This Week on Wife Swap

by tonaxas

Summary

Jaime Lannister and Brienne Tarth are a married ex military family living with Jaime’s three children in the suburbs of Kings Landing and work full time jobs as security for a concert venue in the city. Samwell and Gilly Tarly are a young couple with two young children living on the outskirts of a sleepy town. Can the two get used to each other’s lives or will they suffer the entire three weeks?

Notes

If you don’t know what the show Wife Swap is, let me explain it to you briefly. It’s an American and British reality tv show where two married couples who are the complete opposites swap spouses. Week one, the spouses (usually wives) swap houses and families and they must adhere to the house rules the wife they are replacing set out, week two it’s the switched wives rules and then the third week they get back together and talk at a round table to tell the other what they learned. I’m going to try to format it like the show, even though this shows them behind the cameras as well. Without further ado, here’s my attempt.

See the end of the work for more notes
Chapter 1

It was a joke, it really was no matter what anybody said, they had too many glasses of wine while sitting out on the porch swing scrolling through social media, and then at one am he made a video with his wife about why they thought that the Lannister-Tarth Family should be on some reality TV show. The video taken landscape style (“Because I’m drunk, not an animal, Wench.”) and spoke about their family, gave a small house tour, barely scratching the surface, not going into any rooms, just showing the doors and emailed it to the address on the ad and then finished up the bottle of wine before going to sleep.

They heard nothing back for a while, which became a running gag in the family, especially after they told their close friends as well. If the phone would ring, someone would make a comment about it without fail.

It was the early evening hours and everybody was sitting on the back patio having a nice dinner outside. Everyone was there, Tyrion, Jaime’s younger brother, Podrick, Brienne’s younger cousin who tended to stay with them more often than not, Davos Seaworth, a close friend and across the street neighbor, and of course, Jaime, Brienne and the three kids, Joffrey, who hasn’t looked up from his phone the entire time, nothing to say other than insults and demands to be excused to his room, no doubt to FaceTime Sansa, a girl from his school who really should do her best to drop Joffrey like a bad habit, in Brienne’s opinion. The other two children, Myrcella and Tommen were much better behaved and talkative. The outer backdoor was open leaving just the screen door closed as music played from the inside, serving as nothing else but background noise until the phone began ringing.

Joffrey tried to get it, before Jaime told his son to sit down, knowing he probably wouldn’t answer the phone and just leave and he wanted them to have some family time. The counselor said it would be good for them. Brienne got up and got the phone instead, disappearing through the kitchen with the cordless landline.

It was only fifteen minutes she was gone before making her way back to the small yard, leaning against the door frame. “So, uh.” She started,

“Who was it?” Davos asked, wondering if his wife had been calling to get him to come home. Marya was sick at home, but it was nothing serious, a stomach bug she caught from one of their grandkids but still, he told her he’d be back early, but he didn’t know if she wanted him to run out and get her some ginger ale.

Davos almost never carried his cell phone on him, only when he was fishing or anywhere farther away than where he worked did he ever carry a dinosaur flip phone. He tried to use a smartphone, an iPhone his son gave him, however Davos got one robocall and proceeded to throw the iPhone 4 into the lake they were fishing in, as to the horror of three of his sons.

Tyrion decided to respond “Must be the reality TV people now. You sent the wrong video and now you and my brother are going to be famous to a different audience!” Which was met with a few snickers and eye rolls and a recoil from Joffrey. The two younger kids either didn’t understand or pretended to not understand.

“You’re half right,” Brienne finally walked back to her seat at the round glass table. “So, apparently, we’re going to be on TV.” Brienne didn’t look as excited as two out of three of her step-children did, who looked as if they were going to explode. Jaime picked up on it but didn’t want to bring it up now. It could wait.
“Well, how exciting.” Jaime felt a bit apprehensive about the situation, but he had to admit he was a little excited. He didn’t want to think about the bad parts of plastering their family name on television. He tried to convince himself nobody watched reality tv like that anymore. It was all about shows like The Bachelor or, Meeting up with the Martell’s sort of reality tv. “We’ll talk about it later.” Jaime leaned over and kissed his wife briefly before turning back to the guests and changing the subject, and most importantly, let his oldest son up to his room on the condition when the guests were leaving, he had to say goodbye.

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In a small house, miles and miles North from where the Lannister family lived, a small town laid, and in that small town lived the Tarly family. A family of four, Sam, Gilly, little Sam, a six year old boy and two and a half year old boy named Jon, named for Sam’s best friend, a friend that he’d known since his short stint in the Night’s Watch and an uncle for his children named Jon Snow.

People would call them boring, but they called themselves content. Sam had his day job at the library which kept him busy during the day. He got home at the same time every day at Five Fifty-Five P.M. and immediately helped his older son with his homework while Gilly prepared dinner, Jon following her close behind until Sam kept the baby on his lap, helping the six year old with his simple mathematics. Sam considered himself the luckiest man in the world with two incredibly sweet, good tempered, affectionate children. The two often played together, instead of fighting together, which is what Sam and Dickon, his older brother did most of their childhood.

They eat as a family every night and then put the children to bed at Nine PM, giving themselves two hours together as adults. What they do ranges, but mostly, the two of them watch TV and talk through the commercials, mostly things on cable. However one night they decided to go to their bedroom and skip TV for the night. At Ten Fifteen, Gilly almost jumped out of their bed, dressed in her housecoat.

“What’s the matter?” Sam asked, alarmed there might have been an emergency that needed taking care of.

“Look!” Gilly all but shoved her phone in his face, there was a casting ad for a show called Wife Swap. Sam recognized the name, Gilly had talked about it before, as she confirms almost immediately.

“I watch this show all the time during the day. This could be fun, might shake things up.” While Gilly was perfectly content with her life, she had to admit it was somewhat monotonous. She was a mother who had a part time job from home as a customer service agent for a telecom company out of Pink Maiden. “Think of how fun it would be, see how someone else lives! Come on, let’s try!”

Sam gave a small smile at her excitement. “Are you sure this is something we should even consider? What if they take something we say out of context, what if your dad is wa-” He was cut off by Gilly jumping back on the bed.

“We can’t let him influence every decision we have. He won’t find us. Don’t even think about him. Come on, I want the whole world to see my handsome husband.” That made Sam blush a bit,

“Let me sleep on it.”

“Come on,” Gilly moved closer to her husband, “It’ll be good for us to be apart for a few weeks. I don’t think we’ve spent any time apart since we’ve met.” Sam looked over amused, “Not that that’s an issue, of course, I love every day with you but-” She was tripping over herself, stopped by Sam kissing her on the lips.
“I get it. I just want some time to mull it over. Pros and cons and all that.” He kissed her again.

“Fine, yeah.” Gilly smiled, settling next to her. Sam pulled an arm around her shoulders and there was silence for about a minute. And then they changed the subject to something Little Sam made at school that day. Shortly after that, the two decided to get some sleep.

Two days later, they were filming their morning routine for the TV show. It was filmed with an actual camera borrowed from Jon’s (Uncle Jon, not the baby) boyfriend Tormund on the condition that they not check the SD card, which, Sam was more than happy not to do. In fact, Tormund even edited for them. Of course, he made it look like a child had done it, including not one, but three star wipe effects. Gilly emailed it to the email address in the ad and waited.

Sam wasn’t sure they’d get the call back, in all honesty. Even bringing up that they were one in probably a million couples who submitted, but she would hear none of it.

“Of course we’ll get selected!” She’s say, holding up their youngest. “Look at his chubby cheeks. And remember how cute he looked in his new little suit? Oh my gods, Sam too. Who wouldn’t want to see more of them on TV?” And Sam had to admit, because they did have the cutest kids in the known world.

She was almost obsessive with checking her phone, in truth, Sam hadn’t seen her that excited for anything in a long time, and, not that he would admit it, it almost hurt. Was she happy with him? He hoped the spontaneity of this whole show situation might help.

It was only two weeks later before the producer, a man named Petyr Baelish called them back to say they had selected a couple to swap with. He was told by hearing Gilly freaking out, telling their baby that he’d be a star. Sam was happy of course, it seemed to make Gilly happy and who knows, maybe it would be fun to switch things up this much. It might help shake them out of the rut he felt like they might be in.

Speaking to a few other of their friends, Jaime and Brienne decided to go forward with the show. Only, of course, when the kids said that they were all okay with it, which took almost no convincing. They loved the idea for all different reasons.

“All the kids in school are going to think it’s so cool!” Tommen said when they asked, which caused Jaime and Brienne to laugh a bit. Tommen was seven, still at a cute age.

“It’ll be nice to gain some perspective of how other people run their homes.” Myrcella reasoned, which made Jaime and Brienne smile. For a ten year old, Myrcella was very empathetic and sweet.

“People will finally see how fucked up you guys are and take me away from here.” Joffrey said which made Jaime and Brienne roll their eyes. Joffrey was just hitting puberty, that’s what they told themselves to keep them from dropping him off at a fire station.

That and the fact they were pretty sure he’d like that, which definitely made them think twice about it.

Jaime and Brienne were getting ready for work that evening. The two of them worked the same job, even though for the entire eight hours they worked they weren’t even in the same area. She can count the number of times they ran into one another at work in the three years they’d worked there on one hand. The Red Keep, King’s Landing’s and oldest venue. Half of it was a massive stadium for sports games and concerts and the other half was a convention center, but Jaime and Brienne
worked in the concert hall portion of the castle.

“I can’t stop thinking about what happens if they look us up after this airs.” Jaime said, fumbling with his tie. When he got his prosthetic hand, he’d been told that some things would be much harder and this is one of them. Brienne had her own tie on, and she swiftly walked over and did it for him in a second. “I could have handled it.”

Brienne gave him a coy smile, “But what other excuse can I use to do this?” She said before kissing him on the lips. She only pulled back when she felt his hands run up under her blazer. “Come on,” She said, stepping back with the same coy smile, “We can’t tell Qyburn that’s why we’re late to work.”

Jaime opened his mouth to remind Brienne that technically, Qyburn could shove it and that they didn’t even need to work, but, Brienne was already across the room, putting her watch on. “And to touch on what you said earlier,” Brienne began, “It’s nothing we can’t handle. Besides,” She crossed the room to put her boots on before continuing, “What’s done is done. The kids don’t seem to be worried. Why don’t we just cross the bridge when we come to it?” While ignoring the issue wasn’t much like her, in a way this was almost cathartic, she realized. Finally, she and her family would have nothing to hide anymore. It was almost a protest saying that they wouldn’t live in shame anymore and that itself made it worth it for cameras to come invade their privacy. Besides, it’s been a few years since Jaime’s brother-in-law’s death had been brought to court. It had blown over.

She hoped everybody completely forgot. But, she knew that probably wasn’t the case.

Jaime and Brienne left for work at six o’clock. The kids were going to order a pizza for delivery, since they had to be there at seven to clock in and attend the pre-opening meeting before the doors of the venue opened at seven thirty. Tom of Sevenstreams was playing that night which meant women would try to rush the stage when he played his song ’Let Me Drink Your Beauty’.

They were a little apprehensive about leaving the three of them alone, while Joffrey was thirteen almost fourteen, he had a bit of an issue with violence, but, they figured that Joffrey might just sit in his room and blast music and not come out until morning anyway, so, they let Joffrey be in charge. Of course though, they told Myrcella to call Tyrion, or, depending on the severity, their mother. Cersei was a fine mother, sure she was a hateful cunt that was so toxic she lost custody of the children, but Joffrey responded to her the best, probably out of spite for his father, however Brienne and Jaime both understood there was a lot of rapid changing in the Lannister family for the past few years to narrow down why he was the way he was.

Jaime and Brienne opened the door and immediately had to catch a book Joffrey threw at Tommen, who was crying and trying to run away from another flying book. It hit the wall spine first and fell on the floor, leaving a small dent in the drywall.

“What the fuck is happening here?” Jaime roared to get the boys attention. Joffrey dropped the book he was about to aim at his little brother’s head.

“He made me do it.” Joffrey mumbled before Jaime took his oldest son by the arm, which, he immediately tried to fight off. “Leave me alone! Stop touching me!” He shouted as Jaime tried to reprimand him

Brienne sighed and knelt down next to her youngest step-son who was doing his best not to cry. Joffrey was always like this, she had to tell herself. “Hey, I’m sorry he did that. Are you hurt?” She put a hand on his shoulder, which caused him to look down.

“No. I’m sorry he did that.”
Brienne pulled the boy into a hug, “Come on now, it’s not your fault. I’m just glad he didn’t hit you.” It was late for the boy to be up, but they didn’t have an established bedtime anyway. She stood up after letting go of the child, “Let’s get you some ice cream.”

After Tommen ate a bowl of ice cream he went to bed, passing his father on the way up the steps, who gave him a hug and kiss on the head goodnight. He went into the living room again and started picking up the pillows from the couch that were on the floor and the books from the bookshelf that were also laying on top of the pillows.

“You know, I’m just glad nothing is broken.” He admired, “Also don’t ask me what happened. All Joff had to say was that he wants to go back to his mother.” He tried not to sneer on the word ‘mother’ but he didn’t succeed.

“Tommen is okay, hit with a pillow, but, luckily it’s soft. Didn’t tell me how it started though. Didn’t press.” She sighed, finishing up washing a bowl in the sink and leaving it on the counter to dry.

“I don’t want to think about how he’s going to act for the three weeks you’re away.” Jaime admitted, not that he behaved when Brienne is there, but, Jaime was frightened the teenager would ramp up his sadistic tendencies and put them on someone who isn’t used to it.

“I guess we’ll just have to find out.” Brienne took her blazer off and draped it over her arm. “I’m going to bed. We have a big day tomorrow.” She said as she made her way to their bedroom with Jaime short behind. They would have to wake up early tomorrow to pack and make her way to the airport at around noon. By evening tomorrow, she’d be in someone else’s house, as someone elses wife.
Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

Saying Goodbye is such sweet sorrow, or so they say. Brienne leaves for the North and leaves her family for the next three weeks while Gilly gets a taste of travel, never having embarked on an adventure by plane.

Chapter Notes

Hi y’all, I’m back for this. I’m going to be honest, I suspected literally nobody to like this and for me to get the fuck flamed out of me, so I’m glad people are coming back to read. And if you’re brand new to my AU, in the words of the Emcee: Willkommen, Bienvenue, Welcome! Also I am completely aware the reality TV show industry is fucked up and it’s not what it seems, which I considered going in more detail, but, in the end I decided that it would interfere with my original plot points and and events to much so I decided to look at it through rose colored glasses.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Gilly was packed two nights in advance, which upset her youngest son since he thought his Mommy was leaving and never coming back, not understanding what a vacation meant. This was sort of a vacation, a vacation with someone else’s family and in the end they got ten thousand dollars before taxes.

The night before Gilly was to depart for her temporary husband she was spending the evening after the kids went to bed on the couch. It was Saturday night, and they didn’t have to wake up early to get Little Sam ready for school and Jon would surely wake his big brother up to play before his parents. So it was Eleven PM and they were hitting next episode on a show on Hulu starring Lady Crane and watching in mostly content silence.

“Promise not to watch this while I’m gone.” Gilly said out of the blue.

“Pardon?”

“You heard me. We watch this show together, we have since the first season.” Gilly pouted, which made Sam laugh.

“We’ll watch reruns of shows I’ve already seen. I promise.” The reassurance made Gilly relax a little. No matter how small it was, it meant a lot to her that he’d wait.

“Thank you.” Gilly sat back down, “You think that Jon is going to remember me?” She asked almost immediately.

“Jon is almost twenty five, unless he hits his head pretty hard, he’ll remember you.” Sam deadpanned, which made Gilly roll her eyes. “I know what you mean, and no. He can’t forget his own mother.” he continued.
“He can recognize you. We have pictures of you up. Besides, I doubt this woman is like, your identical twin. It’ll be fine.” He pulled her into a kiss, “It’s hard to forget the most beautiful woman in the world.”

Gilly blushed and kissed him again, longer and deeper this time, only pulling away to say, “You know, the kids are in bed, we have one last night before I ship out. Let’s make the most of it?” She winked, leading Sam to the bedroom.

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They woke up at Seven AM after falling asleep at One, which wasn’t bad for them. Depending on who went to bed first Jaime or Brienne tried to wake up at Seven on weekdays, if only to watch and make sure Joffrey didn't burn the fucking house down while trying to make breakfast.

They didn't have to worry about that right then though, as the kids were still asleep. They didn't need to watch Brienne pack. They already filmed a bit of their life, which felt more painless then she anticipated, but by the way this Baelish guy acted made her feel like he'd be a bigger problem for her family. Of course, he's only be over the phone where she was going, as he couldn't be in two places at once.

"Think you'll need this?" Jaime asked, having spent the last hour and a half helping her pack

It was a sexy pair of red panties with gold lace around the trim.

"I'm more than certain I won't need lingerie." Brienne said flatly.

"You know, I can't think of the last time you wore these."

"Because they're uncomfortable."

"Well, you aren't supposed to wear them for long." Jaime crossed the room and pulled her into a kiss. Before she knew it his tongue was in her mouth and they were backing up to the bed.

"We have some more time to pack, why not waste some of it?" But just before Jaime's left hand could push farther up Brienne’s shirt the doorbell rang.

"What fucking timing." Jaime groaned before taking his hand back and going to the door, Brienne following not far behind.

The door opened to reveal Petyr Baelish, looking more slimy than anyone should at Eight thirty am.

"Good morning, may I come in?" Brienne considered saying no, but she was afraid if she slammed the door in his face it would leave an oil stain on their front door and she'd have to repaint it before leaving. So they let the man who was wearing a three piece suit on an eighty degree day.

Baelish and his camera crew had already been there the day prior, filming bits of their day and the roles that Brienne did around the house and that the new wife would be handling when she arrived later in the week. They spoke to everyone in the house and in frankly, she was less afraid of war than she was of hearing what her oldest step-son had to say about her.

"Gotta love the air conditioning. I must have forgotten where I am." Petyr tried to joke as he walked in with a rolling luggage. Nobody laughed, which he was used to.

"Are you moving in too?" Jaime asked, more than willing to put his foot down. He wasn't sure that wasn't part of the contract he signed. Sure he had his lawyer look over it but that might have been
protocol. He didn't know how these things worked. Regardless of how they did it, he didn't want this stranger living in his home.

"No, no. I'm afraid I have my own home." He tried to laugh but it sounded strangled. Brienne mentally remarked that he probably never laughed a day in his life.

Neither Jaime or Brienne trusted him enough to stand outside their house, let alone inside their house when it seemed he had ulterior motives for picking them over anyone else. Brienne was certain that the only reason they got picked was because of their location.

Two days after they got selected, Catelyn Stark was picking up her children from Jaime and Brienne's after they spent most of the day in their backyard. Catelyn and Brienne got to talking a bit before she revealed that she was avoiding an "old friend" (which was something she actually put in air quotes) named Littlefinger was in town for work. She went on to say that he lived in the city and was completely obsessed with her, but was also completely intimidated by Ned, her husband.

"His name isn't Baelish, is it?" Brienne asked, feeling she already knew the answer.

"Oh, you're the neighbor who he's working with. He sent me an email." Catelyn stated, not wanting to talk about it anymore, so Brienne was more than happy to change the subject to something else.

Brienne was snapped out of the memory by him speaking again.

"We're here to drop off the manual you wrote and we're going to film your family sending you off. My crew will be here at Nine to set up and the limo will arrive at Nine-Thirty. We need the three children ready by then, including the basement kid."

“Podrick.” Brienne said firmly, “Don’t call him basement kid.”

“I apologize then, I’d like Podrick to be there to wave you off as well.” Petyr said with a tight lipped smile.

“I’ll wake him after I finish packing.” Podrick was already up, she’d heard the television on as he was getting ready to go to work. The basement was right underneath Jaime and Brienne’s room. Brienne didn’t say that though, almost certain that the slimey TV producer would take zero time going downstairs to the basement apartment that Podrick has lived in since they moved into the house. Podrick told them he explicitly didn’t want cameras in his apartment, which Jaime and Brienne were one hundred percent in agreement with. They weren’t crazy about the camera crew being in any of the kids rooms unless they let them in themselves.

Podrick Payne and Brienne Tarth were distant cousins, but they cared for one another nonetheless. When Podrick was a child his father died and his mother ran off with another man, leaving the boy alone with a cousin a little closer in distance than her.

Officer Cedric Payne was no treat to live with either, making him do all of the housework and making him run errands, which didn’t sound bad until he was a Ten year old asking a store owner to sell him a pack of cigars. He spent his childhood on the army base. When Cedric was killed in battle, Pod was passed along to a man named Lorimer, how he was connected to this man Pod had no idea, but he was happy to live with him. A rotund man but he meant no harm to the boy. He’d begun to teach the eleven year old boy how to fight and other skills that he felt were most important for the boy’s future. Podrick wanted to join the military for a time. It was really all he knew, what with living with Cedric for five years on various military bases.

Pod lived with Lorimer for a few years until he was executed for theft on base. Pod didn’t think the
food stolen was that big of a deal, perhaps because he ate the stolen ham alongside him. For a month and a half, he lived in some foster program, not quite the system, but definitely not a great place. It seemed more like juvenile hall, which, it probably was. He wasn’t sure what was happening, part of him watched the door of his cell-like room waiting for his Mother to burst in and take him home.

In his mind he had siblings and a step-father who treated him like his own. White picket fence and a dog. He pictured this step-father to have a mustache and read the paper every morning with a cup of coffee. He told himself his Mom was just becoming a better mother for him. He’d forgive her, too. But he knew that wasn’t the case, so he waited… And waited…

Until he was told they had found another distant cousin to take him in. They told him on his mother’s side and he was more than happy to live with her. That’s how he met Brienne. In honesty, he was positive that they weren’t actually cousins. For some reason he’d never asked, Brienne decided to take him in, and for that, he’d be grateful.

And this was much better than any imaginary family anyway.

Brienne went back into her room to finish packing. She was almost done anyway, taking another five minutes to get packed, throwing clothing in the suitcase without much of a care how they were folded. Jaime wasn’t there to fuss over that. She heard clanging in the kitchen, Jaime making breakfast, no doubt. Her bags zipped up, Brienne pulled it into the living room. As she assumed, Jaime was trying to make food for the family, and for some reason, Littlefinger, as Catelyn called him. She didn’t say anything as she went down the steps leading to where the basement apartment was. The staircase was in their bedroom, as they had turned what was supposed to be a living room into a bedroom, since the first week of living there Joffrey almost threw his little brother through a wall in their shared room. There was an outside doorway at the very least, so Pod didn’t have to disturb them if they were sleeping or otherwise.

Brienne knocked on the door, being let in pretty quickly.

“Hey, come on in.” Pod stepped aside, already dressed for work.

“Hey, just wanted to come and tell you I leave at ten… You coming up for breakfast? Jaime’s making… Something. It’ll be food.” Jaime wasn’t the best chef but his food was edible.

“Yeah, I don’t go in until like, ten anyway.”

Pod couldn’t see Brienne off, which was fine. His job was more important than being filmed waving goodbye to someone who was coming back.

“Come up for breakfast, then.” Brienne offered. Technically, he had a kitchen down in the small studio apartment, but there was barely anything in it. He mostly ate upstairs with his family.

“Don’t have to twist my arm.” He admitted, following Brienne upstairs for breakfast.

Family breakfast went as most weekend breakfasts do.

Noisy.

Joffrey picking small arguments with everybody who would indulge him, Myrcella talking about whatever drama from school that currently was taking real estate in her mind, Tommen talking about animals he found in the yard or at the park, Pod usually stayed quiet and Jaime and Brienne almost physically tapping each other in between keeping the peace and keeping up the conversation. This time though there was someone else there to watch, someone else who looked absolutely delighted to be watching this.
Right after breakfast, Pod said his goodbyes and made his leave completely ignoring Baelish.

The limo pulled up exactly at the time promised and the camera crew was all set up so they began goodbyes to the kids and Jaime.

She thought to herself that if she was walking into a disaster situation, she could just fight it off. She knew nothing about this family, not even their names. She hoped it wouldn’t come to that.

She couldn’t think of anything else as the limo drove away.

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The day that Gilly left was easy. An extraordinarily beautiful woman named Ros came with the camera crew, filmed a few shots they missed when they took shots the first time and it felt all too quickly over as Gilly said goodbye to her children. Sam held both their hands as they waved the limo off.

Gilly had never done any of this. She’d traveled by train and bus but never by limo or airplane. It felt nice. She took a glass of complementary champagne as they drove closer to White Harbor airport. She spoke to the camera man who spent a lot of time talking about the places he’d been and shot. It was interesting to Gilly who had spent most of her life in one place. When the car pulled up to the airport, Gilly almost sprung up out of the car as a production assistant took care of her baggage for her before she could say anything. Ros, the producer’s assistant led her to the security checkpoint and handed her a boarding pass.

“You’ll be sitting business class.” She said, Gilly looking more excited.

“I hear that’s really nice.” She had her purse with her as her carry-on, so she tucked the boarding pass in the front pocket of her bag. “Thanks!”

“Don’t mention it.” Ros said flatly, her bluetooth earpiece blinking as she was denying a phone call. “When you touch down in King’s Landing, find Petyr Baelish. He’s my boss. He’ll take care of you from there. Okay?”

Gilly made a mental note of the name. “Alright, I can do that… Thanks.” She responded and turned to make her way through the checkpoint. “See you later, don’t want to miss my flight! I feel so important, business class.” Gilly started to ramble as Ros nodded.

“I bet you do, sweetie. Alright, I have to go. Bye.” Ros said pretty impolitely and turned around and left Gilly standing there to get on line.

Gilly was cooperative with the agents at the plane gate, trying to hide nerves she didn’t know were excitement as she got through the checkpoint with ease, the agent at the end wishing her a safe and enjoyable flight. She lingered around the shops past the checkpoint, debating on buying a bottle of water until she realize they cost seven bucks, so, she dropped the idea pretty quickly.

“Well that’s just wasteful.” Gilly said to the woman next to her who walked away like she’d said nothing at all.

Boarding was easy, she was shown to her seat by the steward and even snapped a photo of herself in the seat, sending it to Sam who quickly sent a photo of the two kids playing in a children’s indoor playground back to her.

‘I miss them already’ Was the last message she sent to Sam before she turned her phone off as per the announcement on board.
Sam and the kids had to be out of the house until Three PM so that way the swapped wife would enter an empty house. It was just the way the show filmed, so, Sam just accepted it and hoped this wasn’t all a trick and he’d come to his home completely cleared out and his wife on a plane to an undisclosed location. He had to try not to think about it.

The plane ride was a bit turbulent as they hit some rough winds somewhere along Riverrun, but Gilly tried not to notice as she continued reading the novel she’d checked out of the library before leaving. She released a breath when the plane landed and turned her phone back on. She received a few messages from Jon (big Jon, not the baby) to enjoy King’s Landing and that if she saw his father, to send his love and a warning he’d visit in the near future. The other text was from Sam, wanting her to text him when the plane lands.

‘Landed, wish me luck!’ She sent back as she got off the plane. She was led to baggage claim and got her luggage after a solid five minutes, turning around there was a man standing there.

“You must be Mrs. Tarly.” He stuck a hand out to her.

“I assume you must be Mr. Baelish.”

“Please, Mr. Baelish is my father, call me Petyr.” She shook his hand and pulled her purse closer to her body. “Now, if we may. The car is waiting outside. Now. I’ll walk out first, and then you walk out when I motion for you.” They were going to film this, she assumed.

She assumed right as she was filmed scurrying out to the limo, identical to the one she arrived in and got in. She sat on one side and a camera and Baelish sat on the other. The camera light was on. Before they started speaking, Gilly was handed a set of keys to put in her purse.

“So, you excited for the swap?” Baelish motioned for her to answer a beat later.

“Yeah, I think it’ll be a fun new experience! I hope that I’ll get along with everybody.” Gilly’s voice was bubbly and excited, looking out at the not so luxurious streets of Flea Bottom.

“Well, let’s hope you don’t. Better for the camera.” His voice was thick with sarcasm, which made Gilly almost roll her eyes.

The rest of the ride wasn’t filmed and was filled with the camera man telling her about the areas they were passing in the hour car ride.

The car stopped in front of a nice house, bigger than hers for sure.

“Well, they keep a nice home.” She said to herself while looking out the window.

The people she was replacing had money, she knew that before going inside. She was instructed to wait in the car as the cameraman set up to film her walking in. There was already a cameraman inside the house, having arrived shortly before.

Gilly got out when she was allowed and remarked on the lovely state of the lawn and the house and the car outside. It wasn’t brand new but it was newer than the car she had at home. It didn’t take her long to reach the door and unlock it with the key that was given to her on the ride there. Before she walked in, she gave the porch swing sitting right next to the door a small push, thinking it was completely adorable. The door opened with a bit of effort, as it was a pretty heavy door, and Gilly walked inside.

The home wasn’t massive, but it was well decorated for her to be completely impressed by. She left her bags by the door. She did a quick walkthrough of the house, starting with the more updated
looking kitchen. When the producer asked what she thought of the kitchen, she didn’t have much to say other than the appliances looked expensive.

Gilly walked into the bedroom next, commenting that the bed looked comfortable. The room looked like it had been professionally clean, wondering if the show did this or if they had a maid.

Gilly went to the backyard next, looking at the small fenced in yard. There was a concrete patio right outside the door with a large picnic table and a grill. In the grassy part of the yard there were a few different balls and two soccer nets on the opposite sides of the yard. She asked aloud if the kids played a lot of sports as extracurriculars. She adventured into the yard and kicked a ball in a net.

“Still got it.” She seemed proud of herself, despite there was no goalie. She didn’t care much about that and didn’t comment as she went back inside. Gilly went to the living room and looked at the walls of the living room and the pictures hung up.

“What a lovely looking family.” She said to the camera as she looked at a group photo that someone had taken in the backyard.

Before walking away, Gilly ran her fingers over a dent in the wall. “I wonder how this got there.” She said with humor in her voice. She turned back to the kitchen table where there was a book sitting there.

The manual.

She’d seen it on TV enough times to know how important it was.

Gilly sat down in a chair and unlocked the device and began to read the contents aloud.

“Welcome to the Lannister-Tarth home, we hope that the place will be a comfortable home for you to spend the next three weeks. My name is Brienne Tarth and my husband’s name is Jaime Lannister. We live in this home with his three children, Joffrey, who’s the oldest at thirteen, Myrcella, the only girl, she’s ten, and Tommen, the youngest at seven. They can be a bit of a handful, but they’re good hearted kids. My cousin, Podrick, lives in the basement apartment. The stairs in the closet in my bedroom lead to his apartment, as well as an outside entrance. He’s nineteen and a great kid, you’ll love him.

The manual talked about other aspects of their lives, which she skimmed through as Baelish made a hand sign to wrap things up. She moved on to the rules.

“We have a few rules in the house. One being that there is no violence inside the house and if they are going to wrestle outside, both parties have to give explicit consent. And if they both do, no neck and face.”

Gilly was taken aback visibly. She chalked her surprise up to growing up with all sisters and her own two boys maybe not being old enough to fight. “Noted,” She said slowly and backed up with a small laugh.

“There’s no bedtime, as me and Jaime work security some nights at the Red Keep, the largest stadium in the world. We leave after dinner and come home sometimes as late as five am on weekends and one am on weekdays. One of us is up while the kids make breakfast as to not wake up to a house fire.” Gilly stopped again, “I think I’ll make breakfast for them.” She commented,

“Finally, we split things even in this house. The kids do chores on the weekend and Jaime and I do chores as well, things are randomly assigned based on age and ability and not based on the idea of women's work and men's work.” Gilly lifted her eyebrows. “I like it, progressive.”
“We hope your time here is enjoyable and not too difficult.” Was the last things written, she took a deep breath.

“Well, this is going to be fun. We hope.” She closed the book and placed it on the counter in the kitchen.

Gilly helped herself to a bottle of water in the fridge, noticing it was somewhat lacking. “We need to go grocery shopping.” She commented to herself before closing the fridge. She moved to wipe up the counters, even though they clearly didn’t need wiping down but before she could wet a paper towel, she heard the door unlock and voices on the other side of the door.

Gilly’s heart was in her throat. It was game time as she noticed the cameraman speed walk into the living room.

She put the bottle next to her and her hands at her side as she heard the door push open.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you all for reading this! I didn't expect to anyone to notice this, actually, so thank you! Please feel free to leave a comment, I love your feedback! Just like Kathrine Newbury says,
Hope I earned the privilege of your time.
Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

So, I have returned.

You know, I was reading George R.R. Martin's Wikipedia page and it said he hated people writing fanfiction. To respect his wishes I will cease to write it on the condition I get to read The Winds Of Winter.

So maybe I won't ever stop after all.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Brienne had flown countless times. Some on her own, some with the military. Mostly with the military. However she’d never flown business class before. Even with Jaime who insisted if they flew somewhere, they’d fly first class she turned him down. She always believed that paying an extraordinarily high price for a seat on a plane was a bit unreasonable. It’s not as if the plane got there faster.

The show had paid for this though, so she wasn’t about to complain.

Brienne slept through the entire flight, only being woken up by the wheels hitting the landing strip.

Getting off the plane, she found her luggage fast and started walking through the airport. She only stopped when someone walked directly in front of her, followed by two camera men with their cameras pointed downward.

“Hey. You must be Brienne. You look just like how Baelish described.” She said flatly. It clearly wasn’t a compliment. This woman in front of her was beautiful with her thick dark hair put up in a ponytail. It made her wonder what was said about her. Before she could ask, however, she was whisked away.

“I’m Ros, I’m the producer he sends to the other house.” She walked fast in sky high heels, but Brienne was able to keep up easily. “Don’t know if you know this but we’re running late. Plane issues, couldn’t be helped. Also take these. They’re your house keys.” Keys to the house were placed in her hand.

Brienne put them in her pocket and silently continued walking. They went out the back exit and Ros placed an incredibly well manicured hand on Brienne’s stomach. “Stay here, I’ll motion you over.” The two men immediately set up for the quick shot. “Won’t be a long set up, there’s no audio or anything. Just go into the car. Bring your luggage.” She said plainly.

It took five minutes of waiting before Brienne was motioned to go to the car, which, in her opinion, she did flawlessly, and got in the car. Ros got in the car along with both of the camera man. The one on the left began packing up his camera.

“We don’t need two cameras right now. Not until after you meet the family.” Ros told her. As the cameraman with an unpacked camera clicked a new battery into place, he hit the on button. “So
you’re gonna just say whatever you’re thinking. We’re gonna ask you a couple questions and then when we get there, we’re gonna continue to follow you. Okay?” Ros gave Brienne the rundown.

“Yeah, sure.” Brienne confirmed as the car began to drive off. “Wait one second before answering.” Ros requested, “So, you excited about this? Do you know anything about the family?”

“I’m nervous. I’m not the most extrovertive of people.” Brienne started after the beat. She scratched her head and continued.

“No. I don’t even know their name.” She figured that was customary. She’d learn when she got her hands on the family manual. The first thing she noticed was how much more humid it was here than in King’s Landing. But that’s how the North was. It got colder in the winter, but summers weren’t as hot. Brienne liked the heat though, so she was glad she wasn’t here in the dead of winter.

They pulled up to the house as the cameraman barely waited for the limo to stop before throwing open the door and getting out. She waited until the cameraman gave her a nod as she took her luggage and got out of the car. The first thing she noticed was the shape of the house, which was a lovely round shape. It seemed more like a cottage than a house. “I really like it. Looks like one of those home design shows.” Brienne didn’t watch them, but it felt like it was a nice thing to say.

Brienne walked up the gravel driveway to the home, unlocking the door with keys she’d been given and walked into the house, a cameraman following her in and getting in front of her.

The house was nice. Hardwood floors, hand painted walls. “Wow, it’s even nicer inside.” She wondered if it made for good TV, walking around and having no complaints. She tried not to care, they were already selected. She still barely knew if she wanted to be selected, but since she was now in Long Lake up North instead of home with her family, she figured it was too late to bring out any doubts or run off into the night.

Brienne left her boots with the other shoes in a basket by the door, walking into the foyer in her socks. There was a nice sitting room when you first walked in. Not as grand as other houses she’d been in. But, then again, she’d been in Casterly Rock, the mansion her husband and his siblings grew up in. He was certain there isn’t a more grander place.

However, one thing she noticed is the grander the property, the more they were covering up. So it felt nice that this house seemed well loved.

Brienne wanted to remark that in a way, it felt like the home she grew up in, but she didn’t. She just commented on the view of the neighbors outside the window.

“You know, I never realized it was farm country out here.” She could barely see what the neighbors were farming. She wondered if she would be doing farm work. Not that she was scared of it, having done plenty of heavy lifting to last a lifetime.

Brienne moved further into the house and walked into the kitchen. It was a more country kitchen look, rather than the brand new appliances that were in her own home. “I like it in here. Gets tons of sunlight.” Brienne didn’t know if that was true or not, but the sun shone brightly through the red and white polka dotted cut off curtains.

Brienne noticed the manual, but when she went for it, Ros sent her a wait hand sign.

“Go through the house more, then the manual.” Ros instructed, and Brienne did as she was told. Moving to the den area, it was a little more messy than the rest of the house. A lot of baby toys in a playpen and toys her youngest step-son would probably enjoy on the floor. Brienne stepped over
them, but not before catching a glimpse of a family portrait taken at some department store.

“Very cute family. I think I’ll stick out like a sore thumb though.” Brienne almost laughed as she moved on to the bedroom, which was the same size as her own, but no staircase leading to a basement apartment. Nothing much to see, so she left and went to the backyard.

The farmland was expansive. That she could see without climbing down the deck. There was an above ground pool and a shed, but other than that, the backyard didn’t have much. She liked the simplicity.

She noticed a fence around the grassy parts of the property, beyond that was the farmland. In that farmland was more corn than she’d ever seen. “Well, alright then. Guess they’re corn farmers?”

She went inside again, not bothering to look into the children’s room. She did, however, go straight to the manual.

Brienne sat down, opening the book and began reading to herself.

“Brienne, please read it out loud.” Ros sounded almost like she was annoyed, which, almost made Brienne say something, but it wasn’t worth the argument to her so she just read it aloud, just as Ros instructed her to.

“Welcome to the Tarly home. I hope you find this home to be as cozy as we try to make it. My name is Gilly and I am currently, well, at your house! My husband’s name is Samwell and our sons’ names are Little Sam and Jon. They’re all good and gentle boys. But, I suppose I have to think that. I hope they continue to be in my absence.

My kids are Six and Two and a Half, so we don’t have many guidelines. The boys go to bed at nine. We always eat dinner and breakfast as a family. We also do lunch together on weekends as well. Domestic housework usually falls to me, by choice. Sam works until Five-Thirty and usually helps with homework while I made dinner.” She saw Ros making another hand sign for him to skip ahead, so she did. She wondered what would make the actual show.

“The farmland isn’t ours. We only own what’s in the fence, so don’t worry about whether or not you’ll be spending time shucking corn. One thing to worry about is that sometimes if you aren’t looking, Little Sam and his brother get through the gate. While I usually stop it, sometimes they manage to get a few feet in. The farm owner is never around, but I am afraid of them getting lost, so please keep an eye on them at all times when they’re outside. But I’m sure you can handle that! Please enjoy our home.” She closed the book, “Well, that sounds like a blast.” She was nervous about that, but she didn’t have to be for long as she heard the door open. The cameraman rushed to the entryway to get the shot.

A shorter round man walked in, two young children nipping at his heels.

“Hello! You must be my wife!” Sam smiled, holding a hand out to her.

Brienne shook it. “I am, you must be Samwell. I’m Brienne.”

“Oh, you can call me Sam. This is Sam, as well-” Sam walked up to the lady. He looked exhausted as he’d spend the better part of two hours running in an indoor playground with kids he’d never see again. “I’m Sam!” He introduced himself, “That’s Jon. He’s named after my Uncle Jon. He’s my best friend.”

Brienne was dumbfounded. If this had been Joff and Tommen, Joff would have called his younger brother a rude name and then his sister something equally rude. This was almost a dream.
“Hi,” Brienne got on one knee to seem less intimidating. “And Hi, Jon.”

Jon was hiding behind his father’s leg, but touched Brienne’s hand.

“Hello,” His small voice said,

“Don’t mind him, Mommy says he takes after Daddy.” Sam announced, which Sam chuckled at, “Alright now. Why don’t you two go change clothes.” Sam patted the boy’s head and watched the older brother take his younger brother to their bedroom.

“They’re lovely kids.” Brienne complimented as he rose to his full height. “Why don’t we go get to know one another better.” Brienne said as she led Sam into his own kitchen. “Besides, you spent all day with little kids, you’re bound to need an aspirin.”

Sam snorted back a laugh. “You got that right.”

- 

"Hello!” Jaime greeted as he walked into the house, Baelish motioned for him to go to the kitchen, which they did as a family.

"Hey!” Gilly went over to the family to introduce herself, watching signals from Baelish to hug Jaime and following them.

"My name is Gilly. I'm you're wife for the next few weeks."

"Oh!” Myrcella smiled at her brightly, her long wavy blonde hair hanging over her shoulders, "Like the flower!"

"Exactly. You must be Myrcella.” Gilly greeted, hugging the girl as signaled.

"Hi, I'm Tommen.” The young boy introduced, receiving a signaled hug from the woman.

"Hello! We're going to have a lot of fun this week you guys.” Gilly promised, turning to Joffrey. "And you must be-

"Don't touch me. I'm Joffrey.” Baelish still gave Gilly the same signal, but she didn't do it.

"Joffrey! What a strong name. I read you're strong willed." One if the passages she didn't read out loud claimed he was difficult. But, perhaps he was just going through puberty.

"Don't forget that." Joffrey said picking up his phone from his pocket. "That's all, right?” Joffrey used that as his exit, going towards the stairs to his room. Jaime almost tried to make him come back, but that wouldn't be much help.

"I'm so sorry… He's…” Jaime wanted to say he wasn't like that, but he was.

"He's a teenager. It's fine. I've dealt with worse.” Gilly answered, "But fine, we can cut the dead weight. What would you guys like to do?” She asked the kids who took a moment in thinking.

"We can watch a movie. Podrick will probably be home soon.” Jaime mentioned, which the whole family was fine with.

The camera crew didn't film them watching the movie, as it was a copyright issue, so they kept their cameras recording but pointed at the floor. Baelish had a gut feeling that he should keep cameras running.
That feeling turned out to be a good feeling when Joffrey came storming down the steps.

"And where do you think you're going?" Jaime asked his barely teenage son, who brushed him off.

"Going to see some friends."

"Who are these friends?" Jaime asked,

"Look, I'm not in the mood for whatever this is. Can't you just fuck off like-" The teenager suddenly stopped talking, red in the face, he walked out of the house before Jaime, who had gone red in the face could chase after him.

Gilly knew right then it wasn't typical pubescent difficulty.

Jaime had his jaw clenched as he went for some ice water in the kitchen. Tommen and Myrcella were on the couch, trying to hide their faces from the cameras, obviously embarrassed. Gilly stepped in then, holding her hands in front of their faces.

"That's enough, don't you think?" Baelish seemed to disagree, walking into the kitchen to talk to Jaime.

It was a one on one interview which Jaime gave a tight answer to. Clearly not looking to talk about it. They sent Jaime back in the room and took Gilly into the back yard. Clearly looking for her to badmouth the child.

"So," Baelish began, "that must have been a lot to take in. You just met him."

Gilly paused to think of an answer. "That was a lot. I think he needs to learn some respect. But I don't think he's a bad kid." She quickly clarified.

Baelish's mouth was a hard line. He'd been expecting a much nastier response. But, Gilly wasn't going to give it.

Joffrey was difficult, that much was clear.

But she had seen worse. She could handle this.

"Will this behavior continue throughout your weeks here?" Baelish asked, and Gilly gave a laugh and shook her head.

"Not if I can help it."

"One more question," Baelish requested, continuing after a second. "What do you think he was going to say."

Gilly shrugged, "No idea. So I have no comment." She said before standing up to go back inside.

Gilly decided to start dinner after all that. Jaime didn't have work and neither did Brienne, which, made Gilly physically relax, since she didn't know how she would do as a security guard.

Gilly thought herself a tough woman, but she wasn’t positive she could tackle some angry drunk guy at a rock concert like she was picturing.

“I think we should go grocery shopping tomorrow.” Gilly called back to Jaime as she pulled some boxes of macaroni and cheese from the pretty bare cupboards.
“Yeah, it’s for the best. We sometimes don’t go.” While Jaime and Brienne both cooked, neither of them did it extraordinarily well. Sure, it was all edible, but other than a few dishes here and there, nothing they made was a show stopper, so they ate out a fair amount.

Gilly, however, did like cooking, she liked cooking so much that in their house eating out was an event. Even if they were only going to the diner.

Gilly moved about the kitchen, the cameraman following her with a bit of trouble, trying to keep the brands out.

“Can we go outside to play?” Tommen rushed up to Gilly, who was currently sorting out food from expired to fine to eat in the freezer.

“I don’t see why not. Do you know if you’re older brother is going to be joining us for dinner?” Gilly knew the answer to that without having to ask, but she figured she’d ask. She didn’t want Tommen to think she hated his older brother.

“I don’t think so.” Tommen shrugged,

“Alright, I’ll keep leftovers.” Gilly promised, which, Tommen nodded and ran outside, calling his older sister out with him. She followed him out the door and soon it was hard to keep track of them running around outside.

-

Brienne was relishing in how fucking boring their house was. Not her own house, her own house had more drama going down than any other house in Westeros she was almost positive. The Tarly house was quiet, boring, and the young family inside it seemed to already be set in their ways, but it was welcome.

Brienne felt indifferent to this. She was currently cooking dinner while Samwell did some chores around the house. Their oldest son’s homework complete already. She was following a recipe in a book that was on a counter, probably just for show by the way the spine cracked when she opened it, but it was serving her well now.

Brienne thought to herself that it was a nice break from the chaos of her home in King’s Landing. There was no crazy sister-in-law to leave threatening messages in the mailbox for her. No Tywin Lannister to drop in and make Jaime feel like a failure for not doing something he never wanted to do anyways.

No Joffrey to break things in the house during a curse filled tantrum.

_Gods help Gilly._ Brienne thought to herself before she could stop herself from thinking it.

As she stirred the noodle dish she was making, she almost felt awful about thinking that. Joff wasn’t a bad kid, she told herself, he grew up in an insane situation.

An insane situation she hoped wouldn’t be aired out on camera.

She looked back at the two children sat at an activity table. The youngest one making a mess out of a coloring book and the oldest one playing with a children’s tablet.

It wasn’t silent, the tablet making noise and Jon making noises for his brother to look at what he was coloring or just to ask what he was doing.
It was still a far throw away from what she’d hear at her house. Usually when one of them spoke to one another, there would need to be a lecture on what language is okay to use and which isn’t. And when they weren’t verbally fighting, they were just finishing a verbal fight and one of them was ready to throw something. Usually Joff started it, but Tommen was known for throwing a few starter punches.

She took a deep breath and tried not to think about home. While she loved everyone in it, sometimes people need a breather.

The oven timer went off, so Brienne took the chicken out of the oven. As per the instructions, she let the meat rest, washing her hands and turning the stove off for the noodles to cool. She began setting the table, the plates making a clanging as she pulled them down from the shelf.

“Smells good here.” Sam said, moving to wash his hands in the kitchen sink. He’d been sweeping the outside porch.

“Thanks, I make no promises that it tastes good.”

“Oh, it’ll be great. I promise.” Sam assured, the cameramen following the two boys to the bathroom, most likely to ask Little Sam a few questions about what his mother does so they can put it against Brienne.

“You don’t have to worry about the cleaning. You get the kids washed up for bed after dinner, I’ll wash dishes.”

“Thanks.” Brienne hated touching wet food.

Dinner went off without a hitch. Jon made a mess of his meal and so did Little Sam, but she didn’t mind bathing the kids.

The best sound she’d ever heard was the cameramen telling Brienne and Sam that they’d be taking room tone and taking a break to eat their own dinner, and then film the kids’ bedtime routine.

“You don’t film us when we’re sleeping?” Sam asked Ros, who tried not to roll her eyes.

“No, you’re thinking of Big Brother. That’s completely different.”

“I know the host of that show. Varys is a friend of my brother-in-law.” Brienne added, not sure why.

“Nice.” She said flatly. “I’ll supervise them and we’ll be out of your hair.”

Brienne picked up Jon to go put him in the tub, trying to save time by putting Little Sam in there also.

An hour after scrubbing the kids down, Brienne was done cleaning up cleaning the bathroom. She didn’t know the kids would splash them that much. After another hour, the camera crew came back and filmed an easy bedtime routine, which involved Sam and Brienne reading a book to both the children.

“You know, I remember my Mom reading ‘The Hungry, Hungry Manticore’ when I was a kid.” Brienne lost her mother at a very early age, so she didn’t really have that many memories of her, so whatever she could grab onto, she tried to keep.

After the kids were already sound asleep, Brienne and Sam tucked them in and shut the light in the
room for the sleeping kids. Waiting for the cameramen to get their shot of the light going out. They
did and they were quickly on their way out. They took room tone and packed up and left in under
five minutes, which she liked.

Sam and Brienne went about their business for the next hour and a half making quiet small talk, not
sure what else there was to say between them.

They were both pretty burned out from travel and adjusting to one another, so the surface level
conversation didn't feel probably as awkward as it should have.

Brienne took a long shower, bringing her robe in with her and went to the guest room to set up shop.
She set her alarm the next morning. It would be Monday and they would be getting the kids ready
for school in the morning.

There was a text waiting for her, only fifteen minutes old, from her husband.

'Please tell me things are better over there.'

Brienne sighed, she didn't have to ask to know what was going on.

'It's going fine here… I assume it's not Gilly who's giving you an issue.'

Brienne felt like she could see her husband's face in that moment. Stressed out, sitting up in bed with
no lights on. She almost heard him sigh as she saw the 'typing' symbol disappear and reappear. Any
message Jaime sent took a few minutes.

'Basically told me to fuck off. Almost said something else but he stopped himself. So. Don't know
what bomb he almost dropped.'

Brienne took a deep breath.

'At least he didn't.'

Brienne wasn't sure that he could refrain himself. She didn’t think he’d do it on purpose, but she
didn’t trust Baelish to allow anything like family secrets to get cut. And rightfully so.

‘ You’re right, I need to talk to him. That might help.’

Brienne only hoped it would.

‘ It’s worth a shot. So besides that, anything exciting happen?’

Brienne put her phone down, expecting a long message, so she’d give it time. She changed into her
pajamas in the meantime. She got into bed after that, picking up her phone. It wasn't as long as she
expected.

‘Honestly? Peaceful, Joff didn’t come back until around ten and went straight into his room, so that
helped. The other two kids were angels as per usual. Gilly really gets on well in the house. Podrick
and her are playing cards in the living room. What’s things like by you?’

Brienne told him the surface level of everything. It was getting late and she was getting tired so, she
didn’t want to pound in a bunch of information.

‘I miss you. Tomorrow I’m going to call you, I miss your voice.’

Brienne felt a smile spread over her face.
‘You just hate texting.’

That was also true. Reading and writing weren’t easy tasks for both Joffrey and Jaime and the only reason anything written digitally was readable was because they had a fantastic spell check app, since the one that came stock mangled messages even further.

‘True. But my statement stands.’

Brienne found herself yawning as she wrote out her last message for the night.

‘I’m heading in. Goodnight, I love you.’

Brienne put her phone on the nightstand and closed her eyes. Only when she woke up would she see Jaime’s response.

‘Goodnight Wench, I love you too.’

Chapter End Notes

Hope you enjoyed! If you did please leave a comment or a kudos. Hope to see you next time!
Chapter 4

Gilly slept on the pullout couch that night, which wasn’t a problem at all. Her bed growing up was a futon, so a pullout couch wasn’t bad at all. She woke up to a knock on the door, which made her jolt right up. She looked over at the door and then the stairs. Joffrey was standing there in his pajamas about to make breakfast before school. It was currently Seven am. The two of them shared a confused glance before there was another knock.

Gilly got up and slowly made her way to the door and looked through the window. Baelish and his cameramen. She took a deep exhale and opened the door, which made Joffrey continue walking down the steps,

“Hi, you’re here early,” Gilly commented, noticing he was still in his standard suit and tie. His cameramen, on the other hand, looked dead on their feet.

“We don’t start filming until seven.” He assured her.

Gilly didn’t say anything as she let them in. “Alright… You guys want some coffee?” She offered, about to head into the kitchen to make breakfast. Down the steps came the two younger children.

“No, that’s alright. We had a few cups down at the studio.” One of the men revealed, barely sounding awake.

Gilly nodded and before she could head to the kitchen to make the kids breakfast, she heard a microwave door slam. They were taking turns microwaving food they had in the freezer.

“Alright.” She mumbled to herself, watching Joffrey try not to fall asleep as he waited for something to heat up. Gilly walked over and looked over at it. Some cheap breakfast burrito. She’d never had things like that before. In fact, their freezer was mainly frozen vegetables and meats. She’d have preferred to do the cooking rather than have her family heat things up. Sure, there really wasn’t anything wrong with frozen pre-prepared food, but she’d grown up eating it and preferred the alternative.

“Why don’t I make breakfast tomorrow?” Gilly offered, and to her shock, Joffrey agreed without a fight.

“Mhm, sure.” Sure, it was probably because he was half asleep and not listening to much else besides key words, but Gilly chose to believe that he was just becoming a little bit more agreeable. It was like an assembly line, each kid heating something up and eating it before taking off upstairs again to fight over the shower. She chose then to start a pot of coffee. The cameras began filming then, starting on Gilly making the coffee with the sounds of them deciding who called dibs on the bathrooms first. Jaime chose then to walk out of the bedroom, the cameras focusing on him.

“Morning, sleep well?” Jaime asked, scratching his face. He needed a shave.

“Yeah, I did. Thanks. You?” Gilly asked, buzzing about the kitchen. “Coffee?” She asked before he could answer.

“Uh, yeah, thanks. And I did sleep well, thank you.” Gilly poured the two of them cups of coffee.
Gilly went to add some cream and sugar in hers, Jaime was drinking his black. The sound of water turning on meant that someone had won the fight, leaving two of them to fight over who was next. Myrcella seemed to have won first dibs by the sound of Tommen and Joffrey bickering in the hallway. The bickering ceased abruptly when the bathroom door opened about fifteen minutes later.

“Do they fight like this all the time?” Gilly asked Jaime, getting started on making their own breakfast.

“Only when they’re awake.” Jaime deadpanned, Gilly nodded.

“I see.”

Gilly’s two kids got along, most of the time. Every now and then they’d have to be broken apart but, for the most part the two young brothers got along and played together well.

By the time Jaime and Gilly made and ate their own breakfasts, the three kids were showered and changed for school, and just in the nick of time, too.

Joffrey had his book bag slung over his back and walked to the door.

“Bye.” Joffrey left, the door closing before he could finish even saying his goodbyes. The bus was right outside, so he wasted no time sprinting to the bus, getting on. The two younger kids’ bus would show up in another half hour. The two kids rushed downstairs to go watch TV or play a video game with Podrick, who was already up. There was no shower in the basement apartment, only a toilet and a sink, so Podrick waited for the fight for the shower to be over. He’d felt lucky that he had bypassed the race all together, showering at night to give himself the time he wanted in the bathroom without having to hear Joffrey pounding on the door.

When it was just the two of them, they began discussing their day. “I’m doing some yardwork and then I’m helping the neighbors across the street move some furniture.” Nothing too exciting by the sound of Jaime’s voice.

“I’m probably going to do some stuff around here, get some grocery shopping done. I can probably get it all done before the kids come home.” Gilly mentioned, but Baelish was quick to speak up.

“We’d like it if you took the children with you. We think it would make for a nice dynamic.” While Gilly could see straight away that Baelish meant that he was pretty sure Joffrey would have some sort of outburst in the grocery store, but she wasn’t about to fight the TV producer on it.

She didn’t want any of her words twisted.

“Yeah, sure. When they all get home, we’ll go straight away.” Gilly agreed, Jaime quietly laughed.

“Well, good luck with that.” Gilly wanted to groan, but didn’t. Especially when she looked at Baelish and his eyes looked like he was getting the best name day gift of his life, and to him, it probably was.

That put a sinking feeling in her stomach, but she pressed on.

She’d have to, if the next weeks would pass.

Breakfast wasn’t hard for Brienne to make, so long as they didn’t want fresh french toast or pancakes. But she could make eggs about a hundred different ways. Brienne woke up when her
alarm went off and went downstairs to see the kids already got themselves up and Ros and the camera crew were filming bits outside. Brienne didn’t waste time in starting breakfast and starting the coffee machine up. Sam was chasing his oldest around trying to get him to get changed for school. The cameras came in to film this, of course. Seeing it through the window, they walked in and focused on the little boy.

“No!” Little Sam protested, stomping his foot on the ground. “Mommy picks my clothes out better.” Brienne looked over to see what Sam had picked out. It was a perfectly acceptable outfit.

Stress from the change, Brienne assumed. He was young, it was almost cute.

“Well, Mommy will be home in a couple weeks.” Sam tried gently, which made Sam huff.

“I wanna pick my own clothes out.” The child whined, seeing Brienne looking over from the kitchen, his face lit up.

“Can I pick my own clothes out?” Brienne paused, lowering the heat on the stove before she burned the bacon.

The camera was on her, as well as every set of eyes in the house- well, except Jon, who was more than happy to continue looking out the window at a cat who was scampering through the yard.-

“Sure?” She didn’t see the harm in it, worst case scenario, he looked silly.

The boy’s father shrugged, “That settles that then.” He handed the small outfit to the equally small boy. “Just, please put these away, then.” Little Sam took it and ran off into his bedroom with it.

There was silence for a minute as the door opened. Sam and Brienne didn’t think much of it. Figuring that someone from the production team walked in or out.

“Jon!” The two year old shouted.

“Yes, that’s your name.” Sam said in a sing song tone.

“So I’ve been told.” A much deeper voice rang out into the house, Brienne jumped out of her skin. That didn’t sound like anybody in the production.

“It’s Jon, a friend of ours.” Realization hit her soon after. Jon Snow. Ned Stark’s son with someone else who wasn’t Catelyn. She didn’t know any details and didn’t ask for them. It wasn’t her concern.

What she did know is that Ned and Catelyn’s youngest daughter adored her oldest brother. When the family lived up near here, over in Winterfell, a few towns north of them, Jon and her were almost connected at the hip. But now Arya had to settle for weekly calls.

The door opened again, much heavier footsteps came in.

“Smells good here!” A booming voice rang out throughout the house.

Like a flash, the half dressed six year old Sam came bounding out of his room to greet the big voiced man.

“Hi Uncle Tormund!” Little Sam was quickly pulled into the air by the large red haired man. Jon’s boyfriend she had been told a few times. Tormund was a divided subject in the Stark home whenever he’d been brought up. Catelyn didn’t like him much and Sansa seemed to follow that, but Ned, Arya and Robb loved him. Bran didn’t have much of an opinion on him and Rickon, their youngest son at Five was absolutely afraid of Tormund. Something he found great humor in.
Brienne decided to turn the heat off and walk into the living room to see Tormund had Sam upside down and Jon on his shoulders. The adult Jon and the adult Sam were talking before their conversation halted.

“You must be Jon.” Brienne went over and shook Jon’s hand.

“I heard about you, Brienne right?”

“That’s me.”

“I’ve heard about you, Tormund-” Jon started, looking over at Tormund who was currently staring wide eyed at Brienne. “-Tormund close your mouth you’re gonna catch flies.”

“You are remarkable.” Tormund greeted, forgetting all about his boyfriend, who was rolling his eyes behind him.

Brienne gave an awkward laugh as Jon gave the back of Tormund’s head a soft smack.

“Right. We both had off and we figured we’d drop Sam off at school.” Jon offered loudly, partially to remind Tormund why they’d even come in the first place.

“I’ll get ready.” The boy volunteered, rushing off to his room.

“Did you guys eat?” Adult Sam offered, Brienne at that ran back into the kitchen, trying to save the bacon she had left on low.

“If its an offer, we’d be happy to stay.” Tormund ate twice that morning, but he was a bottomless pit.

“You know it is.” Sam assured the both of them.

“If Brienne will have us, that is. It seems like she’s the one cooking,” Jon responded.

“It’s just eggs and bacon, nothing too complex.” Brienne cracked the remainder of the carton in a bowl and began mixing them, putting more bacon in the pan. She could get some eggs and bacon at the store again for later in the week.

Breakfast was peaceful, filled with chatter, and Tormund trying to impress Brienne by eating more bacon than the FDA recommended. It wasn’t long after that did both Sam’s leave and Tormund left his number on an index card tucked in the couch cushions on Jon and Tormund’s way out.

Brienne went into the bathroom shortly after they left to have a shower.

When she got out of the shower and dressed, Ros had been downstairs with the youngest member of the Tarly family, keeping him occupied.

“Reminder,” The producer chimed in as she went to finish cleaning up the pans after dinner. “Gilly works online.”

Brienne had remembered that. Gilly worked for a customer service line for a company out of Pink Maiden, a town further south but not by that much. It wasn’t a pyramid scheme, which for a minute Brienne had thought. It was for a company that maintained musical instruments. Gilly’s job description entails that if a customer wasn’t satisfied or they needed help placing a service request or to purchase a pre-owned instrument, she’d help them out over the phone or an instant messenger.

The cameras fired up and Brienne logged into her job. Her own name popped up, something the
producer had worked out shortly before they started taping, and she hit start.

Brienne worked at a fast food restaurant in high school back in Tarth, the island in which she grew up on. She didn’t remember if it was a hard job or not, and besides, between this time she’d been in the Army, she’d been main security at concerts at the Red Keep that involved her having to taze people, as well as being Joffrey Baratheon’s Step-Mother.

Dealing with irate musicians should be a breeze.

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The kids had left for school and Gilly was doing laundry. Things felt relatively normal. The camera crew kept moving between Jaime and Gilly as Jaime trimmed bushes outside and mowed the grass, then back to Gilly sweeping and mopping the living room and then folding laundry. The camera crew came on her full time though when Jaime went across the street.

While she was putting away laundry in Myrcella’s room, Joffrey was the first to arrive home. Slamming the front door he stomped up to his room.

“Wait,” Gilly stuck her head out and looked across the hallway at him. “We’re going grocery shopping when your siblings get home. Petyr wants us to go as a family.” Joffrey grunted, not in the mood to go, but knew there probably wasn’t fighting this.

“How was your day at school, by the way.” Gilly asked, Joffrey didn’t answer it but slammed the door so hard she felt the walls shake a bit. The cameras downstairs caught it in the stairwell.

“Lovely.” She muttered to herself as she finished up in Myrcella’s room.

Jaime returned with the two younger kids an hour later, having picked them up from the bus stop. He said a quick hello to Gilly who was putting clothes in Tommen’s room next door as he passed the open door on his way to Joffrey’s room.

“Can you please do your homework before-” Jaime was interrupted as Gilly heard something hit the wall then the floor. Suddenly she realized where the dents in the walls were coming from.

“-Can you fuck off please?” Joffrey snapped, her blood ran cold as she heard the door slam behind Jaime as he went in.

Gilly already knew that Joffrey wasn’t going to get hit by his father, but just hearing a door slam to this day sent her back memories from when she was a kid.

Tommen walked in and placed his backpack down on his desk chair, ignoring the screaming in the next room.

“Does this happen often?” Gilly asked, Tommen sent her a look.

“What do you think?”

“Got it.” Gilly continued folding and putting away the small shirts.

Tommen started his reading assignment as his brother and his father had a bitter fight next door. They stopped fighting soon after, though after Joffrey started playing music on his speakers, sending Jaime out of the room.

Jaime stomped down the steps without another word. Gilly didn’t want to know, so she was in no
Joffrey didn’t have many outbursts in public anyway.

Gilly walked out of the room, a candle from his room was on the floor. A dent in the wall where the edge of the metal cup it sat in caught the wall. She sighed, inspecting it for cracks. She didn’t find any. She was half tempted to just place it in the basket and put it in the kitchen while she put away the last of the dishrags. But, she decided to just walk into the lions den.

Gilly picked up the candle and knocked loudly, she wanted Joffrey to hear her. She wasn’t happy. The music turned off and Joffrey barked for the person to come inside. Gilly opened the door.

“What?” Joffrey was doing his homework, it was clear he’d been crying. His face was red and his cheeks were damp.

‘Shit’ Gilly felt bad in that moment. She wasn’t as angry anymore. Her face softened as she picked the candle up, placing it on the desk.

“Just, ah,” She swallowed, “Just please don’t throw things anymore.” Her tone was soft, “Thank you, Joffrey.” She tentitively rubbed the boy’s shoulder before leaving, softly closing the door behind her and taking the basket downstairs.

Gilly went to work on cooking dinner.

“I thought you were going to the store.” Baelish asked, Gilly shook her head.

“We’re going to wait on that. Too much for one day. Anyway, we can squeeze some content out of another day.” Her tone was snappy, which made Baelish put his hands up in defeat.

“Hey, hey. That’s not an awful idea.” He conceded.

Dinner was a bit difficult to make, but she found enough ingredients in the house to make burgers and fries with, something the kids were certainly happy with. Podrick even joined them for dinner.

Nobody seemed to miss the idea of the grocery store.

Dinner was tense. People talked about how their day went, but it was hard to ignore that there had been a blowout fight, and the fact that something could set someone off at any minute.

‘Well Gilly, you’ve never had dinner in a minefield before.’ That ran through her mind.

Dinner was finished almost as quickly as it was over as the oldest child retreated to his room, not in the mood to socialize as the talk of a board game being played didn’t seem to entice him.

Things calmed down a fair amount by the time the game ended, which was welcome. By the time Jaime wished his two youngest kids goodnight before he went off into his own room. He was going into work that night, having been called in by head of security.

Gilly continued her game with the kids, Podrick included, as Jaime came out dressed in his gear. Before he left, Jaime paused at the front door, going upstairs to say goodbye to Joffrey.

She didn’t stare or wait for him to come down, so she didn’t realize how long he’d been up there, but she did notice Jaime seemed a bit calmer when he came back down.

It was a good sign, she assumed, that the rest of her night would be easier.
“I’ll see you tomorrow,” Gilly said,

“See you tomorrow!” Jaime called as he closed the door behind him.

Maybe this wouldn’t be so hard after all.

Brienne had been to war more than a few times. She’d been stood up at the altar once right before she decided to go into the military. All the batshit insane things with the Lannister family, and to that there was no shortage of batshit insane things, and all the things she’d done as security of the Red Keep including once having to tackle someone who had a fucking sword in a concert hall, almost slitting her own face in doing so. All of that seemed to pale in comparison of these fucking musicians over the phone.

They all had about a hundred different problems, most of which she wasn’t even able to solve. One musician’s problem was that his wife won his harp in the divorce.

Brienne didn’t even know how to file that one. She filed it under spam.

The only thing keeping her sane was the fact that Jon was listening to her vent in a singsong voice and he seemed to love it.

The camera sure did at the very least.

After Seven hours the shift finished and she took a breath, making both herself and Jon lunch.

The day was a lot calmer as she did tasks around the house like sweeping and dusting and wiping counters down. She did the dishes by hand and put them away. By then, Jon and Tormund returned with the younger Sam. Jon just came inside this time.

“So, how was your first day with the good people of used musical instruments?” Jon asked, knowing just how hellish it was. He’d heard war stories from Gilly.

“I don’t know how she does this.” Brienne admitted, which made Jon chuckle as he signed a release form Ros handed him. The cameras stopped filming fifteen minutes ago, electing to wait until Sam got home.

Sam did get home at his regular time, in which Brienne was grateful for. She wanted to get the day over with. She was already drained as she cooked dinner for the family.

She was half tempted to call for a pizza, but she had a feeling Gilly was the type of wife who much preferred cooking, she could tell by the stuffed freezer and fridge.

Dinner was served and, to be fair, it wasn’t as good as the night before, but nobody let her know that.

Bath time was much easier the second time around though, and like before the camera crew was out in almost no time after that.

“Look, I’m really just…” Sam put his hands up to stop Brienne.

“Don’t worry, I get it. I always thought I had the better job, Gilly hates it too. Look, why don’t we talk tomorrow after we put the kids to bed?” He offered, which Brienne was more than happy to accept.
“I think that’s a good idea. We should get to know one another without the scrutiny of the cameras.” Sam seemed to agree as they both said goodnight and split off to do their own thing.

Brienne’s own thing was getting ready and going straight to bed. Her alarm set for the next morning and the migraine in her head finally beginning to fade.

This might be a longer week than she thought.

Chapter End Notes

Please if you enjoyed feel free to leave a comment or a kudos. I hope to see you back next time!
Hey! I'm sorry for the long delay, but, I'm back. Sorry if this chapter seems to drag, I'd watched a few episodes of Wife Swap to get the pacing down, so, I'm hoping to reflect that in the story. Anyway, hope you enjoy!

The next day went in and out for Brienne, no need to work that day, so there wasn’t much for Ros to film. She spent half of their day with the camera off to save battery. The day was productive for both of them, anyhow.

Ros spent most of the day talking to her boss on the phone who confirmed they were having a slow day while the kids were at school. They spoke on the phone mostly about money for the production and what events they wanted both families to do.

Brienne had been keeping some contact with all three children as well as Podrick. Simple texts, small conversations while they went about their day, just making sure nothing too awful was happening.

And beyond the usual, everything was going fine. No broken bones, no fires, no disasters.

Brienne almost wished there would be.

There was a guilt coming along with that realization that something would need her to return to King’s Landing to help put out some fire.

She also realized she was positive that both producers would be more than thrilled to let Gilly, a woman who barely knew them at all handle it. Unless it was life or death, they’d film a complete disaster just so someone home sick from work one day would be able to watch.

She broke out of her thoughts by hearing a small voiced “Hi!” From Jon, who was wandering the house in search of her.

Brienne enjoyed the small child, even though she herself wasn’t that interested in having a baby. Four kids in the house was enough to keep her busy. In addition to not wanting to actually go through childbirth, the divided attention overwhelmed her enough already. A sixth person in the house to give more attention to sounded like personal hell. She didn’t know how the Stark’s did it. Six children not even including taking care of Theon Greyjoy, someone who wasn’t even one of their kids and Catelyn and Ned still had time for each other. Even though Jon and Robb, their two oldest children didn’t live at home anymore they still spoke to the two children on an almost daily basis, as well as making sure that their younger kids got equal attention. They weren’t passive quiet children either. She’d had them at her house on multiple occasions, the younger three kept up with Tommen and Myrcella while Sansa and Joffrey hung out together in the living room.

They had tried going up to Joffrey’s room once when the whole family had come over, but even with the door open, they were pretty sure Ned was going to have a stroke. So they stayed in the
living room.

“Hi.” Brienne responded, waving at the child who waved back and ran off, probably to get something from his room.

With not much else to do, she decided to follow him in. Maybe he knew the secret of what to do next.

Or at least, she could supervise to make sure he didn’t destroy the room she just cleaned.

It was a hot day. Hot and overcast day, so why Petyr Baelish, decided to film Gilly sitting outside instead of inside in the air conditioning was beyond her.

“So,” He began, pulling up a seat at the table. The cameraman stood right next to him, filming Gilly. “We’re just going to ask you some questions.” It almost felt like a warning. Maybe it was a preconceived notion of reality TV show producers, but she didn’t have a good feeling about the substance of the questions.

“Are you enjoying your time here?”

Gilly nodded, “Yes, I really am enjoying it here.” She assured with a light smile. She wanted to be very careful with her words, she knew they could be editing her statements in any order to fit any question or mood.

Baelish looked satisfied with the answer, “Have there been any big fights since we last saw one another, perhaps during the night?”

Gilly sat in silence for a minute, almost to give her answer silently, but figured that he could turn it into a negative. “No. Usually, when you leave the kids are quiet in their rooms. Me and Jaime typically just go about our business and we go to bed and then you wake us up.” She laughed gently. The producer laughed along,

“Sounds like a boring night.”

“I prefer the quiet, reminds me of home.”

The producer responded a bit too quickly, “Do you think they miss you at home?”

Gilly, frankly, didn’t like the tone. Perhaps it was the direct sunlight beating down on her, she’d been a Northerner all her life, so she never dealt with the sunlight that started off at almost triple digits, and only got hotter through the day, or perhaps she hated the tone or the wording, but she responded.

“I hope so. I miss my children and my husband.” Gilly held back a snapping tone, she didn’t want to see that this ends up on the negative end of a conversation. She wondered why she was so obsessed with making sure they didn’t get her saying bad things when she knew that she wouldn’t have cared if someone in a supermarket thought of her as a villain, but, she didn’t want to look like that. Especially with young children who one day may see it. So, she tried to collect her cool.

“Even if this new mother is about to start changing things?” Baelish asked, “What do you think she’ll change?”

Gilly shrugged, “I have no idea, but I’ll see when I get home.” She tried to answer politely but she sounded strained.
“Alright,” Baelish stood up, “Please wait out here, I have to make a phone call.” Petyr walked in the house, pulling out his phone and hitting a contact, probably the woman who was in her house.

Gilly was out there a full hour while Baelish spoke on the phone inside in the AC, the cameraman had stayed outside, staying completely silent. He didn’t seem affected by the heat.

At the two hour mark, Baelish came outside. “Oh, rather nice out here.” The air had warmed ten extra degrees and Gilly was beginning to look a little red, and clearly starting to get angry. “Let’s finish this interview, I only have one question left.” He announced happily, sitting down and crossing his legs. The cameraman picked up the camera again and started filming.

“How do you think that Joffrey’s father and step-mother let him get away with too much?”

Gilly should have known it was a trap. She had no idea why she didn’t just walk inside and invite the cameraman inside with her, but she didn’t. She sat outside and felt her skin burn in the sunlight. It was probably why she responded to Baelish the way she did.

“Of course they do! I don’t know why this kid has such a chip on his shoulder but perhaps a few rounds of therapy might sort him out a little!” She took a deep breath, realizing just how she sounded.

Baelish’s satisfied smile made her realize that she’d answered incorrectly for her intentions. “Why don’t you go inside,” He turned to a PA who’d been standing nearby, “Why don’t you go fetch Mrs. Tarly a cold glass of water.” Gilly stood up and went inside, the cool air of the AC hit her hard. A cold glass of water was pushed in her hand by a PA.

“We’re going to take a ten.” The PA informed her, walking away after a moment.

“Well, shit.” She mumbled to herself in the empty house.

Ros tried the same tactics with different questions, getting answers similar to Gilly but without the blowup from Brienne. Mostly because Brienne’s current climate wasn’t nearly as warm as King’s Landing.

“Is this house any different than your own?” Ros asked, which, Brienne gave a laugh.

“It’s a lot quieter, I’ll give it that.” Brienne answered, a Production Assistant was playing with Jon in his room, wanting to keep him out of the room they were interviewing in.

“Is that a good thing or not?” Ros raised an eyebrow, Brienne paused, thinking about what she had to say.

On one hand, she felt like if she said it was a good thing, the editors would spin this as her talking foul about her step-kids, something she never wanted to be on record saying.

But saying it was bad made this family look like a bunch of boring wet blankets.

“It has its ups and downs for sure. Sometimes I wish my own family was more quiet like this…” Brienne paused, “But I love them the way they are.” She finished quickly.

“Alright, well, I think we got what we need for that.” Ros answered, standing up and smoothing out her pencil skirt. “We’re going to go for lunch, we’ll be back in around thirty.” The crew started to break down the production, not wanting to keep expensive equipment set up with a toddler.
Ros was the first one to leave, leaving the crew breaking down the set.

“Think that went well?” Brienne asked the person who was untangling the mic and mic pack and taking it off.

“They’re going to edit that. Cut a few words out.” The man mentioned, “Feel I should warn you. Littlefinger is a shark. And just as slippery as one too.” So they were aware of the nickname too.

Brienne began to feel embarrassed, “Well, shit…” She cursed quietly, feeling the thin mic wire slip under and out her tank top.

“It happens. I’ve been doing this for years,” The man seemed indifferent about the entire situation.

“What’s your name?” Brienne asked the man winding the cords up to be put away.

“Pyp.” He responded coolly, moving to put the mic back in the bag he brought it in.

“Have you been doing this long?” Brienne asked, the man shrugged.

“I’ve been freelancing since I left the Night’s Watch. I really only took this job because I’m friends with Sam and Gil. Figured they could use an ally on the inside.” His tone was a bit lighter. Explained why he warned her about the edit.

“Thanks for looking out.” Brienne responded,

“No problem, I’ll make sure they’re not too slippery.” Pyp slung the bag over his shoulder.

“I can handle myself just fine, thank you.” Brienne was firm about that, she could handle some greasy man like Baelish. People have said worse about her, people she actually respected.

“I’m sure you can, but reality TV is a whole new ballgame,” Pyp responded as he left the house to have his lunch.

Brienne wondered just how far this producer would go to make sure she looked like a fool.

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Gilly spent most of the day doing idle chores, trying not to think of what happened earlier during the interview. Jaime had went off for a day shift at the convention center section of the Red Keep, them wanting to keep extra staff on board so she was alone most of the day until the kids came home.

Joffrey came home in his typical huff and later on, the two younger kids came home in their usual fashion. Podrick even came home in the afternoon. Gilly decided they’d all go grocery shopping that day and they needed it.

Gilly started going through the cabinets and refrigerator, writing out a list.

After writing a pretty long list, the PA took it and took a few pictures of it.

“Proof to the network, we’re paying for your groceries.” she handed Gilly a black credit card with the network logo on it. A sky blue credit card with a falcon and a moon on it, the Vale network logo. Gilly took the card and tucked it in her pocket. She gave them a stiff thank you before going upstairs to tell the kids they were going to go shopping.

All three kids went willingly, Gilly gave them a few minutes to get ready as she got her stuhell-bentff together and looked up the directions to the nearest grocery store. Podrick and Baelish walked up as
well. He’d interviewed the young man in the basement shortly after.

“Mind if I tag along?” Pod asked, which Gilly nodded.

“Of course, come along!” she figured she could use the help. If Joffrey was that hell bent on embarrassing his family being in public wouldn't stop him. She hoped for the best but planned for the worst.

That seemed to be a pattern in her life.

She went upstairs to check on the kids, make sure they were ready.

Unsurprisingly, Myrcella and Tommen were ready when she was up there. But she was more surprised that Joffrey was ready and anxious to get going, having been on the phone shortly before she entered the room. She was grateful but Gilly had figured that she'd have needed to nag him to get going.

Perhaps, she thought to herself, he won't make this so difficult.

Gilly knew the van behind her was the camera crew. But it still felt terrifying for her to be followed by a large white van with no windows.

The crew had called ahead, in fact, they called all the stores in the area and made sure they could film wherever Gilly decided to go.

She pulled into a spot and unloaded the car. Baelish rushed over to them.

"We'll set up, check in with management and show our permits and meet up with you." Gilly nodded, grabbing a nearby discarded cart.

"Thanks, let's go guys," Gilly started walking into the store. The four kids chattered lightly as they roamed the aisles. They felt like any other family in the store. Not like she was currently living under a temporary microscope.

It started to feel like that, more than she thought it would.

Shopping was half peaceful, it really was. That is before the cameras returned.

Something switched in Joffrey when they showed up to film her look at two different packs of frozen broccoli.

They were in the meat section, Gilly looking through different types of cuts of pork when it happened. A conversation between the four kids turned into an argument.

Gilly got tired of the stares she got when the cameras were simply following her around, and the looks when they started in but pretty soon Joffrey clapped a package of meat she had put in her cart over Podrick's face. It wasn't hard. It's not like it broke Pod's nose or even the package. But it was enough force to make him feel it. And he didn't take too kindly to that.

Podrick grabbed the younger teenager by the shoulders. "What the fuck was that for? We were talking?" Podrick started raising his voice. Myrcella tried to calm her step-cousin down by rubbing his shoulders.

“I had to shut you up somehow!” Joffrey responded, picking up the meat again, which Gilly tried to grab from him.
"Hey, hey, hey." Gilly turned around to give them the Mom Signature Look.

It didn't work.

Gilly knew that the first week she couldn’t enact her own punishments. Had this been her children, she’d have physically separated the two of them. But Joffrey was about her height, and probably would start throwing punches.

A woman, a blonde woman who looked impeccably dressed in heels that were too high for simply grocery shopping walked over into her eyeline. She didn’t think much of it, beyond the woman being beautiful, until Podrick took one look at her and cursed.

“Mother!” He raised both his hands as she crossed the aisle, her heels clicking loudly on the tile. “Mother, you came just in time.”

Cersei had known about her children’s new starring role in an episode of reality TV, which, she didn’t mind. If they wanted to be on national TV, who was she to deprive them of the attention of a nation?

“What on Earth are you doing? Do you enjoy making a fool of yourself in public? Hm? In front of all these cameras?” The cameras were now all turned at Cersei now, “I refuse to sign a release, so don’t dare think there’s a point in filming this.” She said to Baelish, who immediately ordered the cameras turned off. Gilly wondered why he’d buckled so fast, but didn’t respond.

Finally, someone to put a stop to this behavior. Gilly crossed her arms across her chest, almost looking satisfied.

However, she didn’t realize that perhaps, his mother was the issue.

“My son could have been hurt, do you understand you are older, bigger than him?” Podrick wasn’t a massive person, and Joffrey struck him first.

“Look, I-” Cersei walked closer, speaking over Podrick.

“-I didn’t ask for your excuses. Don’t hurt my children, or I’ll put you back in the cell my brother found you in.” Cersei sneered, which sent a look of anger across the young man’s face, but he didn’t say anything.

“I think that’s quite enough.” Gilly interjected, seeing exactly how this was going to go.

Cersei turned to look at the stranger, a stern face and looking down at her, sizing her up. She sucked on her teeth, opening her mouth to speak with a pop.

“I’m sorry, do you not know who you’re speaking to?” While Gilly didn’t think the well kept woman would be one to throw a punch, no. But one thing Gilly noticed was her look. It was a look of superiority. Like nobody in her life had challenged her, much like how her slimey producer did exactly what she asked him to do with no fight and she was assuming Gilly would shrink to her power and beauty much like, what she assumed, most people in her life did. Only one issue with Cersei’s plan.

“No.”

Gilly didn’t know who the fuck she was.

Gilly grew up North, even more North than the wall. She barely knew what was beyond Riverrun, which was why she had been so excited about this opportunity to explore beyond where he life had
been taking her.

Cersei was about to start the rundown of exactly who she was and why she shouldn’t be messed with before Tommen ran into Cersei, burying his face into her stomach. “Mommy!”

It stopped Cersei’s speech dead in her tracks, she hugged the boy back, leaning down to pepper the boy’s face in kisses, moving to do the same to her daughter who’d been standing nearby.

Joffrey’s face fell. He almost got what he wanted.

Almost.

Cersei began to speak to her youngest son and only daughter about their school days, Joffrey had already walked off to cool down, taking the list to grab some things.

Joffrey had returned with a few items on the list, cans of beans Gilly had written on the list.

“I think we should get going. Are we still going to meet for dinner this weekend? With us, you and Grandfather.” Joffrey asked his mother, which his mother nodded eagerly. She’d wanted as much time with her children as she could get.

“We wouldn’t miss it for the world, my sweet boy.” Gilly was certain his mother was the only person who called him that in earnest. She gave her children one last kiss and hug before going on her way.

The rest of the shopping wasn’t filmed. In fact, Baelish left shortly after, saying they’d leave it at that for the day.

Gilly couldn’t complain, but it made her wonder who exactly she was. Something she’d ask Jaime one day, perhaps.

If that was something he was even willing to talk about, of course.

If Joffrey got his way, however, he’d tell her everything she’d wanted to know.

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The night was easy. The kids ate, did their homework and went to bed easy enough, leaving Sam and Brienne to talk once the crew left for the night. The television was on for background noise as Sam and Brienne lost track of time, just talking like adults. Adults who weren't being filmed most of their day. The comfort level between them was established quickly.

The two talked about where they were from, Sam being from Horn Hill and Brienne being from Tarth. They had way more in common than they thought, both their fathers were men of some importance. Sam’s father owned a corporation that was incredibly popular though the Reach, and Brienne’s father is the mayor of the island town, which was a name which referenced the estate of land that her family had owned for generations, dating back to the Age of Kings when her ancestor Edwyn Evenfall had even changed his last name to Tarth to show how much he loved the land.

A love which traveled through generations and still burned bright in Brienne, more than a millennia later.

Sam didn’t have the same connection to his hometown that she did. He’d been more than happy to never return.
“I can’t believe he just sent you to North like that. That’s cruel.” Brienne commented, which Sam all but shrugged off.

“I’d have never met Gilly and Jon and all the things that I enjoy now, had I stayed home, so it was cruel, but the ends justify the means, and all that.” Sam spoke to his mother often, she’d seen the children more than a few times. But, his father and older brother had been dead to him for a long time now.

Brienne and him spoke about their siblings. From Sam’s estranged relationship with his brother Dickon and his friendly relationship with his sister, to Brienne’s brother who drowned many years ago and the sisters she’d lost along with her mother.

“So, tell me about now. Do you and Jaime’s ex get along?” Sam couldn’t see anyone not getting along with Brienne. Beyond the steely, guarded exterior, she was a warm and loving person.

Brienne snorted with laughter, but shook her head.

“Oh, gods. No. When Jaime and I first got together, she tried to scare me off. Which, I sort of expected. Mother of his kids and all, and then we got married and she’d threatened to kill me.” She said honestly.

“She would drop angry, threatening letters on our doorstep, too. Eventually, things happened…” A partially public case on the tragic death of Robert Baratheon, her husband, in which she wasn’t being investigated, but played the role of a distraught widow. But, to keep some privacy and to keep Sam from being curious about searching the names involved and reading the accusations of the children’s parentage, the public seeing how the Baratheon children looked absolutely nothing like the children Robert had before his marriage to Cersei and everything like Cersei’s twin brother Jaime.

Brienne had known about that before she’d married Jaime, before Robert had even died. She wasn’t ashamed of him or the children. She loved them dearly, even her step-son, even if he could be a prick most of his time. But she knew other people wouldn’t feel the same way, so, she would protect the secret with her life. Even though, unbeknownst to her, Gilly’s life was similar, in a way.

But also completely different.

“Yeah, things happened, and Jaime ended up getting custody of the kids. They still see their mother pretty often, at least once a week, but I know she hates the fact that I’m there every day and she’s not… She still leaves letters. But, since they can’t match her handwriting, she gets away with it.” It also had something to do with the fact that Tywin Lannister, their father, one of the most powerful men in King’s Landing had a say on how they sampled her handwriting. But she wouldn’t tell a stranger that.

“That’s awful,” Sam commented,

“It’s not so bad. I just shred any envelopes with no return address now.” Brienne shrugged off, as if threatening letters were just a common thing most people got.

“If you insist,” Sam said, yawning midway through. He’d checked the time.

One-Thirty AM

“Wow… I can’t remember the last time I was up this late… Early?” Sam joked, standing up off the couch. Brienne got up as well.
“I’m used to being up at this hour, actually. Especially when I’m working.”

Sam nodded at that, “I have to ask you more about your job, that seems exciting.” Sam headed towards his bedroom, Brienne following next to him.

“It can be. Usually in the worst possible way.” She’d had hours and hours of horror stories. “But, until tomorrow.” Brienne could make a nightly thing out of this.

Sam and her got along well. So well, she’d briefly wondered if Ros would try dirty tactics to put them at each other’s throats, or if they’d get so frustrated they’d pull the plug.

She’d hoped if it came to it, it would be the second. Brienne didn’t want the audience to be deceived.

The two separated for the night, Brienne going to sleep almost as soon as her head hit the pillow, not realizing just how exhausted she probably was.

Sam went to sleep fast as well, although he realized how tired he was.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you for reading! Feel free to leave a comment or a kudos and I’m hoping to see you next time!

End Notes

I hope you enjoyed my first attempt at fanfiction in a long, long time.

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!