. Although the Round Hall would have been a more suitable place to address the loyal liege lords and people of Storm’s End, the wounds of what happened there were still too fresh.

A large crowd had gathered in the Great Hall. Everyone from the liege lords to the housekeepers were accounted for. Even a lowly merchant from the nearby town had made an attendance. Arya was surprised to see such a large gathering, but it was comforting to know that there were still plenty of people that believed in Gendry to be Lord Paramount.

As they entered, Arya noticed that Jon, along with Ser Davos, Lord Archie and his wife, Lady Rena were all seated at the main table atop the large dais. There were two chairs that laid empty, seated right in the middle of the table. Arya and Gendry stepped onto the large dais and took their seats amongst the rest of their party.

Gendry lifted from his chair and cleared his throat before speaking to the crowd before him.
“Thank you all for coming. I know most of you are here to see what will become of those that have betrayed no only me, as their Lord Paramount, but the crown as well. For those who do not know, Lord Swann is dead. He threatened me, my family, and my other liege lords causing me to take action. His own stupidity killed him. As for those who followed him, they have been dealt with accordingly. I know that most of you here felt the tyrannical force that Lord Swann had bestowed these last few days. I can say nothing but thank you. Thank you for your understanding and your cooperation.”

Gendry nodded and the crowd before taking his seat once more. He turned to Arya and smiled, lightly squeezing her thigh under the table. She grasped onto his hand and assured him that he did was what right.

The rest of day was spent speaking to the liege lords and informing them of the pressing matters that did not need to be spoken in front of common folk. Gendry was gone the better part of day, leaving Arya to roam around Storm’s End for the first time in days. She started off by going to the stables. Little Lyra’s horse had been burned with the rest of the dead, leaving only a handful of horses in the stables. Arya was glad to see that horse who have given birth not too long ago, was still kicking, along her babe.

“I am surprised to see you here.” Rena’s voice said from behind Arya.

Arya jumped and turned to see her friend. Her wounds were healing, thanks to the maester, but the glimmer that was once in her eyes were now dulled by the recent events.

“Rena! Seven hells, you scared me.” Arya said as she clutched her chest, trying to ease her racing heart.

Rena chuckled, “Now you know how it feels.”

Arya laughed and looked at her friend. She could tell that Rena was not the same Rena she left just five days ago. This Rena was quiet and reserved and had a weariness to her that Arya was not used to.

“How are you?” Arya asked her after a short period of silence.

Rena scoffed, “The physical wounds will heal, but the mental ones may take longer. What is worse about the whole thing is that my children had to endure it.”

Rena’s voice cracked and she could no longer hold her composure. The tears welled in her eyes and spilled along her cheeks. Her young son would never remember the whole ordeal, but little Ginger had awoken in the early morn with nightmares that plagued her young mind.

Arya could not stand to see her friend in such turmoil. She quickly reached over to Rena and embraced her into a tight hug, letting her own tears weep from her eyes.

Arya knew what it was like to have those mental wounds. Even years after what she endured, there were occasions she would wake in terror. Since she has been in Storm’s End, the nightmares were less frequent, and she likes to think it was because of Gendry.

The two women held their embrace even after their tears were dried. It was comfort for the both of them to have someone who understood what the other was going through. Arya squeezed Rena once more before letting her go. She wiped her tear streaked face and laughed at the fact that the second time she has cried was in Rena’s presence.

“On a better note, I have something to tell you.” Arya said.
Rena perked and Arya saw a glimpse of the old Rena she used to know. “What is it?”

“Well, I am going to the maester later to confirm, but I am with babe.” For the first time since knowing, Arya did not feel embarrassed or hesitant when speaking about her pregnancy. With Rena, it was different. There was an ease when it came to telling her. Perhaps it was because she was a young mother and someone that Arya could turn to if she had any questions, which she was sure she would have.

Rena’s eyes sparkled, and for the first time in several days, Arya saw the old Rena return. She quickly embraced Arya and laughed with joy.

“That is amazing…unless it is not?” She suddenly realized as she let go of Arya.

Arya shook her head, “At first it was terrifying. For as long as I could remember, I never wanted children and there was time where I thought I could not carry them. Then I find out that I may be with child and,” Arya shrugged, “I guess it had to do with who I created that child with. I am not going to lie I am still terrified. I still have some reserves, but I am hoping that you and my sister will be able to help me through that.” She confessed.

Rena gleamed, “Of course I will help!”

The two women laughed and talked for some time before Arya left the stables. Rena stayed behind to watch the horses and Arya thought that with time, she would be the same Rena as before.

The day was nearing an end and Arya had stayed in the stables longer than anticipated. Gendry should have been finished with his liege lords, but that was not the man she was looking for. Jon had stated that he would be headed to King’s Landing come the morn, and she needed to speak with him before he left on his journey.

She wondered the castle grounds until she finally came upon him in the Great Hall. Most of the early morning crowd had dissipated leaving just a few stragglers behind. Jon was seated at the head table munching on stale bread and more often than not, stale ale. She climbed the dais and took a seat beside her brother, who seemed lost in thought.

“Something on your mind, big brother?”

Jon jumped slightly, but chuckled when he realized it was Arya that had greeted him.

“Mmm, everything is on my mind. How’d you guess?” he asked as she shoved another piece of bread in his mouth.

“Because you are brooding.” She stated matter of fact.

Jon scoffed, “I do not brood.”

“Yes, you do. Do not make me ride all the way, to King’s Landing to ask your wife if you brood. I’m sure her answer would be ‘yes.’” Arya laughed.

Jon chuckled. He finished off his ale and turned to face his sister.

For the first time since she had been back from her travels, Jon really looked at Arya. He could see that she was no longer that little girl he had held so close to his heart. She was woman grown taking on responsibilities he never thought she would. He could see how mature she had gotten in her time away, and although he hated the idea of her leaving Westeros in the first place, he cannot disagree that it helped her in many ways.
“Why are you staring?” Arya asked after sometime.

“I am just admiring how much you’ve grown in these last few years. I did not see it in King’s Landing, but here, I can tell.” He said as he pushed a strand of hair away from her face.

Arya smiled, “Thank you? I think. So… I hear you ride for King’s Landing in the morning. Are you coming back?”

“Aye, I am. Who do you think asked me to go? I am bringing back the whole troupe.” Jon said with a wide smile.

“Everyone? As in… everyone?” Arya asked, wide eyed.

“Yes, dear sister, everyone. Gendry had mentioned riding up to King’s Landing to retrieve Lyra, but I had a better idea. I think Sansa is tired of the capital and would enjoy an escape. The twins will love it and Bran needs a break from kingly duties. Since I offered to go, Gendry asked me to bring Lyra. It gives you two sometime to yourselves” Jon said matter of fact.

Arya did not miss how Jon mentioned her time with Gendry. She could tell that he still felt uneasy about their pairing and perhaps a little betrayed that Gendry did not mention to him sooner that he knew Arya. It made telling Jon all the more difficult. She knew that he was a man of honor, so his reaction to her being with child is one she does not look forward to seeing.

With a deep sigh and quick clearing of her throat she says, “I have something to tell you.”

“You’re with child.” He said before she could even muster her response.

Arya stared at him with wide eyes. She did not think that it was yet noticeable, but perhaps she was mistaken. She shifted uncomfortably in her chair, trying to avoid Jon’s gaze. She could feel his eyes dig into her skin and the lingering silence only made the situation tense.

“How…how did you know?” Arya finally asked after she mustered up whatever courage that was left in her small body.

Jon shrugged, “Gendry told me. ‘Bout killed him when he did. He was not thinking when he told me. Figured you would want to tell me, but it came out in a rush. I think he was just excited.”

“Well if you did not kill him, I certainly will!” She exclaimed.

Jon waved his hand dismissively, “Oh leave the poor boy alone. It was an accident.”

Arya furrowed her brows in confusion. She was oddly surprised at how well her brother was handling the news of her pregnancy out of wedlock.

“And you are okay…with all of this?” She asked as she gestured to her stomach.

Jon sighed, “If I am being honest, no, but I also know that if you did not want it then Gendry’s cock would be cut off. I also know that he loves you and you love him and you two would protect each other to the ends of the earth. As an older brother that is all I can ask for.”

“Thank you. Truly.” Arya said to Jon. She lifted from her chair and embraced her older brother.

He returned the embrace and tried to hold the tears that were threatening to spill.

Jon released his sister and watched her sit back into the chair. He finished off his ale and began picking up the remnants of his meal when Arya asked, “Where is he?”
“Who?” Jon inquired.

“The bull headed man that spilled my secret?”

Jon shrugged, “Try the forge. He mentioned a scuffle with one of his liege lords and wanted to blow off steam.”

Arya nodded and watched as her brother departed.

She stayed at the grand table for a short time, munching on whatever left over bread there was. Dinner would not be served in the Grand Hall today, which meant her meal was most likely waiting for her in their chambers.

The sun was beginning to set and Arya had contemplated on going to Gendry in the forge, but the idea of the taste of honey and stew was consuming. Despite her better judgement, she went towards the forge where she could see Gendry hammering away at a hot piece of steel.

She could tell that each swing hurt more than the previous. With his injured ribs, she could not imagine that the task was an enjoyable one. She watched him swing and swing; the sweat pouring down his face. Even with the light breeze of night, the air was still sticky causing the forge to feel like an inferno. Arya could feel the heat wafting from the fires causing her leather breeches to stick to her skin.

Gendry was shirtless, aside from the leather apron that adorned his body. His focus was solely on the steel in front of him. Within the last several years, he had gotten better at drowning out the world around him. He knew that the only place that he would feel content was in the forge, hammering away. It reminded him of simpler times. Albeit, those times were dangerous, but at least he did not have a whole damned kingdom to run.

“I thought lords weren’t supposed to work in the forge?” Arya said as she crept from the shadows.

Her sudden presence made Gendry jump with fright. He eased once he realized that it was just Arya.

“And I thought that princesses were not supposed to lurk in the shadows.” He quipped as he set his hammer down on the table beside him.

Arya smile and crossed the forge to where he was standing. She wrapped her small frame around his and breathed in deep, basking at the scent he was emitting.

“When have I ever been a proper princess?” She grumbled.

“Never. But when I have ever been a proper lord?” He countered.

Arya chuckled, “Never.”

They remained in silence as she embraced him. She was careful not to hug him too tightly, for his ribs were still bruised and broken.

“So, about Jon.” Arya chimed after some time.

Gendry’s face paled and he shifted uncomfortably in her embrace. He moved from Arya and returned to the fires, stoking them to burn brighter.

“What about Jon?” He asked innocently.

“You told him?” She questioned. He could see from the corner of his eye. Her arms were crossed
and her stance was that of annoyance.

Gendry cursed silently under his breath, “Told him what?”

Arya grumbled in frustration, “Stop trying to deflect the question. You told him about the babe, did you not?”

*Seven hells*

“Mmmm, I do not recall.” He was digging a bigger hole for himself with every word that came out of his mouth. He should have known better than to believe Jon.

*I will not tell her you told me*, Gendry recalled their conversation. He had scoffed at the proclamation, knowing it was nothing more than a load of horseshit.

“Don’t lie to me, Gendry. It doesn’t look good.” Her hands were now placed on her hips and he knew that he was in trouble.

With a defeated sigh, he dropped his head and nodded, “Aye, I told him, but it was an accident! I swear!”

Arya burst into laughter, making Gendry’s scared expression turn into one of confusion.

“Oh, I know it was an accident. I just wanted to see what you would do if you were confronted. Now I know that you will never be able to lie to me.” She laughed.

Gendry scoffed, “I was never able to lie to you when we were children.”

She crossed the room and gave him a small pat on the chest, “It was a valiant effort. Now, please, come to bed.”

Gendry nodded and leaned down to peck her lips, “As milday commands.”

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Jon had left the following morning, leaving the couple to themselves. Although she wanted nothing more than to spend her time with Gendry, she knew that he was still a lord and had lordly duties to attend. She herself tried to keep busy with archery lessons to the small folk that worked in the castle. Most of her students were young women eager to learn the trade. Rena had even decided to learn how to shoot from the famed Arya Stark.

Between her archery lessons, she would practice her water dancing. She wanted to get in as much as she could before her belly swelled, preventing her otherwise.

As the night came, she would trudge up the stairs, muscles aching and stomach growling, only to be greeted with her stubborn bull half finished with his supper.

For nearly a week, they maintained this routine. It was becoming familiar to Arya, yet she still could not wait for her family to arrive. Storm’s End had been rather quiet without little Lyra causing a ruckus. Arya was sure that the little lady was enjoying her time, especially with her new found cousins. She was preparing herself for all the stories that Lyra would be telling her in the coming nights.

When the royal envoy was spotted just beyond the tree line, Arya became giddy. She was like a little girl again, running up to the gates to await their arrival. She stood for nearly an hour waiting for the
envoy to enter the gates. Three large carriages came through, each for members of the royal family.

The workers around Storm’s End were scrambling to make the castle presentable. It had been ages since royalty had made their visit, exciting everyone from the young to the old.

Sansa was the first to exit her carriage. Podrick was right behind with their babe nestled in his arms. Arya nearly toppled Sansa over when she ran to embrace her sister.

“It’s good to see you too.” Sansa exclaimed with a chuckle.

The housekeepers began to loosen the trunks from the carriage, taking them to their respective rooms.

“Oh please do be careful with that one.” Sansa chastised to a young girl who had dropped one of her small trunks in the mud. The young girl blushed and nodded quickly as she retrieved the trunk.

Bran was the next to exit his carriage. Meera was close behind, along with Tyrion and, who Arya assumed to be, his wife.

“Lady Arya.” Tyrion bowed as he passed her.

“Lord Tyrion.” She bowed in return.

He and his wife went to stand behind the Lord of Storm’s End as they awaited the exit of Jon and Dany.

Just a few short moment later, the third and final carriage’s door burst open. A mop of brown curls jumped out and immediately ran to Gendry’s open arms.

“Papa! I missed you so! I had a lot of fun with the princesses. They are my new best friends. I cannot wait for Ginger to meet them!” She shrieked as Gendry lifted her up into a giant hug.

Gendry chuckled, “I am sure that Ginger will be enthralled with them.”

Lyra threw her arms around Gendry’s shoulders and hugged him fiercely. It did not take her long to realize that Arya was standing just a few short feet away. She wiggled out of Gendry’s arms and ran towards Arya with a toothy grin.

“Arry! Arry! Where were you?” She asked as Arya lifted her.

“Oh, sweetling, I had to come back here and help your father with things. You were having so much fun that I did not dare bring you back. I’m sorry if I worried you.” She whispered to the young girl. Tears were threating to spill from her eyes. If she had not been able to save Gendry, then she would not know what would happen to little Lyra. She was sure that her family would protect her, but there was the chance that Lyra would never truly be safe.

“’sokay.” She shrugged. She quickly placed a snotty kiss on Arya’s cheek. Arya smiled and hugged her tightly, taking in the faint smell of lavender and coal that the child emitted.

She placed Lyra down and Lyra immediately when bouncing back to the carriage where Jon and Dany had finally emerged, their twins as their heels. Lyra grasp each of the twin’s hands and pulled them from their parents, running off towards the Great Hall.

Arya smiled as she saw the young children depart. She turned towards Jon and pulled him into a tight hug.
“Thank you.” She released him and turned her gaze to Dany, “Both of you.”

“I do not mean to interrupt our greetings, but we have a wedding ceremony to plan.” Sansa intervened.

Arya’s eyes widened and she glanced over to Gendry, whose face was full crimson.

“What do you mean?” Arya slowly asked as she looked around the courtyard at each of her family members.

“I told you it would be a surprise.” Jon had said from behind her. She shot him a glare before turning gaze to Gendry.

*I am going to kill him.*

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End Notes

Hope you enjoyed it! I’m excited to see what I write next for this!!

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