## Rulers of the Beyond

### Summary

- 5 years after the events of Season 8

- Bran is King of the Six Kingdoms
- Sansa is Queen in the North
- Drogon seems to have disappeared into thin air
• Dragon’s Bay is on the verge of war between the masters and Second Sons
• Jon was last seen leading the wildings to new lands in the True North
• Arya is on her way back to Westeros on her flagship. The Curious Wolf
• Tyrion is Lord of Casterly Rock and Hand of the King
• Brienne is Lady Commander of the Raven’s Guard
• Grey Worm is training new Unsullied soldiers in the Isle of Naath
• Samwell Tarly is Grand Maester an Lord of Horn Hill
• Bronn is Master of Coin and Lord of Highgarden
• Yara is Queen of the Iron Islands
• Quentyn Martell is Prince of Dorne
• Gendry is Lord of Storm’s End
• Willas is in Yunkai disguised as a freed slave by the name Borys
• Edmure is Lord of The Riverlands
• Ser Davos is retired to Cape Wrath to resume fatherly duties after being widowed

This story takes place after the events of Game of Thrones 6.6

Notes

Chapter 1
- Sam visits his family at Horn Hill and contemplates on his life choices.
- Trouble springs up in the North
Lands, Titles and Other Useless Things

Chapter Summary

- Sam visits his family at Horn Hill and contemplates on his life choices.
- Trouble springs up in the North

Sam

It felt good to be riding down the winding hillside of the Reach once more now that Spring had come. The sound of birds in the trees made him feel a bit giddier. Sam had not seen his home since he had been summoned to Kingslanding a year ago after Talla’s wedding to Ser Jon Fossoway’s eldest son and heir at Cider Hall. Little Jon Tarly was now three and might possibly been conceived at the Quill and Tankard Inn’s backrooms while he was sent by the Watch to the Citadel in Oldtown all those years ago. His thoughts shifted to the last time he had spoken to his father. The same night he had stolen in the middle of the night with Heartsbane; both to spite his father and to have a weapon that could help against the Walkers. He never got to use it though. Nevertheless, the sword itself had done its part in the Great War when Ser Jorah had wielded it. The knight had died defending his queen with the greatsword still in his hand. What followed that had kept him far enough from the Reach to escape the wrath of his sire whom he was unaware had already died during the War of the Two Queens as most had called it. All of that did not matter now that he enjoyed a position in the Small Council. No one could threaten him anymore, and his family’s heirloom was safe behind the walls of Horn Hill. He always wondered about the look on his father’s face when he found out that he had ran off with the wildling girl and stolen the sword. In the end, he never got a chance to pay for that crime.

“M’lord, welcome”, the guard at the gate bowed in greeting, shaking Sam from his musings. The gate guard wearing the red huntsman of House Tarly with a worn out green tunic and chainmail then turned back to bark orders for the gate to be opened for Lord Tarly, earning himself a chorus of “Aye Ser” from his men above the gate. The green roof and beige-brown walls of Horn Hill looked a bit livelier with the warmer climate and Sam could not help the smile on his face as he viewed the blooming flowers in the garden. He had been longing to see Gilly and the children since he had not seen them in a year due to his duty in the capital. Sam could not contain his excitement at the feeling of being home.

“Papa, you’re home!”, Little Jon screamed and ran to his father as he appeared at the door. His face beamed at seeing his father and Sam could now help but break out in his own smile as his son buried his head in his neck hugging him tightly. “Hello son”, Sam broke out with a huge smile on his face.

“I missed you so much, where is your brother and mother?”

Immediately Lady Melessa appeared with Gilly and Little Sam in tow with their guards. His wife looked lovely in a blue silk dress and her hair tied back in the style of Southern ladies, whilst his mother wore a dark red one woven of silk like the one donned by her good-daughter. Gilly was a beauty for sure. Even more so now that she had discarded the wildling look she had when they first met at Craster’s Keep.

“Sam!”, his mother Lady Melessa rushed to her son holding her skirts with Gilly following closely behind. He hugged his mother and then went to Gilly, the mother of his children and Lady of Horn
Hill, who had a huge grin on her face the whole time. She was no longer a wilding girl anymore from the time she had spent South of the Wall amongst the highborn of Westeros.

“Welcome back my lord husband”, Gilly greeted with a smile and a kiss to Sam’s cheek.

If he was honest with himself, Sam would think he cheated life somehow. It seemed like only yesterday when he was fumbling around at the Wall as a voluntary recruit after Lord Randyll had exiled him at the threat of death. He could still remember the eternal scowl on Thorne’s face as he set Grenn and Pyp to harass him until Jon Snow had stepped in. All those men; good men had died whilst Sam had lived. He had survived the hell that came after the Great Ranging with Lord Commander Mormont. He had survived the mutiny led by Karl Tanner. He had survived the battle of Castle Black when Mance Rayder had lighted the greatest fire the North had ever seen. Surely the generations a hundred years from now would not believe a single thing that Sam had seen in his life. He had once gained the acquaintance of a direwolf that behaved like a human being. He was the first to slay a white walker and rediscover what kills wights in thousands of years. He had seen the dead rise and fight. He had seen real fire-breathing dragons. His greatest friend had died and come back. Now he was serving a king that had a thousand eyes and one. His days at The Wall seemed like a lifetime ago and looking at Little Jon, he could not help but think of his namesake. Jon.

Sam would always find himself sorrowful whenever he thought of Jon Snow. He always wondered what Jon thought of him now. He had not spoken to him since that day Sam left Winterfell and Jon was going to take Kingslanding with Daenerys Targaryen. His only friend that ever was. It appeared his world had shattered the day Sam had revealed his parentage. The bloodshed followed was disastrous and the realm was still bleeding from it. Tyrion had told him of what became of The Dragon Queen and subsequently Jon Snow. He had lived in safety at Castle Black because of Jon. He had survived the Night King because of Jon. He had Gilly and the children because of Jon. Amidst all these things, Jon, the rightful heir to the Seven Kingdoms, was banished to the Wall again. All of this for doing the right thing. It was unfair. Sam decided to shake thoughts of Jon Snow...Aegon Targaryen away from his mind.

After dinner when Little Sam had drained all the energy out of him and was now asleep in his chambers and Little Jon also sleeping in Lady Melessa’s chambers, Gilly sat beside Sam by the hearth and warmed her hands while humming a nice tune in oblivion to her brooding husband. His brows furrowed and intently looking at the words of the book he was holding. Maester Aemon would have loved to read this one. Aemon Targaryen. He was Jon and Daenerys’ uncle now that Sam thought of it.

“You’re thinking about him, aren’t you?”, Gilly said without looking at Sam.

“Yes, I cannot help it”, Sam sighed. “I know it does me no good, but you know I haven’t seen or spoken to him since the end of the Great War, and he has never returned any letters I have sent to him at the Wall”.

The last letter he had sent prior to Bran confirming that Jon had deserted Castle Black some years ago and had ridden further North with the remaining families of the Free-folk. A small part in him had hoped someone might get the letters to Jon somehow. He had heard that Sansa had sent riders to look for Jon beyond the Wall to no avail either. Other rumours stated that the big black dragon had come to the North and burnt him to ashes. He had also heard some Essosi merchants in Kingslanding had whispered that the Mad Queen had survived Jon’s dagger and was now living in the deserts of the Disputed Lands in utter madness. Others even went as far as saying they had seen Prince Rhaegar alive and well in the Free Cities. Well those things he knew better than to believe.

“It is very unlike him to ignore a friend, you know that Sam, he might still be haunted by the death of
his queen”

“She was not his queen!”, Sam snapped and then quickly calmed himself down.

“I am sorry for the outburst Gilly”, he said after taking a long breath. “Jon was supposed to be
 king…. He is the rightful heir”.

He was always visited by thoughts of ‘what could have been’ whenever thoughts of Jon’s life came
to mind. He remembered Jon telling him of how growing had been for him at Winterfell, about Lord
Stark and his siblings, well cousins, and how Lady Stark always made certain that Jon remembered
his place in the world. He never found solace at the Castle Black either as his sworn brothers ended
up betraying him and murdering him in cold-blood. He had never even had a chance to speak to Jon
about that. Regret haunted Sam every time the Targaryen name was mentioned. The first thing he did
when he saw his best friend after years of not seeing each other and before the Great War was
destroy his identity. Now that royal house was down to one member, who was not even aware of it
until Sam opened his big mouth.

“But you said Jon didn’t want the throne Sam”, Gilly retorted softly.

“He doesn’t, well he didn’t…”

“But you know he loved her and she loved him. Otherwise she would not have sacrificed her own
dragon to save his life Beyond the Wall. You of all people should know that honour and duty cannot
compare to love”, she said pointedly.

“Maester Aemon…, H- he once said something similar to Jon, I think”, Sam muttered as if to
himself.

The old maester had been like a father to both him and Jon and he had died in Sam’s own hands. No
matter how his loath for the Dragon Queen; Maester Aemon was like a second father to him and Jon.
He was always grateful for the old man’s kindness even when Gilly and Little Sam were lodging at
Castle Black. His time at the Wall was made easier by Targaryens.

“Me being here is proof of that Sam. You had also sworn a vow to take now wife or father any
children. Once we left for the Citadel, we both know that your vows to the Night’s Watch didn’t
matter to you anymore. Here we are today, a lord and a lady of a Great House with heirs following.”

Sam sighed and placed his palms on his chubby cheeks. He had much to let go of. He realised the
impact of what he had done in the crypts of Winterfell that Night before the dead came. Yes,
Daenerys Targaryen had executed the father who had hated him and the brother who never cared.
Was it enough to warrant hatred from him though? He was not sure any more. The same person that
had insisted he tell Jon the truth about his parentage was now sitting Jon’s throne as king. Did Jon
really need to know the truth? It had been an emotional time for finding out about his family that
way. That day he had listened to his anger and hurt. No. He had listened to Bran.

King Bran now. Nominated to kingship by Lord Tyrion Lannister. Who had come to Westeros after
a long exile with Daenerys Targaryen with an aim to take the Iron Throne from Cersei. He always
wondered how the world would have shaped out had Daenerys never come back to Westeros. They
would all be dead, he reconsidered. The great irony of it all. The same people without whom they
would all be dead were the ones they hated the most. Jaime Lannister was hated for killing a king
who was about to burn down a whole city. That king’s daughter was killed by a man who loved her
for burning down that very same city her father wanted burnt.

“Jon loved her and I refused to see that”, Sam replied. “And now Jon is exiled to the Wall while
someone else sits on his throne and I am here, a Lord, with a family and a home, tell me how that is right?".

“I understand my love”, Gilly countered softly, “But beating yourself up for everything that has happened is not going to change anything”. She rubbed her hand on his back. “I am going to bed, please join me soon, it has been a while and I’ve missed you”, she added with a small smile.

Sam looked at his wife and smiled back. “I will join you soon my love, let me write just one more raven to Jon and hopefully he will respond”. Gilly smiled sadly and kissed his cheek and then held her hem of her dress and walked to their bedchambers.

‘I do hope you are alright Jon’. Sam thought as he stirred the inkpot ready to write his scroll.

Tormund

Bloody hells. Tormund clenched his teeth as he woke up to yelps that sounded like the sounds wights would make when you stuck a dragonglass dagger in them. He had trouble sleeping in as of late since Snow’s direwolf had come back with a family of his own two years ago, which had settled in amongst the wildlings like dogs would amongst humans. It was honestly not that bad as they helped keep curious children and thieves from entering their side of the camp undetected. It has also helped repel all those wilding girls who had usually had reasons to loiter near their tent looking to lure Jon Snow to their beds. The noise though. It was unbearable enough living with a Jon Snow who was a shell of his former self.

As much as Tormund would try to be there for Jon, the former king seemed resigned to living the rest of his life in utter misery. For the first few weeks since Jon was exiled, he would talk and smile and hunt with the men. It was until they settled at Hardhome and started to rebuild that Snow started having these terrible nightmares and spontaneous fits and seizures. He would find his friend curled up in a frozen ball in the middle of the night. At other times Snow would cry out and choke in his sleep until he woke up sobbing. Such sights had broken Tormund’s heart and ignited his anger against the world.

Jon Snow was a good man. He is the only one who gave a fuck about the free folk whilst The Watch was hunting them down like game. He had defied tradition and rescued thousands of their people when the Night King came to Hardhome. He had given them sanctuary behind the Wall and was betrayed for it by the Watch, taking a knife in the heart for it. He went against the odds to fight for a home that was never his and again in the Great War. He had seen Snow himself atop the green dragon on that horrible night, battling against the Night King himself on his steed. He had seen the Dragon Queen too in the carnage. He had only met her when she had come for them as they were trapped in a small island near the Arrow Mountain during the wight hunt. He remembered the pale dragon falling from the sky in a bath of Fire and Blood from the enchanted ice spear of the Night King. She had waited for Jon Snow after everyone had given up on him during that ranging. Being one against kneeling himself, he could understand why Snow had bent the knee to that queen. She was young yet fearless and somehow made Snow feel and look young even if for a short time. Tormund saw her again holding her own against the dead alongside Mormont and also battling the Night King’s dragon in the Sky. Infact, it was the young queen that had unseated the God of Death from his mount, setting up the end of the Long Night.

Now the white-haired beauty was dead by Snow’s blade after he had been convinced by his family that this queen was evil. Jon had told him why he had done it. The stories of her burning thousands
of innocents in the South were really hard to believe for someone like Tormund. To be honest, all of this confused him. According to Snow, he had been informed that he was no bastard after all. The Dragon Queen was his real father’s sister, who was some Southern prince, making Jon the rightful ruler of those South of the Wall. It was really strange though, because Snow’s family, the honourable Starks only seemed to look out for themselves in that regard. Betraying him after he had sworn them to secrecy on that matter. Well to Tormund that didn’t matter. Jon was a king in all but name to him and his people long before he took Winterfell. The Dragon Queen had seen those in Jon Snow, and risked her life for him when she had nothing to gain from it.

Jon had been at war since Tormund met him all those years ago in Mance’s tent. He had fought for the Watch against the Free-folk, and for the Free-folk against the Watch. He fought their battles for them and took all the hard decisions, yet they repaid him with treachery each time. One would think the lad never learns his lesson. Even the lesson of death. Tormund found himself worrying about how all these years have truly affected Snow. Two women he loved died in his own arms with his own involvement. That was more than any man of honour would take in his lifetime.

The crippled Stark boy was now king in the far South. Lady Sansa, with hair kissed by fire was never seen during a single battle, yet she was now Queen in the North. Long may she reign they say, forgetting who fought the greatest threat to humanity. Snow was exiled back to the place where he took a knife to the heart for them. Brienne spurned Tormund for that sister-fucking handless knight who left her hanging and went back to his lover. The dwarf smart-ass who had convinced Snow to murder his queen was now serving another King. What had pissed him off the most was the constant riders they Starks kept sending North to command Jon to get back to the Wall. Even if he knew where Snow was he wasn't going to reveal that to them fucks...It seemed the world had a tendency of repaying kindness with grief and pain. Good men never receive good. Evil always triumphs in the end, he mused.

Now he had become a direwolf herdsman in his middle years. Since Snow and Ghost went missing a year ago, he had resigned to keep these little direwolves alive in his memory just in case the worst had happened and he would never see his friend again. It pissed him off truth be told. If he had a dragon of his own he would turn Winterfell into a pile of rubble for all the injustices they dealt to Jon. He was broken from his trance of thought by the blow of a horn. He reached for his axe went out of his tent to see what was happening.

“Tormund! There are riders approaching from East of the Fist!”, Halva the spear wife announced as she passed by to warn others in the camp.

Tormund climbed aloft the rock next to his tent and he could see about forty riders heading their way carrying banners of the crowned direwolf of Stark and other flags he did not care to know of. Southerners. He thought bitterly. What did the mighty Starks want now. Would it not be enough to be left alone? They better not be on a mission to start trouble with the free folk or seeking for aid in some Southern squabble. Yes, he thought. That was what these spoilt brats in the South were good for. Taking everything and never giving anything. Snow would be better suited to addressing such without bloodshed.

Shit. That was what conveyed what went on in his heart right now.
A time of reckoning

Chapter Summary

- Tyrion and Bronn host Tycho Nestoris
- Bran is visited by an old friend

Tyrion

Tyrion had lived in this city for a long time but never in history has it been so scarcely populated. He remembers those days when the dragon skulls adorned the walls of the throne room during his father’s tenure as Hand. People would fill the streets from the Great Sept to the Red Keep. As he now walked up the rebuilt Street of Steel he could recall a walk he had made down this road a decade ago during the war famously known to history as the War of the Five Kings. Though; there had been really six kings in that bloody conflict, and once you think of it; no one had really come out the true victor in the end.

He still could not believe he had served Joffrey of all people. Family or not, that vicious idiot would have burnt the city eventually. It seemed that every king that had sat that throne after Summerhall was doomed or disturbed somehow. Jaehaerys was as sickly as that spoilt imbecile that rules the Vale, Aerys a fire-obsessed paranoid madman, Robert was the second coming of Aegon the Unworthy minus the care for his bastards and supposedly trueborn children and well Joffrey. That was the type of cunt that came once in a thousand years for sure. Chuckling to himself as he recalled the town-screamer in the city square calling him a “wretched demon-monkey”.

Good thing Drogon had destroyed that monstrosity of a chair that caused so much bloodshed. Was it good though? The wheel of power that crushed the smallfolk and the noble alike is still there. Clearly the throne was not the wheel itself but the mere accumulation of oligarchic power amongst the nobility is the wheel that keep spinning with the relentless half-man running inside it like Samwell Tarly’s rat in that dirty chamber he calls a workshop.

It was really a pity that learned idiot Archmaester Ebrose decided he wasn’t worth mentioning in the annals of history that occurred during Robert’s Rebellion and the wars following that. Why didn’t Ebrose specifically mention the Late Catelyn arresting Tyrion and then taking him to the Vale to be tried and thereby defying the king’s peace was the catalyst for the war. All it said was the King in his youth climbed a tower to find Jaime and Cersei fucking like rabbits, leading to Jaime throwing him off a tower to hide the incestuous relations. Of course, he knew why. It would see the Starks as the villains who started that war and well, the King of the Six King Kingdoms and his royal sister in the North would not have it. Not that it mattered of course because alas, he was still alive and the world never stopped going to shit.

He was serving another ruler during those days and he kept wondering how things could have been if the wheel had indeed been broken. These days he was always finding comfort in the Arbor red that he always had a plentiful supply of since Bronn ruled the Reach. He would have enjoyed the cup with a whore’s mouth around his cock during his earlier years while the world was going to shit outside the walls. He truly thought he would be dead or exiled by now.

If he had to admit, making Bronn Master of Coin was one of his dumbest moves in his career as a
politician, maybe second to believing he could trust a queen with dragons to act with honour during war. Or was it trusting Varys to keep secrets? Those days are some days he would rather not think about. How could he have predicted that Daenerys would slaughter the smallfolk in the streets after the city has surrendered? That move had left him as the last of his House from the line of Lord Tywin. Not that he cared about Tywin’s legacy anymore, if he ever did. Bronn was going to kill him if he didn’t meet his end of their bargain and the legacy would be gone still. Who was he kidding though? He could never lie and say he never spent his whole life seeking his father’s approval. He had listened to the lessons of legacy and family from Tywin and pretended not to care but deep down he did. For all he had told his late brother Jaime. Another victim of the wheel.

He entered the new Small Council chambers with Ser Podrick Payne behind him. Another one that was mentioned by the wretched grey rat in the book. He could not blame Pod for that. He had to stop caring about what the Maester wrote and focus on this meeting. Tycho sat to the left of the table, arms folded and a pretentious smirk on his face. Bronn was on the right and the head chair at the table was vacant for him. Tyrion wished he had a Mountain of his own to smash that smirk from that charlatan’s face once and for all. He couldn’t though, since this was a representative of the Iron Bank. Even a Lannister knows not to fuck with the Iron Bank.

“Lord Hand, a pleasure once more”, Tycho greeted

“I hope the seas were kind my lord”, Tyrion replied shaking his hand.

“Just Tycho Nestoris. As I told your late sister. I am not a Lord, just an emissary of the Iron Bank of Braavos”

“Well Just Tycho Nestoris, I insist you call me Tyrion, as any ‘Just’ man would”, Tyrion retorted Bronn raised his brow, suppressing a chuckle, “Never one to let it go are ya”

Tyrion sighed, waddling to the table to pour himself a cup of wine, his black tunic with a new shining silver Hand of the King pin reflecting on the wine jug on the table. Having filled his cup to the brim, he moved towards the table dragging his tall chair with a screech, then then turned to a preoccupied Pod.

“Some help would have been appreciated Ser Pod”, he joked smiling

Pod moved quickly to help, but Tyrion raised his hand to stop him. “Got it, never mind”.

Pod stepped back and Tyrion sat down, took a sip and cleared his throat. “Hmmm, good vintage. Well what can we do for you Tycho Nestoris? I, for one, know you didn’t sail from so far just to stare at a dwarf sipping on his cup of wine”.

Tycho smiled, “Always a jester my lord hand. Well, the reason I am here is that there is still a debt being owed to the Iron bank by the crown, and as you know my Lords; The debt must be paid by whoever sits the Iron Throne since it was taken out in the name of the Iron Throne. Now Cersei Lannister First and Last of Her name wiped out a debt only to take out a new one with the bank for the procuring the military services of the Golden Company”.

“You would also remember that we took this city from the Golden Company which was fighting for an unfit ruler, and you supported them anyways. Did you pay the Golden Company their due?”

Tyrion asked the smirking dignitary making him frown.

“The contract was drawn up and payments were conferred in advance before the Company left for Westeros, I can assure you, Euron...”
“Ahh, the infamous Former King of the Iron Islands and Greatest Captain of the Fourteen Seas. Not very long did he reign now did he? Now tell me why are we being held liable for a debt taken out by someone who had no right to take it out?”. Tyrion asked faking astonishment.

“My lords, it appears that you didn’t note that the history of the Iron Bank with the throne dictates that we fund whoever has the prospects of getting the throne. Your previous queen ruined that by dying on the first day of her reign, but she left a mess in Essos which compromises our ability to gain profits since the cities are on the brink of war, you may find yourselves having trouble even this far abroad”, Tycho warned.

“Daenerys Targaryen did not take out a loan with you”, Tyrion replied, “Even if she had, as you are aware, she is dead, and no one here can lay claim to the debt unless they can be proven to have signed for that debt”.

“As I have said my Lord Hand, the slaves in all of Essos are following the calls of the Priests of R’hllor who proclaimed a Jubilee to all the captive since the end of Lord’s War. Now all Essosi slaves save those in Volantis and Myr are calling for breaking of chains and the more radical ones are calling for the slave masters to be killed. This fanaticism has spread from Mereen to Yunkai and Volantis will soon be next. Since the death of the dragon queen, no one feels safe anymore. Even worse with that abomination of a dragon being rumoured to being seen once more by sailors in the Smoking Sea, I would urge you to reconsider. Given the results of this will affect everyone, including you my Lords. Should the slaves riot and destroy economics in the Free Cities, the next place they will turn to is Westeros. They will turn the peasants against you in revolt”.

“That better not be a threat. I don’t take kindly to threats; veiled or not”, Bronn scowled at Tycho.

“Just stating facts”, Tycho remarked

“Facts can be threats too, can’t they?”, Bronn responded, palming the hilt of his shortsword.

“My Lord…”

“Enough! A damn tavern brawl is exactly what we need right now”, Tyrion cut in, attempting to end the bickering. “Tycho Nestoris, why don’t you enjoy the hospitality of the restored keep, and we will meet and have an answer for you before you leave”. The frustration welling up inside him making him take another long gulp from his chalice.

“Of course, Lord Lannister. I know Lannisters pay their debts, more so a son of Lord Tywin”, Tycho flattered with an exaggerated grin.

“Of course, Ser Podrick have Lord Tycho escorted to the guest chambers and get me and Lord Blackwater over here some more Arbor gold”, Tyrion directed the knight.

Tycho nodded then stood up and pushed his chair back in the table, picking his lengthy robe adorned with the Iron bank sigil, he exited the Council chambers. Bronn sat there pondering while twirling his dagger in his fingers. A moment of silence governed for a while until Bronn broke it with an exasperated sigh.

“We are fucked once again, aren’t we?”, he asked with a knowing but displeased look. “Not yet fucked, but the prospects of the involuntary coitus are inevitable, what not with our king living in the past. One would think his visions would help with the running of the realm every now and then”

Bran infuriated Tyrion.
His Grace was best described as an insensitive cunt who knew too many details about people’s personal lives. Just the other week as Podrick was pushing him on his chair as they were observing the new keep. The fucking bluntness of the king in telling Tyrion he had seen Tywin and Shae fucking in the Tower of the Hand and Tyrion had nothing on his sire. The knowledge of so many details about people’s private lives was not right. Even more so the audacity to blurt it out anytime as you please and then go flying with birds without any care in the world thereafter. Why the fuck he had chosen Bran of all people as king he still did not know. It must have been the confusion of being isolated in a cell by with cockless men guarding the doors in those weeks. This was his punishment he supposed.

Now he was marching back to Maegor’s Holdfast to try and reason with the king. Good thing thoughts could not be read even by the Three Eye Raven. So much for a new world. No more privacy to rant and rave treasonous things, even with Bronn. That one was still on him though. Since Bronn became a lord he was no longer of use to Tyrion. He was all alone now. Even with Sam always hovering about with raven feathers decorating his robes. How much he missed Varys. His brother too. They both never learned from their mistakes and they had paid with their lives for it. Pod himself was now a Knight of the Kingsguard. That made him entirely loyal to the crippled king who seemed to be always in another place. Tyrion would not rant out his frustrations about Bran in case Pod would be asked to report back. How many times had Tyrion been in this situation of advising an unfit ruler who appeared fit at first glance but proved unfit at a later stage. This one was weird and had magical tendencies that creeped Tyrion out but he had to pay for his crimes somehow.

This was his all on him.

Bran

He was in that old cave beneath the weirdwood again. Often, he would find himself being dragged involuntarily back to that cave where he lost so much. Since the end of the great war, he would find himself all alone in this case but with the familiar sounds of Summer, his long dead direwolf and as he ventured deeper into the cave, he would hear footsteps and the occasional sharpening of a glass weapon.

Today as he again woke up in the cave of the Three Eyed Raven; the sounds had gotten even worse. He could make out voices of those who he knew…Ned Stark telling him to listen to his mother, his mother shouting at him for climbing, the whimpers of Summer, and the with each step he took, he could hear the familiar voice of Meera, shouting in utter distress, “Bran, wake up, wake up and warg into Hodor!” as he tried to wipe his tears he lost the use of his feet again, and then as he tried to shout back, all he managed to say was “Hold the door!” then fear overtook him, he tried to move and shout for help and all he could say was “Hodor!”…He tried to pick himself up but he had lost his legs again. “Brynden…”. A familiar voice spoke to him softly. “He looked and saw a face that looked exactly like someone he had encountered during the Great War.

“Hodor?”, Bran asked, unable to speak for some reason.

“I am not her, Brandon.”, Daenerys Targaryen replied

“Hodor, Hodor!” Bran retorted, fear starting to creep in.

“It’s me Shiera, you remember me, don’t you?”, the lady gave him a knowing look.

“Hodor”, Bran replied
“I can allow you to speak if you allow me to speak to Brynden, I know he died in a greendream with you, I can only get to him through you”

Bran stared at this lady. She had deep violet eyes and hair as white as the moon. Her pale skin seemed to glow in the darkness of the cave. She was the most beautiful human Bran had ever seen. He tried to go back to see if he could find her in the past as she had mentioned Brynden Rivers to him. He could not. He tried to focus. He failed and he could feel the beginnings of a migraine.

“You cannot go back, not unless I let you. I have bound you to Wylis’ shadow”, Shiera stated

“Hodor, Hodor Hodor Hodor Hodor?”, Bran asked, frustration making him clench his teeth bolstered by his inability to walk in this greendream.

“Let me speak with Brynden”, the lady Shiera demanded.

Bran thought of screaming for his guards but he remembered the only thing he could say was “Hodor”, and they will think him mad. He sighed, then looked at the serious face of the beautiful lady in front of him. This lady looked exactly like Daenerys Targaryen. She had the pouty pink lips too and that cold stare of the dragon queen. Bran nodded and then his eyes turned white. He started convulsing violently, started to feel his green legs again and then he saw her long lost lover. As beautiful as she had been when he last saw her.

“Shiera…”, Brynden muttered whilst blinking with Bran’s soft eyes.

“Brynden”, she replied with a serious face

“I didn’t think I would ever see you again”, he moved to embrace her..

“You allowed this boy to rule?”, Shiera asked after he had let her go.

“It was the only way…”, Brynden replied

“The only way Brynden? The only way? What about the thousands that got killed in the process? What about your family? What about Aemon? You know Aegon was doing the right thing and he told you the reasons he sent you North that day in the cell. You know I can still hear the song in my ears every time I go to sleep. You said we had time. Brynden, what did we do?”

“Enough!”, Brynden snapped. “We would not have had to do that if Aerys had done his duty and gotten rid of Bittersteel…”

“The damn pissing contest again! I cannot believe my ears. I told you time and time again that Father would never allow me to marry in the family Brynden, but you had to ruin everything we had with the insistence on official nuptials and…” Shiera spat

“It would have made a difference. We would restore the dragons…”

“The dragons were restored at Summerhall. It was Pycelle who saw to Aerys, but the dragons were indeed reborn weren’t they”, Shiera suddenly realised.

“They were, Rhaegar was possessed with it since he was a small boy”, Brynden said with a distant look. “He dreamt it, born amidst smoke and salt in a valley of Fire and Blood”

“Did Aemon tell you that?”

Brynden shook his head. “Rhaegar had those dreams since he was a boy. By the time he married and
holding his court in Dragonstone, he would have them while he was awake. It tore him apart and drove him to melancholic tendencies. The dreams themselves are the beginnings of dragon birth. He was alone and she completed his song for him. It is the song itself that brings a dragon. I know you understand I didn’t attend the tourney at Whitewalls disguised as a hedge knight just for fun now…I always want to witness the birth of a dragon.”

“You took her to the valley of songs, didn’t you?”. Shiera raised her brow…

“Her dragon did. He found his, you know”, Brynden replied with a smile.

Shiera looked at him with a disbelieving look. “I saw the Ironborn spear fell him from the sky on a sunny day”,

“You saw the sun set in the East and rise again in the West too”, Brynden lifted his brow.

“Is that why she wasn’t eating then?”

“Yes…”

Shiera was starting to understand. “So, the dragons did it for the children?”

“That they did. For themselves too”

“Then I must go back, I will need to find them before he does…”. Shiera felt a shiver go down her spine.

“He already has, I told you his dragon found him. It revived him and he revived it.”

“Does he know what Brandon did that day in Kingslanding?”

“He doesn’t.”, Brynden sniffed

“I didn’t think he would remember those details so quickly as it was a grudge he had against the Mad King and that one is long dead. These memories of his multiple lives do not interconnect unless he ensured that after the Second Great War he remembered everything. He remembers the First Great War when he lost his whole family. He remembers his brother being stabbed in the heart with a dragonglass dagger. He remembers the journey across the Sunset Sea. He remembers burning the Northern fleet and his other life as a bastard called Brandon Snow when Aegon Targaryen was in the process of his conquest. He remembers the humiliation of his beloved brother Torrhen as Aegon made him bend the knee. He remembers mostly the day he went to the Mad King to demand Rhaegar come out and die...He had not forgiven that and being a Three-Eyed Raven. I believe he wanted his vengeance on the following generation. He started with her dreams. Then as her friends fell one by one. He gained confidence and started attacking her mind during daylight. With grief and pain, he had a bigger opening and he took it once the Bells rung in the capital."

“And you let him”, Shiera sneered in anger.

“I am dead Shiera. I can only access the living by the will of the living and only those with whom I share blood and as you know, only through him. Similar to how the dead could not pass the wall unless dragged by the living and only through him”

“He made the wall?”, She asked with a voice not lacking shock.

“To keep his brother away from the North. He warged a thousand giants and twenty thousand men
this side of the Wall, and after they had done working, he left them to rot and die up here, just like Maegor did to his builders”.

“So, he will eventually find them you mean?”

No, they are beyond his reach now. Aegon was up here with his wolf and when Spring started, the dragon awoke and drove him mad with dreams until he ventured far North where his dragon took him to where she was with hers. They haven’t decided to come back yet”

“Is yet the operative word here?”, she asked quizzically

“Yet.”

“Does Bran know that she is alive?”

“He doesn’t know for sure, just false rumours. He has been unable to see Drogon for at least four years now and that is because no greenseer can see beyond the Smoking Sea or the Shadow even if they were the bloody Three Eyed Raven themselves.”

“But you...”

“But I am the blood of the dragon”, Brynden cut in before Shiera could complete her response. She nodded in realisation.

“Is that why he gave the dragonblade to No One, so the song would stop?”

“I guess it was poetic to him. Giving the dagger of light to a servant of Death to end your own kin. You know the balance of magic in the world is in the custody of the dragons. It is exactly that same power that would come to fruition with time. But look at what happened in Valyria. It was the work of the Faceless Men too. That is why I was worried Shiera, I ensured he came here so I could watch his progress as he trained.” He huffed.

“What does that mean”, she enquired

“I trained in the halls of Raventree Hall and the only reason I even went to that length was because I was hoping he would not remember. He is the most powerful greenseer and my presence here is to shield the world from him remembering his past lives in first person. I was trying to stop him from finding out what was in that Tower. But he followed out of impulse and that is when I saw that he was starting to develop his old cunning. Anyways that is no longer the blade of heroes. The new blade is with the princess right now”.

“That was Aegon’s blade”

“Daemon never got his hands on it”, he smirked

“Is this another age of heroes then?”, Shiera pondered

“An age of heroes and villains”

A long silence ensued between the two of them.

“What now?”, she asked, deep in thought.

“Now you leave, watch them but let them have peace and so will I, but peace is never a permanent state of affairs. A hunch tells me they will soon get bored of living normal lives or will be needed once more soon enough. Either of the two will soon happen where those two are concerned. Now I
will go and make sure this one doesn’t remember this conversation.”

“Can you”

“Yes, I am dead. So, I can hide my deeds from any greenseer”

“I will miss you”, said a teary Shiera

“Until next time Shiera”, Brynden started to convulse. His eyes turned white and he blinked twice and Bran was back again. His eyes hurt so bad and he looked again and Daenerys Targaryen stood before.

“Brandon”, the lady said

“So, Shiera, are you going to tell me what that was about?”

“Just lover business, nothing for you to worry about your grace”, she said sarcastically

“This is sorcery, isn’t it? I will never let this happen again!”, the king shrieked

“You won’t need to!”, Shiera retorted

Then all of a sudden, she blew some dusty powder from her palm and disappeared into a hazy smoke.
Bran felt sick, he tried to sit up, but the dizziness made him fall to floor next to his bed with a loud crash. The door was pushed open and Lady Brienne came rushing to his side. She pulled him up and checked him for any injuries.

“Are you alright, you Grace?”, she asked with a worried look in her eyes.

“Aye. I'm fine Brienne. It is just lover business”, he coughed. Brienne looked at him like he had grown a second head.

“What do you mean your Grace?”, she asked

“Nothing for you to worry about”, he said with a sparkle in his eye.
Tormund saddled his dark brown and white stallion with his makeshift leather and ironwood saddle. He had been given this horse by Hullen back at Winterfell after the Battle of the Bastards. The lands beyond the wall had returned to their original form, with the beauty of the land clearly displayed now that they had gotten rid of the Night King and his white walkers. They had discovered hidden well at Hardhome with fresh spring water. The trees close to their camp had started growing back as soon as Tormund and Jon had started sorting out accommodations for the families. They made Jon Snow Chief Magnar of Hardhome and King Beyond the Wall both of which he refused but the elders would not have it. He wanted nothing to do with ruling so they made him king and devised other positions to make up for it. They asked Tormund but he refused to rule when Snow was their true king so he was made Chieftain of the Fangs. Sigorn the Thenn was made Magnar of The Skirling Pass, and Justin Redbeard was made the Chieftain of the Fist.

The bearded wilding had sent out a call for all elders to gather in anticipating of the party of riders that was spotted near the Fist of the First men. Tormund gathered sixty riders from his party and they left to intercept the Stark party. After passing a series of hills, Tormund could see the standard again flying proudly on the cool summer breeze. Tormund was flanked by his spearwives, Sisera and Halva, while his son Toregg the Tall rode next to the Snow Princess, Val and his brother Gerrick Kingsblood. These two were among the fiercest warriors trained by Jon Snow. They had offered to be his guards after the freefolk had tried to crown him King Beyond the Wall against his will. Jon Snow agreed on condition that Val and Tormund would do the actual ruling business. It was agreed but then Snow had disappeared before they had a chance to build properly.

The rest of the freefolk leaders rode behind them in an unorganised manner. Most of the elders were drinking on their way, making japes and acting as free as possible, while the younger ones were stoic and serious. Tormund commanded the party to halt and as he looked up and saw the approaching party of riders. Multiple banners flew in the sky as he tried to make out familiar faces amongst the approaching group.

They approached the edge of the haunted forest and the Southern party halted on the sound of a horn. The footmen at arms stood to the sides looking on the oncoming group of freefolk in their
bearskin clothes and mammoth-leather boots. It was evident to the Southerners that these wildings were no longer the same people they were five years ago. The spearwives were wearing leather jerkins and leather pants that held on tightly to their bodies. On their backs were short spears made of black steel and bronze, while Halva and Sisera both had a short axe tied to the waist, Val bore a longsword on her hip. Tormund’s sons wore Southern armour like that of Southern knights but made of leather and black steel and Tormund himself wore similar but with a bear pelt on top.

At the head of the column, the straw-haired Lord Harrold Hardyng, also known as Harry the heir rode on a brown mare which was adorned with his heraldry; to his left was Ser Oscar Brune, the Lord commander of the Queensguard bearing the crowned direwolf standard of House Stark. His sworn brothers rode behind him. Behind him on a snow-white mare, was the stoic faced Queen in the North Sansa Stark with her red Tully hair flowing to her back. Her silver diamond crown was fitted on her head with a grey and black cape on her back fitting very well with her black dress. To their left was the gruff Lord Robert Glover of Deepwood Motte, his squire riding next to him and flying a flag with the mailed fist of House Glover. Next to that party was Ser Willmar of House Manderly, Lord Hugo Wull and Torghen Flint of the mountain clans and Lord Howland Reed the Lord Defender of the Marshlands in the neck. Lady Alys Karstark rode also with them alongside her bannermen and her betrothed Lord Asher Forrester of Ironrath rode besides her also in a silver palfrey. Tormund did not know the rest of the faces. All their banners carried by young boys who were presumably squires or men at arms.

“You stand before Sansa of House Stark, the Queen in the North, Freer of the North and Lady of Winterfell!”, the lad with an eyepatch announced. Tormund snorted.

“Tormund, it has been a while”, the Stark Queen greeted him while looking him in the eye.

“It has”, Tormund replied without emotion.

“It is customary to bend the knee when you greet your queen, wilding”, Harrold interrupted.

“Bend the knee!? What for?”, Tormund asked.

“She is your queen!”, Harrold replied from atop his horse. “Or should I make you?”, he taunted while his horse neighed.

“My queen?”, Tormund asked with a sarcastic frown of confusion. “The free folk have never had a queen…maybe I was not born when they had one, but she surely wasn’t a Stark”

“You followed Jon Snow when he was king in the North, that should apply to our Queen”, Glover interjected.

“We had reasons for following Jon Snow, and those reasons do not apply to your Queen”, said Val, followed by agreements of “Aye” and “Hear, hear” from the other wilding leaders.

“So, you are here to break faith with House Stark?”, Sansa asked with a raised eyebrow reminiscent of the dragon queen.

“Jon Snow was no Stark, so we never had any faith with House Stark to begin with”, Halva elaborated, gaining nods and ‘ayes” from those in her group.

“Did he say that himself?”, Lord Reed asked meekly. He appeared to be very uncomfortable.

“Ha! he didn’t have to, but he did, yes”, Tormund replied with a satisfied smirk. “Jon Snow is one of us now”.

Sansa tried to ignore those words but they hurt her deeply. Donning her emotionless mask again she
looked at the wildling women and the tall warriors standing next to them, then back at Tormund with some sort of resolve.

“Jon Snow killed his Queen and was sentenced to the Night’s Watch”, Sansa said finally with emphasis on Snow.

“And Jon Snow left the Night’s Watch”, Val responded

“That would be an act of treason wildling!”, Hardying retorted while handling his pommel. “It will be answered with blood”.

The freefolk looked at one another, then back down at Hardying. Who was now flanked by Ser Oscar Brune and Ryam Redfort of the Queensguard.

“You mean: you will be the one making Snow bleed?”, Toregg asked with a raised eyebrow.

“Yes, I am an anointed warrior of the Seven, my steel is as good as any!”, Hardying snapped back in annoyance.

It was Halva who broke out into a fit of laughter first, then Sisera. Toregg just smiled and Tormund gave a tiny smirk back and shook his head. The wilding elders followed suit.

“I am seven feet tall and twice as strong as any man”, Toregg said calmly with folded arms and pride shining in his eyes. “There is still no fooking way I can beat Snow; but you…I can easily squash you”

Hardying drew his sword in fury while Redfort watched on with his hand on his pommel. “We will smear these grounds with your filthy blood wildling!”, he screeched.

“What are you waiting for then?”, Tormund asked as his sons drew their war axes and Val drew her own blade. As Hardying charged, a great white blur intercepted him and knocked him off his horse. Sansa’s eyes grew wide as she looked at the great direwolf that was pinning Lord Hardying to the ground while his horse spurred away in terror.

“Ghost! let him go”, Sansa cried while looking at the scene.

The great direwolf did not budge. It just turned its head towards Sansa and its deep blue eyes were piercing as it gave a low defiant growl in response. She looked at its eyes and realised that this was not Ghost.

“Release him Frost”, Val commanded the direwolf and the direwolf let his arms loose with a huff.

The Stark party was dumbstruck as the wolf trotted back to the trees with its snout on the ground. Then it let out a howl and went into the forest. Everyone amongst the party from South of the Wall seemed to take a breath then.

“Bloody mutt!”, cried Redfort in his fury, “I will take its pelt!”, he also drew his sword.

Suddenly a multitude of eyes came out from the forest. Blue, white, grey, silver, deep yellow and orange like the sunset. No sound whatsoever was made by these wolves that came after. They were at least two score in number. Then last of all, a stallion sized direwolf with golden eyes and brown and white fur prowled in slowly. This one was all muscled and it came past all of them and the rest of the wolves drew back. Its piercing golden eyes were locked on Sansa’s. She remembered that direwolf. It was part of the original pack. She stood there with her hind legs as if part of the parlay herself. Nymeria.
Tormund could see the confusion in Sansa’s eyes as the horses around started bristling around timidly in an effort to dismount their riders and flee. The trained warriors of the South held them tightly as their training dictated except for that one that Hardying had been riding.

“Wolf got your tongue Ser?”, Val asked maliciously

“We don’t have time for this idiocy!”, Queen Sansa said with an unsure voice. “Where is Jon Snow!?”, she asked while looking at the freefolk leaders.

“We don’t know”

“How could you not know, with these direwolves here?”, asked the annoyed Queen.

“Because a year ago we woke up and he was not there, his wolf too”, Val replied and Sansa could see that there was no hint of lies in what she said. Suddenly the great direwolf Nymeria’s ears shot up. She stood suddenly and howled to the other wolves. The white direwolf called Frost came over and stood where Nymeria stood. The wold dug one paw into the ground and took off running Southwards while the white wolf stood vigil in the exact same spot as if replacing her in the parlay. It was amusing to see.

Sansa watched the whole exchange with a curious eye. Then after the great direwolf has disappeared into the forest, Sansa turned back to the wilding leaders.

“Tormund, these lands you live on are part of the North and there is only one ruler in the North. You will go find Jon Snow and within twelve moons he is commanded to present himself to Winterfell to bend the knee and answer for the crimes of desertion and treason against the North”, she said with an icy look.

“And how do you propose we find him and where?”, Val asked, anger starting to creep in.

“Our queen doesn’t care. If he does not present himself within the given time, he will leave us no choice”, Robert Glover declared

Tormund turned to look at Lord Glover. “The little Mormont girl truly saw you for the craven you have always been Glover. Your loyalty is too fickle. Pray tell, in which hole did you hide when the dead came to the North?”

Lord Glover’s face turned red as a beet. He fumed, but before he could respond, Jason Redbeard cut him short.

“Are those ya terms girl?”, Redbeard asked, turning to Sansa

“They are. Twelve Moons or force will be employed.”, Sansa retorted.

“We will be ready then.”, Tormund replied

“Is that a threat?”, Sansa asked unsure of what those words meant.

Tormund ignored the question as he heard a wolf howl from the far North. The other direwolves also shot up their ears, more so the white direwolf called Frost. Tormund then made a signal with his hand. His party turned and spurred their horses back towards home leaving the Stark party where it stood and so did the wolf pack. The sun was setting as the Southerners stood there watching until the freefolk disappeared into the mountains by the fist. Another howl could be heard amongst their group; too distant to be Nymeria. Too far North to be one of these. They never went that far North since Ghost and Jon disappeared. Somehow this howl was familiar. Suddenly, all the direwolves
started running Northwards and leaving the freefolk on the path home. They all entered the forest and followed Frost.

“Get someone to track them, we don’t want any surprises”, Tormund commanded his sons.

“Aye father”, the Kingsblood replied as he went off to do as he was bid.

“The rest of us will convene at Hardhome in a moon”

The leaders dispersed with their respective parties and nightfall came.

Arya

She woke up drenched in sweat. The coppery smell and taste of blood still lingering in her mouth. She wiped her mouth to see nothing. It had been a very long while since she ever experienced this. It was during her time in Braavos, when she had been blind. During those days she called herself the cat of the alleys. Those were many years ago and now she was a woman grown, flowered and deflowered. She often thought about Gendry when her guard was down. The way he had loved her and the way she turned him down. The excitement of being an assassin was gone now. Sailing had put her life in more danger than she would have ever liked. Being held hostage in the Farman Isles by Pirates also played its part in contributing to her humiliation. Her stance of invisibility had left her more often than not. She missed him. But she could never allow herself to dwell there. She also thought about her family; Sansa, Bran and Jon. They were the reason she was going back to Westeros now.

It had been twenty-three moons since she left Yi-Ti. She had sailed for a year from Westeros to Farman Isles West of Westeros and after that landed in a large tract of land called Nubios. There she had stayed for fifteen moons. The population of Nubios consists of dark skin people, also ruled by monarchs in the same way it was in Westeros. These people were however extremely wealthy and possessed martial prowess she had never seen before in her travels. Beyond that they were very peaceful and resorted to violence only as a last resort.

She woke up and wiped her face. As she looked herself in the looking glass she could also tell that a long time had passed since the death of her father and all that happened thereafter. As she climbed up to deck, she could see from afar that they were approaching White Harbour. She could see the smoke in the air flowing from the great chimneys of Wolfsden. There were thousands of ships on the ports. Some bore standards, and some had plain sails and seagulls were making noise high up as the sun rose. Arya straightened herself and cleared her throat.

“Prepare for docking, we’re going home”, she directed the captain of the Curious Wolf, Harwin Snow.

“At once m’lady”, Harwin replied with reddened cheeks. It was no secret to everyone amongst the crew that Harwin the bastard was head over heels in love with Arya. One night as they were sitting by a fire in Yi-ti, she had played the game of faces with him. Poor fellow ended up confessing his undying love for her. Unfortunately for him, Arya was not sure she could possibly ever love anyone in that way. She had comforted herself in that the love she had for her family was all she needed. It seemed like they were all destined to be alone. None among Ned Stark’s children ever had a happy ending in love. Robb got killed for it alongside his wife and child, Sansa thought she loved Joffrey but that tale ended with her being a prisoner of the Boltons in her own home. Bran was whatever he was now and that kind of person does not fall in love at all. Jon…Jon killed the woman he loved
because it was the right thing to do.

Is she dead though? This is one question Arya had been asking herself ever since she passed by The Shadow about a year ago. There a certain bald and bearded, stout man with a big belly who went by name of Strong Belwas boarded their ship. As soon as he was deep in his cups, had begun telling tales about the dragons that roamed those parts and the Summer Isles and forests by the Smoking Sea. He claimed to know that the two biggest ones he had seen here once belonged to the Targaryen Queen who used to rule Mereen before the Judiciary Council was formed.

Arya didn’t believe that tale at first. In her knowledge; the queen had died with only one dragon still alive. It was not possible since the other dragon that Jon had ridden was killed by Euron Greyjoy at the Blackwater as they journey to Dragonstone. All her doubts were dispelled however, when one dark evening as they were travelling Westward trying to avoid the Smoking Sea, they were ambushed by three pirate ships. These ships seemed to belong to some sellsword company with a goat’s head as a sigil. Clearly, they were Qohorik. One of them slammed into them from behind and then she fell on deck, losing balance and landing on her head. As she tried to regain consciousness she could see that the pirates were boarding her ship and the crew was fighting them off. She looked to her left and saw two more ships packed to the full with armed pirates who were chanting some slogans in the Ghiscari tongue. They were grossly outnumbered. Suddenly the pirate ship was on fire from flames that seemed to be pouring from above.

Then a loud roar shook her from her trance. She knew that sound. It was dragons. She looked up and saw huge beasts swirling and roaring in the dark sea sky. Only when they started throwing flames in the air could she make out their colours. The two at in the middle seemed to be the bigger ones of the six beast. As she looked closely she could see a white dragon with red eyes and blueish scales. It was about the size of the one ridden by the dragon queen at when she last saw it. It suddenly took off and bathed the waters next to the pirate ship with its fiery breath…Instead of the water boiling over into evaporation, the water formed an iceberg around the ship and held it in place. Arya had never seen anything like that before and she doubted anyone every had. Then another dragon came. This one was much much bigger than the white ice dragon. This one was all black and its scales were layered with a fading red. It did not waste time. It descended on the ship that had crashed into the Curious Wolf and dug its huge claws into the masts, then took off flying with the heavy ship with the occupants still inside. As it turned, Arya saw that this one had a rider, but the dragon took off before she could see who was on the back of the dragon. She had her suspicions but this dragon was far larger and since the queen was dead, it couldn’t be her dragon. The dragon left and was followed by another one, one with which appeared to be brown or gold. This one too had a rider and this one took the other ship which was locked in an iceberg in the same way the black one had. Flying in the same direction the black one went, she tried to look up at the dragon and realised when it was leaving that this dragon was green and it too had a rider. She could not see the rider on this one as well but the rider was wearing a red cloak with brown boots. The white dragon that had created icebergs and another of a darker colour also followed after the larger dragons and now two smaller dragons were circling her ship and the ship that had caught fire. One cream white with golden scales and the other was red as blood with black silvery scales.

The small red dragon landed on her ship and came close to where she was. Never in her life has she ever been so afraid. All her training faded as she tried to keep calm in front of this dragon whose snout was drawing closer and closer to her face. She looked at the orange eyes that burned like coals until she could not look anymore. The dragon sniffed once, then twice. She closed her eyes and prepared for death. A moment lapsed in silence until with a quick flip of her wings, the dragon left the ship untouched. Arya heard a loud noise in the background, but she did not dare look. The other ship that was carrying pirates had sunk and was nowhere to be seen. She looked up and saw the two small dragons disappearing into the smoky mountains by the sea.
Arya and her crew never spoke about that until they arrived at Pentos. She overheard the captain of another ship tell his mates about tales of New Valyria and its dragons. The Ironbank too had heard about it and had sent raiders under disguise to find out what that was about. None had come back. Arya would not let them know of her encounter with these dragons. She had to reach home to find out what had happened to Daenerys Targaryen and her dragon after they burnt Kingslanding. This was not good. She loved dragons but never liked the thought of being against them.

As the ship docked at White Harbour, she looked up and saw the White Castle. There flew the merman of House Manderly and The crowned direwolf of House Stark side by side. She had to get there and write a raven to Sansa and Bran to enquire about these dragons. All that could wait though. She was home.

Somewhere in the world where eyes cannot see…

The black dragon soared atop a mountain and went beyond the volcanic field with the ship held in his talons. He banked then landed the ship on a dry moat next to a very a great structure that had a lake on either side, then took off to the side. Once the green dragon appeared, the black one soared and went up into the air with its rider and flew off into the mountains. The dragon dropped the ship in the same way and landed right next to it. The pirates were in utter panic and uttered stange curses in their own tongue and others in low-Valyrian as the dragon roared from their cells as they heard the noises made by the great beasts. The green dragon appeared too behind the black one. Men roaring curses and others begging for mercy. One had attempted to escape but the dragon scooped him back and he tried to drive a shortspear into it, the dragon just bit his entire arm off. No one tried to be smart after that.

About twenty mounted men emerged from the castle like structure. All of them wearing polished Valyrian steel armour whose scales rippled in the moonlight as they rode towards the dragon. All of them wary of getting too close to the beast. Their leader on the dragon muttered some words and they halted. He had pitch black hair and a trimmed beard with a silver stripe going from back to front. He had a thin scar on his face which passed through his eye to his cheek. His breastplate was adorned with the familiar gold plated three-headed dragon sigil of House Targaryen while the breastplates of the riders had a silver dragon of the same kind. The dragon placed its head on the floor and its rider dismounted.

“Bind them in chains, and keep them in the dungeon, we will have their trial at noon tomorrow”

“As you wish sire”, The leader of the mounted men replied

“Good”, replied Aegon Targaryen as he walked away from them and mounted Rhaegal. Off he went to the mountaintop.

Chapter End Notes

Cliffhanger....I know....Next we go to Valyria, the North and then back to Kingslanding

Next...
- Aegon holds Court
- Meet the heirs of the dragon
- Arya and Sansa reunite
Chapter Summary

Hi everybody….Please bear with me, this chapter will be very long. I mean 10 000 words long, so I have decided to post it in two instalments….The next one will be around 5000 words….we are slowly getting to the core of the story.

- Aegon holds court
- Meet the heirs of the dragon

Chapter Notes

• Aegon refers to himself as Jon, so does Dany
• Jon Connington refers to Aegon as Aegon and himself as Jon
• Everyone calls him Griff.

Lyanna and Aemon are both 4 years and 8 moons old.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

311 AC Valyrian Peninsula

Lyanna

Lya woke up very late today. Mama and Papa came back late in the night and Ghost had woken her up with his pacing and scratching the door when they arrived. She could only sleep once the wolf left her room, and she had only woken up now that her dragon was on the balcony. Lya had seen those ships leaving through Igorthax’s eyes when Drogon had commanded them to chase after the ships. Only Auntie knew Lya could do this, and she had pinky swore she would not tell Mama. Even worse, Lya had ridden Igorthax when Mama had left. Ser Dick had told Papa and he made Lya swear not to try again until she was ready. Lya thought of doing it again but she was afraid of getting in trouble. Mama did not want them to get hurt, Lya knew.

Aemon had never tried to climb on Tergorion.

The loud footsteps of someone running towards her door were not lost on her. She knew exactly who it was. The visitor knocked and did not wait for an answer.

“Lya, come see”, Aemon shouted while peeking in.

“Go away”, Lya replied, grossly annoyed.

She was not really angry at Aemon. She really loved her brother very much. Mama said they were born on the same day, and they are twins even though she is a girl and Ae is a boy. They look alike, but Aemon has hair that is white like Mama and Auntie Shiera but his eyes are grey like Papa. Ghost has whiter hair though. Her hair is black like Papa and her eyes purple like Mama. Auntie said they
are prince and a princess because Mama and Papa are king and queen.

“Good princes and princesses finish their meals”, Auntie always said when Ae was playing with food at breakfast. Her brother was always playing. Either with Ghost and his friends Meela and Eric in the mud and Mama did not like it, but Papa laughed at Ae’s dirty silver hair. She hoped to go riding with her friend Melania when Papa and Mama were done today with the boring meeting.

Aemon pushed the door and shouted, “Please Lya, come fast before it goes away”

Lya got up with a groan, pushing her excited brother out of the way.

“Look!”, Aemon said pointing outside the balcony towards the mountain

Lya wiped her eyes and she could see the rainbow above the waterfall.

“It is so beautiful”, Lya commented with a huge grin, “Look there is purple…like my eyes”

“Do you think we can go fetch it when Mama lets us ride the dragons?”, Aemon asked excitedly.

Lya was still looking up with a mischievous smile, so she didn’t answer.

“I am sure Drogon would help us…”, Aemon thought out loud

“No Ae!, you remember Auntie told us about that little girl in our family who played with an old dragon that was not hers?”, Lya asked with a serious face

“Lord Griff said it was not the dragon that hurt the little girl Lya”, Aemon replied with folded arms and a smug.

“I have my own dragon”, Lya replied as she closed her eyes with a smile and tried to connect to the dragon. She did not have to wait long.

Aemon looked up and Igorthrax was flying above her chambers and then the dragon landed on the balcony next to Tergorion. The twins walked to the balcony and pet their dragons. The dragons purred under their touches.

“I will have a sword one day, and I will go up on Tergorion and cut out your purple for you and the yellow for Melania, she loves the yellow roses”, Aemon promised

“Better yet, we could ask Papa to do it with Longclaw”, Lya replied. “I will be very old by the time you have a sword”, she finished with a laugh at her brother.

“Take that back Lya, or I will brand you a traitor and put you in chains”, Aemon replied. “I am serious”, he chuckled

Lya backed away, laughing and hiding behind her dragon.

‘Ha! Will you swear fealty or should I burn your castle Harren Hoare?”, Aemon asked with an exxagerated deep voice.

“Ha…I will shoot you down from dragonback with my crossbow, Targaryen!”, Lya giggled whilst hiding behind the sleepy dragon. Aemon chased after her and they circled the dragons. They were laughing giddily when Mama and Papa came in to greet them.

“Papa! Mama!”, both children shouted as their parents entered with huge smiles. Both ran to their parents and jumped on them. Lya to Jon and Aemon to Dany.
Dany was giggling and kissing Aemon on the forehead while the latter was busy wiping his forehead. They had been watching the “battle of Harrenhal” in amusement while the children were unaware.

“Mama come see!”, Aemon shouted as Dany put him back down on the floor. He led his Mom out the balcony to where the dragons were snoozing. He pointed up.

“Mama can you bring that here with Drogon, for Lya And Melania. They love the colours. What is that Mama?”, the wide eyed boy asked.

Dany could not hold her laughter. “It’s a rainbow sweetling, and we cannot bring it down because we can only see it but not touch it”.

Aemon didn’t seem to understand but he nodded.

“I will take you up there one day when you are grown up my love okay?”, she reassured

“Okay mama, can I have a sword then?”, the boy tried his luck

Dany leaned down to whisper in the boy’s ear. “Papa will have one made for you okay?”

Again the boy nodded.

“Papa will you take me and Melania riding?”, Lya asked to her Papa

Aegon smiled. “I promise my princess”.

Lya smiled back. “Pinky swear?”

Jon chuckled and then put her down after a great tickling spree. He squatted to be on her level.

“You know it is rude to make promises to a princess and not keep them”. The girl nodded with a grin.

“Papa will take you riding as soon as he finishes in court alright princess”. The girl hugged him tightly and then ran over to Dany.

The door opened and Greyworm peeped his head in.

“Council is ready your grace”, GreyWorm advised.

“In a moment”, Dany replied picking Lya up.

“Now you two be good okay. Do not give Serai and Irri any trouble”, she said with a knowing smile at a blushing Lyanna who was trying not to look at her mom in the eye. The girl nodded and kissed her mother on the lips.

Irri came into the Twins chambers while Jon was tickling his son. “They are in good hands your grace”, the Dothraki handmaiden said with a small smile.

“Thank you Irri”, Jon replied. The girl curtsied.

“A pleasure sire”.

“Irri!”, Lyanna started. “Come see the rainbow Irri”, Aemon added with a delighted tone
Jon and Dany left the kids who were now excited to show Irri the rainbow. The monarchs closed the door and went behind Torgho and Ser Will while Ser Tristan and Brazen Axe stood guard by the door of the children’s chambers.

Jon Connington

The roars of Balerion the black-dread and Vhagar reborn shook him from his deep state of ponder. If he were to be quite honest; Jon had only slept a couple of hours since Their Graces had left after the ships two nights ago. Aegon was furious when he left and he didn’t have to see him to know he still was. The roar he heard last night when Rhaegal and Drogon landed shook Mount Dracar to a boil. Jon could not say he felt sorry for the captured pirates. They had murdered twelve labourers and two knights in their escape. Jon was only concerned about the state of their graces after the chase. He would converse with them properly after the court session today. Kraztos Disaykys came over to where Jon was seated.

“Torgho is back. He sent me to inform you that they will be here to discuss some matters of privacy with the council after this session”, the young Lorathi whispered in his ear.

Jon nodded and wondered what that could be about.

Better yet he could sooth himself with his wretched wineskin so long until court commenced. Sitting on his chair and listening to the slight ache that still lingered on his shin where he had taken a poisoned arrow five years ago. That day he wished he could forget.

He had been in a terrible rage. Illyrio Mopatis had betrayed him and House Targaryen. Subsequently him and his brothers had lost all their hopes and chances of going back home again. The Iron fucking Bank had sold the land back to Cersei….and Aeg..that fucking fraud whatever his real name was had stood between him and that fat pig he had aimed to skewer...In his tears and grief, he had not seen the lad place himself between his real father and the sword. That fucking spineless shit Strickland had decided to side with the Lannister cunt after he had escaped Pentos. Jon wept many atime when he thought of all the years he had wasted raising a boy whom he was misled to think was Aegon Targaryen, The Sixth of His name, and the son of Rhaegar. Was it his desperation to honour his friend’s memory? He wasn’t sure. All the years he had spent training the boy and protecting him. He had grown to love the lad himself between his real father and the sword. That fucking spineless shit Strickland had decided to side with the Lannister cunt after he had escaped Pentos. Jon wept many atime when he thought of all the years he had wasted raising a boy whom he was misled to think was Aegon Targaryen, The Sixth of His name, and the son of Rhaegar. Was it his desperation to honour his friend’s memory? He wasn’t sure. All the years he had spent training the boy and protecting him. He had grown to love the lad and he ended up burying his own sword deep in the boy’s gut. It was not what he had intended. On that fateful night in Pentos, Jon had been drinking ale with The Black Rat of Qohor, Ser Lorimus and Will Cole, all drinking and preparing to venture back to Westeros when Ser Tristan and Lysono had arrived bearing news and a letter that bore news of treachery.

It had been sent from Varys and it detailed the whole plot. He didn’t recognise the Blackfyre woman’s name then but looking back in history, he did. More so now that one of the people who were in the Red Keep during the sack had penned it. How Illyrio had planned this and had tried to involve Varys. It was only after Daenerys had left for Westeros that it arrived and there was naught he could do but confront the Magister for daring to play with the legacy of such a great man. The whole plot was written Blackfyre all over once Jon had looked at it. They had used the death of an innocent child to grab the highest position of power in the land and they had used his relationship with Rhaegar as the foundation of the plot. Somehow the gods had played their game badly because when he got there Illyrio confessed everything with a smug of victory on his oversized cheeks. Claiming that it did not matter now that they had everything they needed and Dorne would back them. The boy agreed with him. That was what tipped Jon off the edge. He forgot himself and thrust his sword straight for the Magister, and the silver haired boy decided to stand in the way. Illyrio had
ordered his guards to seize Jon whilst wailing about how he had ruined everything. Rat and Mudd wasted no time dispatching the guards thereafter while Will had ran after Mopatis who had locked the backdoor behind him while calling for more guards. Magister Pig was crying bitterly whilst doing so. Luckily Cole had found a path to escape the aftermath of this while Jon stood there digesting that he had killed the boy he had raised for the honour of Rhaegar. He should have been nicknamed “Grief” instead of “Griff”.

In his escape, the commander of the Company archers, Black Balaq, the self-proclaimed best bowman in the whole world; had caught him in his foot with an arrowhead dipped in manticore’s venom. The same scour caught Young Jon Mudd in the neck with the next arrow and the poor lad died there and then. From many yards away, the arrow had found his foot and within minutes his whole leg was swollen and veiny. That was one man who was among those he will murder on sight the day he sees them. Illyrio fucking Mopatis too, that fat craven had to die for his treachery and maybe he would have murdered Doran Martell too for his fucking stupidity had Ellaria Sand and her brood not dealt the blow. How could Doran wed his heir to the Lannisters after they had murdered his sister and Rhaegar’s children? What a fucking wimp. Those were the kinds of things that brought problems to his life no doubt. The gods were so pissed with him having legs and not using them to march and avenge Elia and the children, they gave him gout and later recalled him from the realms of the living for his crime of uselessness. Honestly speaking though, what was the purpose of Doran Martell in the world? At least Oberyn slept around and fought for the honour of his family. It is these silly things that people do that anger the gods and unleash the scourge that provokes ancient magic in its sleep. Jon himself would have died had it not been for Quaithe of the Shadow or rather Princess Shiera Targaryen as she had revealed herself to be. That was when he discovered that Aegon and Daenerys Targaryen were alive, but this woman was the only person in the entire world that knew where they were.

It was she who had explained to him how magic works. It is like elements of another world, leaking into ours. There needs be a catalyst to provoke it, like a heartfelt sacrifice like the Azhor Ahai or something equalling to a great injustice like the deaths at Summerhall, or the taking of Winterfell from Stark Blood and subsequently the awaking of the Night King or loss of House Stark if the entire North had sat down and not revolted after Aerys had murdered their Warden and his heir. Jon would count the existence of men such as Doran Martell as one of such tragedies.

If such things keep happening without a reckoning to create balance, magic drops into the world with good and disastrous effects. The Doom itself would not have happened if the Faceless Men had not been the very slaves that had been kept here. Those that escaped did so with the secrets to facechanging, and thereby sacrificing Basilisks in the Fourteen Flames to overpower the spells and created the wyrm that devoured them. This they had done after they had found Braavos in their escape from Valyria. Shiera had also explained how Valyria was created by ice and fire magic, built and later destroyed and ruined by fire magic which was fed with slave blood and how it could be restored when ice and fire met for balance. In this case, the ice and fire magic was only found in one place. The blood of Aegon Targaryen, the sixth of His name and the crystal egg he had brought from the Lands of Always Winter. Aegon; in his grief and madness had agreed, ignoring all sense and only saying the dragons agree that the Prince who was Promised will bring the Dawn to Valyria. Daenerys saidd the same when Jon had asked her to intervene.

“The dragons know…”, the queen had replied. “And now so do we”.

The king had decided. Early in one of those mornings, the King had bid them goodbye, kissing his children while they slept. Shiera just scoffed and told him to come back soon with a kiss on the cheek. The young king then mounted a determined Rhaegal and they flew high up and then plunged into the mouthlike top of The fearsome Mountain that the Queen had named Dracar. The crystal-like egg was on him and so was Longclaw on his hip as Dark Sister was on the Queen’s. The next thing
they saw was Drogon who responded to a call in the now roaring mountain. The Queen wasted no time. She came like a lightning on dragonback and also followed him in. The volcanoes all started erupting slowly. The fires eventually stopped, but the rumbling went on for days. The lands began to heal instantly. The smoke seemed to lift out of everything.

‘The curse is breaking’, Shiera had said looking intently at the mountain one morning when the sky started clearing.

“Does that mean Brynden was right about the importance of dragons to this place?”, Jon asked

“Yes he was. Look”, Shiera said pointing at the mountain.

Jon looked and saw that the mountain was smoking midly. The low rumble had grown very low by now and then it stopped altogether. Some magical stuff had just happened because something like a huge mouth opened at the feet of the mountain and water started pouring out and running into streams that seemed to appear as it moved. Large stone slabs emerged from some places and the buildings seemed to be changing their form. Jon almost ran but Shiera stopped him.

“Don’t be a craven Griff, the land is alive. It will not harm the blood of the dragon”, she had said with a confident smile.

“I am not the blood of the dragon”, Jon had replied with a shaky voice.

Then the water started falling from on top of the very same mountain. Jon was stunned. About an hour later, Aegon emerged again with Daenerys and behind them were four dragons. One was Drogon, much bigger and the other was Rhaegal, who was now the same size as Drogon. Aegon had hatched the crystal egg and there the twin dragons came. One was lined with goldish orange scales and the other had a blue hue on it. They flew behind the two grown dragons and everywhere they flew the smoke lifted and magic was restoring the land.

Once they had landed. Jon saw that Daenerys had two baby dragons on her. One was dark red with a colour of smoke on his back and deep orange eyes. The other had a dark bronze colour. She whispered something to them in Valyrian, and they both jumped to Shiera’s shoulders. The older lady laughed in utter euphoria. Jon was still amazed that this particular Targaryen bastard was still alive. All the stories of sorcery had been confirmed by her highness herself. She indeed used blood magic and charms to remain alive this long and had also stated that there are many others all over the world. She named the small dragons Caraxes and Vermithor in honour of the legendary dragons of her ancestors. One would be hers and the other would belong to the baby Daenerys was carrying.

They had found immeasurable treasures in these old temples and buildings when the spells had lifted and Shiera had been in charge of making the tallies and conducting the spells to unlock enchanted keeps. It soon became very clear that the Targaryens were now officially the wealthiest family in the whole known world. Sheets and sheets of designs for aircraft, hydraulic machines, motorised mechanics, books of medicines, spells and crafts (which Shiera took for herself), war strategies, dragonlore, books about the care of land and animals and some books were about prophecies.

Finally, when the smoke had fully dissipated, they started the excavations and in one such ranging they found a new fleet of ships that had been unused in a large underground vault beneath the dragon statues. The vault itself had large steel pillars with a storage facility and a large workshop that a hundred and thirty three warships and galleys made of a very strange wood that seemed a bit flexible and those ships were unharmed, just dusty. The whole area was untouched. Another full warehouse filled with large plates of Valyrian Steel, large plates of ceramic, glass and marble. Aurane found himself a pair of swords with emeralds decorating the centre of the hilt and an old shield with a banner of his own house in the place that they had discovered was some sort of arena. Aegon had
collected Valyrian steel armour pieces that could fit an army from one of the great forges in an Eastern Castle that bore a great round eye at the gates. The Coles and Jon also found the treasures in the castles one by one as Aegon and the dragons helped them dig. There they found thousands of artifacts and paintings. Thousands of Swords, Axes, Spears made of Valyrian Steel, and those that weren’t were made of pure gold or silver. Thousands of dragonbone knives, daggers and axes. There were carriages made of gold and some other stones adorning them.

There was a giant chain made of this steel that they found in one of the caves leading to the damaged port. Aegon found a crossbow and longbow set of Dragonbone encrusted with diamonds inside the castle he now stayed in. Jon remembers Aegon smiling alone after Jon had advised those be put those aside for Dany. Their aunt Shiera found a hall in the royal castle that had been fully layered in gold and many horns were found in the different places they looked. An armoury that looked like it belonged to a king or a great lord had a room with large dragon saddles and many large and smaller pieces of dragon armour. Many different kinds of ornaments were safely retrieved. Torgho and a thousand of his men managed to excavate a building that seemed like it was full of people when the volcanoes had erupted all those centuries ago. The treasures in that place were ridiculous. He found new armour that could be reworked to be used by the Unsullied and a shield that was made of a steel he had never seen before, which Aegon claimed for the crown. It was hard and very light. Lighter than even Longclaw yet the very same sword could not even dent it. On it was the face of a dragon. There he also found chests and cabinets full of gold. Some of it was coins on the floor, some in stacked in bars that had been blocked by the rubble and boulders in crates. They took all of it. It took them weeks to get to the end of that building where the gold was and there was more and more as they went. The gold would be used to pay new recruits, to restore these cities and in time to change the world for the better. The Fourteen Flames themselves provided giant diamonds and other precious stones. The Valyrian Steel though came from the First Mountains, the Dracar. According to Aegon, there are caves in there that ooze with it in its molten form. He had seen them himself and he then commanded that they be stayed clear of until they would find a way to extract it without anyone being harmed.

“All die for a cause than for coin”, he had said.

The greatest treasure in this place is undoubtedly the magic. The way nature has returned to this place is amazing. It seems almost alive. The way the castles are designed cannot be described. The temples even better. The huge dragon shrines on the pathway to the Royal Castle beyond the Dracar scream power. One time Jon heard Drogon roar on the river bank and his roar could be echoed on all the huge dragon statues on the pathway. It is clear the builders of this place had only intended it for dragonriders because unless you approach from the Dracar pathway on horseback or via a boat or ship on the long river and past the dragon statues, the only other way to access the palace was by on dragonback because it was higher up in the sky than the Eeyrie itself. None in the royal family used either the river or the pathway that crosses the Dracar. The twins themselves practically grew up on Drogon’s back. Even though they are not allowed to ride the crystal dragons yet, they have been riding with Daenerys from their birth, and with Aegon too once he was with them. Somehow despite their long dispute, Aegon and Daenerys had agreed on insisting that their children remain with them at all time.

The first time Jon met them he could not believe how young they were. They behaved like an old couple though. Daenerys’ anger at Jon and vice versa was so great. The mistrust was great…

“All hail,” the herald began

Said monarchs entered the white marble throne room now, looking all regal arm in arm with Ghost panting next to the queen and everyone went to their knees, Jon too. Hair that shone like beaded white gold alongside hair black as a raven with a silver lash no one could explain walked side by
side. Ser Lorimas Mudd alongside Ser Will and Dick Cole walked behind them.

“King Aegon and Queen Daenerys Stormborn of House Targaryen, rightful King and Queen of the Andals, the First Men, the Rhoynar, the Ghiscari and the Mereneese. Lord and Lady of New Valyria and Protectors of the Dynasty”, the herald announced in a loud voice.

Torgo and Aurane walked behind them. Jon was already sat in front on his council seat as they approached. Shiera followed behind with The Rat speaking in hushed tones to Ser Pykewood Peake; her Sworn Shield. It is very strange indeed that the Kingsguard of today had mostly been members of the Golden Company, but none could be better than the kingsguard of Jahaerys the First and the Second, as well as the one King Aerys had. Jon himself, a former lord, turned Hand, turned exile, turned traitor without his knowledge, and then pardoned and made a lord again. He could remember when he had expected Daenerys to be angry at him for serving that fat magister’s ambitions, to his surprise, the queen just said,

“In that case I will apologise for the actions of the mad king in exiling you, that was not called for, and since the pretender is dead, then you are not in any danger from us”

These two were truly very special. The blood of the dragon rang greatness in both of them. It had not been so for as long as they found one another in Asshai, they were at odds. It was until they had gone into that volcano that the blame game and the fear they had for one another had seemed to fade and fade until now. The queen was pregnant again. Aegon had told him that the place was a great conductor of magic like the Wall in Westeros where he was risen from death and the dragon was the greatest carrier of magic, especially magic that related to his House and Valyria itself. It was the same magic that had called on the daughter of Aegon the Uncrowned and Balerion the black dread in their loneliness. A dragon alone in the world is a terrible thing, and the black dread was no different. Their quest for a home and a mate ended tragically, with the loss of the princess and the dragon was never the same after. Good thing these dragons were not alone anymore. Their story was a very painful and magical one. Both had died and come back…and they had come back better for it. They were already making the world a better place.

Today they were to hold trial over the captured pirates once again. This was the sixth batch of pirate ships that had come to their shores to try and steal the treasures that lay in these lands. What made him restless though was his wonder as to what the Iron Bank was up to. Some spies had revealed that they were sent by the Iron Bank to do some digging as to what is going on beyond the Smoking Sea. Some were sent to hunt the dragons or their eggs for bounty. Others to steal from the mines. Aurane had taken him to one of the healing houses where they had kept some of them and the stench was unbearable. Some were even begging to be beheaded instead of enduring the pain of their skin peeling off from swimming in the poisoned rivers. Only last night, one of the invading pirates had lost his arm to Rhaegal’s fury whilst trying to evade captivity. Many in the past had died from the effects of the Doom which lingered in the foremost Islands. Those lands had been previously habited by greyscaled demons out for blood. If they had survived it, some were attacked by the firewyrms that lingered in the poisoned soil. Thank the gods, Shiera had given them help in that regards from ancient books she had kept from Asshai. The lands were healed and now clean air and clean water flowed in these parts. Although it would take long to fix, they would get there eventually. The countless slave ships that hailed from the Summer Islands were usually confiscated and the slavers imprisoned. Those they saved were adding numbers to their population on a daily basis, with some deciding to go to Westeros or Essos and those migrating from Essos and Westeros also came although in few numbers. All the workers had been brought in by Aurane and Shiera from the Shadow, Ghis and Volantis, where a revolt of slaves was in sight, most of them were escaping the carnage that will inevitably follow. Jon could admit to himself that he never ever imagined himself being a part of something as big as this and with such contentment as he felt right now. He was serving his rightful rulers now and he had sworn an oath for the last time. This time he meant to keep
it. The bitterness that had lingered in his spirit was somehow being cured by being in such a place with such rulers. Court was about to begin, and all present went on the knee.

Aegon

Dany looked extra beautiful now that her pregnancy was showing. Jon really felt himself truly lucky. The strain of ruling these new lands was lost on him for a moment as he looked at his wife. He couldn’t keep his eyes off her as they walked into the throne room with escorts and their guards.

“Stop glowering Jon”, Dany whispered with an amused smile

“Is that an order from my queen?”, Jon asked with mocked sincerity

Dany laughed. “Yes, even though you are not a Warden of the North, I am still your queen”

“Shoud I bend the knee then in front of all these lords and ladies, your grace?”, Jon enquired, a small smile building on his face.

“Lord Connington and aunt Shiera will not have it, but yes, when we are alone, I expect you to pledge your fealty”, Dany teased

“Oh, but I am an old man from the North, I will send my son to bend the knee in my place”, Jon played along

“Good, my lord”, she replied and Jon chuckled

The sentry announced them as all court rose and they both moved to the front. The children were back in the Royal Castle in Irri and Serai’s care under heavy guard. Shiera had thought it best they be not available for a criminal trial. She had been advocating that Aemon and Lyanna start their dragon riding lessons, but they disagreed. The white dragons came to the balcony where the twins slept every morning. Daenerys had made it clear that the twins were not to ride them no matter what, until she gave them lessons. The dragons came and spent much of the mornings with the twins for six or seven moons now, but Ser Dick had informed Jon that Lya had ridden her dragon one morning when they were all asleep. Dany still didn’t know that had happened. Well partly because Lya and Aemon had both begged him with puppy eyes not to tell mommy because she will keep the dragons away from them. Jon knew she wouldn’t but he complied.

Jon was not surprised by the way his children were developing quickly. A year ago he had not met them and he still thought Daenerys long dead. Shiera had informed him that it was their bond with the dragons that was making them so intelligent at such a young age and their dragons were not normal dragons, they were of ice and fire like the first dragons. Jon did not bother to enquire further. Lyanna had dreamt Jon fighting in the snow too and that had confirmed what Shiera had told him the other day about a war brewing in Westeros. The prince of Dorne had attempted to arrest Lord Uller for his declaration that Dorne would not follow a cripple from the North. Lord Edmure was unhappy that his nephew with no experience in war or leadership was ruling them, so he had cut off his communication with the crown, whilst Yara Greyjoy had not been seen in the mainland in the years since she left Kingslanding….and Dany had seen Arya on a ship almost a year ago. It was very dark but once they descended on the pirate ships they had been chasing for two days, Dany said Arya had been on the ship the pirates had attacked before she had Drogon grab the ship so as not lose the stolen goods on the ship. Jon remembered that Arya had left Westeros almost around the time Jon
was travelling back to the Wall.

He had expected to be handed over to Greyworm or the Dothraki to execute. However Lord Tyrion had told him he was to be sent to the Wall. Once he got there he started further North with Tormund and Ghost. That was how he thought he would end up, but then they made him King Beyond the Wall against his will. For three full years he was a fully fledged wildling, and he lived as the wildlings have. Tormund had offered that Jon take Val as a bride but he was still in grief. Ghost left for the South for a few moons and came back with many more wolves which were led by Nymeria, the wolf that had previously been Arya’s. These wolves settled and soon more direwolves came. A litter of six again was discovered next to the huge boulder by Tormund’s tent from Nymeria. One looked exactly like Ghost but its eyes were blue. Val had taken to that one in honour of Ghost who had saved her life once when a bear had ambushed her and Halva in the woods by the Gift. That was when Jon started going mad. He would see dead people and the Night King himself on a dead dragon. He started having seizures while he slept and then when he was awake. One time he fell off a horse and convulsed so badly that his direwolf ran. Those developed into him walking in his sleep. He woke up one night feeling like a fire was burning inside him. That was when it all went crazy.

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Two years ago – Beyond the Wall

Jon was riding the dunes of the Skirling Pass with Jason Redbeard after a hunt. He drank from his skin and passed it to the Chieftain. He had been getting these headaches and nightmares whenever he slept. Hence, he was not sleeping anymore. The strangest thing was that he once woke up very far away from his tent. He had been sleepwalking. Since then Ghost was keeping closer than usual as he was now, and the Redbeard was used to him. As they journeyed back to camp Ghost started barking and that was very unusual for him and even worse he was barking at Jon, not growling or howling. Suddenly, he felt dizzy and lightfooted, and Ghost howled now.

“What is wrong boy”, he asked Ghost

Ghost roared.

A fire went up his spine that very moment. He turned to look at Ghost who was now roaring in a strange way, unlike a direwolf at all. Ghost had grown green wings. Jon smiled at the utter madness. He was now officially mad. Jon laughed hard. Then Jon fainted.

He suddenly woke up and he was deep on the floor of the sea, under the water. He didn’t feel cold at all though. He tried to move but a sharp pain pulled him back and that was when he realised he had taken an arrow on his shoulder, a dagger was stuck in his heart and another arrow was protruding in his own neck. He screamed out but no sound came. The pain died instantly. He was now very confused. He started laughing again.

“I should be dead already”, he thought.

He tried to look around but it was dark. He lifted his arms and they felt heavy. He realised his arms were wings. Huge wings. He decided to go along with the madness. Up he went swimming until he reached the surface. He looked around until he saw Dragonstone from afar. ‘This is a dream’, He realised. Then as he tried to fly towards the Island, he blacked out.

He woke up in another place. It was afternoon and he was under a tree. Many carriages were
passing him by and entering into the most beautiful castle Jon had ever seen. There was an event of some sort happening and Jon was walking on the dusty roadside into the castle. It seemed like no one cared very much about him as they passed him without any acknowledgement whatsoever. As he stood up and walked about, he started to realise none of these people could see him. There was a great crowd of smallfolk and mounted knights and nobles were being ushered into the castle by many people. Bannermen flew many flags and standards. Some he knew, and some he didn’t. Some children were running around close to the tree and even they paid him no heed. Jon realised that this castle was in the South; possibly Essos or the Reach from the many flowers on the meadows by the roadside and this seemed very strange. The huge silken banner of the red three-headed dragon flew freely in the highest tower of the castle. Once he thought about it; this seemed to be a palace rather than a fortification. Jon walked towards the castle. As he entered the huge bronze gate, he was met with a group of maesters conversing in hushed tones.

“Racoon!”, an elderly maester called out to the group behind him.

A jester that was sitting with the mummer’s party that was waiting to be ushered into the hall passed right through him as it would an invisible man. Jon accepted it. He was invisible to everyone here, so this had to be a dream. Jon shouted at the mummers but none could hear him it appeared. He walked around and followed the mummers. Once they got inside some backyard room, they took of their garments and a tall maester came in, however he was not wearing any chain. He simply asked the mummer that had walked through Jon, “Is everything ready?”. The shorter man nodded and took out a few round stone-like objects. “Good then, make sure you leave no traces of this, once they are all dead, send a raven to the capital”

The next man nodded and the maester opened the door, before he left, he turned and looked back at the mummer that was still sitting on the straw bed.

“Make sure it works, you came highly recommended by Pycelle”

The man nodded and Jon started to worry. These men were plotting something and this Pycelle was one of the masterminds behind it. Jon left that room and followed the maester. He came across two little girls on the stables with silver hair and and then through the entrance to the main castle. The maester he was following was speaking to a lordling by the door.

“My Lord, the High Septon has arrived. Is everything in place here?”, he said with a low voice and a knowing look, but Jon heard him.

The lordling nodded and the maester smiled. Jon looked between the two and realised that this plot involved murder and some lords here are complicit in it. The way the tall maester had spoken in that room, many people would die here today.

A middle aged man stood. He realised from the golden crown and the silver hair. The High Septon next to him with the sigil of the faith on his long robe, a ridiculously huge turban that looked like the mouth of a fish and a golden staff lingering behind him.

“My Lords and Ladies”, the king announced. “Today we celebrate the impending birth of my great-grandson. Now to make this event even more special, we will ask our kind High Septon to dedicate these seven dragons to the seven as they hatch today”

The High Septon came forward. “Thank you yer grace!, my lords and ladies, we will now ask our servants of the faith to bring the eggs over for a blessing from the gods”. Jon wondered if this had been the same man who had wed his parents.

“We will also be dedicating this beautiful keep of Summerhall today before the Seven”, the man said
pompously.

This statement made Jon freeze. His brow was sweaty. He realised where he was. This could not be the High Septon that had wed his parents then.

“Summerhall….on the day it burned”, Jon said softly with shock still written on his face.

The king came forward. He signalled for his family to come closer and they all did. He took a small dagger. Jon looked at the dagger and realised that this was the very same dagger that Arya had used to kill the Night King. Jon shouted to the King in panic..."Your grace it’s a trap!!".

The king and everyone else didn’t hear a thing.

Jon ran and tackled the pyromancer to make him confess, but he just went through him. “Nothing I do will matter here”. He realised in frustration. Jon saw the Grand Maester who had been sitting with the king move back and slip out the back door.

“Shit!”

The king cut his index finger with the danger and dropped the blood on one of the stones which he thought were eggs. ‘Jon cringed. He looked at the King’s son next to him. He had short pitch black hair. This person looked so much like Jon, difference was the eye color. He did the same as his sire had just done. Two ladies followed and did the same. Next was a very pregnant woman and once done they all stepped back., then a smaller maester came to the front with the pyromancer and Jon heard the door to his left lock from outside. The pyromancer started chanting and lit a small fire sparked among the “dragon eggs” and caught onto the wildfire in the basket. Jon saw the door at the back of the hall lock and his stomach turned.

The pyromancer saw the flames and immediately ran to the door and a guard let him out and blocked the door from the outside, and one of the Lords slit the throat of the kingsguard standing next to the prince. Then he heard an explosion. As he looked he saw the green flames had engulfed the floor and burning off everything in its path. Jon ran outside and he found a hundred masked men standing outside the castle. Three members of the kingsguard broke the back door and soldiers started running out to meet the masked men. Jon went back inside and found the king in a duel himself with the Redwyne. This situation is too confusing, he thought. A very tall knight of the kingsguard was cutting down the sellswords who were entering through the main door like wheat. He ran and intervened in the kings duel, but the lord ran out and he tried to assist the injured king. No...

“Its too late Ser Duncan, just save my family”, the king who had been stabbed commanded. More fire erupted.

“Egg, we can still make it!”, the Knight shouted at the King, but the King shook his head.

‘Go Ser Dunk, Knight of the Seven Kingdoms”, the King said with a soft smile of a dying man. A blazing slab of wood fell from the roof.

Duncan did as he was bid. He slew the a heavily built man and ran for the door. He hacked at it with all his might, then his white cloak caught fire. He cut it out and continued hacking. Now this is what tore Jon’s heart apart. The heavily pregnant woman started screaming on the floor by the high seat. A sellsword with an axe was readying himself to bury the axe into the her skull. The dark haired prince sprang as beheaded the sellsword with one swing of his sword. He took out two more and ran to his father. Another flaming slab fell and caught the dark haired prince and crashed on top of him and his dying father. Jon shouted in anger. The tall knight came in again and Jon
shouted, “Ser Duncan!”. The knight heard him and looked straight into his eyes. Jon was shocked. Then the knight shook his head and grabbed the pregnant princess…Jon followed them. Ser Duncan ran with the princess to the place where Jon had woken up, right under the tree. He ran back into the castle and rescued another lady with brown hair and as he was coming out he was felled with a crossbow from the back.

Jon looked and saw that the whole castle was burning now. He looked and saw some parts of the building falling in. Jon was so heartbroken. He went to the shade of the tree where the brown haired woman was helping the princess give birth. He broke down and started crying when the roof of the castle fell in. As his tears started falling, Jon heard the playing of a harp and in an instant he started hearing sounds of people talking. He was now in Kingslanding. He looked up and saw a familiar mist forming in the city. Then he saw them. Charging through the City in earnest. Leaving no corpses in the wake.

The Night King went to the Red Keep with an escort of white walkers and entered the throne room. Jon was instantly inside too. Then the king on the Iron Throne, who appeared to be a Targaryen screamed at him. “Burn them all!!”, the King shouted. Jon realised he was looking at his grandfather the Mad king. Then Jon looked at a young Ser Jaime standing next to the queen. A very beautiful queen who looked a lot like Dany but a bit taller and older. She had been crying and there were charred bodies on the floor in front of him.

The sentry announced something and the music changed. He saw Bran sitting there in the middle of the room with his eyes turned white. He went outside and saw that there was no army of the dead. Jon was again transported by a dark shadow.

He was now in an eerily dark cave. There were roots protruding from the top and there was a chair made of the same roots and some wooden stumps.

“Ahh, the King arises once more”, said a voice he didn’t recognise

“Who’s there?”, Jon asked with a hoarse voice while rubbing his eyes.

“Its only me”, A man came out from behind the tree, wielding a sword in his left hand. The man had been smiling.

“Wow, You look so much like Baelor”, the man said after getting a good look

‘Who the fuck is Baelor?”

“Baelor Breakspear, my nephew”, Brynden replied somberly

“Who the hell are you and where am I”, Jon asked in tired annoyance

“You are in a cave in the middle of the North, under a weirwood and my name is Brynden, but you can call me Bloodraven. After all, we are kin”, the man said with a genuine grin.

“What is happening to me?” Jon asked in terror, “Am I dead?”

“That is entirely up to you Jon…did you see in your dream you have a dagger in your heart and two arrows?”

Jon’s eyes grew slightly. “Y-yes, he replied”

“That was your dragon being resurrected like you were, and as soon as you wake up, he will be flying here to burn you alive or take you home”, Brynden replied, “He is still angry at you for
deserting him, but happy you brought him back. You are the only dragon he can find this side of the world.”

Jon scoffed and wiped his mouth with his sleeve.

“I choose death then. I killed my queen and I am sure Rhaegal will want revenge. Maybe he blames me for his death too. If the Northern Lords and their Queen find me in the North, they will have me beheaded for desertion. I would rather be eaten by the dragon.”

“The dragon will not take you to Winterfell, that is not your home”, Brynden stated matter-of-factly. “And you have no idea how loyal dragons are. No dragon has ever eaten its own rider.”

Jon realised that this very conversation with this person was not supposed to happen.

“Wait, How are you here?”

‘I travelled through time, just like your cousin Bran”

“Bran?”, Jon realised it was Bran he had seen in the throne room.

“Yes, Bran is the three eyed raven. He can time travel. In this instance, Bran is the three eyed raven who stayed in a single time loop for long and it worked.”, Brynden continued.

Jon was dumbfounded.

“Tell me Aegon…why do you not want to be king?”

Jon said nothing.

“Aemon didn’t want to be king because he was a maester and it would cause problems in the future if he did. It would set a precedence for neglecting oath. But you have died already…Your oaths do not apply because you broke them long before you died, and after that you held lands and titles”

I know all that!”, Jon snapped

“What would you do if I told you Daenerys is alive?”

Jon got angry, “Don’t! Please! I know I killed her and watched her die, I will not let you play with her memory like that!”

“You died too once”

Jon’s eyes grew wide. He started pacing and Brynden just watched him.

“How?”, he asked.

‘In the same way you were revived….in Asshai. By a priestess of R’hllo where the dragon took her.”

“I have to find her”, Jon picked said as he started walking and Brynden followed.

“Wait, there is more…”

Jon fumed…”What?”

“Bran, he needs to die.”
“You will not touch him!”, Jon screamed

Brynden held the sword out to him hilt first as a sign of goodwill. It was a Valyrian steel blade. Jon slowly took.

“I won’t, I am dead”, Bloodraven replied slowly. “You will do it in due time”

Jon was about to respond but his great-uncle cut him off.

“Listen Aegon” he started. “Daenerys didn’t burn the city”

“She did, I saw it, I was there and she confessed to it”, Jon replied honestly

“No you saw her on the dragon but it was neither her nor the dragon in control”

‘It wasn’t?’

“No, do you remember Hodor?”

“Y-yes?”

“He was a half-wit since you had known him correct?”

Jon nodded.

“He was born Wylis, a grandson to Ser Duncan the Tall, grew up a bastard like you did, a very good lad and stableboy”

“What happened to him then?”

“Bran”, the elder replied

“Bran was not born….”, Jon didn’t finish the sentence because his mind had began putting it together.

“Yes, he time travelled back twenty years to Winterfell and warged Wylis while he was in a greendream”

“That makes no sense”, Jon responded after a moment

“It does. See, time is a closed loop. If you travel back in time to change something that has already happened, it will already have been there. If a person dies in a greendream. Like I died while I was in a greendream with Bran. Meaning I died in this body you see, but I can still communicate with members of my family when Bran is asleep. It sometimes happens by the will of the one who wants to see me, at times by the will of another dead person who needs to pass on information to their kin who still live. So I am like a mediator between those who have passed to the next realm and those who still draw breath.”

Jon was quiet and still until he nodded upon realisation that if Brynden was here, then this was a possibility.

“Did you see the army of the dead in Kingslanding just now?”, Brynden finally enquired

Jon nodded. “I saw the Night King and his generals, then after I had seen Bran, I didn’t see them anymore”.
Brynden nodded. “Did anyone else in the throne room see them or Bran?”

“No”, Jon answered

“How do you think the mad king saw them too then?” Bloodraven asked.

Something clicked in his mind. The army of the dead were never at Kingslanding during the time when the mad king ruled.

“Only in your mind they were and because of your blood. They were only meant to be seen by Aerys”, Bloodraven added.

‘How and why?’

‘Bran has had a grudge against our House which surpasses that of House Peake and Cockshaw”

“Why?”

“Many times in the past he has been wronged by dragonriders. It was Azor first. He made a deal with the children after Brandon had lost his sons to them. He killed Azhor in his sleep with copperroot some years later. Then against Aegon the Conquerer who made his brother bend the knee. Many more grievances thereafter. In short, he has tried to seize the Iron Throne, and before that Winterfell. Aerys stole Winterfell from him and it fell to Ned Stark. It is a long story altogether, but the Bran whom you think is your brother died in this very cave when his wolf Summer died. Another Brandon lives in Him now…They are the same person in blood, so he can remember all these lives being The Three-eyed raven and all. He never forgave nor forgot.”

Jon was still in deep thoughts.

“You also do have the sight by the way”, Brynden offered. “And you can warg, otherwise I wouldn’t be able to show you Summerhall just now”, Brynden now observed Jon with his one eye.

Jon was dumbfounded. He said nothing in response to that.

“Aegon listen. There is very little time left and the king is about to wake up.”

Jon stared back at Brynden.

‘Bran warged Drogon and Rhaegal while they were in Winterfell, and slowly they allowed him. He had sinister motives though, so the dragons were refusing to eat due to the warging. He was trying to sabotage you from bonding with Rhaegal or destroy the bond Daenerys had with the dragons. He failed because those two were born at the same time Daenerys became unburnt. Daenerys is bonded to Drogon more and Rhaegal to you. An experienced warg can move from brain to brain if he is good enough. He can also implant greendreams into the minds of his hosts. If I warg a bird here and fly to Castle Black, I can warg a horse I find there from the birds’ brain. That is the second level of warging. The third level is the one you saw with the Night King. He was a powerful warg that could warg multiple bodies and give them a single motive. Bran is not on that level yet but he can move from mind to mind since he did with the dragons. When a person or animal is angry or too happy and their emotions are peaked by grief it activates magic in their blood, no matter how small. This very experience will change you yourself. Daenerys was angry and hurt. Bran told Tyrion that Daenerys is an unfit ruler while the two of you were playing dragonrides in the snow, and Tyrion believed it. He told him he was going to be replaced soon and Tyrion believed it. When Sam told you who your parents were, he did it because Bran told him it was the right time to do it. You neglected Daenerys after that, because you are very stupid. Sansa and Tyrion then started plotting. Bran made it easier for them and for himself.”
Jon winced.

“Jon”, he called him Jon for the first time.

‘He warged you too. Remember when you were at the base of Flea Bottom with Greyworm and you looked at Drogon?’

“Yes.”

“He was being warged.”

Jon shook his head.

‘You remember when you were about to kiss Daenerys by the waterfall and Drogon was watching you like a Hawk?’

Jon nodded again. Now with tears in his eyes.

“It was Bran. He had been trying to get Drogon to destroy you, but he couldn’t, so he got him to attack the city. When you approached Daenerys, she was still being warged. She tried and failed to resist because she was in grief. As you started talking, Bran was still in control, further fuelling your motive to kill her. When you started kissing her, your emotions rose and your resistance broke. The dagger went into her heart. Her mind went to Drogon. She is the one who destroyed the throne, not the dragon. That day she achieved a full bond with Drogon because of you. It was she who took the dead body to Asshai. When you find her and Shiera…I am sure she would have told her too.”

Bloodraven took out a bowl with many seeds inside it. “These are weirwood seeds. Use them only when absolutely necessary and keep some for planting when you get home. My own mother gave me these to plant in Kingslanding when I went there. There is power in your own blood to make use of the trees. You are born with it like me but your own power is much different”

“Home?”

“Yes, but will find out soon enough, your dragon is on its way. He is ready to meet you at the Fist of the First Men. When he gets here, mount him and he will take you further North to where the Night King comes from, I need you to retrieve something very special there and take it with you to where you dragon takes you”, Brynden elaborated.

“What is it?”

“It is some things your father left for you before he passed, you will meet him too someday when magic and time collide”

‘What about Dany”, Jon asked softly

“She is fine, the children too”, Brynded grinned

“Children?”, Jon gasped

“Yes Jon, children. The witch was not a reliable source of information as you predicted”, He replied smiling

Jon felt a hopefulness he had never felt before. Even if Dany had to kill him in vengeance. He had a chance to see his children before he died.

“You are not alone anymore Jon. We will talk freely once more after you have settled at home”,

Brynden said. “Now there is a horse out there next to the tent you are in. Do not wake anyone. Do not take anything but what you are wearing. Ride hard for the Fist and Ghost will follow you, just ensure the other wolves don’t, because you know…the dragon might eat them”.

Jon nodded and Brynden disappeared in a fade.

He tried to open his eyes without moving. Slowly he rose and dressed properly and quietly. True enough the horse was waiting for him and Ghost stood next to it. He wasted no time. By the end of that day he was approaching the Fist. As he drew nearer, he started feeling very warm but it was a very chilly night. Ghost stopped and howled. His horse started panicking and almost threw him. He held it tightly and it stopped. A shadow passed over him and the familiar roar of the green dragon brought his nerves back. The dragon landed and he saw that it was huge.

Rhaegal was slightly bigger than when he last saw him. He moved over to where he was and lowered its neck. A strange energy went through Jon like lightning. The dragon made a chipping sound. Jon came closer and caressed its snout. The anger dissipated off the dragon and it made a small growl and bent its shoulder as an invitation for him to ride. Jon carefully climbed on the dragon’s back and held on to one of the spines and Ghost came closer. Rhaegal looked at Ghost, made a small sound and a puff of dark grey smoke went through his nose. Ghosts ears went up and he climbed after Jon on Dragonback and the beast stood up. Jon felt alive once again. The dragon ran a few paces and up into the Northern sky it went. He was flying relatively slower than usual. A few hours later, Jon saw the ice castle.
End of Act 4.1....Next 4.2

-Aegon holds court (continued)

- Arya and Sansa Reunite

Chapter End Notes

Next POV's are Aegon, Dany, Shiera and Sansa.
Chapter Summary

- Aegon and Daenerys hold court
- Sansa and Arya reunite.

Chapter Notes

Act II is here folks.
It was supposed to be 5000 words, but here we are on the 13K mark... By the gods this seems like it will be very long folks.
It will be a good one though I hope.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Aegon

This castle was unlike any castle he had ever seen. It was built onto a mountain that had the biggest weirwood tree Jon had ever seen. There was absolutely no snow falling on the outside now and the weather was good enough considering the lands they were on. Clearly, this is the first Spring these lands had seen in millennia. There were trees beginning to sprout up everywhere, clogging pathways that had not been walked in years. Rhaegal had flown very slowly for his size. There were high mountains where Rhaegal had sped up a bit but once they reached a plateau, he would slow down. Jon grew bored and tried to coax him into doing twirls. The dragon didn’t budge.

“Probably to prevent Ghost from falling I suppose”, he said to himself after the dragon had just puffed up some smoke in response to his coaxing and Jon snorted. Rhaegal banked and landed right outside the castle, Ghost leaped off and Jon tried to climb down but he tripped on a spike and tumbled down. Before he fell to the ground, the dragon extended his wing and Jon bounced on it as if he was on a trampoline. Once he settled, he got off and the dragon pushed him back to the ground with his snout. Jon laughed and Ghost came over panting and licked Jon in the face. Jon pushed the wolf away and the wolf went to the dragon’s snout and licked it. The dragon narrowed its eyes at the wolf and Ghost stood on his haunches and narrowed his eyes back. Jon laughed as he stood. The dragon turned back at Jon and drove him back down to the ground with a slight nudge of his tail. Ghost growled and the dragon chirped then turned and ran a couple of steps and off it leaped and landed in a field further away. Jon stood again and turned to Ghost with a grin.

“Well here we are boy, might as well go in and find all we need to find here”

He drew Longclaw out of habit. Ghost led him towards the great gate at the foot of the rock mountain. Jon tried to open the gate but it wouldn’t move an inch despite him applying his whole might. Ghost looked at him in a funny way; as if he was looking at a fool trying to accomplish an impossible task.

“What is it boy?”, he huffed after another try.
The direwolf looked at Jon’s left pointedly and walked over to a rusted steel sword that seemed to be pinned into a slit in the mountain wall next to the gate. Jon tried to pull it in vain. He pushed it down and with a metal clank, it went down. He realised this sword was a lever. He pushed it down and down carefully so it would not break. Finally, it reached down and the large steel gate went up until its’ mouth was wide open. Ghost did not wait, he went right through the gate into the dark pathway.

Ghost seemed calm so Jon too followed. “Careful Ghost”, he said as they entered a dark tunnel built into a mountain. Ghost kept trotting and he had no choice but to follow. Jon realised that this whole mountain has been turned into a castle somehow and whoever built this place, was both a genius and a creep. This place screamed evil as you entered. The walls of this tunnel were lined with spiral marks, engravings of heads of wolves and heads of horses and spears. There was a cage with a rotten raven inside it on the floor. Jon saw the light at the end of the tunnel and followed Ghost and as he reached the light, he was in Winter. Snow was falling on the castle grounds, whilst it was still summer outside the castle. What shocked him was the ice engravings that served as banners of sorts that were seemingly engraved all over the walls of this courtyard.

The direwolf of House Stark.

“Shit”

This was getting creepier. Ghost nudged him and he followed, he could not ignore the fact that this Castle belonged to House Stark of all Houses. What was going on here?

A great door stood before him now. The very same sigil engraved beautifully on both sides of the door. Jon could not lie. This courtyard looked like Winterfell. This was a bit shocking to Jon and it made him halt. Ghost waited as well while Jon took a good look around before opening any doors. He realised the great door was the only way he could go. He opened the door and it was dark inside. He took one step inside and the walls lit up with some words and the direwolf sigil kept showing up. With each step he took, the walls of ice released some inscriptions in a blue light. Jon was astonished. He felt the intense magic in this place. His hair literally stood up. Ghost stood on his haunches at the door not even batting an eyelid.

Jon walked slowly and he saw that this was a hall.

There was a stand at the front of it that looked like a basin made of Ice. Jon slowly walked to it and looked closely. Inside the basin was a pod that held a beautiful dagger with a bronze hilt sticking up. The strange thing about the blade was that it was split in the middle. The left side of the blade was entirely made of ice, like the weapons wielded by white walkers. The other side was made entirely of dragonglass. Jon was amazed at the perfection in which this dagger was built. Why was it both dragonglass and ice? And why was it on a bronze hilt? Who the hell had such skills to build such a magnificent weapon and what was it for?

“Take it Jon”, a voice said from nowhere. He doubted.

Jon started to think this was a trap. What if the Night King appeared? This castle was held by him after all. Why though? Was the Night King a Stark? What on earth was the spiralling diagram that the white walkers kept leaving in their wake?

Jon tried to grab the dagger but it shot up quickly and pricked his hand with both sharp ends. The prick seemed to draw more blood than a normal prick that size would. He hissed as he felt the sting on his fingers. He wondered if he had been poisoned because his bowels moved. His fear was for naught, he realised. Instantly after the dagger had stung him, the blade lit up. Jon could clearly see light shining in icy blue and deep red of ice and dragonglass balanced into one blade. A door suddenly opened on the black floor and Jon saw stairs leading down. He carefully went down the
stairs and into a basement that was strangely alight ice blue on the left and reddish glow of dragonglass on the right side. This whole room was half ice and half dragonglass, split accurately. There was another basin that was made entirely of dragonglass in the middle, with weirdwood roots dangling on top of it.

“You made it”, said a male voice in what sounded like relief.

Jon almost pissed himself. He turned and he was met with silver hair and violet eyes. This man looked every inch as a king should. He had broad shoulders and he was as tall as Toregg Giantsbane. He had pale skin and deep violet eyes like Dany and that princess who had been pregnant at Summerhall. The princess had been his own grandmother Rhaella, he understood. Dany’s mother now that he thought of it. His heart panged in realisation. That was the day his own sire, Prince Rhaegar was born. Those same eyes he had seen on the late King Aegon the Fortunate and the Prince of Dragonflies. His hair reached the lower edge of his neck and he was dressed in a black leather armour with scales. He thought he had an idea who this was. It made him emotional.

“Rhaegar”, Jon said, looking at the man with tears in his eyes. “I want to see my mother”

The tall man smiled. “No, I’m afraid. Although I am flattered, Rhaegar is much prettier”, he replied with a smile as if daring Jon to guess. “You will see both your parents in time of course”.

Jon frowned in disappointment. He was in no mood for guessing games. He almost snapped but he remembered his manners. He could be talking to a king. Luckily this king did not wish to further indulge his anxiety.

“Aegon”, the man said in introduction as he extended his hand to offer a shake. A huge smile still on his face.

Jon took the man’s hand warily. “Aegon”, he replied curtly

The man chuckled a bit seeing the confused look on Jon’s face. He was about to ask what was funny, but the man beat him to it.

“First of my name”, the man offered and Jon almost pissed himself again. He was about to go down and bend the knee for no reason but the old king caught him and bid him stand while laughing. Jon realised he could well be the shortest Aegon in history. The thought made him laugh as the legendary king took a good look at him. Then the king started laughing again. Jon was about to say what he thought but the king spoke while laughing.

“No offence your Grace, but you don’t look like an Aegon at all”, the old king said honestly but with a huge smile

Jon felt a tad bit offended but the smile made him chuckle too. “My thoughts exactly”, he replied

“Great men think alike then”, Aegon returned. “It is good to finally meet you son”

“Likewise, your grace”, Jon answered with a small smile. His heart felt warm at the word, “Son”.

The king smiled tenderly. “You remind me so much of my brother Orys”, he said.

“How”

“I told him day in and day out to stop calling me that. He was my brother in all intents and purposes but did he listen? No. Orys went on and on about propriety and setting an example for the realm...”
“I heard the two of you were very close”, Jon countered softly with interest at what the king had said.

“We were”, Aegon sat down and poured what looked like wine in his chalice. “Just like you and Robb in reverse actually now that I think of it”. Jon nodded in understanding.

“He used to put me and Visenya on our arses all the time in the yard. This one time, our father gave him a ride around Dragonstone on Balerion, and poor Orys vomited his dinner afterwards.”, Aegon chuckled and so did Jon.

“He refused dragon rides after that. I asked to legitimize him too just like Stannis did you, he also refused like you did. He ended up taking on the Baratheon name in honour of an ancient Valyrian our father told us stories about.”

“He must have been quite the man”, Jon said with a smile.

I could not have asked for a better brother; you might meet him too one day if the gods are good.”, Aegon replied with a grin.

This room was warm despite being literally made of Ice. Jon realised he had not asked an important question.

“What is this place? And what is that?”, Jon asked, pointing at the sparkling round object in the middle of the dragonglass basin. “And most importantly, what the hell is Aegon the Conqueror doing this far North, three hundred years after he died?”

The king laughed again. Jon waited.

“This”, Aegon sipped on the cup he was holding while waving his free hand around like a sentry advertising exotic goods. “Is Wintergate, the Other castle of House Stark”. The king pointed at the object in the basin. “And that is the most important thing in the world right now besides you, and I am here to tell you some things and hand over the reins to you, while laughing of course”.

“Laughing?”, Jon spat

“Yes, at you. You seem very scared.”, Aegon teased.

“I am”, Jon replied loudly with a renewed frown while gesturing with his hand to the place. “The Night King lived here you know?”

“He did, that is why I said it is the OTHER castle of House Stark. The Night King was a Stark too, that is why he claimed this castle, but he was a not human when he lived here”, Aegon elaborated seeing the confusion in Jon’s face.

“The Night King was named Edrych Stark. The second son of Elias, a grandson of Brandon of The Bloody Blade. Elias went to Valyria after the death of his wife to seek help for the war against the Children. This was fifteen years after the Neck was created. He came back with a new wife. Brandon his heir, was unhappy with this and he showed it. The children of the Forest went quiet for a while and as he sent Edrych and his men to the Isle of Faces to investigate why the Children were no longer attacking, disaster ensued. The Singers caught his brother and turned him by shoving an enchanted blade of dragonglass into his heart. Thereby placing him under a spell to bring death to all invading humans. He targeted his own family. Day in day out, he fought against his brothers and murdered people by the scores. Brandon gathered an army and Edrych defeated them and turned them against Bran. The children grew comfortable. They sent him again but one day in a greendream, him and Bran duelled and Bran was crippled. Azhor returned on dragonback and after
Edrych killed the dragon, Azhor defeated him in single combat but killing him was not possible. He eluded them thereafter, gathering a new army. Edrych went on killing, but this time for some reason he started killing indiscriminately between men and Singers. Their steel would shatter each time they tried to kill him. Azhor and Brandon had a great fallout when Azhor decided to find the children. He made a pact with them and they gave him a chain that was made of dragonglass so he could bind Edrych. In return they wanted the firstborn of the Starks to marry one of them to ensure that their war ended for good. They went for Edrych while Brandon went to seek help from their kin of Durrandon in the South. At the Isle, Brandon consulted the children but once the meeting ensued, his men started killing them. The children went into hiding but Bran stole their lore. He started reading it and conducting spells until finally he was now able to warg the dead and mindless bodies like Edrych. He sent them to capture Edrych but then Edrych drove him off to the Fist of the First Men. His army camped there and slowly the dead were picking them off using dead animals and the weather was not easy on them. Many died of the cold or hunger until Azhor returned. He had a fresh army that did not last a week. Brandon met the Casterly’s who had come to offer aid and told them Azhor was a bastard who would get them killed. The Lord of Casterly Rock came for Azhor but Azhor defeated him in single combat and killed him. He discovered his wife was pregnant but as it happened, when his wife gave birth, she told him to kill her and save the child because they would not survive. She had not been eating well and you know how that would impact a pregnant woman. The child was born but the wife was about to die and begged Azhor to drive his sword into her heart and end it before the Night King turned her. Azhor understood why. The Night King wanted a Valyrian bride. He ended up complying and drove his sword into her heart. That sword grew ripples from the magic and the steel changed altogether. You know the tale, don’t you?”

Jon nodded in contemplation.

“After Azhor had defeated the dead, he chained Edrych to this Castle and went for all the walkers one by one until they were all gone. The pact was that House Stark would split. The descendants of Azhor would hold this castle and the descendants of Bran would hold Winterfell. They built a tunnel that ran from here to the Isle of Faces, passing through Winterfell. In the years that passed, Brandon was still angry about Azhor’s decisions and feared him. He had his own brother killed alongside everyone that lived here using that tunnel. Fourteen years ago, after your foster father Ned Stark died Winterfell was taken from House Stark by Theon Greyjoy, then the Boltons and the injustices committed therein provide sufficient dark magic for Edrych to rise up to claim it and that”, he pointed to the egg.

“He was even more angrier when he woke and as you saw, he wanted to kill Bran and then turn Daenerys so their heir could claim the egg. He decided to raise an army and so he used those grounds beyond this castle to conduct his rituals of changing babies to walkers, but before him, people lived here”.

“People lived here?”, Jon asked in disbelief. “This place is creepy. What kind of human can live here?”

“The castle was very beautiful and mystical. Azhor built this castle using mixed magic after the Pact. That dagger is the tangible evidence of the pact between House Stark and Its Other House after the First Great War. Blood is the only key to this room. Your father read about it in an ancient letter that Azhor had written to Nissa Ovelon when she was pregnant. He was writing to Aemon at Castle Black often until he eventually discovered that the walkers were in the lands of Always Winter, guarding this very thing and their captive King. So, no one could ever access it. You are the only person that it will respond to, not even me to my shame. The Night King could not get to this part of the castle even if he tried. It can only be opened by The One whose song is of Ice and Fire.”

“And that is me?”
“Yes, people with the same blood as you”, Aegon replied.

“Targaryens?”, Jon asked in shock.

Aegon laughed again. “Oh no. I mean people with a balance of the blood of ice and fire, just like you”

“What does that mean?” Jon asked

“Do you know why Cregan Stark agreed to help Rhaenyra during the Dance? Of course, you don’t. Cregan had a copy of Azhor’s last will and testament. It spoke of the First Pact between Azhor and the children and the Second Pact between House Stark of Winterfell and House Stark of Wintergate. That is the only egg laid by Megarmon…the last dragon of Ice and Fire about six thousand years ago…If Cregan had obtained a Targaryen bride, his heir would claim the egg and hatch the dragon. It is the power he wanted. The key to combating the physical effects of dark magic in the world and the chains that bind magic to neutrality”.

“There were others like me with that blood magic?”

“Brynden Rivers, Shiera Seastar and Duncan the Small had it, but limited to warging and greensight. Shiera even more so because her mother was famous for dabbling in the arcane arts while Shiera was in her belly. Hence, Shiera is still alive; one hundred and thirty-six years after she was born, so was Brynden until he died a few years ago in that very cave you found him in. Magic does not follow laws of primogeniture.”, Aegon answered with a grin.

“There are only two people ever in history to have both wolfsblood and dragons blood. Now there are three because of the kinslaying you did.

Jon blushed in embarrassment but was happy hearing about his children from a second source. He wanted to ask about them but he decided to let the king carry on.

“Dragons and Wolves usually never mate. They either love one another to death or hate one another to death. A dragon may not devour a snake in most contexts because the snake would see dragon as kin. It will not mind a raven or a falcon, because the bird submits immediately. The dragon thrives in dominance, that is why you ended up being Lord Commander of the Watch and then King in the North despite being a famous bastard with no right to it. That and the fact that you are really a good king and a good man before that. You dislike power, and that always makes people eager to follow you.”

Jon nodded and his ancestor carried on.

“If a dragon accepts and even loves a wolf though and vice versa…a phenomenon occurs. A powerful one that has only happened twice before. The wolfsblood and the blood of the dragon always ends with the death of the mother. Too much magic passes into the world, overriding all spells and prior magic. The perfect amount of blood magic.”

“So, all Starks are wolves and all Targaryens are dragons?”, Jon asked.

“No. The gods flip a coin”, Aegon said with a chuckle.

Jon frowned again.

“Take my wives, Visenya and Rhaenys. They were both dragonesses but I was the Alpha, so they acquiesced because I shared the power with them. The more dragons there are in the world, the more dragons there are amongst Targaryens, but there can only be one alpha, and that does not
follow the laws of men”

“How”, Jon asked.

“Like Daemon Blackfyre”, the king offered. “Daeron was the heir presumptive to the throne but Daemon Blackfyre was The Dragon in the family at the time. Even the realm saw it and suffered for it. Rhaegar was the Dragon even though Aerys was king. Viserys was no dragon but Daenerys is Your Dragon and you are Hers, but you are the Alpha Dragon of the family”, he finished and then pointed Jon to the dragon egg on the basin.

“What about Maegor, your son?”, Jon asked

“He was the dragon too. What happened to him, happened because of things done by Visenya and the Princess of Dorne before the lad was born…. and that is a story for another day”, Aegon replied in a sad voice and a faraway look.

Jon nodded in understanding.

“Now you will do your duty to the realm your Grace.” the Conqueror carried on. “And you are to take that egg and go hatch it in the first mountain of Old Valyria and restore your House for the generations to come”

“Valyria is cursed”, was the response from Jon

“So are you then… By the gods Aegon, you are a Valyrian. The very king of it. Do you even know what is in Valyria? Riches you can never imagine. Valyrian steel from its natural source. Secrets to ancient powerful medicines and spells to protect the place and so much more. The doom happened at the peak of Valyrian power son. If you die without hatching this egg, your dragon will soon die again and your children won’t survive much longer without the necessary magic. Only you can hatch those dragons and fix the mess in Valyria. This is the reason why I had to be here to tell you this.”

“No one will believe me if I said I am the son of Rhaegar and Lyanna”, Jon tried, “And I don’t trust anyone amongst those who know it for sure. The last time I did, they betrayed me. I mean, as you can see, I don’t look like a Targaryen”, he finished bitterly

“Your hair is black and your eyes are grey but your blood is Targaryen and your grandparents were purebred. The dragons should be enough but if not, there is proof that Rhaegar left in his vault at Dragonstone and inside Lyanna’s statue in the crypts at Winterfell. Ned Stark and Howland Reed hid a copy of their marriage certificate inside it that had been meant to go to the Citadel. Reed kept another copy on him that was supposed to be sent to Winterfell before your father died in battle. He is still alive, you can fly to Greywater Watch right now and retrieve it.”

Jon was shaken. He took a deep breath before he replied. “They really loved each other then.”

“Too much. Rhaegar was even ready to relinquish the crown to Viserys if Aerys and Rhaella would not approve Lyanna, not unlike Prince Duncan who did for a common girl.”

“It led to war, and thousands upon thousands lost their lives”, Jon said passionately. “And for what?”

“Your parents loved each other and you so much, it killed them son.” Aegon elaborated softly. Do not let their deaths and the deaths of those who died in the misunderstanding be for nothing.”

“I don’t want to be king”, Jon solemnly replied
“It is your destiny Aegon!” The old man replied with a slightly raised commanding voice. “Men much older and experienced than you chose you as their king while you were a bastard because you were born a king. You are the head of your House whether you like it or hate it, and your house is a royal House. I know it hurts you son, your mother told me just as much. If you choose the latter, then you can keep hating yourself but the dragon outside will drive you mad because it is in you as much as you are in him now. If you accept it, then you can change the world for the better. Let your blood work for you for a change! It has served others too long. You have been a king more than most kings who sat the Iron Throne have. It is in you. Your father was dead and so was Aerys the Second when you were born. The Iron Throne can be reforged, but a king to sit on it is born for it. You will bring justice to traitors and take back the Seven Kingdoms in due time. For now, you will go and forge your own Kingdom in your homeland.”, Aegon said with authority.

“Will it work? Will the egg truly hatch?”, Jon asked, considering the point the old king was making.

“It has worked so far. Your dragon is alive and well, isn’t it?”, Aegon smiled in relief seeing Jon show a bit of acceptance. “Take it.”

Jon went slowly to the egg and he saw it sparkling like sea water, with scales like a rainbow. Jon touched it and felt it. It felt warm; almost hot and it also felt very cold. Jon didn’t understand.

“You feel the ice and fire in it, don’t you”, Aegon asked in barely hidden excitement while looking at the young king’s face.

“I can. It feels unreal. How can something be so warm and yet so cold?”, he asked, running his hands on the scales while smiling softly.

“A magic egg for a magic Egg”, Aegon japed with a smile

“Are you calling me an egg your grace?”, Jon asked the elder

“Aegon the fifth was called ‘Egg’ by his siblings. Short for Aegon.” he said in response

Jon shook his head and placed the egg inside his coat. Aegon placed his arm around Jon’s shoulder and they both walked up the stairs of the strange basement.

“Now listen, Rhaegal is taking you to Daenerys in Asshai. She is with Shiera. Try to fly without causing a scene. Bran will not see you if you remain in the air high above ravens when you are in the South. I have spoken to Daenerys about you in her time with us. She is not as angry as you expect but angry still and a little afraid of flying out of Asshai. Her guilt about Kingslanding and all that has happened is still there but I got through to her and so did Shiera when she awoke. She doesn’t know Rhaegal is alive but Drogon will have sensed him by now and Daenerys will sense him as soon as he crosses the narrow sea. They will meet you as you approach. Be careful. Do not let the egg out of sight until you reach Valyria. It will speak to your instincts as you travel with it. Shiera is training Daenerys with the sword but she has not told her about your coming. Once you get there, she will show you both how to get to Valyria unharmed. Please trust her. When you find Daenerys, be the good man that you are, do the right thing son. You know how you never wanted bastards? Now is your chance to solve that issue. Once you are married…present her with this”, the king instructed while handing Jon a sword. It was beautiful. Two splitting dragons on the hilt with a large ruby adorning the middle. Jon realised it was the famous Dark Sister.

‘Blackfyre is tainted. When you find it, make sure you destroy it’, the king added. “Longclaw will be the new sword of our House.”

“She will murder me on sight with it your Grace”, Jon said as he spotted Ghost at the door.
“She did not kill you when she was inside Drogon, she won’t kill you now, but angry at you she is”, the king added. The two kings went out the great door. Aegon stopped and Ghost went after Jon and stopped when Jon stopped to turn back to Aegon.

“I will do my best sire”, Jon said. “Thank you for all you have done”

“No thank you Jon”, Aegon said as he called him Jon for the first time. “And remain safe son. For your own sake, and for the sake of Daenerys and your children. Remember what Brynden told you. You are not alone anymore. We will fix this.”.

Jon nodded and Aegon smiled.

“Goodbye Jon. Until next time”, Aegon said while fading

Jon was about to be emotional but he smiled and waved. Aegon was gone and Jon stood there in thought and his hand was running on Ghost’s back. The huge wolf wagged his tail wildly and rolled on the floor in glee.

“You have been a very good boy”, Jon told the wolf. “Not a boy anymore though”, he said as if to himself. Jon took in the ancient castle one more time before he left. He felt very honoured to have met a great king like Aegon. It made him feel very kingly himself.

“I am rubbing shoulders with legends”, he thought and then a laugh came. “Catelyn Stark would tear her red hair off if she saw this”, he chuckled as Ghost stared at him with his ruby eyes as if in agreement.

A huge smile came onto his face as he shook his head in disbelief at what he saw next. The ice banners had changed form from the delicately carved wolf of Stark to beautiful carvings of the three-headed dragon.

“My House”, he whispered to himself with a smile. “Our House Dany…I am coming for you”

He turned and left the castle through the tunnel. Once outside the gate he found Rhaegal who was already waiting for him. The dragon lay lazily close to the castle gate and stood a little once it sensed them coming. He lifted his head with a low growl when his eyes met Ghosts. As they approached, he pushed a huge chunk of fire roasted meat to them. Ghost yelped in joy and went for the meat. Jon laughed as he tickled the dragon under its snout.

“You are good boys, both of you”, he said with a thankful smile towards the dragon as he took a bite of the charred meat. He wished it had salt at least but he would be full.

“Now we will be going on very long journey boys. I need you both to behave. I will keep some of this meat with us for the journey. There are people who want to hurt us. They have hurt us before and that was the last time. I will not let them…No…we will not let them do it again”, he said in resolve.

The dragon purred in response and the wolf carried on eating. They ate in silence. Once done; the dragon let down his shoulder and they both mounted. The beast went up with a huge roar and threw a flame into the air. Jon felt the excitement of his mount. Off into the air and above the clouds they went and then Jon felt sleepy. He looked at Ghost and the wolf was for gone into the land of dreams and Jon chuckled at the sight. Not long after, he was also gone. He woke up later in the day when the dragon landed to drink in some small Island. Him and Ghost did the same. They were on dragonback again when the sun went down and in an hour, they were both asleep again. Rhaegal would fly and land on the sea to paddle like a swan while fishing. The dragon fell asleep in that
They flew for eight weeks in that manner, avoiding lands as much as possible. During the day Rhaegal would fly above the clouds and at night he would alternate between flying low on sea and paddling or at times he would land in small islands. One time, Rhaegal brought a bear he had caught in the woods and they had no choice but to feast on it. Time flew as they flew. Jon was unaware how far they had gone but soon they were flying above red mountains in a desert. On a sunny afternoon, Rhaegal landed and Ghost dismounted and Jon followed.

The dragon lifted its head in anticipation once they were down and after a moment, Jon was not sure if he heard it or felt it. He looked up and a small speck in the sky confirmed it. The moment had come. Jon drew closer to Rhaegal involuntarily. He was nervous. Rhaegal roared and lifted into the sky to meet his brother. The two dragons met in the sky a bit of distance from where he was and it was clear they were both happy to see each other. A minute passed while the dragons danced and played in the sky while Ghost stood in his haunches watching the display and Jon kept looking up and watching with his hand cupped above his eye to deflect the scorching desert sun.

The dragons descended and Jon realised he was not ready for what he saw. The dragon was not alone. The silver hair he remembered very well had been hidden by the shining sun of this place that looked like the literal middle of nowhere. Dany was here.

Rhaegal landed behind Jon and Drogon landed right in front of him with a loud roar. Jon tried to keep his nerves. He failed and flinched. He looked down and the rider on the other dragon looked at him. He saw her. She had tears in her eyes when he looked.

"Come to finish the job, Jon Snow?", the dragon queen shouted from above.

"Dany", Jon said without looking at her.

"Look at me and answer me Jon Snow!", she yelled again in annoyance.

Jon’s heart jumped. Her voice always had that effect on him. He lifted his eyes to the queen.

"Dany, please…", he started; unsure if she could hear him.

The queen started dismounting very slowly. He saw that there was a saddle on the black dragon now. He took a good look at the queen. She was wearing beautiful black leather with a black breastplate of amour decorated with silver spikes on the shoulders. Her hair was tightly packed in a braid that fell to the back of her waist and the leather pants and boots she was wearing didn’t make it any easier for Jon. There was a sword on her left hip and the right hip was holding a dagger. The hilt made him realise which dagger this was and guilt engulfed him again. The petite queen walked over to him slowly; her purple Valyrian eyes locked on his all the time. Finally, she was standing face to face with him in a warrior’s pose. She was so beautiful and this outfit and pose made Jon’s mind run straight to the gutter.

"Are you going to answer me Jon Snow?”, she asked with a serious face. Her hand moved to the pommel of the sword. “Or should I finish you right here and right now?”. 

"I would not blame you if you did Dany. I will not even resist.”, he replied 

"Am I supposed to feel sorry for you then?", she asked angrily 

"I don’t want that…”. He faltered 

"Then why are you here?”
Jon felt like crying when looking at his beautiful aunt. His queen and the mother of his children. It struck him there and then how much he had missed her.

He stuttered. “T-t-to tell you I am... I am sorry Dany…”, he sighed and drew a breath. The queen stared at him lifelessly. Her purple eyes looking into his grey drove him mad with lust.

“I am an honourable fool whose honour has cost him everything he ever fought for. I am a kinslaying idiot that doesn’t know what he has until it is too late. I let others manipulate me and they are better for it while I am not. I regret living my whole life for the benefit of others. I hate myself for it more than anything. You do not have to forgive me for anything I did Dany. The gods know I will not forgive myself for it. I have not forgiven those who betrayed me too. If you must bring me justice, I will not stand in your way. If you don’t, I will do my duty by our family and get justice on those who wronged us. I just have one thing to ask of you…””, Jon said.

The queen raised an eyebrow.

“Can I...Can I please…see the children, just once if that is okay with you”, he replied slowly

He didn’t see it coming. The queen kicked him so hard in the face he fell backwards. The she drew the dagger and with lightning speed her knee was on his chest and the dagger was held to his throat. The anger on her face was beyond what he expected. Her teeth were clenched and both the dragons roared loudly. She pushed the dagger forward slightly while Jon coughed from the impact of the knee on his chest.

“You dare Jon Snow?!!”, she shrieked; her face red with fury.

“P... please Dany”, Jon replied with another cough. “I deserve you anger”, he exhaled.

“They are MY children Jon Snow, I was dead to you remember?!”, the queen asked with a raised voice that was starting to tremble. “Do you know how hard...how hard it was for me to learn I had been betrayed?” she shouted. “My friends were dying in front of me and Rhaegal...” she sniffed “You looked at me as if I disgusted you...gods your touch felt so cold and, and...you told Sansa about... You knew she already hated me and...”. She cried out...

“She swore to keep it to herself”, Jon said softly. His own pain at the whole thing coming to the fore. They realisation of Sansa’s betrayal stung deep.

“She didn’t. That was a deliberate act on her front. A move whose outcome she had predicted. She learnt from Cersei and Littlefinger; two of the best manipulators in Westeros. Once she had used me to take back Winterfell while hiding a contingency army from the me; the battle commander whom she called brother, she wanted me dead so she could take credit for the victory and gain power. I am sure of it.”

Dany’s eyes widened.

“Then she used me and you to get rid of the dead and Cersei... While she loathed me, and spoke ill of me in the crypts with her husband Tyrion; who was my Hand and didn’t defend me from her hatred, all the while my armies and dragons were fighting for her home outside the walls...”, she cried

Jon stared at her in shock.

“Missandei...she told me when we rode for White Harbour after the war against the dead”, she finished.
Jon’s anger came back. “Justice will be served to her someday Dany. The North remembers alright. But they remember selectively. They forget quickly when it suits their interests… and its due time Tyrion lost his silver tongue for the good of the realm.”

Dany frowned. “He wanted you dead”, Jon explained and his resolve was strengthened when he saw the pain in her eyes.

He could not believe how cruel, cold and calculating Sansa had become. She had even manipulated Arya into thinking all she did was for her family and that she was clever. They were never his family. Jon knew she craved power but he never imagined how far she would go. Once Jon had been chosen king in the North, Sansa had questioned everything he did loudly in front of the lords. She was against him going South to seek help against the Night King until he said he would leave the North in her hands. He was sure she had persuaded the Northerners to be spiteful towards Daenerys even before they heard he had bent the knee.

“I killed so many people”, she said, “I don’t want to rule Westeros anymore. Many will want my children dead.”

“It was Bran…”, Jon said quickly.

“I was there too Jon. I saw it. I was out of control but I felt myself doing it. I remember it…”, tears started falling. “How will I ever live with that…”

“I carry the blame too Dany. My family used me too. Sansa betrayed me too by telling Tyrion…”

Rhaegal made a soft sound and both dragons brought their heads down, as if to cry with their riders as they cried. Dany looked at Rhaegal and then back at Jon and then back at Rhaegal.

“I am sorry.”, Jon said softly

The queen broke down and started crying. She wept and let go of the dagger. Jon held her and they both cried bitterly for what felt like forever. The sun was well past its peak when they both finally stopped apologising and crying. The whole time the dragons had spread their wings to shelter the two monarchs from the desert dust. She slowly let go of Jon and tried to stand up. Jon sat up and stood while holding his queen. Then queen wiped her face and approached Rhaegal and held on to his neck tightly, then started speaking softly to the dragon in High Valyrian. Fresh tears fell on her face. The dragon purred that whole time with clicking sounds of happiness here and there.

Ghost just stood there and watched all of this as it happened.

Jon had tears in his eyes too now as he observed the emotional scene. He slowly walked to her and Drogon brought his head to them too. Ghost joined them warily a few seconds later. They stayed like that for a while until everyone recovered.

“I still do not want to rule Westeros”, Dany said finally. Looking at the floor.

“I do”, Jon said softly and Daenerys snorted in surprise and snuck a look at him.

“What brought about the change?”, she enquired

Jon inhaled. “A wise person once told me we can only help people from a position of power… and right now the realm is in wrong hands. I know it…”. he started. Dany smiled softly, remembering their conversation after she defeated the Lannister and Tarly armies at the Blackwater rush.

“A couple of old men I met recently told me exactly how to get into a position of power… and one of
them happens to have been the one who forged the Iron Throne. So, yes. Jon Snow has just entered the great game”, he finished with a serious face.

Daenerys smiled softly while looking down. Jon didn’t see it. A moment passed and then the queen looked at the two beasts next to them.

“Thank you, Jon Snow…”, Daenerys finally said with a small husky voice.

Jon lifted his head to look at her.

“I had lost him. You brought him back to me.”, she elaborated

Jon smiled slightly, “He is a good boy”, he said and turned to look at the queen who was still teary but had a small smile on her face.

“I told them you are a good man, you know”, she said softly, looking at the ground. Jon carried on staring.

” Aemon and Lyanna. They asked about you.”, she carried on in elaboration

Jon’s eyes lit up on hearing he had a son and a daughter.

“Yes, I named her after your mother Jon Snow. She deserved that much after what my family put her through”, she stated. “And Maester Aemon… Aunt Shiera told me he looked out for you at the Wall”

“Thank you, Dany”, he replied in a coarse whisper, “He did”

“They wanted to know and I didn’t tell them what you did. If they ever know, it will be because you decided to tell them. I guess you were right about the witch Jon Snow”, she finished.

Jon swallowed drily and nodded. The queen looked at the green dragon again and then up at the sky. She smiled at the dragon and took a deep breath.

“Follow me, we have much to discuss”, she said with a serious face. She turned and walked back to climb on Rhaegal’s back instead of Drogon. Ghost climbed with her, leaving Jon there in the dusty red sand.

Traitor. Jon thought while looking at the direwolf on Rhaegal’s back

Ghost looked and him and did nothing. The green dragon nudged Jon to the ground with a soft purr and a huff of smoke. Jon fell with a thud and he hear the queen laugh as the dragon raised his head and ran off, the he was high in the air with the queen on his back. Off they went beyond the red mountains leaving dust in their wake. Jon was left on the ground with a Drogon who was looking at him in a strange way.

“I am sorry boy, for everything that happened in Westeros because I am an honourable idiot”, he said to the dragon.

Drogon huffed and puffed black smoke onto Jon’s face. Jon coughed but turned to touch the black dragon’s snout. The dragon nudged him back to the ground and as he tried to stand, like Rhaegal had done. It was their way of playing, Jon realised. The dragon then lowered its wing for him to climb. A smile came on Jon’s face again as he climbed. The dragon roared very loudly and with thunderous steps, he took off running and with unbelievable speed, went into the sky. Jon laughed in glee as the dragon twirled and twisted in the air before following in the direction his brother had
gone. He figured the dragon was very happy. He did not know whether it was happy for him or it was saying thank you for bringing Rhaegal back. Jon did not ask, but hope had filled his heart.

“I am going to do the right thing Drogon”, he said with an excited grin to the dragon as if he was speaking to the Conqueror. “With Ice, Fire and Blood”, he finished

The dragon roared in approval, then banked and flew further East.

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Aegon – Present day

Jon looked down into the crowd as court was beginning.

“Your Graces, My Lords, Ladies of the Court, we are here to hold a trial for the captured pirates that were brought in last night”, Kraztos began.

“Please bring them in my Lord.”, Jon said to Aurane Velaryon, the legitimised Lord of Driftmark.

“At once your grace”, Aurane replied as he went towards the door and the first group was brought in.

Court was in session as they brought up the prisoners before the throne room for judgement.

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Daenerys

The throne room felt a tad bit too warm for her liking. It was her being pregnant and all she knew, and these heavy royal garments were also a bit ridiculous for the weather but Aunt Shiera was very persuasive when given a chance. She also felt heavy and tired but she felt sorry for Jon Connington who had been questioning the prisoners one by one in this heat, as well as Keelah, their interpreter from the Summer Islands who was sweating as it was. Even though Daenerys didn’t need to be here for this; she would not let her husband hold this trial alone. They had to show a united front at all times. Even more so considering the rift that others brought between them in Westeros. That would not be allowed to happen again. They had lost too much. She was brought back from her musings as the prisoners started crying.

“Are you the leader?”, Griff asked the one-eyed man that was in chains before him in Valyrian and the translator repeated in the common tongue. The man nodded. Jon Connington carried on the questioning.

“Who provided the men for the voyage?”, Griff proceeded

“T-tycho…Tycho Nestoris gave me the coin and told me what to look for and where”, the leader of the group replied. Dany saw that the man had pissed himself.

“Why?”

The man explained that Tycho Nestoris had given him the gold to find the sellswords and he had decided not to use any company but to pay desperate individual cutthroats that had no allegiance to any company so he could keep the extra coin. He only knew that Tycho wanted information on New Valyria.
This was not the first time this had happened. Tycho Nestoris’ name has come up on the lips of many pirate leaders they had caught. This began after they had started the Golden Bank of Mereen and it gave lower interest rates than the Iron Bank. Tycho had sent men to Mereen to find out where the gold had come from. The only information he had was that the ships that supplied the gold were sailed and guarded by fierce Unsullied soldiers. The was only one Unsullied Company in the world and it was commanded by Torgho Nudho. So, they had followed the trail of the ships to Valyria and brought the news to Tycho who had wanted more information.

“I will leave your Graces to pronounce the sentencing to this company”, Griff finished after a long questioning.

Dany nodded. Jon sighed. Ghost pushed his large head under Jon’s hand and yawned.

“How many people lost their lives from the crimes committed by this group?”, Jon asked Griff, whose face was as red as his hair from the heat.

“Twelve labourers and two knights in the service of House Velaryon, your Grace”, Lord Connington answered, “Thirty-nine casualties in total since the invasions began”

Jon let out a pained sigh while running his hands through a sleepy Ghost’s fur, while Griff looked down at the marble floor in disgust.

“Elba Dosiris, for these fourteen lives lost, you will have to lose you head. You led many men to their deaths and we cannot forgive that”, Jon said as he looked at the pleading man in front of him.

“Your crew will each lose their strong hand for the crimes of theft and armed robbery. On top of that they will serve House Velaryon in the mines for twelve years, in return for the labourers they have lost due to your deeds. For two more years they will serve the crown and then they will be free men. Any crimes or an attempt to escape committed during this period, will have their lives forfeit and Lord Velaryon is hereby charged with bringing that justice should the need arise.”

The silver-haired Lord of Driftmark bowed to Jon and Dany in acknowledgement of this charge as the king carried on.

"One of your men will be escorted out of the Smoking Sea with a small boat and a letter to Tycho Nestoris. It is about time he understood that the Iron Bank can also burn if the safety of our people depends on it. Your head will be dipped in Valyrian steel and sent with our response”

Jon looked at his wife and she nodded. They one eyed man was crying out and begging for mercy.

“Take the prisoners to the dungeon and bring me a block”, the king commanded.

Torgho signalled for his men and they took the prisoners, a block was brought and two men-at-arms in the service of House Velaryon held Dosiris down on the block. Jon went down the stairs and drew Longclaw and pronounced the sentence.

“Elba Dosiris of Braavos. You are sentenced to death for the crimes murder, armed robbery and theft. Any last words?

The Braavosi begged for mercy with wailing and gnashing of teeth while Aurane’s men held him down.

“Then we, Aegon and Daenerys of House Targaryen, King and Queen of New Valyria and Protectors of the Dynasty sentence you to die.”
With a quick downward swing of Longclaw, Jon struck hard and true. The head of the late Elba Dosiris rolled to Lord Connington’s feet. Dany didn’t flinch.

“Dip it in purified steel and let it dry. Once done, give it to Lord Velaryon to send with the envoy. Court is adjourned and will reconvene in two days’ time”, Jon finished.

He took Dany’s hand while the men rushed to carry the orders out. While the rest went on one knee except for the other members of the Council. They stood and exited the throne room hand in hand as they came in.

Dany let out a sigh of relief. She would now be free to sit outside in the cool air.

“How are you feeling?” Shiera asked from behind them as she walked next to Griff who was reading something from a missive.

Jon turned with a smile to her. The older lady looked at Dany’s tummy.

“We are good auntie, I just need some air that’s all”, the queen replied

Shiera nodded with a smile. “You are growing by the day, soon Vermithor will have someone to fly with in future.” She said with a soft smile. Dany and Jon smiled back

Griff lifted his head from the letter.

“Your graces, I have news, and Torgho has asked to see us. There is some news on the activities of the Iron Bank across the seas and also in Westeros…”, he said

“Alright Griff, the queen will ride back to the castle and I will join you soon. I need a few moments in the Godswood. “he turned to look at Dany.

“Of course, my king”, Griff bowed and went off to the council chambers.

“I will not be long my love, Aunt Shiera will escort you with Drogon”, he said and kissed his wife’s forehead.

“As long as you don’t take too long, you promised to take Lya and Mel on a ride, and you pinky swore”, Dany japed in Lyanna’s voice while Jon placed his hand on her growing tummy with a chuckle. Aunt Shiera laughed out loud at that. Ghost just stood there like a guard.

“I promise my love, “, he kissed her lips then, “Auntie”, he said to Shiera who kissed his cheek, bringing out that smile of his he reserves for loved ones. Her king turned towards the door leading to the gardens.

Jon’s squire followed him with Longclaw held in his hands while Dany and Shiera left the building with a panting Ghost who was driving a wedge between the two ladies with his snout. They went out through the main door to head back to their castle.

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Sansa

The rain had stopped and she was glad for it. She was happier that Arya was arriving today but her gut was restless at the thought. It had been years since another Stark had been in the North. Today was the day that all changed. This somehow overrode her joy at being with family again. She knew
Arya would not hurt her or plot in any way but the nerves said something else. It was her trip Beyond the Wall she knew. The whole wildling situation had just complicated matters for her and the pressure from the Lords, particularly Lord Glover who had insisted that Jon had beheaded deserters from the Watch and now he was a deserter too. He had to come and face justice. He further insinuated that Jon was raising an army beyond the wall and soon he would come and attack them with a band of savages. He further added, to her ire, that some members of the Watch had gone North to join their forces after finding the Wall without command.

This had placed Sansa in a difficult position because Jon never returned any letters and he never wrote any, they had to go and check if the rumours of his desertion were true. Sansa was disappointed at what she found. She didn’t expect Jon to up and leave the Watch and join the wildlings, and that it had happened so long ago. This meant bad news in any perspective she viewed it. If Jon was not with the wildlings, he is either dead or far away or not even in the true North anymore. It was worse now that it seemed the wildlings hated the Starks for sending Jon to guard the Wall against nothing. She ignored the pang of guilt at that thought. Jon is angry at them…and for the first time, it seemed he didn’t want anything to do with them. The pang came up again.

The slight guilt had come many times to her since her coronation. Just a year before that they had all pledged to follow Jon Snow, The King in the North. “It was his own foolishness in bending the knee”, she consoled herself.

Sansa had hoped she would have him give her away at her wedding in their father’s stead. “Jon is a different man now though”, she thought. “What have we done to him?”

The words the wildlings had spoken were constantly in her mind.

“Jon Snow was never a Stark”, she scoffed. “How dare he say that after being sheltered by my father here against my mother’s will”. The guilt pang came again. He saved your life and sheltered you when you ran from Ramsey and never counted your betrayal against you even once, the voice in her head kept saying. It was just anger talking; she thought while biting her nails. Jon would never renounce the Starks. “He is just hurt and angry that’s all”, she told herself. She knew that the real pain came from the wildlings explicitly implying she was not fit to be their queen but Jon Snow was fit to be their king, and thus, they would not follow her. That implication hurt her and made her angry at the same time.

The familiar steps in the corridor and a clinking chain made her aware that Wolkan was coming. A knock came to the door to her solar.

“Enter”

The old man opened the door and popped his head. A sweat on his brow.

“Princess Arya and her party have been spotted turning the Kingsroad your Grace”, the maester informed. “They will be here soon and the Lord Hand is awaiting you in the hall with the other Lords. Of course, once you are ready to receive them, my Queen”

“In a minute”, Sansa replied and the maester left with a bow.

Lord Royce, her Hand had been pressuring her to marry for years now. It annoyed Sansa but she had finally agreed to marry Lord Hardying since the Vale made up the bulk of her army. In the beginning she had felt no need to marry but she remembered how fragile her rule was. The possibility of the Vale joining Bran in the South or declaring utter independence would leave the North open for attack by anyone who wished so. The terms were that she would be the ruler and he would be a consort. She will not change her name and their children would take up the Stark name. The contract
had been drawn and they should have married by now if it had not been for Lord Glover who had come and insisted they journey North.

She knew the Ironborn had made a trade deal with Mereen and the other cities of Dragon’s Bay as it was now called. She had sent a letter to Queen Yara for brokering such a deal a couple of moons ago and there has been no response as yet. She hoped maybe the Ironborn would reply as The Reach was also supplying the rest of the South. Lord Glover had informed her that the lands beyond the wall had sufficient iron mountains to help the North in trade but the wildling situation made it more complex.

Sansa straightened her dress and walked up to the looking glass. She felt prim and proper and yet unsure if she was ready to meet Arya and how Arya would react to the fact that she was getting married. She walked out of her solar down into the corridor. As she walked there she was always reminded of how Ghost would sit there in guard while Jon was in the South treating with the Targaryen Queen. She didn’t think Jon would be the type to fall in love. ‘You didn’t like the queen because she was more beautiful and much more powerful and she did all that one her own’, the voice in her head accused.

Nonsense. She thought as she walked, ignoring the adversary in her head.

Sansa reached the great hall where the Lords were gathered and Harrold Hardying stood there next to Lord Royce with a smirk of self-assurance. A fortnight ago he had been put to the dirt by that blue eyed direwolf so easily, you wouldn’t tell even now. Sansa knew she had to do her duty to keep her crown secure, but she was not sure she could handle Harry the Heir. Twice now he had acted in foolishness trying to appear like a knight in shining armour. The first time had been at the parlay during the Spring Harvest feast where the idiot had poured a cup of ale on Lord Norrey’s head and earned a broken nose for it. This he had done because Lord Norrey had asked for the honour of a dance with Sansa and she had obliged him. The idiot kept making attempts to seduce Sansa to his bed but clearly, he wasn’t aware what kind of woman he was dealing with.

“Good afternoon your grace”, Lord Royce bowed, as well as the other Lords

“Good to see you, your grace”, you look beautiful as always”, Harry said with a kiss to her hand

“Thank you, my Lord, my Lords and ladies, please send a party to escort the princess Arya into her home”, she commanded, trying to ignore the demon of fear in her heart, making her wary of her returning sister.

“As you command, my queen”, Lord Glover bowed as he sent his men off with a command.

Present were Lady Alysanne Mormont, Lady Alys Karstark, Lord Mychel Redfort, Lord Norrey, Lord Cerwyn, Lord Royce, Lord Hardying, Lord Reed and Lord Egen.

Sansa sat in the middle with her hand to her right and Lord Hardying to her left. This was not the correct order but she had grown tired of telling Harry that this tendency would awaken the ire of some lords but he kept doing it. Sansa sighed.

A horn on the outside informed her that her sister had entered the castle gates. A shiver went up her spine and a feeling of discomfort settled on her bowels.

Arya

The week of travel on horseback was something she was no longer accustomed to. Luckily, she had
asked that they not be escorted regardless of how much the fat lord of White Harbour had insisted. She had written the raven herself to Winterfell to inform her sister of her impending arrival. She was shocked at the news that Sansa would be getting married. She hoped to get the measure of said Lord Hardying. In all honesty, Arya hated politics, but she understood that maybe it was a way of keeping loyalties intact. Not that she would ever do that. She missed Gendry and maybe she was married by now.

She climbed of her white horse. The same one she had found at Kingslanding five years ago as it burned. The stable boy took her horse and other men helped Arya’s crew as they dismounted with their belongings, then took the horses off to the stables and some took their belongings to the rooms she figured had already been prepared for them. A scrawny looking knight came up to her with an impervious smile.

“My princess.”, the man started with a dry smile, “It is my honour. I am Ser Oscar Brune, of the Queensguard, if you…”

“I am not a princess.”, Arya told the man while giving him a flat look. “My father was no king”, she finished.

“But my…my, let me escort you”, the man insisted in a grovelling tone.

“I believe I know my way to my own home ser”, she said while shrugging through the man with her hands on her back. The man turned to look at her and then at the crew following her with the disgusted look highborn fools give people whom they believe are below them. Arya side eyed the man and made a mental note to keep an eye on him.

“Competition Ser Harwin”, Calvin the brute japed with a slight elbow to Harwin next to Arya. Arya snorted and Harwin’s face turned red. Then she walked towards the great door entrance to the great hall and the guys followed her. She paused a bit to take in the place as she walked, and she could see her men doing so too. As she looked, she noticed the banner had changed into the direwolf head with a silver crown adorned with a purple frame. She ignored the pang at that. *Jon did not change the banners*. She ignored it again. It is these petty issues that divided them in their childhood and scavengers used that gap.

She could remember running through these parts before everything went South. She walked a bit quicker and she was at the door and her men were behind her. She thought of going down to the crypts but she thought it was better to be polite. The guard opened the door with a bow to her and as she entered she could see the great chair at the head of the hall and the person on it very clearly. She had not changed a bit and her eyes were locked on Aryas. The room had been filled with tables and Lords and ladies were all over the room. Her heart started beating fast.

“Princess Arya Stark, of Winterfell”, the man at the door announced.

Sansa stood and Arya slowly walked towards the head of the room where Sansa and some lords and ladies stood in the front. Her sister smiled and came over to hug her while Arya’s crew bent the knee. Arya didn’t say anything as Sansa hugged her tightly. She just hugged her back. Her sister looked at her and she had tears in her eyes.

“Welcome back sister.”, Sansa said and Arya nodded.

“It is good to be home”.
“Welcome back my princess.”, Lord Royce said and Arya clenched her teeth, which she changed into a pretend smile at the big-bellied Lord. A knight with blonde hair and a careless smirk came over and tried to kiss Arya’s hand. Arya let him, but the look she gave him was a clear warning to never do that again. The man flinched and walked away.

“I am tired, please show me and my men to our rooms”, she whispered to Sansa. Her sister gave her a strange look then after a while nodded.

“My lords and ladies, her sister announced. “We will have a feast later to celebrate the return of my sister”, Sansa said with all courtesies and earned loud cheers and a bang of tables in response. A brown-haired girl came to Arya with a curtsy and asked to escort her. Arya followed the girl who quickly showed Arya into a big room with a large hearth that had been Robbs when they grew up. She figured Sansa was using the Lord’s rooms since Jon had left her in charge all those years ago.

Arya fell backwards into the bed as soon as the maidservant left with a bow. That was when it hit her. Since Bran was in the South and Jon at the Wall, she could alternate in visiting because clearly, she could not stay in Winterfell. The way everyone treated her was foreign to her. The constant bowing, the curtsies, all this unnecessary and pretentious stuff was not for people like her. With those thoughts in her mind, she felt herself drifting off to sleep.

The steps on the corridor meant someone was coming over. A slight knock made her sit up. The ache in her head told her she had awoken while still deep in sleep. She yawned and answered.

“Come in Sansa”, she said, noticing that the room was very warm from the fire lit by the maidservant.

Sansa came in and she could see two men in silver armour behind her taking positions beside her door as her sister entered with a small smile. Sansa turned and asked that the guards bring them refreshments. She then went on to sit on the small chair next to Arya’s bed.

“I missed you.”, Sansa said

“I missed you too”, Arya replied. “I missed home. My family. That is why I returned.”, she shifted on the bed slightly

“Where did you go all this time? I only heard from you twice in the last five years”, Sansa said with a soft voice

“I went everywhere. I started West and fell on dangerous seas. Then we decided to steer Southward and came upon new places. The voyage somehow led us to sail past the lands of the Ibbenese. I was held hostage by pirates and some rich folk from Sothoryos bailed me out. I was attacked by pirates again on more than one occasion. I went past the Farman isles and into Nubios. A land South of Yi-Ti and then landed on Yi-Ti to get a new ship. I stayed there and left for Asshai once we had raised enough doing labours there. On my way from Yi-Ti we were ambushed and attacked by sailors so we steered away until we reached Asshai. From Asshai…It was very dangerous.” Arya said with a deep thought.

“I am sorry Arya”, Sansa said, rubbing her hands on Aryas

“I am not.”. Arya replied. “Had I not travelled, I would not have learnt the things that I have learnt”

“What things would those be?”, the queen asked
“Before we go there, when last did you hear from Jon or Bran?”, Arya asked, looking at Sansa in the eye.

“I heard from Tyrion a few moons ago. He was responding to a request I sent for aid…, and Jon…”, Sansa sighed and Arya narrowed her eyes. She truly hoped she had not lost him too. Tears came rushing to her eyes while she looked intently at her sister in hope that she doesn’t confirm her fears.

“I don’t know where he is and it seems no one does. He deserted the Night’s Watch a few years ago and went North with the wildlings. I sent men to look for him, but he is nowhere to be found. I took a party to search for him beyond the Wall, even his beloved wildlings have no idea where he is. They say they woke up one morning and him and Ghost had disappeared.”

“You believe them?”, Arya asked

“For some reason I do. I have even sent men to investigate if the wildlings were not hiding him. He is not there. In all the settlements. I even saw Nymeria, your direwolf amongst the wildlings. I know it was her Arya.”, Sansa said

“I saw her too”, Arya said after a moment. “She is somewhere around here, but I saw her before while I was asleep in my ship. She was travelling with another blue-eyed direwolf that looks like Ghost.”, Arya replied to a confirming nod from her sister

She sighed. “I would not call her my direwolf though. Last time I asked her to come with me here she refused. Yet she stays with the wildlings beyond the wall”.

“Perhaps she followed Ghost there.”, Sansa thought out loud

“But how could Ghost…,” Arya didn’t finish that sentence as something else came to her mind.

“Tell me, does anyone know what happened to the black dragon once it had left with the queen’s body?”

“No, Bran might know but he has not said anything to me.”, Sansa replied with a questioning look at Arya who was shaking her head in wonder.

“Why are you asking?”, Sansa asked as a servant came in with some warm bread and fresh ale and placed them on the table next to the bed, with a bow she left.

“Because…”, Arya began after the heavy door closed with a click.

“A year ago, a man boarded my ship in the ports of Asshai. He said he was looking for fare to Pentos where his Westerosi friend would pick him up. I asked him if he was from Westeros and he said he was from Astapor in Dragon’s Bay. The man was almost as fat as Lord Manderly; and he didn’t drink ale, he poured it inside himself in gallons. When deep in his cups, he said he used to serve House Targaryen and he was looking to have his job back. That didn’t feel right with me. How could he serve a House that was all gone and dead? Later on, he said there were two dragons in Asshai which he knew to belong to Daenerys Targaryen. One was black and one was green, but he said there were more…”

Sansa stared in anticipation while Arya swallowed. Not once did she say anything of table manners as her sister was speaking with bread in her mouth like a wildling.

“Of course, I ignored that as the musings of a drunkard or maybe one of the Mad King’s exiled lickspittles.”, Arya said gulping her ale like the man she was speaking of.
Sansa’s attention was fully on Arya as she told her tale. She looked intently at her sister’s expression without batting an eyelid. She was now hooked.

“As I was passing through the canals to avoid the Smoking Sea and its woes; there was a mist and we travelled slowly because the waters were calm. All of a sudden three pirate ships appeared on a quick voyage and ambushed us. Their torches were then lit and I saw that these ships were full of armed men and I lost hope there and then. I thought I would die fighting these men if need be but I didn’t need to.”, then she burped loudly and rubbed her tummy

“Arya!”, Sansa cried with an annoyed face. Arya just raised her arms in apology with a smirk.

“One of their ships crashed into ours from behind”, the younger sister carried on. “And as I fell, I bumped my head so badly on deck and it was bleeding. The pirates started pouring in and my crew dealt with the first few invaders until I saw that there were three ships. The one with many men suddenly caught fire that seemed to fall from the sails down onto the men who were now screaming and jumping into the sea. Then I heard it Sansa.”

“ Heard what?”, Sansa asked. Now her eyes were wide open thinking of the danger Arya had been in.

“Dragons. Six of them were flying above my flagship. I turned and I saw two white ones…exactly alike but one had blue on its scales and the other had golden scales. The one with blue scales bathed the waters around the pirate ship and turned them to solid ice. I was freaked out! The other one flew up and joined the bigger ones dancing and roaring and throwing flames in the sky to intimidate the pirate ships. I understood that these dragons had been chasing these ships and once these pirates thought they had eluded the dragons, they attacked my ship”.

“Are you sure you were not dreaming Arya?”, Sansa asked with a disbelieving look

“I am certain. You can ask anyone among my crew.”, Arya returned with a solemn face to which Sansa’s shoulders stiffened.

“That is not all. As the white dragons went up, the two big ones that had been on the sky came down and I swear, they were much bigger that the ones the dragon queen had. They fell down on two of the ships and carried them off with the pirates and armed men still on the ships. As they came down, I saw them clearer. I saw that one was all black with red scales and the other was green like the one Jon had been riding. Both had riders on them Sansa”

“I cannot be expected to believe the dragons had riders…Targaryens are dead…maybe…maybe”, Sansa said out loud as she stood up and started pacing

“I would not know anything. I didn’t see the riders well.”, Arya shrugged. “All I know is that as soon as the dragons with riders took the ships, two smaller ones descended and a smaller red one landed on my ship and gave me a staredown just inches from my face. I looked into its fiery eyes and expected it to burn me alive right there. It just took off and followed another the other one that had just sunk the third pirate ship. I searched for the fat man to question him, but he was nowhere and I never saw him again”, Arya finished and looked at her sister’s eyes which were now wide open and she could see fear in them.

“Are you sure?”, Sansa asked after a while. The look Arya gave back made her sigh in frustration.

“I have to write a letter to Bran…Send a courier to find out if he knows anything about these…dragons and if she knows what happened to Daenerys Targaryen’s body”
“Do that”, Arya replied. “And ask him to search for Jon. He might help with this matter.”

“Jon doesn’t want anything to do with us. He renounced House Stark, Arya…”, Sansa said slowly, searching her sisters’ eyes for a reaction.

“And who told you that? Jon would never do that!”, Arya snapped passionately

“The wildings said he told them so”, Sansa replied while looking down

Arya huffed and looked down. “Is he angry about being sent to the Watch again? He did die there after all”, she offered

“Maybe angrier that he was exiled to guard nothing …, I-I don’t know Arya, he never returned any letters anyone sent to him.”, Sansa bit her nails. “Even his friend Sam has been sending him letters and he also received no reply. The wildlings he led North are also renouncing House Stark, I just don’t know now.”

Arya had tears in her eyes now thinking of Jon.

“I have to find him”, she said resolutely.

“You can’t Arya. What if the wildlings kidnap you and hold you as leverage? You are a princess now and…”, Sansa asked her.

“I can…, and I am not a princess.”, Arya replied with force. She stood to the other side of the bed and faced Sansa.

“The North is a Kingdom now, you are…”, she was cut off again.

“My father was not a king.”, Arya stated and Sansa rolled her eyes.

“He died an honourable man trying to protect his family. Not a king”

“Father was…”, the queen replied

“Father kept his oaths to family.”, Arya cut her off, and the queen sighed in exasperation.

“To Lyanna. He protected Jon and didn’t blab about his parentage or use him as tool in the Game of Thrones. Jon is family. I told him the same of you when he was upset about your mistrust of the dragon queen.”, Arya stated and scoffed in thought

“Now that I think of it. It is because of your clever actions that Jon ended up at the Wall. I am sure father is proud”, she finished with a pained look at Sansa

“My actions?!”, Sansa asked with a raised voice

“Yes, your actions your grace”, Arya stated in mock courtesy. “I know it was you who told the Imp about Jon’s parentage after he had made us swear to keep his secret before the heart tree”, she finished

“I did.”, Sansa said with a gulp

“Why? Did you do it for Jon?”, Arya questioned

“The dragon queen was mad. I would not allow her to rule us…”, Sansa replied with a proud stare
“Point taken. What about Jon then? What good did all of this do him?” Arya started pacing and then stopped to look at the queen.

“What about the promise me, you and Bran made to him, when we swore under the heart tree to never inform anyone of who Jon’s parents are Sansa?”, Arya started piecing this together. She was biting her lips in thought of Jon. “Did you ever consider his wishes in all of this, Sansa?”, she waved her hands around while pacing. “Was he a fool to trust us…? The ones who called him family?!”, Arya yelled

“It was for the good…”

“Save it! sweet sister. We both know by now that there is no such thing as the realm…or anything good for it. Just people who easily break oaths they make to family in order to meet their own desires!”, Arya carried on while Sansa was starting to tear up.

‘Arya!”, Sansa lost her nerve at the accusation

“I would swear by the gods that if Littlefinger and Cersei had ever mated? You would come out of that union.”, Arya spat

“Take that back!”, the queen cried

“You have become just like the people who murdered our family and brought hell to our lives!”, Arya cried out as she left her chambers with a bang of the door, ignoring the guards standing just outside the room.

She walked to the courtyard and went straight into the Godswood, avoiding everyone on the way. It was hard to hide her teary eyes as she walked until she entered and approached the heart tree. As she sat down, tears started falling freely from her eyes for the first time in many years. She stared into the small pond by the tree and looked at her reflection on the water.

“I am sorry father,”, she said with a sniff. “We failed Jon…”.

The sun started to set as the wind gushed loudly on the leaves of the weeping tree.

The tree was smiling.

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END OF ACT 2 Folks...and Well give me the moooney!

Next is Shiera and then… Bran the Broken holds council.
Keep reading. The plot thickens…soon
...And now it begins....

Chapter Summary

- The Council of New Valyria meets
- Tycho receives a Gift
- A bastard attends court and makes a friend

Chapter Notes

Hello friends, my apologies for the delay. RL got in the way. Enjoy the shorter chapter...We will be having few of these shorter ones. Can you hear the drums of war beating??????????

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Shiera

Everyone seemed to be tired this morning. It had been three weeks since their last meeting and it appeared all of them were under strain. Torgo had huge bags under his eyes, evidently from lack of sleep and Griff seemed to be a bit agitated. Aegon yawned as he stretched his arms, and cracking a few knuckles before Council began whilst Archmaester Marwyn was fiddling with parchments on his sleeve. A mist had formed on the fields outside the Council tower, and the fresh scent of lavender filled the air. Rolly Duckfield, the Lord Commander of the Royal Seven had a smug grin on his face for some reason or another and the silver-haired Lord of the Tides had the opposite. A look of deep thought was etched upon his face.

“I declare the meeting in process, Your Graces, my Lords and Lady”, Griff stated after the greetings and gestured to Lady Elysa Velaryon who carried the same look as her husband.

“Aye, we can convene my Lord.”, Dany said tiredly while resting her arms on her belly.

“We may”, Aegon replied.

Kraztos finished with a curt “Aye”. He didn’t have his enormous ledger with him today.

“Thank you, honourable Council. We have a few matters on hand as well as some news that Torgo wishes to share with the Council regarding The Unsullied Company and the Summer Isles…”, Griff started. Shiera nodded from her seat on the left of the head where Jon and Dany sat. Greyworm nodded too in agreement.

“We received correspondence from Mereen and Yunkai regarding the progress of the banking investment we made with the Councils when the Bank was started. No losses have been incurred so far in transit despite several attempts. A further request was received…from Westeros which is to be discussed as well. I think we will save that one for later, Your Graces.”, Griff announced, trying to
avoid the uneasiness in their eyes when he mentioned Westeros.

“Carry on.”, Daenerys allowed.

“The gold made it safely to Astapor and collected by the Ironborn.”, Connington informed.

“Victarion Greyjoy also wrote to confirm that they had received the cargo. Am I still correct to believe the interest will still be reserved for rebuilding on Naath?” Kraztos enquired.

“Kinvara alerted me that the Second Sons had found spies which confirmed what we already knew about the investigations being carried out by the Iron Bank on our lands…” Dany shared.

“Did they trace the ships back here?”, Duckfield enquired with a worried look.

“It appears so. Notwithstanding the response we sent to Tycho Nestoris. It is bound to head exactly where we hoped it wouldn’t.”, Jon offered with a concerned look at Griff.

“We did discuss it in depth with Lord Velaryon, your Grace, and the possibilities are endless. We did know that Tycho Nestoris was recently in Westeros and who knows what deal he made with The Imp?”, Griff responded with a run of his hand through his red hair.

“You think they will send an army to attack us here on the mainland in response?”, Aegon asked with a doubtful look.

“No, Braavos is not known for its armies. Ships maybe…but with news the might have already received about the dragons they will look to avoid that…The most likely thing they will do, as a last resort is engage the services of The Faceless Men.”, Shiera replied while Dany’s eyes grew wide and Jon’s mouth gaped. An air of panic seemed to settle into the room.

“But Tycho is a smart man.”, Shiera assured. “He will see the offer for its value and the threats for its value.”, she added. “Like I said; as a last resort.”

“That is exactly what I thought Your Highness.”, Grief sighed, fear written all over him.

“You think they might send one after us?”, Dany questioned out loud with a stern look.

“More likely they might go for the children.”, Aurane countered worriedly. This raised concerned looks from everyone but Shiera herself.

“No. They won’t send a Faceless Man to us yet. They do not know who holds Valyria. Neither do they know what is in here. The only thing the know about is the Stone, The Steel and the gold. They may have heard about the dragons, but not in full detail.”, Shiera replied with a tiny smile.

“You think the thought of dragons will stay their hands then?”, Griff enquired

“They most likely will send a Faceless Man to kill someone who has access to us first, then pose as that person and thereafter strike as soon as a chance appears.”, Shiera pondered and then turned to face Torgo.

“This means…some of your men stationed in Dragon’s Bay are in danger. A danger we cannot prevent…at least for now. It will call for some contingencies on our part. Luckily, I know just what we need to do. The Iron Bank has sent Faceless Men on many errands before and they have succeeded on their mission in almost all cases save a few.”, Shiera elaborated to confused stares around the room and a whisper between Aurane and Elysa.
“So, you mean they have failed before?” Aurane asked with a shocked look.

“Of course. Nothing survives existence without an adversary to balance it.”, Shiera stated pointedly.

“How? When have they failed before and how? Was the faceless man caught?”, Dany queried.

“Lord Unwin Peake, the infamous Lord of Starpike and once Hand of the King. An ancestor to one of our Seven.”, she sipped again and swallowed.

“He hired a faceless man to kill a certain Lord of Winterfell. Too bad the assassin died before he could lead the attempt back to Lord Peake.”, Shiera answered while savouring the taste of her lemon water.

“Why?”, Jon asked in confused shock. “Why would a Southern Lord want the Warden of the North dead?”

“Everyone wanted THAT Lord of Winterfell dead. Cregan Stark was too powerful and the gods were good that the power he had was not the type of power he was seeking for. He was a powerful greenseer and he held the whole North, and for a few days; the whole Seven Kingdoms at his heel without lifting a finger.” Archmaester Marwyn elaborated.

“I heard he wanted a Targaryen bride”, Griff smiled. “Not a sign of a man who does not like power” Aegon grinned and gave Griff an amused look and shook his head. “He wanted the magic”, Aegon informed him and Shiera nodded.

“Lord Stark came in and essentially told the young king and his Regents that he was to be the Hand, and proceeded to take heads and send men to take the black. Even the Sea-Snake’s head was to be part of his collection.”, Shiera grinned slightly with a side look to Aurane who shifted nervously.

“Well good for us he didn’t get it”, Elysa japed uneasily and Shiera laughed at the display.

“What he wanted or didn’t is not important anymore…Not since the white dragons hatched at least. Lord Cregan studied the ways of the true North and found a way to repel any kind of skinchanger since he did not trust some of his bannermen from the Neck, who were said to have those abilities.”

The stillness of the room explained her need to clarify.

“Cregan’s cousin Elric Stark was the Three-Eyed Raven before Brynden Rivers. So Cregan was wary of magic all his life and as he grew up, he grew to distrust those associated with blood magic. This led him to mistrust even his own kin of Karstark who had always had complaints about the way he ruled. Only skinchangers can be faceless without having to shed all manner of personal identity. The gift of death is life and the gift of life is death in return for the gift of changing your face and being No-One.”, Shiera explained.

There were looks of relief from the council. Jon and Daenerys shared a curious look.

“Like Arya?”, Jon asked to which Shiera confirmed with a nod.

“Yes. It is similar but your cousin had to give another face to replace hers. She was recruited for the skinchanging ability though”, Shiera answered promptly and Jon frowned in deep thought to which Daenerys responded by holding his hand under the table in comfort.

“Regardless, the magic here is much stronger. That will allow me to manipulate the spell of death to work against the Vessel”
“How so?”, Elysa asked directly

“How Valyria was too powerful once. The Lord Freeholders exercised a great deal of sorcery in these parts and most of them documented it in detail”, she offered slyly.

“The gift of death allows one to change their face and take on the skin of the person they pose as… what we will do, is counter it will similar magic that places the faceless man on a trance where he will repeat his orders in eternity”, she finished with a smirk of confidence.

The council and their monarchs seemed satisfied with her reply. Their confidence in her abilities made it easy since the evidence lay clearly before their eyes. Daenerys had been dead when she came to her. In fact, she had to give due credit to Brynden who had directed the dragon straight to the Valley of Songs in River Ash, the birthplace of all dragons. At first, she had thought Brandon was still in the dragon, but the glass candle shwped otherwise. It was the desperation of the slain queen in her last moments that made it possible. The strong desire to live…and only death can pay for a life

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Five years ago, River-Ash, Asshai

Shiera stared intently at the glass candle in her chambers. She had seen the Queen looking down as Rhaegal took a bolt to his neck and disappear below the waves of the Blackwater. She witnessed a dove that spoke with a voice of a mockingbird and a raven speak beneath the shadow of a wolf. She saw dragons escaping from a burning Summerhall and a smiling rat. She stood as the Sun rose in the West and set in the East and the Iron Throne of Aegon the Conqueror melted like a candle at the anger of the queen.

The dragon roared and flew towards Dragonstone and deep into the depths of the Dragonmont. She saw a city full of dragons on its skies. The lava from the volcano was changing form into dark oily stones that reflected like a looking glass. Daenerys opened her fiery deep orange eyes and spread her wings. Vhagar and Meraxes hatched from their eggs.

“The dragon must have three heads”, Daenys told her husband Gaemon and her father Aenar. The Dragon roared.

Rhaenyra screeched in anger as she gave birth. “Take it out of me, now!”, she cried.

The dragon roared and spit a black flame.

“From her womb came another stillborn monster”, Jeyne Westerling spat

“The Iron Throne belongs to the one with the strength to take it”, Visenya uttered

“They are monsters”, Septon Moon said. “What can the death of one dragon matter when another rises up to take its place?”, he asked

“The dragon must have three heads”, Rhaegar said

“Burn them all”, Aerys shrieked in fury.

“He would be the stallion that mounts the world”, Mirri Maz Duur sneered
“The dragons need their mother”, Pyat Pree said and the dragon bathed him in flames.

“I gorged on the grief of Summerhall”, an old crone muttered

“We married the dragons before”, Jon Umber bellowed, “But the dragons are dead”

“Fire cannot kill a dragon”, Viserys screamed.

“You will always be my queen”, another dragon said to the roaring dragon, and the world went blank.

Kinvara had seen the black dragon approaching. It went past River Ash and down into the inner shadowlands. “It is going into the Valley of Songs”, she fearfully said to her disciples and wondered if this is part of the fulfilment of the prophecy. The dragon disappeared into the dark caves of the valley forest and she followed it. Up the ashen mountain she went until she passed the black streams. Statues of all forms of deities and monstrosities were carved on the tree stumps. Others had human skeletons adorned with colourful ornaments. She felt the dragon move through the forest and she watched as the woman followed the beast into the cave it had gone into. It was dark but she followed until she reached the cave where she saw the beast enter with a blast of flames and she stopped to look. The dragon was lying there as Kinvara approached. The woman found the cave and entered slowly without a torch. She could hear the great beast breathing inside the cave.

“Nyke māstan naejot dohaeragon”, she whispered when the breathing turned into a low growl. She saw him seated with his head low as if covering something with his wing. The black dragon raised its head when she drew nearer and she could see the overwhelming stare from those fiery eyes.

“Ānogar ānograro”, Kinvara said to the dragon softly in Valyrian.

The dragon shifted slightly to take a good look at the daring woman. The flaring nostrils of the beast drew closer and closer until he took a long sniff at her palm. She could see the black pupils grow wider in recognition. It drew its head back and recoiled. She extended her left hand and the beast drew closer again to sniff and once it had done so, the dragon roared in a sorrowful way. She pressed her face on the dragons scaled neck. She felt the dragon’s sorrow so deeply. The dragon moved again, then lifted its wing to reveal the Queen’s dead body. She drew closer to the body and once she had knelt beside it, Drogon stood and watched. The older woman removed her dagger from the queen’s heart and wiped it on her skirt. The blade itself felt very warm. She looked at it and then spoke.

“Valar morghūlis, inis daor gō dohaeragon”, she said softly and the blade lit up. She saw the ripples form on the steel and then she placed it on top of the body. The woman cloaked her head once again and walked out of the cave. She turned towards the river banks and walked a bit until she came to the water stream. She picked up a few pieces of ashen clay which she mixed with wine and proceeded to smear on the silver hair of the dead woman. She cut her own palm with a slight hiss. Fresh blood flowed from the cut and onto the stab wound on the dead Queen.

“Āeksiot Ōño, preserve bisa body lēda aōha perzys. Kesīr iksis se perzys wrought hen zirŷla on ānogar. Restorizis. Daenĕrys Targārien”, She shouted with a thin voice devoid of energy.

The dragon roared with a huge blast of flame into the sky and the passed out with a loud crash of its large head on the ashen grounds. The priestess stood up slowly, she took one step and then passed
Shiera felt like her head was splitting. She opened her eyes and she was at Dragonstone at the Chamber of the Painted table.

“Am I dead”, she enquired to no one

“Of course, not”, a voice she knew very well responded.

“Are you back?”, she asked with a small smile while trying to stand. It had been over two years since Brynden had visited her and last time she checked, there was another three-eyed raven now; meaning Brynden Rivers was dead.

“Unfortunately, no I am still dead”, Brynden replied

“Where is the dragon and the queen?”, she asked meekly. A long silence ensued.

“Alive”, Brynden stated and she exhaled in relief. Brynden had a small smile now that Shiera had turned to look at him. He looked like he did during the Blackfyre Rebellion, but with both eyes intact. His long silver hair was let loose on his black uniform and his weirwood longbow was slung on his back.

“Where?”, she asked.

“Where you left them just now. The dragon came to you”, he replied while looking at her with that smile. “She has some visitors right now”.

“What happened Brynden?”, she asked in a serious tone.

“A lot happened”, Brynden offered with a sparkle in his eye. “Valyria can live again Shiera.”

“How? The song of Ice and Fire needs more than a dragon in denial”, she replied.

“Jon Snow the King Beyond the Wall!”, Brynden japed with a raised fist and a mischievous grin. Shiera didn’t share the joke and Brynden became solemn once more as he seemed to be thinking.

“You remember that spell I told you about?”, he asked with a smirk.

“The one used in…”, she didn’t finish once seeing him nod.

“I saw it being done and I found out that it can be redone”, he confirmed.

“He is not the Prince that was Promised!”, she answered passionately. “Even if he was, you know the magic only works at a specified time.”

“He hates himself and has abandoned all reason for life yes, but I believe that will change once he knows they live”, he finished.

“He is beyond the Wall for now. Once his dragon rises, I will meet him, but before then, I will see you. There is something going on with the Queen right now which she had been unaware of. Azhor left something for his heir many years ago but it will be ready sometime soon”.

“That is why she is with Aegon the Conqueror and his wives right now”. Brynden elaborated. “Aegon can show him where the last hero hid the seed of Mergamon”
“Will he agree to do it?”, Shiera asked in wonder and a tinge of excitement bubbled up in her now.

“It will need them both, and their dragons”, the former Three-Eyed Raven explained.

“Listen, too much time has passed now and I have to return before the weirspell expires”, to which Shiera nodded.

“Let him grieve. There are allies heading to Qarth right now. Allies from before the conquest with allies from the conquest. Find them before their chasers find them and go with them to Qarth. There is a warlock called Ignyat Suree. Once you tell him I sent you, he will give you the things I left there. I have instructions on what you need to do to see me amongst them. It will be a dangerous time from now on, so be careful. Once you get back to Asshai, help the Queen gain strength and understanding of what happened in Westeros.”, he finished and Shiera felt her tears coming closer.

“I understand”, she replied

“Good, see you soon then”, he said with a serene smile.

She felt herself being carried back to her body and she smiled softly as she felt the numbness in her body. She suddenly sat up as she heard sobbing sounds and saw that the dragon was not there but in its place, was a broken woman who was crying bitterly.

She felt tears coming onto her own eyes, and slowly she went to the corner where Daenerys, the hope of her house, sat in utter grief. As she neared, a soft voice croaked.

“You must be Shiera, the one whom my ancestors told me about.”, the sorrowful queen sobbed.

“Shiera-Seastar, of House Targaryen, daughter of Aegon the Unworthy”, she replied gently, “But you can call me Aunt”, she said with a rub to the queen’s back. She too was crying now.

The dragon roared outside the cave and a storm came in earnest.

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Shiera present day

“I think it fair we place priority to our defences first, especially now with the fanaticism spreading to other parts of Essos, many will be driven to seek refuge with us and our inability to deny them help will see us in war”, Jon stated.

“I take it our borders are secure?”, Dany asked her husband.

“I am no longer sure; well not after the amount of looted treasures this group of pirates almost got away with”, the king returned

“I have seen to doubling the numbers of men guarding the new road to the mines. The pirates had docked four ships in the river but the whole side was hidden by the sand dunes from the excavation, which I have managed to clear out now to prevent such, my Queen”, Aurane informed them.

“Lord Velaryon had enlisted my help in doing such your grace and after today the ports will be reinforced with two-thousand new Unsullied warriors. All from the first five thousand trained in Walano and Jhala”, Griff corroborated with a glimpse of a smile.

Torgo offered a small smile and a nod to the king as Jon and Shiera seemed delighted with this news.
“Great work Lord Commander”, Dany said with pride. Everyone seemed to be a bit happier now as smiles from everyone were directed at Torgo.

“I could not have done it had it not been for the support of the crown and my captains, we hope to get eleven thousand, four hundred New Unsullied soldiers.”, Torgo added.

“Awesome”, Shiera stated.

“Lord Connington has informed us you have news from Volantis?”, Shiera decided to allow this time for Torgo to brief them on the status of the revolt in Volantis and Lys. The triarchy has been trying to solve the murders of Ergyn Maegyr and Tola Fandeyr in the city square. According to a letter received from one of her spies, the murder is said to be the work of the Jubilee Movement that had taken Essos by storm since the Triarchy made an alliance with the Slavers Federation and funded by the bank of House Maegyr.”, Shiera asked the Lord Commander.

"Thank you, your Graces, I can report that we have managed to train at least twenty thousand men in the past five years, all stationed in the provinces of the Summer Isles and the cities you hold my Queen", Torgo said with a solemn but happy look. "The bank has enlisted some services from Asshai, I am sure the Council will provide a report as I have been informed",

"Is there a specific report?", Kraztos asked

“Yes, I have it here in a letter from our ally in Mereen”, Torgo said with a low voice, while retrieving a scroll of parchment with a golden seal of the Pyramid of Mereen from his pocket and handing it to Lord Connington, who passed it to Shiera and she read:

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Your Graces

As per the assignment you have given me, I have managed to find a few things.

Let me begin by informing you that Malaquo Maegyr is no longer with us. There is suspicion that he was poisoned by members of the triarchy but I am not sure since we found some spies here in the employ of The Bank of Maegyr seeking information on the gold deliveries and the suppliers of the Golden Bank. The word is going around that the mines are in Valyria and I fear it may lead to unwanted attention from Braavos and Qohor. I will further inform you of this.

I have news from Westeros. I hoped this would not happen, but I have a request from Queen Yara Greyjoy, who has informed me of another request and in her own words:

“Queen Sansa of House Stark has requested for aid in form a loan for purposes of supplying grain. In turn she pledges a supply of Iron which has been found at the Fist of the First Men.”

I would recommend that council tread lightly on this matter, of course by Your Graces permission.

Here is the requested report I compiled with Daario and Kinvara as requested:

* The Second Sons number at 13,531 men, all stationed at Dragon’s Bay. As requested, the conscriptions began shortly after the Bank commenced business and it had taken some time to find soldiers outside the Bay. I am expecting a supplement by the end of the year.

*The ShadowMen number at 2500 or so mounted soldiers, all stationed at River Ash as per instructions given to the Prince. He is happy to announce the birth of his daughter, Princess Adamea
and hopes to visit after the princess’ second nameday.

*The Unsullied Company has 2242 personnel in Mereen under the command of Lady Naheela.

*Brazen Axe arrived with the shipment of the stone and the labourers are set to arrive in a week.

* The Judicial Council is compiling a report on the bank and this will be made available to you pending the final shipment count. I believe all to be going well in this end so far. We have not issued any funds to the Astapori Council this cycle as per their request.

Furthermore, we had the honor of hosting Khal Qhono as he passed here with the Bloodriders. I believe his party is headed to your shores as instructed. He will arrive in a moons’ turn from the writing of this letter.

*I believe all is in order. Daario and Kinvara send their regards to the Royal Family and Council.

Yours loyally
Willas

Daenerys sighed audibly after taking a long drink from her glass of water. Jon was staring at the floor with his hands on his head. Duck had an oblivious look and Lady Velaryon was staring intently at the scroll as if she was not believing what she was reading. This news was not exactly what they needed right now, and Shiera realised what had Jon on edge regarding this letter. Elysa broke the silence.

“I almost thought that old shit would never die”, she said slowly with a shocked look at Aurane

“I prayed for it”, he returned with a satisfied look

Jon looked at Elysa in astonishment. “Did you hate him that much?”

“He was my grandsire, Your Grace, but there was no love lost between him and his family. My mother blamed him for Ergyn’s death. You see, he rigged many previous elections with briberies or veiled threats, the former which my father had to give the members of the Volantene nobility. I know this because I heard him and my uncle discussing it more than once in his flagship. After the Unsullied deserted in Volantis and Pentos, the Council enlisted the services of a spymaster and they subsequently found out the leaders of the Fiery Hand made payments to his bank. I suspect they never found him out for the corruption but for his connection with some of the ships that carried slaves out of Volantis.”

“Did they suspect him of aiding slaves?”, Archmaester Marwyn enquired with a confused frown.

“No, Malaquo would not aid slaves. He denied help to Benerro even during the time when most of the slaves and the commoners were struck with the swinging cough pandemic. It was Ergyn who did it, I’m sure. Malaquo quite liked them in chains”, Aurane explained

Connington snorted as usual. “An understatement”, he said to Aurane
“I hated my father too. No rule says we should love our parents or our grandparents in any case”, Shiera shrugged. “You two know this. Aerys inspired no love.”

The two monarchs nodded in unison, with the king still staring at the floor.

“My grandfather was always very stubborn. He did nothing even when informed of how the Freys had murdered his granddaughter. He sat and did nothing out of fear that it will cost him his position in the Triarchy. Anyone who knew him would tell you his death was long overdue. It is ironic that he wanted me and Talisa to marry one of the Slavers who kept him in power so long”, Elysa replied.

“Very much like Doran fucking Martell then”, Duck stated sombrely.

“I would bet they shared a womb”, Griff said in agreement with a chuckle from Shiera who knew just how much the former Golden-Company men hated the late Prince.

The whole council seemed satisfied with this so the queen gestured for Griff to carry on.

“The other request from…”, Griff said slowly but didn’t finish.

“The North”, Shiera finished for him, seeing his uneasiness with this topic, especially around Jon and Daenerys.

“I think we should help them”, Daenerys said to which everyone stared at her in shock. Aegon was still staring at the floor, in consideration of these tidings.

“They are not our allies”, Torgo opposed. He did not like the Starks at all. How he had come around regarding Aegon was a secret held between him and Daenerys.

“They did promise to trade…”, Elysa countered.

“But we do not need Iron, my lady”, Duck stated. “I did not even know there was even iron in the North”. Aurane and Griff hummed in mutual understanding.

“The Fist of the First Men, the letter said”, Aurane informed the knight.

“It is. The iron they are referring to is not even theirs to mine. There are people living in those lands…”, Jon said with an annoyed look. Everyone started to understand what Aegon had figured out. The Starks were planning to Conquer the Free-Folk in the True North.

“Can we send them any help at all?”, Daenerys asked.

“I was just thinking about that. The bulk of the Freefolk are the women, children and the elderly who cannot fight. The North has around twenty thousand fighting men but I doubt they will send them all. Glover hates the freefolk and I think he is behind all this. After all, he is the one who had previously sent men to scout the rocky fields for minerals Beyond the Wall. Greedy fucker!”, the king spat.

“Tormund has around a thousand men all in all. I think two thousand men in addition to his should suffice to repel any invasions. If that fails, then I will go myself”, The king concluded, leaving no room for any further elaboration on the matter of the True North.

“Second Sons?”, Dany asked her husband.

“No. The Company of the Rose”, Shiera stated with a knowing look at Griff. “Like I told you my Lord”
“Aye, I agree with Her Grace”, Duck confirmed with renewed confidence. “They would do. It has always been their wish to get an offer like we did”

Dany looked at Aegon, who was now sitting upright. Her husband nodded.

“Alright, Archmaester please send a neutral envoy to Tormund and another to the leader of the Roses”. Daenerys commanded the elderly man.

“Of course, my Queen”, Marwyn obeyed while writing this down on his piece of parchment.

“So, what about the other request your grace?”, Aurane asked

“Approve it.”, Aegon ordered with a serious face.

“It will place them right where we want them”, he finished to which everyone nodded.

They all heard a sudden commotion outside and a guard came in panting heavily.

“How is it?”, Aegon asked.

“It’s Prince Aemon… He is on Tergorion and they flew up to Dracar!”, the guard informed with a cough.

Jon and Daenerys looked at one another. Shiera turned her back and smirked knowingly.

**Tycho Nestoris**

He stretched his legs after leaving the ship. Too much time spent on sea and one would become a merman. He spotted Dimittis and his men waiting for him with uneasy faces.

“Well met Noho, I didn’t figure you as one to throw welcoming parties”, Tycho japed

“I wish it were so my friend”, Noho replied. “I have a letter from Valyria”.

Tycho’s eyes grew larger. “Truly?”

Noho nodded and a dark look seemed to engulf his face. “With a gift accompanying it”

“A gift?”, Tycho asked in surprise.

Noho Dimittis didn’t answer the question. “Follow me”, he said.

The two representatives of the Iron Bank walked through the alleys in the port city. Many merchants were waving at them in greeting as they passed the shipwright stalls where boats of all kinds were displayed to the viewing public. Dimittis appeared to be in a hurry and soon enough they arrived in the Iron Bank Headquarters and the guards swiftly allowed them in with some greeting Noho and others Tycho.

“In here”, Noho gestured to Tycho to enter.
Tycho took in the surroundings and Noho placed a letter in his hand. That was as interesting as what Tycho was looking at right now. “Is that the gift?”, he said pointing at the steel head that was on his desk.

“Yes, look closely and you might recognise the face.”, Dimittis riddled

Tycho took the head and got a good look at it. “Elba Dosiris”, he pondered audibly with a hoarse voice.

“Yes, or rather the late Elba Dosiris”, Noho corrected.

The strangest thing was that this was not an artwork, no. It was a real head plated in steel….

“Valyrian steel...” Tycho had to sort his thoughts out. In all his years he has never received any Valyrian steel as a gift. This was meant to tell him whoever had this steel to spare had much more.

“How did the skin on this head not melt when dipped in Valyrian Steel and how did such a hot metal not burn through this face?”, Tycho asked the now puzzled Noho.

“No idea. There is some sorcery going on beyond the Smoking Sea. First it was dragons, then gold and now this…”, Noho answered with a concerned look.

Tycho opened the letter warily and started to read.

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Tycho Nestoris

Recently we have been on the receiving end of perpetual onslaughts by men who allege they were sent by you and we are of the mind that you are concerned about the activities we are conducting in our homeland. We would like to dissuade your concerns. Whatever is being done this side of the world is not any of the Iron Bank’s concern. If you truly need to know where the minerals are from, then you can take a ship into Valyria and our ports would welcome you as a guest so we can personally hear your concerns.

We have attached the head of Elba Dosiris with increased value.

We will hold on to the men you have supplied as collateral for the blood debt they owe us.

Regards

The Dragons of New Valyria

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Tycho gulped and Noho’s eyes seemed like they were about to pop. Noho had started pacing around the room as the letter was being read. “What now?” he finally asked his colleague who was visibly stunned.

“We need to speak with the SeaLord”, Tycho said.
Daemon

The room was still as the gruff looking man who entered with a female prisoner that was bound in chains from head to toe, she could hardly walk.

“I found the traitor my Prince!”, the sellsword announced to the court

“Ha!”, Prince Quentyn yelled in glee. “Another one in the bag. I must say they are all making this easy on me!”

“A pleasure to serve your Highness”, the man responded, dragging the chain slightly to receive a pained yelp from the bound woman.

“I am please indeed. Ungag her if you may”, the Prince commanded the filthy thug in his employ

The man complied and under the sack on the head came the beautiful face of Aulinda Vaith, the feisty sister of Lady Vaith. She was the new lady of Hellholt. The spies hired by the Prince of Dorne had reported that Lord Harmen had fled Dorne after his treason was discovered. What was not mentioned was what his treason was until now it seemed.

“If it isn’t the she-panther herself, by the gods”, Quentyn chuckled, very impressed with himself.

“The wannabe lioness”, Ser Pate added in mockery

Lady Uller stood there defiantly with chains dangling from her arms and legs. Her face was bloodied and her hair messed up; possibly from fighting against her would be captors.

“I found her boarding a ship to Pentos, my prince”, the scar-faced man said smugly with a gesture of his fingers to the bruised lady. Quentyn clapped as he stood from his chair. The knight standing behind the prince didn’t move.

Quentyn moved towards the lady and proceeded to brush his fingers on the lady’s cheeks. The lady tried to move but the prince dragged the face to face with a smirk of victory. The lady spat on the prince’s face with a small grin.

“Ellaria was a kinslayer. But you are a kinslayer and disgrace to Dorne”, the lady said. “Arianne is the true heir to that seat!”

Quentyn slapped her hard, everyone expected her to crash to the floor. The lady just stood rigidly and absorbed the pain but the hand mark was visible even from where Daemon stood at the back of the hall. She didn’t even scream but he could see one tear falling from her blue eyes. Daemon flinched, so did Gerold who was still standing behind Prince Quentyn’s chair.

“For your troubles kind ser.”, the prince threw a bag of gold at the feet of the cutthroat that brought the lady. “Throw her into the darkest dungeons and torture her until she reveals where the rest of the damned bastard serpents are!”, he ordered.

“As you command”, Ser Pate bowed with a grin. The man dragged the lady out of the room and Quentyn wiped his face and smiled.

“Court is adjourned!”, the prince announced and abruptly left with his men. Supposedly to nurse his
bruised ego.

Daemon always felt sour after such things. His homeland of Dorne was Bowed, Bent and Broken and he could not keep living like this. For everyone saw this for what it was. Dishonor.

As he walked out to the battlements on the high towers of Sunspear Castle, he felt like someone was shadowing him and as he took a slight look back and saw that Gerold was heading his way. He wondered what the Darkstar was going to say but the older knight was a man of few words he knew. Gerold tapped his shoulder and handed him a small note, then he passed and went on towards the stables. Daemon walked to a spot on the battlements from where he could read the note under the light of the full moon.

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The sun lives yet. The star no longer bends to the broken spear.

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Chapter End Notes

Next we will be completely in Westeros. Let us catch up with normal folk again.
Heavy are the heads as Ravens fly…

Chapter Summary

- King Bran and Tyrion have an open conversation
- Gerold Dayne arrives at Starfall
- The Lord of Storm’s End broods

Chapter Notes

Hello again folks....another shorter chapter.. Enjoy and know your kudos and comments are welcome and appreciated.

First month of 312 AC

Tyrion

With the Small Council meeting over and done with. He was now following Ser Brienne and Ser Aleister of Rosby, a lackwit knight who was wheeling the king back to the Council room after seeing off the new council members, Ser Olyvar Cafferen and Lady Lefford. The stairs were built alongside the ramp for the king to access both the yard and the new Hand’s Quarters without need for a horse. He could hardly hear the builders working once he was inside. Bronn had headed off back to the brothel, while the king had asked to meet with Tyrion privately after Council.

“Take a seat, Lord Hand”, the king said in a monotonous voice that Tyrion had grown tired of.

He took a seat and as he poured himself a glassful of red, he found that the flagon was empty. He frowned and stared at Bran. The king had this faraway look that he wanted to ask about. He despaired from knowing very well that the answer he would receive would be as cryptic as ever.

“How are you finding the new members of Council?”, the king asked after a moment

“Amenable would be the word, Your Grace. Easy to convince too”, the dwarf offered to which the king did not reply. After a moment, Bran turned to face him.

“I would think so too.”, the king said. “Bronn is proving to be problematic”, he finished.

Tyrion blinked and looked at the king carefully. Before he said anything, the king beat him to it.

“May I ask you something my Lord?”, the king requested

“Yes, you may ask, Your Grace.”, he said looking at the crippled king who now grown a small stubble on his face.

“Why did you agree to give Highgarden to Bronn?”
Tyrion felt uneasy, but he decided to respond thoughtfully. He cleared his throat.

“I owed him. See, my family had made promises to him and failed to deliver. Cersei hired him to kill me and Jaime in return for fulfilling the broken promise and I made him a counter offer”

“Did it have to be Highgarden?”, the king asked

“He specifically wanted it”, Tyrion ran the back of his hand on his forehead in thought

The king was silent for a moment.

“Clearly you didn’t think this through my Lord. You have grown too emotional to think things through”, he looked at Tyrion again and Tyrion flinched.

“It was the best move at the time to preserve my life, Your Grace”, Tyrion elaborated slowly

“Do you intend to rectify it at any point or do you need me to handle that for you too?”, Bran asked

“I don’t understand, your grace…”, he began

“The Reach is the biggest kingdom in the South. Highgarden is contested by a few Houses with the strength to take it… How long until the Florents or the Hightowers seek retribution on yourself or Bronn? Or did you not think about that too?”, the king challenged

“Retribution?”, he inquired disbelievingly

“Yes. After all Lord Leyton is dead. His son Baelor is Lord of Oldtown now and he has fifteen thousand men at his command. He was close to his sister Alerie who was the Lady of Highgarden… whose members died by the hand of your brother and sister. Lord Alekyne Florent is with him now. Do you know what may come to their minds? It was your House that took Highgarden and murdered their kin of Tyrell, and a former sellsword who served your House holds the ancient seat of Garth Greenhand without a claim. Do you actually think they will call their banners to defend Bronn should he call them or would they join his enemies or plot his demise?”

“That…might not necessarily happen, your Grace I…”, Tyrion attempted to refute but the king was speaking again.

“When last did we receive any correspondence from Riverrun or the Hightower my lord?”, Bran asked his Hand who had begun to pace around the Council room and not answering the king.

“Do you know what is going on in the kingdoms right now?”, Bran probed.

“I can tell you right now that Dorne is on the brink of a civil war, the Ironborn are back in the mining business and refusing to buy anything from Westeros, and the North is going to war with the wildlings very soon. My uncle Edmure is ignoring our correspondence. How is it that after five years we are still facing a collapse?”

“I have tried to bring these to your attention your grace”, Tyrion reminded aggressively. “But it is hardly my fault that you are never really present”’

“My absences are for the good of the realm”, the king justified. “How else will I know all these things if I don’t travel and see the state of the kingdoms myself?”

“Well…”, the dwarf didn’t finish again.

“No not think that you have even begun to fix any mess created from your family’s reign my lord
Hand. I hope you are not growing sloppy and creating a need for your replacement”

“Your grace, I have worked to fix the mess created by Daenerys here in the city…”, Tyrion declared with an annoyed frown

“Daenerys Targaryen created no mess”, the king retorted, now looking through the window and not at his Hand.

“She was mad. She literally burnt the city!”, Tyrion emphasised. His scalp felt clammy under his golden-brown locks that were starting to show grey in some places.

“Daenerys Targaryen did not burn the city, my lord, not of her own will anyway…”, Bran informed him with a faraway look.

Tyrion stopped pacing to look at Bran who was still looking out the window.

“What is that supposed to mean?”, he questioned

“It means she did not make the decision to burn the city…but it had to happen so that a new reign can be built from the ruins of the city built by Dragons. Only death can pay for life”, he stated cryptically.

“Thousands of people died!”, the Hand replied passionately. “How does the painful death of innocents even begin to be a thing that has to happen?!”

“Thousands of people should have died in Kingslanding during the reign of the Mad King. They allowed him to ruin the realm and did nothing to stop him. They let Robert Baratheon bankrupt the crown and did nothing. They allowed Joffrey to murder my father and they cheered him on…calling my father a traitor when he was an innocent man. These same innocent people you love so much allowed the Freys to murder my mother and brother and did nothing. They clapped and laughed when your family humiliated you in a trial for a crime you did not commit. Did you know that your father knew who had murdered Joffrey? These same people allowed Cersei to rule over them when she had just burnt their Sept with wildfire. Whose responsibility is it to make sure that people live in peace and tranquillity if they neglect that responsibility themselves?”, the king queried without emotion whatsoever.

“It is the duty of monarchs to protect their people”, Tyrion replied

“What value is that duty when it leads to nothing but despair?”, Bran quizzed tiredly

“It is part of the package I guess…”, he retorted

“Is it? What if we sometimes mistake duty for dishonour?”, the king asked him with a pointed look

“What does that mean?”,

“Like for example…Daemon Blackfyre was a Targaryen Bastard. What if Daeron was a bastard too?”, the king asked to which the Hand’s eyes grew wide open in wonder

“Aemon fought a trial by combat to disprove that your Grace”

“If he disproved it then why did that very same fact lead the kingdoms to war? Do you think Aerys was a descendant of Aegon the Fourth? No, my lord…the last six generations of Targaryen royalty are descended from Aemon the DragonKnight and not from Aegon the Unworthy as we all believed.”
‘The trial is an official thing from the Seven…”, Tyrion stated in an attempt to regroup his thoughts. He was feeling embarrassed by his lack of focus that he had even forgotten about his own trial by combats. “Are you saying the Seven gods aren’t real?”

“I am saying a trial by combat is a human invention. If a trial by combat proves the innocence or guilt of a man, then you killed Joffrey since Oberyn Martell was killed in your trial by combat, didn’t you?”, the king questioned in a monotonous voice, but not really answering the question. Tyrion realised he had not thought about gods in a long time.

“You have me there…”, the hand replied softly, trying to ignore the guilt and embarrassment that was consuming him. “It was his decision if I may say”

“I know… It was part of your due for serving Joffrey”, the king told him.

“I was serving my family”, he stated

“So was your brother when he threw me off the tower, he was serving his family too.”, the king informed him. “The things we do for love, he said”

“Love makes fools and dishonourable men out of us all”, the dwarf said looking at his hands and thinking of how he killed Shae and his own sire.

“You supported your family in that dishonourable reign of a bastard and you did nothing to stop it but you only helped in rescuing your brother who was responsible for the war in the first place. You promised to return my sisters in return for your brother when you were Hand. That promise you made led to Jaime being freed and then you failed to inform your father the terms on which Jaime was freed and as a result my sister was retained as a prisoner here, and my mother and Robb were murdered because of a mistake my mother made in trusting you to deliver on your promises.”

Tyrion remained silent. Never in his life had anyone called him on the falseness of his honour. He remembered denying the honour of Janos Slynt. The conflict in his heart was enflamed by the fact that this was all true. One thing he was yet to confirm but Bran carried on.

“Being a cripple was a misfortune I created myself by being a child at a time when treason was being committed in my home, and I was at the wrong place at the wrong time, but reading history and seeing history are two different things my lord. If all sides of a story were ever told, you would realise that the world would be much different than it is.”, the king elaborated

“Do you mean to tell me that Daenerys was innocent in all this?”, Tyrion asked in shock

“Who is ever innocent in anything Lord Lannister?”, the Three-eyed Raven riddled

“In burning the city, I mean”, he responded

“Daenerys was not bad, but she was not perfect either. She never planned or decided to burn innocents and villains, but when she was angry that the city only surrendered after she had burnt the scorpions on the walls and the hired mercenary army. I made the final decision on her behalf.”, his Grace stated

‘On her behalf?”, the dwarf enquired once more

“I warged her dragon and the dragon is connected to her”, he smirked

Tyrion felt his knees buckling under him. If this was true then it meant Varys was not right in saying the queen had gone mad. This means that Daenerys had been the best hope for Westeros and this
king right here had planned this.

“How does…How does that work?”, the Hand stepped back to look at the king.

“The only way to control a bonded dragon is through the emotions of the rider…good or bad. The thing most people do not know is that Valyrians are literally the blood of the dragon, not just because they ride dragons or because of a sigil”, the king stated. “You remember how Maegor the Cruel had many stillborn children and how they were described? Rhaenyra Targaryen also gave birth to such a monster. She had scales and wings because she died before the dragon spirit was fully formed in her. Daenerys also gave birth to a similar child in Essos when Khal Drogo died.”

Tyrion stood there with his mouth agape at the information he was getting.

“The best window to warg a dragon and therefore its rider is either grief or euphoria. In this state, people do not think much, they feel. If anyone tries to warg a person on a normal emotional state, the host is always mentally crippled. The Warg Kings of old used to paralyze soldiers of the North that way and that helped when they were outnumbered. The greatest of all wargs was the Night King”

Tyrion gasped. He had heard of magical abilities but he realised that this was the most efficient way to fight a war. It was also disgusting to think people could do that.

“The Night King?”, he solicited with a fearful look at his monarch.

“He warged dead bodies using ice magic. Ice preserves, and Fire consumes”, the king stated as if to himself.

Tyrion stared at the king for a moment that seemed like a long time until Bran again spoke.

“That reminds me, I have a letter from Sansa. I didn’t inform the other council members of this because there is some information I still need”, the king said while extending his arm to the dwarf with a scroll. He could see the crowned wolf sigil on the broken seal. He realised his hand was shaking from this creepy conversation, or maybe lack of wine. He read softly.

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Beloved brother

I hope all is going well in the South. I recently got married as I had informed you on my previous letter. It would have been nice if you had come but I understand if duty held you.

Arya has arrived back home after five years. I am not sure but she believes we commited treason against Jon and has now left to find him beyond the wall after I had told her that Jon was not there. The wildlings are hiding something Bran, I can feel it. I need your help in finding Jon and Arya.

I have troubling news from her as well. She has informed me that on one of her voyages, she encountered dragons flying by the Smoking Sea with riders on them. Her whole crew confirms the tale as she told it. I am not sure if you still cannot see in those parts, but please do try and check what happened to Daenerys Targaryen’s body after her dragon took her.

I have requested aid from The Golden Bank of Mereen through Yara Greyjoy and received an approval so you need not worry about the previous request I made.

Your help on the above would be appreciated.

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“This is very troubling your Grace”, Tyrion said in a croaky voice laced with trepidation.

“Very troubling. The main issue here is that I cannot find Jon Snow too”, Bran sighed forlornly. The Hand had noticed that Bran was not always without emotion of late.

“I can see him over the last three or so year amongst the wildling population. At one point he seemed to be growing mad and then I cannot see anything after that. I cannot even see the wildlings Beyond the Wall anymore. There is a thick veil of smoke that cannot be seen unless one travels in person Beyond the Wall. It is similar to that one I encounter when I travel to Essos. Similar to a Valyrian spell that was used after I…after Bran the Builder built the Wall."

“What can we do then to find out about the dragons?”,

“I will be travelling in person to Barrowton soon enough. There is something Cregan Stark, an ancestor of mine gave to a beloved friend of his, Lord Roderick Dustin, also known as the Ruin. Unfortunately, that Lord placed a spell on that very artefact with his own blood, so I cannot find it in greendreams. It might give me a chance to search without having to travel Beyond the Wall or Essos. It will also give you a chance to prepare the Crownlands for war and deal with the Bronn situation prudently.”

Tyrion closed his eyes and took a deep breath. How on earth was he supposed to get rid of Bronn. He felt dirty all of sudden to even think of getting rid of a man who had saved his life so many times.

“I hear you”, he said in a despairing tone

“Good.”, Bran replied, “Also make means to find out about this Golden Bank of Mereen”, he finished

Tyrion nodded. The heat on his body felt exaggerated now that he thought of it. It was his soberness that was making him so uneasy in such a conversation. That was his cue to leave.

“By your leave, your Grace. I will do as ordered”, he said after a moment of silence. His hands were still shaky.

Bran nodded.

Tyrion strutted up and slid out the Council room door in all haste. The knight of Rosby behind him and a squire rushing to help him to his horse. The only thing on his mind being wine. Never had he needed a drink as he did right now. It might help him think a bit clearer. He instinctively kept looking at the sky wondering when another attack by dragons would occur. All sounds were blocked from his ears as he walked back to his lair.

Wine. He needed it now.
The clinking of the chains worn by the old Maester Colemon was getting on his nerves. This was a lie, he knew the real problem was his fear of being tainted and sent back to Sunspear. He had been sailing for a fortnight in disguise and had disembarked at the ports by Hellgate Hall. The gods were to thank that no one had given him a good enough look to recognise him. He hoped he would avoid any Martell soldiers by riding the woods instead of going around through Sandstone. In their last attempt to help Arianne, he almost got killed by Arys Oakheart. He decided to ride on the outskirts so he could see any bandits approaching from afar. From there he rode until he decided to stop in the pine woods near Sandstone to camp. There was no way he could trust Quentyn Qorgyle to let him stay the night. The bitterness of the lords and ladies had led to such hostilities that everyone was wary of everyone.

He had a mind of finding accommodation in the inn he had passed a day ago. The heraldry on the horses he had seen outside made him decide otherwise. Who knew which Houses could be trusted these days? Those that had defied the prince were exiled and their lords hunted down. Dorne had no rulers after Doran died and the disorder led to Ellaria’s alliance with the Targaryen queen. After the Ironborn captured Ellaria and murdered three of Oberyn’s daughters; some lords became a bit more defiant to Martell rule. The vacuum was clear and Quentyn had benefited from that.

Strangely enough, the journey had gone well despite his constant paranoia. He had left without telling anyone after all, and men and women died for less in Dorne of late. Gerold had made it his goal not to be counted amongst those who died in these times. He hoped he was not alone in this, and that Daemon had understood the message and had headed to Godsgrace to rally support against the tyranny they were facing.

Now he was in the Lord’s solar at Starfall and hoped The Sword of the Morning and his lady aunt would at least put away their suspicions and give him an ear.

“You cannot be trusted.”, Edric stated firmly after he and Allyria had summoned him. “Your word is no good.”

“I would apologise but I know it is not enough. I understand that you may not trust me Ned, but I would never have left Sunspear if I was not sure”, he retorted nervously under the gaze of the young lord’s violet eyes.

It was his understanding that Edric had been given his spurs by Ser Rolland Storm when he returned the bones of Lord Beric Dondarrion after the Great War and the Brotherhood without Banners was officially disbanded. He proceeded to put Dorne to shame when he accused the lords of cowardice as they didn’t partake in repelling the Night King. This led to many scornful remarks from Sunspear, much to Gerold’s ire. In the past years the lad had given himself to training for the a few years and rumours of his prowess spoke much.

“I hope you can forgive me for what happened and we can move on from there.”, he pleaded

“So, you are telling me you have changed?”, Edric enquired

“I understand the errors of my ways Ned. I can tell you I have grown from them and I understand what is important now.”

“What is important right now if I may ask you Ser?”, Allyria asked with a wary stare at Gerold.
“The unity of our House and the unity Dorne is what is important. Quentyn is unfit to rule and many agree.”, Gerold replied sincerely

“You would make us traitors to House Martell?!”, she asked as if daring him.

Gerold shook his head quickly. “Doran was too much a coward to fight Tywin when the time was ripe. House Martell is not Quentyn. I am asking you to help me set Dorne to rights”, he answered

“How so? Quentyn is the last living child of Prince Doran.”, Edric said, while fiddling with an unopened scroll of parchment. Gerold noted that it was sealed with the red cockatrice of Gargalen. He hoped that the news in the missive were in accordance with what he had sent his squire to request from Lord Tremond. He was the only Lord would share Gerold’s sentiments regarding the prince.

“He is not.”, Gerold replied while looking straight into Allyria’s eyes.

“Arianne and Trystane are dead and Doran had no bastards Gerold…”, she replied with an annoyed stare at the knight.

“That is the thing Ally…”, Gerold replied softly to his cousin. “Arianne is not dead.”

A silence ensued until Edric stood up and started pacing like his father before him used to. Allyria just stared at the Darkstar with an astonished look awaiting an explanation.

“Quentyn never had a claim, he said so many times enough but I knew better and so did others. The way he always speaks about women and bastards underlines his true sentiments about Arianne being the heir. He was the one who sent an assassin to murder Arianne at the Water Gardens. I arrived just in time to stop the assassin and luckily Sarella was there and got some information out of the man before I slit his throat. The man was hired by Quentyn after the death of Viserys Targaryen”

“You helped Arianne fake her death?”, Edric asked with wide eyes.

“Arianne told Doran but he didn't believe her. So, she decided to escape to Lys once she had found out that Doran was planning on allying himself with the Lannisters. Quentyn had disappeared and this led to Trystane being the heir and the Imp had him betrothed to his niece. After that, Oberyn went to Kingslanding where he died in a trial by combat. Yet another Martell dead at the hands of Gregor Clegane. You know as well as I do that Dorne wanted blood in return and Doran did nothing. Ellaria came back and urged him to declare war on the Lannisters, which he refused but allowed the Kingslayer to live after breaking into the Castle, murdering guards and attempting to rescue Myrcella.”

The two younger Daynes were shocked.

“So, Ellaria and the Sand Snakes murdered him alongside Trystane for his lack of initiative.”, Edric realised and Gerold nodded.

“So how did Quentyn escape being murdered too?”, Allyria asked with a raised eyebrow

“The Imp made him another offer”, Gerold replied. “Back in Mereen when the spider contacted the Tyrells and Ellaria regarding an Alliance with the dragon queen”

Edric had an addlepated look. “Quentyn betrayed Dorne?”

“Ellaria betrayed Dorned first by murdering the Prince and Trystane. The Imp had a score to settle with Ellaria and Oberyn’s daughters for the death of Myrcella. He wanted them out with hope that Quentyn would take over and it happened in that way. Quentyn betrayed Dorne by allying with the
Imp.”

“So where is Arianne then? And who else knows about this?”, Allyria beseeched, a cold stare in her eyes.

“She is in Essos. Daemon Sand and Lord Tremond are two others who know about Arianne”, he replied.

“I am not sure where she is now, but last communication I received from her states that she is with the Velaryons”, he said, looking back and forth between his cousin and nephew.

‘Which Velaryons? ...Aurane Waters?”, Allyria questioned

“Aurane Velaryon and his wife, Elysa Maegyr”, he responded

Allyria’s cold stare changed rapidly and she suddenly laughed, with Gerold and Edric both giving her confused looks.

“So Aurane decided to declare himself Lord of the Tides then?”

Gerold shrugged. “I have no idea Ally, but what I know is that Driftmark and High Tide have been vacant for almost seven years now, save for some stewards and Ser Austin Waters who was left as Castellan of the Island.”

“She is not in Westeros too if they are not here”, Edric agreed and Gerold nodded

“Aurane fled with the royal fleet from Cersei Lannister during her regency for Tommen. There is someone who is obviously giving them refuge if they have stayed away for so long. He was not even married when he left so I surmise he went to Volantis, since he is married to a Maegyr”, she said

“But Volantis is in turmoil last, I heard”, Ned informed his aunt. “They might have moved on from there if they are still alive”

“I understand as much, I wrote to Lord Tremond and asked him to write to you regarding my arrival, which I believe is on the letter you hold”

Ned stopped his thinking and looked at Gerold and then at Allyria who gave him a look to say he can go ahead. The young lord opened the letter and read.

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Lord Dayne

It has been a while since I communicated with you. I hope all is well on your side despite the trying times in Dorne. I wanted to inform you that I have communication from your uncle Ser Gerold who informed me of his journey to you. I have also received communication from the Yronwoods and from abroad.

Please receive Ser Gerold as a guest on my honour as I am also riding to Starfall with a party. I will relay all I know when I get there.

Lord Tremond Gargalen

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Allyria stood up and took the letter from Ned’s hand as if she didn’t believe Lord Tremond wrote those words. She was now pacing too and frolicking with the hem of her dress. Ned sighed and walked back to his chair.

“I guess we will hear from him when he gets here”, the lord of Starfall finally said

“In two days”, Gerold emphasised

“In the meantime, I will write to High Hermitage and ask them to allow you in”, Ned started, “I would have you swear by your own head that you will conduct yourself in a manner befitting a knight and no deaths will be wrought of your sword until we command you so.”

Gerold swallowed. Allyria gave him an icy glare again.

“I swear it. By the old gods and the new”, he said with an assured but tired sigh.

“Good.”, Edric smirked. “Maester Coleman will give it to you in the morning. Do not be mistaken Ser, I will take your head myself should I even sniff a scent of disobedience… In the meantime, you can come with me to the yard. It has been a while since I had a challenge”

“As You wish nephew”, Gerold returned with a smile breaking on his scarred face.

Gendry

He had been sitting too close to the hearth in deep melancholy. The raven scroll on his hands was still sealed and he had been afraid of opening it. After Lord Arstan and Mya had left, he had informed Ser Maric to alert everyone that he did not wish to be disturbed this evening.

Gendry had formed many bonds in the years since he became Lord of Storm’s End and Lord Paramount of the Stormlands. He disliked being a lord even though he understood the necessity of it all. Ser Davos had been a father to him and the loss of his wife had strained the old man emotionally. It had been easier for Maric because he had spent the last days with her and Gendry suspected that the old knight had been consumed by guilt over the years missed with his family in the service of kings. Gendry wished he had met the Lady of Cape Wrath for himself as he could tell from her loved ones that she was a special kind of woman. An excellent mother. He had wished to have that for himself in life, yet he did not get to spend much time with his own mother. The hope of building a family of his own was still there but the pain of rejection still paralyzed his will to marry. He was after all, an up jumped bastard who happened to be in good luck. Davos had warned him against such thoughts but he felt he could not control it.

Gendry sighed and cracked the direwolf sigil under the candle flame and read.

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Dear Gendry

I know I might be the last person you wish to hear from.

I am back in Westeros. I felt I needed to inform you, for old times sakes. I know I broke your heart
and I cannot undo that. These past years have taught me many lessons that I wish I had learnt earlier in life.

I will be venturing beyond the wall to search for my brother, Jon. I do not feel at home in Winterfell when he is not there.

You once told me you loved me. I wanted to let you know that I have always felt the same way, in case I never come back again.

Love

Arya

Gendry clenched his teeth and threw the scroll into the fire and a surge of anger rose up his throat.

He closed the door with a loud bang and marched off to the forge.

Chapter End Notes

Til next time friends....keep tuned.
Chapter 8: The Bleeding of the Kingdoms

Chapter Summary

- The turmoil in the Riverlands
- The Free-folk meet a couple of envoys
- Devan and Joy reunite
- Arya arrives Beyond the Wall

Chapter Notes

HI eeebody....very delayed post. Apologies on that end.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Edmure

The Lord of Riverrun stared at the letter he had just written and grit his teeth as he gave it to Patrek to peruse. It was his response to the letter from the capital. It gave him a sense of relief that his short but to the point response will enlighten them as to his position in the general state of things.

*House Tully is not a vassal of House Stark. The rule of House Stark in the South is illegitimate.*

Edmure

He smiled, pleased with himself. This whole king election business seemed to be rigged. House Stark was represented by six people in that meeting. How could a person under arrest for treason be allowed to nominate a king of all things? At least all the River lords and some prominent Houses from all over were seeing it this way. It is not a mere coincidence that Starks rule both the North and the South… If the North is an independent kingdom, then why is a Stark ruling lands below the Neck? Even Northern Houses are questioning why their king Jon Snow was sent to the Wall even after the Unsullied had left? The Seven Kingdoms are ruled by treason, and House Tully is House Tully because of House Targaryen. If the rumours are true, then Jon Snow is their rightful king.

“How are you Ed?”, Patrek Mallister asked his liege.

Edmure looked at his old friend and sighed deeply. Four years ago, he had ordered that the Lord of Seagard build a fleet to counter the Ironborn and his western bannermen to secure their Western borders with new soldiers. The nerve of the Lords Paramount to neglect his claim to the Iron Throne blatantly and nominate a boy proved to be a disrespectful move.

“I am as well as can be”, he replied

“Are you still bent on isolating the River Lords from the rest of the kingdoms?”, Patrek asked.

“With the way things are going, even trade with the Crownlands is becoming difficult”

He had been keeping himself busy with playing with his seven-year-old heir Brynden, whom he
named after his uncle, The Blackfish out of guilt if he could be honest with himself. To this day Edmure blamed himself for how the previous war went. His failure to cut off the escape of the Lannister army and ambush Gregor Clegane and his men still loomed above him like dark cloud. The resultant loss of his sister and nephew, while he had hoped to gain glory from capturing a mill.

“As we speak now Dorne is revolting against the Prince…How much long until some River lord decides he might as well take Riverrun?”, Edmure asked

“Who might that Lord be? Not everyone is the Freys Ed”, Patrek insisted

“There is a dispute over the lands that surround Harrenhal as we speak, a third cousin of the Vances stakes a claim to it over Lady Shela’s grandniece”, Lord Tully claimed. “Lady Darry is hiding Targaryen banners in her basement and to top it all off, a Frey bastard is contesting Olyvar’s claim to the Twins”

“But that does not…”

“It does my friend. Everyone in the Seven Kingdoms mocks me… In the Capital, my own niece told me to sit down when I stood to put forth my own name in volunteering for the Throne… They would rather have a crippled boy as king rather than a full-grown man… I have been made to feel small ever since I made a mistake…One mistake and they all judge me for it for a lifetime”, Edmure replied with a clenched fist.

“I think it was your handing over the castle to the Kingslayer and telling your men to put the Blackfish In chains and hand him over to the Freys that lost you the people’s confidence my Lord”, Patrek replied with a worried look.

“I spent years in the dungeons of The Twins after fighting for King Robb and northern independence. Robb betrayed the Freys first and everyone acts like he was perfect! I had to marry the woman he failed to marry to make up for the mistake I made and I kept her even after the war! The Kingslayer threatened to throw my son into the castle on a trebuchet, I had no choice!”, The Lord of Riverrun emphasised

He never could stop blaming himself for that one particular matter which ended with the death of his own uncle. The Blackfish should have gone North when given the chance.

“I live with that regret every day of my life, but that does not cancel out the fact that House Stark has no claim to the South. They let the North be independent but they want us to bend to a Stark? What makes Sansa and Bran so special? None of them have seen a single day of battle and Sansa is waging war on the wildlings. No.”

“What concerns me most is the behaviour of the Ironborn more than anything. Yara Greyjoy has not been seen in the mainland for years and the Ironborn have at least two-thousand ships now…They have rebuilt their forts and I have long expected them to start their raids again but not even once has it happened…I am sure they still do not sow. What if they decided to start reaving again? Who has enough ships to mount a defence against them now”, Patrek stated

“I would not worry about them in this case. I am sure Yara Greyjoy harbours the same sentiments as I regarding the illegitimacy of King Bran’s rule. I do not recognise it.”

“I am with you on that one…Lord Blackwood says he received a raven from Dragonstone just before the Dragon Queen burnt Kingslanding to rubble”, the Lord of Seagard mused

“He informed me too… From Varys…and you know what’s the funniest part of it? Cat was always
so afraid that Jon Snow would usurp her children of their rights to the North, but right now they are the ones who are actually usurping their own brother in all but name”, he explained with a shake of his head.

“They should have known that the Seven Kingdoms would not bend to them for long… Jon Snow earned his crown in the North, and that was through sheer bravery and courage…He came South for the first time to get help and when he came back with the help he had bent knee because it was their chance for their survival I hear. Some Northern Houses are in a cold rebellion against House Stark, apparently Robb Stark left a will where he disinherited Sansa and some Lords know of it. Ned would be shocked at how much things have changed”, Edmure raged

“Truly Ed?”, Patrek asked in astonishment. “Your Lady sister hated the lad I hear…now you stand here defending his rights against your own niece?”

“My own niece was a product of Baelish and the Lannister whore that murdered her father!”, Edmure spat. “The very same woman that was brazen enough to seat her bastards of incest on the Throne of Aegon the Conqueror!... I am a Tully and House Tully was no Great House until House Targaryen made us a Great House. The North remembers how Torrhen Stark bent the knee, but they forgot very quickly that Daenerys Targaryen sacrificed her armies and put aside her war for power to save the North. There is a dragon carcass by the Godswood in Winterfell as proof that Daenerys Targaryen went to the North and defended Winterfell when they had nothing to offer her”, he finished

Patrek nodded. He also had expressed his shame at their failure to help fight the Night King.

“I heard the dragon queen lost half her army in the Great War… After she died the Unsullied somehow multiplied in the Summer Isles and now trade for the Golden Bank in Dragon’s Bay. I wonder who they answer to; now that their queen is dead…Maybe that black dragon of hers is their new king…I heard it escaped with her corpse in the aftermath”

Edmure stared into the horizon for a moment atop his balcony at Riverrun.

“War is coming to Westeros again, I can feel it”, he stated and stared back at Patrek.

“The Six kingdoms are in great discontent. I am calling my bannermen to council. A war council. It is time we prepared ourselves. For many centuries the Riverlands have fallen prey to other people’s wars. No more, my lord. Let every lord prove his loyalty and every lady their trustworthiness.”

Patrek stood up and looked at Edmure.

“Maester Giryan!”, Edmure called out from his balcony

The chained man came trotting with his back bent like he was carrying a soldier’s saddlebag.

“My lord”, the man replied in a shaky voice, reflecting of his many years.

“Call the banners. We are having a war council”

The Edmure turned to walk back into his castle and Patrek was right behind him.
The Western summer was very evident with the lush green trees in the rocky entrance of Casterly Rock. He had decided to remove his armour and only wore a leather surcoat and chainmail. The sound of horses approaching was so much more real than ever before and he could not believe his eyes when he spotted the smile from afar.

Joy Hill looked a beauty. Her long golden locks flowed smoothly to the small of her back and her emerald eyes shone with childlike wonder that made Devan forget himself. He had left Casterly Rock a moon ago after she had sent him a raven confirming her return to the Westerlands. Devan still harboured hope that his plans would see him unite both branches of House Lannister and restore it to its glory. The Imp had sent threatened him harshly after he had discovered their affair.

“We are not Targaryens”, the dwarf had snarled.

He remembered how Tyrion had cursed everyone that day in the throne room when he was being tried for the murder of Joffrey. How he had wished he had enough poison to kill all the noblemen present at the trial.

‘Very rich coming from the man who had killed his own father’, Devan thought.

He pulled himself from those thoughts. He smiled widely as Joy dismounted her destrier with a grace fit for a queen. Devan had seen the dragon queen at the Blackwater Rush after they had sacked Highgarden with Ser Jaime and the Tarlys.

“My lord, sorry to keep you waiting”, his cousin said with a soft smile that had Devan weak in the knees.

“Of course, my lady”, he came closer

Joy ran over and hugged him tightly forgetting herself in front of her escort.

“I missed you so much”, Joy whispered. “And I have news”

Devan released her from the hug and looked at her.

“My father is alive”, Joy returned with her eyes glossing over in tears of joy as her name said

Devan’s eyes went wide.

“Let’s go inside”, Joy added. “I will tell you all about it”

He looked at her with a smile of relief. “Of course, …Ser Thomas, if you please”

The old knight smiled and nodded. He then started shouting orders for the gate to be opened and lead them in.

The Westerlands were about to get interesting.

Arya

She knew that someone had been watching her since she crossed the wall. It didn’t matter because she was not here to kill anyone. The wilding village she was now in was like nothing she had seen before. The wildling children scampered about in a carefree manner. Some ran about with hounds
and some women were carrying logs out of their tents. The way the people carried about was very strange to what she had grown accustomed to.

There were no guards here and people behaved like there was no danger anywhere. Some men gave her stares as she approached and as she passed. No one stopped her or said anything. No one even drew an arrow as her horse slowly trotted into their camp and she could clearly see that every adult was armed. Others carried giant axes on their backs and women carried babes with a bow slung on their backs and quivers full of arrows. Young boys each wore a shortsword and dagger on their hips but none even placed a hand on the pommel. The giant direwolves did not even growl at her. It was as if they were instructed not to touch her or talk to her. She trotted until she came to the end of the path and there was the tall wildling Tormund with a beautiful golden-haired woman at her side. Both were armed to the teeth and two taller men who looked like Tormund stood behind them at both sides.

“Arya Stark, The Slayer of the Night King herself!”, Tormund greeted sternly

“Hello Tormund”, Arya greeted in the politest tone she could muster. A litter of young direwolves lay lazily next to the big tent where a pair of women stood with spears brandished. She dismounted and walked a few steps towards the wildling pair.

“I would assume you wants answers to your brother’s whereabouts…” the redheaded man started

“I know he is not here…”, Arya replied before the man could finish, “But I know he is not dead”

“No, he is not dead.”, Tormund said while pointing around to the young direwolf cubs. “The wolves would know”

“I hear you. But something tells me you know where he is”, she accused.

“Doesn’t mean I would tell a Southerner shit!”, the tall man roared. “Ya Starks are snakes! Soon as ya don’t need someone, you plot their death”, Tormund replied with a snarl

“Your Queen has declared war against us and yet here you are”, Val pointed out. “Why shouldn’t we kill you and draw first blood?”

“Because I would kill you before you drew that bow”, Arya returned

“Perhaps the wolf behind you would tear your throat before your hand reached that dagger!”, Halva threatened

“That wolf wouldn’t…” she was about to say before the big black wolf snarled and growled at her.

“Ha! Very ironic that the beast on your banners feasts on your ass!”, Tormund snapped. “What do you want little wolf?”

“I want to know where my…where Jon is!”, she said impatiently after correcting herself in guilt.

“As you can see, he is not here and has no intentions of being found!”, Val retorted

“I need to speak with him Tormund”, she pleaded

“We told your sister that Jon Snow is not here. He could have found himself a new secret life in some cave with a woman of choice. He was always a pretty man.”, the blonde beauty stated with a smirk. She noticed the scar above the woman’s brow.
“I guess... that is a possibility” Arya shrugged, thinking of the dragons she once saw.

“But your brother is too honourable. Not me...I would ‘a went for it!”’, Tormund mused with a
faraway look.

They were interrupted by the howls of direwolves.

“Tormund! A rider shouted as he approached them.

Tormund left them and went to entertain the rider. The blonde woman came closer to Arya and
gestured to a smaller tent made of mammoth skin.

“You can stay the night. In the morning you need to leave lest your Queen sister decides we are
holding you hostage”, the woman declared. “Val’s the name by the way”. Then she turned and left
with the huge black direwolf in her wake. The woman was very beautiful and Arya stared at her
back as she walked away.

“She would have been your goodsister if the gods were sane”, another woman said as she also
turned to walk away. Some of the smaller direwolves followed in its wake. Arya spotted the white
direwolf that looked so much like ghost it was surreal and behind it, was her own direwolf Nymeria.
The great beast stood on her haunches and stared deeply into Arya’s eyes. Then she turned and
walked into the forest leaving the pack with Arya.

Arya was left there with the smaller ones lying around next to the tent she was offered. As she
entered she saw that there was a straw makeshift bed at the back of the tent and some firewood at the
side. She took off her boots and sat on the tree stump that was carved for sitting.

The time she spent in Winterfell proved how much hate she still harboured. She had thought about
making a new list of names after the feast at Sansa’s wedding. There were many who were still
plotting against Sansa and many who still said things that reopened old wounds in her heart. The
bones of Daenerys Targaryen’s dragon made matters even worse in her heart. Sansa had insisted on
the men having them sold to merchants and that had been done shortly before her wedding. Arya
herself could not deny that the sight brought her to a point of being nostalgic. The black charred
bones with golden bronze edges shone under the clear sky as the men were carrying them out. It
reminded her so much of what had transpired in that very same Godswood several years ago. The
Golden Bank of Mereen had paid handsomely for the bones of the dead dragon and the skull and
apparently, they were to use the bones to build a ship. She found herself curious of how that ship
would look. Mayhaps one day she would be able to sail again and come across it on a voyage.

Arya felt restless even though her body said otherwise. A small wildling girl came into her tent
immediately and placed a wooden stick with roasted rabbit and a pan of stale bread was placed on
the small wooden stump she had seated herself next to and her skin of mulled wine. The hard meat
fell prey to her teeth afterwards and once she had eaten she felt tired.

Val

“Ha! I told the wretched witch to lick me balls instead!”’, the Magnar o’ Skagos yelled to which the
men roared in laughter. This was merry affair in truth regardless of the war ahead. The men from
Skagos rode in earlier in the day as they were speaking with Arya Stark. Val had seen her before in
Winterfell when Jon Snow was in the South negotiating with the dragon queen and afterwards when
the northern lords were turning on their king. Val knew when the southern armies came and Jon into Winterfell next to the silver haired queen that she had lost him forever.

“Me unicorn left a pile o’ shit in her tent for it!”, he carried on and slapped Jason Redbeard’s shoulder. Sarbon Magnar was as vile as they came. He spoke with a full mouth and speckles of mead flew off his mouth as he laughed loudly. The Redbeard was feasting them on boar suckling roasted in its fat served with barley porridge and the horns of fermented goatsmilk kept coming. Tormund was not drinking though, on second thoughts it seemed like he was not even tempted to.

The visiting party rode in with a group of men who looked like northern lords from the other side of the wall and Val could not help but feel a bit wary of the hooded men that had come riding in on horseback with swords at their hips. These people were not here to stay long. The Skagosi had come to them as a response to their request for aid but had told them there were guests he intended for them to meet as well.

“You must be Tormund, and you must be Val, the Snow Princess”, a man with a grey cape stated as he approached them. He had greying hair and a short pointy beard that resembled that of the weasel lord whose throat Arya Stark had cut in the hall of Winterfell. Two younger men followed behind this man as he started conversing with them.

“Aye, and who are you? I am not sure if we have met...”, Tormund replied crassly

“Edwin Locke”, the elder replied, “Senior Captain of the Roses...the men behind me are Michal Dustin and Tymon Marsh, my assistants. Can we speak in private if you do not mind? I have some news from a mutual friend”, he elaborated in a whisper.

Tormund was silent as he looked back and forth between the man, Val and the two men behind the Locke. Val saw that they were unarmed. Tormund nodded.

“Follow me”, he whispered.

He started walking and once outside the tent he looked around and gestured them to follow him until he disappeared into the cave behind the great rock. Edwin Locke and the two other men followed and Val was the last one of the group to enter. They walked until the tunnel ended where the forest began.

“Speak”, Tormund simply said to Locke after they entered the forest.

“The king sends his regards. He is aware of the war to come and has sent us to help.”, the Locke stated.

“Which king are you speaking of?”, Val enquired suspiciously


“I was sent by our commander Alton of House Stark. Our company serves the crown of New Valyria”

“Where is JON!”, Tormund growled

“He is faraway, and I cannot reveal where he is.”, the greybeard replied. “He is pursuing his true destiny is all I can say”

“I want to speak with him in person”, Tormund demanded. “His family is turning on us and his sister is after our lands”
“He understands that perfectly my lord…”

“I am not a lord. Jon is our king! And he should be here with us”, Tormund growled. “How are we
to be sure that you are not sent by them Starks to catch us unawares and cut our throats while we
sleep?!”

The leader stopped and took out a small pouch from the inside of his coat and handed it to Tormund. He
took the pouch and opened it hurriedly. From inside it he pulled out what looked like a shard of
dragonglass. Tormund twisted it on his hands and Val could now see from the unmistakable shape
and texture that it was not dragonglass. It was a claw, a huge black claw that could belong only to
one creature.

A dragon.

There are two people Val had seen in a dragon’s proximity or even on dragonback. Jon Snow and
Daenerys Targaryen. Wherever Jon was, he either had a dragon or was with someone who had a
dragon. Now that Val thought of it, there was still one dragon left and them Starks had been asking
around a lot about it. Some fishermen of the Free-folk had reported seeing a dragon heading North
beyond the Wall shortly before Jon Snow disappeared. Could it be?

“Whatever the case may be”, the elder broke the silence. “Jon will see you as soon as he can. You
need to trust me. My army is camped at Eastwatch and will only aid in defence of the lands of the
Free-folk, we have our own supplies and we will not impose any attacks on the lands governed by
them Stark unless your king orders us to”

“Is he not your king?”, Val questioned the man

The greybeard smiled. “Oh, that he is my lady. He is my king and so much more”

Bran

It was eerily cold. The mountain lion leapt and landed on a tree stump by the waterfall cave. He
started rubbing himself against the walls of the cave to get rid of the mud stains on his pale-brown
coat of fur. Better to warg a friend than to warg a wild mountain lion that would start hunting men as
soon as he left its consciousness. His flock of ravens scrapped the air with their sharp screeches.

“East, Winterfell!”, the raven cawed and landed on his shoulder. “Family!”, it shrieked

“Not yet”, he told the raven.

Chapter End Notes

- Princess Rhaella is born at Valyria City
- Bronn is bait
- Daario and Willas plan for War
- Arya stows away
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